

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

It has been a long time since we met together as a church. While we have continued with Church at Home so as to keep us involved with each other we have at the same time still struggled to make sense of all the directives, rules, regulations that have kept the church doors closed. Almost daily it seems fresh announcements and perspectives challenge and monitor what we can and cannot do.

In the light of what we know and where we are in terms of the government's current recommendations we want to announce that we will hold **two trial services on Sunday 13th and Sunday 20th September at 11 am each week.**

To fulfil various criteria and facilitate what must be done **WE WILL MEET IN THE MAIN HALL.** This will enable us to comply with the sanitising, spacing, extra ventilation, trace control, temperature check, entrance and exit requirements.

There is still a hold on congregational singing (but we hope to have a surprise and a legal activity that should enhance our worship). You are required to wear masks, you cannot congregate and talk in groups. If we are successful with this trial we will then endeavour to move on to worship in the sanctuary.

PLEASE BE PATIENT WITH US we are trying our utmost to get back on track and while at this point we are making this announcement **IF** there is any further announcement or restriction or lockdown we will have to change the above arrangements.

JUST TO LET YOU KNOW

The integrated communion cups have arrived so we can hold a communion service without falling foul of the restriction on liquids

FINALLY

In praying for you it is about asking the Lord to bless you with all the things that assure you of His love, His presence and His daily care so that you will come safely through these difficult days and troublesome circumstances.

God bless you abundantly

David P Saunders

ROCHFORD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Welcome to

CHURCH AT HOME

Sunday 6th September 2020

THIS IS MY STORY - THIS IS MY SONG

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

HYMN MP 59 (to read or sing)

Blessed assurance Jesus is mine
O what a foretaste of glory Divine,
Heir of salvation, purchase of God
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood

*This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Saviour all the day long;
This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Saviour all the day long.*

Perfect submission, perfect delight,
Visions of rapture burst on my sight;
Angels descending, bring from above
Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.

Perfect submission, all is at rest,
I in my Saviour am happy and blest;
Watching and waiting, looking above,
Filled with His goodness, lost in His love.

CHORUS MP 753

When I feel the touch of Your hand upon my life,
It causes me to sing a song, that I love You Lord.
So from deep within my spirit singeth unto Thee,
You are my King, You are my God,
And I love You Lord.

O Lord God our glorious, gracious, heavenly Father
You alone are worthy to be praised.
You are the One who has put a new song in our hearts.
Help us to appreciate all You have done and marvel at who You are.
Thank You for Jesus He is a wonderful Saviour
Give us the strength, and the faith to trust You more
and follow You faithfully no matter what.

AMEN

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

BIBLE VERSES FOR THE WEEK

Exodus 15:1

"I will sing unto the Lord for He has triumphed gloriously"

Psalms 137:1-3

"How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land"

Revelation 5:9

"...they sang a new song..."

THIS IS MY SONG

We see every day on TV or in the newspapers how fear is controlling and impacting the lives of everyone all around the world. So many live with the fear of violent conflict and war, others are fearful of starvation, sickness, kidnap and being forced to do horrendous things.. Something millions experience on a daily basis. Then along comes Covid-19, a global pandemic with all the consequential rules and regulations to monitor our lives. After these months of not being able to meet together one of the most restrictive is that if we opened the church doors for worship you cannot sing. There are "experts" who have deemed that singing would create a hotspot spike for the virus. One day Job heard God speak to him. The three friends had been trying to give an **explanation** about God BUT what Job needed was a **revelation**. So the moment arrives when God challenges Job *"Can you explain MY creation ?"* (Job 38) A most amazing phrase occurs *"when the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy"* (38:7) Do you realise there is a vast difference between music and noise? Music can be attractive, soothing, enlivening, encouraging and noise can be offensive. What a thought it is to realise when this earth was a place of silence. Then God introduced the sigh of the wind in the trees, the songs of the birds in the forest, the gentle murmur of the waves lapping the shore. It took a long time for man to learn how to sing but how exciting it is. All of us have our favourite songs. If you want to state what God is like sing *"How great Thou art "* or sing the Gaither song

"Because He lives" it will echo in your heart The list is as endless as it is personal. I still remember the Billy Graham crusade choirs singing *"Just as I am .."* I was the keynote speaker in Canada when the choir sang the *"Hallelujah Chorus."* I have heard it many times but that night everyone stood transfixed, taken by the moment into another world. So unforgettable I still picture the moment now. Allow me to suggest some moments when we should all sing

1.Sing when life is GOOD

When God rescued Israel from slavery in Egypt and they stood on the shores of the Red Sea whose waters had destroyed their enemies. The women struck a song of gratitude. An anthem of praise for their redemption and deliverance. *"I will sing unto the Lord for He has triumphed gloriously"* (Exodus 15:1). You know Jesus as Lord and Saviour - then praise Him. *Isaiah 25:1 says " I will praise Your name for You have done wonderful things"*. Think of the answers to prayer, blessings beyond your expectation, salvation, family, church, home - God does so much for us -so sing because you are grateful and life is good to you.

2. Sing when life is GLOOMY.

Those haunting words of the exiles experience in Babylon *"How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land"* Psalm 137:1-3. It is not easy when your heart is broken, when tears still your voice, and the memories of life are unpleasant. *"The peaceful hours I once enjoyed, how sweet their memory still. But they have left an aching void, the world can never fill"* Often through tears at such times I have learned to sing *"Faithful One so unchanging ..."* especially .. *"I call out to You again and again"* I wonder did Daniel sing when he prayed through those open windows in Babylon ? Remarkably just before the shame, pain and suffering of being nailed to the cross. Knowing Judas would betray Him and the other disciples desert Him Jesus sang a hymn (Mark 14:26). Paul and Silas dragged through the streets , locked in the inner prison cell, their blood dripping onto the dirty floor in Philippi. *"At midnight they prayed and sang praise unto God and the other prisoners heard them"*(Acts 16:25) and then God stepped in !

What a moment and what a story.

3. Sing when life is GLORIOUS.

John tells us of a time when a choir of a million or more - *"ten thousand times ten thousand"* will be heard as they *"sang a new song"* (Rev.5:9). Do you know what they will be singing *"worthy is the lamb that was slain". ?*

THIS IS MY SONG - now and it will be then !