

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, private prayer and a time of stillness.

Our current live-streamed services are as follows:: Sunday Eucharist at 10. a.m., and it can be accessed on the St Arvans Parish Group page on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/vicaragecello1/>

and 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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E-mail: frmichael1@aol.com

8th March 2026

The Third Sunday of Lent

The Collect

Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified: mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; 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 book of Exodus

From the wilderness of Sin the whole congregation of the Israelites journeyed by stages, as the LORD commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. The people quarrelled with Moses, and said, 'Give us water to drink.' Moses said to them, 'Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test

the LORD?' But the people thirsted there for water; and the people complained against Moses and said, 'Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?' So Moses cried out to the LORD, 'What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me.' The LORD said to Moses, 'Go on ahead of the people, and take some of the elders of Israel with you; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go.

I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink.' Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. He called the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarrelled and tested the LORD, saying, 'Is the LORD among us or not?' [17. 1 - 7]

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

Psalm 95 *Venite, exultemus*

R/ O that today you would hearken to his voice. Harden not your hearts

O come, let us sing to the Lord;
let us heartily rejoice
in the rock of our salvation.
Let us come into his presence
with thanksgiving
and be glad in him with psalms.
For the Lord is a great God
and a great king above all gods.

R/ O that today you would hearken to his voice. Harden not your hearts

In his hand are the depths of the earth
and the heights of the mountains
are his also.
The sea is his, for he made it, and his
hands have moulded the dry land.

R/ O that today you would hearken to his voice. Harden not your hearts

Come, let us worship and bow down and

kneel before the Lord our Maker.

For he is our God; we are the people of
his pasture and the sheep of his hand
O that today you would listen
to his voice:

R/ O that today you would hearken to his voice. Harden not your hearts

'Harden not your hearts as at Meribah,
on that day at Massah in the wilderness,
'When your forebears tested me,
and put me to the proof,
though they had seen my works.

R/ O that today you would hearken to his voice. Harden not your hearts

'Forty years long I detested
that generation and said,
"This people are wayward in their hearts;
they do not know my ways."
'So I swore in my wrath,
"They shall not enter into my rest."

R/ O that today you would hearken to his voice. Harden not your hearts

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans [5; 1-11]

Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person – though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. Much more surely then, now that we have been

justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. But more than that, we even boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

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

Praise to you, O Christ,
king of eternal glory!
God loved the world so much
that he gave his only Son;
Everyone who believes in him
has eternal life.
**Praise to you, O Christ,
king of eternal glory!**

The Lord be with you:
And also with you

Listen to the Gospel of Christ
according to St John

Glorify to you, O Lord.

Jesus came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon. A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, 'Give me a drink.' (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, 'How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?' (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, 'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, "Give me a drink," you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.' The woman said to him, 'Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?' Jesus said to her, 'Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.' The woman

said to him, 'Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.' Jesus said to her, 'Go, call your husband, and come back.' The woman answered him, 'I have no husband.' Jesus said to her, 'You are right in saying, "I have no husband"; for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!' The woman said to him, 'Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem.' Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.' The woman said to him, 'I know that Messiah is coming' (who is called Christ). 'When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.' Jesus said to her, 'I am he, the one who is speaking to you.' Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, 'What do you want?' or, 'Why are you speaking with her?' Then the woman left her water-jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, 'Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?' They left the city and were on their way to him. Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, 'Rabbi, eat something.' But he said to them, 'I have food to eat that you do not know about.' So the disciples said to one another, 'Surely no one has brought him something to eat?' Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. Do you not say, "Four months more, then comes the harvest"? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, "One sows and another reaps." I sent you to reap that for which you did not labour. Others have laboured, and you have entered into their labour.' Many

Samaritans from that city believed in Jesus because of the woman's testimony, 'He told me everything I have ever done.' So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there for two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, 'It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves.

[St John 4. 5-42]

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

For Your Prayers

That we may meet Christ in the detail of our lives and be changed by our encounter with him

The people of Iran and peace and justice throughout the middle east. All those caught up in hostilities.

The government & people of Ukraine and a just and peaceful end to Russia's war of aggression there.

The people of Sudan.

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; the 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; Margaret; Althea; Margi & Bob Osborne.

For the Departed:

The recently departed; our own departed loved ones, and those whose anniversaries of death fall this week: John Cann, James Langley, Ian 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

The Samaritan Woman

Samaritan lady: Can you believe it? She's at it again!
Jereboam: Is everything all right?
Samaritan lady: Oh sorry, I didn't see you there.
Jereboam: That's all right, don't worry.
Samaritan lady: But you shouldn't really be speaking to me, you know. I'm a Samaritan.
Jereboam: Well, I've just seen Jesus speaking to a Samaritan lady, and if it's good enough for him, it must be good enough for me. Forgive me for intruding, but is there a problem with somebody?
Samaritan lady: I should say so: it's my sister. I've just spotted her in deep conversation with yet another man. Every

time I see her, she's cavorting around with some new guy. It's disgraceful!

Jereboam: She wasn't by that well a short while ago, was she?
Samaritan lady: That's right. Did you see them too?

Jereboam: Yes, but she was with Jesus, and I can assure you that absolutely nothing untoward would have been going on with him.

Samaritan lady: This Jesus is a friend of yours, then?

Jereboam: I don't really know him personally, but I'm interested in his teaching. He's a sort of rabbi, you see.

Samaritan lady: Well, I don't know why he wants to go round speaking to people like my sister. She's hardly a shining example of holiness.

Jereboam: Jesus sometimes speaks to the most surprising people. Would you describe your sister as empty, in any sense?

Samaritan lady: Empty? I suppose so...spiritually empty, maybe. Why do you ask?

Jereboam: I've noticed that Jesus often deals with people who seem in some way empty. These people might well be very active...

Samaritan lady: That's one way to describe my sister!

Jereboam: ...but there's still a sort of emptiness about them. It's as if Jesus shows them how God can fill that void inside them. You know, you may well find that your sister will have been changed quite profoundly by meeting Jesus.

Samaritan lady: Really?

Jereboam: I've never met your sister, so I couldn't say for sure, but Jesus has this knack of helping people to love God. It's as if he enables them to redirect their desires.

Samaritan lady: It still seems strange that he should concern himself with anyone like my sister.

Jereboam: I suspect that he chooses very deliberately the people he speaks to. And I shouldn't be surprised if the reason he chose your sister was because he detected promising signs within her.

Samaritan lady: Let's hope that it does her some good, anyway.

Jereboam: We can agree on that

THIS WEEK

On the Third Sunday of Lent we read of the Samaritan woman who encounters Jesus at the well. He offers her lifegiving waters and then shows her how intimately he understands her. She runs back to town to spread her news: "Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! Could he be the Messiah?"

In the daily Gospels this week Jesus challenges the people in his hometown of Nazareth to look at him in a new way - "No prophet is accepted in his own native place." In a fury, they drive him out of the temple. Peter asks Jesus the limits of forgiveness. Jesus says that we must forgive again and again. He tells the parable about the servant, who though forgiven himself, does not forgive his fellow servants. Jesus has come to fulfill the law and the words of the prophets, not abolish them. Jesus heals a demon that wouldn't let a man talk. When someone claimed that Jesus must be using Satan's power to heal, Jesus responds with words that have a double meaning: there is only one source of grace; it is from God and it resists evil; there is only one source of evil; it is from Satan and it resists God's grace. When asked to name the "greatest" commandment, Jesus names two, thus putting together the necessity of loving God with our entire being and loving our neighbor as our very selves. The week ends as Jesus tells a powerful story of the Pharisee and the tax collector praying in the temple. I tell you, the latter went home justified, not the former; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted."

Next Sunday, the Fourth Sunday of Lent, brings the story of the man born blind. His disciples ask, "Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

Jesus heals the man who now sees more clearly than the Pharisees the true identity of Jesus. "I do believe, Lord."

A homily for the Third Sunday of Lent

+ Most of us at some point or other in our lives go through periods when everything seems to be going wrong, or perhaps when one huge problem tends to

overshadow everything else and has the potential to take the joy out of our lives. It could be as a result of bereavement, our own illness and pain or that of someone close to us; it could be because of financial insecurity or employment problems, it could be because of difficult or broken family relationships or whatever. It could be the rising cost of living or not so long ago, a global pandemic, it could be living anxiously in an increasingly insecure, dangerous and lawless world where the strong lord it over the weak. But at times like these it's difficult to get a true perspective on life as the problems overwhelm us and we can't see any way through them.

We know from our own experience that it doesn't always help if someone reminds us that that things could be much worse. That's almost certainly true, but if you can't cope with what's happening *now*, the thought of even greater catastrophe doesn't make things any easier. That's why I'm always a bit wary of the "count your blessings" school of advice. It's undoubtedly good *theological* advice - we all have so many things to be grateful for - but one has to be in the right psychological frame of mind to be able to accept it. The plain fact that there are other people who are worse off than we are does give perspective, too; but it's hard to find the emotional capacity to compare the pain of others with our own when we could be feeling at the very end of our own resources. It's a normal human reaction to wish that the difficulties facing us could be spirited away and just disappear. It *can* happen but not very often. As someone said, fairy-tale endings belong in fairy tales, not so much in real life.

So, the only real option is to try to find somewhere the resources to be able to cope with and deal with what is confronting us, and the assurance to believe that life is not out of control and that there is a future filled with hope, even if we can't always fill in the precise detail of what that hopeful future might look like or could mean for us. Now, of course, that's fraught with problems as well because it's fatally easy to look for answers in the wrong places and - of course - by trying to avoid the highly difficult and painful process of trying to change ourselves.

It's easier sometimes to think we can change other people, or even the ways of the world itself, than to try to change ourselves with all our deep-seated anxieties and complexities. Although the world has to be changed, and we have to be instrumental in trying to change it if we are to be faithful to Our Lord's prayer and his command, but that doesn't absolve from the responsibility to confront and then embrace the necessity for true conversion of our own hearts and minds and for the pursuit of holiness of life. In the conversation Jesus has with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well the human propensity to refuse to confront our inner need for change is very much in evidence. When Jesus speaks of his gift of living water the woman decides to take him literally and thinks he was referring to the water in the well and suggesting that she wouldn't have to cope with the daily labour of carrying water from the well to the place where she lived. She didn't realise that Jesus was talking about resources that she could find within herself. Perhaps that's not putting things quite the right way because although she needs to look within to find the answers to the obvious bitterness, pain and confusion she finds in life, the answers quite clearly come from the source of all life and hope and joy, Jesus himself.

In Lent we concentrate quite rightly on the need to undergo a conversion of mind and heart - not as a one-off religious 'experience' but as a constant factor in our lives of faith. Our own contact with Christ brings us face to face with the real Jesus, the Christ, the Saviour who met the Samaritan woman at the well and utterly changed her life. An authentic meeting with Jesus changes lives.

Sometimes we are not as confident as we should be about the message, the task we are all given as a result of our baptism to proclaim by our lives of faith. We have become very wary about making extravagant claims about the efficacy of religion. The Church (at least as we see it in its earthly structures), as we know all too well, has many problems and many failings (and they are different ones depending on our own theological or even political perspectives) and sometimes it's very hard indeed to display very much confidence in it at all, but the Gospel message of the Church, the communication of the person of Christ

himself who lives at the heart and centre of the Church's life, relates to all situations, all problems and to all people and it's in the person of Jesus, true man and true God, the conqueror of sin, death and alienation, the healer of the wounds of humanity, that our confidence has to reside and can never be misplaced.

If we really try to live like Christ and follow him in all that we are and in all we wish to become, then our problems don't vanish, they are not magicked away, but we are able to see them for what they, just problems, and with the grace God gives they can be worked through, perhaps even resolved, although, of course, with the caveat - the clear reservation - that this will always be in God's way rather than our own.

Back to the Gospel story today - in the ancient world, wells weren't only an essential public utility, as we would put it now - although they weren't owned for private profit, they were places around which trading and commerce took place; they were above all places of meeting - places of real encounter and communication. So, when Jesus speaks to the Samaritan woman at Jacob's Well and tells her she could have a spring of living water welling up inside her, he wasn't just telling her that she could have a source of inner life and refreshment, he was saying to her that she had actually met with God in the way that Jacob, the common ancestor of Jews and Samaritans alike, had done. And the gift of God in Christ is life without limit. As with the Samaritan woman, it's there for the asking for us, too.

And for us, this is where we meet Christ - we encounter him in our daily prayer, he speaks to us from the pages of the Scriptures, we encounter him, too, we shouldn't forget, in our daily lives of contact with other people, but we meet him also in the most physical way possible in the sacramental reality of the Eucharist as we eat and drink the bread and wine which have become his Body and Blood. And it is here - at the altar - that we are given strength to make our Lenten resolutions a reality as we echo those words which end today's Gospel reading: "we have heard for ourselves and we know that this is truly the Saviour of the world." +

SERVICES IN OUR CHURCHES

TODAY

The Third Sunday of Lent 8th March 2026

- 10 a.m. Sung Eucharist
at St Arvan's
11.30 a.m. Liturgy of the Word
at St Deiniol's, Itton

NEXT SUNDAY

The Fourth Sunday of Lent Mothering Sunday 15th March 2026

- 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

Readings:

- 1 Samuel 16.1-13
Psalm 23
Ephesians 5.8-14
St John 9.1-41

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 Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, & Saturday and at 9.30 a.m. on Friday

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

St Arvans Tea and Chat

Saturday March 14th
and usually every second Saturday of the month
Childrens 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.

Lent Courses

Tuesday afternoons at 2.45pm in Shirenewton, starting on 24th February. "Finding a Voice" is based on the film, The King's Speech. We will explore what the Bible has to say about such universal issues as discouragement and determination, fear and friendship, calling and courage. Call Carol for further details on 07380 992494 and to order the course book.

Monday evenings from 23rd February 7pm in St Christopher's Church. "Meeting God in John" explores what the Gospel reveals about God through the person of Jesus Christ. Contact Rev Philip Averay for more information and to order your course book. 01291 620980

Daily Prayer

This is a pivotal week of Lent. We can solidify the patterns we have begun or we can make a new start, if we haven't been able to get started yet. If we have begun to recognise what needs realigning in our lives and have begun to fast and abstain from some things that get in the way of our relationship with the Lord, then we are engaging in a struggle. We are likely uncovering resistance and experiencing our personal sinfulness face-to-face. This is all preparing us for a deeper conversion, a readiness for reconciliation with God and the graces that will allow us to be a source of reconciliation with others. This is the time when we begin to see and experience how much God loves us at a new and more personal level. These graces prepare us to keep our eyes focused on Jesus in the weeks ahead - to learn from him, to fall in love with him more deeply and to be drawn to imitate him more completely. If we are just getting started with our Lenten journey, renewing our desires for these graces will be all we need to begin with a renewed openness. God does not need a lot of time to convince us of his love for us. This is a week about God's love for us and our call to love others the same way. It is a time blessed by our gratitude for the fidelity of Blessed Mary & St Joseph, who responded to God's fidelity to them. It is a week to keep our daily focus on naming a desire each morning. The day ahead will shape what we ask for as our feet hit the floor in the morning. Pausing to thank the Lord for this day and to ask for the grace to let our mind and heart be renewed in the concrete circumstances, relationships and obligations of our day. Throughout the day, we can then return to those desires in background of our awareness. Our request for the Lord's help is always there and our consciousness of it, will help us make the choice we desire to make, to let go of what we need to let go of, to add what we need to add. This will take us deeper and deeper into self-awareness and a sense of our need for a Saviour, who is right there to embrace us and give us the graces we ask for.

With thanks to Creighton University's Online Ministries