

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 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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20th September 2026 The Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity

The Collect

O Lord, we beseech you mercifully to hear the prayers of your people who call upon you; and grant that they may both perceive and know what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil them; 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 Jonah

When God saw what the people of Nineveh did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would

bring upon them; and he did not do it. But this was very displeasing to Jonah, and he became angry. He prayed to the LORD and said, 'O LORD! Is not this what I said while I was still in my own country? That is why I fled to Tarshish at the beginning; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and ready to relent from punishing. And now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live.' And the LORD said, 'Is it right for you to be angry?' Then Jonah went out of the city and sat down east of the city, and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, waiting to see what would become of the city. The LORD God appointed a bush, and made it come up over Jonah, to give shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort; so Jonah was very happy about the bush. But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the bush, so that it withered. When the sun rose, God prepared a sultry east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah so that he was faint and asked that he might die. He said, 'It is better for me to die than to live.' But God said to Jonah, 'Is it right for you to be angry about the bush?' And he said, 'Yes, angry enough to die.' Then the LORD said, 'You are concerned about the bush, for which you did not labour and which you did not grow; it came into being in a night and perished in a night. And should I not be concerned about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who do not know their right hand from their left, and also many animals?' [3. 10 - 4. 11]

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

Psalm 145 1 - 8

**R/The Lord is near
to those who call upon him**

I will exalt you, O God my King,
and bless your name for ever and ever.
Every day will I bless you

and praise your name for ever and ever.

**R/The Lord is near
to those who call upon him**

Great is the Lord
and greatly to be praised;
there is no end to his greatness.
One generation shall praise
your works to another
and shall declare your power.

**R/The Lord is near
to those who call upon him**

I will ponder the glorious splendour
of your majesty
and all your marvellous works.
They shall speak of the might
of your wondrous acts,
and I will tell of your greatness.

**R/The Lord is near
to those who call upon him**

They shall publish the remembrance
of your great goodness;
they shall sing of your righteous deeds.
The Lord is gracious
and full of compassion,
slow to anger and of great kindness.

**R/The Lord is near
to those who call upon him**

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Philippians [1. 21-30]

For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labour for me; and I do not know which I prefer. I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better; but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith, so that I may share abundantly in your boasting in Christ Jesus when I come to you again. Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about

you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel, and are in no way intimidated by your opponents. For them this is evidence of their destruction, but of your salvation. And this is God's doing. For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well – since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

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

Gradual Hymn

Alleluia, alleluia!
Open our heart, O Lord
to accept the words of your Son
Alleluia!

The Lord be with you:
And also with you

Hear the Holy Gospel
according to St Matthew

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus said to his disciples:
'The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire labourers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the labourers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the market-place; and he said to them, "You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right."
So they went. When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, "Why are you standing here idle all day?"
They said to him, "Because no one has hired us." He said to them, "You also go into the vineyard."
When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, "Call the labourers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first." When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. And when they received

it, they grumbled against the landowner, saying, "These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat."
But he replied to one of them, "Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?" So the last will be first, and the first will be last."

[20.1–16]

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

For Your Prayers

That we may always proclaim by our lives the infinite love and mercy of God
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.
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; Mary; Margaret; Althea; Margi & Bob Osborne; Jenny Sherwood, Bob Main, Diane Parnell, Val Thompson.

For the Departed:

The recently departed; our own departed loved ones, and those whose anniversaries of death fall this week:

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

Nahum

Jereboam: Oh hello, Nahum. Might I ask you something about that letter they've just read out, please?

Nahum: By all means...I can't guarantee to be able to answer your question though.

Jereboam: Well, Paul talks about looking forward to the time when he leaves this world.

Nahum: Yes...

Jereboam: I thought that your faith was very physical. You know -- Jesus came into the world physically, you receive him physically in the Eucharist, and so on. Yet I sensed that Paul might be rejecting the physical world to some extent. He didn't actually say so: I just wondered. It somehow felt a bit different from what the Church usually says.

Nahum: I doubt that it was different really. He's merely saying that life isn't ideal, which we all know anyway.

Jereboam: I suppose that I'm really saying that the letter reminded me of my own experience. When I am at my most spiritual, I often feel as if my body is hardly there. Do you know what I mean?

Nahum: Oh, yes: I think that many of us search for the spiritual away from our physical lives. You can easily forget your body altogether. There's nothing wrong with that. Your body's still there.

Jereboam: My problem is that I often become so far removed from my physical self, that I barely seem to know who I am any more. And then I seem to be so changeable. It's as if I become different people when I'm in different company or speaking different languages. Maybe that doesn't count as a spiritual matter, but it's quite disconcerting.

Nahum: You know, I think everybody feels that to some extent.

Jereboam: Really?

Nahum: Yes, I think so. Can I offer you two pieces of advice?

Jereboam: Of course.

Nahum: First of all, tell someone all about it in as much detail as you can. You should find that a good friend can appreciate all the aspects of you, and your problem won't seem like a problem any more.

Jereboam: As long as I choose the right person...

Nahum: Absolutely right. Confiding in the wrong person can be a disaster! We've probably all learnt that one the hard way.

Jereboam: And the second piece of advice?

Nahum: All right – shut your eyes.

Jereboam: Yes...

Nahum: Now take your left hand and touch your right shoulder...that's it! Perfect: well done! You knew exactly where to touch.

Jereboam: Of course.

Nahum: Well, think about it. All sorts of things affect our thoughts and perceptions. Lots of them we can't understand, let alone control. But wherever we are, whoever we think we are, we can still do what you just did – find a part of our body just by intuition. It's a significant part of our sense of identity.

When you feel disorientated, try it. You might find it reassuring.

Jereboam: Now I really didn't expect to be told about that... Thank you. That man is a breath of fresh air!

THIS WEEK

On Sunday, we hear the powerful parable about the landlord who represents God's way of caring for us. Though workers go out into his vineyard at various times of the day, he pays them all the same. When they grumble, he simply explains that he desires to be generous. How this can change our view of God and our own sense of justice?

Monday is the Feast of St. Matthew, Apostle.

In St Luke's Gospel this week. Jesus shares his wisdom with the crowds he addresses. We must share the light entrusted to us, not hide it. The tables will be turned on those who try to greedily hold on to what they have. When people report that Jesus' family is looking for him, he uses the occasion to highlight the nature of our relationship with him: "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and act on it." When Jesus sends the Twelve to heal and to proclaim the Kingdom he tells them to serve, trusting in God: "Take nothing for the journey." Herod hears about the new prophet and wonders who it is - he has already beheaded John the Baptist. When Jesus tells his disciples that he will be handed over to others, they can't possibly understand until another day. They were afraid to ask Jesus about this.

Next week: In St Matthew's Gospel Jesus offers a story about two sons, one who agrees to work in the vineyard but doesn't; the other who tells his father he will not work but then quietly goes to work. It is a story that challenges the chief priests and elders of the people, "Tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God before you."

A Homily for the Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity

+ The novelist Graham Greene wrote this in Brighton Rock, that complex morality tale of good and evil, right and wrong, and a human nature which so often seen beyond redemption - he

says this: "*You can't conceive, nor can I, the appalling strangeness of the mercy of God,*"

Very often the ways of God are mysterious and unfathomable. In the face of what appears to be senseless violence, meaningless tragedy, of inexplicable and disturbing events of all kinds, I suppose we could say that we take refuge in words like this which both express our inability to understand how such things could happen, whilst holding on to our belief that ultimately a God of love presides over a universe where all things will somehow work for good.

We struggle throughout our lives - and actually I don't think it gets easier - with balancing those two seemingly contradictory ideas, because we feel that things should be just, fair and capable of a straightforward and satisfactory explanation. Some might say that this in-built feeling is itself an indication – at least a bit of a hint - of the existence of God, who has made us in his own image.

Yet - we are still forced back to that cliché: God's ways are not our ways - and not as a cop-out or an evasion, to hide our lack of understanding, but as a simple statement of the way things are: clichés most often are.

There is no sense of economy or human appropriateness or proportion in God's mercy. Christ tells us that it isn't enough to forgive seven times. Instead it must be seventy-seven times, or seventy times seven, it doesn't really matter how we translate that so long as we are given a sense of the vast gulf between what we think is possible and what God actually does.

We have heard all these parables over these weeks of summer and early autumn: the kingdom of heaven is where our sins, and the alienation which is part and parcel of our fallen human nature, are forgiven without limit or restriction - here we are given a glimpse - a blinding flash of light - of the reality of Greene's phrase: "*the appalling strangeness of the mercy of*

God.”

So, this morning we are brought up short by the strange parable of the workers in the vineyard.

This, too, Our Lord says to us, is what God is like. And, again, our first reaction is one of incredulity - what on earth can he mean by this? It's a story which offends our own limited and restricted view of fairness.

Now we don't need to say that when Jesus makes use of parables in this way, he is always doing so in a non-literal way. It goes without saying, God isn't the owner of a vineyard, and Jesus isn't talking here about labour relations or the nature of a just society, he's speaking about our relationship with God. He's saying that whatever we receive from God is by way of being a radically free gift - our expectations or ideas of what might be owed to us, whatever they might be, haven't the slightest relevance here, they make no sense..

In relation to God what “rights” can we be said to have? Having said that, before we lapse into a kind of reactionary pessimism, the message that comes over from St Matthew's account of the parable is quite reassuring. God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, isn't a capricious ruler of the universe, handing out rewards or punishments according to the whim of the moment. There is no question in the story we've just heard of the owner of the vineyard somehow measuring what anyone deserves. The question of payment or rewards handed out to those who work in his vineyard is simply a question of how generous he is. This story is about the nature of God, and the unlimited nature of divine love and mercy. The Gospels are full of these stories of God's generosity: the loaves and fishes feeding thousands of people, the wine provided at the marriage at Cana, the indication that forgiveness should be almost without limit and so on. And the greatest of all is the mystery of the cross - the mystery which stands at the very heart of the

nature of God - Christ's giving of his life for us in order to penetrate the deepest anguish and hurt of humanity's alienation from God and to redeem us and bring us home.

So we are being reminded here in this parable, which seems at first to be about our daily work, that our faith - our salvation itself - stands or falls by the unlimited generosity, mercy and love of the Father, and it is not for us to try to place any limits of our own upon his generosity. For whereas human gifts are often things we come to expect - sometimes justifiably - as a right, the Father's *divine* gift in giving us his Son is greater than anything we could expect or imagine. The shock or the scandal of the Incarnation and its fulfilment upon the hill of Calvary is something we should never forget, and the gift we are given as a result is something we should never take for granted.

So, despite the fact that we might be tempted on a surface reading or a superficial hearing of Our Lord's parable of the labourers in the vineyard to sympathise with the complaints from those who, from dawn, worked in the day's heat and who were shocked to find that the workers who started at 5 o'clock received the exact same pay, we should suspend our judgement.

So, this story Jesus tells isn't about a fair day's pay for a fair day's work or anything like that. It's nothing to do with workers' rights or the principles of fairness and justice we should quite rightly apply to our dealings with one another. The Christian faith and Christian moral theology has a lot to say about the necessity for fairness and justice in our dealings with one another, things which our society should listen to a great deal more than it is at the moment, but that's not what is being spoken of here.

Today's Gospel parable isn't about justice at all but about salvation and the outpouring of God's love. All who are faithfully part of Christ, all who work in the Lord's vineyard, will

receive " the usual daily pay" - that is, eternal life, life in all its fullness. With God there are no half measures, there is no such thing as a half-share or a quarter-share in salvation. And, most importantly, salvation isn't ours because we expect it, or because we deserve it or think we deserve it, but simply because we are loved by God. Yes, even you and me - we are all recipients of this appalling strangeness of the mercy of God," +

SERVICES IN OUR CHURCHES

TODAY

The Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity 20th September 2026

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

NEXT SUNDAY

The Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity 27th September 2026

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

11.30 a.m. Holy Eucharist
at St Deiiniol's, Itton

Readings:

Ezekiel 18.1-4, 25-32

Psalms 25.1-9

Philippians 2.1-13

St Matthew 21.23-32

Please note: this week the Eucharist will be celebrated at St Arvans on Monday, Wednesday & Thursday at 10.00.

There will be a live-streamed only Reflection, meditation and celebration of Night Prayer on Tuesday (22nd) at 19.00

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:

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.

St Arvans Tea and Chat

2.30 – 4 p.m.

Saturday October 10th

and usually every second

Saturday of the month

Childrens activity table

Daily Prayer this week

Every day of every week, we have the precious opportunity to get to know Jesus more intimately and to become more united to him, with the result that we grow in a desire to be with him more and to be more like him. Few of us have the wonderful opportunity to follow the special vocation of becoming contemplatives, but we can be more contemplative in our everyday lives. This can happen for us, not by “leaving the world” but by letting our Lord have a place in our very busy daily world. If we keep developing the habit of being contemplatives in the midst of our days, we will indeed be blessed to find intimacy with God in our everyday lives. It doesn't take more time. It just takes focus.

From the first few moments of our day, and in very brief conscious moments throughout the day, we can speak with our Lord. We can notice what is going on in

within us - our fears, our fatigue, our joys and our sorrows - and tell our Lord what we are feeling and ask for the graces we need.

This week, we can be conscious of the invitation of Sunday's gospel to be less judgmental and more aware of how generously and undeservedly we are loved by God. In a very brief moment, we might ask our Lord to give us the grace to share the light, the gifts we've been given, generously.

On another day, we might find ourselves doing what the Lord has asked us to do, but tempted out of our fear and anxiety to “take too much with us,” in the sense of not really trusting that our Lord will give us what we need for the journey. This would be a great day for some “friend to friend” conversation with our Lord, before the challenge, in moments during it, and after it is completed, expressing our gratitude.

We can grow in freedom by not being afraid to ask our Lord about anything. The answer surprisingly comes in our own inner peace and trust. By Sunday, we can find ourselves judging others less, and more freely and consciously choosing to show God's mercy in our lives.

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

Devauden Photography Competition 2026

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

Clothes for Homeless People

Please donate warm clothes
clean and in good condition
for homeless people this winter

Please bring to

St Arvans Church, NP16 6ET

or St Thomas a Becket Church ,
Shirenewton NP16 6RQ
(which are both open daily)

Underwear and socks
to be new please

The collection will be open
until Sunday 18 October

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR
KINDNESS AND GENEROSITY!**

Early Warning! Harvest Appeal : St Arvans Church 2026. Knickers or Snickers!

Last year we very successfully
collected chocolate for our Harvest
Appeal. We were overwhelmed by
your generosity in response and the
women and children at the Refuge
were so grateful.

This year we will be collecting
SNICKERS CHOCOLATE BARS
(or any chocolate) and most
importantly packs of small KNICKERS
(Tesco/Peacocks? sell reasonably
priced packs of ladies size 8/10/12
small) .

The girls at the Refuge are so grateful
for these personal items.....you are
all life savers.

So for our KNICKERS OR SNICKERS
APPEAL

a box will appear at the back of St
Arvans Church so that we can collect
during September/October for
distribution to the relevant centres in
early November.

