

completely connected what happens to *us*. And the greatest symbol of that Christians is our baptism. So let's stand now and turn to face the font to hear God's promise of forgiveness.

- *Children help.* This is a reminder of our own baptism, if we are baptised. And if we aren't baptised but we're thinking about exploring that, well what a great day to be thinking about that. I'm going to pray over the water of the font, and then Nicki and her helpers are going to bring some of that water to you, to be sprinkled with it, and as that happens think about all the things you want to say sorry to God for, and know that you are forgiven. Because what happens to Jesus is connected to what happens to us. He rises from the darkness to the light. And so can we.

## Easter Day in the Lord's resurrection

*St Luke's, Tutshill, 2024*

Sermon notes

*Acts 10:34-43*

*John 20:1-18*

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

**He is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

### *1. Recovering the 'Alleluia'.*

- Asking a lot, but can you cast your minds back seven weeks or so. The vicar asked us to do something bit weird just before Lent began. Who can remember?
- We buried it because we tend not to use that word during the period of preparation for Easter. Now it is time to dig it up again. Nicki and kids. While they're gone...
- While that's happening, I wonder whether anybody here can remind us what the word 'alleluia' actually means? Yes, it literally means 'praise the Lord', and we use it untranslated in its Hebrew form. So it's Jewish in origin, and you find it all over the place, particularly in the Psalms, as the kind of ultimate shout of praise to God. It is used from really early on in the Christian tradition, and it is the ultimate Easter shout of praise.
- Here are just a few lines from a really early Syriac hymn of praise for Easter, describing the moment where Jesus meets all those who were dwelling in the darkness of

death, and completely transforms their world. “Death could not bear my face. I made of the dead an assembly of the living. I spoke to them with living lips so that my words should not be in vain. They ran towards me... They cried out, ‘take pity on us, O son of God... Deliver us also, for you are our Saviour! And I heard their voices and I traced my name on their heads. So they are free and they belong to me. Alleluia!’

- Children carry Alleluia all around church.
- First really important truth of Easter: **a man that seemed to be buried is risen**. Put the Alleluia on the Cross.

## 2. *Red to white*

- Now is a really good moment for me to thank everyone who has made this church look so lovely and beautiful for Easter. Flowers, lovely white hangings and decorations. There is one thing that just looks a bit out of place this morning still. I wonder whether we might do something about that. What do you think it is? – *red cloth on the Cross*
- One of the ways that the church has helped people to learn the mysteries of faith, particularly in the past when the vast majority of Christians were illiterate, was through colour. And yes, on Friday red was exactly right colour to hang over the cross, because we were thinking about Jesus’s death. And that death was absolutely essential. But today we are remembering that death wasn’t the end. It was a free gift of love which finds its fulfilment this morning, as Jesus rises again. So we

should do something about that red cloth. *Change the cloth.*

- That’s the second truth of Easter that we want to remember this morning. The first was that man who seems to be buried is alive. The second truth is that therefore **something that looked like defeat was actually victory**. Jesus doesn’t save us through force. He saves us through love. And although on Friday it looked like defeat, it is actually the greatest victory that has ever been.
- So let’s sing about that now. Let’s stand to sing, on page 6 of our order of service, ‘When I was lost you came and rescued me.’

## 3. *What happens to Jesus is directly connected to what happens to us.*

- Remember the Acts reading that we heard a minute ago. Peter, in his great Easter sermon, says ‘everyone who believes in Jesus receives forgiveness of sins through his name’. **The third great truth of Easter is that what happens to Jesus at Easter is completely connected to what happens to us.**
- We just sung, ‘my life is hidden now with Christ in God, the old has gone and the new has come. Alleluia! Your love has lifted me.’ When Jesus descends to the dead on Good Friday he carries all of *our* weakness and failing and sin with him, and then when he bursts from the tomb on Easter day we rise with him. What happens to Jesus is