

## St Arvans Church mid-week Bulletin Wednesday 13th October 2021

**Night Prayer:** Tonight at 8pm – online only

**Sunday Eucharist:** Sunday 10am. Please book.

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### St Arvans online

Live service stream : [https://www.facebook.com/pg/vicaragecello1/videos/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/vicaragecello1/videos/?ref=page_internal)

Facebook : St Arvan's Parish group – please like us and become a follower

Webpage at: [www.starvanschurch.org.uk](http://www.starvanschurch.org.uk)

Instagram: starvanschurch

Twitter: St Arvans Church @Arvanschurch

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*Please send any contributions to this bulletin to [starvanschurchnews@btinternet.com](mailto:starvanschurchnews@btinternet.com)*

*Please share it with others whom you think be interested, and invite them to contact us if they want to go on the mailing list at: [starvanschurchnews@btinternet.com](mailto:starvanschurchnews@btinternet.com)*

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### Forthcoming services

Devauden: Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> October at 9am: Morning Prayer

Itton: Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> October at 11.30am: Holy Communion



Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> November: 10.30am: Remembrance Day Service for all our parishes

*Lest we forget*

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## **Harvest Service at Holy Cross, Kilgwrrwg**

Last Sunday, on a beautiful sunny morning, we celebrated Harvest at Holy Cross with Bishop Cherry. We also enjoyed the chance to get together afterwards for refreshments, very generously provided in his house by Dr Andrew Kitson-Smith. Our very grateful thanks to him. For those who could not be at the service, below is the text of the Bishop's address.

Harvest Festival – Kilgwrrwg 10 October 2021

It's a real joy to be here with you this morning, celebrating Harvest Festival in what has been described as 'the remotest church in Wales'. I'd like to thank Father Michael for inviting me to this, my first visit to Holy Cross, and to thank you for your warm welcome.

There's something very fitting about celebrating harvest in the middle of a field, in a church that has stood here probably since the 5th or 6th century. This is a building that almost emerges from the soil itself. It suggests a deep connectedness to nature, not least because of the legend which describes two yoked heifers resting on the spot; indicating to those earliest Christians where God wanted a church to be built.

This building has seen the seasons come and go over centuries and could tell some wonderful stories of the farming communities that have lived and worked this field down the ages. It's also inhabited the seasons in its very being; the springs of hope and new life, as well as the winters, such as when it was used as little more than a dilapidated sheepfold. I wonder which season you feel this church to be in at the moment....

Harvest Festival celebrations have changed quite strikingly, even in my lifetime, and certainly in the towns and cities. Fresh fruit, flowers and vegetables have been replaced by packets of rice, pasta and cereals, tins of soup, vegetables and meats. In some parts, the Harvest gifts may still be distributed out to the members of the local community. But it's more

likely now that they will be taken to food banks, which a soberingly large number of families are now utterly reliant on, or to refugee centres that are supporting those who fled their own countries and have nothing.

Even in the last couple of years, Harvest Festivals have changed, because of the pandemic. Some churches remain closed and won't be celebrating for the second year running. Social distancing and masks remain in place with some congregations still not singing the wonderful harvest hymns that we have. And harvest suppers are out of the question for another year, at least.

It's just one aspect of the strange and troubled times in which we are living. Here in Wales and the West more generally, we've been protected from the impact of failed harvests in other parts of the world. But now, even we are experiencing shortages - of food in our shops, of fuel at our petrol stations, of some medicines that we've come to rely on.

There are pressures on our farming communities, our transport system, our infrastructure to that aren't going to be resolved quickly. And then there's the climate crisis, the change in weather patterns, the critical need for humanity to do something drastic and radical and now, if we are to save the life of our planet and ensure the future well-being of humanity. We live in uncertain and troubling times.

And yet today we do, rightly, celebrate Harvest; and Jesus says to us, 'Do not worry... do not worry about your life, your clothes, your food, your drink.'

How can we not worry when there's so much to worry about? What does it mean not to worry when so many across the world are already struggling and dying for lack of clean water and lack of food; when climate change is destroying a growing number of villages on the islands of the Pacific and livelihoods in so many other parts of the world; when rising sea levels threaten to swallow great swathes of Newport and the rest of the Welsh coastline?

In telling us not to worry, Jesus isn't dismissing all of this as no concern. He's not asking us not to care. He's inviting us to look beyond ourselves and not to get trapped into becoming selfish and self-centred. Instead, we are to strive first for the Kingdom of God and his righteousness. In other words, we are to look outwards - to the world which God created and to those we share this planet with. God's Kingdom is one of justice; the world where all are fed, all are clothed, all can enjoy the life that God has blessed them with and no one is in need.

Thinking only of ourselves - what will we eat and what will we drink - leads to the kind of panic buying we saw at the beginning of the pandemic and, more recently, at the petrol pumps. They're just two of the more obvious examples. Stockpiling vaccines so that some have more than they need and others have none, is another. Jesus's way is radically different. It's about recognising that none of us are islands entire of ourselves (as the great poet John Donne penned). Everyone is a piece of the continent. We're all bound together, interconnected, and interdependent. We are called to live that and proclaim it through how we behave as Jesus's disciples and heralds of the Kingdom of God. So what does that mean for us this morning?

Three things, I suggest.

The first is to give thanks. To look out and take notice of the wonders of creation that God has given us and which are all around us. There's still so much to give thanks for. The beauty of a single flower can be breathtaking, if we take time to notice it and pay attention to its colour, its shape, its structure. The sight of a butterfly, the sound of a bee -all multiplied a million and more times the moment we walk out of this church, or our homes or our schools. We might commit ourselves to paying more attention instead of taking it all for granted; to become aware of the presence and the work of God in all that we see and hear and do; to acknowledge our food as a gift from God and to savour it for its taste as well as it's nourishment. And to give thanks, there and then, for the simple pleasures that enrich our daily lives.

The second thing is to recognise and acknowledge the immense damage we've done, and continue to do, to our planet and therefore the lives of millions across the world as well as our own. This is a cause for lament and sorrow. Our prayer needs to be one of repentance for all that we human beings are doing that threatens life on Earth as we know it, and of resolve to play what part we can in changing that. Those most affected need our prayers too as we look out beyond ourselves and see how far short we are from that Kingdom of justice and peace, of righteousness and love that we are called to build alongside God.

And there are things that each of us can do that will make a difference. Buying and cooking no more than we need, cutting our waste and recycling what we can, planting gardens or even just pots that attract bees and butterflies, praying that bold decisions will be made at the coming COP26 conference in Glasgow... the list is endless, and we can all do something.

As we praise and thank God for the harvest today, let us recommit ourselves to being good stewards of the world he's given us to care for and strive first for His Kingdom and His righteousness.

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## **Ministry Area News**

Here is the latest update from Philip Averay

Dear All,

I hope you are all well? I know many of you will have had your booster jab. Things are gradually opening up and there is a greater feeling of normality, even if not completely. It is harvest season and I know many of you have celebrated, or have plans to celebrate, harvest. I have very much enjoyed the harvest celebrations I have been able to attend.

We continue to progress gently towards forming the Ministry Area. Our Ministry Area now has a name. Your Transition Team, after gathering your suggestions, has settled on Severn Wye Ministry Area; this name places us firmly within our geography.

It has been wonderful to continue visiting all the churches around the Ministry Area. I have recently visited Shirenewton and I am very much looking forward to visiting Mounton, St Arvans and Itton in the next little while. I would just like to thank you all for how welcome I have felt everywhere I have visited.

Your Transition Team met again on 7th September and there are some exciting developments happening. As we have said from the beginning, we are at the early stages of this process. Many of you have commented that you have not felt fully consulted about moving towards becoming a Ministry Area. One of your Transition Team's first tasks is to offer the opportunity for consultation.

We now have three dates where we will be holding in-person consultations (each session will also be available on Zoom). These dates will be on 9th November at 7.30pm, 13th November at 1pm and 25th November at 1pm. We will be advertising the venues for each of these consultation sessions in the next couple of weeks. As you know, the Ministry Area will be formed over the next year, but the consultations are your way to help shape the Ministry Area.

On Tuesday 5th October members of the clergy and the ministry teams across the Ministry Area were invited to attend training and to explore how the churches in the Ministry Area might support each other to bring the Gospel of Christ to our communities. We were led in several activities during the day to help us move forward together.

Our first activity was to look at our "WHY" - what is at the heart of everything we do as a church and in our communities. What those of us who were gathered came to understand is that our WHY is very simple, but still profound. Our WHY for doing what we do as a church is the love we have received from God; our actions are an outflowing of this love towards each other and into our communities. It is the reason that we serve, that we gather together and continue to love and relate with each other, even when it is difficult. This is the WHY that drives us to see our communities transformed.

From this WHY we came up with some priorities and actions. I will provide a fuller account of the day in the next little while. However, just to mention one very popular suggested action from the day, which was for us to have a Ministry Area retreat. Many of our parishes have had retreats in the past and found them to be wonderful times both spiritually and relationally. I have heard many recount fond times going on retreat to Caldey Island or Llangasty. So we will be organising a retreat in the new year.

During my visits across the Ministry Area I have been amazed at how many wonderful things our churches are doing in their communities. We are sometimes unaware of what events and activities each other have planned. To ensure that none of us miss out on an event that we would love to attend somewhere else in the Ministry Area we are looking to have a Ministry Area website. This will have a joint calendar of all the activities, events and services across our area. It will also provide a single access point to advertise events and for people to find our churches' existing websites.

The website is only one way we are seeking to improve our communication across the Ministry Area; we will be looking at other ways as well. Perhaps this is something you can help us with at the consultation sessions: how do you prefer to keep up to date with what's going on?

Thanks again for the wonderful welcome I have received in every church. Please take the opportunity to attend one of the consultation sessions and help shape the future of the Church.

Every blessing

Philip

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## **Prayer and Meditation**

*“When you realize that God loves you and that He has a plan for your life, you can walk with your head held high — totally confident in who He created you to be.”*

*~ Joyce Meyer*

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## **Psalm 15**

O LORD, who may abide in your tent?

Who may dwell on your holy hill?

Those who walk blamelessly, and do what is right,  
and speak the truth from their heart;

who do not slander with their tongue,

and do no evil to their friends,

nor take up a reproach against their neighbors;

in whose eyes the wicked are despised,

but who honor those who fear the LORD;

who stand by their oath even to their hurt;

who do not lend money at interest,

and do not take a bribe against the innocent.

Those who do these things shall never be moved.

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## 1 John 4: 13-16

By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. So we have known and believe the love that God has for us.

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## A reading from the gospel of St John 17: 18-23

*Jesus said*

As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth.

“I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

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## Music

As we have been celebrating Harvest recently, why not listen to this seasonal hymn All things bright and beautiful – sung by the mighty Mormon Tabernacle choir – there is something particularly wonderful about so many voices raised in song!

[All Things Bright and Beautiful, arr. by Mack Wilberg \(2011\) - Mormon Tabernacle Choir - YouTube](#)

And now for something completely different: Jerusalema, sung by the Stellenbosch University Choir

[Jerusalema - Stellenbosch University Choir - YouTube](#)

Jerusalema ikhaya lami (Jerusalem is my home)  
Ngilondoloze, uhambe nami (Save me, and walk with me)  
Zungangishiyi lana (Do not leave me here)

Ndawo yami, ayikho lana (My place, is not here)  
Mbuso wami, awukho lana (My kingdom, is not here)  
Ngilondoloze, uhambe nami (Preserve me, and go with me)

Ngilondoloze (Save me)  
Ngilondoloze (Preserve me)  
Ngilondoloze (Guard me)  
Zungangishiyi lana (Do not leave me here)

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(By the way, to access these links, you should just be able to press Control, and while holding it down, click your mouse – this will take you straight to the video in YouTube)

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## **On the lighter side**

A few more of those delightful church bulletin bloopers this week:

1. This being Easter Sunday, we will ask Mrs. Lewis to come forward and lay an egg on the altar.
2. Mr. Bradford was elected and has accepted the office of head deacon. We could not get a better man.
3. Thank you Steve, who once again has worked hard to clean the pastor off the basement floor.
4. A cookbook is being compiled by the ladies of the church. Please submit your favourite recipe, also a short antidote for it.
5. Next Sunday Mrs. Vinson will be the soloist for the morning service. The pastor will then speak on "It's a Terrible Experience."
6. The sermon this morning: 'Contemporary Issues #3 – Euthanasia.' The closing song: 'Take My Life.'