

Be positive (Philippians 4:8)

"Whatsoever things are of good reportthink on these things"

Do not allow discouragement to make you lose your confidence in the Lord.

God is still on the throne and He will direct our lives so that we can fulfil His purposes and in the process discover what to do and what to say **DPS**

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

By and large we have had a mixed response to the letters we sent to you - a proportion wanted to wait longer before opening the church, others wanted to start immediately. (including over 75's) At the same time I have culled information from a widely differing group of churches. Some our size, others larger, smaller, within EFCC and outside. There is NO clear picture overall'

To commence immediately we would complete the risk assessment (now done) meet either in the car park (being done in Northern Ireland, USA etc) or the main hall. No hymn singing, all seated, distancing, documentation,, sanitising etc and up to 30 people total. With full **re-opening** planned at this time for the church on **Sunday 6th September 2020 if this is possible.**

Streaming and digital working has its eager proponents but I discovered some alarming facts. The supposed high take up is not as indicated. Folk switch on and then off. Contact with a large charismatic/Baptist church (300 plus) one of the elders confided he doesn't even bother to tune in any more. and that they have problems for those without the technology.

There has been a hugh theological debate as to the validity of doing communion via streaming. Talking with our local Roman Catholic churches members say they have some form of service (Mass) with a booking in system, allowed only to take the wafer, the priest symbolically drinks the wine.

A Government announcement is scheduled for August 1st or thereabout and so we have the possibility of the meeting in the hall/car park Sunday 9th August, I have already obtained the sanitising, cleaning wipes, and masks, gloves etc that would be needed and made a possible plan of action.

We **will continue** the Church at Home leaflet to be distributed by post, letter delivery, e-mail until the end of the pandemic scenario. This **will apply weekly** to all seniors and others even if and when the church re-opens.

Watch this space

DPS

ROCHFORD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Welcome to

CHURCH AT HOME

Sunday 26th July 2020

DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO OR SAY !

Read through this outline and join with everyone else at 11 am

HYMN MP 279 (to read or sing)

I know not why God's wondrous grace
To me has been made known.
Nor why - unworthy as I am -
He claimed me for His own

*But," I know whom I have believed
and am persuaded that He is able
to keep that which I've committed
unto Him against that day'.*

I know not how this saving faith
To me He did impart.
Or how believing in His Word
Wrought peace upon my heart.
But 'I know who'

I know not how the Spirit moves,
Convincing men of sin,
Revealing Jesus though the Word,
Creating faith in Him.
But 'I know who'

I know not what of good or ill
May be reserved for me-
Of weary ways or golden days
Before His face I see.
But 'I know who'

(It would be good if you said this out aloud)
O Lord God our glorious, gracious, heavenly Father
You alone are worthy to be praised.

Thank You for Jesus He is a wonderful Saviour
Thank you for what He did for us upon the cross of Calvary.
Give us the strength. and the faith to trust You
with the issues, struggles and the upsets
we are facing right now.

Thank You that You do give us hope joy and peace.

AMEN

You may like to say the Lord's prayer also.

BIBLE VERSE FOR THE WEEK

"After that you have suffered for a while ..(He will).. make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you " 1 Peter 5:10

DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO OR SAY !

If you ever saw the film *Mary Poppins* then the word **supercalifragilisticexpialidocious** would have entered your vocabulary. (My special needs son Mark loved to play the songs again and again.) It actually became a great word to use when people did not know what other words to say. There are times when because we are troubled, in difficulty, in pain or when we say "we are at a loss for words" that the *Mary Poppins* nonsensical phrase or something like it comes to our rescue.

It is good when we are troubled or find things tough going, when you hurt over something said or done, or are confused and do not know what to say that I have found it helpful to say to myself "*The Lord is my Shepherd SO.....* or "*Bless the Lord O my soul and all that is within me bless His holy Name SO* ."(*Psalm 103:1*) Recall in that dark moment when Jesus was on the cross with a sigh too deep for words, hardly able to breathe, wracked with pain He just said "*My God, my God why...*" (Was He remembering *Psalm 22* - who knows !")

From time to time all of us face these life changing things that leave us breathless. Just like the pandemic has been leaving us with more questions than answers. Those are the times when I pose two questions: *Lord what are You trying to teach me ? Lord, how do you want me to respond?*

Over the years I have discovered God has things He wants to specifically say to us. When it would be easy to let go of everything, even quit or not bother what could He be asking of us now? Are we meant to be the right people, in the right place ,

at the right time? Let me give you a *Mary Poppins* style word, you will not find in your dictionary but you will recognise what I mean. "**Stickability**". the determination to succeed, to have a tenacity of purpose, to stay with it until a successful conclusion is reached. The word is never used in the Scriptures but the principle and the truth is there for all to see. You keep going until ...!

THE PRINCIPLE - what we need.

Moses discovered Pharaoh was a stubborn man refusing to release the slaves (God's people). Pharaoh made life miserable for everyone in Egypt as a consequence but Moses stayed with it until every single captive is released - "**stickability**" ! Elijah on Carmel engages with the prophets of Baal, sees God answer with fire and then goes to the top of Carmel. Head in his hands, praying for rain. He sends the servant again, and again, and again "What do you see? Nothing ! Go again! *then comes the little cloud no bigger than a man's hand*" (*1 Kings 18:42-44*) After that, the deluge of rain. -**stickability!** The Bible reading plan is taking us through Ezra and Nehemiah at the moment and the exiles have returned to the war torn Jerusalem and hostility from without from Tobiah, Sanballet and the Ammonites. From within with the complaint from Judah "*the task is too great*" but what a word "*so we built the wall*" (*Nehemiah 6:13*) - they had **stickability** ! "*How many times should I forgive the awkward brother ?*" asks Peter. "*Seventy times seven*" says Jesus - that will need **stickability!** Paul what do you want to say to the folk in Galatia ? "*Let us not be weary in well doing for in due season WE SHALL REAP IF we faint not*" (*Galatians 6:9*)- you need **stickability**.

THE PRACTICE - what we are to do.

Be patient Hebrews 10:35,36.

"Cast not away therefore your confidence ... for you have need of patience"

No rash decisions, no rush into actions which later we might regret or find disappointing. When we are unsure what steps to take next, exercise patience. God will give you a word about what steps to take.

Be prayerful (Philippians 4:6)

"In everything by prayer...let your requests be made known to God"

Maybe you think this is rather obvious but sometimes we get so engrossed in the circumstances and situations we let this slip as we seek to remedy things. We must ask, listen, wait and like the Thessalonians "*pray without ceasing*" (3:17)