



July/August

2026

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There are times for argument and other times when it would be completely inappropriate. When players in their teams involved in big matches are taken off the field and are substituted, they don't protest. Surely that must be hard for some of them—players who feel they still have much to give right there and then. The discipline is perfect and the reasons for it are obvious. Is that typical of humanity? In politics did we recently see a breakdown in discipline—could this save the country? Is it better that we have challengers who will stand up for their beliefs? The issue is one that is raised in Genesis several times—Adam wasn't able to follow God's instructions—can we?

Dear Friends,

One of the pleasures of our monthly Hot Potato Lunch at Hertford is the conversation around the tables. Last month a question came up that surprised me, not because it was unusual, but because it is one that many people have quietly wondered about. "What is the difference between a christening and a baptism?"

One person confidently replied that a christening is for babies and a baptism is for adults who have decided to become Christians.

It is an easy assumption to make, and many people have heard something similar. The reality, however, is a little different.

The Church celebrates one sacrament called Baptism. The word christening is a familiar and much-loved word, especially when people are talking about the baptism of a baby or young child. It is part of everyday language and many churches use it when speaking with families. Yet the ceremony itself is Baptism. Christening is another name that people often use for the baptism of a child; it is not a different sacrament or a separate ceremony.

When an adult comes for Baptism, they answer the promises for themselves because they are making a public profession of faith.

When a baby is baptised, parents and godparents make those promises on the child's behalf and promise to nurture that child within the Christian faith until they are able to respond for themselves.

Whether we say Christening or Baptism the Church celebrates the same gift of God's grace. Water is used, promises are made, and welcome is offered into the life of Christ's Church.

Perhaps that is one of the beautiful things about Baptism. It begins with God's love reaching towards us. Whether we come as an infant carried in someone's arms or as an adult who has discovered faith later in life, we are welcomed by the same gracious God.

If you have ever wondered about Baptism, whether for yourself, your child or your family, please do ask. These conversations are always welcome, and I am always happy to sit down over a cup of tea and explore them together.

With every blessing,

Mark

ART DROP IN will be on Tuesday July 14th 2-3.30 in the Broxbourne Lounge.
Next meeting will be in September.

October 11th: harvest festival, communion and lunch

NATURE NOTES FOR SUMMER 2026

Dorothy writes:

The Future of Rye Meads RSPB Reserve

The RSPB have announced that they will pass management of this wonderful local reserve back to Thames Water on 2 November. RSPB members and the community are pressing for continued public access after the hand back. We have made it clear to Beccy Speight, the Chief Executive, that we expect the RSPB to take responsibility to secure a viable future for the reserve, to ensure that its wildlife is protected and that, on transfer to new management, this SSSI, RAMSAR and SPA wetlands site remains open for the public to access and enjoy. Please do visit Rye Meads to see the Kingfishers, Water Voles, Kestrels and many water birds. You can also sign a petition to 'Save Rye Meads'

Here is the QR code for the Save Rye Meads Campaign on Change.Org.
Over 60,000 have signed up so far.



Dorothy Blatcher, Secretary, SE Herts RSPB Local Group

GOD'S GRANDEUR

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
Crushed. Why do men then now not reckon his rod?
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with
toil;
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell:
the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs —
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright
wings.

By Gerard Manley Hopkins

The Peace of Wild Things

When despair for the world grows in me
And I wake in the night at the least sound,
In fear of what my life and my children's lives
might be,
I go and lie down where the wood-drake
Rests in his beauty on the water, and the great
Heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
Who do not tax their lives with forethought
Of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
Waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world and am free.

By Wendell Berry

Laurence writes a fishy tale:

Hi All,

The photo is of me holding two Spring salmon I caught whilst flyfishing on the River Torridge in Devon many many years ago. A friend and I had arranged to fish on the Little Warham fishery that was owned by a much decorated airman in the Second World War.

It was a beautiful Spring day and, most importantly, the river was in really good order and at a good height which made it more likely that there would be some fresh fish

in from the sea. I elected to fish my favourite pool at the top limit of the fishery which was called rough water. My friend decided to fish his favourite pool which was Dead Man's Hole which was a mile away at the bottom of the fishery.

Rough water is approximately 1 mile from the car park so I had to walk there in chest waders carrying a landing net in quite warm weather. I decided to have a short rest before fishing. I then waded carefully into the pool and started to cast my small black, yellow and silver fly across the water, making sure that I didn't snag the overhanging trees behind me. I very soon felt slight resistance on the line and wound the line in to find a tiny slow worm resting in the bend of the fly hook. This poor thing had clearly been in the river some time and was torpid through being in cold water. I cupped it in the palm of my hand and it came round fairly quickly. It then did what slow worms do when being handled and defecated in my hand! I carefully placed the creature under the bank side hedge and went back to fishing.

I then returned to fishing. I slowly worked down the pool



until I got to a particularly good lie for salmon. I cast out under a low hanging bush and, as the fly swung round in the current, there was a solid pull and I tightened into a lovely 8.1/2 pound spring salmon. I landed it and quickly despatched it. I then walked back the mile to the cottage wearing the chest waders and carrying my salmon to deposit it out of the sun in a fish safe.

I then walked back to the fishing hut approximately half way down the fishing beat and decided to put my feet up and eat my packed lunch. I was then joined by my friend

who had caught nothing. I mentioned that I had caught a fish and he walked off upstream to have a go in the top pool where I had been successful. After a while he returned without a fish, but said he had moved a fish in the area where I had caught one.

I returned to the top pool and fished down it without success so I changed the fly to a 3 inch tube fly. In the same area where I

caught the first fish there was a large swirl and I had another fish on. This fished weighed 10 pounds. I walked the mile back to the house and put the fish in the safe. I met the owner who was really pleased with my success as he could report this in the Trout and Salmon magazine which would attract more anglers. I changed into some shoes and went to find my friend and ghillied for him for the rest of the day as I had reached the catch limit for the week. My friend wasn't successful on this occasion.

I used to really enjoy salmon fishing, but flyfishing for sea trout at night was much more exciting and extremely challenging, but that is another story.

Events in July/August

In our Church Hall

After Eights 7th July is The Language of Flowers by Tricia Thompson.

4th August the meeting is an afternoon tea and is fully booked.

Eco-hint July/August 2026

I'm writing this at the end of June to cover July and August – 2 months, and no idea what will happen in that time. So here goes!

If you are potting up new planters, suggest you cover the base holes with mesh, to stop slugs getting in underneath. Maybe raise the pot on stones or pot feet if very rainy.

If drought, water saving. Maybe convince younger family members to turn tap on at half-gush instead of full gush (Good luck on that one!)

Bathroom – if it's yellow, let it mellow; if it's brown, flush it down. When you wash your hands, put a bowl to collect tap water, and use that to flush the loo.

Or, if you have a bath/shower, put a plug in to store the water, and use that to flush loo. Or sit plants in the bath to enjoy a soak/drink.

Kitchen – keep a small bowl of water in the sink for small quickie rinses, and to avoid the temptation of turning the tap on.

After washing up empty the bowl of water into a bucket, and use it to water plants. Soapy water is fine on plants, and greenfly really don't like it.

Advice from Alan Titchmarsh – water plants in the evening, when it's cooler. Water the roots, not the leaves. If soil is very dry, scrape out a small trench around the plant and water into that. Or, my suggestion, cut the bottom off a plastic drinks bottle, makes a funnel; dig a hole near the plant, upend the funnel into the hole and water into that. It will take the water down to the roots and soak the soil below, encouraging the roots to grow down

to the wet, not up to the heat.

Apparently, according to a tv programme, making electricity can use water, so using less electricity saves water. (And cheaper electricity and water bills!)

IS IT SAFE? Before using a tablet to clean my washing machine, I looked at the packet information – “toxic to fish and aquatic life”. Needless to say, I didn't use it, but it made me realise how much flow from our machines goes into the rivers, lakes, reservoirs and the sea. So, I did a bit of research. Many products say “not tested on animals” but that's not the same. Several say they are plastic-free, which is good, but, with the help of a young lady from Ethical Supermarket, the only product to say fish safe or minimal, was a dishwasher tablet from a company called If You Care. If you are interested, they can be ordered on-line via Ethical Supermarket or Amazon. If anyone knows of any others, please let me know. I'll keep looking.

RECYCLE reminders – summer holidays – more sweet wrappers/packets, plastic film etc can all be recycled at Morrisons or Aldi. Aldi also take used batteries.

Please check your shelves for nearly out of date tins or packets and donate them to Foodbank (box in Upper Room). Old asthma inhalers can also be put in box next to Foodbank box.

Keep the kids entertained in the holidays – bug hunt, make a bug hotel. Put bowl of water out, and first to spot a frog.

Happy holidays, everyone. God bless



Worship this month



July 5th 10.30 am	Brox URC	Revd Mark Robinson Kath Cole will be welcomed into membership
12th 10.30 am	Brox URC	Laura Marlow Communion
19th 10.30 am	Brox URC	Revd Mark Robinson
26th 10.30 am	Brox URC	Martin Wells
August 2nd 10.30 am	Brox URC	Michaela Lawrence
9th 10.30 am	Brox URC	Revd Mark Robinson Communion
16th 10.30 am	Brox URC	Kathleen Laing
23rd 10.30 am	Brox URC	David Ronco
30th 10.30am	Brox URC	Evodian Fonyonga
Sept 6th 10.30 am	Brox URC	Revd Mark Robinson Commissioning service with communion

Please turn to the next page for our regular church activities.



REGULAR CHURCH ACTIVITIES FOR YOUR DIARY

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. Please speak to Diane Price if you are interested. It is on Mondays, 2-4pm, in the church hall. Summer break after a special cream tea on July 20th please speak to a leader if you have dietary issues.

SHORT MAT BOWLS Every Thursday evening in the church hall. 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 second Tuesday of each month. If you are interested in attending a meeting please speak to Brenda McAuliffe or Marion Hall - or just go along at 2pm.

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 rosemary.woodall@ntlworld.com or to be included in the circulation list.

BIBLE STUDY Generally fortnightly July 8th, 22nd August 5th and 19th, in the Oasis Room at 2pm on Wednesdays. Speak to Laurence Sinden. Tea/coffee and biscuits.

JOINT ELDERS MEETING TUESDAY July 21st 10.30 am at Hertford URC

Special invitation Saturday 8th August Pastorate Summer tea party 2.30 Hertford URC.



Not many people know this.....

We're all fully aware that Cheshunt Free Church and Broxbourne URC have become one fellowship and begun their journey forwards together. The aim has been to take the best of each church and to unite them to create the best possible outcome.

Surely this should be a straightforward task.....but oh, the hours and effort that it has involved! And it's not finished yet.

I just felt that it was important to offer you lovely readers a small insight into the work behind the scenes!

Take, for example, the kitchens.

There were some interesting discoveries – who could know that two churches owned 9 ladles between them? Why? Or over 100 miscellaneous mugs? And don't get me started on the seemingly endless collections of, largely mismatched, cutlery.

Over the 5 weekdays of the half term holiday a team of people worked together to:

- bring the kitchen contents from Cheshunt to Broxbourne,
- empty and clean the cupboards of both the Broxbourne kitchens
- amalgamate all the items together in the church hall;
- select the items to equip the two Broxbourne kitchens
- organise and undertake the re-stocking
- sort remaining items into 'charity shop' or 'tip' and to sort and dispose of the tip items.

Would you care to guess how many people and person hours it takes to amalgamate two kitchens?

I am sure that you'd be surprised! I was!

I am not going to name the people involved in 'The Great Kitchen Sort' – that would be divisive - except to mention Diane who worked tirelessly EVERY day. – including on her birthday – and without whom it would not have happened. Suffice it to say that there were 12 people involved. This was a good number - enough to carry out the task and to also enjoy a great deal of camaraderie and fun alongside the hard work.

Between them they put in approximately **160 person hours** and that is a conservative estimate. I am sure that you wouldn't have guessed that.

None of them is asking for thanks or for recognition. It was a worthwhile and satisfying task.

However, there is something that you could do to demonstrate your support of their efforts.

PLEASE, if you drive and are physically able to do so, take one or two of the small boxes of goods that are still languishing in the creche and donate them to a charity shop of your choice. Just ask Di or Liz S. which boxes..

If you are one of the very few that have already done so – **THANK YOU** – the team appreciate your support, **it makes all the difference.**

Rosemary

Trust... and a Question Worth Asking

Was Paul a Christian?

At first glance the answer seems obvious.

Of course Paul was a Christian.

Yet when we open the pages of the New Testament, something interesting appears.

Paul never calls himself a Christian.

In fact, the word Christian appears only three times in the whole New Testament. It was first used in Antioch, and it seems to have been a name given to the followers of Jesus by other people.

Paul usually describes himself differently. He speaks of being “in Christ”, a servant of Christ Jesus, an apostle, a disciple and a member of God’s people. His letters are full of language about faith, grace and new creation, yet he never introduces himself by saying, “I am a Christian.”

So here is the question.

If Paul did not use the word “Christian” to describe himself, what difference might that make to the way we think about following Jesus today?

I would very much like to hear your thoughts. Perhaps discuss it with someone over a cup of tea, bring it up at a church gathering, or send me an email. Sometimes the most interesting conversations begin with a question we thought had an obvious answer.



NOT MANY PEOPLE KNOW THIS.....A small group of intrepid filing cabinet sleuths visited Cheshunt Church on more than one occasion and recovered some rather weighty books. Contact was made with the Hertfordshire Archive and the weighty tomes were duly delivered. Many thanks to all involved!!

GRAPEVINE

We wish Rosemary and Dorothy successful and straightforward hip operations. Rosemary is going back to hospital for her second one (July 7th)—Dorothy is new to it (16th). We hope their respective carers are able to cope well with their recuperation. We hope and pray that we shall see them soon getting around without too much pain.

Mary Bite is also expecting to have a major operation in late July—we hope and pray that Mary will have her painful back repaired and that her quality of life will be hugely improved—and again we think of all those looking after Mary, Chris in particular. We pray that all medical carers and providers give the best possible care.

Alan Lodge is still hospitalised in Basildon awaiting tests and treatment. He would love to pass the time with any visitor who is able to drop in. We pray that Alan has confidence in his carers and that his treatment progresses effectively.

Very good to see the Velasquez family in church. School holidays enabled Maeve, Isaac and their parents to come to Europe for a family wedding. Wendy is happy that she can care for her poorly Mum in the U.S.

We wish everyone good health especially if you’re awaiting test results, and comfortable homes and holidays as we all battle with the extraordinarily high temperatures that we are experiencing this summer.