

## St Arvans Church On line Community Bulletin Friday 20th March 2020

*If you have any contributions for future bulletins please post a COMMENT on this website and we will put you in touch with the Editor.*

*The newsletter will be issued on an irregular basis, according to the material available, but the hope is to issue it at least once a week.*

*The Sunday readings and meditation will be circulated separately - tomorrow - do watch out for them*

The purpose of this bulletin is to keep the church community of St Arvans, Devauden, Kilgwrrwg, Itton and Penterry parishes connected and inspired during the Coronavirus crisis, while the church services have stopped. Many of us are having to isolate ourselves at home, and we may feel vulnerable and lonely. We are also all deeply saddened not to be able to attend our services, especially as we come up to Holy Week and Easter.

The bulletin will include, among other things:

some inspirations for prayer and worship, with links to further resources  
information from the Parish  
wider news.

Because of the numbers of people involved, it would not be sensible to circulate everyone's emails and let everyone share material directly. There are also Data Protection issues to be considered. So, for now, we will operate as an electronic newsletter, with Hilary Hillier acting as co-ordinator on behalf of Father Michael. But I hope you will all get involved, sending in your favourite poems, readings, inspirational music etc so that we can share it with everyone. This is your bulletin, so we welcome all feedback and ideas. Please share it with others who you think will be interested, and invite them to contact us if they want to go on the mailing list.

**We are intending to develop separately a telephone contact list, aimed at helping members of the parish, particularly those isolating at home, keep in touch with each other. We invite anyone who is self-isolating to make this known by email as above or telephone Hilary on 624924 so that we can keep in telephone contact and provide any practical help you may need. We need to discuss how to handle this: whether we can develop a list and circulate it to all in the email group, or whether people would prefer not to have their numbers shared in this way. Let us know what you think, and of course we will not share the numbers of anyone who requests otherwise.**

I have included a number of links below to other material, and to music in particular. We do also intend to produce a paper copy of this to circulate to those without access to the internet, and we can only apologise that they will not be able to access these items, so we will use a mix of items in the newsletter itself, and links to other material. Since this is a known source, and I have pretty good internet security, it should be pretty safe to access this material by just clicking on the link. But you can copy and paste it into your internet browser if you are concerned (*\*there's a note at the end on how to do this*).

## Some Prayers and Reflections

**Prayer** for all those affected by Coronavirus (from the Archbishop of Canterbury website)

Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy. Sustain and support the anxious, be with those who care for the sick, and lift up all who are brought low; that we may find comfort knowing that nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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And this is the **Archbishop's Message**: *(HH note: yes, I know he's English, but so am I and he puts it so well !)*

As we continue responding to Coronavirus, a lot of us are wondering how we can walk in faith, resist fear, and support those who are most vulnerable.

The first thing to say is that following the advice of experts – especially about washing our hands regularly and self-isolating if we have cold or flu symptoms – is a really important place to start. But what else can we do?

Well, the thing about having hope, faith and courage is that although they are gifts from God, we can do our bit to nurture them.

We can take some time to sit quietly and pray, letting God know about those things that are on our hearts and minds.

When we do that, we make that connection with God that nourishes and sustains us.

We can pray for those who are physically vulnerable. Those who are financially insecure and worried about needing to take time off work. Those who live in countries without public healthcare systems. Those who do not have family or friends and are facing this situation alone.

We can pray for healthcare workers and political leaders who are responding to this crisis and bearing the incredible responsibility of trying to keep us safe.

That brings us to resisting fear. One way to avoid being overwhelmed by fear is turning our attention to helping someone. Is there a person in your life, or your community, that you could call on the phone and see if they're okay? Maybe it was someone that you prayed for? Perhaps they can't get to the shops – could you pick up some groceries for them? Perhaps they are self-isolating and feeling lonely – could you call them on the phone and see how they are?

If you have some spare income, or some spare food, could you donate to your local food bank? Let's remember that we are in this together. Let's look after ourselves and our communities, gain courage from each other, and walk together in hope and faith.

As it says in Psalm 46: "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble."

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Messages from Bishops in the Church of Wales can be found here: <https://www.churchinwales.org.uk/en/clergy-and-members/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance/bishops-messages/>

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**Music – Aled Jones** singing **Always There**. An uplifting and appropriate hymn in the current circumstances. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oS6R3uUeP04>

**Holy God we praise thy name**, a really rousing hymn, sung by an Irish Choir, Faith of our Fathers. I'm not sure why they feel the need to dress in what looks rather like surgical scrubs, but it had me singing along <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wXmGj6id7eU>

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### **Information from St Arvans**

St Arvans Church is open for private prayer in the presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, and for the lighting of candles. Father Michael has put hot water and paper towels in the tower for hand washing. Holy Cross Kilgwrrwg – in a beautiful and isolated location - also remains open for private prayer. We suggest you might consider wearing gloves, and please make sure you thoroughly wash your hands again when you get home.

Some churches are going to do live streaming of services, and Father Michael is looking at options for St Arvans. If you hear of this happening anywhere, please share it with us.

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### **Broadcasts / Social media etc**

The BBC has announced that it will broadcast a Sunday Service held by the Archbishop of Canterbury. At the moment I can't find more details, but if anyone finds out, please let me know so we can share it with everyone.

We will circulate separately a list of regular programmes.  
St Arvans Church and St James, Devauden both have Instagram pages.  
Just look for:

starvanschurch

or devaudenchurch.

Father Michael is also investigating Twitter and Facebook pages!

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### **Useful links:**

Church in Wales. <https://www.churchinwales.org.uk/en/>

Anglican daily prayer – the set readings, prayers and psalms for today can be found at:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/common-worship/daily-prayer>

Bible Gateway – an online bible in pretty much every version you could think of! It's easy to find particular passages or references. <https://www.biblegateway.com/>

The Archbishop of Canterbury website <https://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/>

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**On the lighter side** (from Hilary, not Fr Michael!)

I'm afraid I have to admit that, following the shock of Monday's announcement on social restrictions for all, my Lenten abstinence (no sugar, chocolate or wine) which had up to then been most scrupulously observed, has completely gone out the window! Am I alone in this?? I've now asked a friend to buy me some Sauvignon Blanc ! On the positive side, however, I have 6 large boxes of Thorntons chocolates (about 40 chocs per box) which I bought as prizes for a cancelled golf competition last Sunday. And some of them will be out of date within the next few weeks!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!