



SVB Outlook

December 2024 - January 2025



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

www.svbcofe.org.uk

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Rector's Rambles

The advent calendars are just starting and the countdown to Christmas is beginning in earnest. Each year it seems to get busier and busier, and the countdown starts earlier and earlier.

For some it is a countdown they enjoy, the decorations, the Christmas carols in the shops and in our churches, planning to see friends and family, to exchange presents and to eat too much. For others it is a time of sad memories and missing loved ones, or worrying how they are going to afford everything Christmas appears to demand - they just long for it to be over.

The adverts on the television often sell a perfect Christmas with families or couples all together round a lit fire smiling and laughing, a dream which only a few, the lucky ones, can live up to. What the majority of the adverts fail to do is to tell of a Christmas many years ago in a cold stable when Jesus, the light of the world was born.

In our churches we will be celebrating the birth of Jesus and the hope we believe He brings. The details of all the various services are in this magazine and we would love as many people as possible to come and join us. Alternatively our churches are open during the day for you to have some time out, some quiet time; do take advantage of them and also we hope we will see you sometime over the Christmas season.

Wishing you all a Christ-filled Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Chris

“The countdown to Christmas is beginning in earnest. Each year it seems to get busier and busier”

“Wishing you all a Christ-filled Christmas and a peaceful New Year. “

The Second Advent

We all associate Advent with Christmas. It's a time to look forward to the festivities, and make our final preparations. But there's another take on Advent which is just as important, and which we tend to forget. It is also the season when, traditionally, we are encouraged to look forward to the Second Coming of Jesus. "Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again" we declare at every Holy Communion service. But it's easy to lose sight of the truth of this, particularly just before Christmas.



The Old Testament prophets prophesied many facts about the coming of the Messiah, but what was not revealed to them was that he would actually come twice: once as a vulnerable baby, and secondly as a heavenly judge. The baby grew up to be an extraordinary man who showed God's love and wisdom in healing and teaching, and declared and demonstrated the start of God's rule on earth. Falsely accused by his enemies and betrayed, Jesus the Messiah voluntarily gave his life as a ransom for many. Then he rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, and sent the Holy Spirit to empower his followers. Finally, at some indeterminate time in the future, he will come back in resurrection power to judge evil and evildoers and reward his faithful followers.

“We could characterise the Second Coming as the Christian hope, with an absolute conviction that one day, it will happen.”

Why do we believe in his Second Coming? We can see from the New Testament that Jesus taught it, and his followers eagerly accepted it. Jesus often refers to himself as the “Son of Man” in the gospels, and in Mark 13:26-27 he speaks of the Son of Man coming in clouds with power and great glory. Matthew 25 contains the last 3 recorded parables of Jesus, and they all speak of situations where people are waiting for someone to arrive: a bridegroom, a rich man, and finally, the Son of Man - Jesus himself, judging the nations. Will people be ready? Will they have made the best use of their gifts?

Will they have shown compassion to the needy? Each parable contains a warning, and a sense of a future reckoning.

We see an even stronger emphasis on the Second Coming in the writings of the apostles. For example, Luke records the words of the angels immediately after Jesus' Ascension: “This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11). In fact, the first generation of Christians seem to have expected Jesus to return within their lifetime. However, when he did not, the expectation of his return did not fade, and

has remained as a foundational teaching of the church down the centuries. We could characterise it as *the* Christian hope: not a vague wish that it would be nice if it happened, but an absolute conviction that one day, it *will* happen.

The Second Coming of Jesus is the only basic belief of the Church which hasn't yet happened, and as such it seems to me to be worth some thought and attention. Here are some of the reasons why it is important:

1. It shows Jesus as the Lord of history, who will return to earth at the perfect moment of God's choosing.
2. It shows Jesus as the just judge, who will deal with each of us in the most loving and fair way, put right every injustice, and bring total healing and restoration.
3. It shows Jesus as the one who will bring God's rule and reign to a transformed and renewed earth in a way that everyone will have to acknowledge.

We should be ready and waiting for this to happen, while continuing to be the people God wants us to be and do what he wants us to do: a continual challenge and encouragement.

One of my favourite portrayals of the Second Coming is in "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe", the first of the Narnia books by C.S. Lewis. Mr Beaver tells the children an old prophecy that Aslan the Lion, the creator and ruler of Narnia, which is now in perpetual winter and ruled by a wicked witch, will return.

"Wrong will be right
When Aslan comes in sight.
At the sound of his roar
Sorrows will be no more,
When he bares his teeth
Winter meets its death,
And when he shakes his mane
We shall have spring again."



Photo Tom Skarbec-Wazynski

The prophecy sums up in a simple verse a lot of what the Second Coming of Jesus actually means:

So, in the midst of all our Advent preparations for Christmas, remembering the first coming of Christ, let's also look forward eagerly to the Advent that hasn't yet happened: the Lord's Second Coming.

Steve Abbott

God Still at Work in our World

The birth of Jesus Christ was revolutionary and continues to have an impact on our world. Crib Fest reminded us again of that as we have seen cribs on display from many countries.

The Church around the world is growing but we rarely hear of this - and locally there are Christian activities with which we connect by praying and giving. God is at work in a wonderful way, revealing his love to so many who had not heard the gospel.

Just as God called St. Paul and dramatically commissioned him on the road to Damascus, so we find people today who have been commissioned to serve him in far-off countries – and in our country too!

In times past the Church sent out missionaries to remote parts of the world, where people had not yet heard about God's love; or perhaps places where the national church was weak and lacked teaching – or was suffering under persecution from harsh political systems or even the religious establishment. We still send people – but not in the same numbers.

Today our SVB connections are with nationals whom God has called to serve him in their own countries – Brazil, India, Kenya... In the coming issues of Outlook, we shall be looking at each of these to learn how they are putting Christian faith into action.

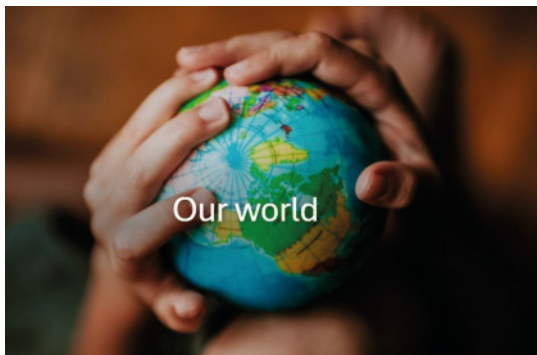
We also support local 'missions' in our own neighbourhood – Foodbank and Regenerate. These help us connect with our parishes and the communities we serve.

At our monthly Global Action mission prayer meetings, we are kept informed and stay connected as we pray for these ministries. We also pray for those many 'hidden' Christians who suffer for their faith - in Bangladesh, China, Vietnam, Mali, etc.

How are these various missions funded? That is where we come in, providing both prayer backing and gifts to enable their work to continue. We would like to see this increase as we move into 2025.

Frank Gray

For more information look at this web page <https://svbcofe.org.uk/missional/>



The Childrens Society Annual Box Collection 2024

Just a quick reminder that the box collection is due in January 2025!!! Where has that year gone (but then I say that every year)? I am more than happy to collect cheques as there still doesn't appear to be much use for coins but nevertheless all donations are most gratefully received.

Announcement! - An opportunity to help

I cannot believe that I have been the local secretary for the Children's Society for the last 23 years and it is with much sadness that it is time for me to put down my pen and calculator and say that the January count will be my last one.

I am hopeful that someone within the **Sodbury Vale Benefice** will be able to take up the role so that we can be represented within the Society. I have to say it is not an onerous task (once a year) and I am more than willing to talk it through with the person who is happy to take over. You do not need banking or likewise experience.

Please, please consider this post and contact me on 07970902391 if you are interested and you would like further information.

Hilary Hurley

CS Music Society
Tuesday 3rd December 2024
7:30pm
Chipping Sodbury Town Hall
BONE-AFIDE trombone
quartet



The revolutionary trombone quartet, Bone-afide, perform reimagined dance music

including highlights from Tchaikovsky's Swan lake and exhilarating new arrangements from Sam Every.

Courtesy of the Countess of Munster Musical Trust

Horton Harvest Lunch



On 27th October guests enjoyed a wonderful Harvest Lunch at Horton Village Hall. The excellent cuisine was produce by Tina and her team. The guests included members of Horton Church, Horton villagers and a contingent from St Adeline's in Little Sodbury. A great time was had by all.

Tina

Faithful Generations Event

Saturday 1 February 2025, 12:00 pm to 5:00 pm at Gloucester Cathedral

A shout out to everyone of grandparent generation and the children they love and care for in their families, churches and communities.

You are invited to bring each other to Gloucester Cathedral for a fun and creative afternoon where you can explore Christian faith and spirituality together. There will be all these activities



Activities

Gingerbread people – Icing and sprinkles galore. Recreate yourselves in gingerbread form.

Decorated Doves – How do we say thank you to God for each other? Mary and Joseph took doves to the temple what would you give?

Candle display – Decorate your candle to show how you light up the world.

Photo booth – Dress up as each other take a funny photo and upload it to the QR code.

Fridge Magnets – Create a fridge magnet and swap them as a promise to pray for each other.

Peg it! – Write or draw a prayer – who can you peg it to without them noticing? Keep on passing the prayer.

The beauty of glass – Create a beautiful window which talks about your relationship with God or a favourite Bible story.

Table talk – Take a seat, pick a card and just have a chat for a few moments

Table Talk for Toddlers – Go on a shape and colour hunt through the cloisters or a nature hunt in the garden.

The empty chair – When someone has died the love we have for them lives on, and they continue to influence our lives. Use the materials to remember someone you love but see no longer.

Sensory spaces – Throughout the cathedral are small quiet spaces and baskets/activities to explore together.

Prayer Stations – Opportunity to reflect and pray for families of all generations risking their lives to escape danger.

Uneven Song

Evening song, our prayers as the sun is setting, is a very beautiful and ageless service where choirs sing the thoughtful words of psalms and of Mary, Jesus mother and Simeon who blessed baby Jesus in the temple.

As we remember Mary and Joseph taking baby Jesus to the temple Our 'Uneven Song' will use some of this timeless tradition, but will also include dance and songs to sing together, our display of candles and doves will celebrate the peace of God and light of Christ. Bishop Rachel will invite us to join in with her as she shares her thoughts about this time of year and what it means for our lives.

Booking

It would be much appreciated if you could let us know if you are coming on the diocese web site at this address <https://gloucester.anglican.org/event/faithful-generations-event/>

Harvest Supper at St John the Baptist Church, Chipping Sodbury

On October 25th we held the first Harvest Supper for a long while: 33 of us met to share a meal in the Church Centre – we had a delicious buffet meal with a Harvest Loaf and lots of colourful and tasty food. Hot fruit crumbles for pudding, drinks served throughout the meal and plenty of chatter and appreciation for the wonderful table decorations. Everyone sounded so relaxed and brought the evening a happy atmosphere of laughter and fellowship.

Ross got us all singing, treating us to a selection of familiar songs from the mid 20th century!

The evening concluded with a rousing rendition of 'We Plough the Fields and Scatter' and I think we all felt truly thankful to God for His provision.

Thanks go to all who came to enjoy the evening and added the wonderful atmosphere, to Sue Webb and family for preparing and serving the meal, to Rev Chris for expressing our thanks to God, to Ross for singing and speaking with such fervour, for Kathryn Thompson for making the incredible table decorations from mainly hedgerow greenery and berries and afterwards decorating the church porch to continue the enjoyment of them.

As an organising team we really appreciated the help we had from friends in the church and town.

Anne, Sue and Helen.



More from A Rocha's Easy Eco Tips Calendar.

December

Celebrate a Greener Christmas. Find ways to make your Christmas festivities both a joyous celebration of Christ's coming and environmentally conscious. Explore A Rocha UK's twelve tips for a greener Christmas at:



<https://arocha.org.uk/our-twelve-tips-for-a-greener-christmas/>

Here is a small selection of those ideas:

1. Start with your advent calendar. Support overseas farmers by ensuring that your advent calendar, and any Christmas chocolate, is Fairtrade.
2. Rent a tree. Did you know that, in the UK, 6-8 million real Christmas trees go to landfill every year? With a Christmas tree rental scheme you can enjoy a real tree knowing that it will be replanted later.
3. Go for a natural wreath and decorations. Holly sprigs, ivy trails, pinecones, rose hips... Take a bag, go for a walk, and see what you can find!
4. Create homemade gifts. Baked goods for example
5. Give the gift of time. Too many unwanted gifts end up in landfill. Here's an idea. What about a gift of cooking for someone once a month for a year, taking them for a coffee, babysitting, house cleaning... or whatever.



January

Make 'enjoying nature' your priority. From bird watching to writing about or drawing something that inspires you in nature, growing your own fruit or vegetables, or exploring an area of outstanding natural beauty in the UK, be sure to fall in love with nature in a new way this coming year and allow it to lead your thoughts towards God our Creator. Further ideas can be found at

<https://arocha.org.uk/ideas-to-enjoy-nature/>

Visit <https://arocha.org.uk/wild-christian/> for more ideas.

Chris Axford - Eco Church Group

Little Sodbury Christmas Fair

Saturday 16th November saw a Christmas Fair in aid of St Adeline's, Little Sodbury held in the Horton and Little Sodbury village hall. There were fourteen Craft tables with a range of different crafts on show. There were jams and pickles, pottery and woodwork and a selection of beautiful Christmas handicrafts.

Grateful thanks to Brenda and her team of helpers who got the event set up and running and made it such a success that it raised over £700 in support of St Adeline's church.. **Michael**



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Thanks to Allen

12-16-2013

WHILE SHEPHERDS DECKED THEIR FLOCKS
BY NIGHT

Copy Deadline Please send all copy for the Feb-Mar issue to the church office by **Wednesday 15th Jan.**

Front Cover: Yate winter scene by Frank Gray

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Yate Choral Society

Conductor Graham Coatman

UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN!



A Christmas
Concert of
Carols and
Readings



Tuesday 10th December 7.30pm
Chipping Sodbury Town Hall

Tickets £12 (under 16 Free) From Chipping
Sodbury Tourist Information Centre or
01454 313907 for info & Tickets



Yate Choral Society registered
charity No 1127423

Christmas Services in our Benefice:

Chipping Sodbury, St John the Baptist:

Sunday 22nd Dec 9.30am Said Communion service (no music)
7.00pm Carol Service

Christmas Eve (Tuesday)



3.00pm Christingle
4.30pm Christingle
11.30pm First Communion of Christmas



Christmas Day (Wednesday)

9.30am Christmas Communion

Horton, St James:

Sunday 22nd Dec 11.15am Carol Service



Christmas Eve (Tuesday)

6.00pm First Communion of Christmas

Little Sodbury, St Adeline:

Friday 20th Dec 6.00pm Carol Service



Sunday 29th Dec 10.30am United Benefice Communion

Old Sodbury, St John the Baptist:

Sunday 22nd Dec 3.00pm Carol Service

Christmas Eve (Tuesday)

3.00pm Crib Service



Christmas Day (Wednesday)

11.15am Christmas Communion



The Legend of the Poinsettia

The Legend of the Poinsettia comes from the people of Mexico and dates back to the 17th century when monks began using these beautiful red flowers in their Christmas processions.

It was Christmas Eve in Mexico when many travelled to the nearest chapel to worship and lay their gifts before the Christ Child in the Nativity.

Pepita and her cousin Pedro joined their families as they travelled down the dirty road. Pepita held her head low with such a sad look on her face for she was too poor to buy a gift.

Pedro tried to encourage her saying that even the smallest gift given in love would be happily accepted by Christ.

Pepita's eyes glanced about and landed on a field of flowering weeds along the roadside. She knelt and gathered several making them into a simple bouquet.

As she looked at the flowers, her disappointment returned for they were in no way a worthy gift for anyone, much less the Son of God. A small tear fell from her cheek and landed on the dusty path leaving a dark spot behind.

As they neared the Nativity, Pepita bowed her head low and drawing courage from Pedro's words - "even the smallest gift given with love will be accepted," she stepped inside the little chapel and approached the Nativity scene.

As she knelt there, it is said a miracle took place! The scraggly petals of those weeds changed into beautiful scarlet red blooms. Pepita's face also bloomed with a smile sensing the love her Saviour had for her - a poor little girl with nothing to give but herself and her love.

From this time on the poinsettias became known as the Flores de Noche Buena - "Flowers of the Holy Night."

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Epiphany Quiet Morning

Join us for an Epiphany Quiet Morning
on Saturday 11 January 2025
as we start a new year together

We will meet at the Church Centre, Wickwar Road,
Chipping Sodbury from 10am - 12.30pm

(Bring a packed lunch)

Revd. Jane

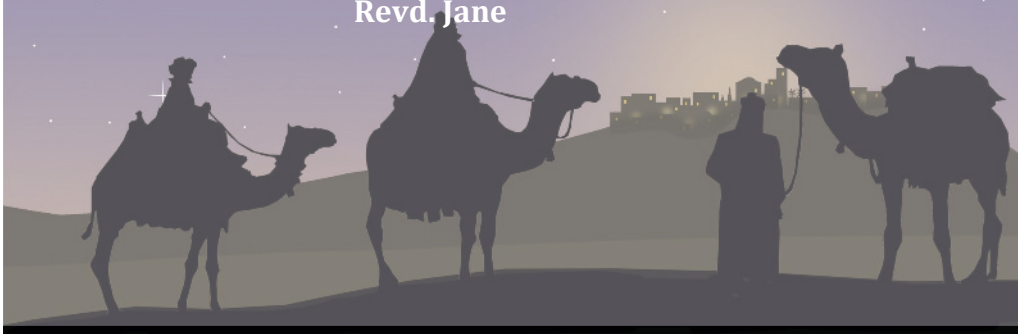


Photo by Sebastiano Iervolino Pixabay

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 informal service	Holy Communion	Morning Prayer	Evensong
2nd 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

10:00 am every Thursday

Holy Communion at St John's, Chipping Sodbury Church Centre

8:30 am Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday

Morning Prayer via Zoom. Details from Jane

10:30 am on any 5th Sunday

Holy Communion in one of the four churches

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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If you wish to know more about our Sodbury Vale churches and their activities please scan this QR code.

