

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
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1st February 2026

kept as

**The Presentation
of the Lord
Candlemas**

The Collect

Almighty and ever-living God, clothed in majesty, whose beloved Son was this day presented in the Temple, in substance of our flesh: grant that we may be presented to you with pure and clean hearts, by your Son Jesus Christ 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 prophet Malachi

Thus says the LORD God: See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight – indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts.

But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the LORD in righteousness. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years. Then I will draw near to you for judgement; I will be swift to bear witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired workers in their wages, the widow, and the orphan, against those who thrust aside the alien, and do not fear me, says the LORD of hosts.

[3. 1 - 5]

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

Psalm 24 7-10

**R/ The Lord of hosts,
he is the king of glory.**

Lift up your heads, O gates;
lift them high, O everlasting doors;
and the King of glory shall come in.
'Who is this King of glory?'
'The Lord, strong and mighty,
the Lord, mighty in battle.'

**R/ The Lord of hosts,
he is the king of glory.**

Lift up your heads, O gates;
lift them high, O everlasting doors;
and the King of glory shall come in.
'Who is he, this King of glory?'
'The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory.'

**R/ The Lord of hosts,
he is the king of glory.**

**A reading from the letter
to the Hebrews** [2. 14 - 18]

Since the children share flesh and blood, Jesus himself likewise shared the same

things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. For it is clear that he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham. Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

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

Gradual Hymn

Alleluia, Alleluia!
The light to enlighten the Gentiles
And give glory to Israel, your people.
Alleluia!

The Lord be with you:
And also with you

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

R/ Glory to you, O Lord

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, Mary and Joseph brought Jesus up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. (as it is written in the law of the Lord, 'Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord'), and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, 'a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons.' Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the

parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, 'Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.' And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, 'This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed – and a sword will pierce your own soul too.' There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshipped there with fasting and prayer night and day. At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favour of God was upon him.

[2. 22 - 40]

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

For Your Prayers

That the light of Christ may purify our hearts, minds and intentions and guide us in our following of the Lord.
The government & people of Ukraine and a just and peaceful end to Russia's war of aggression there.
The people of Iran, Gaza, & Israel & for lasting peace in the Middle East, for the people of Sudan.
The people of the U.S.A.
and of Minnesota, particularly.
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 & Bob Osborne, Nathan;

For the Departed:

The recently departed; Peter Anderson; Les Lines; our own departed loved ones, and those whose anniversaries of death fall this week:

Trevor Beverley-Jones; Jo Boys; Sylvia Eggert; Philip Arthur Zorab

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

Doeg

Reuben: D Doeg and friend
Jereboam: I've got some difficult questions for you, Doeg.
Doeg: All right...let's try.
Jereboam: I heard this the other day: "It was essential that Jesus should become completely like his brothers, so that he could be a compassionate and trustworthy high priest of God's religion, able to atone for human sins."
Doeg: Yes, I've heard that too.
Jereboam: And Paul has mentioned that Jesus lives in his people.
Doeg: Certainly.
Jereboam: But, if I've understood correctly, Jesus was also with the Father from the very beginning.
Doeg: Right again. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God."
Jereboam: Here's my problem: what about all those years before the Incarnation? Jesus existed, but wasn't available to people, because they didn't realise he was there.
Doeg: It sounds strange when you put it that way.
Jereboam: And certainly he couldn't live in his followers, because there weren't any.
Doeg: Obviously not.
Jereboam: So I wondered: did he enter the lives of our ancestors too, even if they didn't understand it in those terms? Maybe the Incarnation just meant that people finally accepted what had already been happening for thousands of years.
Doeg: That certainly sounds plausible, doesn't it?
Friend: Excuse me: I couldn't help overhearing. What about the salvation of the world on the Cross? People can't have been saved by Jesus until the Crucifixion.
Doeg: Ah – maybe I can explain that. I was taught that Jesus, after

his death but before his resurrection, descended into the realms of the dead, to awaken the righteous to eternal life. So ultimately good people from all ages were included in his salvation.

Jereboam: I suppose it's another example of God working outside the restrictions of time.

Doeg: You manage to come up with some tricky issues, Jereboam...

Jereboam: I did warn you.

THIS WEEK

We keep Sunday as the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord. It celebrates Mary and Joseph bringing their baby, Jesus, to the temple and their remarkable encounters with both Simeon and Anna. Simeon tells them, "Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel," while Anna "gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem." This feast also marks the end of the 'extended Christmas and Epiphany Season. From today we look towards the coming season of Lent. Ash Wednesday is 18th February this year.

Thursday is the feast day of Saint Agatha, Virgin and Martyr, and on Friday we remember Saint Paul Miki and Companions, Martyrs of Japan.

The story of David we have been following for the past two weeks will end with his death as we conclude the readings from the Book of Samuel. As the narrative moves to the Book of Kings, David's son Solomon, has succeeded him on the throne and for the next week, the tale of notable leaders of Israel's history continues to unfold.

In St Mark's Gospel this week, Jesus continues to heal and teach. The young daughter of a synagogue official is sick and on the way to heal her, as Jesus stood in a crowd, he felt the power go out of him as a woman with a haemorrhage touched his cloak. "Your faith has saved you," he reassures her. To the father he says, "Do not be afraid; just have faith" and heals the daughter. He teaches in the synagogue in his hometown "and they took offense at him." He was not able to perform miracles there, because of their lack of faith. Jesus sends his disciples out to preach and heal, telling them to take

nothing for the journey but a walking stick. Though the demons know who Jesus is, Herod thinks he is John the Baptist, whom Herod had beheaded. Jesus encourages his busy disciples, "Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while." But as they tried to get away "and saw the vast crowd, his heart was moved with pity for them, for they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things."

Next Sunday, the Second Sunday before Lent, Jesus encourages his disciples to let their light shine: "Your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father."

A homily for Candlemas

+ Today's liturgy really speaks for itself, and because of what we are doing in words, music and actions we don't need that much by way of explanation as to its layers of meaning. With the story we hear in today's Gospel of Jesus' presentation in the Temple, what is sometimes referred to as the 'extended' Christmas season – the Sundays of Epiphany, that time of the year when we reflect particularly on the Lord's Incarnation - comes to a definite end. Lent doesn't start for another two and a half weeks or so, but as today's liturgy makes clear, from today onwards we begin to make that shift in our spiritual gaze and look towards the cross and Easter. Candlemas falls – and it's deliberately designed to fall – at the time of the old Celtic festival of Imbolc. There was a similar Roman fertility festival, Lupercalia, at the beginning of February, too. That's not a problem – in fact, it's quite the reverse. We practice continuity: Christ is the power of love behind all things, and Christianity is meant to baptise and incorporate everything that is good in natural spirituality - and we light our candles today just as we begin to see the light strengthening in the natural world, the lengthening of the hours of daylight, and we hear the increase in birdsong.

So, today our gaze moves forward, and this festival of the presentation of Jesus in the temple can be seen to foreshadow his later entrance into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, after which he will be lifted up on the cross for the salvation of the world. And, of course, this is summed up in Simeon's prophecy which we've just heard

in the Gospel. St Luke tells us that Simeon, inspired by the Holy Spirit, entered the temple at the same time as Jesus was brought in by Mary and Joseph. And he immediately recognised in the child the fulfilment of the promise God has made to his people and says that now he can depart this life in peace. The promised one, the Messiah, has come. This moment is for Simeon and then for the devout widow, Anna, the prophet, the fulfilment of a lifetime spent living in hope, a hope that sums up and represents all of Israel's waiting for the Messiah. Today, if you like, we see the promises we heard about throughout Advent, the longing for deliverance of the people of God, recognised as having come to pass. But today isn't only a feast day of unconstrained joy. Here at Candlemas, the joy of Simeon as he recognises in the infant Jesus the Messiah, God's light to the nations, quickly gives way to realism as he speaks of Jesus as an inevitable sign of contradiction and division – how could the Word of God incarnate born into a world of fallen human beings be otherwise? Then Simeon turns to Blessed Mary herself and predicts the sword-thrust of grief that she will experience at the death of her son, some thirty years or so years in the future. Redemption is brought about at a cost, and the price is paid by God himself. But our relationship with God isn't transactional – despite the best efforts of some throughout history to portray it that way. It's not a deal – it's a free gift. So Christ comes to share in our experience fully even to the point of sharing our life and death. Because ours is fundamentally a faith of the Incarnation, the Christian faith presents us with a picture of human life, and all created life, as it really is. There are no rose-tinted spectacles or romanticised visions here: the great Festivals and Feasts of the Church's year all tend to have a darker, realistic edge to them because they look life straight in the eye and tell it how it is. What use is a faith which does anything else?

Today is a pivotal point in the year, from now on we are very definitely focused on the coming seasons of Lent and Easter - from the crib we turn to the cross and we face the most profound mystery of all - that of the meaning of pain, suffering and death which is transformed by the

shattering event of the Lord's Resurrection.

Once again, today's liturgy points out to us that it is through the Word made flesh in Jesus Christ that we can begin to make sense of our own encounters with change and loss and grief, pain, suffering and death. Christ is the light which the darkness cannot extinguish. Light is a sign of contradiction to the darkness. But in so much as we share in the light, and reflect it to the world, in whatever ways we can, small or great, we come to share in the Salvation – the Resurrection life – of the one who comes to bring glad tidings of joy to the whole of creation. +

St Arvans Tea and Chat

Saturday February 14th
and usually every second Saturday of the month
Children's activity table
For assistance or a lift
please ring Diane on 628084

The Ministry Area Prayer Group

Thursdays at 7.45 – 9.00 p.m.

During the colder months we meet at The Cedars, Chapel Lane, Pwllmeyric, NP16 6LE
From 9th April until 24th September 2026 we will be meeting in Churches around the Ministry Area.

Please join us, everyone is welcome and no experience is necessary!

Please contact David on 07887 853479

david-carne@outlook.com

for any prayers that you would like us to include or for any questions that you have.

SERVICES IN OUR CHURCHES

TODAY

kept as

Presentation of the Lord

1st February 2026

10 a.m.	Sung Eucharist at St Arvan's
11.30 a.m.	Holy Eucharist at St Mary's, Penterry
4 p.m.	All Age Eucharist at St James', Devauden

NEXT SUNDAY

The Second Sunday before Lent

8th February 2026

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

Readings:

Genesis 1.1 - 2.3
Psalm 136 or 136.1-9, 23-26
Romans 8.18-25
Matthew 6.25-34

Fr Michael's day off is Monday this week

The Eucharist will be celebrated this week at St Arvan's at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Saturday, and on Thursday & Friday at 9.30 a.m.

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

Daily Prayer

This is a good week to use the background of our lives to talk with the Lord about our need for healing. We can begin each day by naming some desire we have for healing, wholeness and peace. Putting these desires into words, early each day, as soon as we get up or while getting ready to face the day, helps us give focus to our relationship with the Lord. "Lord, thank you for this day. Be with me as I face the challenges before me. I especially need patience and more compassion, Lord. Heal the anger I feel, and give me peace, so that I can love the way I know you want me to." Each of us can make this 30 second prayer specific

to what we need to do each day, and the grace we need to do it. Getting in the habit of naming what we need and asking for it will shape how we spend the day, confidently aware of God's presence with us.

Throughout the day, we can continue our simple conversation with the Lord, speaking friend to friend. We may encounter things within ourselves that are not as they should be. Anger or resentment, fear or paralysis, jealousy or pride, lust or greed, self-pity or judging others are all things that distort our ability to love others the way we are loved by our God. When we encounter them, we can ask the Lord to heal us and purify our hearts. Each experience of our need for a Saviour and our ability to name them each day can deepen our desire, The healing stories in the gospels make it clear that faith is key to healing. When the people in Jesus' home town say, "Isn't this only the carpenter's son?" their lack of faith is saying, "He can't heal us." In our own struggle with letting Jesus be our Saviour, two things can get in the way. First of all, we need to know we need healing. Secondly, we need to want to be healed. If we cling to being angry or have become comfortable being afraid, we will first need to acknowledge what a difference freedom would mean in our lives and come to desire healing. This honest dialogue with our Lord, throughout our days, no matter what we are doing, can help us grow in faith in the One who wants nothing more than to free us to know his love, and to share it generously with others.

The integrating element of this daily prayer is the gratitude we express each evening before we sleep, giving thanks for the grace to be able to connect with our Saviour throughout this busy day.

With thanks to Creighton University's Online Ministries