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 later
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
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Mobile 07867803479
E-mail: frmichael1@aol.com

23rd November 2025
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; grant this for the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, to whom with you and the Holy Spirit, be the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. A**MEN**

A reading from the prophet Jeremiah

Woe to the shepherds who destroy
and scatter the sheep of my pasture!
says the LORD. Therefore thus says the
LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the
shepherds who shepherd my people:
It is you who have scattered my flock,
and have driven them away, and you
have not attended to them. So I will
attend to you for your evil doings, says
the LORD. Then I myself will gather the
remnant of my flock out of all the lands
where I have driven them, and I will bring
them back to their fold, and they shall
be fruitful and multiply. I will raise up
shepherds over them who will shepherd
them, and they shall not fear any longer,
or be dismayed, nor shall any be missing,
says the LORD. The days are surely
coming, says the LORD, when I will raise
up for David a righteous Branch, and
he shall reign as king and deal wisely,
and shall execute justice and
righteousness in the land. In his days
Judah will be saved and Israel will live
in safety. And this is the name by which
he will be called: 'The LORD is our
righteousness.' [**23.** 1 - 6]

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

Psalm 46

R/ **The Lord of hosts is with us: the God of Jacob is our stronghold.**

God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear,
though the earth should change,
though the mountains shake
in the heart of the sea;
though its waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble
with its tumult.

R/ **The Lord of hosts is with us: the God of Jacob is our stronghold.**

There is a river whose streams
make glad the city of God,
the holy habitation of the Most High.
God is in the midst of the city;
it shall not be moved;
God will help it when the morning dawns.
The nations are in an uproar,
the kingdoms totter;
he utters his voice, the earth melts.

R/ **The Lord of hosts is with us: the God of Jacob is our stronghold.**

The LORD of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our refuge.
Come, behold the works of the LORD;
see what desolations
he has brought on the earth.
He makes wars cease t
o the end of the earth;
he breaks the bow,
and shatters the spear;
he burns the shields with fire.
'Be still, and know that I am God!
I am exalted among the nations,
I am exalted in the earth.'

R/ **The Lord of hosts is with us: the God of Jacob is our stronghold.**

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Colossians [**1**.11-20]

May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, and may you be prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, t he firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers – all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

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

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

When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. Then Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.' And they cast lots to divide his clothing. And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, 'He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!'
The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, and saying, 'If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!' There was also an inscription over him, 'This is the King of the Jews.'
One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, 'Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!' But the other rebuked him, saying, 'Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong.' Then he said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.'
Jesus replied, 'Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.'
[**23**.33–43]
This is the Gospel of the Lord
Praise to you, O Christ

For Your Prayers

That our first loyalty may be to Christ our shepherd and king
Musicians.
The government & people of Ukraine and a just and peaceful end to Russia's war of aggression there 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.
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, Nathan;

For the Departed:
The recently departed: Ken Smith; Rosemary Whittaker; our own departed relatives & friends, and those whose anniversaries of death fall this week: Edward Roderick Hill

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

Tirzah

Jereboam: This week we are again speaking with Tirzah, the founder of the Neighbour Group, which helps people in any kind of difficulty. Tirzah, a few months ago you told us about the difficulties this work involves, but perhaps today you might explain to us how the group began?
Tirzah: Well, it actually started because I was so hopeless at most aspects of faith – you know, prayer and so on. I just didn't have the patience or the commitment. It bothered me, though, that I was missing out on something: I had this vague sense that Jesus had offered something really important, but I didn't feel suited to it in some ways. Then I learnt what he had said from the Cross to that repentant thief: "Today you will be with me in Paradise." That got me wondering. "The thief never showed any aptitude for prayer," I thought. "All he did was to feel sympathy for Jesus and to speak to him kindly. Maybe I can do something similar myself."
Then I heard about another thing that Jesus had said. He told people that whatever they did to others, they were in truth doing to him. Apparently, actions of charity could affect pretty dramatically people's chances of reaching the Kingdom of Heaven. "Maybe," I thought, "if I work to help others, I can gain some sort of eternal reward, despite my other limitations."
In the end I found myself encouraging others to do the same. The Neighbour Group just started from there really; people joined in and seemed happy to share my motivation.
Jereboam: You think that the motivation is important then?

***Tirzah**:* Yes, I do ask that people adopt a similar attitude if they possibly can. The way I see it is this: if you perform good deeds simply because of a sense of rightness or duty, you're in danger of acting as your own judge, of closing in on yourself and becoming your own centre of attention. Whereas if you remain aware that you are really meeting Jesus through your actions, then you look outwards towards an endless prospect of goodness.

Jereboam: And clearly people are still keen to join the group…

Tirzah: So far, yes. There are lots of us that would love to have a stronger faith, but with something like the Neighbour Group we can find practical ways to compensate for our shortcomings.

***Jereboam**:* What would you say to people who might accuse you of thinking more about your own salvation than about the interests of others?

Tirzah: Well, I couldn't say that they were wrong. I'm not sure that they're right either – it's hard to know. These things are bound up so closely with one another.

Jereboam: Let me finish by wishing the group every success with its work.

Tirzah: Thank you, Jereboam.

THIS WEEK

This is the last week of the liturgical year, As always on this last Sunday before Advent, we celebrate the Solemnity of Christ the King. The readings remind us of God's faithfulness to us as he promises to shepherd the people of Israel. In Luke's Gospel we are taken to the crucifixion and Jesus being mocked as "King of the Jews." The man crucified next to him asks Jesus to remember him when he gets into his Kingdom. Jesus replies, "Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

The first readings in this last week of the liturgical year are from the Book of Daniel. These apocalyptic and mystical readings were written to give encouragement to the Jewish people in the face of persecution.

The stories in the Gospel of Luke this week offer a look at the meaning of generosity as the poor widow offers her two small coins. Jesus cautions against those who will come in his name promising salvation: "Do not follow them!" The cost of following his teaching is made clear, "You will be hated by all because of my name, but not a hair on your head will be destroyed." In a dramatic look at the end time, echoing the Daniel readings, Jesus says, "And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." Jesus continues the "end time" message saying, "know that the Kingdom of God is near. Amen, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place." He cautions, "Beware that your hearts do not become drowsy from carousing and drunkenness and the anxieties of daily life, and that day catch you by surprise like a trap."

Next Sunday is the The First Sunday of Advent and the beginning of a season filled with the riches of resonant and evocative scripture readings. For the next few weeks, the main focus will be on the first reading, with the gospel chosen to accompany it. The prophet Isaiah offers the people of God a promise of peace: "They shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks." St Matthew's gospel speaks of the story of Noah and we hear words of caution from Jesus to prepare "for an hour you do not expect."

A Homily for Christ the King

+ Today, on this last Sunday before Advent, the Gospel shows us Jesus at Calvary, crucified between two criminals, mocked by the soldiers of the Roman occupying power. We see here the ultimate confrontation between the violent, pragmatic, ruthless power of this world and the hidden, veiled, spiritual power of God himself who rules with love and self-sacrifice. The cross is sometimes referred to in the New Testament and later as a tree, and here we have a tree which is in stark contrast to the symbols of good cheer and a seasonal good will which we are already somewhat prematurely beginning to see around us, but *it is* a symbol of a deadly serious witness to the eternal love which we believe underlies all things.

So, what we see in the Gospel is a strange confrontation with all our expectations. We see a dying Saviour, who we call a king, hanging on the cross, wearing a crown, not of gold but of thorns, mocked by those he came to save. What do we find here? The tragi-comic end of a provincial agitator, someone who was a failed messiah, paying the price of defeat and betrayal, or do we see something far more mysterious taking place here, something far more disturbing to the ways of the world and the way we understand them?

It's clear that those who stood around to jeer, went away less than satisfied, even strangely disconcerted by what they saw. According to the Gospels, in his dying moments, one of the thieves crucified alongside Jesus was driven to repentance, conversion and faith; St Luke, St Matthew & St Mark go on to say that at least one of the soldiers, a centurion, most likely a hard-bitten veteran of many campaigns and a witness to many executions, was also disconcerted and brought to his knees by what he saw.

We like to think otherwise, but this isn't always a benign world, and it always has been that way. Jesus is sent to bear witness to God's kingdom, to bring light into the darkness of the world and into the darkness in human hearts. And if we want to see what happens when God's mercy and love become uniquely present in a human being in a world which prides itself as being realistic, dealing with things the way they are, then we need to gaze upon the King who is stripped of everything, even his basic human dignity and lifted up on the cross.

So,again, that question: when we look at the cross what is it we actually see? Is it only a graphically violent image, a symbol of dereliction, defeat and inhumanity? Or can we see in it a depiction of the divine pity, sharing our human condition, entering into it in the fullest way possible – as a human being - and possessing a veiled power which draws people into God's kingdom, into God's life and God's way of doing things? The cross is a symbol of a truth which speaks to us of the healing of our conflicted and divided human nature, of the conquering of the alienation and death which also characterises worldly authority, in so far

as it operates unjustly and fails to reflect the compassion and mercy which comes from outside and beyond us from the creator and sustainer of all things.
Of course, in some ways, ours has been up to now anyway a gentler, *less outwardly* brutal age – or at least it is *here* and *now*, *where we are* (particularly if we stay away from social media and it's deliberately divisive algorithms), but we know very well from the news that this safety and security isn't true for those not so very far away who are subjected to invasion and violence and the deprivation of their human dignity every day of their lives. We see a threatening world where the stoking of division, hatred and violence is on the increase. We see an unsettling world where the brazenly corrupt leader of a once trusted and essential ally now sides with the worst dictators on the planet and constantly betrays the values on which his country was ostensibly founded.
The Feast of Christ the King is a relatively modern celebration, dating from the mid-1920s. And, as we see, it's – unfortunately – increasingly relevant. Someone – I forget who at the moment - said that the Sunday of Christ the King was inaugurated to the sound of breaking glass – that is amid the noise of political violence, hatred and insecurity. And it was intended partly as a response to the rising tide of totalitarian ideologies both of the right and of the left which claimed total ownership over the human person and the human spirit. But today's feast of Christ the King is saying that there is only one who can lay claim to that, and he is the embodiment of love and mercy, the one who died to take away the sins of the world. So the crucifix, that visual description of Calvary, speaks to us not of the triumph of violence and oppression, but its complete opposite - the compassion - the fellow-suffering - of God, made concrete and visible in the death agony of the innocent victim of humanity's violence and hatred. It matters who it is who is nailed to the cross. It's not only a universal symbol of the reality of human suffering, above all, it's a sign that God himself has become one of us in everything that matters - even in the limits placed by death on the length of our earthly lives, even in the inhumanity and injustice human beings all too often show to one another. Surely, we can all identify with that?
A faith without the cross is a faith which refuses to face up to reality, and is one which has nothing to say to us that is in the least useful in addressing the experience of human life and human nature as it is. It's nothing we can't get from the John Lewis Christmas commercial.
What today's feast says to us, coming at the end of the liturgical year, before the new church year begins next Sunday at the start of Advent, is that the God who reigns from the cross - as the victim-king, Christ the King - to free us from alienation, sin and death - is teaching us that the only true power and the only true reality is the way of love - the almost impossibly hard, costly, sacrificial love of Christ, a love which both offers itself for us and, in turn, asks that. by the help and grace of God, we ourselves try to express that love inevitably falteringly and stumblingly in the way we live, in our relationships with others.
So today we celebrate what we probably should call an *alternative idea of Kingship – the true* 'kingship' of Christ. We reflect on the fact that even a savage symbol of barbarity, torture and degradation - the cross - is transformed, in the hands of God, into a sign of his love for us and the whole of creation.
But the Christ who reigns as king from the cross does so *always* in the context of the resurrection to come. And that resurrection, bought for us all upon the cross is for all times and all seasons and even shines its light into the gathering gloom of the end of November, and into the darkness of a world crying out for his love and compassion and the hope of new life which he promises. +

Many thanks to all those who made the Jazz concert at St Arvans such a success last Friday. Our particular thanks to Sheena and Barney Banfield for organising and coordinating the event. Our thanks, too, to Fraser and the Quartet for a fantastic evening

Our thanks to all those who contributed chocolate to the St Arvans Harvest Appeal for the unhoused at Christmas, and to Verena for organising the appeal

SERVICES IN OUR CHURCHES

TODAY

CHRIST THE KING

The Sunday before Advent

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

NEXT SUNDAY

The First Sunday of Advent
30th November 2025

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

Readings:
Isaiah 2.1-5
Psalm 122
Romans 13.11-14
St Matthew 24.36-44

Daily Celebrations of the Eucharist at St Arvans this week: Tuesday, Wednesday, and Saturday at 10 00, Friday at 09.30
Please check as times may alter

Fr Michael's day off is Monday this week

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

St Arvans Tea and Chat

Christmas Event
December 14th
and usually every second Saturday of the month
Children's activity table

For assistance or a lift please ring Diane on 628084

Advent Courses

Daytime: Tuesdays at 3pm, starting on 25 November, in Shirenewton Church Rooms. . Contact Carol 07380 992494 for further details.

Evening: Thursdays at 7.30pm, starting on 27 November, in The Cedars, Pwllmeyric. Contact Father Michael on 01291 622064

We will be exploring: Who am I, and Why am I here – a course in 4 parts by Nick Baines, Bishop of Leeds, considering what it means to be a Christian in a world challenged by war, poverty, climate changeThere will be a small charge to cover course materials**.**

The Ministry Area Prayer Group

meets every Thursday 7.45pm – 9pm
For further details
emailil david@bedlambeds.com

23rd October and onwards
at *The Cedars*