



ST ALBANS

Why Are We Here?

April 17, 2022, Easter Sunday

Why are you here this morning? You don't have to say it out loud, but you do have to be honest with yourself. Why are you here? And I'm looking for something a little deeper than: "because it's Easter".

Answers may vary. Maybe it's "I love church, I'm here every week." Maybe it's "I love Easter morning, it's a great tradition to come and worship and sing". Maybe it's "I'm visiting family who come here and I'm tagging along." Maybe it's "it's really important to my mom that I come with her." Maybe it's "I really don't want to be here and I can't wait until brunch. How many pages are left in the service anyway?"

All of these answers are perfectly okay. In fact, I have a confession to make. That last response, "how many pages are left in this service booklet?", that was me. No joke. So how does a person go from being a Mechanical Engineer counting the pages in a service bulletin, to being an Anglican priest preaching on Easter morning? That's a story for another day. How do any of us get to where we are, spiritually?

Today is the high point of our liturgical year as Christians. And I thought about what I would preach about this morning. I thought about the pandemic, about how this is the first Sunday in three years that some of us have been able to be together in person. I thought about the women at the tomb, about how they were silenced, they were mansplained, even though they were the first to witness the resurrection.

But what kept coming back to me was the question "why?" Why do we do what we do? What keeps us coming here? What keeps us going out there? Why is the resurrection important? I felt I needed to preach about that. About why we have faith. The short answer is that we have faith because it's about transformation. It's about death not having the final word. It's about life, and hope, and joy.

And all that is all very nice in an abstract sense. And I could go on about all of this. About transformation, about death not having the final word, about life, hope and



ST ALBANS

joy. But soon, because it's so abstract, I'd lose you. I know exactly the moment when I lose you as a preacher, by the way. Eyes start to glaze over. Bulletins and stained-glass windows suddenly become very interesting. So instead I want to share with you real stories of transformation, real stories of death no longer holding power, real stories of life, hope and joy even in the midst of struggle.

What I'd like to do now is something a little unusual for us Anglicans. We're going to have us some witnessing. In Lent we had three beautiful examples of witness. We had Rosaline, Anna and Felix share with us what Easter means to them. It left me wanting to know more about how we all feel about it.

Earlier this week I asked you and St Bernard a question in my weekly email. I asked: "what difference does your faith make in your life?" And I got quite a few responses. Your responses were powerful and beautiful. And I wanted us to hear some of them this morning. Actually, we need to hear them this morning. These are the answers to "why are we here this morning?". These are the answers to "why does the resurrection matter?".

I'm going to ask people to read them out loud. They are all anonymous and I'm going to choose random people to read them, so the person who's reading it isn't the one who wrote it. I'll hand them out and ask you to come up to the lectern to read it so that folks at home can also hear it.

What can I say after hearing that? Not much, except that it's only fair for me to add my own witness. There is so much I could say, but for this morning, I'll leave you with what's most important to me: my faith has given me the life-altering removal of the fear of death, which allows me to live fully and joyfully in the service of others in the present.

My hope and prayer is for all of us to be open to experience God's transformational power. So that each of us can answer "why are we here?" confidently with life, hope and joy. Amen.