

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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10th May 2026

THE SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER *Rogation Sunday*

The Collect

God our redeemer, you have delivered us from the power of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of your Son: grant, that as by his death he has recalled us to life, so by his continual presence in us he may raise us to eternal joy; 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

Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, 'Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. For as I went through the city and looked carefully

at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, "To an unknown god." What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things.

From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him – though indeed he is not far from each one of us. For "In him we live and move and have our being"; as even some of your own poets have said, "For we too are his offspring." Since we are God's offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals. While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.'

[17; 22 - 31]

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

Psalm 66 7 - 18

R/ Let the sound of his praise be heard.

Bless our God, you peoples;
make the voice of his praise to be heard.
Who holds our souls in life,
and will not allow our feet to slip.

R/ Let the sound of his praise be heard.

For you, O God, have proved us; you have tried us just as silver is tried. You brought us into the snare; you laid heavy burdens upon our backs. You let enemies ride over our heads; we went through fire and water; but you brought us out into a place of refreshment.

R/ Let the sound of his praise be heard.

I will enter your house with burnt-offerings and will pay you my vows, which I promised with my lips and spoke with my mouth when I was in trouble.

I will offer you sacrifices of fat beasts with the smoke of rams; I will give you oxen and goats.

R/ Let the sound of his praise be heard.

Come and listen, all you who fear God, and I will tell you what he has done for me.

I called out to him with my mouth, and his praise was on my tongue. If I had found evil in my heart, the Lord would not have heard me;

R/ Let the sound of his praise be heard.

But in truth God has heard me; he has attended to the voice of my prayer. Blessed be God, who has not rejected my prayer, nor withheld his love from me.

R/ Let the sound of his praise be heard.

A reading from the first letter of St Peter [3; 13 - 22]

Who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated, but in your hearts sanctify

Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defence to anyone who demands from you an account of the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and reverence. Keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God's will, than to suffer for doing evil. For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you – not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

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

Alleluia, alleluia!
Jesus said: 'if anyone loves me he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we shall come to him.'

Alleluia!

The Lord be with you:
And also with you

Listen to the Gospel of Christ according to St. John

R/ Glory to you, O Lord

Jesus said to his disciples:

'If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you for ever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you. I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live,

you also will live.
On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.'

[14, 15 - 21]

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

For Your Prayers

All who work on the land, and on the water, particularly in own locality.
That this Eastertide we continue to rejoice in the new life of the Resurrection.
The peoples of Middle East and the Persian Gulf. For peace and justice throughout the region.
All those caught up in hostilities.
For world leaders – for wisdom, restraint and respect for human life.
The government & people of Ukraine and a just and peaceful end to Russia's war of aggression there.
The people of Sudan.
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; Jenny Sherwood.

For the Departed:

The recently departed; Graham Jeremy; our own departed loved ones, and those whose anniversaries of death at this time: Chris Hogben; David Thomas, bishop; Douglas Cummings; Diane Pattison

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

Isboseth

Isboseth: Excuse me; are you Jereboam, by any chance?
Jereboam: Yes, that's right.
Isboseth: Someone told me that you're something of an expert on religion.
Jereboam: I don't know about that. I'm quite interested in it..
Isboseth: I'd be grateful to hear your opinions about certain matters, if you don't mind. My name's Isboseth, by the way.
Jereboam: Pleased to meet you. What did you want to discuss?
Isboseth: Well, I'm finding synagogue quite frustrating. It seems to me that people worry obsessively about the procedures and orders of things. To me, the way in which you carry out your religion reflects your relationship with God.

I just don't want to think of God as being fussy or petty.

Jereboam: I quite agree, but I think you'll find a different atmosphere in other places.

Isboseth: Yes, but then there's another style which I find just as difficult. I feel uncomfortable when people say: "We're marvellous – we're the chosen race." Maybe they don't use those exact words, but there often seems to be that underlying attitude, which I find quite arrogant...whether it's true or not. Again I feel as if I am being pushed into the wrong sort of relationship with God. If you ask me, any mature relationship is about adapting and learning about each other. When I hear too much of that "chosen race" stuff, I worry that my understanding of God is being reduced to a question of "yes" or "no". Surely it's too simplistic. We're a bit more than just members of a race, after all.

Jereboam: I do see what you mean. Have you come across Jesus, by any chance?

Isboseth: I've heard the name mentioned.

Jereboam: I think you'd like him. He says things like: "anyone who loves me will be loved by my Father."

Isboseth: Now that's an attitude that appeals to me; there's something wholesome about it.

Jereboam: I ought to add, though, that Jesus is no push-over. Yes, he talks about God's love, but he also makes it quite clear that he expects people to follow God's will and choose good over evil.

Isboseth: Quite right too, if you ask me. I don't expect God to be a push-over either. From the little you've told me, I think that Jesus could help people to sustain a meaningful relationship with God. Where can I find him?

Jereboam: He's due to arrive here in the next day or two. In fact, I've come to see him myself. Keep your ears open, and you're bound to find out where to go. If you're in any doubt, come and ask me. I'm staying with my cousin in that house over there.

Isboseth: Thank you, Jereboam. I may well call on you.

THIS WEEK

On the Sixth Sunday of Easter, we hear the incredibly comforting news from Jesus in St John's Gospel: "I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you" as he promised to send the Advocate, the Spirit of Truth to us.

Thursday is the Feast of St. Mathias, Apostle.

During the weekday readings, we learn of the work of the early disciples, emboldened by all they have seen, who preach and baptize and spread the good news. Paul has a vision of the Lord saying "Do not be afraid. Go on speaking and do not be silenced for I am with you." In the Gospels we are with Jesus, bidding us his farewell, in the Fourth Gospel. The reason we can be assured, after he leaves us, is that he and the Father are one. So, we can ask for anything, and the Father will give it to us. The Psalm responses all week are joyful in this Easter season: The Lord takes delight in his people. Your right hand saves me.

Heaven & earth are full of your glory.

Next Sunday; we celebrate the Feast of the Ascension. Jesus returns to the Father taking our humanity into the life of God. He goes so that the Spirit may descend and continue his presence with us for ever.

A Homily for the Sixth Sunday of Easter

+ + Sometimes when we are not able to present at something - say an important event in the life of someone close to us - a birthday or a wedding or a baptism or whatever, we find ourselves saying, "I'm sorry I can't be there, but I'll be with you in spirit."

What we mean when we say this is, 'I won't be with you, but I'll try to stop and think of you or, better for a Christian, I suppose, (and if we find it embarrassing I fail to see why!) I'll say a prayer for you. Of course, this is a perfectly good response to make when we are prevented by other commitments from being somewhere where we would otherwise want to be. But there's a theory that the way we use English these days seems very critical if not actually *hostile* to Christian faith - think of the way journalists and commentators use words like dogma, orthodox, tradition, doctrine, theological

and so on – always meaning something negative and restrictive. I'm not sure I buy that *altogether*, but it *is* interesting how the word 'spirit' has come to be used here; we say 'I'll be with you in spirit' when in fact we mean 'I won't be with you at all'. In the way we use our language, a spiritual presence in some way becomes an alternative to a real, actual presence, and that isn't quite what we believe is it? Let's take a different example: we sometimes hear people say, 'Well, I follow the spirit of the law but not the letter of it'. Usually, this means that they are 'creatively re-interpreting' it to suit their own wishes. In all these ways the 'spirit' is often contrasted with 'reality'. Of course, a 'spirit' is by definition something insubstantial, something which is not tangible. We use the same word for a ghost – and as we know, in older versions of the language, the Holy Spirit was called the Holy Ghost! But what that doesn't mean is that a 'spirit' is not 'real'. We're committed really to believing that the realm of the 'spiritual' goes *beyond* the material world that we can see and touch around us; it speaks to us of other, greater realities which lie beyond our earthly experience. To regard spiritual things as somehow unconnected with "the real world", having nothing to say to the concrete situations human beings deal with every day, isn't something we can accept.

Again we're committed to believing that the spiritual *is* ultimate reality and it impinges more on our everyday lives and it connects with earthly reality and our everyday lives far more than we sometimes care to think.

In today's Gospel, as he prepares to leave his disciples and go to the Father, Jesus talks of the Holy Spirit, the Counsellor - the Greek word *Paraclete* literally means *the advocate*, someone who pleads, who argues, on our behalf. This Spirit is not disconnected from the world, not unreal and insubstantial, but comes to us from the heart of godhead and is a continuation of Jesus' presence in the world and among his people. The Spirit is a guarantee of God's love and God's presence. We are not left behind like orphans. The Lord is risen, he is still with us.

The Holy Spirit assures us of God's love; and by the Spirit that love is made present to us and *for* us. He is the fulfilment of

Christ's promise "because I live, you also will live." And Gospel reminds us this morning that we, in turn, are called to love Jesus; Those who love him will keep his commandments, he tells us. Those who keep his commandments will, he promises, receive the Holy Spirit. We stand in need of the Spirit to take us forward, to be with us as our counsellor in our journey towards God, to continue the guidance that Jesus has given us, on our pilgrim road to the Kingdom. We can't find all the detailed answers to all life's problems written in the pages of Scripture - that not what the Scriptures are for - to dot all the 'i's and cross all the 't's, and so we need, as part of Jesus company of friends, as part of the community of faith, as the Church, the continued guidance of the presence of God to lead us along the path God wants us to follow. We are called to live not just the 'letter' of the commandments of Christ, *if indeed that is even possible*, but we are called to 'life in the Spirit', to live 'in the spirit of the Gospel law'.

As followers of Christ, as his "friends" we live by the Spirit in the community of faith. We don't do this alone - he doesn't call *me*, he calls me as *part of the Body*, as part of the Spirit-filled community of faith. Now as 21st Century people we are very suspicious of institutions, we are very conscious of the damage human institutions can potentially do to people, and also of the corruption which human beings inevitably leave in their wake. Yet the Church is both a human institution in the sense that it is made up of highly fallible, sinful, human beings like you and like me, but it is also a divine society guided by the Holy Spirit- *the* divine society if you like- in that through the Church we come to God, whether we *like* it or not, sometimes even whether we *realise* it or not. There is no other vehicle of salvation. This is it!

As we know the Church on earth has been tragically fractured and broken in the course of history because of human failings and human error, but it survives and through the Spirit leads us and accompanies us on the way to God. It may help to remember that despite the brokenness of the Church on earth, the Church in heaven - the Church of the Saints - is one, and constantly prays for our divisions to be healed. The Church is still being guided by the Holy Spirit into all

truth - that is the Lord's promise. Some people believe the Church stopped believing the right things only a generation or so after the Apostles. No! What sort of God would that commit us to? Certainly not one who was very interested in the salvation of his people and one highly forgetful of the promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit who would lead his people into all the truth.

Life in the Spirit - life in the Spirit filled community - life in the church of Christ is nothing if it is not firmly based on love for the real person of Jesus Christ and the following of his commandments. If we neglect Jesus or his commandments, we become, in St John's terminology part of "the world" which, by definition, cannot receive the 'Spirit of truth'. The "world" (and we are obviously to an extent a part of it) wants above all else its own freedom of identity and behaviour. In complete contrast, as followers of Jesus we find that we discover our identity, our true humanity, only in him. Paradoxically in rejecting the supremacy of our own 'egos', our own unconverted desires we find out who we really are in being loved by God and loving him in return.

God is present to us "in the spirit," but that 'spiritual presence' of God in our lives is itself a 'real presence': the real incarnate presence of Christ in his life, death and resurrection, and the continuing real sacramental presence of Christ here in the Eucharist.

And the Christian spiritual life has at its heart some very concrete things: our reflection on the Gospels, our written link with Christ; under the guidance of the Holy Spirit putting the teachings of Christ into practice in our lives; and the celebration of the sacraments, things of the earth filled with the presence of God, which he gave to us for the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, for the gift of his life to us so that we might know him and love him. +

St Arvans Tea and Chat

2.30 – 4 p.m.

Saturday June 13th

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

The Sixth Sunday of Easter 10th May 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

kept as

The Ascension of the Lord 17th May 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:

Acts 1.1-11

Psalm 47; [93]

Ephesians 1.15-23

St Luke 24.44-53

Fr Michael's day off is Monday

The Eucharist will be celebrated at St Arvans Tuesday to Saturday at 10 a.m. except for Friday at 9.30 a.m.

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

The Ministry Area Prayer Group

Thursdays at 7.45 – 9.00 p.m.

From 9th April until 24th

September 2026 we will be meeting in Churches

around the Ministry Area:

14th May: 14th May St. Thomas a Becket, Shirenewton

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.

Concert at St Arvans
23rd May at 5.30 p.m.
Echoes of the Poets

The Cam Bridge Trio presents works by Brahms and Bridge, followed by settings of Garcia Lorca's poetry for soprano and piano by Zeina Al Azmeh, performed by Charlotte Garcia and Al Azmeh

Tickets £15

Purchase online
(scan the QR code
on the posters)

by phone
(07946 158 704),
or on the door

Daily Prayer

This is a great week to try to live in the promise of Jesus that we don't need to let our hearts be troubled. We can trust. He will not leave us on our own. We can prepare for the coming feast of Pentecost by letting the Holy Spirit console us and gather us.

But, what if I do have some troubles and worries? We can talk with our Lord about our desires regarding those anxieties and difficulties in the background moments of our life each day. For example, when I wake up, I can take a moment, while still at my bedside, letting myself name the struggles I will face that day, and simply asking the Lord to give me the graces I need today. That can take less than a minute, or 30 seconds, as the week goes on. In the shower, and while getting dressed, I can flesh out that desire.

O Lord, you know this is just tying me up in knots. I haven't slept well for a while and I feel so bad for snapping at my family last night. The specific grace I ask for today is to be calmed by your Spirit, and to place my trust in you. Give me the grace I need to not surrender my peace so easily.

O Lord, my spouse is really so angry and tight, and it seems we are just driving our teenager farther and farther from us, in rebellion. I don't know what to do. I'm responding to both of them badly. Today, let me focus on your love for me, so that I can be peaceful and calm in trying once more to calm the angry seas with simple love, with gentle affirmation, and patience that is a gift of your Spirit.

And, throughout the day, we can find moments -walking from one place to another, reaching for the phone, opening a jar of something, walking down a shopping aisle at the supermarket, filling the car with fuel - when all of this will come back and we can renew our trust in the Lord's promise. Especially, when we go to bed each night, we can give thanks, that we were not alone this day.

*With thanks to Creighton University's
Online Ministries*