

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, **Our live-streamed services are as follows: Sunday Eucharist at 10. a.m., and a reflection & celebration of Night Prayer usually on Wednesdays at 8 p.m.** They can be accessed on the St Arvans Parish Group page on Facebook: <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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24th November 2024

Christ the King

The Sunday before Advent

The Collect

Eternal Father,
whose Son Jesus Christ ascended to the throne of heaven that he might rule over all things as Lord and King: keep the Church in the unity of the Spirit and in the bond of peace, and bring the whole created order to worship at his feet; 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 thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood attending him. The court sat in judgment, 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, 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 93

R/ The Lord has girded himself with strength

The Lord is king
and has put on glorious apparel;
the Lord has put on his glory
and girded himself with strength.
He has made the whole world
so sure that it cannot be moved.
Your throne has been established
from of old; you are from everlasting.

R/ The Lord has girded himself with strength

The floods have lifted up, O Lord,
the floods have lifted up their voice;
the floods lift up their pounding waves.
Mightier than the thunder of many waters,
mightier than the breakers of the sea,
the Lord on high is mightier.

R/ The Lord has girded himself with strength

Your testimonies are very sure;
holiness adorns your house,
O Lord, for ever.

R/ The Lord has girded himself with strength

A reading from the book of Revelation

Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. Look! He is coming with the clouds; every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all the tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. So it is to be. Amen. "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

[1. 4b-8]

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

Gradual Hymn

Alleluia, alleluia!
Blessings on him
who comes in the name of the Lord!
Blessings on the coming kingdom
of our father David!
Alleluia!

The Lord be with you:
And also with you

Hear the Holy Gospel
according to St John

Glory to you, O Lord.

Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?" Pilate replied, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?" Jesus answered, "My kingdom does not

belong to this world. If my kingdom belonged to this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here."

Pilate asked him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice."

[St John 18.33b-37]

This is the Gospel of the Lord
Praise to you, O Christ

For Your Prayers

That Christ the King may be the gentle ruler of our lives
All who are caught up in war or conflict
All those without adequate food or shelter
The peoples of Gaza, Israel and Lebanon
& for lasting 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;
The Revd Stuart Jackson; Anne-Louise; Helen; Mary; Peter; Kenneth Cameron; Margaret; Althea; Eira Firth;
Margi and Bob Osborne;

For the Departed:

The recently departed: our own departed relatives & friends, and those whose anniversaries of death fall at this time.

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)

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 people whose lives have been affected in some way by Jesus Christ and his teaching.

Alexander

Jereboam: You must be feeling dreadful.

Alexander: It's awful, you know: just standing there powerless, while a man you admire and love so much is on the verge of being sentenced to death. It's harrowing enough for me – it's hard to imagine what it must be like for Jesus. I think they're whipping him at this very moment.

Jereboam: How has he been reacting?

Alexander: With absolute dignity and humility. No temper, no revenge: he just accepts everything.

Jereboam: Strange to think that only a few days ago the crowds were greeting him as the King of Israel...

Alexander: I know. I'll tell you something I noticed today, though. Jesus confirmed Pilate's words by saying "I am a King." Obviously I've heard people say that about him

before, but I don't remember hearing him say it himself, at least not as directly as that. Curious how he should utter the words just at the very moment when he is being completely humiliated.

Jereboam: I guess his idea of kingship may be different to most people's.

Alexander: I think you're right. I haven't had much time to mull this over, but see if this makes sense to you. A king has to be the main figurehead of a nation, so, if you've got a warlike nation, for example, the king needs to be the bravest and strongest of all – the ultimate warrior, if you like. But if, like Jesus, you lead people towards a life of peace and humility, it stands to reason that a king of that sort will be the most peaceful and most humble of all.

Jereboam: It certainly makes sense, when you put it like that. What about his subjects? – which I imagine include you.

Alexander: I suppose we follow Jesus' example, but not because he bullies us into it – or "lords it over us", as he might say. We follow him because he inspires us to do so. Look, I don't mean to be rude, but I feel I must go back and see what's happening.

Jereboam: Of course.

THIS WEEK

On the last Sunday of the year, we celebrate the Christ the King. In the first reading from the book of Daniel, we read of a vision he has of "one like a Son of man coming, on the clouds of heaven." In St John's Gospel Jesus tells Pilate, "You say I am a king. For this I was born and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice."
Saturday is the Feast of St. Andrew the Apostle, with its own special readings. The first reading all week is continues from the mystical book of Revelation. In this last week of the Church's year, we have gospel readings from St Luke's Gospel, which grow more explicit about the end time as Jesus and his disciples

draw closer to Jerusalem. Jesus watches rich people make donations at the Temple but when a poor widow drops in two small coins he notes that her donation is far larger for "she, from her poverty, has offered her whole livelihood." He speaks of the end time, and cautions that many will claim to come in Jesus' name. "Do not follow them!" He says that the cost of following him may be high, and may lead to trials and divisions in families. But, he says, "By your perseverance you will secure your lives." In a dramatic look at the end time, Jesus says, "And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." Just as we know what the signs in nature tell us - fig trees in bloom announce the coming of summer - Jesus want us to be aware of the signs of the coming of the Kingdom: "when you see these things happening, know that the Kingdom of God is near." Finally, he tells us not to let our "hearts be drowsy" from drunkenness or anxiety but to be vigilant at all times and to pray for the strength we will need for the "tribulations that are imminent and to stand before the Son of Man."

Next Sunday is the beginning of a new liturgical year with the First Sunday of Advent. The first reading from the book of Jeremiah offers a comforting promise of safety to beleaguered Israel: "those days Judah shall be safe and Jerusalem shall dwell secure." St Luke's gospel offers us a repeat of several of the daily gospels, advising us to be alert and vigilant, watching for signs. "And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory."

A Homily for Christ the King

+ Today's Gospel for the Feast of Christ the King probably causes us to ask quite a few questions. If today's feast - and remember this is at the end of the Church's year - the Christian new year begins next week with the beginning of Advent - if today's feast is about the Lordship of Christ over the world and - more than that - over the whole creation, then this is a strange reading to have at its centre. Or is it?

The passage from St John's Gospel we have just heard is a disturbing encounter. On the one side we have Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor - the symbol of

earthly power - not just worldly authority (that can take many forms, not all of them bad) but naked military power - power obtained and maintained by force over an unwilling population. And facing him we see Jesus, having been arrested in the garden of Gethsemane and probably roughed up and beaten after his summary trial before the High Priest. To put it into modern terms: the representative of the world's superpower and a political prisoner. And the bruised and battered figure facing Pilate, today we celebrate as our Universal King. What's this about? When we think of kings historically we tend to think about power and pomp and circumstance, crowns and thrones - essentially the symbol of the authority of a State. If we are going to see Jesus as a king - most importantly, *our* King - then clearly we are going to have to do some serious re-thinking about what we think kingship really is.

As we said it's a strange, mysterious encounter - one has all the power, the other is completely powerless - yet the vulnerable prisoner is the one we believe has the care of all things that exist. To begin with, let's look at Pilate's reaction to what is going on. He clearly finds Jesus fascinating but can't quite work out why, and, as a busy man of the world, can't afford the luxury of too much reflection; it might deflect him from he was there to do - and that is to exert the power of Rome. And we know that, even as he sees the charges against Jesus to be trumped up, to keep the peace and save his reputation and his career Pilate condemns Jesus to death. Pilate is an appropriate figure for us to consider today, he's the political realist par excellence, the believer in relativism and not much else. 'What is truth,' he wonders aloud, or even sneers, a little later on from the passage we heard in today's Gospel. But he doesn't have the time - he has some serious decisions to make and, as we know, Pilate refuses to commit himself and by refusing to judge between right and wrong, chooses evil. What we have in today's Gospel is a picture of a very brutal reality and a very hostile world. Into this world Jesus is sent to bear witness to the truth of God's kingdom. But if we want to see what happens when God's truth is present in a human being in a world which prides itself as being realistic, logical, dealing with things the way they are then, we need to

gaze upon the king who, shortly after the passage we've just heard, is stripped of everything including his basic human dignity and is executed on the cross, surely one of the most barbaric forms of execution devised by man.

Yet - we are being told that this is true kingship - real authority and dominion and power.

So what are seeing here? Yes, it's a violent image - the kind of thing which goes on in parts of today's world all the time. But what do we take away from it - an impression of casual brutality, inhumanity and the defeat of hope or do we see through the eyes of faith divine pity, sharing our human condition, entering into it in the fullest way possible and possessing a power and a moral authority which can draw all people into God's kingdom?

What today's feast says to us, coming at the end of the liturgical year, is that the God who reigns from the cross, the victim - king, says to us that the only true power is that of love - a love which both offers itself for us and, in turn, says to us that this almost impossible sacrificial way is the only route to God's kingdom and to an understanding of what life at its deepest level is all about. What today's feast of Christ the King is meant to say to us on this last Sunday of the Church year, when we are also urged to stir up our wills and our hearts to redouble our efforts as disciples of Christ - what it says to us is that the Lord has shared our human condition to redeem us, to save us from our sins - in other words to allow us to be the people we are meant to be - and also in order to teach us how to live and love and forgive; how to give of ourselves in sacrificial love, how to spend our lives - like Jesus himself - seeking the will of the Father. This we are being told is the expression of the Kingdom of God on earth, this is 'all empire power and glory.' this is the way. The Feast of Christ the King couldn't be more relevant, because it says to us that here is hope beyond the possibility of hope, even for a bitterly divided and brutal world - now as it was then. Because the Christ, the Saviour, who reigns as King from the tree of the cross does so always in the light of the resurrection which is to come. And because of him that resurrection - that new life - can be ours too. +

Christmas Crafting Session
Saturday 30th November 2 – 4 p.m.
St Arvans Meeting Rooms

Create a wreath, door swag or garland
using local materials
£20 (proceeds to St Arvan's church)
Mulled wine, mince pies etc.
Any donations of greenery etc
very welcome

Now a sell out!
All spaces filled

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

December 14th and usually
every second Saturday
of the month

Childrens activity table

For assistance or a lift
please ring Diane on 628084

On 14th December entry will be £6 per
person which includes a free raffle ticket
with a guaranteed prize for everyone.
There will also be Christmas carols led by
Dorothy

We would be very grateful for donations of
small gifts such as chocolate, biscuits,
toiletries etc and Christmas wrapping
paper. Please pass these on to Maureen,
Sheena or Diane by 6th December

The Ministry Area Prayer
Group meets every Thursday
7.45pm – 9pm

During these colder months,
prayer meetings will be held in
David Carne's house, The Cedars,
Chapel Lane, Pwllmeyric. If there
is anyone or anything which you
would like to be prayed for, please
email david@bedlambeds.com

SERVICES IN OUR CHURCHES
TODAY

24th November 2024

Christ the King

The Sunday before Advent

10 a.m. Sung Eucharist at St Arvans

11.30 a.m. Holy Eucharist
at St Deiniol's, Itton

NEXT SUNDAY

The First Sunday of Advent

1st December 2024:

10 a.m. Sung Eucharist at St Arvans

11.30 a.m. Holy Eucharist
at St Mary's, Penterry

4 p.m. All Age Eucharist
at St James', Devcauden

Readings:

Jeremiah 33.14-16

Psalms 25.1-10

1 Thessalonians 3.9-13

St Luke 21.25-36

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

The Devauden Calendar is now
available to buy ! £10. Proceeds
to St James Devauden. This will
make a Great Christmas present !!
Available from Devauden shop.

We hope to resume both the daily
celebration of the Eucharist and
the live-streamed Wednesday
evening reflection and night prayer
at St Arvan's at the beginning of
Advent.

More details next Sunday

Advent Courses

Four Tuesdays at 7:30pm at
St.Christopher's Church, Bulwark
with Fr Chris Blanchard: a new
Meditation course that will be the
second ever to be run in the UK!
All are welcome. Starts on
Tuesday **26th November.**

Also, on Tuesday afternoons, an
Advent course based on the life
and teaching of St Francis at
2.45pm, on Tuesdays, in
Collingwood, Chapel Lane,
Pwllmeyric. Starting on 19th
November.

