

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 10.00 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:

<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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27th September 2026 The Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity

The Collect

Almighty God, you have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless till they find their rest in you: teach us to offer ourselves to your service, that here we may have your peace, and in the world to come may see you face to face; 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 Ezekiel

The word of the LORD came to me: What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, 'The parents have eaten sour grapes, and

the children's teeth are set on edge'? As I live, says the Lord GOD, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. Know that all lives are mine; the life of the parent as well as the life of the child is mine: it is only the person who sins that shall die. Yet you say, 'The way of the Lord is unfair.' Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair? When the righteous turn away from their righteousness and commit iniquity, they shall die for it; for the iniquity that they have committed they shall die. Again, when the wicked turn away from the wickedness they have committed and do what is lawful and right, they shall save their life. Because they considered and turned away from all the transgressions that they had committed, they shall surely live; they shall not die. Yet the house of Israel says, 'The way of the Lord is unfair.' O house of Israel, are my ways unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair? Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, all of you according to your ways, says the Lord GOD. Repent and turn from all your transgressions; otherwise iniquity will be your ruin. Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed against me, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord GOD. Turn, then, and live.

[18. 1-4, 25-32]

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

Psalm 25, 1 - 9

**R/ Remember, O Lord,
your compassion and love.**

To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul;
my God, I put my trust in you;
let me not be humiliated,
nor let my enemies triumph over me.
Let none who look to you be put to shame;
let the treacherous be disappointed
in their schemes.

**R/ Remember, O Lord,
your compassion and love.**

Show me your ways, O Lord,
and teach me your paths.
Lead me in your truth and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation;
in you have I trusted all the day long.

**R/ Remember, O Lord,
your compassion and love.**

Remember, O Lord,
your compassion and love,
for they are from everlasting.
Remember not the sins of my youth
and my transgressions;
remember me according to your love
and for the sake of your goodness,
O Lord.

**R/ Remember, O Lord,
your compassion and love.**

Gracious and upright is the Lord;
therefore he teaches sinners in his way.
He guides the humble in doing right
and teaches his way to the lowly.
All the paths of the Lord
are love and faithfulness
to those who keep his covenant
and his testimonies.

**R/ Remember, O Lord, your
compassion and love.**

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Philippians [2; 81-13]

If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled

himself and became obedient to the point of death – even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

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

Alleluia, alleluia!
Your word is truth, O Lord,
consecrate us in the truth
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 entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, 'By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?' Jesus said to them, 'I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?' And they argued with one another, 'If we say, "From heaven," he will say to us, "Why then did you not believe him?" But if we say, "Of human origin," we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet.' So they answered Jesus, 'We do not know.' And he said to them, 'Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things. What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, "Son, go and work in the vineyard today." He answered, "I will not"; but later he changed his mind and went. The father went to the second and said the same;

and he answered, "I go, sir"; but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?' They said, 'The first.' Jesus said to them, Truly I tell you, the tax-collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax-collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him.'

[21.23–32]

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

For Your Prayers

That we may always serve the Lord in deed as well as in word.
That the holy angels may be our guard and protection
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, Liz Hall.

For the Departed:

The recently departed; Michael; 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

Sephtan

Jereboam: I've understood correctly, have I, Sephtan? Paul doesn't encourage competition.

Sephtan: That's right. As Jesus said, "If anyone has a mind to be the greatest, he must be the last of all, and the servant of all."

Jereboam: I can't help thinking that you'll have to change that attitude from time to time. You members of the Church need to survive, you know. That's bound to involve competition of some sort. Or is it that you're happy to compete, but just not with each other? You must motivate yourselves somehow.

Sephtan: I don't see that there's a problem. Jesus' teaching asks us to follow the path of love, and to choose right over

wrong. None of that depends on competition or money.

Jereboam: I sometimes wonder whether you people actually achieve anything practical, though. What you say could describe a dreamy sort of existence where nothing actually gets done.

Sephthan: Oh no -- we're very active people...or most of us are. And as far as motivation's concerned, I'd have thought that obeying God's will should provide sufficient motivation for anyone. Don't get me wrong -- I'm not blind to the necessity of earning money, although I tend to be wary when people talk about it. All sorts of dubious actions and attitudes can sound quite justifiable, as soon as they are rewarded with money.

Personally, I tend to think not so much of earning money, but of redirecting money from other people towards myself. That helps me to assess things more clearly.

Jereboam: It's all admirable, I'm sure, but is it sensible? I mean, work's pretty hard to come by these days. You can't allow everyone else to take on all the work, just because you want to be last instead of first.

Sephthan: Jesus was pretty clear about things. He assured us that the same God who cares for the birds in the air will ensure that we have nothing to worry about.

Jereboam: I'm just not convinced, that's all.

Sephthan: Well, I hope that we can prove you wrong. You'll appreciate that we don't have much option, other than to follow the demands of our faith. By the way, how much do you pay us for these interviews?

Jereboam: Sorry?

Sephthan: Don't worry, Jereboam: it was a joke. Things were getting a bit heavy...

THIS WEEK

On Sunday we hear St Paul exhorting the Philippians, "Have in you the same attitude that is also in Christ Jesus," offering us a powerful image of Jesus' humble, self-less service. 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." Tuesday is the Feast of Saints Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael, archangels, with its own special readings. Wednesday is the feast day of Saint Jerome, priest and doctor of the Church. Thursday is that of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, Friday that of the Holy Guardian Angels.

The first readings at the Eucharist all week offer a look at the Book of Job. We witness his despair and his faithfulness in his most trying times and end with his praise of God's glory.

St Luke's Gospel continues to offer us stories of Jesus "resolutely" on the way to Jerusalem and the suffering that faces him there. He is not welcomed in a Samaritan village but rebukes the disciples who want revenge on the village. He encourages his followers: "No one who sets a hand to the plow and looks to what was left behind is fit for the Kingdom of God." He holds the people of Chorazin and Bethsaida accountable for ignoring his message despite "mighty deeds done in your midst" saying "whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me." As his 72 followers returned to Jesus, they marveled at the power given them in his name as he praises his father for revealing wisdom "to the childlike."

Next week: A parable about tenants who were entrusted with their master's fields is at the centre of next Sunday's readings. We hear Jesus really challenge the religious leaders with this story of the tenant farmers who refused to listen to the master's servants (the prophets) and abused and killed his son (Jesus) in an attempt to usurp his inheritance. Jesus tells them, "Therefore, I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that will produce its fruit."

A Homily for the Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity

+ Most people are aware of that classic comment of St Augustine: "God make me good, but not yet." St Augustine went on to become one of the greatest writers, theologians and Saints of the early Church, but his remark does highlight the ambivalence of much of the human response to spiritual realities.

It's a natural if fallible human reaction. The author of the Letter to the Hebrews had it right when he says, "It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Once we allow God into our lives without trying to hold anything back, we lose control and life will never be the same again. The following of Christ makes demands, it's not always a comfortable ride. St Augustine, with the formidable insight that he had into the psychology of faith, recognised that fact way before his final conversion. Hesitation is a natural response perhaps to something unseen and therefore, we think, less immediate. We can put off making a decision.

But unseen doesn't necessarily mean unreal. At this time of year, the Church celebrates two feasts of the mysterious, the unknown and the unseen, the feast of St Michael & All Angels which was last Friday and that of the Guardian Angels tomorrow. They remind us that the greatest reality there is, is one which we cannot now see and touch and feel, but is all around us nevertheless.

John Henry Newman, another saint who was well aware of the personal, psychological aspects of faith, said this, "*Persons commonly speak as if the other world did not exist now, but would after death. No: it exists now, though we see it not. It is among us and around us.*"

That's something which, of course, makes our response to faith now all the more vital, even if we have a tendency to say 'yes' and 'no' at the same time.

And today's parable in the Gospel seems to have been addressed precisely to this situation. Jesus asks us to pay attention to those two words we've already spoken of which either influence our lives or can send them off in a new direction. 'Yes' and 'no'. Those two very simple words which can have a profound effect on the direction of our lives. If we mean them. And if we mean them, we will act upon them. Otherwise we don't really mean

them.

The parable, as all the parables, is very familiar in terms of our own experience. This kind of thing happens over and over again. The first son, at his father's request to go and work in the family vineyard, declared quite openly: "No, I will not go."

We are not told why he refused. He could have been lazy, he could have been reluctant to change his plans for the day, he may have felt put upon and always being unfairly asked to do things. However, he changed his mind. again we are not told why. All that comes across from Jesus' words is that he reconsidered his initial response and turned up for work after all.

The second son in contrast to his brother said an equally emphatic "yes" to his father's request. But he didn't act on it. Again we don't know why. He may have forgotten, he may have thought it wasn't urgent, he may never have intended to go in the first place. All we do know is that his 'yes' gives way to a very emphatic 'no'.

Now, although we might like to think we would be completely unlike either of the sons and that we would have said 'yes' in the first place and meant it and go on to act on it, we have to recognise that at some level there is a part of each son in us. We know very well that sometimes our actions do not always match our promises or our good intentions. We sometimes give our word but don't always keep it in all kinds of ways and situations. We turn our 'yeses' into 'noes'. This is at the heart of Jesus' attack on the scribes and Pharisees, the religious establishment of his day, and it's directed at all kinds of formalism in religious faith. In effect, he's saying that the Pharisees and scribes say 'yes,' like the second brother in the parable, but don't go to work in the vineyard. They profess to do the God's will, but don't carry it out in the way they live. If what we say and what we pray isn't reflected in what we do - in the way we live our lives and the way

we treat others - then what value is there in that? And that's the point Our Lord is making when he says to the chief priests and the elders - the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. But, of course, the opposite can happen too. Some people may in the beginning throw up their hands in horror and revulsion and say, "no, that's not for me,," but as time goes on they begin to see things differently and change their minds. Lots of people come into a relationship with God that way. Throughout the history of the Church we are presented with people who in various ways knowingly or unknowingly had said 'no' to God, and then later changed their minds and the direction of their lives and became heroic men and women of faith - Saints. St. Augustine, I suppose, is the classic example, but there have been many others, including St Francis and Ignatius of Loyola . No one will be judged by a single act or by just one stage of his or her life, but by the whole of their lives.

So, as those who have made a solemn commitment in baptism to following Christ, in order to fulfil our promises we have consciously to hold on to, deepen and reinforce our initial 'yes' to God. And that means giving our full attention to daily prayer, regular worship, service to others, a willingness to grow in faith by whatever means present themselves to us in the course of our lives. We have to learn to see God in all things as St Ignatius would say. And that means we have to keep on struggling however difficult, however dried up, things seem to get.

We can fail, we can fall down, we can miss the mark - or whatever metaphor we want to use - and still be redeemed by the grace of God. In fact this is the experience of each one of us.

Every 'no' of the past can be turned into a 'yes.' There is always time to reconsider our decision because whatever we do or say, or don't do and

not say, we can still hear the call of grace as Christ waits to invite us into his Father's kingdom. We think we are searching for him, but in reality he is searching for us, and he is not that easily put off. +

SERVICES IN OUR CHURCHES

TODAY

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

NEXT SUNDAY

The Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity 4th October 2026

- 10 a.m. Sung Eucharist
at St Arvan's
11.30 a.m. Holy Eucharist
at St Mary's, Penterry

Readings:

Isaiah 5.1-7
Psalm 80.7-15
Philippians 3.4b-14
St Matthew 21.33-46

Please note: this week the Eucharist will be celebrated at St Arvans on Tuesday at 09.00, Wednesday & Thursday at 10.00.

There will be a live-streamed only Reflection, meditation and celebration of Night Prayer on Tuesday (29th) 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

A regular way of reporting some important
news today is to cite the source:
“according to a highly placed government
official,” even when the source is
anonymous. We give the story credibility if
it seems to come from an authoritative
source, deserving credibility. Jesus tells
us clearly that the source of his message
and his power is God, the Father, himself.

This week we can experience intimacy
with God in the midst of our busy lives if
we take brief moments throughout our
day, every day, to let the connection
between God and us become conscious.
We forget who we are. We get distracted
by the world around us, even with things
that are our duty, or commitment. To
become more conscious of the presence
of God with us in our busy days takes
some practice. It is a matter of desire and

choice. If we desire it, we will choose it.
And, it takes a “method.”

This week we can wake each morning and
let our first thoughts turn to our Lord and
our relationship. “Good morning, Lord.
Thank you for letting me be your disciple
today. Help me to be connected with you
throughout this day. With your love, help
me to be freer and more grateful, in the
midst of the anxiety and tension I
experience today.” That takes less than 30
seconds to say. We might object, saying “I
am just barely awake when I wake up.
How am I supposed to think this clearly
immediately?” It just takes practice. The
point isn’t to focus on the words, but on
the relationship that frames our day. Then,
in the shower, while getting dressed,
getting to work, and at a dozen in between
times throughout the day and evening, we
can re-connect consciously, in and
ongoing conversation - 20 or 30 seconds
at a time.

“Be with me in this next challenge, Lord. I
often lose my temper here. I can get fairly
impatient at this time. I get hooked and
slip into judgment and anger. Stay with me
and I will rely on your grace to be more
patient, gentle and loving.” Or, walking
down the hall to the restroom, I might say,
in my heart, “Lord, it really helps me to
remember that beyond my job description,
I’m your disciple. Help me to listen to you.
Help me sense I’m here to let your
Kingdom enter the world here. Give me
the help to bring healing and love in this
place today.”

Try to take a brief few moments while
getting ready for bed to recall the
moments of connection and grace this day
and give thanks.

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

Clothes for Homeless People

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

Please bring to

St Arvan’s Church, NP16 6ET
or

St Thomas a Becket,
Shirenewton NP16 6RQ
(both are 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.

Aging Well

As we get older some things in life

become more of a challenge,
physically, legally and often from
advances in technology.

We are running a set of talks
by people who may be able to help
in some of these on **the first Monday
of the month from 1.00 till 2.00
at St. Christophers Church,
Bulwark, CHEPSTOW**

We have been able to secure people
who can help lead us through some if
these matters and we have a number
of other organisations in the wings for
future dates in the New Year.

Monday 5th October
Aneurin Bevan University Health
Board

Monday November 2nd
First Aid and advice on what to do in
the event of trips or falls at home

Monday December 7th
Police and Monmouthshire Building
Society staff helping on cyber
security and scams

Monday January 4th
A local solicitor talking about wills,
power of attorney etc.

Monday February 8th
MIND 5 ways to wellbeing
(Due to holidays this will be on the
2nd Monday)

This is open to all the churches
within the Ministry Area

Devauden Photography Competition Display

Come see all the photographs!
They will be on display Sunday 27th
September until Sunday 4th
October. Church open from 10am
until 4:30pm each day!
Teas & Coffees on Wednesday
Morning!

St Arvans Harvest Meal

Friday 23rd October
in the Meeting Rooms
Tickets £25
More details soon