

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

29th October 2023 ALL SAINTS SUNDAY

The Collect

Almighty God, you have knit together your elect in one communion and fellowship in the mystical body of your Son Christ our Lord: grant us grace so to follow your blessed saints in all virtuous and godly living that we may come to those inexpressible joys that you have prepared for those who truly love you; 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 book of Revelation [7. 2- 4, 9 - 14]

I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God, and he called with a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to damage earth and sea, saying, "Do not damage the earth or the sea or the trees, until we have marked the servants of our God with a seal on their foreheads." And I heard the number of those who were sealed, one hundred forty-four thousand, sealed out of every tribe of the people of Israel. After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. They cried out in a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!" And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, singing, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honour and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen." Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?" I said to him, "Sir, you are the one that knows." Then he said to me, "These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

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

Psalm 34: 1- 10

R/ Those who trust in him will understand truth and the faithful will abide with him in love.

I will bless the Lord at all times;
his praise shall ever be in my mouth.
I will glory in the Lord;
let the humble hear and rejoice.
Proclaim with me the greatness
of the Lord;
let us exalt his name together.

R/ Those who trust in him will understand truth and the faithful will abide with him in love.

I sought the Lord and he answered me
and delivered me out of all my terror.
Look upon him and be radiant, and let
not your faces be ashamed.
I called in my affliction and the Lord
heard me and saved me from all my
troubles.

R/ Those who trust in him will understand truth and the faithful will abide with him in love.

The angel of the Lord encompasses
those who fear him,
and he will deliver them.
Taste and see that the Lord is good;
happy are they who trust in him!

R/ Those who trust in him will understand truth and the faithful will abide with him in love.

Fear the Lord, you that are his saints,
for those who fear him lack nothing.
The young lions lack and suffer
hunger, but those who seek the Lord
lack nothing that is good.

R/ Those who trust in him will understand truth and the faithful will abide with him in love.

A reading from the first letter of St John [3. 1 - 3]

See what love the Father has given us,
that we should be called children of
God; and that is what we are.
The reason the world does not know
us is that it did not know him.
Beloved, we are God's children now;
what we will be has not yet been

revealed. What we do know is this:
when he is revealed, we will be like
him, for we will see him as he is.
And all who have this hope in him
purify themselves, just as he is pure.

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

Gradual Hymn

Alleluia, alleluia!
Come to me, all you who labour
and are overburdened,
and I will give you rest, says the Lord.
Alleluia!

The Lord be with you:
And also with you

Listen to the Gospel of Christ **according to St. Matthew**

R/ Glory to you, O Lord.

When Jesus saw the crowds,
he went up the mountain; and after
he sat down, his disciples came to
him. Then he began to speak,
and taught them, saying:
"Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
"Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.
"Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.
"Blessed are those who hunger
and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.
"Blessed are the merciful,
for they will receive mercy.
"Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.
"Blessed are the peacemakers, for
they will be called children of God.
"Blessed are those who are persecuted
for righteousness' sake,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
"Blessed are you when people revile
you and persecute you and utter all
kinds of evil against you falsely on
my account.
Rejoice and be glad, for your reward
is great in heaven, for in the same way
they persecuted the prophets who
were before you.

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

For the Church, that we may always live in
the hope of the Resurrection by which we
are united to those who have gone before
us.

The faithful departed at All Soulstide
The peoples of Israel and Gaza
& for peace in the Middle East
The people of Ukraine and a just and
peaceful end to the war there
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, 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; Lisa;
Anne-Louise; Helen; Abigail; Mary; Peter;
Kenneth Cameron; Ken Reece; Margaret;
Margot Davies.

For the Departed:

The recently departed; our own departed
relatives & friends, & those whose
anniversaries of death fall at this time:
Donald Sunderland;

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'

Mahalon

Jereboam: So what's new in the life
of the Church?

Mahalon: Well, we've been
hearing a lot recently about what a
wonderful gift faith is. Several of the elders
have been praising the faith of Abraham,
for example.

Jereboam: You know...forgive my
rudeness...I never quite see the point of
commending faith like that. Presumably
the idea is to encourage you to believe
more fervently, but that doesn't really
make sense. Teach people about your
faith, by all means. Encourage them to
express their faith through good works:
fine...but telling them to believe more
strongly – well, surely they can't achieve
that just by trying harder, can they?

Mahalon: It's not quite like that.
We reassure one another about the value
of our faith, encouraging ourselves to
have the confidence to believe. That's
important. If you're surrounded by enough
people who regard your faith as
unnecessary or inadequate in some way,
their opinions can easily start to affect
you. Listen to this: one of our friends was
recently advised that she ought to give up
her belief in Jesus and her membership of
the Church. Apparently she'd become
healthier!

Jereboam: What? I don't like the
sound of that attitude...

Mahalon: No: it is an extreme
example. But even in everyday life you
encounter little criticisms or jokes made at
your expense. Sometimes they're
genuinely meant in a friendly way, and

you like to think that you can laugh them off, but eventually this all starts to have an impact, wearing you down. Then your faith begins to become cautious, wary...it's blunted, if you like. That's one reason why the fellowship of faith within the Church is so important, and why we need to remember the glorious faith of our forefathers. Their resolve reminds us what is possible, encourages us to trust our convictions, and – how can I put this – it urges us to let our faith trickle into every last corner of our being.

Jereboam: I see.

Mahalon: ...and by the way I didn't think you were being rude at all.

Jereboam: Thank you.

THIS WEEK

We keep Sunday as our celebration of All Saints. We remember the ordinary saints of the Church and celebrate the great mystery of the Communion of Saints – that we are all united in the life of the Resurrection.

On November 2nd, we celebrate All Souls Day, the Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed. We pray for those who have died in faith and who we believe are still united to us in the Communion of Saints.

The first reading all week continues with the third week of St Paul's longest letter, the Letter to the Romans, with his teaching of the Holy Spirit in our lives. The Gospel of Luke offers a glimpse of Jesus healing and teaching the people, even as he continues to clash with religious leaders. He cures the "bent woman" on a Sabbath and tells of the tiny mustard seed which develops to become a full grown bush. He repeats that it will not be easy to enter the Kingdom: "For behold, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last." He defies those who bring word of threats on his life and defies the silent Pharisees who watch as he cures a man on the Sabbath. Jesus encourages us to be humble: "For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."

Next Sunday Jesus says in St Matthew's, "Whoever exalts himself will be humbled; but whoever humbles himself will be exalted." He encourages us to turn away from a love of honours and titles and to take the lowest place at the banquet.

A homily for All Saintstide

+ We could be forgiven for thinking that what we are celebrating today are the achievements of those extraordinary people we call God's Saint's with a capital "S" But no, what we are really celebrating is the goodness and the faithfulness of God himself, the triumph of his grace seen in the lives of those, whether we know about them or not, who became in their lifetimes closest to him.

The Scriptures show us how to look at God, and they do so for the most part obliquely - they don't very often deal in philosophical abstractions.

At All Saints the Church, whose faith is profoundly scriptural and in many ways profoundly semitic, reminds us that God shows himself - his goodness - his holiness - through *us*, or through people who are in so many ways like us.

Caravaggio, the late sixteenth / early seventeenth century Italian painter, was notorious in his day for using for his portrayals of Biblical characters models from the very lowest rungs of society - the poor, the destitute, the criminal and immoral. And whatever his specific reasons were for doing that, it makes the vital point that none of us is outside the reach of God's mercy and that none of us ever starts out being perfect, and we have to begin somewhere. Everyone begins their pilgrimage of faith with the same experience of human nature, flawed, fallible, prone to mistakes and mis-steps of all kinds

But our faith invites us to see the death and resurrection of Christ as the central events in the history of the world. Through them, God's Spirit has been sent abroad to re-make humanity in the image of his Son, to gather us into union with him. This is the re-creation of our human nature to which Bible testifies. We are saved through the death and resurrection of Christ, our human nature is healed and restored, not by magic, not automatically but by the grace we receive in baptism through faith, through our continuing acceptance of Christ into our lives, and our being brought ever closer to him by encountering him through prayer and

his life and love which we receive through the Eucharist. This is the new world of God's reign and it is unexpectedly, undramatically but life-changingly among us already and it gives us the chance to be healed and to be restored with God's nature the human nature we know by our own bitter experience – and the evidence in the world out there - to be so flawed. Now those who are motivated most fully and completely by this experience of grace and life and love are those we commemorate at All Saints tide. These are the role models the Church sets before us, some well-known, others perhaps known only to those they came into contact with in life, and we are right to celebrate this triumph of God's grace in the compelling and magnetic lives of the saints - they draw us further into the circle of God's love.

But the call of God's grace comes to all of us, and in the mystical Body of Christ, the One, holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, the Communion of Saints, we, living and departed, are still united in the undying love of God. As T.S. Eliot wrote, "the communication of the dead is tongued with fire beyond the language of the living." All Saintstide is also telling us that faith can't exist authentically in isolation from other people. The Lord, as the scriptures faithfully record, founded not a philosophy or a life-style, or even a "religion" but a community of human beings lead by the Apostles. Ultimately we *catch* the faith from other people. These people are not always the ones we see around us, we feel - sometimes it's almost tangible when we celebrate the Eucharist or, as T.S. Eliot so memorably puts it when we stand "in the draughty church at smoke fall" - the continuing influence and inspiration of those whose witness to Christ stretches back down the ages to the Apostles themselves.

This season of All Saints is a time when we feel that the veil between this world and the next is particularly thin, and so it's the time when we recognise what we might call the "ordinary" saints, that huge number, impossible to count from every nation, race, tribe and language as the

Book of Revelation says. It's the feast of those who have lived by the values of Christ in the Beatitudes – this morning's Gospel: those who have been gentle and merciful to others. It's the feast of those who have mourned and have been concerned to be pure in heart, those who have been peacemakers and thirsted after what is right and good and true. It's the feast of those who have been persecuted in the cause of righteousness. We celebrate the grace of God in the "ordinary" Christian people down the ages who have been extra-ordinary. What we are not doing at All Saints tide is remembering all the canonised and beatified Saints of the Church. It's not primarily about those who have been formally recognised in any way, they have their own commemorations, although, of course, in a sense it *is* about them as well, in that they are all part of that same flowing stream of faith and holiness. But perhaps some of these "ordinary saints" will be remembered as kind old relatives, or as neighbours who were always there for us and for whom nothing was too much trouble. People we ourselves will have met but never realised the depth of their faith or the extent to which their lives were permeated by the grace and holiness of God because they didn't wear their religion on their sleeves. Others won't be remembered at all by this or any other generation, only by God himself. And today says to us that that's enough.

St. John sums up what we believe about All Saints. All we know is that we will be like God, because we shall see God as he really is. The Church will never be without hope. The saints have gone before us.

We all need some words of encouragement, perhaps particularly at the moment. So whenever we are tempted to think of the Church in a merely earthly way, with all its divisions, its problems, its idiocies, its wordiness, its bureaucracy, we should remember the saints in heaven who started off very much like us and we should call to mind those greater, supernatural, realities which All Saints tide celebrates: forgiveness and redemption and mercy, and the greater

and future reality of which we get a foretaste at this Eucharist when we are fed with the living reality of Christ himself. We should remember and never give up hope. This, the Communion of Saints - the living Church on earth and in heaven - is the reality of our faith. +

Thought for the Week

"Lord, make me an instrument of your peace; where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy."

St Francis of Assisi

What's On

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

*Every second Saturday
of the month*

Childrens activity table

For assistance or a lift
please ring Diane on 628084

SERVICES IN OUR CHURCHES

29th October 2023:

All Saints Sunday

10 a.m. Sung Eucharist at St Arvans
Hymns (*New English Hymnal*)
341; 345; 197; 483

Please note: The Eucharist on All Souls Day (Thursday 2nd) will be celebrated at 12 noon.

The daily mass will be at 9 a.m. for the rest of the week (*There is no service on Mondays*)

NEXT SUNDAY

**5th November:
The First Sunday
of the Kingdom
(4th before Advent)**

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

Readings at the Eucharist:
*Micah 3. 5-12; Psalm 43 or 107. 1-8;
1 Thessalonians 2. 9-13;
St Matthew 24. 1-14*

For services in the wider Ministry Area
please see www.severnwyema.co.uk

**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.

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

2nd November:

St. Arvan's Church

9th November: St. Tewdric's
Church, Mathern

16th November

Chepstow (07887 853479 for
address) - Movie showing
of 'The Shack'

23rd November

St. Pierre Church

30th November

St. Pierre Church - Rev
Robert Sanday (retired) will
be following a Celtic form
of prayer

7th December

St. Pierre Church

14th December

St. Pierre Church

21st December

St. Pierre Church – with
mince pies!

Future dates to follow

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.**

Saturday 4th November
Severn Wye Ministry Area
invite you to join a walk
around the Western churches:

Newchurch to Shirenewton
setting off c 9am
(with breakfast at the Farm Shop
en route)

Shirenewton to Mounton
setting off c 11.30am

Mounton lunch break c 12.30pm
setting off c 1.30pm to Mathern

Mathern to St Pierre
setting off c 2.30pm

*There will be brief prayers
at each church.*

The total distance is around 9 miles,
but you are welcome to join us for all
or any part of the route (and to bring
well behaved dogs on leads).
Bring your own refreshments. Please
wear suitable clothing and footwear for
the weather and terrain.

All timings approximate. Further
details will be published on the
SevernWye website at
www.severnwyema.co.uk

 For more information about the
day: Hilary 01291 624924

*This is not an official 'organised event'
- we all walk independently, and
at our own risk. We can arrange lifts
back to cars left at other points
on the route*

