

Thursday 23 November 2023

Dear Friends,

As I grow a little older the radio is becoming far more appealing than the TV, and with apps which allow me to listen to programmes at times which suit and in places where the company of other voices is appreciated and I can use my imagination to enliven a walk or a car journey, I love the flexibility. This week I have been especially moved by the conversation between the Dimpleby brothers, Nick and Jonathan, who have been sensitively sharing their journey through the dark days of Nick's recent Motor Neurone Disease diagnosis (The Bright Side of Life, Radio 4). I admit to shedding a few tears as I listened to their heartbreaking account of living with this incurable and fatal disease, and to being deeply affected by the honesty and rawness of the pain expressed. For Nick there is little comfort as the disease slowly robs him of all his faculties, including his artistic ability to express life through sculpting and creating beautiful things. But he is surrounded by a loving and supportive family, and he finds much solace in his home, his garden and his attention demanding kitten. During his conversation with his brother, belief in life after death wasn't really touched upon, but the reality of Nick's situation and the unbearable truth of the disease's progress, prompted questions about end of life decisions which no one ever wants to have to contemplate. I found the programme profoundly moving just for its sheer honesty and refusal to avoid asking the painful questions, for which there is often no easy answer.

The other radio programme which has given me plenty of pause for thought this week has been The Archers, that longest running Radio 4 saga set in the fictional farming community of Ambridge. The stories weave around the everyday exploits and dramas of local people struggling with life's dilemmas, traumas and difficulties. And this last week has been more dramatic than usual with the ending of the dastardly Rob Titchener's life, a character who has caused so much pain and trauma to others – The Archers has never been afraid to grasp the nettle and in a story line centred around domestic abuse it has shone a light on the devastation and damage which is so often hidden away from view and therefore away from any hope of finding help and support. Last night's episode was especially enlightening, and full of hope as an unexpected and sensitive conversation took place between two people suddenly finding that they had a shared understanding of the deep psychological pain suffered at the hands of another. There is finally a glimmer of light at the end of a long dark tunnel for Rob's wife Helen, along with the very real hope of healing and peace and a brighter, more joy-filled future. Fiction it may be, but the emotional roller-coaster of life in Ambridge holds up a mirror to the world and our own seen and unseen lives. And that's before we explore the Vicar's current story line!

Of course it's not only radio where life's mysteries are explored through story and conversation. This Saturday Dr Who returns to our TV screens, and I can't wait, especially as Russell T Davies is back in the story-writing driving seat, and David Tennant returns as the man himself. I'm old enough to remember William Hartnell who played the first Dr Who, and of sitting on the sofa with my Gran on Saturday evenings, both of us hiding behind a cushion as the terrifying daleks took their revenge and exterminated everything in sight. Of course, the reason I love Dr Who so much is that it's the story of redemption. Sylvester McCoy who played the Dr between 1987-89, put it very nicely when he was asked recently why the show is so beloved and has lasted for 60 years: "this is the story of someone coming down to earth, who takes on human form, and tries to do good and help out. And it's kind of a lonely figure, full of love for humanity." I think the reason why Dr Who is so loved and has lasted so long is that we recognise in the central figure something of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and the deep truth of the Divine life hidden within ours, a mystery which touches our hearts and makes them beat a little faster. We long for love and kindness and hope and redemption to come down and bring healing to our lives and to those we love who are suffering. We long to believe that we are not alone, that there is a power higher than our own power, which can lift us up out of the sorry stories the world tells, and shows us that human beings can be better, that we can do better, and that we can survive and overcome even the most fearful situations when love is at the helm. The stories are full of hope, of redemption, of finding that true power comes from humility and love, of knowing that the One who comes from above comes with deep healing in his wings, and that the past, present and future is held firmly in His hands. The great Dr's companions learn to trust his rather mysterious ways, and despite their frequent mistakes and ability to let him down, they are empowered through their love for him to be the best they can be, and eventually they take on his mantle and share his burden and learn from him. And their lives are changed for ever. Sounds familiar!

This weekend as we celebrate the feast of Christ the King, I pray that we will experience the healing, redemptive love of God and that the world will come under his just and gentle rule and become a place where stories of hope and healing are shared, and joy is found, even in the darkest and scariest of places.

With prayers and blessings from the clergy team,

Anne, Charlie, Joe and Wilma

This week the letter has been written by Revd Anne Crawford

Please pray for:

...**Fr. Jamil Khadir and the Anglican congregations in Nablus** in the West Bank; for the peace of Jerusalem, and for an end to conflict

...**Christ Church**, the Anglican Church in Kyiv, and the people of Ukraine

...**Christ's School**, staff and students, and other schools in the parish

... **Richmond Soup Kitchen** and all guests and volunteers

...**the sick and those in need** – Gill Doling, Liz Velluet, Marc Cranfield-Adams, Mark and Susie Cox, Hermione Lockyer

...**the departed, may they rest in peace**, including David Fry, Evelyn Hussey and Creighton Muscato

Please note that the **Prayer List is renewed at the beginning of each month.**

If you would like your own name added, simply [email the parish office](#).

If you would like to add someone's name, please ensure you have their agreement, if at all possible.

Church, Community and other news:

We are now **sending out this e-Newsletter from an Outlook circulation list** (as opposed to MailChimp) because we're hoping that it will arrive in more people's Inbox rather than going into junk! If you'd like to Unsubscribe you'll find a link at the bottom of the email; If this newsletter has been forwarded to you (and you've not been sent it directly) or you've read it on our website and you would like to Subscribe, [please click here](#).

Team Service 26 November Christ the King, 10.30am St Mary Magdalene

See notice further in the newsletter – we just want to make sure you know when and where everyone will be on the morning of Sunday 26 November!

Upcoming meetings within RTM

Monday 27 November: Property and Finance Committee

NEW: Eaglets @ St John the Divine – a message from Emma, Children and Young People Ministry Leader

This week we explored the farm with mud and all. It was fabulous!! There were lots of laughs along the way. Next week, we explore the Beach.

We love that each Eaglets session allows us to share a story together and sing some silly songs. If anyone has any children's books, they would be willing to lend or donate to us for our Eaglets sessions, that would be really helpful. Please try and catch me either on a Sunday or drop them off to the Parish office. We would ask these to be secular in content, but it would be important to have Christian themes, such as kindness and sharing.

A big, big thank you to my lovely team of volunteers! I can confirm that we have enough volunteers for the 28th to go ahead, but it would be lovely to have a whole team of volunteers so that we don't end up in a similar position as last week.

If anyone is able to give some time on that day, please contact me. (cypml@richmondteamministry.org)

It's (almost) the most wonderful time of the year ... time for Las Posadas!

It's nearly time for the Travelling Crib to set off on its travels again. If you would like to be involved in hosting the crib for one evening, please email me at cypml@richmondteamministry.org or send me a text on 07712481372. Please also send me an email if you would like more details.

WhatsApp Group for Church Families

We're setting up a WhatsApp group for all the families in each church. If you are a family and come to any of the churches and would like to be added to these chats, please send an email to cypml@richmondteamministry.org with your phone number and I will add you.

Richmond Soup Kitchen update

Many, many thanks to everyone at our churches who has responded to our plea for help with the Richmond Soup Kitchen. There was already a queue when the RSK opened up for its third season on 1 November, and despite miserable rain the volunteers were kept busy both nights offering a warm meal and a friendly ear to some of the most vulnerable people in Richmond.

So many of you have offered to bake or make soup and we are truly grateful. This service cannot run without volunteers.

It also needs funding, and it is wonderful that donations of more than £2,200 have been received in the past few weeks. This is over half of the target we set on our first attempt with JustGiving. Thank you.

If you know anyone who would like to make a donation they can be made at our JustGiving page <https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/richmondsoupkitchen>.

If you would like to know more about volunteering please do get in touch

at richmondsoupkitchen@gmail.com or take a look at www.richmondsoupkitchen.org. We can always use your talents!

Ways you can help:

- Baking or making soup at home
- Shopping for ingredients (RSK pays)
- Cooking or serving on-site
- Helping with fundraising
- Donations

Christ the King, 26 November – Team service at St Mary Magdalene at 10.30am

All are invited as we end the liturgical year together with the Feast of Christ who is our King. There will be a joint choir that morning.

NB: no 9.30am service at St Matthias or St Mary's that day, nor 11am service at St John the Divine.

Over Coffee:

Join us after the Joint Service at St Marys on 26th November when we host Cllr Julia Neden-Watts who will be with us for coffee. Julia is deputy leader of the council as well as Chair of the Environment, Sustainability, Culture and Sports Committee. This is the committee responsible for services that relate to the Borough's physical environment such as planning policy, parks and sports services. The Committee is also responsible for areas such as arts, culture, waste and recycling, registration services and consumer protection. As part of our commitment to being an EcoChurch we are keen to engage with Julia as a representative of the borough so see what ideas she might have and how we might work together to look after God's planet.

Book swap table:

There will be a book table, on 25 and 26 November. Just bring any books (good quality appearance and content) and swap for other books. No money needed! If you have a favourite book you wish to swap, why not include a little note explaining why you enjoyed it.

Understanding Islam

Dr Chris Hewer is returning to do a week of courses this month. Below is the program for the week.

Friday 24th November 10am to 4pm: "Talking about Christianity with Muslim Friends" at St Anne's Church Hall Kew. It would help to know numbers.

Saturday 25th November, 10am to 4pm: A study day "Women in the life of the Prophet". The Parish Rooms, 6 Church Walk, Richmond TW9 1SN.

All the courses are free but donations are welcome to help cover costs. Refreshments will be available during the day but participants are asked to bring their own lunch. For further information please contact me at 07804 866349 or dianamills31@gmail.com

News from Charlie

I am now heading off to King's College Cambridge for a week's placement, 19-26th November. I will think of you all as you celebrate Christ the King together at the Team Service!

Reflective Art Group

Are you interested in reflecting on your life in creative ways? Charlie is considering starting a monthly art and reflection group and would like to hear from anyone who would be interested in coming along. The group would offer an hour and a half, or so, of space and quiet to create art on a particular theme or prompt.

Themes might include: hope, embodiment, worship, water.

Get in touch with Charlie if this is something which you might be interested in:

charlie.middleton@richmondteamministry.org , 07746695637.

UPDATED: Advent 2023

- Advent Procession, 3 December 6.30pm: a service of music and readings for Advent @ St Mary Magdalene
- If you are considering a book for Advent, with daily reflections, may we suggest to you 'Stick with love' by Arun Arora? It is the Archbishop of York's Advent Book 2023 and comes highly recommended. There is even a chapter on someone you may know! The book is published by SPCK and can be purchased from Open Book in Richmond or other retailers.
- Revd Anne Crawford will once again prepare a virtual Advent calendar, which drops into your email inbox each morning during Advent. Each email will contain an image and a reflection. If you would like to receive the daily email, please sign up by letting Anne know:
anne.crawford@richmondteamministry.org
If you received the virtual Advent calendar last year, you will already have received an email from Anne.
- The Team clergy are offering you three meditations on Advent art via Zoom, on Wednesday 6, 13 and 20 December, 8pm – 8.45pm. After each meditation we will say Compline together.
Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81635450169?pwd=M0JJZE9tbHcrcWI2bUFYSk5vZHA3dz09>
Meeting ID: 816 3545 0169
Passcode: Advent
- Blue Christmas, 11 December, 7pm at St John the Divine. Not everyone finds this time of year easy. It may be because of grief or loss, because life is difficult, because of challenging relationships. If you recognise yourself here, then this service is for you. Nothing will be expected, just come as you are.
- RTM Christmas invitations are being printed at the moment and will be ready for bundling into streets and for distribution from 25 November. If you can deliver cards to a road in the Parish, please collect cards from your church. GoodGym Richmond will also help deliver some of the cards.

Green Tips Newsletter

Have you seen our quarterly GreenTips newsletter? The first edition can be found here -

<https://richmondteamministry.org/uncategorized/greentips/>

Recitals at St Mary Magdalene

2 December 2.30pm, Honourable Artillery Company Band

Music for Christmas, with Carol singing. Christmas jumpers optional! Bring everyone – this is a wonderful, joyful yearly event.

9 Dec 12.30pm, Rachel Smith, flute and Emilie Capulet, piano

Flute-ful Renditions: Breathing new life into traditional folk tunes

Next Children's Service at St Mary Magdalene – 2 Dec at 4pm

Advent is about waiting and preparing. Will you come and help?

Job Opportunity

The role of PA to the Archdeacons of Wandsworth and Lambeth is being advertised on Pathways -

<https://pathways.churchofengland.org/job/pathways/4821/pa-to-the-archdeacons-kingston>

The closing date is midnight on 3 December 2023.

Planned Giving

Last year we introduced the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS). Many thanks to those of you have joined the scheme. If you are still making regular donations by standing order, envelope or GiveALittle, please do switch to PGS if you are able to. This will help us enormously by reducing the amount of administration and

significantly improving our cashflow. If you have any questions, please [contact Jackie Harrison](#) or 07747 111525.

Church Services:

St John the Divine's Sunday service at 11.00am is both in-person and live-streamed via their [Facebook page](#). St John's midweek service takes place on Tuesday evenings with half an hour of quiet contemplation focused on the Blessed Sacrament at 6.30pm, followed by the Said Eucharist at 7.00pm.

St Mary Magdalene's Sunday services are at 8.00am, 9.30am, 11.30am (third Sunday only) and 6.30pm. Our 9.30am service will be live-streamed on [Facebook](#), for a little while longer. **Thank you to all those who have signed up as subscribers to [St Mary Magdalene YouTube channel](#). We will be moving over to YouTube On Advent Sunday, 3 December.**

There is a Said Eucharist at 10.00am every Wednesday, followed by coffee.

St Matthias' 9.30am Sunday service is an in-person service. The midweek Eucharist at St Matthias is held on Thursdays at 10.00am and is followed by coffee and biscuits. Everyone is very welcome to join us.

Orders of service / readings for all three churches can be found on the News page of our website – here: <https://richmondteamministry.org/news/>

Private Prayer:

St Mary Magdalene is normally open on Saturdays between 10.00am and 12.00noon, when you can light a candle and reflect or meditate.

The church is also open Monday – Friday, from 8.00am until 3.00pm.

Morning Prayer, Monday – Fridays, at 8.30am:

Morning Prayer takes place in church and on Zoom. We meet at St Mary Magdalene on Mondays, at St John the Divine on Tuesdays, at St Mary Magdalene on Wednesdays and Thursdays, and at St Matthias on Fridays.

On Zoom, Monday – Thursday

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88554825313?pwd=cVVLdFkrUy95MFU4OTVld3hNNi9tUT09>

Meeting ID: 885 5482 5313

Passcode: 410548

and on Fridays

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81983343470?pwd=ejVpVnB4d3VGdkFtWjl2c2tTOC9XUT09>

Meeting ID: 819 8334 3470

Passcode: FriPrayer

With best wishes,

John

Parish Administrator

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020 8940 0362

Richmond Team Ministry

St Mary Magdalene • St Matthias • St John the Divine

www.richmondteamministry.org

Registered Charity No 1130018

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