



HERTFORD, Cowbridge, SG14 1PG



JUNE 2026

MISSION STATEMENT

We aim to be an active Christian Church open to all, meeting together for worship, teaching and prayer and offering loving care and support to all. We work alongside other Christian Churches reaching out into the Community with love.

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

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 prayer.

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.

Many thanks,

Mark

PASTORATE UPDATE

*“Where can I go from your Spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence?
If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea,
even there your hand shall lead me.”*

Dear all,

These last few weeks have been shaped by unexpected journeys, continuing transition, and the strengthening of community life across our pastorate.

From Stepanka

After nearly 2 years of Pasterate Updates I have reflected on my part of the report and realised that I have run out of interesting things to share with you. I am unsure if people are particularly interested in which 'business' meetings took place since they are already noted in your church magazines, and I have already mentioned most other things since my admin tasks are repetitive in nature. Mark's report about the life of your churches is far more important and engaging. Going forward, Mark agreed for the pastorate updates to be written primarily by him. Having regular pastorate updates was one of my initiatives and it is my hope that you will continue to find them helpful.

Thank you for your prayers for All Nations. The new, temporary college location has now been announced. From Sept 2026 to Aug 2027, the All Nations Christian College plans to teach students at Chester House, Muswell Hill in North London. It is an exciting new chapter for the college, but also a difficult transition period for all who love the community at Easneye. To find out more about the next steps, please visit: <https://www.allnations.ac.uk/about-us/beyond-easneye>

Please join us for the **Big Picnic on Saturday 13 June 2-5 pm!** This is the final opportunity for you to come on to the site and enjoy our beautiful college and grounds and spend time with our current students and staff. The event will be held outside (as the weather permits). Please bring your picnic rug/seating and picnic snacks with you. There will be ice creams available to buy, cups of tea and farewell cake served, books for sale, games and live music, and some special tours of Easneye House where you will come face to face with some of the characters in the Story of Easneye. **No need to book.** We look forward to seeing you there!

From Mark

In mid-April, I travelled to Malaysia on behalf of the United Reformed Church to attend a Council for World Mission conference entitled Deconstructing Racism, Reconstructing Justice (DRRJ 2026). I had informed the elders of the upcoming journey, although the opportunity itself came unexpectedly. The person originally due to represent the URC was unable to attend at the last minute, and I was asked whether I would be willing to go in their place. I accepted, and it proved to be a deeply important experience.

The five-day residential conference brought together twenty-nine church leaders from across the world. Together we explored questions of racism, justice, theology, history, power, and the calling of the church within today's world. It was challenging, honest, thoughtful, and transformative. The conversations were rich, and the relationships formed across cultures and nations were deeply valuable. In my report back to the URC, I have recommended that the DRRJ programme be brought to the URC, so that those in senior leadership roles might experience this residential course

together, implement its recommendations, and develop further actions for the flourishing of the church and the wider community.

The May Market was also a very busy and joy-filled occasion. Many people came through the doors, stayed, browsed, bought, talked, and enjoyed the warmth of the church's welcome. The plant and garden stalls were especially busy, and there was a real sense of energy throughout the day. Thank you to everyone who contributed in any way — those who planned, baked, sold, bought, collected items, promoted the event, welcomed visitors, tidied, cleaned, served, encouraged others, prayed, and helped create such a positive day. It was a strong community event, a good act of outreach, and a real encouragement for the church.

Meanwhile, the work of amalgamation continues to move forward steadily. The marketing of the Cheshunt church building is progressing at pace, with a number of interested parties viewing the premises. Elders have also visited the building together to identify what will be brought with us into the Broxbourne church building as part of this continuing transition.

At the manse, a quinquennial inspection took place on Thursday 7 May. The surveyor carried out a detailed inspection of the property and remained far longer than expected — almost two hours, despite initially assuring me that the visit would take less than one. As a result, I was unfortunately unable to attend a morning meeting and the Open House gathering at Hertford that day.

At Hertford, Open House continues to offer a warm and welcoming space for people from the church and wider community to gather for conversation, companionship, refreshments, and discussion on all kinds of subjects. Everyone is warmly welcome. On every second Thursday, the increasingly popular Free Hot Potato Lunch takes place from noon. This continues to be very well received and greatly appreciated.

Our weekly Zoom prayer gathering also continues faithfully. I would encourage more of us to join if possible. It is a gentle and supportive space where people may pray aloud or silently, take an active part, or simply listen and share in prayer for others and for ourselves.

At Broxbourne, Comet continues every Monday, offering an opportunity to meet with others, strengthen friendships, enjoy laughter together, play games, and borrow books. Alongside this, other regular gatherings across the pastorate — including bowls at Hertford and Broxbourne, Bible study, Drop-in Art, and After Eights — continue to enrich our shared life and strengthen the bonds between us.

Across the pastorate, we continue to discover that church life is formed through worship, justice, hospitality, prayer, learning, and the steady work of building community together.

Prayer

Faithful God,
You call your people into journeys we do not always expect
and you remain present with us wherever we go.

As scripture says,

“Where can I go from your Spirit?
Or where can I flee from your presence?
If I rise on the wings of the dawn,
if I settle on the far side of the sea,
even there your hand shall lead me.”
(Psalm 139:7, 9–10)

Guide our churches in the work before us.
Strengthen us in justice, mercy, prayer, and friendship.
Bless every act of welcome, every shared meal, every quiet kindness,
and every step we take together into the future.

Hold us in your love
and continue shaping us into a people of hope and courage.

Amen.

PRAYERS

Continue to pray for Bob, Fran and their family.
Continue to pray for Jan Carter
Continue to pray for Phoebe who is starting to make progress back to full health.
Continue to pray for Shirley’s grandson, Michael, as he prepares to return home after his
time in Madagascar Continue to pray
for Janet and Trevor Williams’ daughter, Jo, as she continues her fight against cancer and
for Janet, struggling to cope at this time.
Pray for people known to you that they may know God’s love and strength.

Drop in Art Group –
Tuesday 16th June, 2026 - 2.00 – 3.30 pm
Broxbourne URC Lounge

From Shirley Sloan

ON REFLECTION by Janice Ross

Recently, while on holiday in the Moray Firth area, I enjoyed browsing through the bargains in a charity shop. I came across a pretty jigsaw, with only 250 pieces, which I thought would make a lovely gift for my granddaughter. "Seagull View" it showed a colourful harbour scene, with houses along the pier side and some small fishing boats.

My husband, who enjoys jigsaws, couldn't resist opening the box. Laying all the straight edged pieces out he quickly became stuck on the sky which just didn't seem to fit together. He thought the lettering on the boats would also be an easy starting point but couldn't find these either.

Nothing made sense. "I've started so I'll finish" he said stoically.

The finished jigsaw, completed days later, sported a hen, milk churns, a red Royal Mail van and a thatched farmhouse with a colourful orchard. All the pieces were there, but it wasn't the right jigsaw in the box! The saying "what you see is not necessarily what you get" came to mind.

Have you ever bought a carton of strawberries or grapes to find mouldy ones at the bottom? Or perhaps you get an item from a charity shop only to find on opening that a bit is missing?

For Jesus's friends and disciples, the Easter events must have seemed like a mixed-up jigsaw, bringing uncertainty, confusion and deep disappointment. They could never have imagined that the finished picture would look like an angry mob and crucifixion. Then came the resurrection. Tears of sorrow were turned into whoops of joy! By the time Jesus left his friends to return to heaven, some of the pieces were beginning to make sense.

The disciples stayed together, waiting to find what they were supposed to do now, and then came Pentecost.

The usual picture of a crowded Jerusalem, with hundreds of worshippers coming to the Pentecost festival, was broken by a strange, violent wind. Flames appeared on the disciples' heads. Then a message was sounded out which everyone was enabled to hear in their own language. It was noisy, chaotic and unexplainable.

At times, life can look a bit like a mixed-up jigsaw. Our lives can be going along as usual, routines established, all things fitting together and then, out of the blue comes a piece that just doesn't fit. It can be an unexpected job loss or an illness, or something as small as a family argument. Suddenly everything is in upheaval.

Remember what God says – "I am who I am. I am the same yesterday, today and forever. I the Lord never change."

He sees the whole picture and offers to be our steady rock.

We will be welcoming the Millmead School Choir to sing for us on Sunday 7th June at 10.30 am. Please invite your friends to join with us to hear the choir. (Our Communion service will be on 14th June).

John Ellis



SONGS OF PRAISE

Sunday 28th June, 3 pm at Hertford Baptist Church.

For more information, telephone 01992 582951 or contact hertfordbaptist.org.uk

Do you need help with your garden?

Contact Chris Hamilton – 07568 355444. Services Provided: Lawn mowing, Hedge cutting, Garden Renovations, Jet washing, Leaf clearance, Gutter clearance

DIARY DATES

Thursday 4th June – The Church Hall is booked for the day by “Springboard”. This is an organisation that trains and helps young people, especially those who have some learning difficulties, but others as well, to get into work mainly in the hosting and catering industry. It is a charity.

Saturday 6th June – Church Hall is booked for a Wine-Tasting event. No sale of alcohol involved.

Monday 8th June – Hertford and District Churches Together, Social event for Committee Members and Church reps at All Saints Vicarage.

Tuesday 9th June – As the halls are in use for the usual weekly bookings, “Springboard” are renting the Church for Exam Sessions from the training given to the students last week. Please be aware that there should be no disturbance from people popping in and out of the Church. (Foodbank to be advised when getting the van for Ware).

Wednesday 10th June – 7.30 pm, The Mimram Singers rehearse in the Church for their concert on Sunday. Sunday 14th June – 3 pm, Mimram Concert in the Church in aid of Isobel Hospice – free entry.

USED POSTAGE STAMPS – If you have any used postage stamps, could you please put them in the container at the side of the Church. Shirley is collecting these for the Isabel Hospice.

Saturday 1st August

10 am – 12 noon

Church Coffee morning, raising funds for Isabel Hospice

Scones, cakes, Tea & Coffee for sale

With a Book and Cake Stall

Saturday 8th August
 2.30 pm
 Social Tea Party in the Church Garden
 With an invitation to Broxbourne to join us.

DIARY JUNE 2026

3 June	8.00 pm	On line prayer meeting with Broxbourne Church
4 June	10.00	Open House Coffee Morning
7 June	10.30	Morning Service – Led by John Ellis, including Millmead School Choir
10 June	8.00 pm	On-line prayer meeting with Broxbourne Church
11 June	10.- 00	Open House Coffee Morning followed by Hot Potato Lunch
14 June	10.30	Morning Service – Led by our Minister Mark Robinson, including the Sacrament of Holy Communion.
17 June	10.30	On-line prayer meeting with Broxbourne Church
18 June	10.00	Open House Coffee Morning
21 June	10.30	Morning Service – Led by David Bradburn
24 June	8.00 pm	On-line prayer meeting with Broxbourne Church
25 June	10.00	Open House Coffee Morning
28 June	10.30	Morning Service – Led by Martin Bird, All Saints.

Foodbank opens on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings 10 – 11 am and on Tuesday and Thursday mornings 10.30 – 11.30 am at the Priory, Ware

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