

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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3rd September 2023
The Thirteenth Sunday
after Trinity
Proper 17

The Collect

Almighty God, who called your Church to bear witness that you were in Christ reconciling the world to yourself: help us to proclaim the good news of your love, that all who hear it may be drawn to you; through him who was lifted up on the cross, and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **AMEN**

A reading from the prophet

Jeremiah [15. 15-21]

O LORD, you know; remember me and visit me, and bring down retribution for me on my persecutors. In your forbearance do not take me away; know that on your account I suffer insult. Your words were found, and I ate them, and your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart; for I am called by your name, O LORD, God of hosts. I did not sit in the company of merry-makers, nor did I rejoice; under the weight of your hand I sat alone, for you had filled me with indignation. Why is my pain unceasing, my wound incurable, refusing to be healed? Truly, you are to me like a deceitful brook, like waters that fail. Therefore thus says the LORD: If you turn back, I will take you back, and you shall stand before me. If you utter what is precious, and not what is worthless, you shall serve as my mouth. It is they who will turn to you, not you who will turn to them. And I will make you to this people a fortified wall of bronze; they will fight against you, but they shall not prevail over you, for I am with you to save you and deliver you, says the LORD. I will deliver you out of the hand of the wicked, and redeem you from the grasp of the ruthless.

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

Psalm 26 1- 8

R/ Your love is before my eyes

Give judgement for me, O Lord, for I have lived with integrity; I have trusted in the Lord and have not faltered.

Test me, O Lord, and try me; examine my heart and my mind.

R/ Your love is before my eyes

For your love is before my eyes; I have walked faithfully with you. I have not sat with the worthless, nor do I consort with the deceitful. I have hated the company of evildoers; I will not sit down with the wicked.

R/ Your love is before my eyes

I will wash my hands in innocence, O Lord, that I may go in procession round your altar, Singing aloud a song of thanksgiving and recounting all your wonderful deeds. Lord, I love the house in which you dwell and the place where your glory abides.

R/ Your love is before my eyes

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans [12; 9-21]

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honour. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.' No, 'if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to

drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads.’ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

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

Gradual Hymn

Alleluia, alleluia!
May the Father
of our Lord Jesus Christ
enlighten the eyes of our mind
so that we can see
what hope his call holds for us.
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

From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, ‘God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you.’ But he turned and said to Peter, ‘Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling-block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.’ Then Jesus told his disciples, ‘If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life? For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.’

[St Matthew 16.21–28]

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 take up our cross and follow Christ along the way that leads to Resurrection
Schools and colleges returning from their summer vacations
For Mia, to be baptised today and all preparing for baptism.
For a successful harvest and for all who work in agriculture, horticulture, forestry and in the fishing industry.
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:
John Meade; Jeff Gravelle; Rachael Hill; Arthur Bevan

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’

Nathan

Jereboam: These tiles are lovely, Nathan. Did you say they’re for the people in that new house?

Nathan: All of them except that tile in the middle there.

Jereboam: I do like your designs: they’re so fluid and expressive.

Nathan: Thank you; I’m delighted you think so.

Jereboam: Didn’t I see you with Jesus the other day?

Nathan: Quite possibly: I’m often there listening to him. He’s a remarkable man.

Jereboam: Some people seem to have been puzzled by him. He encourages everyone to lose their life, take up their cross and follow him.

Nathan: I think he’s referring to that awful practice of killing people on a cross. Crucifixion they call it, don’t they?

Jereboam: Yes, but what I mean is that it makes him sound rather grim, doesn’t it?

Nathan: As I see it, Jesus is saying: “follow me, whatever it takes and however much suffering is entailed.” Perhaps I’d call it challenging rather than grim.

Jereboam: Have you managed to put his principles into practice?

Nathan: I try. They have a definite bearing on my work, certainly. You see that tile in the middle – I can’t allow it to be used by anyone. It’s awful, isn’t it?

Jereboam: Sorry?

Nathan: Yes, look. There’s

something so rigid and inflexible about it. When I painted that one, I don't know what came over me, but I was hoping to impress people. I wanted to do something that would be noticed. That's the equivalent of wanting to "save my life" in Jesus' terms. Whereas with these other ones, which I think I could say are rather better, I tried to allow God to speak through my craft. In a sense I tried to be invisible, to "lose my life for his sake", as it were.

Jereboam: That's very honourable, I'm sure, but some people have really altered their whole way of life after hearing Jesus teach. Can you really be taking up your cross, if you're still painting tiles? You've done that for years anyway.

Nathan: I asked myself that question too...but Jesus told me to take up my cross, not anyone else's. This is the way I think I serve him best. It may even be that part of the cross I need to bear is to realise how trivial my contribution seems.

Jereboam: That's an interesting point. Well, personally I'm glad you're still producing your tiles. In fact, I was wondering if you'd consider doing one or two for us...

Nathan: I'd be honoured.

Thought for the Week

"Whether our life be that of Nazareth, the Public Life or the Desert... it should cry the Gospel..."

St. Charles de Foucauld

THIS WEEK

Our week begins with the Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity. We get a glimpse of the Prophet Jeremiah who understands the pain of following the Lord and decides not to speak the Lord's name again, "but then it becomes like fire burning in my heart." St Paul's letter to the Romans encourages them - and us - not to conform to this age but to discern the will of God. In St Matthew's Gospel, Jesus corrects his disciples' resistance to his own passion and death, telling them that if they try to save their lives, they'll lose them. "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me."

Friday is the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

St Paul's First Letter to the Thessalonians concludes on Tuesday. On Wednesday, we begin a week of readings from the Letter to the Colossians, with its gracious salutation and encouragement. The readers are exhorted to see Christ as the "head of the body" noting that all is created "in and through him."

We now move from Matthew to Luke, the Gospels which we will hear on weekdays from now until Advent begins. We will feel the special way the evangelist will highlight healing, mercy, the poor, women, prayer, the Spirit and a gospel for a new, all inclusive, Israel.

Jesus teaches in the synagogue and reads from Isaiah: "Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing." Jesus heals a man with demons. He heals Simon's mother-in-law, and all the sick they brought him. "I must proclaim the good news of the Kingdom of God, because for this purpose I have been sent." He calls out to three discouraged fishermen to lower their nets, to show them his power. Peter is overwhelmed and protests he is unworthy. "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men." At Jesus' persistence, Peter, James and John leave their nets to follow Jesus. The week ends with Jesus' tangling with the Pharisees who challenge the fasting of his disciples. "Can you make the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them?" He deflects the criticism by telling them "no one pours new wine into old wineskins." When his critics note that his disciples were "unlawful" by picking heads of grains to eat, he tells them, "The Son of Man is lord of the sabbath."

Next Sunday, as faithful followers of the Lord, we are encouraged to "love one another" throughout the readings. Ezekiel tells us that we are responsible for each other and St Paul's letter to the Romans offers: "Owe nothing to anyone, except to love one another." In St Matthew's Gospel, Jesus tells us to challenge each other on our behaviour and to pray, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

A homily for Trinity 13

+ It's the first Sunday of September and Summer (which has disappeared for the last couple of months) seems to have decided to make an appearance again, with the usual ironic habit of the British weather to start picking up after most people's holidays are over. If only this summer's outdoor events could all have taken place in early autumn! The purpose of religious faith religion is really about *ultimate meaning*, both about our inner selves and about our place in the world. Yet the Christian faith has always maintained quite adamantly - stridently even to our modern ears - that faith isn't primarily about finding a comfortable spiritual life-style option, but about the God who himself searches for us in love and seeks to reconcile us to himself and share his life with us. The truth we believe is *revealed to us* - shown to us - and we believe that it's revealed to us Jesus Christ, who is God become a human being, and at the same time, the divine Wisdom, the '*logos*' in Greek, the animating principle of reason behind all things, it's what St John means when he writes about Christ as 'the Word made flesh.'

As we know, we continue to live in a world which for the most part - perhaps even increasingly, frighteningly, once again, works on the principle of the survival of the fittest. The Christian identification of God who is in himself truth, reason and compassion, undermines any vision of a God who is so transcendent that he is above reason, and can therefore either sanction even the most appalling cruelty and injustice, or is indifferent to it, just so long as we go through the required ritual acts of piety.

The true God who empties himself to share the human condition and who dies upon the cross as the innocent victim of the sins, aggression and cruelty of humanity completely undermines this rule of the strong, the violent and the unjust. Injustice of any kind is incompatible with the nature of the God who reveals himself in Christ. Orthodox Christian theology -

even if the practice of the Church has so often fallen short of it - has always said that not to act in accordance with reason is contrary to God's nature and that when we do act in this way it is immediately clear that we are acting against the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Church he founded. The Church has always believed that God has humbled himself by the ultimate act of solidarity with us by becoming incarnate in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the one just man who has humbled himself; Jesus Christ is the one who was lifted up—exalted, that is—on the cross, and who has been exalted to the heights of heaven.

Yet, at the time of Jesus, the cross was the most scandalous form of execution. It's not difficult to understand, then, that in today's Gospel, when Our Lord speaks of his coming death and alludes to the way in which it will take place, the disciples were shocked to the core: because what he was saying was truly horrific for their ears. Having been given such authority just shortly before, being called the rock on which Jesus will build his Church, Peter must have felt himself obliged to challenge in some way what was being said to him. And it is Peter's protest which provokes a clarification from Jesus about Peter's authority (and allied to that, for subsequent generations the authority of the Church itself): authority is only authentic when it speaks from God and not just from the standpoint of *conventional* social attitudes about what might be prudent, or practical or sensible. When Jesus rebukes Peter in the strongest terms he is both pointing out that Peter is speaking purely and instinctively from a worldly point of view and tells him he is overstepping his role. And when Our Lord speaks of 'Satan,' he means the prince of this world, which we could describe as the embodiment of worldly values, the standards which don't come from God. So, he orders Peter to get behind him, that is, not only just to get out of the way but literally to return to a position of discipleship - to follow, not to try to lead in a direction other than God's.

To an extent the cross has understandably lost its power to shock us in the same way as it shocked Peter and his contemporaries. We associate the cross not only with barbaric punishment and appalling suffering but also with victory over death. But to those who first heard Jesus it must have been a horrifying prospect. They would have seen its victims displayed at the roadsides as a example to others. It certainly wouldn't have meant to them simply the kind of sacrifices that we associate with taking up the cross in our own lives, but *literally* having to endure this instrument of deadly torture which would inevitably end in an agonising death. Jesus knew he would suffer this particular martyrdom, and he chooses it here as an metaphor for the experience of those who follow him. Throughout our Christian lives, we continually fall short of our commitment to our faith. Yet we shouldn't lose sight of the truth that we are surrendering our lives to God. We are only truly converted (and remember that conversion is a daily act of will, a daily decision to trust our lives to Christ) if we live out in our daily lives in the light of the truth of the love of Christ.

And we have to remember also that in today's Gospel reading Jesus says: "*those who lose their life for my sake will find it.*" Tough words which take a lifetime's experience and understanding to make sense of them. We are called to an authentic encounter with God through prayer and service, something which can only unfold to us by our allowing ourselves the space to be aware that we live in that *tension* between the cross and the resurrection, between brokenness and being made whole, in which our pilgrimage, (our journey of faith) inevitably involves us - that gap, that tension - that cross - out of which can come healing and the new life of resurrection. The Christian life isn't so much a matter of imitation as of reception; it does involve us in struggle but is really about being open to receive a gift. And that gift is the gift of life - life in all its fullness. +

Services in our Churches:

TODAY:

3rd September 2023:

The 13th Sunday after Trinity

9 a.m. Family Service at Devauden
10 a.m. Sung Eucharist at St Arvans
Hymns (*New English Hymnal*)
334; 76; 374; 307
11.30 a.m. Holy Eucharist
at St Mary's, Penterry

Please note: The 9 a.m. daily Eucharist will be celebrated this week only on Wednesday, and then will resume on Tuesday 26th.

NEXT SUNDAY

10th September 2023:

The 14th Sunday after Trinity

9 a.m. Family Service at Devauden
10 a.m. Sung Eucharist at St Arvans
11.30 a.m. Holy Eucharist
at St Mary's, Penterry

Readings at the Eucharist:

*Ezekiel 33. 7-11; Psalm 119. 33-40; ;
Romans 13. 8-14; St Matthew 18. 15-20*

17th September 2023:

The 15th Sunday after Trinity

9 a.m. Morning Liturgy at Devauden
10 a.m. Sung Eucharist at St Arvans

Readings at the Eucharist:

*Genesis 50. 15-21; Psalm 103. [1-7,] 8-13;
Romans 14. 1-12; St Matthew 18. 21-35*

24th September 2023:

The 16th Sunday after Trinity

10 a.m. Sung Eucharist at St Arvans
11.30 a.m. Holy Eucharist at Itton
3 p.m. Harvest Thanksgiving
at Kilgwrrwg

Readings at the Eucharist:

*Jonah 3.10 – 4.11; Psalm 145. 1-8;
Philippians 1. 21-30; St Matthew 20. 1-16*

What's On

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

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

Saturday 9th September
And every second Saturday of the month

Childrens activity table

For assistance or a lift please ring Diane on 628084

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.

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

In aid of St Arvan's Church

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**

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!

31st August

St. James, Devauden

7th September

St. Mary's Priory, Chepstow

14th September

St. Deiniol, Itton

21st September

St. Christopher, Bulwark

28th September

St. Andoenus, Mounton