



# SVB Outlook

*February - March 2026*



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

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

# Our Team



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



*“Hope is what so many of us are holding onto in this uncertain world just now.”*

*I was reminded of a line in one of Graham Kendrick’s songs. ‘There is a hope so sure, a promise so secure’.*

Dear Friends,

In my letter this time last year, I reflected on Lent and looking forward to our new hope in Jesus’ resurrection.

I also reflected on the fact that both Rev. Chris and I had been hoping to sort and clear out some of the stuff we have in our houses. While it was a hope for Lent, I think we both knew it was more than a Lenten challenge so would take longer and maybe some of you have wondered how we got on.

I can’t speak for Chris, but for me, my hope faded quickly although I remained positive knowing it would take quite a while. However, my Mum died in September and so the focus changed to dealing with her belongings. More trips to the charity shop, more things added to boxes waiting in our garage for assessment. Most of all, sorting out financial affairs and applications. Thank you all for your friendship, prayers and support since Mum died; it means a lot.

Maybe I have failed in the challenge I set myself last year, but I still have hope. Hope that at least a few of my old belongings will eventually be passed on to someone who can make good use of them at some point this year.

And hope is what so many of us are holding onto in this uncertain world just now. We naturally fear what the coming months might hold; we don’t understand what the leaders of nations are doing as we read and listen to the news.

I was reminded of a line in one of Graham Kendrick’s songs. ‘There is a hope so sure, a promise so secure’. We can be sure of our eternal hope in Jesus Christ, and God’s promises are the anchor which helps keep us upright through the storms of life.

Blessings

**Rev. Jane**

# A word from Bishop Robert

This is an extract from Bishop Roberts New Year message that remains relevant throughout the year.

St Paul, writing to the Ephesians, reminds us that in Christ we are blessed, chosen, and adopted — recipients of grace that is “lavished” upon us. This abundant grace is not something to be stored away like a precious possession. It is a gift meant to shape us, soften us, steady us, and ultimately be shared with a world longing for hope.



We are invited to live with a renewed sense of identity. Not defined by fear, pressure, or achievement, but grounded in the love of the One whose image we bear. Each encounter, each decision, each act of service becomes an opportunity to allow Christ’s light to shine through us.

The need for that light to shine has never been more pressing. John’s Gospel does not ignore the reality of darkness in our world — darkness of conflict, loneliness, injustice, or uncertainty — but it gives us a promise to hold with confidence: *“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.”*

So may a flame be kindled within us: a flame of justice, standing with the vulnerable; a flame of mercy, forgiving as we have been forgiven; a flame of peace, seeking reconciliation over resentment; a flame of hope, refusing to let darkness have the final word.

The Word has become flesh and remains. Grace is given and continues to flow.

May Christ’s light guide and sustain us in the months ahead.

+ Robert

## Lent 2026

During Lent we will be running our usual Lent Course. This year we will be doing a course called ‘Not a tame lion’ based on the works of C S Lewis. As in previous years there will be 2 opportunities to join. Both will start week commencing 23rd February. On a Monday night we will be doing a Zoom version starting at 7pm and on a Tuesday afternoon at 2pm there will be an in-person version in the Church Centre. The course will use a mixture of DVD clips and quotes so we are hoping people might be willing to invite people to their homes to watch the Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe and Shadowlands in advance of the course. More details on this to follow. **Rev. Chris**

# Ash Wednesday in our churches

## 18th February

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of our journey through Lent. It is a principal feast in the Church of England and traditionally is a time of fasting and penitence. As Easter is early this year, Ash Wednesday falls on 18th February, there will be two Holy Communion Services in our Benefice; one in Chipping Sodbury Church at 10.00am and one in Old Sodbury Church at 7.00pm.

The name Ash Wednesday comes from the practice of burning ashes made from the palm branches which were blessed on Palm Sunday the previous year. The ashes are then put on the foreheads by making the sign of the cross and saying the words "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return". Ashes were used as a sign of grief in the Old Testament and are now used as an external sign of repentance as part of this service; they are a symbolic reminder of our journey through the solemnity of Lent to the joys of Easter. We shall be offering this opportunity in our churches this year as part of the Ash Wednesday Communion service. If you would rather not be anointed with ash please do still come for communion. **Rev. Chris**

## Reverse Advent Calendar

Thank you so much to everyone who joined in with our Reverse Advent Calendar challenge in support of the Foodbank. It seems a long while ago now, as we did this in the run up to Advent during November so there was time for the Foodbank to distribute to their clients before Christmas. Ellen Wood, the Foodbank manager for North Bristol and South Gloucestershire, joined us at the Benefice service at the end of November to tell us all about the work of the Foodbank, she shared the vision, and what plans the Foodbank had to continue to help families in need. If you want to know more about their work have a look at the impact report:



[NBSGF Impact Report 2024-2025 : simplebooklet.com](https://simplebooklet.com).

We gathered so much through the Reverse Advent Calendar, a local volunteer from the Yate Foodbank came with the van on Monday to take all the donations away. He'd already loaded a lot when I remembered to take a photo! We filled the van!

**Michelle**

# SVB Strollers



October finally saw Strollers heading for Littleton upon Severn, having been rained off in September. Starting at The White Hart, we followed footpaths, a minor road and a bridleway all the way to Saint Arilda's church, Oldbury. A unique church dedicated to a little known Saint who lived near Thornbury. We enjoyed our drinks in the churchyard, on some seats giving a splendid view over the Severn. We then took a short path over fields to reach the embankment and the Severn Way. Part of our route was also

following the Jubilee Way. Turning inland a couple of fields and a bridle path, took us all the way back to the village, where lunch awaited us in the White Hart.



November saw the group travelling further afield than usual for a walk around part of the Cotswold Water Park at South Cerney. After a little difficulty finding it, we followed a section of the old Thames and Severn Canal, past the remains of locks and the toll house, shown in the photo. Arriving at the visitors' centre for a coffee stop. We continued along the canal to Cerney Wick, where we followed a track past one of the lakes used by a sailing club. The route then turned back along the disused railway line now a cycle route from Cricklade

to South Cerney. Conditions were good underfoot and a lot of the paths tree lined, with glimpses of the lakes and wildlife. A distance of just over 5.5 miles. We enjoyed lunch back in South Cerney at the Eliot Arms where we had left the cars.

Our final walk of the year was local, starting and finishing at The Dog at Old Sodbury. Conditions were damp and given there were 19 stiles it resembled something of a Grand National, but all runners made it to the end! A good work out for free! As always, a splendid lunch to reward our efforts.



Do come and join us on the third Wednesday of the month, it really is a stroll, and you would be most welcome.

**Anne Vickers**

# The Children's Society      Chipping Sodbury Music Society

January is the month that I always set aside to call on my box holders and collect their donations. I would just say that although I will not be calling this year, I would respectfully say that donations to The Children's Society can still be made online, via the donations page, or through the post.

**There is still the opportunity for someone to 'pick up the mantle' and come forward as a local secretary and continue collecting donation boxes. Just contact me for information.**

**Hilary Hurley**

**Tuesday 10th Mar. 2026 7:30 pm**

Chipping Sodbury Town Hall

**Hanna Shilvock & Viola Lenzi - Bass clarinet and Piano**



Hanna and Viola are a highly talented and passionate duo. Their joint mission is to showcase the bass clarinet as the lyrical, virtuoso solo instrument it is - promoting appreciation for the instrument with audiences around the UK and abroad.

## Children's Society Prayer:

God of Mission,

We hear of Jesus calling His first disciples, and we are reminded that Your kingdom grows through courage and trust.

We pray for children and young people facing uncertain futures, who need guidance and opportunity to flourish.

We thank You for The Children's Society, whose work empowers and advocates for those most vulnerable. May their mission continue to transform lives, bringing hope and justice where it is most needed.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

**Hilary Hurley**

# Crib Fest 25

“And there were Donkeys”....Our Crib Fest 25 was again a much enjoyed occasion for our local schools and communities near and far. In the past, we enjoyed visits from donkeys, Teasel and Pixie, until they retired some years ago, but last year the Sodbury Christmas Event Team organised a visit from two new donkeys, causing much excitement.

The big draw this year turned out to be the return of the papier-maché Angel, suspended from the Chancel Arch; quite an impressive sight, as it looked down over the display of Nativities.

We welcomed nearly 2000 visitors over the festival, who thoroughly enjoyed their time with us, discovering new and different Nativities, and enjoying delicious homemade cakes.

I must take this opportunity to publicly thank everyone who played a part in planning, organising and manning Crib Fest 25. THANK YOU

For 2026, our Crib Fest will be packed away for a rest, to make way for something that will be totally different and quite exciting. So, watch this space.

**Paul Jones-Williams**



## Did you Know?

- Dreamt is the only English word ending in “mt”.
- Only four words in English end in “dous”: (tremendous, horrendous, stupendous and hazardous).
- There are only two words in English that have all five vowels in order: abstemious and facetious.
- “Typewriter” is the longest word that can be made using letters on only one row of the keyboard.

## Copy Deadline: Mar 18

Please send all copy for the **Apr-May** issue to the Editor or the church office by this date.

## Front Cover:

Daffodils at home by  
Michael Stephenson

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# Chipping Sodbury Music Society

Tuesday 14th Apr. 2026 7:30 pm  
Chipping Sodbury Town Hall

Meliora Collective - 10 Players



Out of a love of chamber music, Meliora Collective celebrates the shared joy of music making. Founding members, Meera and Steph, dreamt up this ensemble in the midst of the pandemic, following a long-held desire to launch an ensemble of this nature.

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## Words from Bishop Rachel

As I look back on 2025, the occasions of being with children and young people are highlights. Conversation and interaction which began with the questions and views of the child or young person (for example, a child in reception or a year 12 student studying sociology), has enabled me to share something of my own encounter with Jesus Christ — to share parts of my own story as I have interacted with theirs, beginning with where they are. And I have learned so much from those children and young people.



As the season of Epiphany unfolds and we approach Lent, I pray that we might have a fresh revelation of Jesus Christ and commit ourselves to place the child at the centre, and to travel to where they 'are at', geographically and/or emotionally, mentally and spiritually. Furthermore, as we pray for children, young people, families and carers, to be caught up in the mysterious love of God and encounter with Jesus Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit, may those of us who are adults be expectant for our faith to grow as we learn from the child and young person at the centre.

With my thanks and prayers for our life together,

+ Rachel

# Christingle/Crib Services 2025

Every Christmas Eve at St John's, Chipping Sodbury, we hold two Christingle/Crib services in aid of the Children's Society.

We were delighted to welcome over 400 people, including parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, friends and young people to these services on Christmas Eve 2025. Our guests are invited to dress as Angels, Shepherds, Kings or even Mary and Joseph and take part in the telling of the Nativity, or to simply to watch the story. At the earlier service, Sophie and Sam Kemp were Mary and Joseph, while their 10-day old baby, Holly, was Jesus which raised a gasp from the congregation as she was passed into the stable to join her Mum and Dad. The shepherds watched from the nearby hill and a large throng of angels gathered, shortly followed by 3 Wise Men on their camels. At the second service, Bethany and Olly played the roles of Mary and Joseph.



The time eventually came for the distribution and lighting of the Christingles. The church lights dimmed as we sang the beautiful song 'Hope of Heaven', reflecting on Jesus' love for us. After the final song, "Unto Us a Child is Born", our guests headed out into the evening to begin their celebrations of the birth of the Christ child.

We are extremely grateful for the donations received for the crucial work of the Children's Society, which came to over £700. Thank you!

Rev. Jane



GOOD THING I FOUND YOU GIDEON ... IT SEEMS SOMEONE HAS BEEN HIDING ALL YOUR BIBLES IN HOTEL ROOMS

# Retreat Houses for Quiet Days or longer Retreats.

As part of this year's Lent Group series, we looked at the topic of "Spirituality", and I made a list of some suggestions for residential Retreat Houses that are relatively near which offer either Retreats or Quiet Days/ Mornings. These have all been used and enjoyed by either me or other members of the Benefice. After Chris Mason's helpful article on Prayer in a recent "Outlook", I thought people might like to have this information. All these places have websites.

## Retreats:

**Harnhill Centre of Christian Healing** (near Cirencester). Has a particular emphasis on healing, but you can just go on a personal retreat. Also has guided retreats and quiet days.

**Glasshampton Monastery** near Worcester. This is an Anglican Franciscan Friary staffed by a small community of brothers. Most of the time is spent in silence, but you can talk at afternoon tea! Remote rural setting, excellent theological library. The brothers welcome visitors to their regular worship services 5 times a day. I don't think they put on guided retreats, but you can book a time to talk to one of the brothers.

**Mucknall Abbey**, Worcestershire: this is an Anglican Benedictine monastery, composed of brothers and sisters, which welcomes visitors for retreats and Quiet Days. Again, they don't offer guided retreats, but it is possible to book a time to talk to a brother or sister.

**Holland House Retreat**, Cropthorne, Pershore: it is possible simply to stay or have an individually guided retreat. There are also special events. I recently stayed there for a short retreat, and enjoyed my time there very much, in beautiful surroundings.

**Stanton House Christian Retreat:** I've stayed here on several occasions, and found it very special. It's in a village just outside Oxford, and has a lovely garden. You can go for a personal stay, but there are also guided retreats throughout the year.

## Quiet Days:

**The Well Centre for Spirituality**, Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol. The Well has a running programme of events, including led Quiet Days. It is also possible to book a personal quiet day or stay overnight. It is a small but beautiful and very old house, reputed to be the oldest house in Bristol. We have a personal connection with it as a Benefice, as Colin Lunt is chair of Trustees.

**Framilode Riverside Retreats:** these take place, 10.00 am-3.00 pm, monthly on the first Wednesday of the month, in the beautiful parish church of Framilode right by the Severn (not far from Slimbridge) - a truly lovely spot. A number of us have been on (and some have taken!) these Quiet Days. The day includes a simple lunch. Highly recommended.

**Steve Abbott**

## Our Church Advent Calendar

When Rev Chris, during a service at Old Sodbury, asked for volunteers who would be happy to be filmed recounting a memory of a Christmas in their past, I willingly raised my hand. The brief was simple: a short clip 45 to 60 seconds in length, which would be filmed by either Frank Gray or Richard Hore on their smartphones. Simple though the brief was, the reality was a little different! I wrote my first draft and then timed it - far too long. The second attempt, though better, was still too long.



Eventually on the umpteenth draft I managed to reduce my story to fit the time allowed, and arranged for Richard to film it. I discovered that it was possible to have an “autocue” if wanted, to avoid going blank or too many hums and haws. I jumped at the chance and looked forward to yet another piece of wizardry from the amazing duo of technical buffs. What transpired was not quite the same as I had imagined. Just a single sheet of A4 card with my story printed on it and a small rectangular hole cut in the card before being placed in landscape mode over the camera lens on the smartphone. Would I be up for the challenge again? Yes, in a heartbeat. It was great fun to do and I really enjoyed watching the other 25 clips. What have I learnt from it? How quickly 60 seconds go by when you are enjoying yourself.

Rev Chris has asked me to thank on her behalf all those who contributed to the Advent calendar and a special mention to Frank and Richard for giving their time and expertise to make it possible.

**Lynne Watts**

## Quiet Day

Just a reminder to keep an eye open for details of our next Quiet Day, either by email, pew sheets or church notices in the coming weeks. Plans are afoot!

**Rev. Jane**



Photo by Juan Domenech - Unsplash

# The 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Tyndale Bible



This year sees the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of William Tyndale completing his translation of the New Testament into English from the original Greek and Latin, which were unreadable by most of the population including many of the clergy. The first 6000 copies were printed in Cologne in 1526, and were smuggled into England against the

wishes of King Henry the Eighth.

Bibles were hidden in barrels of flour or in containers of cloth, shipped down the Rhine and into the port of London where sympathetic dock workers would unpack and distribute them. Cuthbert Tunstall, Bishop of London, who in 1523 had refused to support Tyndale in his Bible translation, presided over the buying and burning of the majority of Tyndale's New Testament. Today there are only 2 copies in existence.

William Tyndale was born somewhere in South Gloucestershire, sometime between 1490 and 1495. The exact location and date being a matter of much discussion. He may have attended Katherine Lady Berkeley Grammar School, but definitely went to Magdalen College, Oxford where he obtained his BA degree in 1512 and his MA degree in 1515. After this he spent time teaching in Oxford and then moved to Cambridge for further learning. He was ordained a priest during his time at University. After completing his education at Cambridge he moved to Little Sodbury in 1521 as tutor to the children of Sir John Walsh, of Little Sodbury Manor. It is here he is believed to have begun his translation of the New Testament, but he had to leave in 1523 as he became a hunted man for his outspoken views and his bible ambitions. He moved to London to seek support for his Bible translation, but eventually he was forced to move to Europe to avoid Henry's enforcers.



Burning Tyndale Bibles  
By Internet Archive Book Images

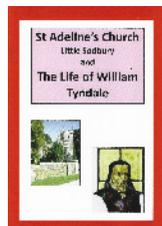
To find out more about William Tyndale and his Bible work you can visit St Adeline's church in Little Sodbury. This church is built along the lines of, and using much of the material of, the original chapel, that was behind the Manor House, and in which William would have preached and taught in his time here. You can take in the peaceful feeling of the church and, if you wish, purchase a booklet outlining some of the history of William Tyndale and his battle to bring the Bible to the ordinary citizens of this country, and how he gave his life for that task.

**Michael Stephenson**

(Do bring some cash as we don't have the means for card payment)

Tyndale's quote in debate with a learned cleric

*"I will cause the boy that driveth the plough to know more of scripture than thou dost"*



William Tyndale booklet price £3

# Easter Services

## Maundy Thursday 2 April

7.00pm Communion with hand washing and Vigil Chipping Sodbury

## Good Friday 3 April

2.00pm Service at the foot of the cross Chipping Sodbury

## Easter Saturday 4 April

7.00pm Easter Vigil Little Sodbury

## Easter Sunday 5 April

6.30am (tbc). Sunrise Service Old Sodbury

9.30am Easter Holy Communion Chipping Sodbury

11.15am Easter Holy Communion Old Sodbury

11.15am Easter Holy Communion Horton

6.00pm Easter BCP Holy Communion Little Sodbury

**This is our provisional programme of services for Easter, so please keep an eye on our website, SVB mail and the pew sheets for the latest updates.**

## 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
<b>Service Time</b>	09:30am	11:15am	11:15am	4:00pm Until Mar 29 2026
<b>1st Sunday</b>	St John's Praise Child friendly informal service	Holy Communion	Morning Prayer	Evensong
<b>2nd Sunday</b>	Holy Communion	Morning Worship	Holy Communion	Evensong
<b>3rd Sunday</b>	All-Age Communion	Holy Communion	Morning Prayer	Evensong
<b>4th Sunday</b>	Holy Communion	Morning Worship	Holy Communion	Holy Communion

### 10:00 am every Thursday

Holy Communion at the Church Centre, Wickwar Road, Chipping Sodbury

### 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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*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.***

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