

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 Tuesdays..

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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2nd August 2026 The Ninth Sunday after Trinity

The Collect

Almighty God, who sent your Holy Spirit to be the life and light of your Church: open our hearts to the riches of your grace, that we may bring forth the fruit of the Spirit in love and joy and peace; 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 prophet Isaiah [

The LORD says this: Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your

money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live. I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David. See, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples. See, you shall call nations that you do not know, and nations that do not know you shall run to you, because of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you.

[55. 1-5]

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

Psalms 145 8-9, 15-22

R/ You open wide your hand, O Lord,

The Lord is gracious
and full of compassion,
slow to anger and of great kindness.
The Lord is loving to everyone
and his compassion is over all his works.

R/ You open wide your hand, O Lord,

The Lord upholds all those who fall;
he lifts up those who are bowed down.
The eyes of all wait upon you, O Lord,
and you give them their food
in due season.
You open wide your hand
and satisfy the needs
of every living creature.

R/ You open wide your hand, O Lord,

The Lord is righteous in all his ways
and loving in all his works.
The Lord is near to those
who call upon him,
to all who call upon him faithfully.
He fulfils the desire of those who fear him,
he hears their cry and helps them.

R/ You open wide your hand, O Lord,

The Lord preserves
all those who love him,
but he destroys all the wicked.
My mouth shall speak
the praise of the Lord;
let all flesh bless
his holy name for ever and ever.

R/ You open wide your hand, O Lord,

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans [9. 1-5]

I am speaking the truth in Christ. I am not lying; my conscience confirms it by the Holy Spirit. I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my own people, my kindred according to the flesh. They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; to them belong the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, comes the Messiah, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

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

Gradual Hymn

Alleluia, alleluia!
Man does not live on bread alone,
but on every word that comes from the
mouth of God
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

When Jesus heard that Herod had beheaded John the Baptist, he withdrew in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it,

they followed him on foot from the towns. When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick.

When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, 'This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves.'

Jesus said to them, 'They need not go away; you give them something to eat.' They replied, 'We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish.' And he said, 'Bring them here to me.' Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

[14.13–21]

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

For Your Prayers

That we may treasure the presence of Christ in our midst in the Eucharist, the presence that feeds and sustains us.

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;.

For the Departed:

The recently departed; John Williams; Ray Howell; Arthur Parkes, priest; our own departed loved ones, and those whose anniversaries of death fall this week: George Howell, Jan Evans, Bill Rogers, Benjamin Vaughan, bishop, Ray Parnell, Edith Sims.

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

Amon & Azor

Jereboam: Good evening, gentlemen. May I ask you for a few words

about Jesus? I imagine you were at his gathering this afternoon.

Amon: Yes, we were. Well, I'm Amon and this is my brother Azor. We've been to a few of Jesus' sessions now, and this one was just as inspiring as the others. We were discussing it as you walked up, actually. Jesus referred to himself as the bread of life, and he compared himself with that manna from heaven which God provided for our ancestors in the desert. Jesus claims to offer eternal life, in a way that the manna never did.

Azor: Presumably, when he describes himself as bread, he doesn't actually mean that we're supposed to start chewing his arm or anything. I think he's saying that he nourishes us in another way -- sustains us, if you like. Amon here made an interesting point...

Amon: Well, yes: bread's a really essential, basic food that we all eat. If Jesus had said something like: "I am the mashed olive of life," it wouldn't have sounded so important somehow. But I think he's pointing to something more mysterious here, too. I'm not sure what.

Jereboam: I'm going to put a question to you. There's a girl who lives down the road from us, and she's almost stopped eating – she just refuses food. Anyway, her parents are really worried about her. Now, if Jesus is telling people that they can be fed without eating real food, don't you think it might make this sort of problem worse?

Amon: That's a tricky one. What do you reckon, Azor?

Azor: Well, I don't think so. For one thing we all had a snack halfway through the afternoon. And remember how they say Jesus fed that huge crowd in the wilderness with only a few loaves and some fish.

Amon: And I noticed that Jesus was eating too. Another thing is that...look, has this poor girl been to any of Jesus' sessions?

Jereboam: I don't think so.

Amon: Well, a lot of what he says boils down to respecting everyone else. In the same way, he makes you respect other things too.

Azor: Without worshipping them or anything.

Amon: What? No, of course not. It's a question of respecting everything for what it is, and as a gift from God.

Azor: Yes, *he* also makes you better at receiving. What I mean is: Jesus reminds us that good things come from God and not just from ourselves, and so you end up appreciating them more. It's difficult to explain. Look, why not try and bring that girl along? Jesus could cure her, I'm sure, whatever her trauma might be..

Jereboam: I might well do that.

Thank you.

THIS WEEK

Sunday is the Ninth Sunday after Trinity. We hear in the Gospel how Jesus fed the crowds by making it possible for the disciples to give the people what they had. It was not enough, but became enough because of the compassion Jesus had for the people. Isaiah Chapter 55 invites us to come to the water when we are thirsty, to come and eat though we have no money. We can stop spending on what fails to satisfy. St Paul consoles us, too, by reminding us that nothing can "separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Tuesday is the feast day of Saint John Mary Vianney, the patron of parish clergy. Thursday is the Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord with its own special readings. Saturday is the feast day of Saint Dominic.

This week we complete our readings from the prophet Jeremiah. Saturday has the consoling reading from the prophet Habakkuk, "the vision still has its time." The Gospels continue from St Matthew this week. The disciples watch Jesus walk across the water to reach them in a storm. "Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid." On Tuesday there is a choice of repeating that gospel or using another from St Matthew. The Pharisees ask why Jesus' disciples don't follow the dietary laws and Jesus says, "It is not what enters one's mouth that defiles the man; but what comes out of the mouth is what defiles one." "Who do you say I am?," Jesus asks. Peter declares for all of the disciples, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus sums up our discipleship wonderfully: "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. What profit would there be for one to

gain the whole world and forfeit his life? Or what can one give in exchange for his life?" The disciples wonder why they could not drive out a demon from a boy, Jesus answers, "Because of your little faith." Faith "the size of a mustard seed" is enough.

Next Sunday: In the Old Testament reading we hear how Elijah finds God not in the thunder and driving wind, but in a gentle breeze. Peter's fear gets the best of him, when Jesus calls him out of his boat in a stormy sea. Peter takes his eyes off of Jesus and would have perished without Jesus' rescuing him.

A Homily for Trinity 5

+ It's strange, and we don't really expect it from such a well known episode of the Gospels as the feeding of the five thousand, but the presence - more than that - *the threat* - of death is very much in the air in the passage we've just heard. As so often in response to a crisis of some kind, Jesus had withdrawn to a quiet, deserted place to pray, either by himself or with his immediate followers. He had just received the news of the death of John the Baptist at the hands of the puppet king Herod. John, of course, wasn't only the one who had on the banks of the River Jordan announced the beginning of Our Lord's earthly ministry, but he was also his cousin. The news was shocking - the detail surrounding the heartless, careless, casual *frivolity* of the evil of worldly power exercised without responsibility, the sort of careless, random evil we still see so much in the world of today and in its great power politics. Our Lord knows this will be his destiny, too - John's death prefigures his own. He is the forerunner in more ways than one. So Jesus retreats into the wilderness, the desert hills surrounding the Sea of Galilee, to pray without interruption away from the pressing demands of those who flocked to hear him speak.

And it is in this context that St Matthew tells us of Jesus' feeding of the five thousand. Somehow the crowds had followed him into the wilderness and had found him there. Always compassionate, he doesn't send them away but heals the sick and teaches them about the kingdom of God. So as evening approaches, the

disciples want to send the crowds away to the neighbouring villages to buy food. Jesus however feeds the crowd - more than five thousand we are told with the five loaves and two (probably dried) fish that the disciples have brought with them. We are presented here with a miracle and it's clear that that is how St Matthew intends us to see it.

There are, of course, those who rule out such demonstrations of divine power as impossible; those who tend to scoff at miracles suggest that Jesus persuaded everyone, by his charismatic example, to belatedly share their picnic lunches with one other. Such reductionism and minimalism - such, if I dare say so, rather banal draining of the Gospels of the richness of their meaning - misses the whole drama of this story and its symbolism which reaches back into the past of the people of Israel and forward into the life of the Church, *the New Israel*, as the Fathers of the Church, the early theologians, called it.

The fact that the crowds are in the wilderness with no food is intended to suggest to those who heard it the journeying of the children of Israel in the wilderness led by Moses after the Exodus from Egypt - a place where God himself feeds them and leads them on towards the Promised Land. Here in the Gospel God, through his Son, the Christ, also feeds his people as a demonstration of the life of the kingdom. This is what God does, we are being told.

And if he reaches back into the past to give meaning and continuity to the present, Jesus also reaches forward into the future. St Matthew has told us that Jesus took the bread and fish, blessed them, broke them and distributed them to these hungry crowds. Taking, blessing, breaking and distributing are explicitly meant to be a kind of pre-echo, an anticipation of the Last Supper, where Jesus took bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to the apostles to eat. St Matthew uses the same vocabulary, describing the same actions, - it was probably far more obvious to the early Christian congregations listening to Matthew's gospel in the original Greek. The symbolism doesn't stop there, of course because these are the same actions we perform at the Eucharist today, where a priest, standing in the person of Jesus and acting in his name, takes bread, blesses it,

breaks it and distributes it to the people of God.

So this story of the feeding of the five thousand is far more than a visual representation of the compassion of God towards people in need. It's a deeply symbolic story, a historical incident which points us forward to the Eucharist, to our reception of the Bread of eternal Life. As so often in the Gospels, in the person of Jesus past, present, and future come together. Through this story Matthew shows us firstly that Jesus is the new and greater Moses, the person to whom the Law was revealed. Matthew is telling us here that Jesus is truly the Messiah, the giver of the new law of love, the Saviour of God's people, come to inaugurate God's kingdom, come to lead his people to the banquet of eternal life, of which the Eucharist is a foretaste - a preparation. And in the background of this we are meant to see the stark contrast between this great sign of the feast of the Kingdom of heaven with the decadence of the feast St Matthew has described a few verses earlier in his Gospel – before the passage we've just heard - where Salome entraps Herod into taking the life of St John the Baptist, at a feast heavy with the grotesque banality of intrigue and deceit in the court of a earthly tyrant. The compassion of Jesus, the Christ, healing the crowds in the wilderness is directly contrasted with the moral sickness of the power-obsessed Herod who kills the last and greatest of the prophets to appease an empty-headed teenage dancer and the evil intentions of her mother.

We said that this story is not only triggered by a death, but surrounded by death, and so it is because the Eucharist itself can only come about through the sacrificial death of the One who feeds us with his life. Here at the altar - at the Eucharist - we re-present that death - that one perfect and sufficient sacrifice - as the only acceptable offering we can make in praise and thanksgiving for our sharing in his Resurrection life. This is the promise of our heavenly destiny: Christ feeds us with his life to fit us for the life of the Kingdom. The Kingdom which is very much evident here in the present, but whose fullness is yet to come ... +

SERVICES IN OUR CHURCHES

TODAY

The Ninth Sunday after Trinity 2nd August 2026

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

NEXT SUNDAY

The Tenth Sunday after Trinity 9th August 2026

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

Readings:

1 Kings 19.9-18
Psalm 85.8-13
Romans 10.5-15
St Matthew 14.22-33

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

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

St Arvans Tea and Chat

2.30 – 4 p.m.
Saturday August 8th
*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:

6th August St. Deiniol, Itton
13th August St. Tewdric, Mathern
20th August St. Arvans
27th August St. Thomas Becket,
Shirenewton
3rd September St. Andoenus,
Mounton
10th 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

In this week which sees the Feast of the Transfiguration we can ask, in a variety of ways, in the different situations of our daily lives, that our eyes might be opened to see Jesus as he really is - glorified, with the Father, and ready to renew our faith and trust in him.

As we begin our day, and at brief times throughout our day, we can pull our consciousness together by letting the themes of this week's reading guide us. One day, we might ask to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus as we go through a day full of strong wind and waves. We can ask again and again, as things get tougher and more challenging. Another day, we might focus on what comes out of our mouths. Is there cynicism, judgments, distortions of the truth, divisive and self-serving manipulation, hurtful put-downs? How do I practice using my voice to give praise to God by affirming others, forgiving them, by telling the truth, by defending the

poor and the voiceless, by giving God thanks?

Later in the week, we can get in touch with the call of Jesus to deny ourselves. This is not self-denial for its own sake. This is the dying to self that comes from loving in the self-sacrificing way that Jesus did. Who in my family, friends, relative, co-workers, members of my parish or congregation need my care and support? How have I focused on "gaining the world" and lost some of my true self in the process? Is there some way this week that I can taste discovering my true self in giving some time, some compassion, some love, some special concern to someone who needs this from me?

And throughout the week, perhaps at a special time of powerlessness or some time when I feel that I don't have the energy or gifts to do the "more," to move a mountain, I can ask for faith the size of a mustard seed. And, at the close of each evening I can give thanks to God for being generous to me all week, for this simple focus on our relationship every day.

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

Devauden Photography Competition 2026

We STILL want to see your best photograph!

What is the best photograph you have taken recently?

What picture are you most proud of?

Perhaps you haven't taken it yet!

It could be a landscape, a sunset, your family in their finest (or in their PJ's), your dog, the view from your window, a still life, or some wildlife!

There will be an exhibition of the entries in St James' Church in September, and the 12 best pictures will be made into a calendar for 2027

How do you enter?

We can only accept digital photographs, so please email devauden.photos@gmail.com with your best photograph by Sunday 6th September.

If you are under 16, please let us know when your picture is emailed in by your parent or responsible adult.