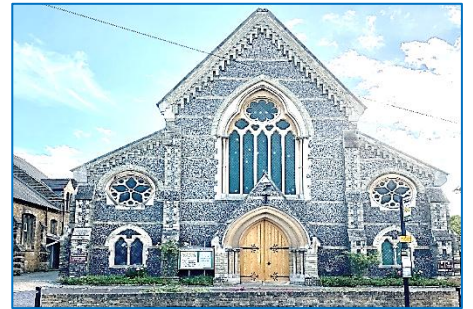




HERTFORD, Cowbridge, SG14 1PG



**AUGUST 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.**

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### **PASTORATE UPDATE**

*As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another,  
as good stewards of the varied grace of God.*

1 Peter 4:10

Dear friends,

One of the joys of serving this pastorate is seeing the many different gifts God has brought together within our churches. Every congregation has its own character, yet together we share one calling: to worship God, to care for one another, and to serve our communities with generosity and hope.

Over the past month there have been many reminders of that shared ministry.

At Hertford URC, it has been encouraging. It will be an opportunity to see Open House continuing to flourish. Week by week the conversations seem to grow livelier as new friendships are formed and familiar faces gather around the tables. It has become much more than a coffee morning. It is a place where hospitality is offered freely, where people are listened to, and where community quietly grows.

As the summer approached, COMET also came to the end of another season. We marked the occasion by sharing a wonderful meal together, filled with laughter, conversation and gratitude for everyone who has worked so faithfully throughout the year to make COMET such a welcoming part of our church life.

As we continue through the summer, at Hertford we are also looking forward to the Garden Tea Party on Saturday 8 August, beginning at 3.00 pm in the church garden. to enjoy good

company, conversation, and refreshments in a relaxed setting, and to welcome friends, neighbours and visitors into the life of the church. If you would like to come, please add your name to the sign-up sheet at church. We hope it will be a joyful afternoon shared together. The months ahead also bring moments of celebration in both of our churches.

On Sunday 2 August, we look forward to welcoming John Ellis into the eldership at Hertford URC, giving thanks for his willingness to serve and praying that God will bless him in this ministry.

Then, on Sunday 6 September, during our Commissioning Service at URC Broxbourne, we will welcome Laurence Sinden into the eldership through his ordination and induction. We rejoice that God continues to call people into leadership, and we ask God's blessing upon both John and Laurence as they begin this new chapter of service.

Looking ahead, preparations are also underway for a Pastorate Photography Competition. This has grown from Amanda Harwood's original idea and is being developed with the support of Cheryl and Dorothy as a shared pastorate initiative. Further details will follow soon, so keep an eye out for posters and announcements. I hope many people from both churches will feel encouraged to take part.

Our recent Annual General Meeting at URC Broxbourne also provided an opportunity to reflect on the many different ways people contribute to the life of our churches. There is an extraordinary amount of faithful service taking place every week. Some lead worship, some offer pastoral care, others prepare refreshments, maintain our buildings, organise activities, keep records, welcome visitors, support community projects, or work quietly behind the scenes. Every act of service enriches the life of our fellowship, and I want to express my sincere thanks to everyone who gives their time, gifts and energy so generously.

As we continue to grow together, there are also opportunities for others to become involved. We are currently seeking people who may feel called to serve as Safeguarding Co-ordinator and Health and Safety Co-ordinator, two particularly important roles within the life of the church. We would also welcome help with Christian Aid, Stationery, Publicity and Notice Boards, and Kitchen oversight. These are opportunities to share responsibility together, and support will always be available for anyone exploring these ministries.

Some of us are required to complete safeguarding training as part of our role within the church. Thames North Synod Foundation Safeguarding Training can be accessed using the link below:

<https://www.urclearninghub.org.uk/mod/scorm/view.php?id=1328>

As I look across our pastorate, I continue to give thanks for the generosity, kindness and commitment I see in both congregations. Whether gathered around coffee at Open House, sharing a meal at COMET, preparing worship, serving our communities or accepting new responsibilities, each person helps to reveal something of God's gracious work among us.

Prayer

Gracious God,

We thank you for the many gifts you have placed within our churches.

We give thanks for every act of welcome, every conversation that brings encouragement, every shared meal, every quiet act of service, and every person who offers their gifts for the good of others.

Continue to shape us into one pastorate, united in faith, rich in unity, and ready to share the hope of Christ with our communities.

In the name of Jesus Christ ~ Amen.

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## **PRAYERS**

Continue to pray for Bob, Fran and their family.

Continue to pray for Jan Carter

Continue to pray for Phoebe who is making progress back to full health, but is having a setback at the moment. Pray for Heather as she helps her family at this very difficult time

Continue to pray for Shirley's grandson, Michael, as he returns 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.

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Drop in Art Group –

No meeting in August

The next meeting will be in September.

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From Shirley Sloan

**ON REFLECTION** – by David McLaughlan

One of the things I love about being a grandparent is the unexpected questions little ones ask. Recently, six year old Oran made me think. “Papa,” he said, “When did you become my Papa?” Since the moment I knew he was on the way, I said. “And before that,” he continued, “were you just an ordinary man with an ordinary life?”

I smiled at him assuming that being his papa made my life more than ordinary – which, of course, it does! “Yes,” I nodded sagely, “Yes, that’s all I was.”

But thinking about it, we have eight grandchildren. I have been a Papa for 26 years and a dad for 44. Each role changed my life in profound ways. The thing that changed me to the depths of my soul was marrying Julie.

What I am trying to say is that, one way or another, I’ve been living my life for others for a very long time. The “me” I started with was ok; decent material to work with. He would have been the ordinary man with the ordinary life Oran referred to. But living for others has asked more of me than I would ever have asked of myself. And that has made me, I hope, a better version of myself, more patient, more understanding. Helping others in dire straits has certainly increased my empathy. It’s made me much likely to cry – but only at the beautiful moments to be found in the worst of situations.

Julie and I have been re-watching “The Chosen”, a series about Jesus and his disciples. One episode is almost entirely devoted to the disciples’ relationships, quarrels and expectations because Jesus left early in the morning to heal people. He returns after dark, exhausted, checks they are ok, then retires to his tent. He has spent the day, and his energy, on others. He makes no fuss about it. Barely mentions it in fact.

Why? Because he is the Servant King, companion to the lost, healer of the lame, friend of the supposedly unclean. His life is dedicated to God – and to others!

I used to wonder, what was the point? Then I thought about the difference it made to sit with the dying, to spend the time convincing a man that life was worth living. Not to them (although I hope it helped), but to me.

These things change us. Even the less dramatic examples of kindness do God’s work in our hearts. These are, I am sure, the ways in which he grows our souls.

When God came down to Earth, he lived for, and loved, others. Then he left, asking us to love God and one another. We can't help "them" without helping ourselves.

Taking this one life we have and living it for others is what makes us more than ordinary. Being Oran's Papa is a huge help as well.

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### **Mark's Holiday.**

Mark will be on holiday from 6<sup>th</sup> August to 2<sup>nd</sup> September. If you have any pastoral needs whilst he is away, do not hesitate to contact John Ellis. John's phone number is in the Fellowship Directory or can be obtained from any Elder.

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### **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.

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**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 Isobel Hospice.

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**Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> August**

2.30 pm

Social Tea Party in the Church Garden  
With an invitation to Broxbourne to join us.

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## DIARY AUGUST 2026

|        |          |                                                                                                       |
|--------|----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2 Aug  | 10.30 am | Morning Service – Led by our Minister, Revd Mark Robinson, including the Sacrament of Holy Communion. |
| 5 Aug  | 8.00 pm  | On-line prayer meeting with Broxbourne Church                                                         |
| 6 Aug  | 10.00 am | Open House Coffee Morning                                                                             |
| 8 Aug  | 3.00 pm  | Social Tea Party in the Church Garden                                                                 |
| 9 Aug  | 10.30 am | Morning Service – Led by John Ellis                                                                   |
| 12 Aug | 8.00 pm  | On-line prayer meeting with Broxbourne Church                                                         |
| 13 Aug | 10.- 00  | Open House Coffee Morning followed by Hot Potato Lunch                                                |
| 16 Aug | 10.30    | Morning Service – Led by Mark Johnson                                                                 |
| 19 Aug | 8.00 pm  | On-line prayer meeting with Broxbourne Church                                                         |
| 20 Aug | 10.00    | Open House Coffee Morning                                                                             |
| 23 Aug | 10.30    | Morning Service – Led by Chris Hall, Ponders End URC                                                  |
| 26 Aug | 8.00 pm  | On-line prayer meeting with Broxbourne Church                                                         |
| 27 Aug | 10.00    | Open House Coffee Morning                                                                             |
| 30 Aug | 10.30    | Morning Service – Led by Janet Bird All Saints Church                                                 |

***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***

***Enquiries 07851 70847***

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