



Closing Service

**13th September 2020
4.00pm**

**Service led by Revd. Kathryn Taylor
& The Moderator of Eastern Synod,
Revd Canon Paul Whittle**

Introit – Be still for the presence of the Lord

Call to Worship

We are here to celebrate

the life of David Livingstone United Reformed Church,
to give thanks to God for the gifts that have come to us
and to others through this ministry,
to acknowledge our sadness at its closure,
and to affirm again our faith in Jesus Christ.

Let us be grateful for God's gifts,
honest about our sorrow, open in our love,
trusting in Jesus Christ, the only head of the church.

The service today marks a passage for this congregation.

A ministry is coming to a close;
something new is about to be born.

God is calling the members of this congregation
to a new ministry.

Congregations are formed
and congregations are disbanded,
but the Lord our God reigns forever.

Hymn

1. O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder,
Consider all the works Thy Hands have made;
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,
Thy power throughout the universe displayed.

*Ref: Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to Thee,
How great Thou art, How great Thou art.
Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to Thee,
How great Thou art, How great Thou art!*

2. When through the woods, and forest glades I wander,
And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees.
When I look down, from lofty mountain grandeur
And see the brook, and feel the gentle breeze.
3. And when I think, that God, His Son not sparing;
Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in;
That on the Cross, my burdens gladly bearing,
He bled and died to take away my sin.
4. When Christ shall come, with shout of acclamation,
And take me home, what joy shall fill my heart.
Then I shall bow, in humble adoration,
And then proclaim: "My God, how great Thou art!"

Prayer of Adoration, Confession & Lord's Prayer

Blessed be the name of God, whose Word has long proclaimed within this place of worship. As generations have prayed their prayers and sung your praises here, your Spirit has blessed countless worshippers.

We have celebrated the Lord's Supper here and been nurtured by it through our journey in faith. We have rejoiced here as believers have confessed their faith in Christ.

Here we have baptised children and celebrated those who have died. As new families have been created through marriage in our old building, we, our parents and children have vowed to love, honour and cherish always.

From within these walls many have gone out to serve you in the world. As we go now from this place into a further journey of faith we give you thanks, O God.

Receive our praise and thanksgiving for the blessings, help and comfort which you imparted upon your people in this place. Continue your mercies to your Church, that we may be conscious of your unchanging love as we take leave of this place of worship.

Forgive us those times when we have failed you, when we have said less than we could have said, done less than we could have done, been less than we could have been. Forgive us those times when we have done and said things that we ought not to have said or done. And help us to accept your promised forgiveness and to live in the light of your love.

Bless this worship in Jesus' name.

And now let us say silently the Lord's Prayer Our Father ... Amen.

Reading: Psalm 46

God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.

Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should
change,

though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;
though its waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble with its tumult.

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy habitation of the Most High.

God is in the midst of the city, it shall not be moved;
God will help it when the morning dawns.

The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter;
he utters his voice, the earth melts.

The LORD of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our refuge,

Come, behold the works of the Lord;
see what desolations he has brought on the earth.

He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;
he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear;
he burns the shields with fire.

“Be still, and know that I am God!
I am exalted among the nations,
I am exalted in the earth.”

The LORD of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our refuge.

Hymn

1. Amazing grace, how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost
But now I'm found
Was blind, but now I see
2. 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear
And grace my Fears relieved
How precious did
That grace appear
The hour I first believed
3. Through many dangers, toils, and snares
We have already come
'Twas grace hath brought
Us safe thus far
And grace will lead us home
4. The Lord has promised good to me
His word my hope secures
He will my shield
And portion be
As long as life endures
5. When we've been there ten thousand years
Bright shining as the sun
We'll have no less days
to sing God's praise
Than when we first begun.

History of Church – Revd Kathryn Taylor

In December 1954, Mr ED Miller wrote to the local press about his interest in starting a Congregational Church in this part of the New Town. As a result of this letter 5 Founder members got together and the first service was held in the Dashes Common Room in March 1955. In October 1955, the first Covenant Service and the induction of the First Minister – Revd. G W Satchell took place.

The 5 founder members were: Mr and Mrs E D Miller, Mr and Mrs E J Quinn and Mr H Dunn. By 1958 the Church had grown and had a congregational family of 50 members and up to 100 children. Harlow at that time had a reputation as a ‘Pram Town’ due to the number of young families moving into the area.

As the Church was originally planned, it was hoped to have a manse on the same site and the original estimate for the planned building was £30,000. The manse was not built. Instead the minister was housed in a House provided by the Harlow Development Agency. The actual cost of the church building was £11,500 and was raised by the members with valuable help from the Essex Congregational Union, David Livingstone Stanford Rivers Church, (where David Livingstone started his ministry), the Raynor Bequest and the Congregational Union of England and Wales.

Over the years the Church had a turbulent history, with suggestions of closure, fluctuating numbers of worshippers, leaking roofs, break-ins, and vandalism etc. Many attempts were made to obtain groups to share the building to help with finance, which had become costly to maintain.

By the late 1990s the vandals appeared to be winning the fight and the building took on an appearance of a World War Two bombsite. The minister, John Wheaton and the elders entered into negotiations with the Methodist Housing Association (Springboard) to take over the land, build flats to let and provide a new smaller church on the site. After extremely long and complex negotiations with the English Partnership, Harlow Council, the trustees, and Local MP the scheme got the go ahead. Whilst the building was being carried out the members spent a very happy time, sharing worship with Trinity United Reformed Church.

The patient, faithful congregation eventually moved into the present building in 2002. We have enjoyed many events in the church such as the Glee Club, a singing group which gave renditions to other groups and churches, jumble sales and coffee mornings. We also shared with Trinity our Harvest Festival Suppers and Carol Services to name a few. David Livingstone had many lettings over the years including the Inner Wheel and a group from Grays, Essex periodically. Recently the Aspire Support Learning group have hired our building for 5 days each week. This has been a good outreach to the community as they provided lunches on a Tuesday and Friday.

Sadly, numbers have fluctuated, and we elected to having only services every other week. This has continued over the last 18 months with much discussion at each church meeting, but with the remaining members unable to attend regularly the decision to close was finally taken in January 2020. Our final service was to be on 10th May, but due to Coronavirus this was delayed until today.

Hymn

Lord, the light of your love is shining
In the midst of the darkness, shining
Jesus, Light of the world, shine upon us
Set us free by the truth you now bring us
Shine on me, shine on me

*Shine, Jesus, shine
Fill this land with the Father's glory
Blaze, Spirit, blaze
Set our hearts on fire
Flow, river, flow
Flood the nations with grace and mercy
Send forth your word
Lord, and let there be light*

Lord, I come to your awesome presence
From the shadows into your radiance
By the blood I may enter your brightness
Search me, try me, consume all my darkness
Shine on me, shine on me

As we gaze on your kingly brightness
So our faces display your likeness
Ever changing from glory to glory
Mirrored here may our lives tell your story
Shine on me, shine on me

Talk – Revd Canon Paul Whittle

Hymn

1. Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of Heav'n to earth come down;
Fix in us thy humble dwelling;
All thy faithful mercies crown!
Jesus, Thou art all compassion,
Pure unbounded love Thou art;
Visit us with Thy salvation,
Enter every trembling heart.
2. Come, Almighty to deliver,
Let us all Thy life receive;
Suddenly return, and never,
Nevermore Thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
Serve Thee as Thy hosts above,
Pray and praise Thee without ceasing,
Glory in Thy perfect love.
3. Finish, then, Thy new creation;
Pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see Thy great salvation
Perfectly restored in Thee;
Changed from glory into glory,
Till in Heav'n we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before Thee,
Lost in wonder, love, and praise.

Prayers of Intercession

When the chosen people left the land of Egypt for the uncertainty of the wilderness, you O God went with them. You inspired and directed Moses and the people to the Promised Land. You will be with us as we move on.

When the prophets knew for certain that the old values and traditions would no longer serve your purpose, nor bring them closer your kingdom, you showed a new way and revealed fresh opportunities. Ever faithful God, you will be with us as we move on.

When Jesus realized that the trusted structures could no longer serve your purpose, when Jesus knew that it was time for a change, you O God were at the heart of his ministry, sustaining him all the way.

Lord Jesus Christ, we are not good at letting go of the past, at recognising that there are times when we need to move on, to take a step forward in faith.

We prefer instead the security of the familiar, the comfort of that which does not stretch or challenge us too far, and we are wary of the prospect of change, afraid that possibly it might ask of us more than we are willing to give. We are not good at letting go of the old and putting on the new. We are reluctant to abandon old habits.

Help us to understand that, while the old has its place, there are some areas of life where a complete break is needed, a turning away from what has been, before we are ready to receive what shall be.

You instead want to work within us to finish the new creation you have begun. Give us the courage to trust you completely, so that we may refashion our lives to your glory.

God our refuge and our strength, you know our deepest thoughts and feelings particularly now and at all times in the future.

As we prepare to leave this place, we commit each other into your hands. Hold our memories, travel with us into the future, and give us your peace, the peace which passes all understanding, now and for all that is yet to come.

Hymn

1. One more step along the world I go,
One more step along the world I go;
from the old things to the new
keep me traveling along with you:
*And it's from the old I travel to the new;
keep me traveling along with you.*
2. Round the corner of the world I turn,
more and more about the world I learn;
all the new things that I see
you'll be looking at along with me:
*And it's from the old I travel to the new;
keep me traveling along with you.*

3. As I travel through the bad and good,
keep me traveling the way I should;
where I see no way to go
you'll be telling me the way, I know:
*And it's from the old I travel to the new;
keep me traveling along with you.*

4. Give me courage when the world is rough,
keep me loving though the world is tough;
leap and sing in all I do,
keep me traveling along with you:
*And it's from the old I travel to the new;
keep me traveling along with you.*

5. You are older than the world can be,
you are younger than the life in me;
ever old and ever new,
keep me travelling along with you:
*And it's from the old I travel to the new;
keep me traveling along with you.*

Words of Mission and Blessing

God remains with us,
though we let go of this memorable place,
God remains with us.

Though we sing new songs and worship in new ways,
God remains with us.

Though we serve in different ways
and pursue different causes,
God remains with us.

Though we find new friends in a new congregation,
God's love remains with us.

God's justice will inspire us.
God's realm will call us to action.
God is eternally for us and with us.
Thanks be to God.

And now may the blessing of Almighty God,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be with you and those you love,
this day and for evermore.
Amen.