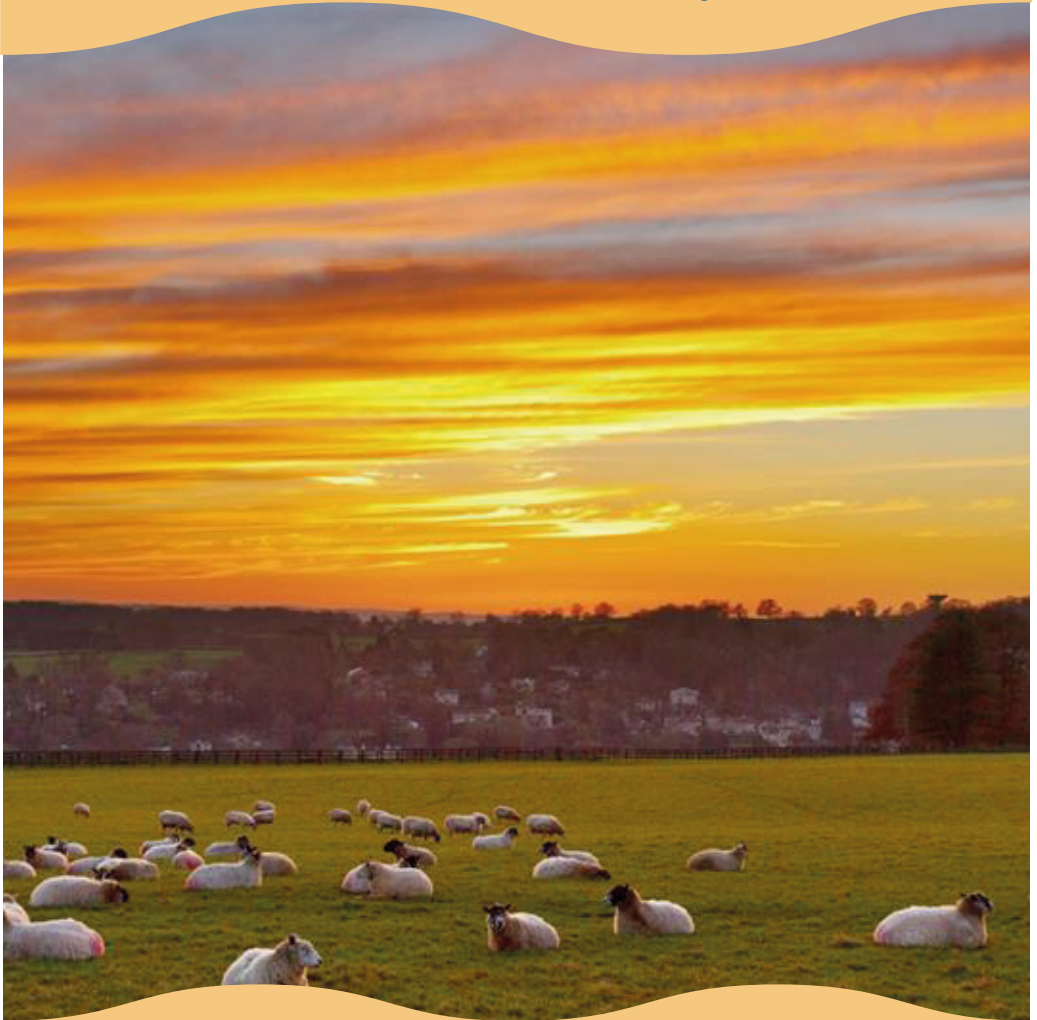




SVB Outlook

June - July 2026



The magazine of the churches of The Sodbury Vale Benefice:
Please take this free copy away with you to read at home

Chipping Sodbury, Old Sodbury,
Little Sodbury and Horton.

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



Dear Friends,

We're fortunate to have numerous groups, activities and events to get involved with in our town and villages throughout the year, depending on our interests. And now we're in Festival season. In April the Yarn Festival returned to Chipping Sodbury which saw many visitors, and as I write, we're looking forward to another two festivals which will have taken place by the time you read this edition of Outlook.

Firstly, for the second year running, Good Times, featuring many big names is being held in Chipping Sodbury. Big names, including our own Elles Bailey! Then at the end of that week, we celebrate the festival of Pentecost which happens 50 days after Easter. We remember the Holy Spirit descending on the Apostles and other believers as Jesus had promised, helping them in the mission he had set them, to spread Christianity and the message of God's love for us.

***Pentecost happens
50 days after
Easter when we
remember the
Holy Spirit
descending on the
Apostles***

Pentecost is also known as the birthday of the Church which we honour following Jesus' Ascension to heaven after Easter. Significant birthdays abound this year, many in the Benefice marking an '0', ranging from 40 to 90, and celebrated in different ways. We send our love and congratulations to all.

In the coming weeks summer teas resume in Old Sodbury and Horton. Old Sodbury Village Day, Chipping Sodbury Big Lunch and Carnival days are being planned, with Friends of Old Sodbury Church putting on a fabulous evening with an ABBA tribute band in the garden at Camers.

So many events, but something definitely not to be missed are the social events that we are currently arranging to enable all those in the Benefice to spend more time together; the first of which is a picnic plus entertainment to enjoy on Saturday 13 June. We look forward to welcoming you there.

***The first Benefice social event which is a picnic and entertainment is happening on
13th June.
Details to follow***

Rev. Jane

Sustainable Church Flowers



I first heard about sustainable church flowers when I attended a 'Gather and Create' flower course at Organic Blooms in Latteridge. I was so enthused by this course, that a group of us went back to learn how to make our church flowers more sustainable and eco-friendly.

We had an inspirational morning, it made us look at our flowers and containers in a new way. All our Easter arrangements were done with sustainability in mind and the church looked wonderful.

What are Sustainable church flowers and why do we need to change?

The Sustainable Church Flowers (SCF) movement was founded in Worcestershire in 2019. It promotes eco-friendly floristry in churches by encouraging the use of seasonal, locally sourced flowers and eliminating single-use plastics like floral foam. It advocates natural, biodegradable arrangements to respect creation and reduce environmental impact.

The General Synod backed a motion from the Worcester Diocese encouraging churches and cathedrals to explore ways of arranging flowers that are both beautiful and environmentally responsible.

The motion does not introduce any rules or bans. Instead, it encourages churches, wherever possible, to consider using seasonal, locally sourced flowers/foilage, and to phase out single-use floral foam - a 1950s-era plastic product which cannot be recycled or composted, sheds micro-particles when handled which makes its way into the rivers and seas, and contains the equivalent of up to ten carrier bags' worth of plastic per block. The Royal Horticultural Society has already prohibited floral foam at its shows (including Chelsea) since 2021.

All of the arrangements at the King's coronation were done sustainably.

The motion highlights long-established alternatives such as reusable vessels, twigs, moss, chicken wire, and metal "frogs", which for centuries enabled churches to create arrangements without single-use plastics. It also celebrates the creativity of volunteers and the opportunity to support local growers and community gardens.



The carbon footprint of the cut flower industry is much bigger than food, so here are a few things we can do to help:

1. Use seasonal blooms

Locally sourced flowers reduce your carbon footprint and can stay fresher longer.

Flowers are grown all around the world and in many countries. It isn't always an ethical trade. Many people who work in the trade are exploited and exposed to chemicals, local water resources can be affected. The cheap bunch of flowers in the supermarket may have been created at the expense of the environment and people.



2. Avoid use of oasis

Choose biodegradable options like moss, chicken wire, reusable vases or interesting vessels.

3. Eco-friendly wrapping



Use brown paper, kraft paper, garden twine, string or other recyclable materials when wrapping flowers

Flowers bring the colour and beauty of creation into our churches, they are part of our worship reminding us of our great Creator God. We decorate our churches to celebrate festivals, births and marriages, as well as our weekly worship. They bring joy to our hearts and a smile to our faces.

We are being encouraged to continue this long tradition by using flowers and foliage around us and using our God-given creativity to display their

beauty in new ways.

Our flower arrangers have always produced beautiful arrangements for our church festivals and now it is exciting to see how even more creative we can be within the sustainable flowers criteria.

If you would like to explore new techniques, ideas, and resources, there are lots of websites including the 'Sustainable Church Flowers' website which provides a wealth of information. Flower arranging is a joyful and relaxing thing to do and anyone can do it.



Karen Hunter

Sunday Teas
 Old Sodbury church
 Postcode: BS37 6NB
 W3W///: tape.organs.pilots

2.30pm - 4.30pm
 from 24th May until
 the end of August
 (including Bank Holidays)

Horton Afternoon Teas

Horton Church will be serving afternoon teas from:

6th June to 1st Aug.

Noon to 4:15pm

(With a break on 27th June and 4th July)



Photo by Haley Parson - Unsplash

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My Favourite Hymn

This is the first in what will hopefully become a series of people talking about their favourite hymn and why. It might be that it invokes a memory of a time or place, it may remind you of a person or an occasion; the words or the music may be the catalyst for something: whatever makes the hymn special for you we would like to know it. Don't worry if you don't think you have the skills to write the piece, if you are happy to chat about it we can arrange the writing!

My favourite hymn is:

'Be Still, for the Presence of the Lord'.

Since I first heard this hymn in 1986, it has always been a favourite, but it came to mean much more as I have had to learn to be still and not always busy.

This is the hymn that I repeated in hospital when the words, especially of the third verse, brought comfort when family and friends couldn't be there; the reminder that God was still with me.

*'Be still for the power of the Lord. Is moving in this place,
He comes to cleanse and heal. To minister His grace
No work too hard for Him. In faith receive from Him
Be still for the power of the Lord, Is moving in this place.'*

It's not just a hymn for the sick though; I often find myself thinking of the words when looking at a beautiful object or walking in the countryside that wherever I may be, whatever I am doing, the Lord is with me if I just stop and listen for Him.

The picture is me on our recent holiday to Lithuania. We took a day trip from Vilnius to Trakai by train. The lake surrounded by forest, a beautiful place where it is easy to be still.

So that's my favourite. I'd now really like to know what yours is and why. If we have enough contributors, we could have a special service to sing all our favourites! Let Michael, the Outlook editor, me in the office or Frank know if you have a hymn you'd like to tell us about.



Michelle

Celebrating Mothers' Union 150th Anniversary this Year

In 1876 Mary Sumner, the wife of a vicar in Hampshire started what was to become Mothers' Union. Mary felt women from all social levels should be able to meet together to support each other in raising their families, recognising the importance of the role of motherhood. She grew from a shy person to being an inspirational speaker and the movement took off after she addressed a meeting of women at the Portsmouth Church Congress in 1885.

Nowadays, MU membership is not limited to only mothers or even women: Branches have both married and single, women and men. It's an international movement with 4 million members in 84 countries, working with people of all faiths and none, transforming lives, strengthening families and communities and advocating for meaningful change.

In this country our membership is largely elderly, though there are still plenty of active members working in their chosen areas, be it prison work, school governors, listening to children read in school, knitting for premature babies, sewing bags for young people coming out of care or whatever the local need is. Recently I learned that AFIA ('Away From it All' holiday provision) which runs on a Diocesan basis and is a national project, has been going for 60 years. In our Diocese we have just welcomed a new, volunteer AFIA coordinator.

In our Branch we have 24 members and 2 indoor members (not able to come to meetings). As a newcomer to MU, I think we are blessed to have experienced, long standing members: many have belonged to the group for over 40 years, are still active in supporting their clergy and community, keen to be involved and informed about MU work and exceptionally supportive of each other. Our celebrations of the 150th anniversary include an afternoon of marking the length of membership of many of our group with a presentation of certificates by our Diocesan President and looking forward to the future work of Mothers' Union. Our group meets in the afternoon but I would love to see an evening group start to accommodate younger, working members. The strength and support of each other is invaluable especially when we can pray for each other and share fellowship in both the good and the harder times.

Do come to talk to me if you are interested in joining Mothers' Union or if you would like to join us for our celebration afternoon on June 8th.

Helen Hope-Bell

Copy Deadline: July 17

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

Front Cover:

A pleasant Evening by
Points West

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Baptism of Holly Sylvia Kemp

On Sunday 12th April, St John's Church saw the baptism of Holly Sylvia Kemp. It was a carefully thought out, interactive and personal service led by Rev Catherine Coster. Myself and my husband Sam, joined by our families and friends, witnessed our youngest daughter, sister to Daisie and Poppy, be welcomed into the Church family. We chose my sister Jenna and her husband Luke to be Holly's godparents. As a family, we are very close and know Jenna and Luke will guide Holly through her Christian journey. We are very grateful to Catherine, who planned and executed a wonderful service, albeit precarious in places as the children of the congregation were permitted to light and carry their tealight candles they had decorated! Catherine is a special lady in our lives; I first met her at StorKies toddler group when Daisie was a toddler. I was amazed at how much passion and endurance she had running the group alongside everything else she does in her very busy life (I've seen her diary)!



Holly was a very good girl during her special service, smiling throughout and no cry was heard as the water was poured over her head. It was so special to witness the children's faces light up as they gathered round the font to watch this happen, some dipping their fingers into the water too, and to hear the congratulations and good wishes from the congregation; we

feel very blessed to know such kind people. We appreciate everyone who helped make the service happen, and who work hard every week to ensure services are co-ordinated as well as they are. Holly, and our two other girls, have a great support network in their Church family which feels comforting.

Following the service, we headed to Chipping Sodbury golf club for tea and coffee, bacon and sausage rolls. We received great hospitality there and thoroughly recommend it as a space for celebrating occasions.

Overall, it was a fantastic day with memories we will treasure for a lifetime.

Sophie Kemp

Katia's visit

We feel truly blessed to serve the worldwide church! It brings us such joy to pray for them, support them financially whenever we can, and welcome them to visit us for fellowship. It is heartwarming to hear about the incredible ways God is working through their ministries.

This summer, we welcome CMS missionary Katia Rocks, a wonderful Brazilian national from Florianopolis, who will be visiting the UK to connect with her supporting churches. We're honoured to be hosting Katia for a few days right at the start of her visit. In July, her family will join her—her two delightful teens, Joanna and Davi, along with their dad, Jimmy Rocks, after school breaks up.

Katia has graciously chosen to begin her UK visits with us (she has a busy schedule visiting 23 churches in total!). She warmly invites everyone to an informal, open-to-all bring-and-share lunch at the home of Frank and Hennie Gray on Saturday 20th June (12.30pm). Then, on Sunday 21st June, Katia will join us at our 9.30am Church Service at St John the Baptist, Chipping Sodbury.

About ten years ago Katia and Jimmy planted the Vineyard Church in Florianopolis. It has grown so extensively that they recently moved to larger premises. Katia's heart for ministry shines through her involvement in a women's prison ministry and her outreach to women through church connections.

We warmly invite you to come and meet Katia, to hear more about her inspiring ministry and to celebrate her remarkable journey of health. Having recently navigated a series of cancer treatment and recovered, she is, by God's grace, thriving and full of life.

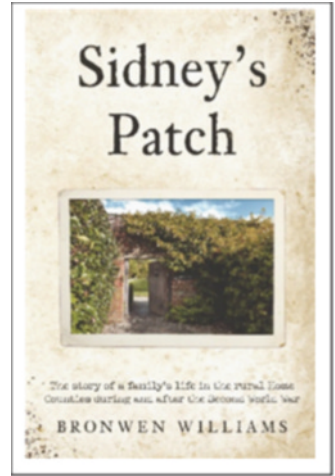
Tania Manners



First Novel is Published

It was a relief to see my novel, which was many years in the making, published this year. *Sidney's Patch* was launched in April at an event held in the Church Centre and attended by a few friends and family members. The book is set in the Home Counties during the Second World War and follows the life of Sidney Palmer who lives with his parents and doting grandmother. As an only child he learns to amuse himself at Kirkstone Grange where his father is the head gardener and life is comfortable for the family and the community until 1939 when Britain declares war on Germany. The novel is not about the war, but rather a character-driven story focusing on relationships which depict the ups and downs during this turbulent period. Published as Britain marks more than 80 years since the end of WW2, I've dedicated *Sidney's Patch* to all those who served in the armed forces to defend our island and the many civilians who were engaged in essential work to keep Britain going throughout the conflict.

There are a few signed copies of *Sidney's Patch* available from the Tourist Information Centre in Chipping Sodbury. Copies are also available through online retailers. (RRP £9.99).



I will be book-signing between
10:00 am and 12 noon
at the Coffee Morning on
Saturday June 6th
in the Church Centre

and all proceeds from the sales
at this event will be donated to
St John's Church, Chipping
Sodbury.

Bronwen Williams

Photographs Wanted

I am always looking for photographs for the magazine and particularly for the front cover. Have you got any pictures that you feel would enhance the front cover of our magazine, or when you are out and about can you take photos that you think would enhance the magazine? If so please send them to the editor at m.stephenson111@gmail.com or to Michelle in the Church Office sodburyvalebenefice@gmail.com,

Here are some of the previous cover pictures and a potential future one:



Michael

Chipping Sodbury Yarn Festival

Many thanks to everyone who helped out with the Book sale and refreshments during the weekend of the Chipping Sodbury Yarn Festival.

The festival was a great success with Chipping Sodbury being packed with people from all over enjoying all the wool related exhibitions, demonstrations and sales. The church was buzzing with people enjoying refreshments and a chance to sit down.

We raised well over £1000 on refreshments with the raffle and book sale doing really well too. Thanks again to everyone who helped out over the weekend.

Michelle

SVB Outlook – Worshipping from Home

Ten years ago (even less) we would have thought it impossible to join a worship service in our homes. But Covid changed all that. 'Zoom' became a lifesaver as fifty or more of us met regularly week after week via the Internet – for both Sunday and mid-week services. We even had fellowship chats after the service and a good supply of quality hymns courtesy of BBC Songs of Praise, St Martin's in the Fields, and other providers.

Once Covid was over many were hooked. They did not want to give up on their new Zoom experience, and we sought ways of extending this new medium for other meetings.

Today, with minimal equipment, we can live stream our 9.30am service via both Zoom and YouTube. Zoom has the advantage of being live and immediate, and the benefit of being able to see the faces of those who have also joined. The downside is that once it has gone, it has gone. This is where the YouTube feed provides a useful alternative. It has the advantage of being watchable either live or at any time afterwards. But it is an individual experience. You cannot see others who also watch.

Thank you for watching...

We invite you to contact us:

- ▶ Website: <https://svbcafe.org.uk>
- ▶ E-mail: admin@svbcafe.org.uk
- ▶ Address: St John's Church Centre, Wickwar Rd, Chipping Sodbury, BS37 6BQ

Our CCLI Streaming Plus Licence Number is: 137829



We don't get a lot of Zoom participants, but those who do join, around 6-10 each week, value it greatly. This is especially true of the Morning Prayers – from Tuesday to Thursday each week. Far more join Morning Prayers via Zoom at 8.30 am than would join in weekday prayers at the Church. Participants join whatever their circumstances and wherever they

are; from home, before starting work, and even while on holiday, both in the UK and abroad.

Around twenty-five view the YouTube stream each week, the link for which is shared with the wider community via SVB Mail. There is now a growing library of streamed services from the past that can be viewed any time.

Zoom meetings are also held in the evenings – for the Old Sodbury Together Group, and for prayer meetings. This option is especially valuable during the winter months.

Thanks to some creative technical wizardry we now can also live stream Benefice services from Old Sodbury, but unfortunately connections to the Internet are not yet available in either Horton or Little Sodbury churches.

Richard and I feel privileged to be able to take our worship to people during times of failing health, even up to the last Sunday before they pass on to be with the Lord. It is also one way of staying connected when away from home – almost anywhere in the world. But no matter where, we attempt to provide a feed for Sunday Worship that enables the viewer to feel they are participants in services as they happen, just where they are – an almost surreal experience.

Information on how to log-in to our SVB streams is sent out each week via SVBMail which we encourage you to sign up for. Send email to admin@svbcofe.org.uk for details. Our YouTube library can also be found at: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMtGPVxGLhAs5FGTHL08p8w> or use the QR code displayed here:



Frank Gray

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 Until Oct 25 2026
1st Sunday	St John's Praise Child friendly 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 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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Rev. Canon Rob Axford
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Rev. Christine Axford
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Rev. Colin Lunt
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Rev. Canon Catherine Coster
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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.***

For more information scan this code

