

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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24th August 2025
St Bartholomew, Apostle

The Collect

Almighty and everlasting God,
who gave to your apostle Bartholomew
grace truly to believe and to preach your
word: grant that your Church may love
that word which he believed and may
faithfully preach and receive the same;
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 Acts of the Apostles

Now many signs and wonders were done
among the people through the apostles.
And they were all together in Solomon's
Portico. None of the rest dared to join
them, but the people held them in high
esteem. Yet more than ever believers
were added to the Lord, great numbers of
both men and women, so that they
even carried out the sick into the streets,

and laid them on cots and mats, in order
that Peter's shadow might fall on some of
them as he came by. A great number
of people would also gather from the
towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick
and those tormented by unclean spirits,
and they were all cured.

[5. 12 - 16]

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

Psalm 145 1-7

R/ The Lord is loving to everyone.

I will exalt you, O God my King,
and bless your name for ever and ever.
Every day will I bless you
and praise your name for ever and ever.

R/ The Lord is loving to everyone.

Great is the Lord
and highly to be praised;
his greatness is beyond all searching out.
One generation shall praise
your works to another
and declare your mighty acts.
They shall speak of the majesty
of your glory,
and I will tell of all your wonderful deeds.

R/ The Lord is loving to everyone.

They shall speak of the might of your
marvellous acts,
and I will also tell of your greatness.
They shall pour forth the story of your
abundant kindness
and joyfully sing of your righteousness.

R/ The Lord is loving to everyone.

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians [4. 9-15]

For I think that God has exhibited us
apostles as last of all, as though
sentenced to death, because we have
become a spectacle to the world, to
angels and to mortals. We are fools
for the sake of Christ, but you are wise
in Christ.

We are weak, but you are strong. You are
held in honour, but we in disrepute.
To the present hour we are hungry and
thirsty, we are poorly clothed
and beaten and homeless, and we grow
weary from the work of our own hands.
When reviled, we bless; when persecuted,
we endure; when slandered,
we speak kindly. We have become like the
rubbish of the world,
the dregs of all things, to this very day.
I am not writing this to make you
ashamed, but to admonish you as my
beloved children. For though you might
have ten thousand guardians in Christ,
you do not have many fathers.
Indeed, in Christ Jesus I became your
father through the gospel.

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

Gradual Hymn

Alleluia, alleluia!
Rabbi, you are the Son of God
You are the King of Israel.
Alleluia!

The Lord be with you:
And also with you

Listen to the Gospel of Christ
according to St Matthew

Glorify to you, O Lord.

A dispute arose among them
as to which one of them was to be
regarded as the greatest.
But he said to them, 'The kings of the
Gentiles lord it over them;
and those in authority over them are
called benefactors.
But not so with you; rather the greatest
among you must become like the
youngest, and the leader like one who
serves. For who is greater, the one who is
at the table or the one who serves?
Is it not the one at the table? But I am
among you as one who serves.'

'You are those who have stood by me in my trials; and I confer on you, just as my Father has conferred on me, a kingdom, so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

[22.24–30]

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

For Your Prayers

That we may follow the apostles in their fearless witness to Christ, and that, inspired by the witness of the Apostles, we may deepen our lives of prayer and service to others.

All pilgrims – especially for Fr Philip as he walks to Rome, and all who journey to Santiago de Compostela and all the holy places of the faith.

The people of Gaza, & Israel, & for lasting peace in the Middle East

For wisdom, restraint and a desire for peace among the nations of the world.

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
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, & Archbishop of Wales; 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 Leo, 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 Jackson; The Revd Helen Rodwell; Elisabeth; Anne-Louise; Mary; Peter;

Margaret; Althea; Margi Osborne, Marilyn Humphries

For the Departed:

The recently departed: John Rowlands; our own departed relatives & friends, and those whose anniversaries of death fall at this time: Dorothy Fatley; Margaret Mitchell; Tanya Blanchard.

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

Jeremiah

Jereboam: Today I am speaking to Jeremiah, who has a particularly fond memory of Jesus. Perhaps you could tell us about it?

Jeremiah: Well, yes...I can't have been more than five or six years old at the time. Jesus asked me to stand in front of him, and he placed his arms on me for several minutes. I felt warm and happy. You know that lovely sensation in your throat when you swallow a really soothing drink? Well, it was a bit like that, except that the lovely sensation filled my whole body.

Jereboam: Did he speak to you?

Jeremiah: A little, yes, although I can't remember much about it. Mainly I remember the warm feeling and, strange as this might sound, the sense that he respected me. While he held

me, he was still speaking to the other people there. Apparently he was encouraging them to treat children kindly...so I've been told anyway.

Jereboam: Many of those who travelled around with Jesus in those days have now become teachers in their own right, but you haven't done that, have you?

Jeremiah: No: I didn't experience Jesus' teaching – or at least I was too young to follow much of what he said. However, I did experience Jesus' loving presence, and so now I try to extend that love to others through my prayers. It's a less public role than the work of our teachers, but I consider it important nevertheless.

Jereboam: I'm sure that you're right. Tell us more about what this work entails. How do you "extend his love", as you put it?

Jeremiah: Well, I suppose it would be true to say that the act of praying implies that you feel a love for God. When God responds to your prayer, he necessarily acts through love, because that's what he is. So, if I pray for someone – let's take you as an example – if I pray for you, I approach God because of my love for him, and he acts on you through his infinite love. The whole process consists of love. The danger for a teacher is that your message may become clouded by your personality and worldly considerations. The prayer process removes that selfishness from the cycle.

Jereboam: I feel flattered that you'd even consider praying for me.

Jeremiah: It's no more extraordinary than you deciding to talk to me. Could I point out too that this all ties in with a letter we received the other day from James? He mentioned that if people don't receive what they ask for in prayer, it might be that they haven't prayed properly. Let me just reinterpret that in my own language: the prayer process involves only love, so the results have to be an expression of love. If I ask for something selfish – let's say, for power

to win an argument – I might receive strength, but not the self-importance I wanted. God transforms our requests into expressions of His love.... purifies our requests, if you like. At least that's how it seems to me.

Jereboam: You've certainly given us plenty to think about. Thank you, Jeremiah.

THIS WEEK

On Sunday we celebrate St Bartholomew the Apostle. In today's Gospel from St Matthew Jesus says, *"The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those in authority over them are called benefactors. But not so with you; rather the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like one who serves".*

Wednesday is the feast day of Saint Monica. Thursday is that of Saint Augustine, Bishop and Doctor of the Church. Friday is the celebration of the Passion or Beheading of Saint John the Baptist.

The first readings at the Eucharist this week are from St Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians, probably the oldest book in the New Testament. The letters are affectionate and frank reminders of the humiliation and challenges that Paul met in preaching to this community he loved so much. These readings are a wonderful reminder that the letters of St Paul were just that - letters to teach, encourage and support early communities of Christians.

St Matthew's Gospel this week includes stories of Jesus strongly challenging the Pharisees. He saw how they made people's lives so difficult by their insistence on the rules and appearances while neglecting mercy and good faith. He chides them for paying attention to the extraneous and not the message: "Blind guides, who strain out the gnat and swallow the camel!" His criticism grows stronger: "On the outside you appear righteous, but inside you are filled with hypocrisy and evildoing." Jesus teaches about preparation: Stay awake! For you do not know on which day your Lord will come." In the parable of the ten maidens who go out to meet the bridegroom, many of the women did not prepare for the

meeting and do not have enough oil for their lamps and Jesus says again, "Stay awake." Saturday's gospel is the dramatic story of the three servants who are given resources by their master and rewarded or punished for what they did with the resources they had.

Next Sunday We are encouraged to embrace humility. The first reading from the Book of Sirach says it simply: "Humble yourself the more, the greater you are, and you will find favor with God." In St Luke's gospel is a beloved story of Jesus saying, "do not recline at table in the place of honor" at a banquet. "For every one who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."

A Homily for St Bartholomew

We know next to nothing about St. Bartholomew, whose feast day we celebrate today. If we register the name at all it's probably either in the context of a famous London teaching hospital named after him, or of a notorious massacre of Huguenots in sixteenth century France. But what we do know about Bartholomew is that he was one of the Twelve Apostles called by Jesus to make up the inner circle of his disciples (twelve to represent the twelve tribes of Israel – that is, symbolising the totality of God's people) who later became the witnesses to the of his Resurrection.

His name is what is called a patronymic, a family name: 'Bar - Tolomai' - 'the son of Tolomai' (in the same way the prefix 'Ap' is used in Welsh) And the Church has always believed that Bartholomew (who is mentioned in the three synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) is the same man as the Nathanael who is mentioned in St John's Gospel, (which doesn't mention the name Bartholomew at all) John says he says he is from Cana of Galilee and that Jesus called him an "Israelite...incapable of deceit." Or 'in whom there is no guile' to use the Authorised translation.

Tradition says that Bartholomew after the Resurrection went to preach the Gospel of Christ in India and Armenia, where he was flayed and beheaded by a local ruler.

Not a great deal to go on - not a great deal to speak about this morning either, you might think

But we have much more to say if we can safely go along with the identification of Bartholomew with Nathaniel, and this is strengthened greatly by the fact that Nathaniel was brought to Christ by the apostle Philip, and in all the lists of the apostles in the synoptic gospels, Bartholomew is always placed next to Philip.

It was Nathaniel / Bartholomew who in St John's Gospel speaks the famous, openly sceptical line concerning Christ: "Can any thing of good come out of Nazareth?" referring most likely to the fact that the later Jewish tradition clearly stated that the Messiah, the Christ, was to come from Bethlehem in Judea, not Nazareth in Galilee.

Nathaniel takes quite a bit of persuading - ultimately Philip just says to him 'look just come and see him and judge for yourself.' Nathaniel was lacking in what Jesus calls "duplicity" - that is, his heart was undivided, his intentions pure - his openness to reality was always ready to recognize and surrender to the truth when he encountered it. And when Jesus sees him and proves that he understands him and knows something about him that no one else knows, Nathaniel is convinced - 'you are the Son of God, you are the King of Israel' he says. And Jesus replies that if Nathaniel follows him he will see far greater things: essentially the Lord is saying to him that he will come to see the vision of God and share the life of God himself.

So what is St John, and through John Christ himself, saying to us in this passage about the calling of one of the Apostles? Far from there being nothing to say about St Bartholomew, in fact there's a great deal, and anything I say in a few minutes this morning can only scratch the surface. Firstly, that it is Jesus himself who finds us, not the other way around. The message of the Incarnation is that of God coming in search of the human race and identifying himself completely with us. Secondly, Christ often uses the words and actions of other people to bring us to him. In this case Philip persuades Nathaniel to overcome his scepticism and to see for himself the truth about Jesus. So often we are brought to faith, or to a deeper experience of the Faith, by those around

us who are able to reflect some of the love of God and the urgency and importance to all of us of the person and message of Christ, and to convince us to have a closer look. Like Nathaniel, *when we do* we are not disappointed, we are drawn by Jesus himself into the mystery of his life - the life of God himself, the life of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the life of grace, of faith, hope and love.

And thirdly, Jesus also calls *each one of us*, even though we may be naturally sceptical and hard to convince, even if we are far from perfect, even though we are, deeply unfashionable and more than vaguely archaic though it now sounds, sinners. There really is a more accurate word to describe our flawed human nature, but it's one which has gathered all sorts of unfortunate conceptions around it. We are all sinners because of the human condition; because we're not what we are intended to be; because we are involved in human history. All of the above. But we can also say that Christ has redeemed us by his life, death and Resurrection.

And each one of us, through our baptism, has become a member of Christ's Body and has become a follower of Jesus. What does this calling mean to us? What does it require of us?

The call of Christ is never a one-off experience, it's an on-going way of life. The Lord calls us not once but constantly throughout our lives, however hard we sometimes try to hide from him. Sometimes He calls us in ways that result in major changes and upheavals in our lives. But most of the time Jesus calls in a quietly insistent way that we may try to ignore or explain away with all kinds of clever psychological evasions. But when we listen we are changed. These small, sometimes imperceptible but constant shifts result in us eventually becoming closer to God. It's a process, not a one-off event. And so in one sense we are already living in the kingdom of God here and now. Christ is as present to us as he was to the people in the today's Gospel - not physically, but through the power of the Holy Spirit. Why else are we here, but to meet him in the words of the Gospels and in the reality of the Blessed Sacrament of his Body and Blood. We hear him speak to us through the words of Scripture and when he gives his life to us in Holy Communion to draw us ever more

deeply into the mystery of his life? Here we are truly given a foretaste of the life of heaven.

So, the Saints from the Apostles and martyrs - even those about whom we know very little about their individual lives - above all else witness not just to the Lord, but to the power of his resurrection and the new life which is ours as a *result*. Our Lord, in the Sermon on the Mount says to the crowds, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." In Bartholomew / Nathaniel we have such an example of purity of heart - he sees - and recognizes - God when he is confronted with Him and, on seeing Him, believes in Him, and upon believing in Him, follows Him.

That's all we really know about St Bartholomew the Apostle.
Perhaps that's all we need to know. +

The Ministry Area Prayer Group

meets every Thursday 7.45pm – 9pm
28th August at St Thomas Becket,
Shirenewton
For further details
email david@bedlambeds.com

St Arvans Tea and Chat

September 12th
and usually every second
Saturday of the month
Childrens activity table

*For assistance or a lift
please ring Diane on 628084*

SERVICES IN OUR CHURCHES

TODAY

St Bartholomew, Apostle
24th August 2025

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

NEXT SUNDAY

Trinity 11 31st August 2025

10 a.m. Sung Eucharist
at St Arvan's

Readings
Sirach 10.12-18
Psalm 112
Hebrews 13.1-8, 15, 16
St Luke 14.1, 7-14

Daily celebrations at St Arvans are at
10 a.m.; Fridays at 9.30 a.m.

Fr Michael's day off is Monday.

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

St Arvan's Annual Congregational Meeting Sunday 31st August after church

A meeting to hear annual reports on
the church's mission, finances and
fabric, and to elect officers and
representatives for the coming year.
OPEN to ALL