

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, Following the lifting of Covid restrictions, Holy Communion may once again be received in both kinds, although there is, of course, no obligation to do so.

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

<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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6th August 2023 The Transfiguration of the Lord

The Collect

Father in heaven,
whose Son Jesus Christ was wonderfully transfigured before chosen witnesses upon the holy mountain, and spoke of the exodus he would accomplish at Jerusalem: give us strength so to hear his voice and bear our cross that in the world to come we may see him as he is; 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 book of Daniel

As I watched, thrones were set in place, and an Ancient One took his throne, his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames, and its wheels were burning fire. A stream of fire issued and flowed out from his presence. A thousand thousand served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood attending him. The court sat in judgement, and the books were opened. As I watched in the night visions, I saw one like a human being coming with the clouds of heaven. And he came to the Ancient One and was presented before him. To him was given dominion and glory and kingship, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away, and his kingship is one that shall never be destroyed. [7; 9 - 10; 13 - 14]

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

Psalm 97 1-2, 5-6, 9

R/ Rejoice in the Lord, you righteous, And give thanks to his holy name

The Lord is king:
let the earth rejoice;
let the multitude of the isles be glad.
Clouds and darkness are round about him; righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne.

R/ Rejoice in the Lord, you righteous, And give thanks to his holy name

The mountains melted like wax at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth. The heavens declared his righteousness, and all the peoples have seen his glory.

R/ Rejoice in the Lord, you righteous, And give thanks to his holy name

For you, Lord, are most high over all the earth; you are exalted far above all gods.

R/ Rejoice in the Lord, you righteous, And give thanks to his holy name

A reading from the second letter of St Peter [1; 16 - 19]

We did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we had been eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received honour and glory from God the Father when that voice was conveyed to him by the Majestic Glory, saying, 'This is my Son, my Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.' We ourselves heard this voice come from heaven, while we were with him on the holy mountain. So we have the prophetic message more fully confirmed. You will do well to be attentive to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts

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

Alleluia, alleluia!
This is my Son, the Beloved,
he enjoys my favour;
Listen to him.
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.

Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. Then Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three dwellings here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, "This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!"

When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Get up and do not be afraid." And when they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone. As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus ordered them, "Tell no one about the vision until after the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."

[9; 28b - 36]

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

That we may see the world transfigured in the glory of Christ and be strengthened in our hope of Resurrection
Those who suffer as a result of the climate emergency
Responsible stewardship of our planet

For compassion and responsibility in those elected to govern us.

The people of Ukraine

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;

Michael; Lisa; Anne-Louise; Nick; Helen;

Abigail; Mary; Peter; Kenneth Cameron;

Ken Reece

For the Departed:

The recently departed; our own departed relatives & friends, & those whose anniversaries of death fall this week: Ray Parnell; Edith Sims; Ray Bull.

Sid Belcher; John Geroge Hughes,

bishop; Mary Aplin;

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'

Nehemiah

Nehemiah: Excuse me, would you be Jereboam?

Jereboam: That's right.

Nehemiah: You write those articles about Jesus, don't you?

Jereboam: Yes, I do.

Nehemiah: Well, I saw him yesterday. I wonder if you'd be interested to hear about it.

Jereboam: I'd be most interested: do tell me what happened. Where was it?

Nehemiah: A little way up the mountain. I'd gone up there yesterday evening – it had been a difficult day, to be honest, and I just needed to get away from everyone for a while. Eventually I started to feel cold and so I came back down, but on the way I heard some footsteps and, when I looked, there were Jesus and three of his friends walking along, just a little way above the level of my path. I think they were heading back to the village too, but I'm not sure.

Jereboam: You're quite sure it was Jesus?

Nehemiah: Oh yes, I've seen him a few times before. I even recognised his friends: they often come along to his teaching sessions.

Jereboam: Did any of them speak to you last night?

Nehemiah: Oh no, I don't think they even realised I was there. I should have called out, but it didn't occur to me at the time.

Jereboam: But maybe you heard what Jesus was saying to his companions?

Nehemiah: No, I couldn't hear them at all.

Jereboam: Look, I don't mean to...

Nehemiah: Don't tell me, I know what you're going to say: "Come on, Nehemiah, just because you've seen the man, it's not really that remarkable, is it? We can't write an article about just seeing someone."

Jereboam: Well...

Nehemiah: But the thing is, it was remarkable: he was glowing -- that's the only way I can describe it – as if there was something lighting him up from within. Or, I don't know, maybe he wasn't glowing at all, maybe it was just that there was some force drawing my eyes towards him.

Jereboam: How did you feel?

Nehemiah: Really warm and...comforted. You know if you see a fire in the distance? It somehow makes you feel warm inside, even though you're too far away to feel the heat. It was a bit like that.

Jereboam: And what about his friends? Did they glow or attract your gaze?

Nehemiah: In a way...but it wasn't so much that they were glowing, more that they were surrounded by his glow -- absorbed by it, you might say. The four of them had become one unit. If I can make another comparison, it was a bit like seeing a really loving couple when they walk along. Even if they're not touching each other in any way, you can somehow sense the special bond between them. It was rather like that. Jesus' glow seemed to link them all together...and that's about it: there's not much more to say. All a bit vague, isn't it?

Jereboam: It will be really useful, Nehemiah. I'm most grateful to you.

Thought for the Week

"Start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible."

St. Francis of Assisi

THIS WEEK

On Sunday we celebrate the Feast of the Transfiguration of our Lord, on which we see how Jesus revealed himself in Glory, "to prepare his disciples for the scandal of the cross."

In St Matthew's Gospel this week we hear words about faith and discipleship. The "feeding of the 5,000" comes after the disciples ask Jesus to send the crowd away because they didn't know how to feel them. Jesus tells them to "give them some food yourselves" and blesses the loaves and fishes. Jesus comes to his disciples across the water in a storm, and invites Peter to come to him, across the water; when Peter comes, he takes his eyes off Jesus and goes down. A persistent Canaanite woman begs Jesus to help her daughter. When he refuses, she persists and he replies, "O woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." Jesus asks his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" and Peter replies, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." But when Peter tries to stop Jesus from talking about the hardships that are ahead, Jesus tells him, "Get behind me, Satan!" He gives his followers a guide for their lives: "Whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses

his life for my sake will find it." The disciples wonder why they could not drive out a demon from a boy, Jesus answers, "Because of your little faith." Faith "the size of a mustard seed" is enough.

Next Sunday Elijah finds God not in the thunder and driving wind, but in a gentle breeze. We repeat the gospel we heard a few days ago as Peter's fear gets the best of him, when Jesus calls him out of his boat in a stormy sea. Peter takes his eyes off of Jesus and would have perished without Jesus' rescuing him.

A homily for The Transfiguration

+ If you make a habit of being up before dawn - and it probably needs in our climate to be a habit because clear skies are, shall we say, a bit hit and miss, particularly *this* summer - you'll have the experiences of watching some fairly spectacular sunrises. But before the sun comes up, as you probably have seen many times, there in the gradually and at first imperceptibly lightening sky, is a very bright star which we know to be the planet Venus, the "morning star" of the ancient world.

Seeing it there in the sky in the early hours of the morning was thought to be a sign of reassurance that dawn was on its way and that the light would return again to the world. This is St Peter's point in the second reading today when he is concerned to reassure those to whom he is writing that they can have true confidence in the glory and divinity of Christ. Peter, or perhaps someone writing on Peter's authority and in his name, is determined to get over the message that the Transfiguration isn't something which has been invented for whatever reason, but that it took place so we can all have confidence in the truth of who Christ is, and be strengthened in our following of Jesus. And Peter appeals not only to the events of the episode of the Transfiguration itself, but to the Transfiguration as a sign that Christ is who the Church proclaims him to be. Today's Feast of the Transfiguration isn't merely the recalling of a temporary experience of Jesus and his closest followers on Mount Tabor. It

is important for what it says about him and also what it says about us and our own future. This episode revealing Jesus in the shining light of divine glory was meant at the time as a profound revelation to restore the confidence of the Apostles, about to accompany Jesus to Jerusalem and to his Passion, that he is indeed the Christ, the Messiah, the Divine Son of God, witnessed to by the patriarchs and prophets of Old Testament Israel represented pre-eminently by Moses and Elijah.

Now we have to suppose that at the time, this was just a fleeting glimpse for the apostles - they have no idea of its real significance - hence Peter's bewildered comments about building three shelters for Jesus, Moses and Elijah - its significance only becomes clear later after the shattering events of the Lord's Passion and death and his appearances to them after his Resurrection. And clearly they kept the memory of the transfiguration as something to think over in their minds and hearts. It emerges not just as a foretaste of the Lord's resurrection, but as a sign that the true divine glory isn't to be found in a kind of imaginary paradise, removed from the realities of human life, but through the events which will follow it. It's a foretaste of the Resurrection, a brief lifting of the veil in showing who Jesus really is, but the saving events come through the hard reality of the first Holy Week. But we don't receive the gift Resurrection by denying our humanity but by allowing God to *perfect* our humanity. The Transfiguration shows us not a disembodied Christ talking to Moses and Elijah but a glorified Jesus in his humanity and his divinity. The true beauty of Christ, the eternal glory of God, is seen at the Transfiguration in the face of the one who will give his life for the life of the world. The apostles who were chosen to be there as witnesses, Peter, James, and John - and in turn we ourselves - are being told that only that we have to unite ourselves to him in his Passion and death so as to share in his resurrection life. Only perseverance despite the difficulty, the struggle, the tension of

discipleship, will lead us to the glory of the vision of God. Most of the time we want to be reassured that everything will be all right – I think that’s another implication of Peter’s comment about building shelters on the mountain – a wish for permanence and stability. Well, the Christian faith both gives us, that and doesn’t give us that. The figure of Christ crucified at the centre of our faith doesn’t say to us that bad things don’t happen to those who have faith. Subconsciously that’s probably always what we really want but it’s the one thing we can’t have in the physical universe in which we live; what we are not being promised is freedom from the conflicts, stresses and disasters of life, immunity from the seeming randomness of the events which happen to us. But we are promised the life of the Resurrection, a share in the mystery of the eternal life of God if we unite ourselves to his Son.

People (when I say ‘people,’ I really mean all of *us*) want an experience which will dispel our doubts and fears for ever, so that we can follow Christ without hesitation. Well, we’re not going to get that either. We who live after His death and resurrection at times find it difficult to believe in him and what he promises. But the Transfiguration isn’t one of those experiences either. It didn’t do that for the three of Jesus’ closest disciples who were there. It certainly wasn’t true of Saint Peter who went on to deny the Lord three times in the courtyard of the High Priest, who was forgiven by the Risen Christ three times, and given the charge to lead his Church – to ‘feed my sheep.’ We can’t expect more than them. The challenge is for us here today is to believe, without having physically seen, without having been there. But we can’t do that without a degree of personal experience; it’s not just a matter of blindly accepting the witness of others without experiencing anything ourselves. Our vocation as Christians is to know Christ and follow him. This can only happen by choice. That might seem a strange thing to say, but authentic discipleship can only come about by

making what seem to be those small choices (which are not really small choices at all), those small choices of belief and practice every day of our lives: by choosing to spend time in prayer, by choosing to look at life and the needs of others from the perspective of the Gospels, by choosing to come to the Eucharist to receive the divine life the Risen Lord wishes to share with us. That’s the choice of the Transfiguration itself: that only through perseverance in our relationship with God, only if we are prepared to fall down again and again in trying, only if he picks us up again and again and sets us on our feet and heading in the right direction, can we hope to see him face to face and share his glory. +

Services in our Churches:

TODAY:

6th August 2023:

The Feast of the Transfiguration

9 a.m. Family Service at St James’, Devauden
 10 a.m. Sung Eucharist at St Arvans Hymns (*New English Hymnal*) 178; 295; 296; 339
 11.30 a.m. Holy Eucharist at St Mary’s, Penterry

The Eucharist will be celebrated this week on Tuesday and Wednesday, and next week from Wednesday morning – all at 9 a.m.

NEXT SUNDAY

13th August 2023:

The Tenth Sunday after Trinity

10 a.m. Sung Eucharist at St Arvans
 11.30 a.m. Liturgy of the Word at St Deiniol’s, Itton

Readings at the Eucharist:
 1 Kings 19. 9-18; Psalm 85. 8-13;
 Romans 10. 5-15; St Matthew 14. 22-33

What’s On

St Arvans Drop in Tea & Chat
 2.30–4 p.m. at the Meeting Rooms
 Everyone Welcome

Saturday 12th August
Saturday 9th September
And every second Saturday of the month

Childrens activity table

For assistance or a lift please ring Diane on 628084

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***St Arvans***  
***Vicarage Garden***  
***Late Summer Barbecue***

**Saturday August 26<sup>th</sup>**  
**7 p.m.**

Tickets £12

Please bring your own chairs and drinks

*In aid of St Arvans Church funds*

**Devauden Photography Competition is here again!**

The 12 best photos will star in the 2024 calendar, and will be displayed in the church in September.

Photos must be taken within 5 miles of the Wesley Statue on the village green in Devauden, and have been taken since 1st July 2022.

**Closing date: 4th September.**

Email your entries to [devauden.photos@gmail.com](mailto:devauden.photos@gmail.com)

St James Church, Devauden invites you to

### **Sponsor a Slate**

to help much needed roof repairs. £10 per slate. Forms available from Devauden Village Shop. Please help to preserve this wonderful listed building.

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**Friday 15th September:  
Autumn Fashion Show**  
in the St Arvans Memorial Hall.  
7.30pm.

Tickets £10 to include a glass of wine. Tickets available from Jean Papps or in church, or from [starvanschurchnews@btinternet.com](mailto:starvanschurchnews@btinternet.com)

*In aid of St Arvan's Church*

### ***Please Note;***

This will be the only on-line full newsletter until 20<sup>th</sup> August.

Next Week (13<sup>th</sup>) only the readings at the Eucharist will be sent out.

### **20<sup>th</sup> August 2023: The Eleventh Sunday after Trinity**

9 a.m. Holy Eucharist at Devauden  
10 a.m. Sung Eucharist at St Arvans  
11.30 a.m. Midday Prayer at  
Kilgwrrwg (*please note the  
change of service*)

*Reading at the Eucharists*  
*Isaiah 56. 1, 6-8; Psalm 67; Romans 11. 1-2a, 29-32;*  
*St Matthew 15. [10-20,] 21-28*

## ***Ministry Area Prayer***

**D**ear 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**

## ***A Prayer for Ukraine***

*written by Ukrainian 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.**