

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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14th April 2024 The Third Sunday of Easter

The Collect

Almighty Father, who in your great mercy gladdened the disciples with the sight of the risen Lord: give us such knowledge of his presence with us, that we may be strengthened and sustained by his risen life and serve you continually in righteousness and truth; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **AMEN**

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

Peter addressed the people, 'You Israelites, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we had made him walk? The God of Abraham, the God of

Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our ancestors has glorified his servant Jesus, whom you handed over and rejected in the presence of Pilate, though he had decided to release him. But you rejected the Holy and Righteous One and asked to have a murderer given to you, and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. And by faith in his name, his name itself has made this man strong, whom you see and know; and the faith that is through Jesus has given him this perfect health in the presence of all of you. And now, friends, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. In this way God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, that his Messiah would suffer. Repent therefore, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out.'

[3; 12 - 19]

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

Psalm 4

**R/ Lift up the light of your
countenance upon us, O Lord.**

Answer me when I call, O God,
defender of my cause;
you set me free when I am hard-pressed;
have mercy on me and hear my prayer.
'You mortals, how long
will you dishonour my glory;
how long will you worship dumb idols
and run after false gods?'

**R/ Lift up the light of your
countenance upon us, O Lord.**

Know that the Lord does wonders
for the faithful;
when I call upon the Lord, he will hear me.
Tremble, then, and do not sin; speak to
your heart in silence upon your bed.

**R/ Lift up the light of your
countenance upon us, O Lord.**

Offer the appointed sacrifices
and put your trust in the Lord.
Many are saying,

'O that we might see better times!
Lift up the light of your countenance
upon us, O Lord.

**R/ Lift up the light of your
countenance upon us, O Lord.**

You have put gladness in my heart,
more than when grain and wine
and oil increase.
I lie down in peace; at once I fall asleep;
for only you, Lord, make me dwell
in safety.

**R/ Lift up the light of your
countenance upon us, O Lord.**

A reading from the first letter of St John [3; 1 - 7]

See what love the Father has given us,
that we should be called children of God;
and that is what we are. The reason the
world does not know us is that it did not
know him. Beloved, we are God's children
now; what we will be has not yet been
revealed. What we do know is this: when
he is revealed, we will be like him, for we
will see him as he is. And all who have
this hope in him purify themselves, just as
he is pure. Everyone who commits sin is
guilty of lawlessness; sin is lawlessness.
You know that he was revealed to take
away sins, and in him there is no sin. No
one who abides in him sins; no one who
sins has either seen him or known him.
Little children, let no one deceive you.
Everyone who does what is right is
righteous, just as he is righteous.

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

Gradual Hymn

Alleluia, alleluia!
Lord Jesus, explain the scriptures to us.
Make our hearts burn within us
as you talk to us.
Alleluia!

The Lord be with you:
And also with you

[Listen to the Gospel of Christ according to St. Luke.](#)

R/ Glory to you, O Lord.

While the eleven and their companions were talking about what they had heard, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be with you.' They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. He said to them, 'Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.' And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, 'Have you anything here to eat?' They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate in their presence. Then he said to them, 'These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you – that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.' Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, 'Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.' [St Luke 24. 36 - 48]

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

For Your Prayers

That in Eastertide we may continue to rejoice in the glorious Resurrection of Christ & live in joy and hope
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; Althea; Eira Firth;

For the Departed:

The recently departed: Alan Beattie; Sr Ruth Furneaux; our own departed relatives & friends, and those whose anniversaries of death fall at this time: John Watson; Craig Octon

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.

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

Razias

Jereboam: Razias -- fancy meeting you again so soon! Were you listening to Peter just now? I didn't notice you.

Razias: Yes, I was there. I didn't spot you either, but then there were so many people...

Jereboam: Something Peter said reminded me of our conversation the other day -- you know, we talked about Jesus' resurrection as a sort of model that teaches us about resurrected life generally.

Razias: Yes, I remember.

Jereboam: One little detail that Peter mentioned got me thinking. He referred to God as having raised Jesus from the dead. That made me wonder: it's easy to assume that Jesus just brought himself back to life. According to Peter, though, God caused it to happen -- God the Father, I mean.

Razias: You're quite right, of course.

Jereboam: Then I thought: if someone imagines that Jesus came back to life without the help of God the Father, and if they regard that as a pattern for resurrection generally, they might jump to the conclusion that they can somehow take charge of their own resurrection. I'm not saying that we don't affect our destiny by how we lead our lives, but surely in the end it's for God to judge who will, or will not, enter the kingdom of heaven.

Razias: Again, I agree with you. And thank you for bringing the question up. Actually, it disturbs me that I've ignored these things so easily. Our aspiration to the kingdom of heaven could indeed become so fixed that we'd forget to submit to the will of God.

Jereboam: So, ironically, the strength of someone's belief might stand between them and God.

Razias: Yes, I suppose so...and surely our main task is to prevent anything at all from standing between us and God. We should open up every facet of our lives to him.

Jereboam: Now I can agree with that, without even regarding myself as a follower of Jesus.

Razias: It seems a good point to have in common.

THIS WEEK

St Luke's Gospel has the very human story of Jesus appearing to the disciples after the Resurrection, inviting them to touch his hands and feet to see that he is real. He ate with them and "he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures." In the first readings at the Eucharist from The Acts of the Apostles this week, we read of one of the earliest martyrs, Stephen and of Philip converting an Ethiopian slave along the road. Also this week we are given the story of Saul, persecutor of Christians being blinded and then healed by Ananias in the name of Jesus. The week ends with Peter traveling the region and carrying out acts of healing.

The gospel for this week is from Chapter 6 of St John's Gospel on Jesus as the "Bread of Life." Like so many stories in this gospel, Jesus teaches from one layer of understanding to another, taking us deeper into understanding his gift of himself to us in the Eucharist. Jesus says, "Do not work for food that perishes but for the food that endures for eternal life." "The bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst." "I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my Flesh for the life of the world." "Whoever eats my Flesh and drinks my Blood remains in me and I in him." This dialogue ends with this exchange with his disciples: "Jesus then said to the Twelve, 'Do you also want to leave?' Simon Peter answered him, 'Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and are convinced that you are the Holy One of God.'"

Next Sunday: we reflect on the Paschal Mystery more deeply. In the first reading from the Acts of the Apostles in explaining the healing which had taken place in the name of Jesus, Peter reflects on the psalm verse "The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone," He goes on to say that the crippled man was healed, "in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazorean whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead." In St John's Gospel, Jesus tells us, "A good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."

A Homily for the Third Sunday of Easter

+ I'm increasingly struck by the sense of shock and uncertainty in the accounts of the first Easter and in particular in what we are told about the first appearances of the Risen Christ to his disciples. There's an overwhelming sense of mystery, often combined with mystification, confusion and a lack of understanding. As we've said before Resurrection is itself a dawning mystery – the Gospels very clearly show it as such. Its meaning takes time to unfold – as it unfolds now in our own lives. In all kinds of ways it's still unfolding.

But where the accounts all come together and agree is in their he accounts seem to all come together in their insistence that all this is utterly real and tangibly physical. We saw last week the apostle Thomas touching the wounds of the crucifixion. We are told in the Gospel this morning that Jesus tells the apostles and their companions to touch him. To make his point even clearer, he asks them for something to eat and he sits down and eats in front of them. This is no insubstantial spirit who appears to them. The Apostles and the writers of the Gospels after them are insistent that whatever else it is, the Resurrection is a flesh and blood event – not a ghostly, purely spiritual, appearance – and it's not just a metaphor for their own clearly obvious transformation and renewal after the death of Jesus.

Of course, the Resurrection has all kinds of meanings, on all kinds of levels- we use them all the time. But we should be in no doubt that the first Christians were convinced of Jesus' bodily rising from the dead. It's absolutely vital to them. Why is this so important?

If we dig a bit deeper we can see that from the beginning of the Gospel story – the beginning of the Christ-event, if we can put it that way – redemption and salvation is being brought about by a total identification of God with us. In Jesus, he takes our human flesh – that is, he really becomes a human being – he's not just appearing in the form, the guise, of a human being. He shares our nature through Blessed Mary. The Fathers of the Church would put it this way – that what is not assumed is not healed. Reconciliation, the healing of humanity and the whole of

creation, can only come about by God's taking on human nature and taking that human nature back into heart of the Godhead. "Flesh and bones" as today's Gospel says, are vital in a universe of physical matter. As Eastertide continues this is a theme which is developed and explored, all kinds of questions are raised, and we begin to find ways of understanding just why this event of the Resurrection is seen as the beginning of everything. .

The mystery of the Resurrection, is hard to pin down, but we are meant to recognise it as somehow embodying both the fulfilment of what our divided hearts really long for, and the healing both of the wounds of humanity and that of the universe itself.

Resurrection brings meaning out of what seems like random failure, hope from the dereliction of defeat – and not only for Jesus, but because of Christ, for all of us and everything. It's so difficult to talk about because it's so all-encompassing. The mystery – and we see this in the Gospel accounts, too - goes beyond what our minds can comprehend, much more than our faltering words can describe.

This is the poet Denise Levertov, rooting the mystery in the clay, flesh and bone of creation: the poem is called "*On belief in the Physical Resurrection of Jesus*"

It is for all
'literalists of the imagination,'
poets or not,
that miracle
is possible,
possible and essential.
Are some intricate minds
nourished
on concept,
as epiphytes flourish
high in the canopy?
Can they
subsist on the light,
on the half
of metaphor that's not
grounded in dust, grit,
heavy
carnal clay?
Do signs contain and utter,
for them
all the reality
that they need? Resurrection, for them,
an internal power, but not
a matter of flesh?
For the others,

of whom I am one,
miracles (ultimate need, bread
of life) are miracles just because
people so tuned
to the humdrum laws:
gravity, mortality —
can't open
to symbol's power
unless convinced of its ground,
its roots
in bone and blood.
We must feel
the pulse in the wound
to believe
that 'with God
all things
are possible,'
taste
bread at Emmaus
that warm hands
broke and blessed.

FASHION SHOW

Friday 19th April

by Harts of Monmouth

'Spring Colours'

St Arvans Memorial Hall

7.30 p.m.

Tickets £10

available from

01291 628691

**to include a glass of wine or a
soft drink**

In aid of St Arvan's Church

SERVICES IN OUR CHURCHES TODAY

14th April 2024:

The Third Sunday of Easter

10 a.m. Sung Eucharist at St Arvans

11.30 a.m. Liturgy of the Word at St
Deiniol's, Itton

NEXT SUNDAY

21st April 2024:

The Fourth Sunday of Easter

9 a.m. Family Service
at St James, Devauden

10 a.m. Sung Eucharist at St Arvans

11.30 a.m. Holy Eucharist
at Holy Cross, Kilgwrrwg

Readings at the Eucharist :

Acts 4. 5-12;

Psalms 23;

1 John 3. 16-24;

St John 10. 11-18

For services in the wider Ministry Area
please see www.severnwyema.co.uk

St Arvans Drop in Tea & Chat

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

May 11th 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!**

SATURDAY

18th May

from 9a.m.

Rogation Walk

Taking in the churches of
Itton, St Arvans, Penterry,
Devauden and Kilgwrrwg

Further details next week