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June 2026

Most of our gardens won't win awards I suspect—nor will they produce prize vegetables or blooms. However they need a great deal of thought and effort and knowledge. We also need to plant appropriately for climate change to try to avoid losses in the heat and extra payment on the water bills. So watching tv coverage of RHS Chelsea can be helpful even for humble gardeners There is always more to learn about gardens and gardening. It's an area that brings back advice and slogans from parents. What greater pleasure is there than to be like Adam and to tell your grandchild the name of a plant you remember from childhood and to hear them repeat it.



Dear Friends,

This is the time of year when the light lingers longer, and evenings stretch themselves across the day. It is at this time that our gardens begin to fill and we leave our windows open later. Right now I can hear somewhere nearby someone is cutting grass and children's voices are heard, carried through the warm air. Life moves outside again.

A few days ago, I watched someone pause outside the church doors. It was an ordinary moment. There was no talk, just a pause.

The person stood there for a few seconds looking at the building before moving on. Yet something about it stayed with me. Perhaps because churches are full of pauses. People come with questions they do not yet know how to name. Questions about grief, and weariness, about gratitude and hope.

The church is one of the very few places left in society where people are still invited to bring their whole selves, their questions, their longings, their uncertainty, their hopes.

I believe that to become a place where people can feel a sense of belonging is one of the callings of the church in this time.

Not every question people bring will be answered quickly nor will answer to prayer be clear immediately.

Scripture often unfolds this way. Jesus tells stories about seeds, yeast, soil, growth hidden beneath the surface of things. The Kingdom of God frequently arrives quietly from small beginnings, with ordinary people and on simple days like today.

I hope we can notice the small signs of God among us. A pause at the church door, a question raised beneath the surface, a prayer that has no words yet. I pray our churches are places where such things are welcomed, where people are received with patience, and where hope grows in God's time.

With every blessing  
Mark

*Please remember to visit the Commitment for Life web-page to see who we can be supporting and praying for—at the moment people in Zimbabwe.*

*Remember to drink Fair Trade tea! - AND HAVE YOU TRIED THEIR CHOCOLATE!*

**STOP PRESS**

**ART DROP-IN** 16th 2-3.30 in the Broxbourne Lounge with Jill. Materials provided.

**CONVERSATIONAL BIBLE STUDY**

Laurence says: we will be meeting every other Wednesday June 10th until the 9th December. All welcome.

**When we needed a May Market, were you there?  
(to be sung to the tune of 'When I needed a neighbour...')**

On Monday May the 4<sup>th</sup>, were you there? Were you there?  
'Cos the outreach and the welcome and the money all matter  
At our Fair!  
Did you tell your friends about it  
And to be there, to be there?  
Did you tell your friends all to be there?  
'Cos each word and each phone call and each poster really  
matter,

Guests came from everywhere!  
With stalls sold and organised  
were you there, were you there?  
With stalls sold and organised were you there?  
For the tables and chairs and requests all matter  
Placed 'just there'.

When we needed some plantsmen  
were you there, were you there?  
When we needed some plantsmen were you there?  
For the plants and the pots and the baskets do matter  
Shelves grew bare!

When we needed refreshments  
were you there, were you there?  
When we needed refreshments, were you there?  
And the cakes and scones and the teas they matter  
And were shared.  
With produce to make and sell  
were you there, were you there?  
With produce made and sold were you there?  
And the jams and the cakes and the crumbles matter  
Sold and prepared.

Did you come and face your fears?  
Were you there, were you there?  
Did you come and face your fears? Were you there?  
'Cos the beans and the slime and more mysteries all matter  
Kids aware.

For Vintage and Dinosaurs  
and stalls up the stairs,  
For all of these others, were you there?  
For the treasures and the bargains and the beasties all matter,  
Junk or rare!

If you here aren't included  
but were there, yes were there;  
If you here aren't included but were there  
Our gratitude to you for all your efforts does matter  
Don't despair.

Yet another year has passed and  
All were there, all were there.  
Yet, another year has passed, I do declare.  
£3,000 pounds plus for our funds – Wow! – That really  
matters  
Answered prayer.

With thanks to you all, whatever part you played in this phe-  
nomenal outcome.

The Bites and the Woodalls

(aka The Management)



**Reminder Broxbourne Foodbank - Helpers Needed!**

We're looking for volunteers to help Broxbourne Foodbank in its important work supporting those in need in two particular roles. Can you help?

- 1) Preparing Food Parcels - we're looking for two new volunteers on Mondays and two on Thursdays to help prepare parcels at the warehouse (near Tesco, Brookfield Centre, Cheshunt). You would be needed from mid-morning to mid-afternoon on a weekly basis.
- 2) Drivers - we're looking for two new drivers, one to collect the foodbank van on Wednesdays to take food to St. Joseph's (Waltham Cross) for the distribution there and return it and the crates back to the warehouse afterwards (Wednesdays, ~12.30-3pm), and the other to do likewise for the distribution from St. Catherine and St. Paul's, Hoddesdon (Thursdays, ~9-11am).



## Worship this month

<b>June</b> 7th 10.30 am	Brox URC	Trust Revd Mark Robinson
14th 10.30 am	Brox URC	Ian Matthews Communion
21st 10.30 am	Brox URC	Kathleen Laing
28th 10.30 am	Brox URC	Anna Erikson

### REGULAR CHURCH ACTIVITIES FOR YOUR DIARY

**IMPORTANT \*\*\*\*\* CHURCH MEETING AND AGM 29th June 7.30 tbc all are invited.**

**Elders Meeting June 3rd 10.30 am** Joint Elders meeting July 21st 10.30 am at Hertford URC.

**COMET** Please come along if you enjoy togetherness - that is meeting friends over a cuppa in the church hall and having a chat and possibly a game of Rummikub. There are occasionally special sessions such as fish and chips. It is on Mondays, 2-4pm, in the church hall.

**SHORT MAT BOWLS** Every Thursday evening in the church hall. 7.30pm Please speak to Alan Earl if you would like to join.

**AFTER EIGHTS** is now open to gentlemen as well as ladies. A programme of interesting talks in the church hall on the first Tuesday of each month from 2pm-4pm. If you are interested in attending a meeting please speak to Brenda McAuliffe or Marion Hall - or just go along at 2.00pm.

**PRAYER GATHERING** every Wednesday at 8pm via Zoom for approximately 45 minutes. All are welcome to come and pray silently or aloud, or to be still and enjoy an oasis of peace - please contact Rosemary Woodall for further information, email [rosemary.woodall@ntlworld.com](mailto:rosemary.woodall@ntlworld.com), or to be included in the circulation list.

**BIBLE STUDY** Generally fortnightly in the Oasis Room at 2pm on Wednesdays— 10th and 24th June Speak to Laurence Sinden. Tea/coffee and biscuits.

## ***Amanda's Eco hint for June:***

Did you do No-Mow May? If you decide to do a June trim, please leave a batch of long grass, for insects, butterflies and moths to shelter and some to lay their eggs.

A batch of nettles is also a good eco idea, as many butterflies and moths like to lay their eggs on food plants, and nettles are a prime source. Nettles in the wrong place, incidentally, can be cut down and used to make a good plant feed; just please check there are no eggs or caterpillars on them (caterpillars don't swim very well.) To make nettle tea, chop up unwanted nettles, and leave them in a bucket of water. After a fair while you will have a brownish liquid in the bucket, but this will need to be diluted to use as a plant feed for growth.



It's the birds' nesting season, so please don't cut hedges. You may scare them away from their nests. Sparrows are community nesters. They like to have their nests close together. If you want to attract sparrows to your garden, you can buy special group nest boxes of 3 nest holes.

Water – really needed by birds, hedgehogs and other wildlife in this hot weather, but please remember to clean and change the water each day, to avoid infection.

Frogs and newts (they are tiny and you may have them without knowing) are suffering in the heat. To help, you can create a damp cool shelter – a pile or 'cave' of stones or tiles or a length of wide plastic tube, put in a shady place or under leafy plants. They will repay you by eating your slugs. And a saucer of water.

Water for your own use – suggest you freeze a milk bottle or two of water, in case of reservoir shortage. Keep it separate from rainwater for acid-loving plants.

Remember to water newly planted berry plants and bushes.

Party time – Balloons are great fun, but dangerous once deflated. Please take care and chop them into small pieces, to avoid suffocating birds and animals.

## **Broxbourne Food Bank *IMPORTANT—PLEASE NOTE IT IS NOT CLOSING* but please volunteer as requested if you can. if you can**

Please remember to bring donations to the foodbank as our communion offering.

### **FIRE SAFETY**

Following an assessment for fire risk we are revising our policy and guidance—you will receive a copy.

There will be a fire evacuation practice. Dorothy Blatcher, Fire Warden

### **CHRISTIAN AID**

Please hand your filled envelopes, gift aided if you can, to Dorothy or Amanda. Thank you for your support.



### ***IN OUR CHURCH HALL— JUNE***

2nd      2.00pm After Eights Lindsay Barrell— Burlesque

30th      7.45 for 8PM SE Herts RSPB Peter Warne: Finding wildlife in Epping Forest - all welcome— please speak to Dorothy.

## How well do you know Chris Bite who looks after our garden?

Chris was born in Hertford County hospital and living in Hertford he grew up close to the River Lee. He started fishing at Hartham Common when he was 5. When he was 12, rods were tied to the cross bars of his bike and he ventured along the towpath to Ware, Stanstead Abbots and Dobbs Weir. At the age of 16 Chris joined the Stanstead Abbots angling club and was fishing the lakes down Marsh Lane, when the club rented them. Chris entered one or two open matches as a junior, one of which had some 200 anglers meeting at the Jolly Fisherman for a match along the towpath from Stanstead Abbots to Ware.

Chris then joined Hertford Angling Club where he competed in the club matches, was voted on the committee as match secretary and he then organised the club's matches mainly on the Lee and Ouse. Quite a few local anglers began to fish evening matches, for about 10 years they would meet by Stanstead Abbots bridge from the 16 June to the end of August, on a Monday evening and fish until dusk.

In 1980 Chris married Mary and they lived very happily at 70 the High Street in Stanstead Abbots, just a few yards from the river and a small tackle shop around back of the pharmacy. Sadly the evening matches that used to attract up to 30 anglers dwindled as people's work commitments changed.

It was the mid 80's when the then British Waterways decided they could get an income from anglers on the Lee and put stretches out for tender, which up until then had always been free fishing.

The LVACA which represented angling clubs in the valley, called a meeting mainly to get clubs organised, so they did not start out bidding each other.

Chris suggested that the clubs that wanted to fish the Lee form a consortium, so that there would be no bidding war, as had been successful with the Lee Vally Parks waters. The consortium was formed with Chris on the committee which ran the angling on the Lee from Hertford down to Bow until 2013 when the numbers of clubs wanting to fish the rivers had fallen, mainly due to commercial fisheries on lakes.

Hertford and Ware clubs then took over the Hertford to Broxbourne stretch under the name of Towpath Fishery, both for its members and for day ticket anglers.

The bailiff was Martin until 2021 when he was part-time at Amwell Magna so Chris helped. This has now become most mornings covering the stretch from Broxbourne to Stanstead Abbots bridge with another bailiff covering from Hertford

down to the bridge at Stanstead Abbots.

Senior anglers pay £5 for a day's fishing and OAP's £2 and juniors are free. The day-ticket money goes to the two clubs into the Towpath fishery account. Both the bailiffs get a percentage of the ticket sales to cover expenses. The monies collected go towards the rent paid to the Canals and Rivers Trust and Lee Valley Parks - the two clubs make up the difference.

The majority of day ticket anglers are willing to pay, the odd one or two say fishing should be free. Chris travels by bike in the summer, it's 12 miles, which can take anything from 1 hour 45 minutes to 3 hours depending on the numbers of people there are along the bank.

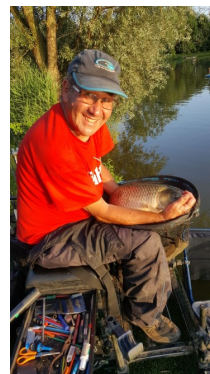
Chris says, 'A lot of my fishing is match fishing which I do with another club I am in, their matches are more in the Cambridge area, but I still get down the Lee. Depending on the time of year this is either at Rye House or Stanstead Abbots. Only 2 seasons ago I had my best bag of Lee fish from Stanstead Abbots, 9 bream all around 6lb to 7lb, all in a short afternoon section up by the A414 bridge.'

The River Lee is not the easiest river to fish, but the Navigation and the old Lee have some of the largest fish in the country. Over the years they have produced the record chub and barbel from Broxbourne and Fishers Green, carp of 41lb 8oz, bream of over 10lb and recently last November a net of roach that weighed over 50lb, 33lb catfish plus the latest angling craze, large perch with fish of over 5lb from Stanstead Abbots.

'What has changed over the years is the way the fish migrate over the season, so no longer do you see the anglers lined up by the village bridge during the winter months. This is because the fish have found other places for their winter holidays but there are also too many boats.'

The Canals and Rivers Trust have not got the powers or money to deal with all of the problems some of the boat owners cause. Chris tells us: 'After 3 years going along the Towpath, I have got to know a number of characters who I share a good morning with. There is one gentleman who always tells me where he has seen people fishing, he must be in his 90's and he walks the towpath from Ware down to Cheshunt then gets the train back a couple of times a week.'

*Useful phone numbers* The Environment Agency hotline 0800 80 70 60 for pollution, river levels. Canal and River Trust emergency 0800 47 999 47 bank and boat problems.'



*Above Chris Bite with a bream.*



**Pentecost and Gift Day display following the procession into worship.** The globe, flowers, fabrics, candle, books, and artwork reflected the movement of the Holy Spirit across creation and among all people. The flowing colours symbolised wind and fire, recalling the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost and the calling of the Church, while the whole display gave thanks for the gifts we receive from God and are called to share with hope, generosity, justice, and compassion.

**Please speak to your elder if you would like to receive a printed copy of the magazine and not just the electronic copy.**

This month the Pastoral News has not been included in the magazine. It has been circulated separately. If you would like to have it included please let me know. Thank you.

Julia (Editor)

**FIRE SAFETY We are reviewing our policy and guidance following a fire risk assessment and a fire drill. You will be given a copy of the updated policy and be shown what to do in the event of a fire,**

**Dorothy Blatcher Fire Warden**

## GRAPEVINE

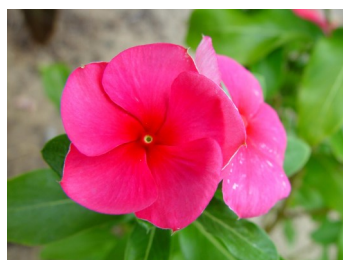
A belated and sad farewell to Dominic! Who we shall miss. However he is retiring so hopefully he is in for a very happy time. Welcome to Bruno Rabouin who has already proved himself to be a worthy successor to Dom.

We send our very best wishes to Alan Lodge who has not been at all well recently. We do hope he will be joining us again very soon as his good company has been much missed.

We hope everyone has coped with the extreme heat without too much discomfort. Please keep drinking water!

We wish anyone taking exams this month the very best of luck and a cool calm head for applying all of the hard studying to your answers.

Lastly –hoping and praying that Helen is now fully recovered from her mishap—best wishes to her.



Mark writes:

## Trust and a Question Worth Asking

I have found that many people believe that having faith means you should always be certain of what comes next. Questions about God and theology can therefore feel uncomfortable, even wrong. Yet throughout Scripture, we see that people question God constantly.

Abraham questions. Moses questions. Job questions. The Psalms are filled with questions. Even Jesus cries out from the cross: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

The Bible is honest about these voices. Scripture preserves them. This tells us something important. Faith is not the absence of questions. Faith is the decision to remain in relationship with God while carrying questions.

The Reformed tradition has often encouraged careful thinking, study, discussion, and wrestling with Scripture. Faith seeks understanding. Questions become part of discipleship rather than a threat to it.

It is possible that the church has accidentally given the impression that mature faith means never doubting, never struggling, never wondering.

Yet some of the deepest faith grows precisely through honest wrestling. Jacob leaves the night limping, yet blessed. Thomas asks to see the wounds. The Psalms speak with grief, anger, confusion, and longing, and still they remain prayers.

So here is a question worth asking and sharing together:

Are questions about God and belief one of the ways faith grows?

I would be glad to hear your thoughts, responses, or further questions, either directly to me by email, phone 07510 782031, in person or through our magazine editors.

