



Fake News?

It's a regular quote these days from a leading politician or 'public relations' professionals ... "Fake news!"

And through the ages this has been said about the story of Jesus dying on the cross to then rise again three days later ... the very thing we will be celebrating on Easter Sunday at St Lawrence and All Saints' Churches. So how can we know if this story is true or false? Where is the evidence?

Well the death of Jesus, on the cross, by the command of Pontius Pilate, is well documented not only in the Bible but in other writings of the same time. Josephus, a Roman-Jewish historian, as well as Roman politicians Pliny and Tacitus, neither of whom liked Christians, all wrote about the death of Jesus, the Christ, at the same time the Bible was being written.

But what about his resurrection?

Well, if the Roman and Jewish authorities had wanted to nip the growing movement of 'Jesus followers' in the bud wouldn't they have brought out his body to prove the 'false news'? But they didn't! Why? Because the tomb was empty ... because he wasn't there ... because he had risen!

The Bible, which shows itself, in these modern times, to be true again and again through archaeology and science, reports that when Jesus rose again he was seen not only by his close friends but by hundreds of witnesses before he returned to heaven. And many of those who witnessed the risen Jesus went on to sacrifice their lives as they went on to share with others the one they loved and followed. Why would they do that if the news of Jesus being alive was 'fake news'? They wouldn't, would they!

And today around the world ... including here in Effingham and Little Bookham ... people choose to follow Jesus because they know he is alive ... they have met with him and they love him just as he loves them. Here in our parish this prompts us to serve him by serving our local community through our charity collections, our toddler services, and being part of Messy Church, Connect and Tuesday Teas, etc as well as supporting our local food bank. However, in some places around the world this still means people sacrificing everything to follow the one they know died on the cross for them and who rose again victorious over death.

All of this provides a very real hope for all who choose to follow Jesus ... fantastic news for all of us.

Jesus himself said *"I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die"* (John 11:25-26). What an invitation! What a cause for celebration!

On Easter Sunday we will be celebrating the resurrection of Jesus with a 6am Dawn Service at St Lawrence Church, Effingham followed by a croissant / hot cross bun breakfast and then at 10am in All Saints Church, Little Bookham with an All Age Family Celebration with Holy Communion followed by an Easter Egg Hunt for the children. A very warm welcome awaits you all if you can join us.

Praying that you would know the truth of the risen Christ in your lives this Easter
With every blessing
Your Rector,
Reverend Mandy