



# SVB Outlook

*August - September 2023*



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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Contact Hannah if you have a concern about  
suspected abuse of a child or a vulnerable  
adult

## A Word from Jane

Dear Friends

Summer is now upon us with all the normal uncertainties about weather and holidays. We look forward to idyllic times of relaxation and dream of blue skies, beaches and warm weather – but not too hot like the rest of southern Europe!

In our last issue of Outlook we talked of passing the baton as we embrace a new monarch, King Charles.

Transitions can always pose a challenge – and as a Benefice of churches we are in the midst of one right now as we look forward to the installation of our new Rector in October. Revd Chris Butler is heading our way and preparations are under way to welcome her. Excitement and anticipation are building...

Over the past months God has been providing for us through the ministry of many clergy within our congregations. We are grateful to them for the many sermons they have preached and the services and meetings they have led, with much dedication, all lending their various gifts and personalities.

Now is a period of enthusiasm and expectancy as we prepare for the next era in our collective church histories in Sodbury Vale. As churches and congregations, we move on in eager anticipation and we share this expectation with the communities we represent.

Our excitement is peppered with some elements of intrigue: what changes will Chris bring about? What can we look forward to? How ready are we to accept someone new? The questions are many... but amid these many questions there is one certainty - the firm belief that Chris is the incumbent that God has chosen to lead us forward. She is the person of his choosing.

God knows what he is doing just as he did when he organised the succession of events we have recently been celebrating again this year: the death and resurrection of Jesus, his ascension – and then the sending of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. All carefully planned and executed according to his plan and purpose.

**Jane**



*“Now is a period of excitement and expectancy as we prepare for the next era”*

*“Chris is the incumbent that God has chosen to lead us forward”*



# Hello from our new Rector

## Rev'd. Chris Butler

My name is Chris, and I was ordained in Bath and Wells in 2010 and have been in that Diocese ever since. I am looking forward to joining Gloucester Diocese and throwing myself into Church, town, and village life.

At home I live with my two dogs, Leah and Charlie so I would welcome any tips for local dog walks.

Before I was ordained, I lived in Bath for many years where I worked for the Ministry of Defence, it will be lovely to reacquaint myself with the area. I am also a sports fan and a keen supporter of Bath Rugby, if you are a Gloucester fan please don't hold that against me.

See you all in October.

**Chris**

*A welcome service will be held on 4th October. Details to be announced later*



## Have you heard of the Great Green Wall?

This is an amazing international effort to grow a vast belt of trees, vegetation and fertile land across the drylands of the Sahel, stretching 8,000km across Africa.

The idea for the Great Green Wall took shape in 2007, when the African Union came together to think of ways to tackle the growing threat of climate change and land degradation.

This project is one of earth's biggest responses to the climate crisis. It tackles many urgent needs at once: increasing biodiversity, restoring and protecting land, growing nutritious food, and creating green jobs for the millions of people living along its path.

The Great Green Wall is being planted by thousands of ordinary people, across Africa's drylands. It is an African-led movement, which puts people and sustainability at its core.





**Tree Aid** works in several countries across the Sahel. The tree-planting projects are designed with local communities to address their needs for increased income, climate resilience and access to nutritious food in a joined up way. This means planting the right trees in the right places, and ensuring communities feel equipped and empowered to take care of forests for generations to come



Different trees are grown according to local conditions, from frankincense in Ethiopia, or shea in Mali, to baobab in Ghana. This means the way it looks will vary from country to country and even village to village.

It's like a 'mosaic' of restoration projects, which will run from one side of the continent to the other. The project will bring back native tree and plant species to a once fertile area,

transforming the landscape and making it greener.

Trees provide so much for families in rural Africa – nutritious food to eat all year round, products that can be sold at market to earn a vital income and shade from the scorching sun. They protect the environment and restore barren land making it productive again.

Already farmers are reaping the rewards, with bigger harvests and more food to eat and sell. Tree Aid also helps grow businesses, supporting communities to make and sell tree products, like shea butter and soap, supporting over 39 thousand people to develop enterprise groups selling tree products too.

Since Tree Aid began in 1987, they have grown over 27 million trees with communities across Africa but many more are needed,

There will be an opportunity to support this amazing initiative in St John's, Chipping Sodbury, in the autumn, as we'll be holding retiring collections for Tree Aid on Sundays during October, as part of our Eco Church commitment to support an environmental charity each year.

**Christine Axford**



# Project Zulu

I was privileged to have attended a concert at St. Georges, Brandon Hill early in June of this year with Chris and was so inspired and uplifted by the performance that I felt that I had to write about it for Outlook. In fact, we enjoyed it so much we booked again for the final concert of the tour at Clifton College on the following Friday.

Project Zulu is a suite of educational development projects run by the University of the West of England (UWE Bristol), to promote lifelong learning opportunities across township schools in KwaZulu Natal, South Africa. This year the project celebrated the 10th anniversary since the first tour and 10 summers of volunteering.



The choir, made up of children 8 to 13 years old from Jobstown Primary and Mntimande Primary Schools were here for three weeks during which they wowed audiences with their incredible musical talent and infectious love of music. They visited UK schools and offered cultural exchange opportunities to children across the South West through shared learning experiences and music workshops. Busking across Bristol, Bath and West Wales, performing in concert venues, cathedrals and chapels, the choir entertained and inspired thousands of supporters.

During the three week tour the choir raised over £30,000. This total exceeded previous tours and every penny raised will be used to build new classrooms at the two primary Schools. The first tour in 2013 raised enough money to install solar panels which are still generating power today. Since then, the funds raised and matched by Atlas and UWE Bristol have built new classrooms, paid for resources including laptops, educational software, built playgrounds and a laser-levelled fully irrigated sports field, which will be opened in August of this year. The latter will become the home of Madadeni Bears Men's and Women's Rugby as well as the hub of Sithobelumthetho school's sports activities.

This summer 40 students and 15 staff from UWE Bristol will be volunteering across 8 projects.

I can honestly say that I have not felt so emotional and energised by a performance for some time. The energy, joyfulness and sheer exuberance of the performers was inspirational. Seeing the contrast at Clifton College for these children who have so little, with pupils of the college who have so much, was humbling in the extreme and was a reminder of what we all take for granted. It was also very touching when the

Head teacher of one of the schools spoke at the beginning of the concert at Clifton College. She was so obviously a committed Christian and in a way, slightly naively, assumed that all the audience was too when it was obvious that a great number were not.

We can thoroughly recommend seeing them on any future visits, which will be in 2025, if you get a chance please watch the videos through the link to get the full experience of their vitality and love of life.

(more information and videos of the choir see [www.projectzulu.org](http://www.projectzulu.org))

**Richard Needs**

## Fish Supper

Thank you to everyone who came and joined us in the Church Centre on Wednesday 12 July for a Fish and Chip, pay as you feel, supper.

It was a fantastic night with lots of laughter, and great to see so many faces from around the benefice coming together just to chat and enjoy a simple meal together.

We made a small surplus which will go toward the essential maintenance required in the centre. **Michelle**



## Chipping Sodbury Music Society

**Tuesday 10th October 2023**

**7:30 pm** Chipping Sodbury Town Hall

**Angelo Villani - piano**

Angelo has performed extensively in the UK, Europe, Asia and Australia, and has

received coverage on major media, including Classic FM and live BBC interviews and performances. The release of his debut album, "*Angelo Villani plays Dante's Inferno*" garnered considerable praise and earned five star reviews.



**Copy Deadline** Please send all copy for the Oct-Nov issue to the Editor or the church office by

**Tuesday September 19**

**Front Cover:** A famous Lake District bridge from a different view point



# Bishop Rachel's message



Last week, it was a privilege to host a reception in the House of Lords the day before the Online Safety Bill returned for debate.

As I have reflected on the past few weeks, I have realised how the words 'safety' and 'belonging' have arisen again and again in the different places where I have been, whether it has been in the small rural church at their midweek 'coffee and chat', or speaking with offenders in prison, or listening to presentations around safeguarding at General Synod, or being at The Rock awards for young people, or hearing what parents value in their toddler group at the local church, or taking part in parliamentary debates around illegal migration or online safety.

As I reflect on all this, I remember the horrific genocide which took place in Bosnia in 1995 in what had been declared as a United Nations 'safe area'. This might seem very disconnected from what I have written above, yet the reality is that the murdering of men and boys, and the rape of many women and girls, took place within communities in which people had previously celebrated their differences across faith and culture, and where there was a sense of safety and belonging. People who share their stories from this time repeatedly talk of the horror of how things changed so quickly, and how the communities where they all belonged were suddenly shattered, with so many people no longer feeling safe.

The theme of this year's National Memorial Day was 'Together we are one' and it seems to me so relevant for just about every situation and place I have found myself in over these last few weeks.

Words such as 'together we are one' can sound so nice and comforting, but the reality of living them is far more challenging. It means going towards one another, particularly those who are different from us and with whom we disagree vehemently. I confess that I have not always found that easy over these past few weeks, not least at General Synod and in Westminster, and I have had to daily remind myself of the truth that everyone is created in God's image and that all of us are loved by God and in need of God's grace and mercy.

As soon as we allow someone to become 'other' we are contributing to the disintegration of relationship and failing to join in with God's work of transformation and reconciliation. On this note it seems relevant to mention The Difference Course(<https://difference.rln.global>) It is a great resource, do take a look.

As we walk through the coming week, I hope there will be space for each of us to reflect on what further steps we might take so that people of all ages find the Church a place of safety and belonging rooted in the love of God; and that those who are followers of Christ discover yet more of what it means to be the body of Christ.

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# Harnessing the Power of Artificial Intelligence for the Church of England

## Introduction:

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as a transformative force across various industries, revolutionising the way we live, work, and interact. The Church of England, with its rich history and commitment to serving its congregation, can also benefit from the numerous applications of AI. By embracing this technology, the Church can enhance its operations, improve outreach efforts, and provide more personalized support to its members.

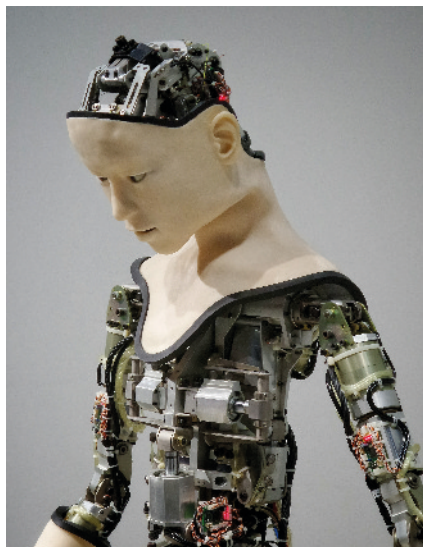


Photo by Possessed Photography

## 1. Streamlining Administrative Tasks:

One of the significant advantages of AI is its ability to automate mundane administrative tasks. By employing AI-powered systems, the Church can streamline processes such as data management, scheduling, and resource allocation. This enables clergy members to focus more on pastoral care, community engagement, and spiritual guidance.

## 2. Enhancing Pastoral Care:

AI can play a vital role in enhancing pastoral care within the Church. Chatbots and virtual assistants can provide immediate support, answering common questions and offering guidance on various religious matters. These AI-powered tools can be accessible through the Church's website or dedicated mobile applications, ensuring that pastoral care is available to the congregation 24/7.

## 3. Personalized Spiritual Guidance:

AI algorithms can analyse an individual's spiritual journey, providing personalized recommendations for Bible studies, sermons, and other faith-based resources. By understanding the unique needs and preferences of its members, the Church can offer tailored spiritual guidance that resonates with each individual, fostering a deeper connection and engagement.

## 4. Data-Driven Decision Making:

AI can help the Church of England make informed decisions based on data analysis. By collecting and analysing data from various sources, including attendance records, surveys, and feedback, AI algorithms can identify trends, preferences, and



areas for improvement. This data-driven approach enables the Church to adapt its services, programs, and outreach efforts to better serve its members.

## 5. Language and Translation:

The Church of England is a diverse community with members from different linguistic backgrounds. AI-powered language translation tools can help bridge communication barriers and facilitate interactions between clergy and individuals who speak different languages. This inclusivity fosters a sense of belonging and ensures that the Church can reach and connect with a broader audience.

## Conclusion:

Artificial Intelligence presents a wealth of opportunities for the Church of England to enhance its operations, provide personalised support, and engage with its congregation more effectively. By embracing AI technologies, the Church can streamline administrative tasks, enhance pastoral care, offer personalised guidance, make data-driven decisions, and facilitate cross-linguistic communication. As the Church adapts to the changing technological landscape, AI can be a powerful tool for strengthening its mission and serving its members in a more impactful and meaningful way.

*This article was written by an artificial intelligence application (ChatGPT) in answer to my question on how AI could help the Church of England.*

# St John's Church, Chipping Sodbury



Photo from Pixabay U\_9yuzg4m4m3

## Flower Festival

Celebrating  
The 100th Anniversary of

# DISNEY

Friday 15th to Sunday 17th September  
2023

## Community Concert

Saturday 16th September @ 6pm

Come and see your favourite  
characters

# Dementia Awareness Inclusive Church Action Group



Inclusive Church

Readers of Outlook magazine will be pleased to know that 12 people from the Benefice attended the three sessions of community training in dementia awareness at the Church Centre on the mornings of 8th, 15th and 29th June. It was led by Kim Diment from Gloucestershire Health & Care NHS Foundation Trust.

The feedback from participants was unanimous in their appreciation for an excellent course which informed us about the biology of the ageing brain, attitudes to older people and importantly how we as Church communities can help in the acceptance and inclusion of older people in our congregations.

Those who attended the course realise that we still have much to learn, for the story of everyone's ageing process is unique, but we are committed to becoming a Dementia-Friendly Church and ensuring that in worship, welcome & hospitality, conversation and practical tasks we do our best to offer everyone a good and positive experience of Church.

Here are some top tips and suggestions taken from becoming a dementia-friendly Church which are worth thinking about:

- Approach the person in a friendly manner
- Establish and maintain eye contact
- Talk slowly and clearly
- Give time for a response - you may have to repeat what you say several times
- Don't hurry them, be patient
- Don't get involved in an argument
- Be gentle and kind
- Treat the person with Dementia as a member of your own family

Dementia awareness is an outward expression of **Inclusive church** whose statement of belief says "*We believe in **inclusive church** as a place 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."*

Sign	How to respond
Staring or “Daydreaming”	Observe and gently offer help if appropriate
Memory problems Not knowing what to do Forgetfulness	
Looking confused Not focused	Gentle reassurance and offer of help
Spatial awareness Bumping into things. Lack of confidence	Observe. Offer guidance and a friendly arm
Stammering Stuttering	Be patient. Sometimes taking the person to what you think they are talking about can be a great help
Speech Repetitiveness Clock watching E.g. asking “What’s the time” repeatedly	Patience and a helping hand. Let them say the same thing again, it will help their self -esteem if you don’t cut them off mid- sentence.
You have concerns about the individual	Discuss with Church Safeguarding Officer

**Chris Mason, on behalf of the Inclusive Church Action Group**

## Chipping Sodbury Baptist Church



### Holiday Club

**For all Kids Aged 5-11**

14th - 18th August

10am - 12.30pm



**Games, crafts, refreshments, Bible stories & lots of fun**

**20th August family BBQ celebration 3.30pm**

Spaces limited so booking essential. Forms available at [www.cs-bc.org.uk](http://www.cs-bc.org.uk)



# SVB Strollers

The largest group of Strollers so far, set out on a sunny day in May for Castle Combe, ably led by Kylie. Parking proved to be the first challenge of the day as the machine was not working. What followed resembled something of a comedy sketch as ourselves and others tried to access other means to pay, with the inevitable “no signal”. Finally taking a photo of the non-working message, we set off to enjoy our four mile walk. A friendly passer-by took our photo, so for once we are all included.



We followed the river By Brook down the street and across a lovely old bridge before heading along the footpath.

Going through a wooded area we came across a fairy house! Shortly after we met some of Bev's Cotswold warden colleagues repairing two stiles. I don't think there was any connection! Our walk



continued over fields and then down through woods to reach the village. The pub couldn't cope with feeding such a large number so we called at The Old House at Home in Burton, where we were well looked after.

The weather continued to hold good for our June walk at Littleton Drew. Parking under the motorway at The Gibb we strolled through the attractive village, past the church and the green, before taking a bridleway towards Grittleton.



We turned back on a section of the old Fosse Way. Leaving two strollers at The Salutation, the rest crossed the road and dropped down to the river, which we followed to the old mill and then back to collect the cars and join the others for lunch.



**Our next walk on August 23rd**, this time on the fourth Wednesday, is a special ECO walk to explore a section of the River Frome and learn something about its ecology and how it is looked after. Bugs may be involved!! We would like to encourage kids who are on holiday from school to join us. This will be led by Lizzie Kinsey who works for South Glos. Environmental department.

**Details are on the website.**

**Anne Vickers**

# Regular Church's Service Pattern

	St John The Baptist, Chipping Sodbury	St John the Baptist, Old Sodbury	St James the Elder, Horton	St Adeline, Little Sodbury
Service Time	09:30am	11:15am	11:15am	6.00pm
1st Sunday	St John's Praise Child friendly informal service	Holy Communion	Morning Prayer	Evensong
2th Sunday	Holy Communion	Morning Worship	Holy Communion	Evensong
3rd Sunday	All-Age Communion	Holy Communion	Morning Prayer	Evensong
4th Sunday	Holy Communion	Morning Worship	Holy Communion	Holy Communion
If there is a 5th Sunday there will be a 10.30am Holy Communion in one of the four churches				

## Did you know we have a Pastoral Care Group in The Sodbury Vale Benefice?

### Do you know what we do?

- Ultimately, we support the Rector, Clergy and staff in the Benefice
- We have members who help at Baptism and Marriage preparation meetings
- We have members who will visit the bereaved
- We take Home Communion to the housebound and those unable to get to Church
- We visit a local Residential Care home during the year to sing hymns
- We organise and hold an All Souls Service at St. John's Chipping Sodbury

### We hold a social event:

## Tea and Chat

Held in the Church centre on the fourth Tuesday of the month.

We are only a small group and would welcome anyone who feels they could help in any of these areas to join our team. The more of us on our team, the more people we can assist.



To find out more  
Please contact  
**Christine  
Stephens** on  
**01454 314621**

# The Extended Team

## Honorary Assistant Ministers

Meet the members of the extended team who support our worship. They consist of retired clergy and lay readers, who take services and help with other events across the benefice.



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*This magazine is brought to you **Free** by the four churches of the Sodbury Vale Benefice. If you would like to make a small donation towards printing costs which are 65p a copy that would be most welcome. **Thank you.***