

# 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, private prayer and a time of stillness.

**Our current live-streamed services are as follows:: Sunday Eucharist at 10.**

a.m., and it can be accessed on the St Arvans Parish Group page on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/vicaragecello1/> and available to watch later

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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The Vicarage, St Arvans  
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**5<sup>th</sup> April 2026  
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

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.' [10. 34; 37 - 43]

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

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

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

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

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

**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, (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, (alleluia)**

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

Listen to the Gospel of Christ according to St. John.

**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. [20, 1 - 9]

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 the Lord.  
The peoples of Iran, Lebanon and of the Persian Gulf.  
For peace and justice throughout the region. All those caught up in hostilities. For world leaders – for wisdom, restraint and respect for human life.  
The government & people of Ukraine and a just and peaceful end to Russia's war of aggression there.  
The people of Sudan.  
All those without adequate food or shelter  
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, & Archbishop of Wales; the Episcopal Visitor of the Society of the Holy Cross in Wales, & 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 Leo, 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 Jackson; The Revd Helen Rodwell; Elisabeth; Anne-Louise; Mary; Margaret; Althea; Margi & Bob Osborne.

### **For the Departed:**

The recently departed; Peter Jones; our own departed loved ones, and those whose anniversaries of death fall this week: Sr Ruth Furneaux; Joe Dunn; Evelyn Price; Audrey Sherwood.

### **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. Each week, the Jereboam interviews people whose lives have been affected in some way by Jesus Christ and his teaching :-*

## Gardener, Sharon and Esther

*Gardener:* Good morning.  
*Jereboam:* Lovely day, isn't it?  
*Gardener:* It 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; do what you need to do. It was good to meet you.  
*Jereboam:* Sharon, are you all right? I imagine you're 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...

## THIS WEEK

On Easter Sunday, we hear from the Acts of the Apostles Peter's preaching about the Resurrection. The Letter to the Colossians reminds us "You have died and your lives are hidden with Christ in God." The Gospel is from St John's 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 for 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, is 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. Tuesday, we read of Jesus' appearance to Mary Magdalene, through the eyes of John's Gospel. Jesus missions her to announce the Good News to his brothers. On Wednesday we are treated to Luke's marvelous 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." 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 have the powerful appearance in John's Gospel at the Sea of Tiberias. Peter decided to return to fishing. Jesus appears and remissions him. On Saturday, the week concludes with the summary of appearances in what appears to be an addition to the end of Mark's Gospel.

**Next Sunday** is the Second Sunday of Easter. We are given a glimpse into the life of the early community of the Church, gathered around as "Many signs and wonders were done among the people at the hands of the apostles." John's Gospel gives us two post-resurrection stories that featuring the Apostle Thomas. He is reluctant to accept the word of the others that they had seen the risen Lord. Jesus says to him: "Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed."

## A Homily for Easter Sunday

+ The Resurrection took everyone by surprise on the first Easter morning. No one really knew what to make of it. And in many ways, we've been trying to make sense of it ever since.

In all the Resurrection appearances of Jesus in the Gospels - and, of course, in this morning's Gospel, Jesus doesn't appear at all. There is just an empty tomb with the stone rolled back - there is that mixture of belief and unbelief, of rumour, and incredulity and only a slowly dawning recognition which becomes in itself a sign of the presence of the Risen Lord..

At the first Easter the Apostles and disciples are in some ways both sure but not yet sure. When Jesus *does* appear to them he was the same and yet transformed. On too many occasions for it to be the effects of shock, he is not immediately recognisable. And so, naturally, they hesitated; it was all too good to be true - people don't come back from the dead. The two disciples in the well-known story of the walk along the road from Jerusalem to the village of Emmaus didn't recognise the risen Christ even after having a profound conversation with him until he did something familiar and immediately recognisable - he broke the bread at table for them, and then he vanished from their sight.

So Christ was the same and yet he was also quite different.

What are we to make of this?

We tend to do the natural thing as people who are used to hearing stories, either in novels or in the theatre or on film. We look at the story of Jesus and, after the horrors of his arrest, trial and execution, we see the Resurrection as a kind of happy ending - the tables are turned and the hero of our story is vindicated and restored.

But we should be very wary about looking at Easter in this way, because it's not actually what we are being told.

The Resurrection isn't the end of a film or a novel - unless it's one of those frustrating stories where we're left wondering about exactly what happened and what might happen next.

To avoid misunderstanding I'm not saying here that the Resurrection is ambiguous or doubtful, just that it's not what we think it is. And if we think we've understood it, I suspect we haven't grasped the reality.

Whatever happened to Jesus Christ at his death, the Resurrection isn't a restoration, it isn't a bringing back to life. The Risen Christ that the Apostles see, hear and touch is startlingly, disturbingly, different from the teacher they followed - disturbingly different and disturbingly the same. The Resurrection is literally incomprehensible - dead men don't come back to life, and this dead man clearly shares a radically new kind of life that is quite beyond the experience of those who encounter him. And when he comes among them, he doesn't come with clear answers but with strange hints and illusions and deeply searching questions about the meaning of love, discipleship friendship and life itself.

He still does. The Resurrection doesn't come with answers but with huge questions about the nature of things we regard as familiar. The Christ who is risen interrogates the world about the meaning of human relationships, about power and authority, about loyalty and betrayal and he shows to us the face of the God who turns things upside down. He is the upsetter of applecarts, the destroyer of illusions and the bringer of a life which transcends death. The one thing this resurrection life is not, and that is anything familiar.

So, if we regard the Resurrection as the happy ending to a moving and sad story of a human life, we fatally domesticate it and forget the mysterious wildness of the life

of God. We abolish the mystery and consign what has happened at the Resurrection to the category of things we know. And the Resurrection simply won't fit into that. We forget at our peril the overwhelming, blinding eruption of the life of God made present to us in the person of the Risen Christ.

Easter never gives us answers to make sense of the past, only a bewildering sense of wonder as we look to the future. The Resurrection is always looking to the future, asking the questions we find difficult to ask, and raising the hopes we dare not imagine. And whatever the life of the Resurrection is, it's not a past event, we can't consign it to the history of religion and think we're safe from it, or from the One who eternally experiences it and wants to share it with us. It's the life of God itself and - when we give ourselves without reservation after the way of the one who died on the Cross, it happens here and now, and it happens to us when we are least expecting it.

And to end with probably the most important question of all - what does the Resurrection mean for you? +

## The Ministry Area Prayer Group

Thursdays at 7.45 – 9.00 p.m.

From 9<sup>th</sup> April until 24<sup>th</sup>

September 2026 we will be meeting in Churches around the Ministry Area:

9th April St Pierre

16th April St Christopher

23rd April Mounton

30th April St Arvans

Please join us, everyone is welcome and no experience is necessary!

Please contact David on 07887 853479

([david-carne@outlook.com](mailto:david-carne@outlook.com))

for any prayers that you would like us to include or for any questions that you have.

## SERVICES IN OUR CHURCHES

**TODAY**

**EASTER SUNDAY**

**5<sup>th</sup> April 2026**

- 9 a.m. Holy Eucharist  
at St James, Devauden
- 10 a.m. Sung Eucharist  
at St Arvan's
- 11.30 a.m. Holy Eucharist  
at St Deiniol's, Itton
- 11.30 a.m. Holy Eucharist  
at St Mary's, Penterry

## NEXT SUNDAY

**The Second Sunday of Easter**

**12<sup>th</sup> April 2026**

- 10 a.m. Sung Eucharist  
at St Arvan's

*Readings:*

Acts 2. 14a, 22-32

Psalms 16

1 Peter 1.3-9

St John 20.19-31

The Eucharist will be celebrated this week at St Arvan's at 10.00 on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, Friday at 09.30 Wednesday's celebration will be at St Mary's Priory, Chepstow at 10.00

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

## St Arvans Tea and Chat

**Saturday April 11<sup>th</sup>**

*and usually every second Saturday of the month*

Childrens activity table

*For assistance or a lift*

*please ring Diane on 628084*

## Daily Prayer

We now begin our celebration of the Resurrection of our Lord, which lasts for the next seven weeks - when we mark the Ascension forty days after Easter and which culminates in the celebration of Pentecost on the fiftieth day after Easter. This week, we begin that deepening

realisation of, and reflection upon, the meaning of the gift of life we have received in God's raising Jesus from the dead so that we might have eternal life. Just as it difficult for many of our cultures to face the reality of death, it is difficult to accept the reality of life after death. St. Paul invites us to live in this passing world with our hearts set on the world that will never end. This week let us try to open our hearts to a felt sense of what a difference it makes that the tomb is empty, that Jesus is alive, that he allows us to recognize him in the breaking of bread, and that he missions us to proclaim this Good News.

Each morning this week, we can pause for a moment and simply thank God for our being alive today. Even more, we can thank God for the life that Jesus won for us. Throughout the day, and at different brief moments, we can remember that this is Easter Week and ask to live more freely today, more gratefully. We can name the grace in our own terms and in the context of what we are experiencing, what gets us discouraged or what gives us life. Overall, we want to live the freedom we have been given. If death has no hold on us, so many of our fears would melt away. If we realized our ultimate home is in heaven, our spirits would be lighter and we would walk around more gratefully.

So, as we go through this week, we can let ourselves believe in the Resurrection that was won for us. "Lord, I believe in the gift of life you have given me in the death and resurrection of your Son, Jesus." We can say this act of faith, or sing any of the wonderful Easter songs in the back of our minds, as many times as it takes to let ourselves feel the effects of Easter.

Perhaps we had a difficult Holy Week or Easter. There might have been loneliness or family conflicts. Perhaps we are facing a chronic illness or deep struggles with a loved one, or we are grieving the loss of a loved one. These, and many other struggles can challenge our Easter hope and joy. This is the week to place our trust in the one who is now alive, so that we can live forever. We can ask for the gifts of hope renewed these days. In giving thanks, we can ask that our hearts be opened even more to receive the gift of his Spirit.

*With thanks to Creighton University's Online Ministries*