

WELCOME AND NOTICES

Easter Praise will be at 5pm this afternoon.

Next Sunday Mike and Mike will again lead our morning service, and in the afternoon at 5pm the Scouting Groups will join us for a St. George's Day Parade Service.

Also, a reminder that Roger Hinton's funeral will be on Wednesday 27 April, 3pm at Colney Woodland Burial.

CALL TO WORSHIP:

Hallelujah! Christ is risen!
He is risen indeed! Hallelujah!

'Fellow Israelites, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. ³⁰ But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. ³¹ Seeing what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his body see decay. ³² God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it.' (Acts 2:29-32)

SONGS: JESUS IS LORD, CREATION'S VOICE PROCLAIMS IT

Jesus is Lord! Creation's voice proclaims it,
For by His power each tree and flower was planned and made.
Jesus is Lord! The universe declares it,
Sun, moon and stars in heaven cry, 'Jesus is Lord!'

*Jesus is Lord! Jesus is Lord!
Praise Him with hallelujahs for Jesus is Lord!*

**Jesus is Lord! Yet from His throne eternal
In flesh He came to die in pain on
Calvary's tree.**

**Jesus is Lord! From Him all life
proceeding,
Yet gave His life a ransom thus setting us
free.**

Jesus is Lord! Jesus is Lord!...

**Jesus is Lord! O'er sin the mighty
conqueror,
From death He rose, and all His foes shall
own His name.**
**Jesus is Lord! God sent His Holy Spirit
To show by works of power that Jesus is
Lord.**

Jesus is Lord! Jesus is Lord!...

THE GREATEST DAY IN HISTORY

**The greatest day in history,
death is beaten, You have rescued me.**
Sing it out: Jesus is alive.
**The empty cross, the empty grave,
life eternal, You have won the day.**
Shout it out: Jesus is alive, He's alive.

*And oh, happy day, happy day,
You washed my sin away.
Oh, happy day, happy day,
I'll never be the same.
Forever I am changed.*

**When I stand in that place,
free at last, meeting face to face,
I am Yours, Jesus, You are mine.**
**Endless joy, perfect peace,
earthly pain finally will cease.**
Celebrate, Jesus is alive, He's alive.

*And oh, happy day, happy day,
You washed my sin away.
Oh, happy day, happy day,
I'll never be the same.
Forever I am changed.*

Oh, what a glorious day,
what a glorious way
That You have saved me.
And oh, what a glorious day,
what a glorious name,
Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

*And oh, happy day, happy day,
You washed my sin away.
Oh, happy day, happy day,
I'll never be the same.
Forever I am changed.*

ALL HEAVEN DECLARES

All heaven declares the glory of the risen Lord.
Who can compare with the beauty of the Lord?
Forever He will be the Lamb upon the throne.
I gladly bow the knee and worship Him alone.

I will proclaim the glory of the risen Lord,
Who once was slain to reconcile man to God.
Forever You will be the Lamb upon the throne.
I gladly bow the knee and worship You alone.

OPENING PRAYER AND CONFESSION

Glory to you, O God:
You raised Jesus from the grave,
Bringing us victory over death

and giving us eternal life.

Glory to you, O Christ:
For us and for our salvation
You overcame death
And opened the gate to everlasting life.

Glory to you, O Holy Spirit:
You lead us into the truth
And breathe new life into us.

**Glory to you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
Now and for ever. Amen.**

Let us confess our sins, that we may live in the freedom Christ has won for us.

If we have fallen into despair,
Lord, forgive us.
If we have failed to hope in you,
Lord, forgive us.
If we have been fearful of death,
Lord, forgive us.
If we have forgotten the victory of Christ,
Lord, forgive us.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

May the living God raise you from despair, give you victory over sin and set you free in Christ. **Amen.**

ALL-AGE TALK: FROM HATE TO LOVE

OFFERTORY PRAYER & PRAYER FOR SUNDAY CLUB

Risen Lord, we come with all we are and all we have, because you gave all you are and all you have through your death and resurrection. Bless now these gifts and bless each member of the Sunday Club that today of all days they may discover the wonder of your resurrection, to the glory of your holy name. **Amen.**

READING: Luke 24:1-12

On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. ² They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³ but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴ While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. ⁵ In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, 'Why do you look for the living among the dead?' ⁶ He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: ⁷ "The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again." ⁸ Then they remembered his words.

⁹ When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. ¹⁰ It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. ¹¹ But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. ¹² Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.

This is the Word of the Lord
Thanks be to God

REFLECTION: THREE DAYS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD (9) The Wonder of Resurrection

Conspiracy theories abound across the world, from faked moon landings to wild

ideas about Diana's death. Did you know Elvis is still alive? And John F Kennedy wasn't really shot but lives in an underground bunker. That's what some believe. Did you know that what happened on September 11th 2001 at the World Trade Centre, the Pentagon, and in Pennsylvania according to some, is that President Bush and Vice-President Dick Cheney were in on what was about to happen. The Twin Towers were brought down by controlled explosions that were planted before the planes hit.

Now of course conspiracies do exist. Major international companies have been found guilty of fixing prices. But today we live in a world where truth is considered a matter of opinion rather than fact. Of course, truth can be manipulated to tell a different story. The atrocities in Ukraine are hoaxes, according to the Kremlin, with actors wearing stage make-up to look like blood. We live in a world in which truth is twisted in order to tell a different narrative. For example, the Russian people are being told that neo-Nazis are overtaking Ukraine, and that they need to liberate the eastern Donbas region to stop the corruption of the West further infiltrating Ukraine. As the Kremlin control the media, this twisted narrative is believed by millions of Russians. But the Russians aren't the first to control state media in such times. It happens in every war. Fighting to get your message across is as vital as fighting with bombs and bullets.

It is sometimes impossible for people to know what to believe. How can they trust what they have been told? How can we know the truth of what happened that

first Easter morning? Let's look at Luke's account.

We begin with the women who went to the tomb with spices for Jesus' body that they had prepared (v1). They were expecting a scene not unlike any other tomb, and according to Mark's gospel, the women were fretting about how they would get into the tomb (Mark 16:3). They expected nothing but sorrow. If you go to the graveside of your loved one, you do not expect to see an empty grave. And if it was empty, would you automatically think your deceased loved one had risen from the dead? Of course not! Luke tells us that the women found the tomb already open but Jesus' body was not there (v1-3). They were bewildered and wondered about this (v4), and while they were wondering about the case of the disappearing body, two angels appeared. You would have been as frightened as the women, and you would have been as surprised as the women when the angels said "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen!" (24:5-6), or a better translation would be "He has been raised." The angels then instructed the women to remember what Jesus had said to them while they were still in Galilee, that "The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again" (v7). Sometimes we don't remember what was said to us until it is repeated. It was only after the angels delivered their astonishing message that the women remembered what Jesus had said to them (v8). This was the moment when the light was switched on, at least in part. At this point we don't know whether they fully understood the message about resurrection, but they went to the disciples and delivered it nonetheless.

These words from the angels were a reminder of Jesus' prophetic word about his death and resurrection (Luke 9:22). Luke 24 has three episodes – firstly, the women's encounter at the tomb; secondly, the encounter on the road to Emmaus (v13-35), and thirdly, Jesus' appearance in Jerusalem (v36-49). And all three episodes are structured in the same way. There is bewilderment, followed by rebuke, then instruction and finally witness. And each instruction has a call to remember God's word.

Prophetic words from the entire Bible are central to an understanding of Jesus' death and resurrection. Those who had rejected the prophetic word also rejected the resurrection. Indeed, Jesus said, "If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead" (Luke 16:31).

This means we are to be a people of the whole book, Old Testament and New Testament. We can only grasp the resurrection if we open our hearts and minds to embrace the enormity of who Christ is and what he has done through understanding the Scriptures – all of them.

Finally, having been bewildered, rebuked and instructed, now the women become witnesses. However much they understood, they told the Eleven Apostles (v9-10). There are times when we may not understand much, but that doesn't matter. What we are to do is to witness to what we do know about Jesus and not worry about what we don't yet know. Luke mentions now the women by name: Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the

mother of James and the others with them' (v10). Here the women are mentioned for only the second time in Luke's gospel. They were first named in 8:1-3 when they began to follow Jesus, and now they are named again. But the men didn't believe them because their words seemed like nonsense. It's amazing – these were the Apostles whom Jesus had prayed for and instructed, who he had taught about his impending death and resurrection. Their faith would be the foundation of the Church, but at this point they didn't get it and dismissed the witness of the women.

Like so many of us, we hear but we don't hear God's Word. And many today dismiss the resurrection without ever having read the gospel accounts for themselves. This is either arrogant, stupid or both. However, at least Peter got up and ran to the tomb to make sense of it all, but when he bent down to look in the tomb, all he saw were the strips of linen used to wrap Jesus' body. He didn't see that the women's words made sense, and even he went away wondering what had happened. His inspection of the tomb led to wonder, puzzlement, but not faith, at least not yet. On Easter morning Peter, the apostles and the women were miles away from an Easter faith. Belief in the resurrection of Jesus hadn't sunk in, but when they encountered the risen Lord, Peter and the Apostles and the women became powerhouses of the good news which exploded at Pentecost.

A real truth emerges from Luke's gospel, unlike any of the other gospels, and that is that the disciples didn't invent the story of Jesus' resurrection, for they neither understood it nor believed it.

So how does Luke's account of Jesus' resurrection help us today?

Firstly, we are not unlike the disciples who struggled to understand and believe. But we make life more difficult for ourselves if we never explore the Bible for the truths it contains, which are far more grounded in reality than any conspiracy theory. You may need a basics course or a refresher in what the Christian faith is all about. You may need to go deeper and explore more than the basics. After all, you don't want to stay an infant Christian all your life. You need to grow up. Then again, you may need to regularly explore the Scriptures with others in a home group, where you can grow together. Wherever you may be, just starting out, or wanting to go deeper, it's time to make that commitment and discover for yourself the truth of the risen Jesus.

"Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen" (24:5-6). Jesus is alive and at work in our world, and wants you to know him better, and that's no conspiracy theory but the truth.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION led by Christine McGrath

These are responsive prayers:
Lord, come in love - response is
and roll away the stone.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven
Hallowed be your name
Your kingdom come
Your will be done on earth as in heaven
Give us today our daily bread
Forgive us our sins
As we forgive those who sin against us
Lead us not into temptation
But deliver us from evil
For the kingdom, the power
and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.

SONG: IN CHRIST ALONE

In Christ alone my hope is found,
He is my light, my strength, my song;
This Cornerstone, this solid Ground,
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm.

What heights of love, what depths of peace,
when fears are stilled, when strivings cease!

My Comforter, my All in All,
here in the love of Christ I stand.

In Christ alone! - who took on flesh,
Fullness of God in helpless babe!
This gift of love and righteousness,
Scorned by the ones He came to save:
Till on that cross as Jesus died,
The wrath of God was satisfied –
For every sin on Him was laid;
Here in the death of Christ I live.

There in the ground His body lay,
Light of the world by darkness slain:
Then bursting forth in glorious Day
Up from the grave He rose again!
And as He stands in victory
sin's curse has lost its grip on me,
For I am His and He is mine –
bought with the precious blood of Christ.

No guilt in life, no fear in death,
this is the power of Christ in me;
From life's first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny.
No power of hell, no scheme of man,
can ever pluck me from His hand;
Till He returns or calls me home,
here in the power of Christ I'll stand!

THE PEACE

The risen Christ came and stood among his disciples and said "Peace be with you." The peace of the risen Christ be always with you.

And also with you. Alleluia!

HOLY COMMUNION

The Lord is here

His Spirit is with us.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God

It is right to give thanks and praise.

Blessing and honour, glory and power, are rightly yours, all-gracious God. By your creative word you brought the world to birth; in your generous love you made the human family, that we might see your glory and live for ever in your presence.

Blessing and honour, glory and power, are rightly yours, all-gracious God.

When we wandered from you in our sin you sought us with your steadfast love and did not give up on us. In the fullness of time you sent your Son to be our Saviour and Deliverer. Being fully human, he lived our life and died our death upon the cross. Yet death could not hold him for your love is stronger than death.

Blessing and honour, glory and power, are rightly yours, all-gracious God.

Therefore, with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we bless and praise your glorious name, saying:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of
the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

Blessed indeed is the Lord Jesus Christ who, at supper with his friends, took bread and gave you thanks, broke it, gave it to them and said: 'Take this, all of you, and eat it. This is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'

When supper had ended, he took the cup and gave you thanks, gave it to them, and said: 'Drink from it all of you. This is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for everyone, for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in remembrance of me.'

**Dying, you destroyed our death.
Rising, you restored our life.
Lord Jesus, come in glory.**

Therefore, Father, we celebrate this Passover of gladness; for as in Adam we

die, so in Christ we shall all be made alive. Accept through him, our great high priest, this our sacrifice of thanks and praise.

Send your Holy Spirit that these gifts of bread and wine may be for us the body and blood of Christ. Gather us, who share this feast, into the kingdom of your glory that with all your people in every time and place we may praise and worship you forever. This we pray through Jesus Christ our Risen Saviour, in the power of the Holy Spirit, in the love of God our Father, to whom we give praise and glory forever.

Amen.

BREAKING OF THE BREAD

Alleluia! Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.

Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia!

DISTRIBUTION OF THE BREAD AND WINE

We meet the risen Christ in the breaking of the bread. Let us draw near with faith.

The body of Christ broken for you.
The blood of Christ shed for you.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

**God of our salvation, we thank you
for our communion with the risen Christ
and with all who love him in earth and heaven.
We pray that, strengthened by his grace,
we may serve you faithfully all our days;
through Jesus Christ our Risen Lord. Amen.**

SONG: THINE BE THE GLORY

**Thine be the glory,
risen, conquering Son;
Endless is the victory
Thou o'er death hast won.
Angels in bright raiment
rolled the stone away.
Kept the folded grave clothes
where Thy body lay.**

*Thine be the glory
risen, conquering Son;
Endless is the victory
Thou o'er death hast won.*

Lo, Jesus meets us,
risen from the tomb!
Lovingly he greets us,
scatters fear and gloom.
Let the church with gladness
hymns of triumph sing,
For her Lord now liveth,
death has lost its sting.

Thine be the glory...

No more we doubt Thee,
glorious Prince of life;
Life is naught without Thee:
aid us in our strife;
Make us more than conquerors,
through Thy deathless love;
bring us safe through Jordan
to thy home above.

Thine be the glory...

CLOSING PRAYER AND BLESSING

Risen Lord, we worship and adore you, for in you we have life and hope now and for ever. We go in your name to declare the truth that you are risen from the dead. Alleluia! Alleluia!

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always.
Amen.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord
In the name of Christ. Amen.