

# 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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## 12<sup>th</sup> May 2024 The Sunday of the Ascension

### The Collect

Grant, we pray, almighty God, that as we believe your only-begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ to have ascended into the heavens, so we in heart and mind may also ascend and with him continually dwell; 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

In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. After his suffering he presented himself alive to them by

many convincing proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. 'This,' he said, 'is what you have heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.' So when they had come together, they asked him, 'Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?' He replied, 'It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.' When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up towards heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up towards heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.' [1; 1 - 11]

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

### Psalm 47

**R/ God has gone up with a shout,  
the Lord with the sound of the trumpet.**

Clap your hands, all you peoples;  
shout to God with a cry of joy.  
For the Lord Most High is to be feared;  
he is the great king over all the earth.

**R/ God has gone up with a shout,  
the Lord with the sound of the trumpet.**

He subdues the peoples under us,  
and the nations under our feet.

He chooses our inheritance for us,  
the pride of Jacob whom he loves.

**R/ God has gone up with a shout,  
the Lord with the sound of the trumpet.**

God has gone up with a shout,  
the Lord with the sound of the ram's-horn.

Sing praises to God, sing praises;  
sing praises to our king, sing praises.

**R/ God has gone up with a shout,  
the Lord with the sound of the trumpet.**

For God is king of all the earth;  
sing praises with all your skill.  
God reigns over the nations;  
God sits upon his holy throne.

**R/ God has gone up with a shout,  
the Lord with the sound of the trumpet.**

The nobles of the peoples  
have gathered together  
with the people of the God of Abraham.  
The rulers of the earth belong to God,  
and he is highly exalted.

**R/ God has gone up with a shout,  
the Lord with the sound of the trumpet.**

### A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Ephesians [1; 15 - 23]

I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love towards all the saints, and for this reason I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

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

### Hymn

Alleluia, alleluia!  
Go and make disciples of all nations;  
I am with you always;  
yes, to the end of time.  
**Alleluia!**

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

**Listen to the Gospel of Christ  
according to St. Luke.** [24, 44 - 53]

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

*Jesus said to his disciples,*

**T**hese 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. And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.' Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; and they were continually in the temple blessing God.

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

## **For Your Prayers**

That we may unite ourselves with our Risen and Ascended Lord  
For those who work in the media of communications, and for the right use of media.  
For all pilgrims to the holy places of the faith and all who support them  
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; Althea; Eira & Naylor Firth; Ivor Cavill; Jenny Sherwood; James Burnam.

### **For the Departed:**

The recently departed: Hugh Balmer; our own departed relatives & friends, and those whose anniversaries of death fall at this time: David Thomas, bishop; Chris Hogben; Douglas Cummings; Diane Pattison; Anne Flora 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.*

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

### **Mathan**

**Mathan:** You must think it's quite an achievement that I'm even speaking to you about the Ascension!

**Jereboam:** You certainly seemed quite upset about it at the time.

**Mathan:** Yes: it was a difficult stage.

**Jereboam:** I'd have imagined that it was an exhilarating experience. What made it so difficult?

**Mathan:** Well, in a way everything had come at once. We realised that Jesus wouldn't be coming back, at least not in the same way, so on a personal level we missed him. It was a bit like experiencing his death all over again. The Ascension presented us with a big challenge too: we were suddenly left to carry out Jesus' work by ourselves – which was a pretty daunting prospect. In the end, of course, it wasn't long before God sent his Holy Spirit to guide and inspire us, but that was a few days later. We felt pretty bereft until that happened.

There was another problem too. It was only a matter of weeks since we'd witnessed our Lord coming back to life. Wonderful, of course, except that many people assumed that we'd lost our senses and imagined it all. Worse than that, there was talk that we'd deliberately made the whole thing up. People said we'd invented the Resurrection; then when Jesus wasn't around to prove that he'd risen from the dead, they said that we'd invented the Ascension as well, to dodge the issue.

**Jereboam:** I see what you mean.

**Mathan:** Anyway, that's enough excuses... I'm sorry that I wasn't more forthcoming when you spoke to me years ago.

**Jereboam:** Don't worry. I'm glad that you feel more comfortable talking about it now though.

**Mathan:** Things were much easier after the coming of the Holy Spirit, as I mentioned. Life has settled down a bit since then anyway. These days we're more used to dealing with the negative responses when they come. By the time people have laughed at Jesus' teachings, as well as the Resurrection, the Ascension, the coming of the Holy Spirit and so on, you become far less shocked by their reaction. We still feel that we have to talk about these things and present our claims.

**Jereboam:** Perhaps my articles can help a little in that respect.

**Mathan:** I'm sure they can: thank you for the opportunity.

## THIS WEEK

On the Fourth Sunday of Easter we reflect more deeply on the Paschal Mystery. Peter quotes psalm 118 in preaching to the religious authorities and defending the healing of the crippled man, "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."

Thursday is the feast day of Saint Catherine of Siena, Virgin and Doctor of the Church.

The first readings this week continue the story of the growth of the Church community in the Acts of the Apostles. The gospels this week are taken from St John's Gospel, chapters 10, 12, 13 and 14 – they emphasise who Jesus is - from the Father and one with the Father. He has come to bring us light and life. He promises us that he is the gate, the way to life. And, he assures us that if we make our home in him, he will be in us, and we will thereby be one with Jesus and the Father. He says, "I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved." "My sheep hear my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish." "Whoever believes in me believes not only in me but also in the one who sent me, and whoever sees me sees the one who sent me." "From now on I am telling you before it happens, so that when it happens you may believe that I AM." "Do not let your hearts be troubled." "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the

Father except through me." "If you ask anything of me in my name, I will do it."

**Next Sunday** we hear the gospel from St John about Jesus as the true vine. We are the branches that are pruned to bear more fruit. We are invited to remain connected with Jesus, that we might make our home in him, and bear much fruit.

## A Homily for Ascensiontide

+ The Ascension is probably one of those Feasts which gives rise to huge amounts of misunderstanding, both about what it is saying to us and concerning its relevance to our lives. When we are told that Jesus disappears from sight and is spoken of as being taken up from his followers, it's not committing us to some sort of pre-scientific idea of a three-decker universe – heaven above, the earth in the middle and hell below (if that's actually what most ancients people really believed and that's far from being completely true.) No, at the Ascension what is being said is simply that Jesus leaves *this world* and returns to the Father; it's not that he is "up there" somewhere and somehow, but that he is no longer bound by the physical existence as we know it. He has "gone up" only in the sense that he has physically *gone beyond* to the life of God which transcends our experience of space and time.

Do you see the problem? We are already struggling to find words and concepts which connect with our experience and our understanding of the nature of things. In many ways the questions, 'what actually happened to Jesus at the Ascension?' And, 'Where did he go?' are really not the right ones to ask.

It was C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien who described the life of Jesus as 'myth become reality' and what we hear described by St Luke in today's Gospel, and in the reading from the Acts of the Apostles is a kind of acted-out metaphor expressing greater realities which our minds can't otherwise grasp.

But like all the other events in the history of salvation, like all the other great feasts of the Christian year, the Ascension can't be understood as an isolated incident. It can't be separated off from the birth, death and resurrection of Jesus, and neither can it be separated off from the descent of God the Holy Spirit. The Lord's birth and

death and descent into the grave, his rising to new life, his ascension into glory and the descent of the Spirit are all parts of a single dynamic movement – the unfolding of the mystery of God in time; as well as the unfolding of our own new life in the eternal life of God.

We are used to thinking of God as unchanging – and in essence that's true in the sense that a God who was subject to change would inevitably end up as less than God. But today is telling us that the God who in Christ takes on our humanity – becomes a human being – at the Ascension takes that humanity back as part of the life of God. Christ has taken *creatureliness* in the form of our humanity into his divinity. That's what we're celebrating today – the union of God with his creation and that breaking down of the distinction between God and the created order which takes place at the Incarnation, is today confirmed with all sorts of implications which we are still discovering for the way we treat one another and our attitude to the material creation itself and everything that lives in it. What is holy and what is profane, what is religious and what is secular, when Christ has broken all the barriers down? Can we now even ask those questions meaningfully in a universe where everything is sacred? Easter is now eternal. Resurrection is a universal experience. Over the last six weeks of the Easter season, the Gospels have been speaking very clearly about the Risen Jesus and his Resurrection Body as living in a different and fuller way than before his death.

We've said so many times that the Resurrection of Christ isn't the resuscitation of a dead man – it's not like the raising of Lazarus - but the gift of an altogether more significant new God-given event and a new kind of life. It is the 'prototype' of the resurrection life of the whole world. Jesus speaks of going to *prepare* a place for us. At the Ascension he goes so as to be present in a new, universal, way.

Jesus explains at the Last Supper that he must depart so that the Holy Spirit could come - as the Paraclete, the Advocate, the one who speaks on our behalf, the one who leads us into truth, into the fullness of the life of God. Christ's death and resurrection, his returning to the right hand of the Father, are the means, the channel of the Spirit's coming. Because

he goes away and the Spirit descends, Christ's life is not restricted to one event, one time and place, but it flows out from that moment into all times and places. So, it is for our greater glory, for "the making infinite of our finite possibilities" as someone has said that Jesus departed. Christ now through the Holy Spirit has become universally available to lead us to wholeness and to become true to what we are meant to be. The Holy Spirit, the divine Love who 'energised' Our Lord's ministry, makes us his witnesses. By dying on the cross, Jesus shows God's compassion and mercy to a world dying because of the absence of compassion and mercy. The Spirit guides us in a way which enables us to live by faith, hope and love.

So, we who are 'in Christ,' then, we who belong to his Body, the Church, are called to share his divine mission, and to be ourselves, agents of his love and compassion. We are ourselves being asked to help make all things new. Here, almost at the end of the Easter Season, that is what the Ascension is telling us. +

## SERVICES IN OUR CHURCHES TODAY

**12<sup>th</sup> May 2024:**

### **Ascension Sunday**

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

130, 443, 271, 332

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

## **NEXT SUNDAY**

**19<sup>th</sup> May 2024:**

### **PENTECOST**

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 2. 1-21;*

*Psalms 104. 24-34, 35b*

*Romans 8. 22-27;*

*St John 15. 26-27; 16. 4b-15*

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

**SATURDAY MAY 18<sup>th</sup> 2024**

**Severn Wye Ministry Area**

## **'Rogation' Walk**

**The Churches of Itton,  
St Arvans, Penterry,  
Devauden  
and Kilgwrrwg**

**You are welcome to join us for  
as much of the day as you  
wish! including well-behaved  
dogs on leads)**

### **Stage 1: St Deiniol's Itton to St Arvans Church**

we will be setting out after prayer and  
a blessing at *about* \* 9 a.m.,  
arriving at **St Arvan's Church**  
at **about 10.15 a.m.**

### **Stage 2: 11 a.m. St Arvan's to St Mary's, Penterry**

**Stage 3: St Mary's, Penterry to St  
James** – *setting out from Penterry at*  
*1.p.m. after a break for lunch*  
*(please bring your own refreshments)*

### **Stage 4 St James', Devauden to Holy Cross, Kilgwrrwg**

- *setting out at 2. p.m.*

**The walk will end at Kilgwrrwg  
at 3 – 3.30 p.m..**

For more information about the day,  
including transport arrangements at  
the end of the walk, contact The  
Vicarage, St Arvans 01291 622064 or  
email [frmichaelgoilop1@gmail.com](mailto:frmichaelgoilop1@gmail.com)

*\* All times are approximate, please dress  
appropriately for the weather conditions  
and terrain.*

*This is not an official 'organised event' -  
we all walk independently, and at our own  
risk.*

**St Arvans Drop in Tea & Chat**

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

*June 8<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!**