



# SVB Outlook

*October - November 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)

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**Volunteer required**

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Contact Hannah if you have a concern about  
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adult

# A Word from Rob Axford

Dear Friends

I write this letter on the day that King Charles III received messages of condolence from both Houses of Parliament at Westminster and from the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh. It is the day we have watched Her Majesty's coffin make that slow journey from the Palace of Holyroodhouse to St Giles Cathedral and the vigil as her four children stood in silent vigil. It is the day when King Charles addressed the parliaments thanking them for their condolences and committing himself to follow his mother's example of service and dedication to the people of this land and the Commonwealth of Nations.

We are in a time of change, just under a week ago we had a change of Prime Minister and then two days later the very sad news of the death of Her Majesty followed by the proclamation of our king, King Charles III and his Queen Consort, Camilla. There has been a lot of looking back giving thanks for our late Queen, for her sacrificial service, her humility and sense of duty. We've recognised how all of this, her whole life, was founded in a deep faith in Jesus Christ.

There has also been a looking forward as Charles III has committed himself to the future. As we've reflected on the Queen's life we've also reflected on his life and achievements; his reign as King will be built on that history, drawing on the life of his mother and his own life. He too will be reflecting on that history to provide a clear way forward, he will not only know the history of the United Kingdom he will reflect on it to enrich our future.

## *We pray God's blessing on our King*

We are looking forward to the appointment of our new Rector. It will be a new beginning for that person and for us as we walk together into the future to which God is calling us. There is much history and wisdom, both in the life of these parishes and in our future incumbent, to enrich the journey on which we will embark, but the journey must have a direction, an aspiration. Together we will listen and work, seeking to discern God's will under the grace and guidance of the Holy Spirit. In our praying and listening we will be future focused, building on the past and always keeping our eyes on Jesus and the Kingdom of God as we seek to serve the people here.

We pray God's blessing on our King, on our new incumbent and on the life of this benefice.



**Rob Axford**

# Organ Recital at St Adeline's

It was a hot Saturday in August when we held our Organ Recital at St Adeline's as a sort of inauguration of our new organ which was installed earlier this year and dedicated by David Bowers (You remember him?) at a communion service on 6th February.



The church offered some respite from the heat of the day as 48 guests enjoyed the concert. We enjoyed a range of organ music from "Fantasia and Fugue in C minor" to five "Folk tunes" played beautifully by our own organist Jonathan Crow. This was followed by a selection of pieces for organ and violin and organ and flute, with the organ being skilfully played by Nick Sherwood and violin and flute played by his wife Helen (not at the same time).



The audience thoroughly enjoyed the recital and were enthusiastic in their applause. They equally enjoyed nibbles and drinks and the opportunity to socialise after the event

This was a very successful event and we hope that more of these musical performances can be organised in the future. Keep your eyes peeled for the adverts!.

# Mothers' Union summer meeting

## Mary Sumner Day

Our meeting in August was held at Chris and Jenny's home for an afternoon tea. The weather was glorious and we were able to relax and enjoy Chris and Jenny's garden whilst eating our afternoon tea.



It was lovely that so many people attended and not all Mothers' Union members.

Our meetings are held on the second Monday of the month in the Church Centre at 2pm. All are welcome, you don't have to be a member.

Our thanks to Jenny for the delicious cake and to both of them for their hospitality.

**Hilary Hurley**



# Home Groups

Fellowship Groups known as Together Groups or simply Home Groups have been described as one of the best kept secrets in SVB' – yet for many they have become a vital link for Christian fellowship, friendship, prayer and Bible study.

*“One of the best kept secrets in SVB”*

There are currently three groups in operation. Here is a brief introduction to each by those who run them:.

## **Joy Fussell and Pauline Green lead The Old Sodbury Together Group**

which has thirteen members and meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays of each month at 7pm. They have continued to meet during the last year on Zoom as it has proved to be a good way to stay in touch providing a very special “lifeline” for those in the group who don’t get out a great deal.

We have studied a range of topics ....Psalm 23, Sharing our Faith, and The life of Abraham

*“All groups offer a warm welcome and encourage you to join us”*

These studies have been led by group members, clergy and friends. We have also enjoyed having some outside speakers, who talked about their experiences of mission work in Hong Kong and the Himalayas. Closer to home we were updated on the work of the Foodbank and the Mothers’ Union. We were also challenged as we heard

about the Persecuted Church across the world.

In August and September the weather was kind to us and we met for tea and cake in Pauline’s beautiful garden.

For more information contact Joy Fussell [<joyfussell@hotmail.com>](mailto:joyfussell@hotmail.com)

**Steve Abbott’s Home Group** started in February, specifically as a group meeting during the day. Many were interested, with half wanting to meet once a month, and half every fortnight. So we went with two groups: the larger group (12 members) meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month in the Church Centre, and the smaller group (6 members) meets on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays of the month, at 21 Quarry Road; both meet from 2.0 - 3.30 pm.

The format of the meetings is the same for both the large and the smaller groups. We start with coffee/tea, and, in the larger group, we sing a hymn. Then we get going with an “ice-breaker” topic so that everyone gets a chance to say something. Then we either pray for one another (if there is an immediate pressing concern) or look at a Bible passage.

At the moment, the larger group is looking at Philippians (with the aid of Bishop Tom Wright's study notes), and the smaller group is looking at a Psalm (which we each choose and introduce in rotation). After this, we have a time of prayer, if we haven't already prayed. Just before the end of the meeting, we think about any church-



-based social activities coming up, particularly anything we could invite our non-church friends to. This format seems to be working well at the moment. For the large group meeting in August, we substituted a purely social event, tea with delicious refreshments in one of our gardens. This proved very successful. We would welcome more people to join us, as there is room in both the larger and smaller groups. Contact Steve at [abbott.steve@btinternet.com](mailto:abbott.steve@btinternet.com)

**When David Parsons left several years ago, Frank Gray took over his group** and basically followed the same format. Our group of around eight members currently, starts with tea and coffee and biscuits as we share together some of the things that are going on in our lives, challenges we face, places we have been, etc. We have been following the Essential 100 series of studies which cover the main themes of the Bible – 50 from the Old Testament and 50 from the New. We are currently looking at the Teachings of Jesus, but also draw quite heavily on William Barclay's study notes which are invaluable in plumbing the deeper truths contained. Frank leads these studies. We conclude by sharing prayer and praise items then close by praying for one another.

After losing a few members during the past twelve months we are anxious to have more people join us. We meet the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month and move around to the homes of various members. Contact Frank at [admin@svbcofe.org.uk](mailto:admin@svbcofe.org.uk)

If you are interested in something more contemplative there is also a Meditation group, run by Roger Nailer, which meets on a Tuesday afternoon for meditative prayer. Christian meditation is centred around phrases or sentences derived from the Bible. Contact Roger for details [rogernailer@gmail.com](mailto:rogernailer@gmail.com).

All of the above offer a warm welcome. We encourage you to join us in your spiritual pilgrimage as we all learn and share together what God has to say to us through his Word and through meeting together in fellowship.

# Inclusive Church Action Group

In February and March this year Chris Mason led a very good short series on “Living in Love and Faith”, the Church of England study on Christian teaching and learning about identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage. It was an excellent course which encouraged us to think about inclusivity in its widest sense and many of us began asking the question “So how do we become an inclusive church?”



As an outcome from the meetings, David Bowers asked Chris and the 20 who had attended if they would like to meet together to see how we might further the aim of becoming an inclusive church, possibly a “Registered Inclusive Church”. As a result a small group was formed initially representing Chipping Sodbury and Old Sodbury but we hope that the group will grow to represent all of the churches of the Benefice.

At our first meeting we were prompted by the Spirit to discuss, examine and explore what it would mean for the four churches of the Benefice to become more inclusive, accessible and welcoming. We recognised that being inclusive means that we need to ensure that we don’t discriminate in any way and this includes areas of gender, sexuality, marital status, age, race, culture, physical disability, mental health, learning disability, neurodiversity and much more.

All of this will mean change; in practical ways we will all need to become more aware of the needs of other people. We need to ensure at a very basic level that all of our worship services are accessible, that we provide service sheets in different formats, that lighting is good, that we use the loop system for those with hearing difficulties. That is only the start, we need to ensure that everyone is included and that we do not discriminate in any way.

It was, I believe, David’s hope, and it is certainly our hope, that each church of the benefice will register for Inclusive Church, that we will take to ourselves the statement of Inclusive Church and make it our own. The Inclusive Church Statement of belief says:-

*“We believe in **inclusive church** – a church which **celebrates and affirms every person** and does not discriminate.*

*We will continue to challenge the church where it continues to discriminate against people on grounds of **disability, economic power, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, learning disability, mental health, neurodiversity, or sexuality.***

*We believe in a Church which **welcomes and serves all people** in the name of Jesus Christ; which is scripturally faithful; which seeks to proclaim the Gospel afresh for each generation; and which, in the power of the Holy Spirit, allows all people to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Jesus Christ."*

More information about Inclusive Church can be found on their website at <https://www.inclusive-church.org/> and the Inclusive Church Action Group will be very pleased to support the PCCs of the benefice as together we seek to be an inclusive church.

Rob Axford  
Catherine Coster  
Karen Hunter  
Hilary Hurley  
Chris Mason  
Inclusive Church Action Group



Inclusive Church

## Albania Mission Trip

This was a postponed trip – Hennie Gray and I had hoped to go out during the summer of 2019, but Covid (and lockdowns) prohibited it. So, it was agreed that this year we would go – despite the disruption caused by the transport strikes.

Our main focus was the outreach project to the orphanage in Korçe. It is a state run orphanage but over the past years a small team have been given access through the church in Korçe to take a Bible-based activities programme to the adult residents. Some of these people are legitimate orphans, others have birth families but don't live with them, because disabled people have generally been 'looked down upon' in that culture. This is why the orphanage is sited on the top of a hill – to put some distance between those with mental or physical handicaps and the other townspeople.

We all enjoyed the programme sessions, which were Bible-based and reinforced by activities and games (interspersed with nail-painting and dancing to worship songs!). We did this through a translator, Elena, from the church, who is an excellent teacher and has a great love for these people, whom she feels are "family".





We also had fun times with the residents, taking them out on trips to the Lake at Pogradec on the border of Macedonia; to a nature park in Korce and a funfair, and also swimming. We had to go to the pool complex after hours, as the regular punters would not tolerate disabled people swimming among them – and the manager would lose money. But the staff were really kind to the residents, and laid on a lovely meal for us.



On the Saturday when we weren't allowed to be at the orphanage, Hennie went to a private home for elderly residents. This is monitored by the state, but run by Marleen, a missionary originally from Belgium who has been in charge for the past 27 years. A man from the church ran a Bible Study which was well-attended, and Hennie gave her testimony.

On another occasion, we visited a village church in Pojan to spend time with ladies from the weekly Bible study group. Tania was asked to give her testimony, which really spoke to their hearts. These ladies put on a lovely spread for us, and then finished the evening with a display of Albanian dancing!

The heat was just a little worse (38 degrees!) than it had been in the UK at that time, and it's taken quite a while to recoup our energies. It was amazing, and we won't forget the wonderful people we spent time with. **Tania Manners**

## Visit of Indian Bishop Prasana Samuel

It was our privilege in July to welcome Bishop Prasana and his wife Professor Esther Samuel to our Benefice. They are from Bengaluru in India. Revd David, as head of the Diocese link with Karnataka Central, brought them from Gloucester for a wonderful lunch hosted by Tina Hildick-Smith. Also present were Liz and Stephen Gregson, Tania Manners and Hennie Gray who visited the diocese in 2019 and the Arpana School that we help support.



The lunch was followed by an interview at St John's Church, CS, with both the bishop and his wife regarding the church in Karnataka and the many challenges they face. It was helpful in giving us a firsthand account of the pressures that the churches are under, now that the ruling BJP party is encouraging discrimination against Christians and people of other faiths.

Afterwards the Bishop and his wife left to go to London where they were attending the Lambeth Conference hosted by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

# SVB Benefice Vision Statement

## Welcoming, Growing, Connecting

Many of you will be aware that for the process of appointing a new Rector, a profile of our churches had to be produced. This daunting task fell to the churchwardens. We looked back at our previous profile and decided the Benefice had moved on a great deal. It was decided that a new vision statement was required that encapsulated the current atmosphere of our churches as well as what we want to develop.

We felt that the logo below did this with the Cross and the Trinity at the centre we are

### Welcoming, Growing, Connecting with God and our Communities

A statement of our vision for the future was also needed to show prospective applicants that as a benefice we want to move forward not only in our Christian faith but to expand his kingdom. This was the statement that was decided upon:

## The Vision Statement

Working with Christ at  
the centre We seek to

**Welcome all**  
through  
meaningful  
prayer and  
worship



**Grow together**  
in our love and  
faith for God and  
as a benefice

**Connect with our communities**  
sharing the love of Jesus to  
change lives by the power of the  
Holy Spirit

As we seek to fulfil this vision then changes may need to be made.

**Welcoming all** may mean changes in our services and liturgy to attract people on the fringes of our church community.

**Growing together** may mean overlooking our differences, asking the Lord to change our attitudes, to seek forgiveness and reconciliation with those we have quarrelled, be willing to support other churches.

### Copy Deadline

Please send all copy for the December-January issue to the  
Church Office by **Monday November 14**

### Front Cover:

Altar in the Lady Chapel at St John's,  
Chipping Sodbury

**Connecting with our communities sharing the love of Jesus** may mean moving out of our comfort zone meeting with people we don't usually mix with, on Monday to Saturday and not just on Sundays.

We can do none of these things without meaningful prayer and worship. Our faith and love for God must propel us into action but we cannot do any of these things without the power of the Holy Spirit. He is the one who will help us to share the love of Jesus and to change lives for good.

God is out there, already working in people's hearts, but we are his body, his hands and feet on earth that he uses to bring his plans to fruition. May we be ready to help his kingdom to come.

## Horton Church Teas



Some of the Little Sodbury people went on a Saturday afternoon to enjoy the

wonderful teas being served at St. James', Horton where we were royally waited on by Martin and indulged in the fabulous cakes made by Tina.



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# Her Majesty the Queen Elizabeth II, 1926-2022

## Memories of the last few days from Lynne Watts and Richard Needs

### Lynne Watts -

Like many thousands of others experiencing that same overwhelming sense of loss and grief on hearing the news of The Queen's death, Alan and I wanted to mourn and pay our respects in those places where Her Majesty had spent so much of her life. We travelled to a grey, overcast and damp Windsor the following Tuesday and witnessed a town



in mourning and a constant stream of people, young and old, carrying flowers and messages to lay at the Castle entrance gates on the Long Walk, where the Prince and Princess of Wales and the Sussexes had greeted the public two days earlier. Through tear-filled eyes we read eloquent tributes to our Queen and messages of gratitude for her unfailing sense of duty and delighted in the children's simple drawings and expressions of their love and thanks.



The following morning we took the train to Waterloo, arriving shortly after 10.30, and joined the throngs making their way across the Thames in the direction of the Mall, eager to witness senior members of the Royal Family as they accompanied the coffin procession from Buckingham Palace to Westminster Hall. Sadly it was not to be; news reports claimed that there was little hope of getting onto the Mall and the queue at Admiralty Arch confirmed this. Plan B - head to Whitehall, where the procession would emerge from Horse-guards Parade. By the time we had been turned back on one side because the access was blocked, crowds had already built up on the other side. Plan C - head nearer to Westminster Hall.

As we arrived at the Embankment, a policeman announced that all accesses to the procession route were now closed off and the area was in lockdown! We walked to a nearby park and sat in glorious sunshine watching crowds passing by with their flowers, chatting to strangers sitting next to us and hoping that when the procession had finished, we would be able to retrace the procession route in reverse - which we did.

The whole day was wonderful and full of special moments - London streets with no traffic, so many young people there, the kindness of the police and stewards on duty, smiling, friendly faces despite the sombre occasion, a camaraderie as we met and chatted to others and the huge crowds of ordinary people, who like us, just wanted to be there for our Queen.

### **Richard Needs –**

I was under six years old in 1952, so a little young to attend the 'lying in state' of King George VI. I have always been a supporter of the Royal Family and had a very high regard for the dedication, lifelong commitment and devotion of Queen Elizabeth II in her role as head of state. On the death of the Queen, I immediately felt that I needed to pay my respects in some physical way by attending the 'lying in state', which I realised would involve some effort on my part.



On Wednesday evening 14 September I joined the queue, just opposite the Globe Theatre in Southwark at 10.45pm and entered Westminster Hall at 7.00am the next day, just over 8 hours. For some bizarre reason it did not feel that long and the atmosphere was quite light hearted with a strange camaraderie and feeling of a shared purpose with the people immediately around you.

The last one and a half hours of queuing was through an enormous zig zag in Victoria Gardens where there were scouts positioned at regular intervals at the end of each leg giving out what was a lucky dip food distribution. Before leaving the gardens we had to give up any food or water that we had been carrying prior to the final security check points and discovered that this was the source of the food for the lucky dip; a great way to avoiding waste and reminiscent of the feeding of the five thousand.



On passing through the final security screening the mood changed immediately and became much more sombre on entering Westminster Hall.

From the top of the steps, looking down at the catafalque, despite its size it seemed so small and almost insignificant, in the magnificent setting of Westminster Hall, for someone of such great stature and who was so well known throughout the world; not what I had expected. It was for me, and I am sure for many others, a very an emotional experience. It brought home how insignificant we all are, whatever our background and life experience, in the wider context of this disturbed and turbulent world. Those guarding the coffin were statuesque which was incredibly powerful considering there was no movement whatsoever.

We were very lucky to have been in the Hall at the changing of the guard which gave an extra few minutes to take in the whole scene. It was an incredible, literally, 'once in a lifetime' experience and I am so glad that I made the effort.

# Queen Elizabeth II, Beacon of Grace

It was 2015. And Elizabeth was 89. I had asked God a specific question: please show me someone in the public eye who is an outstanding whole-life disciple of Jesus, someone whose faith shapes all they do and say. 'Elizabeth' was God's answer. Swift, clear, weighty. And to be shared.



Since that day it's become ever clearer to me that Elizabeth was a gift from God to nation, Commonwealth, and indeed the global community, a beacon of humility, grace, astuteness, good humour, generosity, and deep faith.

About her faith she was crystal clear, and repeatedly so. In her 2014 Christmas broadcast she put it this way:

*'For me, the life of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, whose birth we celebrate today, is an inspiration and an anchor in my life. A role-model of reconciliation and forgiveness, he stretched out his hands in love, acceptance and healing. Christ's example has taught me to seek to respect and value all people of whatever faith or none.'*

There's certainly no doubt about the identity of the King our Queen served. Nor is there any doubt that the prayer that her people have so often prayed (perhaps without realising that it was a prayer) was answered. God saved our Queen. Our Queen was 'gracious' and 'noble' and 'victorious' in the things that really matter – hope and faith in Christ, love of God and of the people she's been empowered to serve.

Indeed, there can be few greater indications of God's mercy and grace to our nation than to have given us a Queen who loved us so faithfully and pointed us to him so clearly.

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ for the gift of his servant Elizabeth.

Source - London Institute for Contemporary Christianity [www.licc.org.uk](http://www.licc.org.uk).



## God Save the King

# Fish and Chip Supper at the Church Centre

Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> October 7.00pm start

Please come and join us for a takeaway!

This is a pay as you feel event.

*What does that mean?*

We are suggesting a ticket price of £10:

If you can afford that, pay £10,

If you would struggle to afford £10, pay what you can and come and enjoy the evening.

If you are in the happy position that you could manage a little more please consider paying extra to subsidise someone else's meal.

*(All ticket money will go into an envelope so no one will know what you paid)*

If we end up with any surplus funds, we will put them toward the centre window fund.

**Fish and Chip Supper** (*Vegetarian alternative possible please let us know when you reserve a place*), **followed by tea or coffee.**



## Rev David Powe's Quiz Night Friday 11th November Church Centre



Teams of up to 6  
(Don't worry if you want to come on your own, we'll find you a team)

**Tickets £10 includes a light supper** (provided by Tina from Horton)



Proceeds to Revd. David Powe's  
"Shepherd's Hut Project"

Tickets from the Church Centre Office

01454 325160,

email [sodburyvalebenefice@gmail.com](mailto:sodburyvalebenefice@gmail.com)

or see Michelle, David P or Madeleine.

Water will be provided. If you'd like to drink something else please bring it along!

Let Christine Stephens (314621) or Michelle in the office (325160 or [sodburyvalebenefice@gmail.com](mailto:sodburyvalebenefice@gmail.com)) know if you would like to come,

**Reservation is essential.**

If you require transport, it can be arranged, please let Christine know.

***Please come along and join us for a fun evening of conversation and chips!***

# 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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[abbott.steve@btinternet.com](mailto:abbott.steve@btinternet.com)



Revd. Pauline Green  
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Revd. Canon Rob Axford  
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