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 a 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

Fr Michael Gollop,
The Vicarage, St Arvans
01291 622064;
Mobile 07867803479
E-mail:
frmichaelgollop1@gmail.com

15th November 2026
The Third Sunday of the Kingdom

2nd Sunday before Advent

The Collect

Heavenly Father, whose blessed Son was revealed to destroy the works
of the devil and to make us the children of God and heirs of eternal life:
grant that we, having this hope, may purify ourselves even as he is pure;
that when he shall appear in power and great glory we may be made like him
in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where he is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God,
now and for ever. **AMEN**

A reading from the prophet Zephaniah [**1.** 7, 12-18]

Be silent before the Lord GOD! For the day of the LORD is at hand;
the LORD has prepared a sacrifice, he has consecrated his guests.
And on the day of the Lord's sacrifice I will punish the officials and the king's sons and all who dress themselves in foreign attire. At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps, and I will punish the people who rest complacently
on their dregs, those who say in their hearts, "The LORD will not do good, nor will he do harm." Their wealth shall be plundered, and their houses
laid waste. Though they build houses, they shall not inhabit them;
though they plant vineyards, they shall not drink wine from them.
The great day of the LORD is near, near and hastening fast; the sound
of the day of the LORD is bitter, the warrior cries aloud there.
That day will be a day of wrath, a day of distress and anguish, a day of ruin and devastation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of trumpet blast and battle cry against the fortified cities and against the lofty battlements.
I will bring such distress upon people that they shall walk like the blind;
because they have sinned against the LORD, their blood shall be poured out like dust, and their flesh like dung. Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to save them on the day of the Lord's wrath;
in the fire of his passion
the whole earth shall be consumed; for a full, a terrible end he will make
of all the inhabitants of the earth.

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

Psalm 90 1 - 8, 12

R/ **Satisfy us by your loving-kindness; so shall we rejoice and be glad.**

Lord, you have been our refuge
from one generation to another.
Before the mountains were brought forth,
or the land and the earth were born,
from age to age you are God.
You turn us back to the dust
and say, 'Go back, O child of earth.'

R/ **Satisfy us by your loving-kindness; so shall we rejoice and be glad.**

For a thousand years in your sight
are like yesterday when it is past
and like a watch in the night.
You sweep us away like a dream;
we fade away suddenly like the grass.
In the morning it is green and flourishes;
in the evening it is dried up and withered.

R/ **Satisfy us by your loving-kindness; so shall we rejoice and be glad.**

For we consume away
in your displeasure;
we are afraid
because of your wrathful indignation.
Our iniquities you have set before you,
and our secret sins
in the light of your countenance.
So teach us to number our days
that we may apply our hearts to wisdom.

R/ **Satisfy us by your loving-kindness; so shall we rejoice and be glad.**

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Thessalonians [**5;** 1-11]

Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. When they say, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labour pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape!
But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief;
for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night
or of darkness. So then let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep

awake and be sober; for those who sleep sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation.
For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

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

[Gradual Hymn]

Alleluia, alleluia!
Make your home in me,
as I make mine in you,
says the Lord.
Whoever remains in me
bears fruit in plenty
Alleluia!

The Lord be with you:
And also with you

Listen to the Gopel of Christ according to St Matthew

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus said to his disciples,

For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents.
But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.'
Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, "Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours." But his master replied, "You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."'

[**25**. 14-30]

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

For Your Prayers

Those who have died in war
The peoples of Ukraine, Palestine and Gaza, Israel, Iran 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.
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:
Ralph Hamilton, Sylvia Jackson; The Revd Helen Rodwell; Elisabeth; Mary; Margaret; Althea; Margi & Bob Osborne; Jenny Sherwood, Diane Parnell, Val Thompson, Liz Hall, Carole, Sue, Bruce Matthews, Arwel Griffith, Barrie Howells

For the Departed:
The recently departed; our own departed loved ones,and those whose anniversaries of death fall this week: Douglas Higgs, Jeremy Winston, priest, James Griffin.

A Prayer of Spiritual Communion

My Jesus, I believe that you are present 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
This week's Jereoboam is based on the readings for the 20th Sunday after Trinity.

Sephthan

Jereboam: Well, Sephthan, we had plenty of response to your comments the other week.
Sephthan: People seem to think I'm a bit of a reactionary. Honestly, I don't look for conflict. I just believe that certain things are either right or wrong, regardless of how much money they bring in, and regardless of who does them.

Jereboam: I think it's sometimes good to provoke a response anyway. Tell me: I was wondering what you'd make of Jesus' famous story about the man burying money in the ground. You know – the man is rebuked and punished, because he fails to increase the value of what has been entrusted to him. It hardly seems your sort of story.

Sephthan: Strange, isn't it? This is the same Jesus who told people to sell their possessions and give the money to the poor. I can only think that he meant the story as a metaphor, and that he's asking us to develop our natural gifts fully, rather than hiding them from view. Or, to put it another way, he wants us to give back more than we receive.

Jereboam: That seems to be the general consensus of opinion.

Sephthan: I hope so: you could imagine that story being open to quite unpleasant interpretations. You know: poor people deserve to be poor, because they don't use their money properly – that sort of thing.

Jereboam: I can't believe that Jesus wanted to encourage that idea.

Sephthan: I think he'd have found it horrible, to be honest. And do we know how the other men in the story increased the value of their money?

Jereboam: By trade, I think. It doesn't say any more than that.

Sephthan: Precisely. They could have done unspeakable things with that money. They could have impoverished someone else, for all we know. Obviously you'd need to know about what they did, if you wanted to assess their actions seriously...which brings us neatly to the distinguishing feature of God's riches.

Jereboam: What's that?

Sephthan: Acquiring God's riches never makes anyone else poorer.

Jereboam: There's a thought. Thank you, SephthanI do like Jesus: he's so warm-hearted and patient.

Jereboam: Patient? Yes, but I'd say he's sometimes quite impatient too...in a good way, I mean. He wants people to reform their lives urgently.

THIS WEEK

Sunday brings us the familiar, powerful parable from St Matthew's Gospel about the servants who are each given sums of money to invest. We are all called upon to use the gifts we have received as gifts, and to return them, fully developed and utilised.

Tuesday is the feast day of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary, Saturday iis observed as the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

During these last two weeks of Ordinary Time, the first reading is from the Book of Revelation, with its mystic imagery. Written for readers who were familiar with apocalyptic writings, the writings sends a hidden message of salvation to the earliest communities of Christians, and to us.

Luke's Gospel offers the story of the blind man who hails him, "Jesus, Son of David, have pity on me!" An unpopular tax collector, Zacchaeus, climbs a tree to get a glimpse of Jesus and is given personal recognition as Jesus says, "Zacchaeus, today I must stay at your house." Luke's version of the parable of the talents offers praise for the servant who has invested the ten coins and earned another ten. "Well done, good servant! You have been faithful in this very small matter; take charge of ten cities." He weeps over Jerusalem: "If this day you only knew what makes for peace – but now it is hidden from your eyes." Jesus drives out the sellers from the temple while the chief priests plot against him. Religious leaders try to trap him with a trick question about a woman who marries seven brothers but Jesus refutes them.

Next Sunday is Christ the King. Jesus tells the parable about how we will all be judged - as a shepherd separates sheep from goats, based upon our care for the poor: "Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of the least brothers of mine, you did for me."

SERVICES IN OUR CHURCHES

TODAY
The Third Sunday of the Kingdom
15th November *2026*

10 a.m. Sung Eucharist at St Arvan's
11.30 Holy Eucharist at Holy Cross, Kilgwrrwg

NEXT SUNDAY
Christ the King
22nd November 2026

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

Readings:
Ezekiel 34.11-16, 20-24
Psalm 95.1-7a or 95.1-7
Ephesians 1.15-23
St Matthew 25.31-46

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

Please note: this week the Eucharist will only be celebrated at St Arvans on Tuesday at 9.00, Wednesday & Thursday at 10.00

There will be a live-streamed only Reflection, meditation and celebration of Night Prayer on Tuesday (3rd) at 19.00

Fr Michael's day off this week is Friday

A Homily for The Second Sunday before Advent

+ In all kinds of ways November seems very much to be a time of endings. The harvests are long over, the long warm days of sitting outside in our free time seem unimaginably long ago now, the remaining leaves are coming off the trees, and winter is well and truly on its way. In terms of the

liturgical year of the Church we have only today and next Sunday to go before the beginning of Advent and the inevitably run-up to our celebrations of Christmas. So, we are almost at the end of the year, traditionally a time for Christians to reflect on the meaning of the communion of saints, a time for remembering the departed and for thinking about the "last things," the end of life and the end of the world.

But even in the context of all this, today's both today's Old Testament reading and the beginning of the Epistle can sound very alarming. For anyone not carefully nurtured in the Christian tradition all this can read very much like apocalyptic science fiction. At a first reading there doesn't seem to be very much hope and grace or "good news," which after all is one of the meanings of the word 'Gospel.'

These passages, of course, form part of the classic Biblical account of the end

of the world. But to complicate matters further, throughout the history of the Church there have always been individuals or small groups of people who have taken it upon themselves to brandish these and other similar passages (we think of the Book of Revelation in particular) in the face of those around them and provoke psychosis, fear, panic and a totally unbalanced version of the faith of the Church. We see them around the world in various disguises, some of whom are vocal, not to say vociferous, supporters of the current president of the United States of America. It's also an element in some of what's going on in the Middle East at the moment, thanks to a certain kind of American evangelicals' lack of understanding of the Gosples.

A preoccupation with the idea of the end of the world, and the frankly inappropriate delight in which it's engaged in by those with a distorted religious viewpoint, has a quite troubling effect. It either reinforces the idea of a God who is always angry, ready to vent his wrath on the world at the expense of the message at the heart of the Gospel of the love of God and the new life of the Resurrection, or it reinforces the idea of all Christians as credulous anti-scientific religious fanatics who don't care about the suffering of others or the health of our God-given, common home on this planet.

We need to read scriptural passages in context and in the context of the whole Gospel, the teaching of the Church down the ages. For instance if we read the whole of, say, chapter thirteen of St Mark's Gospel we see towards the end these words:

"But of that day or hour, no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."

What Jesus is doing is talking of his return at the end of time to judge the world. The details of that return are couched in the kind of language which would have been very familiar to his hearers, part of the tradition of Jewish religious imagery - what we hear in fact from the prophet Zephaniah and others.

However, we also have to say that none of this reduces one bit the seriousness of what we are being told. No, we don't know the time of the end of the world, the end of human history, but it would be foolish in the extreme to console ourselves with talk of first century biblical linguistic conventions and forget that, for each one of us, the end of the world - the end of life - could be at any moment. This year, above all, has emphasised the fragility of human life in a way most of us have never experienced before. And it's always been part of the Church's interpretation of Jesus' words about the end of the world to say that we are meant to live each day of our lives as if it could be the last.

On a practical level, today's readings invite us to meditate on the concept of the end of the world *for us.* And this isn't meant to make us feel depressed, but as a means of reminding us that everything in this world comes to an end, even our own lives. This is just an adult facing of the facts and not an attempt to evade the inevitable truth for each one of us. So these last Sundays of the Church's year and the first Sundays of Advent are a time for us to reflect, to feel the presence of God, to reflect on how we are living and to ask God to give us the strength to live faithfully no matter what happens. So often we try to wage war against time - either trying somewhat futilely to bring it under our control, or attempt to avoid thinking about its consequences at all by the innumerable forms of escapism available to us in today's culture.

In the Gospel today, Jesus is telling us that we are not here in this world to play safe, but to trust that his is the way which leads to life. Of course, we are to avoid doing wrong - that much is essential if we are to be his disciples, but it isn't *enough*. It's too negative. We are being told by Jesus today to make, within the opportunities we are presented with, the best possible use of our time and our talents, we are meant to unite ourselves to Christ, and allow his grace to work in us to build up the kingdom of God where we are, in our own lives, and relationships. Everything we have, whether in the spiritual or the material sphere, even life itself, is a 'talent' entrusted to us by the Lord, and, as they say, we 'use it or lose it' -

For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance;

but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away.

Because of his death and resurrection, for us the future is Christ. He is with those who hope and trust in him, leading them through the anxieties of this life to the joy of his eternal kingdom. We are not left to our own devices, or even to our own resources or capabilities. He is the Good Shepherd, who is our guide and our helper along the often difficult pilgrimage of faith. He is with us as we reflect on where we are, where we have come from and where we wish to

go.
November is a time of endings but it keeps bringing us back to the beginning point of the resurrection - the new life which unites us all in Christ. Everything we believe stems from this point. We can't predict the future with any certainty, either our own or that of the world itself, but we do know that no matter what the future brings, the risen Christ is with those who hope in him, leading them through the anxieties of this life to the joy of his eternal kingdom. +

Daily Prayer this week

Making changes in our lives and the fear of making those changes are both themes in this week's gospels. Zacchaeus boldly reforms his life after he allows Jesus into it. The servant who is given a gold coin hides it in a handkerchief because he is afraid of his master. He has a chance to be given responsibilities but his fear keeps him from doing anything.

We are often afraid when we consider making a change in our lives. We can see habits that are not healthy, a benign neglect of those we love and patterns that are deeply set in our lives. We may know deep down that we want to change them but we don't have the confidence to believe we can do it. This week we are invited by Jesus to know that while we can't make those changes alone, we can, if we allow Jesus to be with us in them.

Where do we start? With a small prayer. In those tiny pockets of time during our week, when we travel, ride to work, do dishes, or even in the shower, we can make these reflective moments to ask for help. Just as Jesus asked the blind man, "What do you want me to do for you?" he is asking us the same question.

What do we want Jesus to do for us? Where do we want to make changes in the patterns of our lives? What changes are we afraid to make?

Dear Jesus, I ask for your help. Heal my fears. You have asked how you can help me and I am afraid to answer. I know what changes need to be made in my life but it seems overwhelming. Help me to open my heart to what you are asking - and to what I know I need. Be with me when I don't always know how to live in these new patterns and give me the humility to keep asking you for help, over and over. Let me feel your presence in my life and that will give me the strength and courage I need to live my life more faithfully.

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

St Arvans Tea and Chat

2.30 – 4 p.m.
Saturday December 12th
and usually every second Saturday of the month Childrens activity table

The Ministry Area Prayer Group

Thursdays at 7.00
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.

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 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

2027 St James, Devauden Calendars are now on sale

Our thanks to Jonathan Jenkins for the Remembrance Sunday installation in St Arvan's Church

. **Very many thanks** to Miriam & Barrie, Sheena & Barney, and all those who helped organise the really enjoyable and successful St Arvans Harvest Meal on Friday 23rd October.
£1293 was raised for church funds!

There will be an **Advent Course** this year in the Ministry Area – based on the faith of Blessed Mary - details to follow next week .