

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
Fr Michael Gollop,
The Vicarage, St Arvans
01291 622064;
Mobile 07867803479
E-mail: frmichael1@aol.com

28th June 2026

kept as

**Saints Peter & Paul,
Apostles**

The Collect

Almighty God, whose blessed apostles Peter and Paul glorified you in their death as in their life: grant that your Church, inspired by their teaching and example, and made one by your Spirit, may ever stand firm on the one foundation which is your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives 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

About that time King Herod laid violent hands upon some who belonged to the church. He had James, the brother of John, killed with the sword. After he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also.

(This was during the festival of Unleavened Bread.) When he had seized him, he put him in prison and handed him over to four squads of soldiers to guard him, intending to bring him out to the people after the Passover. While Peter was kept in prison, the church prayed fervently to God for him. The very night before Herod was going to bring him out, Peter, bound with two chains, was sleeping between two soldiers, while guards in front of the door were keeping watch over the prison. Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He tapped Peter on the side and woke him, saying, 'Get up quickly.' And the chains fell off his wrists. The angel said to him, 'Fasten your belt and put on your sandals.' He did so. Then he said to him, 'Wrap your cloak around you and follow me.' Peter went out and followed him; he did not realise that what was happening with the angel's help was real; he thought he was seeing a vision. After they had passed the first and the second guard, they came before the iron gate leading into the city. It opened for them of its own accord, and they went outside and walked along a lane, when suddenly the angel left him. Then Peter came to himself and said, 'Now I am sure that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from the hands of Herod and from all that the Jewish people were expecting.'

[12; 1 - 11]

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

Psalm 125

**R/ Show your goodness, O Lord,
to those who are good
and to those who are true of heart.**

Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but stands fast for ever. The hills stand about Jerusalem; so does the Lord stand round about his people, from this time forth for evermore.

**R/ Show your goodness, O Lord,
to those who are good
and to those who are true of heart.**

The sceptre of the wicked shall not hold sway over the land allotted to the just, so that the just shall not put their hands to evil. Show your goodness, O Lord, to those who are good and to those who are true of heart. As for those who turn aside to crooked ways, the Lord will lead them away with the evildoers; but peace be upon Israel.

**R/ Show your goodness, O Lord,
to those who are good
and to those who are true of heart.**

A reading from the second letter of St Paul to Timothy [4; 6 - 8; 17 - 18]

As for me, I am already being poured out as a libation, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have longed for his appearing. But the Lord stood by me and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and save me for his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

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

Alleluia, alleluia!
You are Peter and on this rock
I will build my Church.
And the gates of the underworld
can never hold out against it.
Alleluia!

The Lord be with you
R/ And also with you

**Listen to the Gospel of Christ
according to Saint Matthew**

R/ Glory to you, O Lord

When Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, 'Who do people say that the Son of Man is?' And they said, 'Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.' He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?'

Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.' And Jesus answered him, 'Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.'

[16. 13 - 19]

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

For Your Prayers

That we may follow the apostles in their faithfulness to Christ .
in the way we live our lives
Those celebrating or preparing for marriage
Peace and reconciliation in our own society
The peoples of Middle East and the Persian Gulf. For peace and justice throughout the region.
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, Bob Main, Diane Parnell; Gaynor McCarthy; Katie

For the Departed:

The recently departed; Tricia Evans; our own departed loved ones, and those whose anniversaries of death at this time: Douglas Evans; John Rowlands, priest; Daphne Richards; Colin Jenkins

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

Claudius

Jereboam: So you've just lost your job, Claudius?

Claudius: I'm afraid so. I've worked as a prison guard for about fifteen years now. Never had any problems, until the other night I fell asleep on duty.

Jereboam: It can't be that unusual. Everyone's human.

Claudius: To tell you the truth, when my children were small, I'd get really tired, and I used to fall asleep regularly. No, the problem this time was, the prisoner escaped.

Jereboam: How?

Claudius: Good question. I peered into the cell the next morning to ask if they wanted a bite to eat and – what do you know – this bloke's chains are still there with no prisoner. No sign of violence, no damage, nothing.

Jereboam: Sounds suspicious. Someone must have helped him.

Claudius: I don't think so. There were two soldiers in there with him and several other guards on duty too. Those men are all honest, dependable guys. Seems as if we all fell asleep at the same time. Our problem is, the authorities reckon that one of us helped him, so we've all lost our jobs.

Jereboam: So what's your theory?

Claudius: Well, this prisoner, Peter his name was -- really pleasant bloke by the way -- he was a follower of that Rabbi Jesus. You know the one I mean. Since the authorities put him to death, Jesus that is, his followers have had us believe that he's come back to life. And these followers of his seem to have acquired some amazing powers. They do all sorts of astonishing things: they helped this chap that lives down the way from us. He'd been deaf as a post for years, but those Jesus people healed him in no time at all. So my theory is – and I shouldn't really tell you this, because I'll get into trouble for saying it – but I reckon that Peter escaped through some mysterious power.

Jereboam: I guess that's not going to go down too well with the authorities.

Claudius: Too right, mate. And I'm stuck with no job.

Jereboam: Have you got any plans?

Claudius: Well, really I don't know. I need to earn some money somehow, but

first I think I'm going to look into this Jesus business. It's got me rather intrigued, to tell you the truth.

THIS WEEK

On Sunday we celebrate the feast day of the Apostles Peter and Paul
Friday is the feast of Saint Thomas, apostle.

The first readings at the Eucharist this week are from the Prophet Amos. Amos was a shepherd who was called to deliver God's word to the northern kingdom, Israel.

St Matthew's Gospel this week takes us through several stories about Jesus' ministry. When a man wants to follow but only after he buries his father, Jesus answered him, "Follow me, and let the dead bury their dead." Jesus calms the storm at sea. Then he drives demons out of two men living among the tombs. When Jesus calls Matthew to leave his customs post and to follow him, many tax collectors and sinners came to have dinner with Jesus and his disciples, again causing a controversy with the religious leaders. Jesus confronts them: "Those who are well do not need a physician, but the sick do. Go and learn the meaning of the words, I desire mercy, not sacrifice. I did not come to call the righteous but sinners." When Jesus' disciples are criticized for not fasting, Jesus talks about the difficulty of combining the old and the new. He is calling for something radically new. Not a patch, but new wine in new wineskins.

Next Sunday begins with a Sunday that offers pastoral comfort to us all. In the Zechariah reading, the Lord promises Israel, and us, a saviour who "shall proclaim peace to the nations." St Matthew's gospel points to Jesus as the source of that peace, as he affirms his identity as the Son of God. Jesus offers himself as a relief from the burdens of our days, promising "you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light."

A Homily for Saints Peter & Paul

Their feast day, coming at the very end of June, has led Saint Peter and Saint Paul, the founding saints of the Christian Church, to be regarded, in northern Europe anyway, as patrons of good

weather. Well, that's certainly accurate – depending of course on what you define as good weather.

Why does the Church celebrate the Feasts of St Peter and Saint Paul together? By insisting on this common feast day, the ancient tradition of the Church is telling us something vital about what we believe the Church to be and the nature of the faith that we proclaim. What we are doing today is celebrating the apostolic nature of the Church - that the Church is founded upon Jesus' sending out of the apostles to proclaim the kingdom of God and to witness to his resurrection, and - even more than that - we are being told that our own experience of faith is rooted in the faith that they professed even to the giving up of their lives for the sake of their master and our master. So, we're firmly rooted in the history and experience of the world. Both Peter and Paul were martyred in Rome probably within a year of one another. Apart from that perhaps we would have no other reason to celebrate their importance to us at the same time; they were totally different characters, with very little in common apart from their devotion to the person of Christ. In the Gospels, because of his instinctive and deep faith, we see Peter being singled out during Our Lord's ministry as the de facto leader of the twelve apostles; Jesus chooses him to be "the rock," and, after the Risen Lord forgives his denials, he is chosen to be the one who strengthens and leads the Church at its beginning.

But Paul wasn't even one of the twelve. Paul is the last apostle to be called and by a vision of the Risen Jesus. Paul undergoes a spectacular conversion from someone who was actively engaged in persecuting the Church to the one who, humanly speaking, does more than anyone else to spread faith in Christ to the ends of the ancient world. Despite being, in his own words, formerly a pharisee of pharisees, he is chosen to be the apostle of the gentiles, the non-Jewish world. He is often seen as a radical or 'prophetic' figure, whose task was mission and expansion.

So we see Peter the guardian, and Paul the prophet. That may be something of an oversimplification, but the Acts of the Apostles which record the tension which existed at times between these two

leaders of the Church, show us that it's not altogether misleading. But the Church now as then needs both Peter and Paul. Like Peter we need to hold on to what Christ taught, and how the apostles themselves, our human link to the Risen Lord, understood what he did and who he was - God incarnate - and that his coming among us is of supreme importance for our understanding of God himself and of ourselves as human beings.

And like Paul, we have to emphasise that the Church exists for the proclamation of the Gospel and the living out of its values in the world; that the Church's task is always to go out to the various cultures and societies of the world and proclaim the Good News of the Resurrection fearlessly and boldly in ways that can be readily understood. We need Peter and we need Paul as reminders to us all of the Church's two-fold - to hand on authentically what was received from the Lord, and the need to proclaim and teach the Resurrection and not to be afraid. We need these two apostles to set before us breathtaking reality that Jesus of Nazareth, who called Peter the fisherman from his nets on the Sea of Galilee, and called Paul, the enemy of the new faith, on the road to Damascus, is truly the Son of the Living God; and that he has established a community of friends who are, by their communion with Christ, adopted sons and daughters of God. We are those who are called into this living personal friendship with Jesus Christ. Both Peter and Paul's lives were completely transformed by their encounter with Jesus; Peter left his former life behind at the shores of the sea of Galilee and embarked upon a journey of faith and discovery which led him to die a martyr's death, far from home, far from everything that would have been familiar, at the heart of the Roman Empire.

Both Peter and Paul were human beings with many of the faults and failings common to all of us. They were both on occasion rash, impulsive, prone to anger and misunderstanding. And they were both broken - Peter by his denials of Jesus in the High Priest's courtyard before the crucifixion, Paul by his Damascus Road experience which left him shattered and blinded. There's a line from a Leonard Cohen song, not someone I'm used to quoting but it's appropriate in this context: "*There is a crack, a crack in everything,*

That's how the light gets in." And it's the experience of brokenness which leads both these men to a unshakeable realisation of the grace of God and the love of Christ. Their wounds and imperfections remain very apparent, but rather like that Japanese artistic custom of gilding repairs in pottery, these imperfections, these wounds and cracks are themselves a visible sign of God's glory.

So Paul's journey led him from being, as he says, a Pharisee of Pharisees and an enemy of the newly-founded Church, to a life of danger and privation, travelling around the cities of the ancient world, founding church communities, teaching, writing with a passionate conviction and meeting the same fate as Peter in the same imperial city.... What made the difference for Peter and Paul was their encounter with Jesus and their continuing relationship with him which continued to death and beyond death. They were both called, both "converted" from their former lives, and this conversion, as it is for all of us, continued throughout their lives as part of the growth in knowledge of God and their service of the Lord. Like them, we, too, are called to constant conversion. The Italian saint, Philip Neri - renowned both for his spiritual wisdom and his sense of humour - said that he was converted to Christ, not just once in his life, but every morning of every day, and that has to be true for all of us who live in friendship with Christ. Because it is only this which can give a constantly renewed life to the Church, only this which will let us live the faith with the urgency, passion and courage of the Apostles themselves, our fathers in the faith. Peter and Paul were very different people; what united them is what unites them now - their relationship with Jesus himself, crucified, risen, glorified. Peter and Paul in their different ways and different circumstances heard the call of the Lord and responded to it by convincing those around them, not only by means of words but by their very lives, of the message of Jesus Christ. And in our own set of circumstances, where we are now, as the people we are, we are called to do the same +

SERVICES IN OUR CHURCHES

TODAY

28th June 2026

kept as

Ss Peter & Paul, apostles

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

followed by the St Arvans'
congregation Annual Meeting

11.30 a.m. Liturgy of the Word
at St Deiniol's, Itton

NEXT SUNDAY

The Fifth Sunday after Trinity
5th July 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

Readings:
Zechariah 9.9-12
Psalm 145.8-14
Romans 7.15-25a
St Matthew 11.16-19, 25-30

Fr Michael's day off is Tuesday this week
Please note: the Eucharist will be
celebrated at St Arvans on Tuesday,
Wednesday & Thursday at 10 a.m., Friday
at 9 a.m.

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

Annual Meeting

**St Arvans Annual
Congregation Meeting will be
on Sunday (28th June) after
the 10am Sung Eucharist.
Everyone is encouraged to stay
and join this meeting.**

St Arvans Tea and Chat

2.30 – 4 p.m.

Saturday July 11th

*and usually every second
Saturday of the month*
Childrens activity table

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:

2nd July St. James, Devauden
9 th July St. Mary, Penterry
16 th July St. Mary's Priory, Chepstow
23rd July St. Peter, Newchurch
30 th July St. Peter, St. Pierre
(Volunteer leader, please)
6 th August St. Deiniol, Itton
13 th August St. Tewdric, Mathern
20th August St. Arvans
27 th August St. Thomas Becket,
Shirenewton
3rd September St. Andoenus,
Mounton
10 th September St. James, Devauden
17th September St. Peter,
St. Pierre
24 th September St. Christopher,
Chepstow
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.

Daily Prayer this week

Most of us know that having faith is more about confidence and trust in the Lord than it is about theological understanding or assent to truths. The biggest barrier to our more complete following of our Lord in faith is fear. This is a wonderful week to ask our Lord to heal us so that we can not be afraid and just have faith in him as we place our faith in his calming presence.

We can begin each day, sitting or standing at the edge of our bed and, in 30 seconds, simply name our desire. "Lord, thank you for this day. Please heal my fears. I want to place my trust in you more completely. Be with me in the tough stuff today." When we are in the shower or while getting dressed, as we are heading to work or doing laundry, when we are walking down a hall to a meeting or even at a store shopping, we can expand on our prayer - again, briefly and in a friend to friend conversation with our Lord. "Dear Lord, I'm going to be facing several things today that feel like storms at sea. Don't let me lose sight of your presence with me today. Give me courage and an inner peace to do what you call me to do."

The phrases from Matthew's Gospel can work their way into our week so easily in this context. "Lord, let me know your love and mercy, that I might treat those I'm now judging with more of the love and mercy you show me." "Lord, it feels like you are inviting me to take a narrower path today than the one I usually take, following the way everyone around me goes. Help me choose your way with greater freedom and peace."

There is a real and sustaining joy that accompanies this sense of intimacy with our Lord, in the midst of our daily, busy lives. It seems right to take a few moments each night to express our thanks to the Lord for the gifts of the day.

With thanks to Creighton University's Online Ministries (adapted)