

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

There is an online only reflection, meditation and celebration of Night Prayer (Compline) on Wednesdays or Thursdays at 7 p.m.

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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The Vicarage, St Arvans
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**19th July 2026
The Seventh Sunday
after Trinity**

The Collect

Lord of all power and might,
the author and giver of all good things:
graft in our hearts the love of your name,
increase in us true religion, nourish us
with all goodness, and of your great mercy
keep us in the same; through Jesus Christ
your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns
with you and the Holy Spirit, one God,
now and for ever. **AMEN**

A reading from the Wisdom of Solomon

There is not any god besides you, Lord,
whose care is for all people, to whom you
should prove that you have not judged
unjustly; For your strength is the source of

righteousness, and your sovereignty over
all causes you to spare all. For you show
your strength when people doubt the
completeness of your power, and you
rebuke any insolence among those who
know it. Although you are sovereign in
strength, you judge with mildness, and
with great forbearance you govern us; for
you have power to act whenever you
choose. Through such works you have
taught your people that the righteous must
be kind, and you have filled your children
with good hope, because you give
repentance for sins.

[12. 13, 16-19]

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

Psalm 86 11 - 17

**R/ You, Lord, are gracious
and full of compassion.**

Teach me your way, O Lord,
and I will walk in your truth;
knit my heart to you
that I may fear your name.
I will thank you, O Lord my God,
with all my heart,
and glorify your name for evermore.
For great is your love towards me;
you have delivered me from the
nethermost Pit.

**R/ You, Lord, are gracious
and full of compassion.**

The arrogant rise up against me, O God,
and a violent band seeks my life;
they have not set you before their eyes.
But you, O Lord, are gracious
and full of compassion,
slow to anger and full of kindness
and truth.

**R/ You, Lord, are gracious
and full of compassion.**

Turn to me and have mercy upon me;
give your strength to your servant;
and save the child of your handmaid.
Show me a sign of your favour,

so that those who hate me
may see it and be ashamed;
because you, O Lord, have helped me
and comforted me.

**R/ You, Lord, are gracious
and full of compassion.**

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans [8. 12-25]

Brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not
to the flesh, to live according to the flesh
for if you live according to the flesh, you
will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death
the deeds of the body, you will live. For all
who are led by the Spirit of God are
children of God. For you did not receive a
spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but
you have received a spirit of adoption.
When we cry, 'Abba! Father!' it is that very
Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that
we are children of God, and if children,
then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs
with Christ – if, in fact, we suffer with him
so that we may also be glorified with him.
I consider that the sufferings of this
present time are not worth comparing with
the glory about to be revealed to us. For
the creation waits with eager longing for
the revealing of the children of God; for
the creation was subjected to futility, not of
its own will but by the will of the one who
subjected it, in hope that the creation itself
will be set free from its bondage to decay
and will obtain the freedom of the glory of
the children of God. We know that the
whole creation has been groaning in
labour pains until now; and not only the
creation, but we ourselves, who have the
first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly
while we wait for adoption, the redemption
of our bodies. For in hope we were saved.
Now hope that is seen is not hope. For
who hopes for what is seen? But if we
hope for what we do not see, we wait for it
with patience

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

Gradual Hymn

Alleluia, alleluia!

May the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
enlighten the eyes of our mind
so that we can see what hope
his call holds for us

Alleluia!

The Lord be with you:

And also with you

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

Jesus put before the crowd another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field; but while everybody was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and then went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain then the weeds appeared as well. And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, "Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?" He answered, "An enemy has done this." The slaves said to him, "Then do you want us to go and gather them?"

But he replied, "No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. Let both of them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn."

Then Jesus left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples approached him, saying, 'Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.' He answered, 'The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man; the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the weeds are the children of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let anyone with ears listen!'

[13.24–30, 36–43]

This is the Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you, O Christ

For Your Prayers

That we may cultivate the ground in which the seeds of faith are sown.

Those who follow the Rule of St Benedict, either in community or in secular life.

All seafarers and the work of The Mission to Seafarers

Those preparing for marriage

Peace and reconciliation

in our own society

The peoples of Palestine and Gaza, Israel and the wider 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;

Katie

For the Departed:

The recently departed; Gaynor McCarthy;

John Williams; Ray Howell; David

Edwards; own departed loved ones, and

those whose anniversaries of death fall

this week: Joan Neal; Stanley Phillips;
David Marshall; Mary Marshall;
Nancy Shepherd; Kenneth Vinsell, priest;
John Rogers; Rene Blakey.

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*

Laban

Laban: Excuse me; you must be
Jereboam.

Jereboam: That's right.

Laban: I'm Laban. I think you
were just talking to my friend Manasses
about repentance. I often help our fellow-
members of the Church with that sort of
issue, so Manasses suggested that I had
a word with you.

Jereboam: Yes, of course. Thank
you, Laban. I've been mulling things over,
even since I spoke to Manasses. I'm quite
puzzled by that story Jesus told about the
wheat and the dandel being sorted at
harvest-time.

Laban: I remember the story.

What's the problem?

Jereboam: Well, it sounds to me as
if the dandel was always bound to be
burnt, right from the outset. Nothing could
be done to alter the course of events,
because you obviously can't change
dandel into wheat. How does repentance
come into that?

Laban: I have to admit that the

imagery doesn't quite work in that sense. We do believe that there's always the chance for anyone to repent. At least let's take heart from the thought that the dandelion isn't weeded out until the last moment. In the same way we have the chance to redeem ourselves right through our lives.

Jereboam: Can you tell me what really goes on with repentance? How can we leave our sins behind?

Laban: Ultimately, of course, it's God who enables us to "leave our sins behind" -- to use your phrase. Our main task is to ask for his forgiveness, and we do that with Jesus' help. Nevertheless, we can try other things as well. Perhaps we can put right whatever we've done: sometimes that's as simple as saying "sorry" to someone. Excuse me if that sounds a bit obvious; I don't mean to be patronising.

Jereboam: Don't worry; please go on.

Laban: Another approach is to think carefully about exactly why we committed the sin in the first place. There are always lots of reasons why we act as we do, or make the decisions that we do. Some of those reasons will be practical, some moral and some even spiritual. Think about anything you do...anything at all -- it could just be the fact that you're talking to me now. A great range of reasons lie behind all your actions, even simple ones like that. Equally, there'll be various considerations that stop you doing other things. The most important of all these considerations must be your love for God and for his creation, particularly people. That's what we mustn't lose. In the kingdom of heaven that love will be the only possible motive for anything, so once we've turned our backs on that, we're heading in the wrong direction...fast.

Jereboam: So exactly how do you help people?

Laban: Well, when people want to repent, I encourage them to acknowledge all the various motives that led them to commit their sin. This process can be quite difficult: often we're only dimly aware of what motivates us. Anyway, once they've worked all that out, then we talk about how they might have found a better balance between these motives. At that stage they usually realise how they could have acted differently. The key is the balance between the different motives. There's no use pretending that

some of them don't exist or even assuming that they'll ever disappear.

Jereboam: Dare I say it -- it sounds complicated, but it could actually be quite simple in practice.

Laban: Let's say that the process is simple, but not always easy. So much of it involves understanding our own thoughts. People often regard sin as an action -- reasonably enough, in a way -- but I'd say that our real problems lie in our attitudes. The action is the consequence of the attitude, or, more precisely, the consequence of the balance that we maintain between different attitudes.

Jereboam: I see -- just about...

Laban: Perhaps I can make one final point: sometimes it seems to me that the person hasn't sinned at all. They simply found themselves in a difficult situation and tried to do their best. People often need someone else to point that out to them.

Jereboam: Thank you, Laban. I'll have plenty to mull over now..

THIS WEEK

On Sunday we are reminded that God has sown good seed, but, of course, an enemy has sown weeds in the same field. We are not supposed to go out there judgmentally pulling up weeds, but to leave judgment to God. The way the Kingdom of God grows is the way tiny seeds grow and the way yeast makes dough rise: it is surprising and slow and almost imperceptible. If we have ears, we ought to hear.

On Wednesday we remember St. Mary Magdalene. Saturday is the feast of St. James, the Apostle. Both days have their own special readings.

The first readings at the Eucharist this week, except for the feasts, are from the prophet Micah and end on Saturday with readings from the prophet Jeremiah, through next week and into the week afterwards.

We'll continue to read from St Matthew's Gospel this week. The scribes and Pharisee ask Jesus for a sign to prove his credentials. He says that the only sign will be his death and resurrection. Jesus tells his disciples the parable of the sower. When asked why he speaks in parables and Jesus answers that the simple and those with open hearts will hear and understand. Then Jesus explains the parable: the importance of rich soil. Just

so, the Son of Man "did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many." On the Feast of St. James, we hear how that the apostles miss the message of Jesus and are arguing about who is the greatest. He says, "Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you shall be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave."

Next Sunday we see how God admires Solomon because he asked for wisdom rather than riches. Jesus is the source of God's wisdom and teaches us more about the Kingdom of Heaven. We imagine the passion of one discovering a treasure buried in a field or finding a pearl of great value, sacrificing everything to buy what is so deeply desired. A dragnet hauls in fish that can nourish others as well as what is not useful for others. Jesus invites us into deeper reflection on what we value and prepares us for our mission.

A Homily for Trinity 7

+ Sometimes the things we least look forward to doing turn out to be the most satisfying. Of all the jobs in the garden, weeding falls into that category. But after the gruelling part of bending and getting our hands dirty, it's something where we can see an immediate difference when we've finished. Of course, when we've sown seeds in a seedbed the question is to weed or not to weed. Very often we have to wait to be able to distinguish the wanted from the unwanted plants which start to spring up. Something similar is going on in today's Gospel, where Jesus says that the Kingdom of Heaven is a bit like a field in which, as so very often happens, there are weeds growing up with the crop of wheat.

The servant in the parable comes up with, on the surface, some unlikely and almost paranoid comments. To begin with how the weeds got there in the first place and, secondly, about what to do with them. The servant clearly isn't a farmer - perhaps he's done too much small-scale gardening - because he comes up with the suggestion that the plants which shouldn't be there should be weeded out. The landowner rejects the suggestion because, he says sensibly, that would

damage the growth of the wheat crop itself.

Now, of course we don't need to be told that these words of Jesus are nothing to do with agriculture. Jesus himself explains that he, himself, the Son of Man, is the Sower, the kingdom of God is the field. The wheat are those who follow the will of God, the weeds are those who follow the enemy, the evil one, the devil. The harvest is the end of the world, the coming of God's kingdom at the end of all time with the final judgement.

So often, the parables of Our Lord can be understood on various levels. The Kingdom of Heaven is also the Christian community. And it's also each one of us individually. Both within the Church and within ourselves there is so much that is promising, so much that is good but which has to co-exist alongside that which is alienated and sinful. The Gospel is nothing if not realistic!

It would be natural within the community of the disciples grouped around Jesus and later in the apostolic community of the early years of the Church that there would be a concern with holiness of life and obedience to the teachings of Christ. There would certainly have been a move by some to exclude those who fell short of the ideal and the words of Jesus seem to be directed precisely against that kind of misplaced quest for a totally pure community. The Church has always resisted this throughout its history with the understanding that such an approach not only is always a spiritual dead-end, but also a denial of the both the unlimited mercy and the justice of the judgement of God alone. In his own time, at the end of time, God will sort out the wheat from the weeds.

Our Lord himself didn't drive away from his presence those whom conventional and respectable religious opinion regarded as sinners or in some way unorthodox. This is the continuing dispute he has with the Pharisees throughout the Gospel - they do not know God, Jesus says, and yet they are taking on themselves one of the prerogatives of God alone, and with a delicious twist of irony, he who *is* God exposes their thirst for condemnation and false purity by explicitly forgiving the sins of others. He calls them to himself and gives them the opportunity of being changed by the encounter. He still does - to all of us.

The Christian community, the Church of God, should always do the same. There is always the temptation to be exclusive, either in the moralistic way of the Pharisees, both ancient and modern, or by the temptation to delight in judging and marginalising those who are felt to be out of step with the views of the majority. The Gospel always demands we should behave otherwise. The humanity of Christ - the humanity taken into God - demands otherwise.

We can certainly say that God invites us constantly to review and change our ways of living so that every aspect of our life reflects his love and his mercy. The Christian commitment to repentance isn't a one-off but it implies that we should always be prepared to change, and even to be able to see that what we are doing may even be not what God is really asking of us.

Most of us come to the Church because we want to know more about Christ and the Gospel. But on the other hand, it is not so easy for us to want to give up anything which could stand in the way of a authentic and true relationship with God. The Church is always the hospital for sinners, not the closely guarded fortress of those who think they are the elect, however one might want to define that. The Church is a people on pilgrimage, not a conquering army, and long pilgrimages always mean encounters which change you...

So today's Gospel reflects life as it is, the reality that we live every day. We find ourselves with a lot of good within us, but also parts of our lives which are filled with the spiritual equivalent of weeds. Perhaps Jesus is telling us to concentrate on building up the good in our encounter with him and not to be too concerned about the weeds. That seems to be a fairly consistent teaching in the spiritual tradition to which we belong. We need to make sure that our daily focus - and the direction of our lives - is on our relationship with Christ and everything that flows from that.

Following Christ is not about just avoiding evil, just not doing what is wrong - St Paul would say that that's the Law not the Gospel. Once we start to do that, we give the negativity of sin and evil far too much priority and we are in danger of forgetting that the world and everything in it are already redeemed in Christ, and of turning

God's astonishing and beautiful creation into a moral prison camp policed by the grim-faced custodians of puritanical godliness.

The true life of the Gospel is instead about learning - in the Lord's own company, and with the prayers of the Saints to support us - how to love what God loves and to do what God wants us to do. Whatever Christian tradition we come from, at the heart of following Christ is always the desire to want to know him personally and to live in and from the relationship that we have with him. It's the Holy Spirit who intercedes for us and shows us the way, who comes to us in our weakness, and shows us how to pray and leads us to an understanding of how to live with love, joy and delight and in communion with God's creation.

So, then, when we come here to the altar - either physically or at the other side of a screen - it's not to debate the issues of the day, or to fight ridiculous, artificially manufactured, culture wars or, for that matter, just to receive a little bit of moral uplift or to make us feel more comfortable with who we are - or at least I very much hope not. There is only one purpose, and that is to encounter the fullness of the divine life: to meet God and be changed by the encounter. +

St Arvans Tea and Chat

2.30 – 4 p.m.

Saturday August 8th

and usually every second

Saturday of the month

Childrens activity table

**Open afternoon
at St Deiniol's, Itton
This Sunday (19th)**

3 - 5 p.m.

All Welcome!

SERVICES IN OUR CHURCHES

TODAY

The Seventh Sunday after Trinity 19th July 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

NEXT SUNDAY

The Eighth Sunday after Trinity 26th July 2026

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

Readings:

Wisdom 12.13, 16-19
Psalm 86.11-17
Romans 8.12-25
St Matthew 13.24-30, 36-43

Fr Michael's day off is Wednesday this week

Please note: the Eucharist will be celebrated at St Arvans on Tuesday & Friday at 9 a.m., Saturday at 10 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:

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
24th September St. Christopher, Chepstow

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

"Comparisons are odious," is a well known piece of wisdom. It is helpful be reminded by Jesus this week that to be his disciples is not about comparing ourselves with each other. It is not about a competition to be greater than another. It is about being servants of each other. It is about being like him, who came to give his life away. As we pray this week, in the background of our daily lives, we can reflect upon all the relationships in our lives and ask for the grace to come to know the needs of each person in my life and for the grace to be servant as Jesus is servant.

The parable of the sower can be a wonderful source of reflection this week. We can do it in a variety of ways, but it might be helpful to just take one kind of soil to reflect on each day. Each day we can begin -- as we first get out of bed, in the shower, while dressing, eating, driving, walking from one place to another, shopping -- by asking for the grace to understand how parts of me are like this soil.

Seed sown on the hard path. I can ask to know how the Word is simply stolen away from my heart. What is hard hearted in me? What hardens me? How am I not open? What saps my spirits, my hope, my faith?

Seed sown on rocky ground. I can ask to know how I sometimes initially receive the Word readily, even with joy, but my lack of deep roots lead to my losing heart, when

troubles come? When do I lose courage? How do I believe the Word but fail to pay to price for living it? How can I develop deeper roots?

Seed sown among thorns. I can ask for the grace to know how I initially welcome the Word, but let anxieties and the lure of riches choke the Word so it can't bear fruit. What kind of worldly anxieties trouble me? What kind of attractions, possessions, addictions affect my freedom and peace? What grace in me isn't bearing fruit? How can I be freer, live more simply, with more surrender? Seed sown on rich soil. I can ask for the grace to hear the Word and understand it and to bear much fruit. What will help me, prepare me to be more receptive? What environment, activities, service will help? Each night, we can give thanks for these reflections that help us examine our daily live and grow in love, in freedom and in fruitfulness.

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