In our last newsletter it was indicated that the eldership were hoping to open the church sometime in August. However, you are all probably aware that because of further developments with the Covid virus in this area, new restrictions have now been introduced. Unfortunately, therefore, it will not be possible to re-open as originally planned.

The eldership are having regular meetings and are keeping abreast of current governmental and synod recommendations and will keep you informed of every development.

There is a hymn which was written by a man called Horatio Spafford called, “ It is Well with my Soul”.

When peace like a river, attendeth my way,

When sorrows like sea billows roll;

Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say

It is well, it is well, with my soul.

Many people have probably been rather low in spirits during the last few months and have perhaps felt things are not “well” with their souls (or in some cases their knees, or feet!). But, compared to the problems Horatio Spafford suffered prior to writing this hymn, most people have been very lucky.

Spafford was a well off, successful lawyer in Chicago and had invested significantly in property round the city. He was happily married and had five children, four girls and a boy. He must have felt he had a blessed life. However, the first blow was when his four year old son died of scarlet fever. Soon after that there was the “Great Chicago Fire” of 1871 when all his properties were extensively damaged in the flames. He suffered further financial loss by an economic downturn. He had planned on visiting Europe with his family but in a late change of plan, involving trying to sort out his financial affairs, he sent his family ahead of him. His wife and four daughters boarded a ship called the Ville du Havre but while crossing the Atlantic the ship sank rapidly after a collision with another ship called the Loch Earn. His wife survived but all four daughters drowned. He wrote the hymn while near the point where his girls had died.

Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,

Let this blest assurance control,

That Christ has regarded my helpless estate,

And hath shed His own blood for my soul.

It is well with my soul,

It is well, it is well with my soul.

The composer of the music for this hymn was a man called Philip Paul Bliss. At the age of 38 he was on a train journey with his wife. The train they were travelling in was crossing a trestle bridge which collapsed and threw the carriages into the ravine below. Bliss escaped from the wreckage, but the carriages caught fire and Bliss returned to try to extricate his wife. No trace of his or his wife’s body were discovered afterwards.

Philip Bliss wrote lyrics as well as hymn tunes. These are some of the words of one of his hymns. The hymn is called Trusting in Jesus. Let us do the same whilst life is difficult.

Trusting in Jesus my Saviour Divine,

I have the witness that still he is mine;

Great are the blessings He giveth to me,

O I am as happy as mortal can be.

Trusting in Jesus, O what should l fear?

Nothing can harm me when he is so near.

Sweet is the promise he giveth to me;

O l am as happy as mortal can be.

Live simply, care deeply, love generously, forgive freely and pray daily. And after you’ve done all this, place your lives in the hand of a gracious and merciful God. Amen