

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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16th August 2026

kept as

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

The Collect

Almighty God,
who looked upon the lowliness of the Blessed Virgin Mary and chose her to be the mother of your only Son: grant that we who are redeemed by his blood may share with her in the glory of your eternal kingdom; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **AMEN**

A reading from the book of Revelation

God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within

his temple; and there were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail. A great portent appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pangs, in the agony of giving birth. Then another portent appeared in heaven: a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. Then the dragon stood before the woman who was about to bear a child, so that he might devour her child as soon as it was born. And she gave birth to a son, a male child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron. But her child was snatched away and taken to God and to his throne; and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, so that there she can be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days. [11. 19 - 12. 6]

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

Psalm 45

11 - 18

R/ Sing praises to God, sing praises

'Hear, O daughter;
consider and listen closely;
forget your people
and your family's house.
The king will have pleasure
in your beauty;
he is your master;
therefore do him honour.

R/ Sing praises to God, sing praises;

The people of Tyre are here with a gift;
the rich among the people
seek your favour.'
All glorious is the princess as she enters;
her gown is cloth-of-gold.

R/ Sing praises to God, sing praises;

In embroidered apparel
she is brought to the king;
after her the bridesmaids
follow in procession.
With joy and gladness they are brought,
and enter into the palace of the king.

R/ Sing praises to God, sing praises;

'In place of fathers, O king,
you shall have sons;
you shall make them princes
over all the earth.
I will make your name to be remembered
from one generation to another;
therefore nations will praise you
for ever and ever.'

R/ Sing praises to God, sing praises;

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Galatians [4; 4 - 7]

When the fullness of time had come,
God sent his Son, born of a woman,
born under the law, in order to redeem
those who were under the law, so that
we might receive adoption as children.
And because you are children,
God has sent the Spirit of his Son
into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!'
So you are no longer a slave but a child,
and if a child then also an heir,
through God.

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

Alleluia, alleluia!
Mary has been taken up into heaven;
all the choirs of angels are rejoicing.
Alleluia!

The Lord be with you
R/ And also with you

Listen to the Gospel of Christ
according to St Luke

R/ Glory to you, O Lord

Mary said, 'My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,
for he has looked with favour

on the lowliness of his servant.
Surely, from now on all generations
will call me blessed;
for the Mighty One has done great things
for me, and holy is his name.
His mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.
He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud
in the thoughts of their hearts.
He has brought down the powerful
from their thrones,
and lifted up the lowly;
he has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty.
He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
according to the promise he made
to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants
for ever.' [1. 46 - 55]

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

For Your Prayers

That we may come to share with Mary
in the glory of her Son's resurrection.
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; our own departed
loved ones, and those whose
anniversaries of death fall this week:
Sid Belcher; John George Hughes,
bishop; Mary Aplin; Patrick Clay.

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*

Joanna

Jereboam: Good morning, Joanna.
I understand that you have an interesting
story to tell.

Joanna: That's what people tell me: I may
have been the last person to see our
mother Mary before she died.

Jereboam: We're talking about
Mary the mother of Jesus, the well-known

teacher who was put to death a few years
ago.

Joanna: That's right -- we all call
her "our mother Mary". She wasn't really
my mother, but even people who are older
than she was called her "Mother".
Anyway, most mornings I used to go and
visit her. I'd take some fruit, and we'd sit
together in the courtyard outside her
room, or inside if the weather was bad.
We'd eat the fruit and talk about anything,
and I mean anything. It was so lovely to
have a friend -- I think I can call her a
friend, although I never described her like
that before -- who would listen to every
detail of your life, no matter how trivial,
and understand things you wouldn't care
to admit to anyone else.

Jereboam: But things were different
the other day...

Joanna: Well yes: I went at the usual hour
-- it was my third visit of that week -- but
she wasn't there. I was surprised,
because she always stayed in at that time
to receive me. I waited for quite a while.
Gradually it dawned on me that she had
left that place and died.

Jereboam: How do you know? She
might just have gone away for a few days.

Joanna: Believe me: I just know. With
most people death involves a big change;
you know that as well as I do. It can be a
long, drawn-out business and very difficult
for everyone concerned, both before and
after the death. Not with our mother: she
has just passed into her heaven that she'd
speak about so fondly.

Jereboam: And what happened to
her body? I hope that someone has taken
care of her properly.

Joanna: Sir, you may find this strange, but
Mary and I still speak to one another, even
after her death. She doesn't say so much
to me now, but when I do hear her voice,
there's no mistaking it. She told me not to
look for her body, just to accept that she's
gone.

Jereboam: Joanna, I'm not going to
pass judgement on you, but that is an
unusual story.

Joanna: I know. It never crossed my mind
that I'd ever be unusual. These things
have just happened to me.

Jereboam: Thank you for your very
personal account.

THIS WEEK

Sunday is kept as the great feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. As she was the first to believe in her son we believe Mary was singled out to share body and soul in the Resurrection of the Lord.

Thursday is the feast day of Saint Bernard, abbot and doctor of the Church. Saturday is the celebration of the Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

This week at the Eucharist we continue to hear readings from the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel. We are treated to some of the best of Ezekiel's prophesy this week. He is sharp and biting in his calls for conversion and comforting in his prophesy about God's fidelity and mercy, especially in the field of dry bones that come to life. In this week's selection from Matthew's Gospel we read some wonderful words of Jesus about being his follower. Jesus tells a rich, young man to sell what he has and give it to the poor. "Then come, follow me." The man went away with sadness because "he had many possessions." When Jesus tells his disciples how hard it is for the rich to be saved, his disciples worry, but he says "for God all things are possible." Jesus says there will be a great turning of the tables - the last being the first and the first falling to last place. But, he tells them the parable of the landowner that hires workers throughout the day, including the last hours. When he pays them all the same, the workers who worked all day grumbled. Jesus asks, "Are you envious because I am generous?" He adds again, "The last will be first, and the first will be last." A king gives a wedding banquet for his son but many were too busy to come. Others killed the servants who carried the invitation. "Many are invited, but few are chosen." When asked the greatest commandment he gives the double command of loving God and neighbor. Jesus warns against the self serving ways of the religious elite. He says, "The greatest among you must be your servant."

Next Sunday

The first reading from Isaiah offers the story of the faithful servant Eliakim, who will be given the keys for his master's palace. Paul's brief reading from the Letter to the Romans is a moving prayer filled with awe at the depth and unknowing

ways of our Lord. In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus asks his followers what people are saying about him. Then he asks the real question, "Who do you say I am?" Peter's direct answer, "You are the Christ" prompts Jesus' reply that Peter would be given the keys to the kingdom of heaven and would be the rock of faith on which he would build his Church.

A Homily for the Assumption

+ Today's feast is really about discipleship, that of Mary and of our own. It reinforces that realisation which many of us have come to over the last few difficult months that the things we thought really mattered to us - the ability to enjoy life with a feeling of security and the ability to look to the future with a degree of confidence aren't as important - or as achievable - as we thought they were. When we as Christians honour Mary what are we celebrating? It's not simply an accident of biology, because Mary's motherhood - her role as what Greek theology calls her - the "Theotokos" - "the bearer of God" - is no accident; it was her voluntary co-operation with the process of humanity's redemption - it is essential to her discipleship - and in the highest degree possible she represents the true human response of faith. We honour her always as the first Christian. But Mary begins her pilgrimage of faith as someone who overcomes her fear, someone who takes the incalculable risk of setting out into the unknown. She has trust and obviously a massive inner strength and purpose - it's obvious from the words of the Magnificat - this morning's Gospel reading - that Mary is far from being the rather submissive and somewhat anaemic object of devotion that she has sometimes been portrayed - but despite what she is told she has no idea what she is letting herself in for. Her "yes" to God at the Annunciation has consequences quite beyond the ability of any human being to contemplate. Her faith is able to guide her through the darkness to lies beyond but her immediate experience of discipleship doesn't protect her at all. Mary's first experience of discipleship is as hard and cruel as one could imagine, giving birth far from home and family, unable to find adequate shelter, after that life as an exile in a

foreign country, fleeing from Herod's persecution. Her vocation - like all followers of Christ - is to embrace the reality of the cross and resurrection - she does so spiritually long before she is called to witness its reality, standing with the apostle John at the foot of Calvary and witnessing to its fulfilment, gathered with the Apostles at the first Pentecost. If we join her in the following of her Son, what are we promised?

Well, first of all, not immunity from the tensions and sufferings of being human (how could we be given that our faith celebrates the becoming human of God himself?), not an absence of mess and confusion, not freedom from the distress caused by our own weaknesses and betrayals or those of others, not protection from disappointment and rejection, and infidelities of all kinds (and it's our own that are the most difficult to accept and move on from) The Christian faith isn't a kind of spiritual rabbit's foot which we carry around with us to stop things going wrong. Very often the impression is given - or "picked up" that *it is* - and that's when faith can so very easily fail. Bad things do happen to good people. The whole point about the Gospel is that it is in many ways God's own protest movement against the way things are - both with the world in which we live and with the way we human beings have made it and ourselves. The Gospel this morning is a great affirmation of faith and hope in God's promises despite the injustices we see around us and within us.

What we are celebrating today is the triumph of faith despite all this. As the first disciple, as the type - the model, in other words - of the whole Church, Mary is among the first to share in the fullness of her Son's victory over death and evil. In *her* glorification we see our own - a sign of our own sure and certain victory, of our own true homecoming, of our pilgrimage ending in an experience of life, beauty and truth in the presence of God.

And Mary shows us that despite everything, the life of faith and discipleship is not only possible but essential to the living of an authentic human life lived in the full knowledge of our contingency, of our littleness. In her, hope becomes a reality. Sharing in the experience of the cross will lead to the new life of Resurrection. Following the path of faith will lead us to life in all its fullness, in

God's time, in God's way. Our exile will end in the glory of God's Kingdom. I'm going to end with a short passage from one of the most interesting and important Anglican theologians of the last century, John Macquarrie: his point is that Blessed Mary's Assumption, like all the saving events of our faith, is not a one-off event, but a continuing process which involves all of us

"... Christians can affirm that beyond reasonable doubt at some time in the first century of our era in some Christian community in the near East, the Blessed Virgin Mary fell asleep and went to be with her Son to receive the glory he had promised to bestow on his own. That would seem to be something that can be affirmed on the basis of the New Testament, and we may say that this is the classic moment of the Assumption and is worthy in itself to be celebrated. But it is the beginning of a vaster (dare we say, cosmic or universal?) assumption. That vaster assumption is in progress now. Wherever in the Church ... here on earth there is a gleam of true glory, a faithful act of discipleship, a prayer offered in faith, a hand stretched out in love, there is assumption, human life is lifted up to God by God, We believe too that in the Church expectant, souls are being perfected toward the day of Jesus Christ. Finally in the Church triumphant, the work will be complete, and with Mary and all the saints, the people of God will have attained to his eternal kingdom of glory, peace and light." +

St Arvans Tea and Chat

2.30 – 4 p.m.

Saturday September 12th

and usually every second

Saturday of the month

Childrens activity table

SERVICES IN OUR CHURCHES

TODAY

16th August 2026

kept as

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

- 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 Twelfth Sunday after Trinity

23rd August 2026

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

Readings:

Isaiah 51.1-6

Psalms 138

Romans 12.1-8

Matthew 16.13-20

Please note: the Eucharist will be celebrated at St Arvans on Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday at 10.00, Friday at 09.30

Fr Michael's day off this week is Monday

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:

- 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.

Prayer this week

As we go through our everyday life this week, we carry this week's gospels and their vivid descriptions of our relationship with Jesus. What is he asking of us this week?

Each day, we begin with the practice of briefly pausing at our bedside to focus the day with a 15-30 second prayer. It is helpful to develop this habit by simply doing it three or four days in a row. Even if I say that I'm half-awake at this time, we can discover what a difference this way of beginning the day can be. With practice, it gets easier to say, "Thank you for this day, Lord. Please, be with me today, especially when I do _____ this morning and this afternoon as I _____. Give me more patience, love and trust in you."

While getting ready, I can expand this prayer, in a simple friend-to-friend conversation with our Lord. This kind of bond or checking-in with our Lord at the beginning of the day, lets a background relationship with develop and grow, while I'm doing many things. It changes my consciousness and takes my fundamental relationship with God and unites and integrates it with the things I'm doing, whether they are pleasant, routine or quite difficult.

Throughout the week I might be thinking of what it would mean for me, in my circumstances, to sell what I have, give it to the poor, and really follow Jesus. What is preventing me from following the Lord more completely? Are there "riches" that I know are barriers to my surrendering to God's will more freely? What seems to possess me? Recognising our lack of

freedom in one or another area is the first step in being able to ask for the grace of freedom from the things that possess me - even when I know they are not good for me.

We might also ask the Lord to show us what he desires that we be "free for." "Freedom from" is the first part of our relationship. Then, we are free to be sent. What am I being freed for? What loving, what new generosity, what type of self-giving? What neighbour, person in my family, or the poor of the world, am I being called to notice and serve? We might ask the Lord to reveal to us this week how we are called to be servant.

We will still do what is on our schedule, respond to all our commitments. The difference will be that we will do it while we are more "in touch" with the Lord. Staying focused and connecting with our Lord throughout the day is at the heart of prayer, "Raising our minds and hearts to God."

And, at the end of each day, we give thanks for the gift of his presence..

*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.

Mega Mondays Saints, Chepstow

August 17th, 24th

10 a.m – 12 noon

St Mary's Priory, Chepstow

Crafts, games & fun for the summer holidays