

# 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.**, 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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## 16<sup>th</sup> March 2025 The Second Sunday of Lent

### The Collect

Almighty God, you show to those who are in error the light of your truth, that they may return to the way of righteousness: grant to all those who are admitted into the fellowship of Christ's religion, that they may reject those things that are contrary to their profession, and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same; through our Lord Jesus Christ, 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 Genesis

The word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, 'Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.' But Abram said, 'O Lord GOD, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is

Eliezer of Damascus?' And Abram said, 'You have given me no offspring, and so a slave born in my house is to be my heir.' But the word of the LORD came to him, 'This man shall not be your heir; no one but your very own issue shall be your heir.' He brought him outside and said, 'Look towards heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them.' Then he said to him, 'So shall your descendants be.' And he believed the LORD; and the LORD reckoned it to him as righteousness. Then he said to him, 'I am the LORD who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess.' But he said, 'O Lord GOD, how am I to know that I shall possess it?' He said to him, 'Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon.' He brought him all these and cut them in two, laying each half over against the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away. As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram, and a deep and terrifying darkness descended upon him. When the sun had gone down and it was dark, a smoking fire-pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, 'To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates.'

[15. 1 - 12, 17 - 18]

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

**Psalm 27:** 1 - 8

**R/ The Lord is my light  
and my salvation.**

The Lord is my light and my salvation;  
whom then shall I fear?  
The Lord is the strength of my life;  
of whom then shall I be afraid?  
When the wicked,  
even my enemies and my foes,  
came upon me to eat up my flesh,  
they stumbled and fell.

**R/ The Lord is my light  
and my salvation.**

Though a host encamp against me,  
my heart shall not be afraid,  
and though there rise up war against me,  
yet will I put my trust in him.

**R/ The Lord is my light  
and my salvation.**

One thing have I asked of the Lord  
and that alone I seek:  
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord  
all the days of my life,  
To behold the fair beauty of the Lord  
and to seek his will in his temple.

**R/ The Lord is my light  
and my salvation.**

For in the day of trouble  
he shall hide me in his shelter;  
in the secret place of his dwelling  
shall he hide me  
and set me high upon a rock.

**R/ The Lord is my light  
and my salvation.**

And now shall he lift up my head  
above my enemies round about me;  
Therefore will I offer in his dwelling  
an oblation with great gladness;  
I will sing and make music to the Lord.

**R/ The Lord is my light  
and my salvation.**

**A reading from the letter of St Paul  
to the Philippians** [3; 17 - 4. 1]

Brothers and sisters, join in imitating me,  
and observe those who live according to  
the example you have in us. For many live  
as enemies of the cross of Christ; I have  
often told you of them, and now I tell you  
even with tears. Their end is destruction;  
their god is the belly; and their glory is in  
their shame; their minds are set on earthly  
things. But our citizenship is in heaven,  
and it is from there that we are expecting  
a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will  
transform the body of our humiliation that

it may be conformed to the body of his glory, by the power that also enables him to make all things subject to himself. Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved.

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

### Gradual Hymn

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ,  
King of endless glory.  
God loved the world so much  
that he gave his only Son;  
Everyone who believes in him  
has eternal life.

**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ,  
King of endless glory.**

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

Listen to the Gospel of Christ according to St Luke **Glory to you, O Lord.**

**A**t that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, 'Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you.' He said to them, 'Go and tell that fox for me, "Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work. Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed away from Jerusalem." Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord."'

[St Luke 13. 31-35]

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

### For Your Prayers

That we may keep a holy and joyful Lent  
The government & people of Ukraine and  
a just and peaceful end to Russia's war of  
aggression there.  
All who are caught up in war or conflict

All those without adequate food or shelter  
The people of Gaza, Israel, Lebanon &  
Syria, & for lasting peace in the Middle  
East

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, & 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;  
Mary; Peter; Kenneth Cameron; Margaret;  
Althea; Naylor & Eira Firth;  
Margi & Bob Osborne, Yvette

### For the Departed:

The recently departed:; Mel Jenkins; Joan  
Kenington; our own departed relatives &  
friends, and those whose anniversaries of  
death fall at this time: Ian & Brian Drake

### **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.*

### Merari

**Jereboam:** I think I remember Jesus telling his followers about how to pray: on their own, in secret and with the door shut.

**Merari:** Yes, that's right.

**Jereboam:** I've been thinking though: what about praying together with other members of the Church? That happens regularly. Aren't you contradicting Jesus?

**Merari:** I don't think so, no. His point was that the important aspect of prayer is one's relationship with God. You are not demonstrating anything to anybody.

**Jereboam:** I think we'd all agree with that.

**Merari:** On the other hand, though, we believe that the Church is the Body of Christ. Through the Church we receive his body and blood; through Jesus, and therefore through the Church, "we are saved and made free", as the saying goes. It follows naturally that we should pray together -- as a family, if you like. Of course we still pray individually, and I like to think that our gatherings grow out of our private prayers. Our worship together is a sort of culmination of everything that we do individually.

**Jereboam:** That must have implications for how the gatherings are conducted.

**Merari:** Certainly, yes. There shouldn't be a contradiction between what we do in private and what we do as a community. The sense of awe, the frustrations, darkness, exhilaration, emptiness, the silence...all those are natural parts of prayer, and the community has to allow for them, has to accommodate them. Otherwise I

think that people might pray better by themselves. To me, the sense of awe is very important. As a young man I once went to the Temple, expecting to find a quiet corner where I could kneel down and pray. It was such a chaos of bustling, worldly nonsense, that I just couldn't do anything.

**Jereboam:** Jesus had a similar reaction too, as I recall, clearing out traders from the Temple.

**Merari:** Yes, I can't imagine that he found dodgy pigeon-sellers any more conducive to private prayer than I do...

## THIS WEEK

On the Second Sunday of Lent we hear how God made a covenant with Abraham. In St Luke's gospel, Jesus after being warned of his danger by some of the Pharisee party, predicts his own death at Jerusalem like the prophets before him. Each day the first readings are chosen to prepare for the gospel and the theme of both readings is complementary. Wednesday is the feast day of Saint Joseph, husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The second week begins with Jesus telling us: "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you." All week we will be taught by Jesus about the simple lessons of being his followers. "Whoever exalts himself will be humbled; but whoever humbles himself will be exalted." Jesus predicts his passion again. Again, they misunderstand, and so he says, "whoever wishes to be great among you shall be your servant." Jesus tells the Pharisees a parable about a poor man and a rich man. The rich man asks Abraham to warn his brothers about the consequences of this behaviour. Abraham answers: "If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone should rise from the dead." Then Jesus tells the scribes and religious leaders the parable about the farmer whose servants were abused by his tenants. Finally, they killed his own son. Jesus concludes, "the Kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that will produce its fruit." While tax collectors and sinners are being drawn to Jesus the Pharisees

complain, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them." So, Jesus tells them the wonderful parable of the Prodigal Son.

**Next Sunday:** The Third Sunday of Lent offers Moses' encounter with God in the burning bush. The Lord promises Moses that he will lead the captive Israelites out of Egypt and into "a land flowing with milk and honey." St Luke's Gospel tells us of Jesus' warning that we must be willing to repent now and that our lives could end by accident or through the evil of someone else. The parable of the barren fig tree reminds us of God's patient love for us, even when we show no signs of changing our lives.

## A Homily for the Second Sunday of Lent

+ The readings today begin with a journey, that of Abraham, the first of the Patriarchs of Israel, the first to hear the call of God. Sometimes we're at a bit of a loss as to their relevance of some of the Old Testament readings, but the Church chooses them mainly to try to make it clear to us that Jesus doesn't appear in the history of the world out of nowhere. He comes, not as just another prophet, not just as a disembodied source of eternal truths but as the focal point of human history, a continuing story in which we ourselves are bound up. He is the one who gives our lives meaning, who gives us a sense of purpose and a vision of where it is we are going. If we are looking for a theme in today's liturgy, it's about the journey of faith. Abraham was called to set out, though he had absolutely no idea where it would lead him; and he had to trust in the mysterious promise of God. And in today's Gospel we heard Jesus' lament over the city of Jerusalem, and by implication, over human society itself. How the voice of God, the voices of mercy, justice and compassion are continually rejected in favour of agendas of violence, hatred, and division. Jesus is warned by some of the Pharisees - and it's not clear whether this is meant as a friendly warning or as a sinister, veiled threat - he's warned to stay away because of the plots of Herod to kill him. Yet it's clear that despite this, Jesus had set his face to go to Jerusalem whatever the consequences might be. The appointed time had come to reveal - in the most unexpected, shocking, and shattering way - the Father's mercy and justice, to reveal his unlimited love

and solidarity for the human race. The confrontation between darkness and the light, which St John speaks about in the prologue to his Gospel, and which we always hear proclaimed on Christmas Day, is being made increasingly clear. Jerusalem, of course, was far more than, in secular terms, the obscure capital of the Roman Province of Judea, or even the former ancient capital of Israel. It was the place of the Temple, the place where the Jews believed God lived among his people, the place where the law and the prophets should be taught in its fullness; it was the place of the true and authentic worship of God; it was the place where the throne of David had been established and where the scriptures said it would be restored for all time. As we know Jerusalem is at the crossroads of east and west, a historical centre of conflict and division

Christ goes to Jerusalem to reveal God's glory, yet as always with the God who is both revealed and hidden, that glory appears to us veiled and in the most unexpected ways. The restoration of the throne of David is given an unexpected meaning at Calvary where Christ will be seen reigning from the cross. For us as Christians, Jerusalem is always the place of the Easter Mystery, which took place at a specific time and place in the world's history, but which is always and eternally present. The Son of Man, the weary pilgrim who tells us that he has no place to lay his head, is now seen to belong in one place in particular, and that is the one place through which we are led home to the life of God.

And what Jesus is saying in these words of lament over the city and to those who were with him is that it's not possible to come to God with our own agendas. It's our own agendas that so often make us unfit for the kingdom of God and make us reject it. Part of our journey this Lent is coming to a realisation that all too often when we say we want to be part of God's kingdom and even, we pray for it to come about, what we're really saying is only when we're ready, and only when we have time, and only if it fits in with our desires. Jesus, the Incarnate Word, who has no agenda but God's, and as St Luke says, his face is already set towards Jerusalem, he knows there isn't room for any other agenda and timetable but that of the Father.

When we talk of past, present, and future, we as part of the Church do so in subtly different ways from the culture around us. The past isn't dead and buried; those who have gone before us live, as we do, in Christ. The Communion of Saints isn't an abstract concept, but an ever-present reality, and that has to make our perspective somehow different. We have to be on our guard against the temptation to believe that only the present is important and that there are no eternal values on which we can base our lives, or the future of the world. Of course, that's not to say that the past controls us, or should constrain us by its inevitably partial understanding, but as those who are journeying towards, not the earthly Jerusalem but the heavenly Jerusalem, we need to keep a firm grip on the values of Christ in the Gospels in order to be guided safely into the future God wants for us. After all the atrocities we are seeing committed against innocent men women and children in Ukraine, or still in the Middle East, people whose only wish is to live their lives in freedom and peace, we don't need to be told what those values are - what they involve and what they unreservedly condemn. They are those things which show us the living face of Christ and the God who is love, compassion and mercy.

It's never the Church's role to try to cling on to the past in a culture of negativity or to turn back the clock to some illusory golden age which never existed, but to live according to another concept of time altogether - the past, present and future of the Kingdom of God - and what we mean by that are the human and divine values of Christ himself - the values we and the Church as a community have a sacred duty to proclaim and live by - the presence we live by, the mystery which informs our lives

So, the Kingdom of God - which Jerusalem is so often used a metaphor for - the City of God, if you like, is never behind us, it's never in the past, nor is it something which only lies in the future. It's among us. Jesus himself is not a figure from the past, but always someone in the present; he is the one who lives. The Kingdom of God - which of course the Gospels identify with the person of Jesus himself - is both with us now and something to be revealed, and the voice of Christ calls us on. And we will not be fit for

it if we spend our time looking for God as being present only somewhere in the recesses of history, or in the pages of a book, however sacred, while ignoring the demands of his presence with us now. When we say that ours is an historic faith, what we mean is that something has happened in the past which determines our future, the message of which - and the means of sharing in it - has been carefully and tenderly passed on to us. In other words, God has revealed himself to us in Christ, and the consequences of that are for all times and all places. The Son of Man who had nowhere to lay his head - the Christ who makes his way to Jerusalem - is still at home nowhere and everywhere.

For the most part, we don't like having to work things out for ourselves, we tend to avoid having our assumptions confronted or challenged. Yet, of course, Jesus in the Gospels constantly did that and constantly does that to us now. The call of to follow him through cross and resurrection to new life - is constant, and keeps leading us towards the true freedom which only this kind of difficult, challenging faith provides. Part of our job during Lent is to re-evaluate what that means for us and where that journey is taking us. +

## SERVICES IN OUR CHURCHES TODAY

### *The Second Sunday of Lent* **16<sup>th</sup> March 2025**

9 a.m. Family Service at St James', Devauden  
10 a.m. Sung Eucharist at St Arvan's  
11.30 a.m. Holy Eucharist at Holy Cross, Kilgwrrwg

### **NEXT SUNDAY** *The Third Sunday of Lent* **23<sup>rd</sup> March 2025**

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

Readings:  
Isaiah 55.1-9  
Psalm 63.1-8  
1 Corinthians 10.1-13  
St Luke 13.1-9

*For all services in the wider Ministry Area please see [www.severnwyema.co.uk](http://www.severnwyema.co.uk)*

## Fr Michael's day off is Monday

**Daily celebrations of the Eucharist** (Tuesday to Saturday) at St Arvan's are at 10 a.m. except Friday at 9.30 a.m.

**There are Lent boxes available** at St Arvan's for the work of A.C.S. (The Additional Curates' Society)

## The Ministry Area Prayer Group

Meets every Thursday 7.45pm – 9pm at David Carne's house, The Cedars, Chapel Lane, Pwllmeyric.  
email [david@bedlambeds.com](mailto:david@bedlambeds.com)

## St Arvans Tea and Chat

*April 12<sup>th</sup> and usually every second Saturday of the month*

Childrens activity table  
*For assistance or a lift please ring Diane on 628084*

## Details of Lent Courses in the Ministry Area:

*Living Hope*  
Mondays March 10<sup>th</sup> to April 14<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m.  
at St Christopher's, Bulwark

*Living to Please God*  
Tuesdays from 11<sup>th</sup> March  
At 2.45 p.m.  
Shirenewton Church Rooms

All are welcome