

# NEWSLETTER

for the Churches of St Arvans, St Mary, Penterry,  
St Deiniol, Itton, St James, Devauden & Holy Cross, Kilgwrrwg  
forming part of the Severn Wye Ministry Area

## IMPORTANT - PLEASE NOTE

St Arvan's Church is open during the day both for worship and private prayer, Our live-streamed services are as follows: **Sunday Eucharist at 10. a.m., and a reflection & celebration of Night Prayer usually on Wednesdays at 8 p.m.** They can be accessed on the St Arvans Parish Group page on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/vicaragecello1/> and are available to watch at any time The St Arvans Parish website can be found here:

<http://www.starvanschurch.org.uk/>

Please help to keep us informed of anyone who is in need or is isolated over the next weeks and months, and anyone in need of our prayer and support  
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## 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 EASTER SUNDAY

### The Collect

Lord of all life and power,  
who through the mighty resurrection of your Son overcame the old order of sin and death to make all things new in him: grant that we, being dead to sin and alive to you in Jesus Christ, may reign with him in glory; to whom with you and the Holy Spirit be praise and honour, glory and might, now and in all eternity. **AMEN**

### A reading from the Acts of the Apostles [10. 34; 37 - 43]

Peter began to speak to those assembled in the house of Cornelius: 'I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. You know the message he sent to

the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ – he is Lord of all. That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.'

*Reader/ This is the Word of the Lord*  
**Response / Thanks be to God**

### Psalm 118. 1–2, 14–24

**R Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**  
**This is the day the Lord has made.**

Give thanks to the Lord,  
for he is good;  
his mercy endures for ever.  
Let Israel now proclaim,  
'His mercy endures for ever.'

**R**

The Lord is my strength and my song,  
and he has become my salvation.  
There is a sound  
of exultation and victory

in the tents of the righteous:  
'The right hand of the Lord  
has triumphed!  
the right hand of the Lord is exalted!  
the right hand of the Lord  
has triumphed!'

**R**

I shall not die, but live,

and declare the works of the Lord.  
The Lord has punished me sorely,  
but he did not hand me over to death.  
Open for me the gates  
of righteousness;  
I will enter them;  
I will offer thanks to the Lord.

**R**

'This is the gate of the Lord;  
whoever is righteous may enter.'  
I will give thanks to you,  
for you answered me  
and have become my salvation.  
The same stone  
which the builders rejected  
has become the chief corner-stone.

**R**

This is the Lord's doing,  
and it is marvellous in our eyes.  
On this day the Lord has acted;  
we will rejoice and be glad in it.

**R**

### A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Colossians [3. 1 - 4]

If you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.

*Reader/ This is the Word of the Lord*  
**Response / Thanks be to God**

### Gradual Hymn

Alleluia, alleluia,  
I am the first and the last, says the Lord,  
and the living one;  
I was dead, and behold  
I am alive for evermore.  
**Alleluia, alleluia!**

The Lord be with you:  
**And also with you**

**Listen to the Gospel of Christ according to St. John.** [20, 1 - 9]

**R/ Glory to you, O Lord.**

**E**arly on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.' Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went towards the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead.

This is the Gospel of the Lord  
**R/ Praise to you, O Christ.**

### For Your Prayers

That we may rejoice in the glorious Resurrection of Christ  
All who are caught up in war or conflict  
All those without adequate food or shelter  
The peoples of Gaza and Israel  
& for lasting peace in the Middle East  
The people of Ukraine and a just and peaceful end to the war there  
Those who suffer as a result of the climate emergency  
For responsible stewardship of our planet  
For compassion and responsibility in those elected to govern us.  
For migrants & refugees, and all forced to flee from their homelands

**For the Church:**

For the bishops of the Church:  
Cherry, Bishop of Monmouth, Philip, Episcopal Visitor of the Society of the Holy Cross in Wales, Justin, Archbishop of Canterbury. & for all who hold and teach

the Catholic faith that comes to us from the Apostles.

All bishops, priests and deacons and all baptised Christians  
For the reunion of all Christians: for Pope Francis, for Orthodox Patriarch Bartholomew, & for the leaders of the Reformed traditions  
For the Severn Wye Ministry Area, for its priests, licensed lay ministers and all its people.

**For the Sick & those in need:**

Roy Staples, Ralph Hamilton, Sylvia; The Revd Helen Rodwell; Elisabeth; Anne-Louise; Helen; Mary; Peter; Kenneth Cameron; Margaret; Margot Davies, Margi; Billy; Altheia; Eira Firth; Sr Ruth Furneaux;

**For the Departed:**

The recently departed: Alan Beattie; Leslie Moulden our own departed relatives & friends, & those whose anniversaries of death fall at this time: Dorothy Kneebone; John North-Row; Philip Bell, priest; Horace Davies, priest; May Fitzpatrick; Betty Clay;

### A Prayer of Spiritual Communion

My Jesus, I believe that you are in the Blessed Sacrament.  
I love you above all things,  
and I long for you in my soul.  
Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart.  
As though you have already come,  
I embrace you and unite myself entirely to you; never permit me to be separated from you. Amen.  
*(The Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament)*

### The Jereboam Interview

*We continue our series of extracts from the Jerusalem and Galilee Gazette, an imaginary first-century newspaper. Week by week the correspondent Jereboam interviews various people whose lives have been affected in some way by Jesus Christ and his teaching.*

#### Gardener, Sharon and Esther

**Gardener:** 'Morning.  
**Jereboam:** Lovely day, isn't it?  
**Gardener:** Makes you glad to be alive, a morning like this...

**Jereboam:** Oh, yes. I tell you what: we could do with some good weather, after all the terrible goings-on of the last few days. What with...Look, would you excuse me, I've just seen that woman over there. She's a friend of mine, and she looks rather upset. I ought to go and check she's all right.

**Gardener:** Of course; you do what you need to do. It was good to meet you.

**Jereboam:** Sharon, are you all right? You must be still upset about Jesus.

**Sharon:** It's even worse than we thought. Jereboam, someone's stolen his body.

**Jereboam:** They've what?

**Sharon:** Exactly what I say. I went to the tomb where they laid his body on the eve of the Sabbath. Someone has rolled away the boulder that was covering the entrance, they've unwrapped his body and removed it. After all we've been through! You wouldn't imagine that people could stoop so low.

**Jereboam:** I must say, that's really awful. I feel quite shaken myself, and I wasn't even one of his followers. People like you must be...

**Esther:** Sharon! Sharon!

**Sharon:** Oh, Esther, have you heard about Jesus? His body's been...

**Esther:** No, he's alive!

**Sharon:** What?

**Esther:** Mary's just seen him. She started off thinking he was the gardener, but it was Jesus. He's alive!

**Sharon:** But he's dead – I was there when they took his body down from the cross. Mary's making a mistake: she's just too upset to think straight.

**Esther:** She's not upset; she's...she's radiant. There's no question about it: he's alive.

**Jereboam:** Excuse me, but did you say that Mary had thought Jesus was the gardener?

**Esther:** Yes. They were talking for quite a while about this and that. At first she just didn't recognise him, didn't realise what had happened. Mind you, it's understandable. Things like that don't exactly happen every day, do they?

**Jereboam:** No, I suppose not. As a matter of fact I rather think I've just seen him myself, except I didn't notice who he was either. I can't believe I was so stupid: he was with me and I didn't realise it!

Come on; let's see if we can find him. He was over here...

*Our thanks to the Parish of St Catharine's Chipping Campden & to the author for permission to reproduce 'Jereboam'*

## THIS WEEK

On Easter Sunday, we hear in the Acts of the Apostles Peter's preaching about the Resurrection. St Paul's Letter to the Colossians reminds us "You have died and your lives are hidden with Christ in God." The Gospel is from St John Gospel and gives us the first story of that Easter morning - Mary Magdalene discovers the empty tomb and runs to Peter and the "disciple Jesus loved" to tell them. They run to the tomb and discover for themselves that it is empty. The first readings in Easter Week are from the Acts of the Apostles. We hear Peter's preaching the Good News and experience the first deeds of the Apostles, which parallel the acts of Jesus, including the conflicts he experienced and his power to heal. The Gospels this week are all resurrection appearances. These wonderful stories contain some common elements. They appear designed to make it clear that this was not a group of disciples who dreamed up the resurrection, because they were hoping for it so much. In fact, they found it difficult to believe. The Jesus they saw and experienced was not a "ghost." Instead, he had a body. Monday has the story of Jesus appearing to Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, as well as the "cover-up story" and pay off of the guards. On Tuesday we hear of Jesus' appearance to Mary Magdalene. Jesus tells her to announce the Good News to his brothers. On Wednesday we hear St Luke's story of Jesus' appearance to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. They were sad, because they had hoped the story would have turned out differently. Jesus tells them why he had to first suffer and die in order to enter into his glory. As they stopped to eat, "he was made known to them in the breaking of the bread." On Thursday Jesus appears in the room where the disciples are gathered. "Peace be with you" he says and then eats with them and shows them his wounds. On Friday, we hear of his appearance at the Sea of Tiberias. Peter decided to return to

fishing. Jesus appears and commissions him afresh to feed his sheep. On Saturday, the week concludes with the summary of Jesus' appearances at the end of St Mark's Gospel.

**Next Sunday:** On the Second Sunday of Easter, we are given a glimpse of how the early community lived their life of faith by sharing everything in common. In John's Gospel, Jesus appears to the Apostles, hiding in fear, and gives them the gift of his Spirit, calling them to forgive sins. We are reminded that the gospel is written, that we might come to believe in our Lord and have life in his name.

## A Homily for Easter Sunday

I always think it's a lot easier to relate to the complicated events of Holy Week, filled as it is with themes of betrayal, fear, political intrigue and violence, suffering and death than to begin to talk about the mysterious but simple event of the resurrection.

And the question - the self-evident question - isn't to do with how Jesus, having died, rises again, but how does the resurrection of Jesus make a difference *for us*? You might think that the answer is obvious, but that's clearly not what everyone thinks. Some will say to us - have said to us, most likely - "So what? Even if Jesus was raised from the dead, and there were witnesses to that happening, then what has that got to do with you and me and the way we live our lives today?"

Holy Week is easier to deal with because as human beings we know the darkness all too well - the impulse to do wrong and all kinds of petty and not so petty betrayals, the selective blindness that leaves us unable to see our own faults but to be very acutely aware of others' imperfections. Holy Week is filled with the kind of darkness we are seeing from Gaza and Ukraine where innocent civilians are targeted, it's filled with what we see all over the world where the haves enrich themselves often at the expense of the have-nots. It is filled with all kinds of impending horrors - of torture, death, and sorrow beyond bearing. This darkness deepens and becomes absolute on Good Friday when the disciples witnessed the horrific violence of the cross when all seemed lost.

Holy Week is the Ten O'clock News or the front page of the daily newspaper, it's Twitter and Facebook. It is difficult to believe in the power of the light and the sheer exhilaration of its victory. But Easter is the celebration of the triumph of the light over the darkness - the triumph of love over hate, compassion over cruelty, life over death. That's one reason why we come to Church at Easter, an awareness that Christ rising from the dead saves us despair as we hear the proclamation handed down to us across the centuries, the Apostles' witness to the resurrection. We've said before that on the first Easter morning no one saw Christ rise from the sealed and guarded tomb, but what we have is the shared, unanimous witness and joy of the Apostles and disciples - from Mary Magdalene in the pre-dawn light in the garden - that Christ lived once more and appeared to them, not just once, but repeatedly over the next fifty days of what we now call the Easter season, and spoke to them of mysteries beyond their wildest dreams. *Whatever* the Resurrection of Christ is, it's not magic. It's not manipulation. It's not a conjuring trick. What we are being told is that by the death of the one who is God on the cross, Divinity has known mortality. The source of Life itself has shared nothingness, even abandonment and despair and, by doing so, he gives life and light and hope.. The darkness of Holy Week and all the human folly involved in that, doesn't have the last word. And we believe that the God whose Son rises from the dead meets us in the business of everyday life - major and minor. The God who reached out to us by becoming one of us and by dying on the cross continues to reach out to us in his Resurrection to lead us to the healing of our souls' infirmities - to the triumph in us of his gifts of grace - of understanding, peace, gentleness, love and compassion. And if the resurrection is true then these things, these truths of existence, are not merely the products of our wishful thinking, but they are sewn afresh into the fabric of the universe, and they will prevail. Yes, Christ by his death and resurrection leads us to the presence of God, but the life of the Resurrection begins now. At the Easter Vigil last night, the Easter Candle was blessed with these words:

*Christ yesterday and today / The beginning and the end, Alpha and Omega; All time belongs to him and all the ages; / to him be glory and power through all eternity.*

And as the candle is lit from the new fire, the prayer continues:

*May the light of Christ, rising in glory, dispel the darkness of our hearts and minds.*

If Christ is my beginning, the divine creating Word through whom I was made, if Christ is my end and the goal of my life's pilgrimage, my every step should reveal the gifts which He has given me to bring the values of eternity closer. And if all time belongs to him, what does he demand of me today, tomorrow, and into the future? That's the difference the resurrection makes. That's the difference it makes to us. He is Risen!

## SERVICES IN OUR CHURCHES TODAY

**24<sup>th</sup> March 2024:  
PALM SUNDAY**

9 a.m. Holy Eucharist  
at St James' Devauden

10 a.m. Sung Eucharist at St Arvans  
Hymns: *(New English Hymnal)*

119; 110; 103; 120

11.30 a.m. Holy Eucharist  
at St Deiniol's, Itton

## NEXT SUNDAY

**7<sup>th</sup> April 2024:  
The Second Sunday of Easter**

10 a.m. Sung Eucharist at St Arvans

11.30 a.m. Holy Eucharist

at St Mary's Penterry

4 p.m. Family Eucharist  
at St James, Devauden

### Readings at the Eucharist :

*Acts 4. 32-35;*

*Psalm 133; 1 John 1.1 – 2.2;*

*St John 20. 19-31*

*For services in the wider Ministry Area  
please see [www.severnwyema.co.uk](http://www.severnwyema.co.uk)*

## St Arvans Drop in Tea & Chat

2.30–4 p.m. at the Meeting Rooms  
Everyone Welcome

**April 13<sup>th</sup>** and usually  
every second Saturday  
of the month

Childrens activity table

For assistance or a lift  
please ring Diane on 628084

**The Severn Wye Ministry  
Area Prayer Group meets  
each Thursday at 7.30 p.m.  
All are welcome!**

**For details see**

[www.severnwyema.co.uk](http://www.severnwyema.co.uk)

## Thought for the Week

"Jesus's resurrection makes it impossible for the human story to end in chaos - it has to move inexorably towards light, towards life, towards love. - Carlo Carretto

**Our thanks** to all those who gave worked so hard over Holy Week, and to all who have decorated our churches so beautifully for Easter!

## Severn Wye Easter Services

### Easter Day :

**Christ is Risen: Alleluia!**

**8am St Mary's Priory – Holy Eucharist**

**9am Mathern – Easter Eucharist**

**9am Devauden – Holy Eucharist**

**10am St Arvans - Sung Eucharist**

**10am Shirenewton - Holy Eucharist**

**10.15am Mounton – Holy Eucharist**

**St Mary's Priory - Breakfast and Easter Egg Hunt, followed by Family Worship**

**11.30am Itton - Holy Eucharist**

**11.30am St Pierre – Holy Eucharist**

**6.30pm Newchurch – Holy Eucharist**

