



# SVB Outlook

*February - March 2022*



The magazine of the churches of The Sodbury Vale Benefice:  
Chipping Sodbury, Old Sodbury,  
Little Sodbury and Horton.

[www.svbcofe.org.uk](http://www.svbcofe.org.uk)

# Our Team



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# A Word from David

Dear Friends

Lent begins this year on 2nd March and I hope we can all use it once again as an opportunity for deepening our understanding of our faith. It is always worth remembering that the origins of Lent go back to the time in the early Church when new believers were baptised on Easter Day and there was a period of preparation for this which was gradually adopted by all Christians as a time of discipline and prayer.

***“Our Christian life is a journey with God, in which we are called to move forward and to grow in prayer and understanding.”***

Many people give something up for Lent as an act of self-discipline but it can also be good to use it as a time for learning so that our faith is enriched. This year we have a Lent Course which will take place for five sessions on Wednesday evenings at 7.30pm from 9th March. There will also be a slightly shorter meeting on Thursdays from 11.00 – 12.00. The course is called “Loved and Liked” and you will find details of it in this edition of Outlook. I commend this course and hope it helps us in our Lenten journey. The course will be in the Church Centre unless there are any new restrictions on meeting in person.

I would also like to commend a course we are running at the Church Centre on Thursday evenings from 3rd February to 3rd March. This is a course produced by the Church of England, partly as an exercise in consultation and partly to help us to both share and learn together. The course is called “Living in Love and Faith” and it explores the Christian perspective on relationships and sexuality, an area where there are often differing views within the life of both the local and wider Church. Again, you will find details in this edition.

***“I hope that Lent is a time of blessing and enrichment for all of us.”***

Our Christian life is a journey with God, in which we are called to move forward and to grow in prayer and understanding. The period of preparation for Easter can be a time when we draw on the resources which will help us to do this.

I hope that Lent is a time of blessing and enrichment for all of us.

**David Bowers**

# A New Year message from our Bishops

One of the joys for both of us in the days before Christmas was to be able to join in a number of carol services around the Diocese. In these services, we told again the story of the coming of God among us in the birth of Jesus Christ. This is Good News, and we were reminded again



**“2 metres apart”**

what an immense privilege it is to serve with you as your Bishops and of the committed and generous ministry of clergy and lay leaders in all our communities, and faith lived out by children and adults in numerous everyday contexts Sunday to Saturday.

Moreover, as in these services, we heard again of the visits of the shepherds and the magi, we were reminded to look up and out. We were reminded that this birth is not just for a few, but for all, and for now. As we step out into this new year, we are invited to live the life of Jesus Christ in all that we do. God comes to live with us, sharing our life and that of our world and we, the Church, are called to do the same.

It's good to be reminded of this in the midst of all the noise that surrounds us, all of our worries, fears, and concerns. This is our purpose, to share the love of God and to work for the coming of the Kingdom, as the prophet Micah tells us, 'What does the Lord require of you? To act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.' With this as our focus, we can walk confidently into the new year.

In this Diocese our LIFE Together vision and our five spotlight areas, are especially helpful in guiding us in this path and keeping us focused, in our plans and actions, on sharing the life that we find in Jesus Christ.

We have committed to:

- Nurturing everyday disciples
- Developing diverse lay and ordained leaders
- Investing in people and programmes which excite young people to explore and grow in faith
- Encouraging new and courageous ways of worshipping in different places which connect with more people
- Being advocates for flourishing through initiatives which combat injustice, environmental destruction, exclusion and isolation



Keeping these in mind, as we navigate what will, without doubt, be yet another challenging year which again promises the unexpected, will help calm us when we feel buffeted by the storm and keep us close to our purpose and calling. As we see these commitments lived out by others of all ages they will also assure us of our unity in Christ across our different communities and expressions of church life. Perhaps most importantly they will help ensure we look out beyond ourselves to the world in which Christ was born, which we are called to serve in Jesus' name.

The life of our Diocese is each day in our prayers, not least prayers of thanksgiving for all we share and prayers of blessing that together we may bless all in our care.

We look forward to sharing the journey of the year ahead with you,

+ Rachel

+ Robert



# Dean of Gloucester Cathedral appointed as Bishop of Salisbury



Very Revd. Stephen Lake

It was announced on January 13th that Her Majesty the Queen has approved the nomination of the Dean of Gloucester Cathedral, the Very Revd Stephen Lake for election as the next Bishop of Salisbury. Stephen will begin his new ministry in April. Until a new Dean is appointed, the interim post will be held by Canon Andrew Braddock.



Revd. Canon Andrew Braddock

my surprise, I have been called to serve as the next Bishop of Salisbury. These nearly eleven years in Gloucester have been amazing and the best part of the journey has been working alongside such dedicated and effective staff and volunteers.”

Dean Stephen writes: “You will now have heard that, somewhat to

Stephen trained for ministry at Chichester Theological College and is returning to his roots with this appointment. He grew up in Poole, held his curacy at Sherborne Abbey with Castleton and Lillington and was ordained Priest in 1989.

He became Vicar of St Aldhelm’s, Branksome, Poole from 1992 and was additionally appointed Rural Dean of Poole in 2000. In 2001, Stephen was appointed Sub Dean of St Albans, and took up his current role as Dean of Gloucester in 2011.



***We send our congratulations from the Sodbury Vale Benefice to Stephen and his family.***

# Lent Course

We thought it would be good to say something about this year's Lent course well in advance.

We've decided to use a course called "Loved and Liked" which was devised specifically for use in our diocese. In her "Welcome" note in the course handbook, Bishop Rachel writes, "The aim is to enable people to explore who they are as diverse individuals inhabiting different stories and carrying different joys and hurts, daring to discover yet more of the God who knows us by a name, loves us and calls us to go on becoming who we have been created to be."

This sounds exciting to us, and we are looking forward to the course and all the inspiration it will give us as well as the challenges it might bring.

As usual, sessions will be in the Church Centre.

**Session 1** Wednesday March 9th at 7:30pm

*Repeated on Thursday 10th April at 11:00am*

Then every Wednesday and Thursday until

**Final Session** Wednesday 6th April at 7:30pm

*Repeated on Thursday 7th April at 11:00am*



More details will follow.

**Jane Jones-Williams &  
Steve Abbott**

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# Gloucester Cathedral's auction success



Gloucester Cathedral's first ever sealed bid auction of historically significant stones was a huge success. In November last year, the Cathedral was pleased to hold its inaugural stone auction to give our community and congregation an opportunity to take a piece of their Cathedral home, while raising funds for our stonemasons and fabric. The auction was formally launched at Friend's Day. As a trial auction, it proved immensely successful. Almost 100 sealed bids were placed for all 10 of the stones selected by our Master Mason, Pascal Mychalysin.

Bids came in from all over the country, however all winners were from Gloucestershire. Between the 10 lots, we have raised a brilliant £12,232 with all the winning bidders thrilled to have secured a piece of the Cathedral.

These precious stones, won in the auction, will now continue their stories in various settings across the county. We know from conversations with the buyers that some will be displayed in gardens, while others will be converted into pieces of furniture such as coffee tables.

We plan to hold further auctions in the future, and we would encourage anyone interested in obtaining a stone to follow us on social media or sign up to our monthly e-newsletter to be kept up to date.



## A glorious celebration of fifty years of chorister sponsorship at Gloucester Cathedral



On Saturday 27 November 2021 the Cathedral community and congregation came together to celebrate Fifty Years of Chorister Sponsorship at a special Golden Anniversary Concert.

Thanks to the generosity of so many people over the past half a century, hundreds of children have had the opportunity to be choristers in our glorious Cathedral. Many of them have gone on to be distinguished professional musicians, not least the patron of the Boy Choristers, Ed Gardner OBE, Principal Conductor of the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

During the concert all five of our resident choirs performed a selection of famous and new anthems in the Nave of the Cathedral, attended by over 400 people. It was a joyous occasion which we were thrilled to be able to share with so many.

Chorister Sponsors and Music Patrons are regular donors who support our music related activities and enable us to deliver musical education of the highest standard. It was wonderful to be able to celebrate this fantastic milestone with them, and others, and to showcase what they enabled us to achieve over the years.

*“Thanks to the generosity of so many people over the past half a century, hundreds of children have had the opportunity to be choristers in our glorious Cathedral.”*

# Loos for Lent

For us the “smallest room” is essential, and we take it for granted. Not everyone is so fortunate – but we can make a difference through twinning our toilets.

**Toilet Twinning** works with communities around the world, educating people about the link between disease and poor sanitation and helping local people to make changes to ensure good hygiene and improved sanitation.



The Eco Church group aims to twin the two toilets in the Church Centre (at £60 each) and during Lent we'll collect donations in St John's, Chipping Sodbury.

Perhaps other churches or individual families might also like to twin their toilets? Each twinning comes with a certificate with a picture of your twinned toilet that you can hang in your loo – it's a great talking point with friends who visit!

## This is Sita's story, from Ivory Coast

Sita's children were constantly sick with diarrhoea and the family made regular visits to the medical centre for vital medicines they couldn't afford. Sometimes, the nurse would give them a week's grace to pay. But Sita and her husband are casual labourers on the local cashew plantation and work is poorly paid and scarce. They felt hopeless and trapped.

Now they have learnt about hygiene and sanitation, families like Sita's have built a latrine behind their home. There's a new community water pump by the school too – and a village water management committee to ensure it is properly maintained. Sita's family are healthy and no longer spend money on medicines. They can afford to send the children to school – and have started to build a new home. Their health, hope and dignity have all been restored.



More information can be found at Toilet Twinning: <https://www.toilettwinning.org/>

Chris Axford, (Eco Church group)

Phone: 01454 321161, Email: [chris@robaxford.plus.com](mailto:chris@robaxford.plus.com)

# The Safety of Christians in Israel

There are calls for immediate action to be taken to ensure the safety of Christians in Jerusalem following ongoing attacks by radical groups.

Russel Rook, director of the Protecting Holy Land Christians campaign tells what day to day life is like for Jerusalem's Christian community.



"It's being spat at as you walk into a church. For a priest - it's having a rock thrown at you. It's having your church vandalised.

"It's fire bombings, it's the radical extremist who walked in to the church in Gethsemane last year and tried to set fire to the church in broad daylight. These are dramatic, terrible things that are happening."

The Christian population in the Holy Land has dropped from 12 per cent at the turn of the century to just 1 per cent today as persecution has forced many to seek refuge elsewhere in the world.

According to Rook, the numbers are even more extreme in Jerusalem's Old City, which has sites sacred to Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

**Father,**

**We pray for our brothers and sisters facing persecution in Jerusalem. We pray you would protect them and strengthen them in their faith. We ask that the authorities would take action to ensure persecutors are brought to justice and the right to worship you freely would be upheld.**

**In Jesus' name, Amen.**

"The numbers are absolutely frightening," he explains. "We have to face the reality that if we don't do something soon, if we don't stand up for our brothers and sisters, in the birthplace of the church, within a few generations, we won't have the living, breathing Christian community that makes Christ present in the Holy Land."

Religious leaders and the Protecting Holy Land Christians campaign are calling on the State of Israel to uphold and protect religious freedom and take action against extremist groups to ensure Jews, Muslims and Christians are all free to worship safely.

Article by **Heather Preston** (Heather Preston is a multimedia journalist for Premier.)

Source - Premier Christian News [premierchristianmedia.co.uk](http://premierchristianmedia.co.uk).

# Our biggest Christmas tree ever.



At St Adeline's this Christmas we had the biggest Christmas tree we have ever had to decorate the church thanks to the generosity of a local resident, Andy McGowan, who had a large tree in his garden that he was removing and was happy to donate to the church.

Brenda Cordy with the help of all her family managed to get the tree, which was about 18 feet in height, into the church and installed behind the altar rail.

The tree was beautifully decorated and lit right up to the top up in the church roof thanks to Brenda's daughter and son-in-law Emma and Nick who gave up their usual Christmas tree this year to use their decorations and lights for this huge tree in the church.

Everyone who visited the church was amazed to see such a large tree in such a small church and it was the highlight of our Christmas decorations this year.

## Horton and Little Sodbury Christmas Craft Fair

St Adeline's and Horton Churches together held a Craft Fair in Horton & Little Sodbury village hall to get us in the mood for Christmas and raise some money for the churches. There were a wide variety of stalls and they were very popular. They included a decorated, illuminated bottle stall, a hand knitted toy and Arran-type jumper table. Several Christmas cards and baubles also were on offer, as were jams and chutneys. Barry Cordy's famous bird boxes, bird tables and hog boxes were on show. We must thank Tina for supplying the refreshments, they were really splendid and much appreciated. All in all it was a really good effort and a well attended occasion.



# Turning Point supports children's learning



Masudi is 13 years old and in his final year of primary school in Kibera. He uses the Turning Point Community Library regularly to do homework and read stories. Let's hear from Masudi himself.

*Masudi how long have you been coming to the library and why do you come?*

I started coming last year when I was in class 7 . I do homework, like maths and science, and I read story books in the library because I don't get time to do that at home.

*What is it like to do homework at home?*

When I am at home I have a lot of chores to do and many times my mum sends me to fetch water or go to the shop. Sometimes there are a lot of noises that disturb my studies at home. Also it is very dark in our house, even during the day.

*What difference does using the library make for you?*

In my school we don't have enough textbooks so when we are given homework it takes a long time to copy down all the questions before I leave school. I can find the books I need in the library to do my homework. I like to read. It is important because it helps me to better my life with the knowledge I can gather from different books.

# Living in love and faith

We will be running the **Living in Love and Faith** course in our Benefice and we would like to invite you to be part of this.

\* **DATES:** Thursday evenings from **February 3rd to March 3rd at 7.30pm – 9.00pm in the Church Centre.**

\* **WHO IS LEADING IT?:** The facilitator will be Revd Chris Mason, along with Hennie Gray

\* **INTRODUCTION/INFORMATION SESSION:** There will be an introductory gathering in the Church Centre at **12.00 on Sunday 30th January** (after the Benefice Service)



## Living in Love and Faith

Christian Teaching and Learning about  
Human Identity, Sexuality and Marriage



\* **WHAT IS IT ABOUT?:** This is a course produced by the Church of England that parishes/benefices are encouraged to participate in. The introduction from the Church of England says:

*“This programme of Christian teaching and learning about identity, sexuality, relationship and marriage was launched across the Church of England at the end of 2020. The programme invites us all to think about how questions about these issues fit within the bigger picture of the good news of Jesus Christ and what it means to live in love and faith together as a Church. It takes a new approach to a big issue by listening to the views of the whole Church, so the more people who participate and offer feedback, the more this aim will be fulfilled.”*

This is an area on which there are differing views across the Church of England, both nationally and locally, and it is an opportunity to come together to listen to each other, as well as share our own insights. There is no agenda apart from coming with an open mind and heart to share, listen and to explore together.

\* **HOW CAN I REGISTER MY INTEREST/FIND OUT MORE?:**

Contact Revd Chris Mason by phone on 07749 903658 or

by email at [revd.chris.mason@gmail.com](mailto:revd.chris.mason@gmail.com)

**Copy Deadline** Please send all copy for the February - March issue to the Church Office

by Friday **March 18**

**Front Cover:** Spring will be coming

# It Does Begin in Bethlehem!

In the last issue I reported that "It Begins in Bethlehem", which had been postponed in 2020, would take place on Christmas Eve 2021. Sadly, it wasn't to be as we took the decision to postpone once again to protect our visitors and ourselves. But we had a dilemma .... what would we do with the 90



oranges we'd already received, that were to be transformed into Christingles, and given out to children visiting on Christmas Eve? Quickly we decided to distribute Christingle 'kits' (a kit being bag with an orange with the red tape secured round it, a candle, sweets and four cocktail sticks) at the church gate in Chipping Sodbury to any children passing. David and Judith, who were unfortunately in Covid isolation, prepared 50 or so kits from the comfort of the vicarage.

David, Tania Manners, Catherine Coster, Steve Abbott and I duly gathered around a table outside the church on Christmas Eve morning, with everything prepared. However, suddenly we thought, 'what if no-one passes by?'. It was very quiet. Now we were stuck with 50 made-up kits plus extra oranges – and sweets! But we needn't have worried. People started to arrive. Some had seen our message on SVBMail and others had passed the message on via Facebook. Catherine and Tania headed off to the high street and towards Waitrose with bags and soon returned

for more. Then people came to us. They were out on Christmas Eve to collect turkeys and more – Christingles! Suddenly, we didn't have enough kits, so David and I quickly made up more bags while Steve engaged with our visitors. From those conversations what really struck us was that people had greatly missed the Christingle services and the Crib Festival. Many had been in the past and were looking forward to a time they'd be able to come again.

**Jane Jones-Williams**



# The Extended Team

## Honorary Assistant Ministers

Meet the members of the extended team who support our worship. They consist of retired clergy (perhaps not quite?) and lay readers, who help David by taking services and helping with other events around the benefice.



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