

PARISH NEWSLETTER

IMPORTANT - PLEASE NOTE

St Arvan's Church is now open during the day both for worship and private prayer, Again, we stress there is no obligation while Covid-19 infection rates remain high to attend in person, and that your own safety and health & those of others must remain paramount.

There is now no legal obligation to wear masks in church, but please do so if you wish. If you feel unwell with Covid-like symptoms, or have tested positive, please take part in our church services online rather than attend in person.

Our live-streamed services will continue as follows: Sunday Eucharist at 10. a.m., and a reflection & celebration of Night Prayer on Wednesdays at 8 p.m. are live-streamed on the St Arvans Parish Group page on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/vicaragecello1/> and are available to watch at any time

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
Parish Priest (Vicar / Rector):
Fr Michael Gollop,
The Vicarage, St Arvans
01291 622064;
Mobile 07867803479

29th May 2022 The Ascension of the Lord

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,
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. 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.

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)

For Your Prayers

On this Sunday of the Ascension we pray
for a spirit of love, fidelity and service, that
where Christ our head has gone before,
we may follow to share the fullness of his
Resurrection
the well-being of the earth and everything
which lives on it.
The people of Ukraine.
The peace of the world
Those killed and injured in Ukraine
Those without adequate food and shelter
For all migrants, refugees, and all forced
to flee from their homelands
Those here and throughout the world who
continue to suffer from the Coronavirus
pandemic - for doctors, nurses, all
medical staff, carers, medical researchers.
For those in government throughout the
world, that they may make informed, wise
and compassionate decisions

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 Sick & those in need:

Roy Staples, Ralph Hamilton, Patricia
Hamilton; Sylvia; The Revd Helen
Rodwell; Kim; Elisabeth; Marion Webster;
Lorna; Michael; Lisa; Carole Bates; Anne-
Louise; Abigail; John Metivier, priest;
David Nicholson, priest.

For the Departed:

The recently departed: Maurice (Mike)
Menage; our own departed relatives &
friends, & those whose anniversaries of
death fall at this time: Thomas Hudson;
Alan Kennard; Lilian Baynton; Simon
Moore; Paul Belcher; Jeannette White

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'*

Silas

Jereboam: Cheer up, Silas! I
thought everyone in your group was in
high spirits after Jesus' resurrection.

Silas: Ah, you obviously
haven't heard: Jesus won't be with us any
more, at least not in the literal sense.

Jereboam: No: I didn't realise.

Silas: Let's see: you probably
do know that we've seen him a number of
times since his resurrection.

Jereboam: Yes...

Silas: Well, that's all finished: he won't
be coming back at all now – at least not
until he returns at the end of the world,
and nobody has any idea when that will
be. Until then he's left us definitively, in
order to be with his Father in heaven.

Jereboam: Forgive me for being
flippant, but you must be in the unique
position of mourning the loss of the same
person twice!

Silas: I suppose so, but it's
different from before. When Jesus was
crucified, we felt that everything had come
to an end – it was all over. Now we're still
going to miss him on a personal level, of
course, but he's made it clear that things
are only just beginning. We are supposed
to continue his work, but on our own. I
imagine it's going to be very difficult. We
all feel as if we've suddenly been
promoted to positions of much greater
responsibility.

Jereboam: Now I understand why
you're looking serious.

Silas: Yes, it's quite a
daunting prospect for all of us. Right now
we feel as if we are going to need some
inspiration from somewhere, but I suppose
we just have to pray and wait to see what
happens.

Jereboam: Well, I hope that
everything turns out all right for you.

Perhaps you'll come back soon and let us know how things progress.

Silas: Certainly.

Thought for the Week

"Christ is already in that place of peace, which is all in all. He is on the right hand of God. He is hidden in the brightness of the radiance which issues from the everlasting throne. He is in the very abyss of peace, where there is no voice of tumult or distress, but a deep stillness--stillness, that greatest and most awful of all goods which we can fancy; that most perfect of joys, the utter profound, ineffable tranquillity of the Divine Essence. He has entered into His rest. That is our home; here we are on a pilgrimage, and Christ calls us to His many mansions which He has prepared.

St John Henry Newman

This Week

Today we celebrate The Ascension of the Lord. The readings begin with the story from the Acts of the Apostles of Jesus leaving his disciples and promising them the support of the Holy Spirit. The Gospel of St Luke tells of Jesus as he led his disciples out "as far as Bethany, raised his hands, and blessed them. As he blessed them he parted from them and was taken up to heaven."

Tuesday is the Feast of the Visitation.

During the week, the first readings continue from the Acts of the Apostles. We are following the preaching and ministry of Paul. We can feel his urgency as he exhorts the Christians at Ephesus to follow his example in living the faith "I served the Lord with all humility and with the tears and trials that came to me..." He returns to Jerusalem to face persecution but remains under house arrest, teaching and meeting with followers.

The gospels are mostly from St John's Gospel, chapters 16 and 17. Jesus warns his disciples that they will be scattered, and says they will find trouble in the world but assures them he has overcome the

world. Jesus' high priestly prayer reflects the inseparable relationship between him and his Father. "I glorified you on earth by accomplishing the work that you gave me to do." "I pray ... that they may all be one ... as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us." Jesus challenges Peter three times to "feed my sheep" and the Easter season comes to a close on Saturday as Jesus reminds us, "It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain."

Next Sunday is the great feast of Pentecost, the birthday of the Church. The readings, and the whole Church, celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit among us, and his abiding presence with us. The Apostles who had been so terrified are now set on fire to proclaim the Resurrection. Now they can speak clearly, so everyone can understand them. In St John's Gospel, Jesus breathes on his disciples and tells them, "Peace be with you" and fills them with courage, giving them the mission to forgive and sending them to carry out his desire that we all be one.

A Homily for the Ascension

+ Eastertide is a season: what we celebrate today at the Ascension can't be understood as an isolated incident. It can't be separated off from the death and resurrection of the Lord, and neither can it be separated off from the descent of the Spirit of the Lord. Death and descent into the grave, rising to new life, ascension into glory and the descent of the Spirit are all parts of a single unfolding of the mystery of God's love for us. That's what we have been celebrating for the last six weeks. Throughout the Easter season the Gospels have been speaking of Jesus and his Resurrection Body as being somehow more fully alive than before his death. Resurrection is the gift of an altogether more significant new life. The Scriptures see it as the 'prototype' of our own fuller life - so that Jesus speaks of going to *prepare* a place for us. St Paul speaks for Christ's resurrection as the first fruits of our own. And at the ascension he leaves his apostles and disciples in order to return in a new way. And, hugely significantly, He goes to take us - our humanity - with him; to take our

human nature which he shares to its fulfilment in the divine life of God. God shares our nature for eternity. So, Jesus does not belong exclusively to this world, because we must not belong entirely to it. It is not our final home. In this world, we are always 'resident aliens', - *strangers and sojourners - people who are just passing through - the Scriptures put it* - here we have 'no abiding city' as the Letter to the Hebrews says, and our journey means that we must share in Jesus' dying and rising.

Jesus explains at the Last Supper that he must depart *so that the Holy Spirit might come* - as the Paraclete, the Advocate, the one who speaks on our behalf, he who makes the Christian life possible. Jesus' death and resurrection, his going to glory, are the means, the channel of the Spirit's coming, and mean that the Spirit guides us in a way which enables us to live by faith and hope. Because he goes away and the Spirit descends, his life is not restricted to one event, one time and place, but streams out from that moment into all times and places.

So it is for our greater glory, so that our limited horizons become infinite, that Jesus departed. The Holy Spirit, the divine Love who 'energised' Our Lord's ministry, makes us his witnesses, too. Jesus by his life, death and resurrection communicated God's love and mercy to a broken world; it is the privilege of his members, who share his mission, to be ourselves by the Spirit's grace, open to the mercy and compassion of God, and, by sharing in his love, become collaborators with him in his divine mission.

The events we have been living out liturgically during the Easter season are as much about ourselves as they are about Christ, and today's feast, the Ascension is a token - a sign - of our renewal and transformation, and the knowledge revealed to us that the old things are passing away and that everything is being made new. It is in this hope that Christians can spend their lives in good actions, acts of service to others - good works as the Prayer Book calls them - not afraid that goodness will be undone and blotted out by the mere passing of time and the decay of material things. It means, too, that the evil done in the past can be repented and forgiven. The Christian can trust that nothing will be wasted by God. It's important to remember given the state of

the world as we see it today, that life isn't just a succession of random moments that don't add up to anything. There is a love, justice and mercy which is greater than our own. There are higher standards of conduct, decent ways of being a human being, which stand over and above what is imposed upon us by the powerful and the power hungry, and in judgement of them. By being lifted up at the Ascension, Christ hasn't deserted us, but made it possible for his Spirit to enter all times and places – to be with us now. In this way it is possible for each of us to be transformed into the friends of Christ, those who follow him and do his will in the world. Our actions are given life and vitality in a new way by the Spirit of the God we love and try to serve. And as part of Christ, as part of his Church (which like her Master himself goes beyond the confines of time and space, beyond all the passing trends, tragedies and terrors of the world) the Resurrection, the Ascension and the descent of the Holy Spirit are part of the fabric of our lives. They have taken place in time, yet they are suspended in eternity – they are always contemporary, always relevant, always freshly with us - and we hope that because of them - because of the great reality of the love of God shown to us in Christ - we ourselves will be will lead to share eternal life with God. The eternal life, the Resurrection, which we are promised in its fullness but which begins now ... +

Services in the Group:

The Ascension of the Lord

10 a.m. Sung Eucharist at St Arvans
Hymns (New English Hymnal)
130, 443, 271, 332

A Prayer for Ukraine

written by Ukrainain Christians

O Lord our God, look down with mercy on the Ukrainian people. Protect and save them from the unjust aggressors who seek to subdue them. Grant them steadfast trust in your mercy and protection.

O Mother of God, who gave us your miraculous icon at Zarvanytsia, intercede for the Ukrainian people, who run to the shelter of your mercy in their times of need.

O Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Grant peace and protection to the people of Ukraine. Give them strength and courage to defend what is good, right, and holy. Keep them safe from harm and provide for all their needs, both temporal and spiritual.

Hear our prayers, O Lord, and deliver us from distress, for You are merciful and compassionate and love mankind. To you we give glory: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Ministry Area Prayer

Dear Lord, we thank you for the opportunity to work together as a Ministry Area.

May we engage with each other with faith and encouragement.

May we manage each situation with wisdom and mutual respect.

May we serve with integrity, creativity and purpose.

May we speak with openness and gentleness.

May we offer our gifts, time and finances with generosity.

May we face each challenge with courage and the desire to grow through it.

May we all be drawn deeper into our relationship with you and be known as your disciples.

Help us to show your love, proclaim your Good News and grow your Kingdom in this place.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. **AMEN**

SEVERN WYE MINISTRY AREA

PRAYING TOGETHER

"The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results." JAMES 5:16

Praying together for our ministry area and our local communities

**THE 2nd AND 4th MONDAY
OF EVERY MONTH**

7.30 TO 8.30 PM

**St Christopher's Church,
Bulwark, Chepstow**