

fear at this moment, or the things we dread ? Write Peniel over it all and as "*we pass over Peniel let the sun shine - because we trust in Him !* Is this not a key issue in everything we do or say or strive to achieve to be absolutely committed to "*..we trust in Hlm*". Can you make a better choice than that ? Answer "yes" and you must then consider.

### The CHALLENGES we face (in 2021).

#### Watch your WALK

*"As you have therefore received Jesus Christ, so walk you in Him" Col.2:6*  
It is time to come out of the darkness that seems to have taken over our land and let our light shine. Remember "*Jesus bids us shine like a clear pure light - You do it "in your small corner and I in mine"* Day by day how we live, what we do or say, all will impact upon and influence the folk we encounter. It will be for good or bad, it will motivate them to experience life or death. You will confront them with what is good and Godly or they will see something out of tune and wrong. What we say can discourage, depress, be cynical OR we can be kind, bring a blessing and glorify God. Remember we are "*God mastered men and women*" whose goal in life surely is best expressed by our hymn when "*we trust and obey*".

#### Watch your WAYS.

*"When a man's ways please the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him" Proverbs 16:7*

We live in the most educated society yet so many are still striving to find fulfilment and peace of mind.. I have discovered over the years it is God's ways that produce love, joy, peace. Most of all remember "*we are labourers together with God ( 1Corinth.3:9)*". We are going to have to face an enormous challenge to renew the work when the pandemic is over.. All of us will have a part to play. We are to live so as to please HIM, our Lord and Saviour. above everything else.

As we pass over our Peniel and leave 2020 behind may the sun shine again and most of all may the **SON (Jesus)** shine through our lives. **DPS**

#### Please Note:

It is a challenge to keep on trusting God no matter the circumstances. Let me assure you we are doing everything possible to keep you informed and to endeavour to pursue the time when we can meet together

## ROCHFORD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Welcome to  
**CHURCH AT HOME**

Sunday 17th January 2021

### "THE SUN ROSE"

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

#### HYMN MP 760 (to read or sing)

When we walk with the Lord in the light of His Word,  
What a glory He sheds on our way !  
While we do His good will He abides with us still,  
And with all who will trust and obey.

*Trust and obey, for there's no other way,  
To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.*

Not a shadow can rise, not a cloud in the skies,  
But His smile quickly drives it away.  
Not a doubt nor a fear, not a sigh nor a tear,  
Can abide while we trust and obey.

Not a burden we bear, not a sorrow we share;  
But our toil He doth richly repay;  
Not a grief nor a loss, not a frown or a cross,  
But is blest if we trust and obey.

But we never can prove the delights of His love  
Until all on the altar we lay;  
For the favour He shows and the joy He bestows  
Are for them who will trust and obey.

Then in fellowship sweet, we will sit at His feet,  
Or we'll walk by His side in the way.  
What He says we will do, where He sends we will go,  
Never fear, only trust and obey.

*(It would be good if you said this prayer out aloud)*  
O God, You are always the same, You never change.  
This new year 2021 provides us with a new challenge to trust  
You more, to follow You more closely so it means all the more we  
will need Your help, Your strength, Your favour, Your blessing.  
In all the chaos and confusion make us aware You  
are always with us In Jesus' Name

**AMEN**

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

### **BIBLE VERSE FOR THE WEEK**

**GENESIS 32:3**

***"as he passed over Peniel the sun rose upon him"***

### **THE SUN ROSE**

It is an amazing thing that in every place and every language when men and women open their Bible and begin to read it (not just eyes following words on a page) but reading with the heart - then life changes. Sad, sorrowing people are comforted. Sinful, broken hearts find peace, forgiveness and transformation. Those in the dark find light so as to walk on with hope and in faith. If needing direction and purpose for your life He is the "way maker". Bible stories take on a new significance and challenge. A word, a promise, and the extraordinary way it has caught your eye and then touched your heart. Just know that at that moment you were in the presence of the Lord Himself. He was speaking to you, words that are spirit and life. See John 6:33 *"The words I have spoken to you are spirit and life."* Here is an outline of what happened to me as I was thinking forward to 2021 and sitting reading an old familiar Bible story.

### **The CHOICES we make**

Jacob was on his way back. It was crisis time in his life. Two decades before he had run away from Esau and linked up with Laban. Now he is escaping from Laban and will be confronted by Esau. Suddenly, yesterday catches up with him when he sees the armies of angels as explosively he calls the place Manhanaim - *"two camps"*. so he says *"This is the camp of God"* and yet to him it is *"Jacobs camp"* too. Then Jacob makes his plans as to how he will face Esau BUT something more significant must happen first. The night time encounter and wrestling with God that will transform everything. He will pray one of the greatest prayers recorded (*Gen.32:9-12*) as Jacob reminds the Lord of His purposes and the promise made at Bethel. The real issue and problem is not Esau but Jacob himself. The night time confrontation goes on, the insistence that God must bless him

and then came the name change from Jacob to Israel (*Prince with God*). Campbell Morgan (*used to be at Westminster chapel*) called this a unique experience and uses an unforgettable phrase to interpret Israel as *"a God mastered man"*

I have come to realise it is when God rules our lives that He can then trust us with His power, favour and blessing. So again we have another special name Peniel which simply means *"the face of God"*. So as Jacob leaves Peniel it is a **new** day, a **new** life, he now had a **new** name, a **new** walk and above all a **new** relationship with God that would help him face and solve any problem. So *" as he passed over Peniel SO the sun shone upon him"*

As we leave the dark days of 2020 and the battles we have fought with Covid 19. The horror stories, the dreadful damage to the economy, the frightening loss of life, the fear that transformed every public statement and broadcast. Locked out, let down, impositions and rules that have left us so bewildered and confused. What I want to do is write "Peniel" over it all and lead you into 2021 Just as Jacob did *"as he passed over Peniel so the sun shone on him"* **The sun is going to shine again.** We are *"God mastered men and women"* so we do not fear what lies ahead.

Amy Carmichael has a very beautiful verse, given her when she was in "lockdown" - shut in, helpless because of the physical setback in her life.

*He has for thee  
A light for every shadow,  
A plan for each tomorrow,  
A key for every problem,  
A balm for every sorrow.*

So simple yet how relevant, true and still up to date, how I need to constantly remind myself of the statements the poem makes. But I do know if we have a problem, God has a promise.

When we read our way through Jeremiah together I made a note of how God knew that Ebed-melech (*friend to Jeremiah*) needed a word of encouragement as he faced hostility and great difficulty. The promise was *"I will rescue you ... you will NOT be handed over to those you fear. I will save you because you trust in Me"*(Jeremiah 39:17) What a promise just conditional on *"because you trust in Me"* What is the greatest upset or