

# 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  
Fr Michael Gollop,  
The Vicarage, St Arvans  
01291 622064;  
Mobile 07867803479  
E-mail: frmichael1@aol.com

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

## The Collect

O God, you declare your almighty power most chiefly in showing mercy and pity: mercifully grant to us such a measure of your grace, that we, running the way of your commandments, may receive your gracious promises, and be made partakers of your heavenly treasure; 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 prophet Isaiah

Thus says the LORD:  
Maintain justice, and do what is right, for soon my salvation will come, and my deliverance be revealed. And the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD, to minister to him, to love the name of the LORD, and to be his servants, all who keep the sabbath, and do not profane it, and hold fast my covenant – these I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples. Thus says the Lord GOD, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, I will gather others to them besides those already gathered

[56. 1, 6-8]

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

## Psalm 67

*R/* **Let the peoples praise you, O God, let all the peoples praise you.**

God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, That your way may be known upon earth, your saving power among all nations.

*R/* **Let the peoples praise you, O God, let all the peoples praise you.**

Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you. O let the nations rejoice and be glad, for you will judge the peoples righteously and govern the nations upon earth.

*R/* **Let the peoples praise you, O God, let all the peoples praise you.**

Then shall the earth bring forth her increase, and God, our own God, will bless us. God will bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear him.

*R/* **Let the peoples praise you, O God, let all the peoples praise you.**

## A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans [11. 1-2a, 29-32]

I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew. For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. Just as you were once disobedient to God but have now received mercy because of their disobedience, so they have now been disobedient in order that, by the mercy shown to you, they too may now receive mercy. For God has imprisoned all in disobedience so that he may be merciful to all.

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

## **Gradual Hymn**

Alleluia, alleluia!  
Your words are spirit, Lord,  
and they are life:  
you have the message of eternal life.  
**Alleluia!**

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

## Listen to the Gospel of Christ according to St Matthew

### *Glory to you, O Lord.*

**J**esus went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. A Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, 'Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon.' But he did not answer her at all. And his

disciples came and urged him, saying, 'Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us.'

He answered, 'I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.'

But she came and knelt before him, saying, 'Lord, help me.'

He answered, 'It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs.' She said, 'Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table.'

Then Jesus answered her, 'Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.' And her daughter was healed instantly.

[St Matthew 15.(10–20), 21–28]

This is the Gospel of the Lord  
**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

For the Church, that we may be a place of welcome for all who seek God.

Those recently married and those preparing for marriage.

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: Patrick Clay; Dorothy Farley; Margaret Mitchell

## 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'*

## Andrew

**Jereboam:** Can I bring you another drink, Andrew?

**Andrew:** Oh, lovely – thanks, Jereboam.

**Jereboam:** How are you getting on?

**Andrew:** Not too bad now...These supports will be coming down tomorrow or the day after, and we should have finished the whole house by the end of the month.

**Jereboam:** That's what I like: positive news. A friend of mine always used to say that "yes" was the best word in any language.

**Andrew:** I see what he meant, but...

**Jereboam:** But what?

**Andrew:** Well, it rather depends what the question is, for a start! Then with my work I think it's important to be

cautious. What if there's a strong wind – will the roof blow off? What if it rains continuously for several days – will the building withstand it? I'm sorry to be miserable, but those are pretty crucial questions. All this "yes" stuff seems a bit too easy for me.

**Jereboam:** All right, so what's your favourite word then?

**Andrew:** That's a tough question...maybe I'd have to say "love".

**Jereboam:** Yes, good: I like that.

**Andrew:** Our teacher Paul says that love is the only thing that can't hurt somebody. Makes you think, doesn't it?

**Jereboam:** It sounds to me as if he hasn't got any children. Sometimes you have to be firm with your children, and everyone can feel hurt.

**Andrew:** It's not the love itself that causes the hurt – it's all the other stuff – the practical details. Look up there...you see those supporting posts? They're crucial: they create the framework for us to build your house. The stability of the whole structure depends on them. It's like the way we restrict and discipline our children, until they can manage by themselves.

**Jereboam:** But we've all seen children smothered by too much love.

**Andrew:** No, we haven't. Look carefully at those supports: they've got to be firm and fixed, and they've also got to be totally straight, with the joints and angles absolutely perfect. So, in the same way, you can have the best of intentions – and, by the way, I'd say that the words "love" and "intention" are pretty close in meaning – but your guidelines have to be accurate. Once you start pulling something off balance, that's when your problems really start.

**Jereboam:** I'd better get you that drink, anyway.

**Andrew:** That's kind of you.

## Thought for the Week

"What we love we shall grow to resemble".

St. Bernard of Clairvaux  
(1090 – 20 August 1153)

## THIS WEEK

God's love belongs to all of us, according to the readings for the Eleventh Sunday after. God promises in Isaiah "my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples." St Paul, in his letter to the Romans, tells us "the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable" and refers to himself as the "apostle to the Gentiles." In St Matthew's Gospel, Jesus hears the pleas of a "foreign" woman, a Canaanite who begs Jesus to heal her daughter.

On Tuesday we celebrate The Queenship of Mary and on Thursday the Apostle, St. Bartholomew.

In the first part of the week, we have readings from the Book of Judges. We read of how Israel worshiped other gods and fell into the power of their enemies; how God called Gideon to be a leader of his tribe; of Gideon's son Abimelech who was unfairly made king and his brother Jotham's response; and of Jephtha's promise to God to sacrifice the first person he saw if only he was victorious in battle. After his victory, Jephtha's only child ran to greet him and he sacrificed her. The psalm for that day reminds us that "Sacrifice or oblation you wished not, but ears open to obedience." Two days of readings from the Book of Ruth tell the moving story of Naomi and her loving daughter-in-law Ruth. Ruth leaves her own homeland to return with Naomi to Bethlehem, where Ruth remarries and has a child, Obed, who will become the grandfather of the great king, David. Matthew's Gospel this week includes some favourite parables, like the rich young man and introduces the counter-cultural idea that riches may make it more difficult to be saved. Those are followed by stories of the Master of the vineyard who leaves us with the phrase "The last will be first and the first, last." Jesus tells the parable of the landowner who hires workers throughout the day, including the last hours. When he pays them all the same, those who worked all day grumbled. "Are you envious because I am generous?" He offers the parable of the guests who are too busy to attend the wedding feast of the king's son. Friday, Jesus tells us to love our neighbours as ourselves. Saturday, Jesus says, "Whoever exalts himself will be humbled;

but whoever humbles himself will be exalted."

Keys are central to readings for **Next Sunday**: the first reading from the prophet Isaiah offers the story of the faithful servant Eliakim, who will be given the keys for his master's palace. The short reading from St Paul's the Letter to the Romans is a moving prayer filled with awe at the depth and unknowing ways of our Lord. In St Matthew's Gospel, Jesus asks his followers what people are saying about him. Then he asks the real question, "Who do *you* say I am?" Peter's direct answer, "You are the Christ" prompts Jesus' reply that Peter would be given the keys to the kingdom of heaven and would be the rock upon which his church would be built.

### A homily for Trinity 11

+ I don't know if you've come across them, but there's a series of cartoons mainly on social media - although there are calendars, postcards and books as well - even mugs and tea towels, I think - called '*Off the Leash*' - the main theme which comes across is of dogs wrapping their owners around their little fingers - not that dogs have little fingers, but you know what I mean. One of the cartoon has a couple of dogs sitting by the side of a dinner table and saying to one another over and over again - "*just keep staring*" - until the people who are eating give them some of their food from the table. And, in a sense, that is exactly what the Canaanite woman is doing in today's Gospel. So - to begin with, what we see in this passage is an occasion when Jesus seems to be very harsh indeed - uninterested, even hostile to what seems like a perfectly reasonable request from the woman - a non-Jew, of course, someone outside the Covenant - that her daughter be healed. Immediately it seems that Jesus is rejecting her because of who she is - a woman belonging to the people who were originally driven out of the land of Canaan by the people of Israel when they were brought by God into the Promised Land. But if we look at what Our Lord is really saying there is much more to it than that. He says to her in effect - look I have come first and foremost to save the people of Israel, the lost sheep of the Old Covenant who are drifting away from God and the true meaning of the Covenant relationship

he has established with them. It's not that he doesn't care, it's just that she and her daughter are not his main concern. So her request is met first with silence, and then with the metaphor which is a little startling to us - and to modern sensibilities - that her asking for the healing of her daughter is like taking the food from children and giving it to the household dogs. Actually the word he uses really means 'little dogs,' or 'house dogs,' or even 'puppies.'

And the woman - who has, remember, already acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah - she says to him 'Have mercy on me, Son of David,' recognises his words as far from an outright rejection of her urgent request and engages in a bit of word play of her own - "Yes Lord," she says, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their master's table."

And in doing this she stakes a claim to be part of the household of faith - not as a child of the Covenant, but in a sense through her very humanity. In faith, this woman acknowledges the reality of the distinction between Jew and Gentile, but she also acts from a deeply felt conviction that this barrier can and will be overcome. So in a way, her request and the faith which prompts it *anticipates* the Resurrection and Pentecost where God's salvation in Christ is made available to all the peoples of the earth.

It is a feature of the Gospel narratives that we often see Gentiles, that is, non-Jews, those who didn't share Jesus' own ancestral faith, responding to him in faith and trust. It's true that he has come first to the people of Israel - but time and again the examples of people who listen to his message and show faith come from outside.

So a bit like the other little dogs in the *cartoon*, the woman keeps staring determinedly at Jesus until he is satisfied of her faith and determination. Her heart is open to faith and that openness is tested by Jesus, - she shows her faith by her insistence even in the face of silence and rebuke. Even when she comes up against his initial wall of silence she doesn't give up. So - to go back to his own metaphor - when Jesus refers to her as a puppy, he's not wrong, because like a house dog she recognises her master, on whom she can depend.

So far from being a rejected outsider, she ends up being held up by Jesus - perhaps even laughingly because of her witty response to his put down - as a model of discipleship and faith. OK, he is saying, I give in! This is certainly one of the few funny stories in the gospels. How much are we to make of it? Has Jesus just been teasing the woman, or is she testing him? Is this a turning point for him, his discovery, as he deals with her persistence, that his mission will transcend the boundaries of Israel? It's not so much that he changes his mind but that the response to him from outsiders is often more impressive than from those insiders from among whom he springs. So, like the gentile woman, we, who are his children by adoption and grace, have to recognise Jesus as the one who brings salvation, who heals us from the spiritual sickness of our lives. And that process of spiritual healing always begins by entering into an honest relationship with him, a relationship that is not above imploring him for his help in our every need. So the real focus in today's Gospel isn't so much on the healing of the child, a fact which St Matthew adds almost as an afterthought, but on the woman's faith which brings it about .. And, of course, on the barriers which Christ tears down. In this episode, which is taking place in the borderlands - in the no man's land between the territory of God's people and the that of the pagans - we are being shown that God's love recognises no boundaries, there are no essential divisions between 'us' and 'them.' between those who belong and those who don't.

The real miracle here, we are being told, is the very fact that such great faith could be found in the heart of this Gentile woman - someone outside the existing Covenant between God and his chosen people. And it's important to put this passage into context - that shortly before this scene, when Jesus visits the synagogue at Nazareth, his own home town, he encounters such a *lack* of faith that he can work few miracles and we are being told, as in last week's Gospel, just how fragile the faith of Peter and the other disciples can sometimes turn out to be. It is through faith and the reaching out to us of God in Christ that we all belong. We belong to God's holy people not by anything we ourselves have done, but by what Christ has done for us. We don't

qualify because of race, ethnicity or family background or all the many tribal barriers we human beings love to set up, but only through the free grace of God. Not only that, but we are all 'outsiders' and 'aliens' to the promise until Christ breaks down the barriers. We have been given a part to play in God's plan of salvation, not by birth or inheritance, but rather by our re-birth through the waters of baptism and by our communion with the one who calls us - an invitation to communion with the mystery of God extended by the Resurrection of Christ to the whole world and to the whole of creation.

St John reminds us that we should never fail to give thanks that we can be called God's children, for, through his love and mercy, that is what we are, and here, at the Eucharist, the Lord again pulls down all divisions of 'us' and 'them', and we embrace our common destiny in the presence of the one who feeds us with his eternal life.... +

### **Services in our Churches:**

#### **TODAY:**

**20<sup>th</sup> August 2023:**

#### ***The 11<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity***

9 a.m. Holy Eucharist

at St James', Devauden

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

178; 295; 296; 339

11.30 a.m. Midday Prayer  
at Holy Cross, Kilgwrrwg

*The Eucharist will be celebrated  
this week each day (except Monday)  
at 9 a.m.*

#### **NEXT SUNDAY**

**27<sup>th</sup> August 2023:**

#### ***The 12<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity***

10 a.m. Sung Eucharist at St Arvans

11.30 a.m. Holy Eucharist

at St Deiniol's, Itton

Readings at the Eucharist:

*Isaiah 51. 1-6; Psalm 138; ;*

*Romans 12. 1-8; St Matthew 16. 13-20*

## **What's On**

### **St Arvans Drop in Tea & Chat**

2.30-4 p.m. at the Meeting Rooms

Everyone Welcome

### **Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> September**

*And every second Saturday  
of the month*

Childrens activity table

For assistance or a lift  
please ring Diane on 628084

### **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*

### **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.**

**The Severn Wye Ministry  
Atea Prayer Group meets  
each Thursday at 7.30 p.m.  
In one of our churches  
All are welcome!**

**17<sup>th</sup> August**  
St. Arvans  
**24<sup>th</sup> August**  
St. Peter, St. Pierre  
**31<sup>st</sup> August**  
St. James, Devauden  
**7<sup>th</sup> September**  
St. Mary's Priory, Chepstow  
**14<sup>th</sup> September**  
St. Deiniol, Itton  
**21<sup>st</sup> September**  
St. Christopher, Bulwark  
**28<sup>th</sup> September**  
St. Andoenus, Mounton