

## St Adeline's Little Sodbury – Parish Profile

### The church and people



St Adeline's church is a small country church with a regular congregation of between 14 and 20. We have been working as part of a benefice with Chipping Sodbury, Old Sodbury and Horton since 2009. We hold one service of evensong at 6:00pm every Sunday and a Holy Communion service at 6:00pm every fourth Sunday of the month. We also participate in the benefice service where all four churches come together for a service, usually on the 5<sup>th</sup> Sundays hosted in each of the churches of the benefice in turn.

The parish is very rural, two and a half miles from Chipping Sodbury, extending over the Cotswold escarpment and the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The village has about 100 residents most of whom commute to work as there are few farming jobs.

The church has a close connection with William Tyndale who tutored at Little Sodbury Manor. St Adeline's church, in which William would have preached, was built in 1492 next to Little Sodbury manor. It was rebuilt on its present site in 1895 and is built to almost the same layout as the original chapel and with much of the original materials. We hold a William Tyndale memorial service every year and have ties with the William Tyndale Society who arrange visits to the church for their members, and direct their foreign members to the church. We are building on this connection by selling a booklet about the church and Tyndale's life written by one of the parishioners. We are also planning a Tyndale display in the church. This connection brings in foreign visitors, particularly from America, where there is a lot of interest in William Tyndale. Further historic interest is generated by the fact that the village of Little Sodbury is a "Thankful Village" where all the men who went to the First World War returned safely. This is also true for the men who went to World War Two, and the church has been the centre of village celebrations for this wonderful record.

Our services are from the Book of Common Prayer 1662 which provides traditional worship for those in the benefice who prefer it. Our weekly service is taken by one of the ordained ministers; supported by local retired clergy, our lay reader and lay readers from the Bristol diocese. We do not have a resident organist and we use local organists as they are available. This is usually not too difficult to organise as vicars, lay readers and organists all say they enjoy their time with us in Little Sodbury. We have been commended for the warm welcome people get when coming to church and for our singing during the services. The church is open all the time and is visited by people from around the world including walkers on the Cotswold Way. We encourage this by providing free water and squash for the use of visitors to the church. The visitor's book testifies to the peace and beauty they find in the church when they visit.



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There is a strong sense of community with the church members working hard to keep the church in good condition and in organising events to keep the funds topped up. The non-church goers in the village love and respect the church and provide both direct financial support to keep it open, when asked, and support for our fund raising events. The church is used by the parish council as its meeting place, and we are looking at ideas to enable the community to make greater use of the church facilities. The congregation provide good pastoral support for each other, and the villagers, when people have problems and at times of sadness.

### **Development**

There is still work to be done in the parish. We need to reach out even more into the local community and increase their connection with the church. With an aging congregation and few children and young people in the village we need to look at drawing in slightly older people and developing leadership in a broader group to ensure continuity into the future. Being located out on the edge of the Sodbury area we need to look at getting more of the congregation involved in benefice activities, and this is progressing with the Joint PCC meetings that have been started and with our participation in the Crib Festival at St John's Chipping Sodbury.