

Thursday 19 December 2024

Dear Friends,

So here we are. Almost Christmas.
Many of us have spent the last few weeks getting ready.
Trees bought and decorated.
Gifts bought and wrapped. Or not?
Festive parties. Family gatherings.
Cards and letters sent far and wide.
Orders of service printed.
And here we are. Nearly there.
Together we sing the familiar carols.
We may light and hold our candles.
We retell that age old story.
Silent Night. Holy Night.

All beautiful. But I can't help but think...

For all our preparation and for all the beauty around us I wonder if there is something more.
Something we miss in all of our planning and preparation.

All of our decorations and gift giving. So much of what we spend time and energy and money on
seems to have little to do with that simple, provocative, age old story we read together each year.
A story so familiar we know it off by heart.

Gentle Mary. Stoic Joseph.

Shepherds in the fields abiding.

Angels from the realms of glory.

A story so layered over by tradition and Christmas card images and softened by the glow of
candles that the meaning and the challenge the story presents gets lost in the pageantry of our
celebrations.

Caesar Augustus. Roman Emperor. Self proclaimed Son of God on one side.

Jesus. Born in Bethlehem. Laid in a manger. Gospel proclaimed Son of God on the other side.

King Herod in his palace and on his throne in Jerusalem.

Or, Mary and Joseph making their way from Nazareth to Bethlehem.

The Roman legions who patrol the countryside and streets to impose their peace.

Or, the heavenly hosts with their proclamation of *Peace on Earth. God's good will to all.*

As we hear the story we are left to ask ourselves and then to decide.

Which side of the story will we choose as our own to guide and direct the way we live?

And, because the Bible is never just about then, but also about now.

And, never just about them, but also about you and me.

And because there is more to Christmas than Father Christmas and reindeer.

What does all this mean for us today? What does all this mean for you today?

With the world as it is? With your life as it is?

If there is something in this story about *Peace on Earth* which weaves itself around some deep
longing within you, how is it you are going to get ready for that kind of Christmas?

If there is something in this story about everyone having a place and not just the rich and the
powerful and something in the story which brings into focus how you imagine life and the world
might be. Should be. How is it you are going to get ready for that kind of Christmas?

If there is something in this story about *God with us* which rings true; which tugs at your spirit.

God with us. Not God over us.

Not God judging us. Not God condemning us.

God with us in this wonderful, complex, sorrowful, joyful thing we call life.

God with you and me. God with us and them.

God here. God now.

Just as you are. Just as we are. Just as they are.

So, if there is something about this story...

Something about Christmas which is about more than trees and gifts and carols and cards.

Then what are we doing to get ready for that kind of Christmas?

With love and prayers this Christmas,

Anne, Charlie and Joe

This letter was written by The Revd Joe Moore

Please pray for:

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

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

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

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

... **the sick and those in need** - Gill Doling, Liz Velluet, Marc Cranfield-Adams, Barbara Adamson

... **the departed, may they rest in peace** - Alfred Davies, Terence Abel

*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:

Christmas 2024 Opening Hours

Please note the parish office will be closed from Tuesday 24 December, re-opening on Thursday 2 January. There will be no newsletter for the next two weeks.

Our churches will be closed 26, 27, 28, 30 & 31 December and 1 January. There will also be no morning prayer on these days.

SMM Wednesday Eucharist

There will be no Eucharist on Wednesday 1 January, as it is a Bank Holiday, and the churches will be closed.

Wednesday Eucharist will return, 8 January, 10am.

Worship at St John's

Please note that the Eucharist on Christmas Day at St John's is at 10:30am (30mins earlier than the usual Sunday Eucharist time).

There will be no Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Eucharist on Tuesday 31st December.

Team Talk

The latest edition of Team Talk is now available at the back of church or [online by clicking here](#).

Richmond Soup Kitchen MORE SOCKS NEEDED

Our first month of opening has seen some chilly weather and busy nights, on average we are seeing 25-30 guests each evening. All are welcomed with a friendly smile and a warm meal.

As we prepare to open on Christmas Day and Boxing Day this year we are asking for donations of socks to share as a gift- new and in packaging, unwrapped so we can make sure everyone gets the right size. Thank you so much to everyone who has already bought some socks, but WE NEED

MORE. We are told that there is a good deal on at Mountain Warehouse but there are lots in all the shops. There is a box at the back of St Mary's. Thank you in advance!

We have had some lovely partnerships from the local community including pumpkins from Kew Gardens, packaging from Richmond rotary, a delicious curry donation from tangawizi and another year of the hot drink partnership with the orange tree theatre. You can find out all about these on our social media pages here

Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61565925222846>

Instagram - <https://www.instagram.com/richmondsoupkitchen/>

We've seen our food bills almost double this year as need is higher than ever. If you're in a position to support us financially you can do that here

<https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/richmondsoupkitch>

Thank you all for your ongoing support and prayers, it's means the world to us. As always if you have any questions or are interested in volunteering you can email me

at richmondsoupkitchen@gmail.com

Isabelle & RSK team

Repairs Update at St Mary Magdalene

Good news! The Chancellor at the Diocese has given the go-ahead for the repairs to be carried out to the damaged beam in the Nave at St Mary's. We still need approval from Richmond Council and Heritage England which may mean that work will have to start after Christmas. Perhaps that is not a bad thing with so many services coming up. The Chancellor adds

"Finally I would like to send my greeting to the churchwardens and congregation. Some serious structural failure to their church building is what every parish dreads. I am sure that they will be able to take the problem in their stride and that soon the building will be witnessing once again to the good news of Christmas. Perhaps some of the Christmas visitors might even be moved to contribute to the cost of these repairs!"

Parish office

Dear friends, during the vacancy period for the Team Rector, on behalf of the PCC, churchwardens and clergy I will be providing 'light touch' line management of the operations in the office and of our PCC employees. Please continue as you normally do to contact our staff team and clergy. I will be more in the background supporting and enabling so we can continue to serve you all well. Best wishes, Ruth Martin.

The Conversation

As you know our Vacancy at St Mary's is about to start. We are so very lucky to have Charlie with us - but we must start planning together for our future. The Church Wardens of St Mary's are proposing a series of progressive discussions starting in January. It is hoped this brief gap over the Christmas Period will give us all some time to settle and reflect.

We propose to call this simply "The Conversation", these will be open forums held here in St Mary's where we can have a wide ranging conversation as to how we see our future together. God willing - we will be aiming to reach as near as is possible to a consensus.

There are of course topics which affect the Richmond Team Ministry - as opposed to St Mary's alone. On these subjects we will be seeking a broader conversation with our close friends and colleagues at St John's and St Matthias here in Richmond. We will be discussing the best way to do this with the other Richmond Team Ministry Church Wardens shortly.

There will be in addition an Anonymous Box where questions can be placed that can be read out and discussed, if people would find this helpful.

There is initially no fixed agenda just an aspiration that everyone who wants to, has an opportunity to talk and that from this we will try to formulate a plan, built on consensus. Action points leading on from these meetings will help us formalise the process as we proceed.

Please share this with anyone you think might be interested. We will announce the meetings in the New Year.

In the interim if you have any concerns please don't hesitate to contact your Church Wardens, John Buckingham or Anthony Bell.

Gift for Emma

Emma's last day at RTM will be Thursday 2 January, and we would like to give her a leaving gift. If you would like to contribute to such a gift please transfer your gift to:

Richmond Team Ministry – No 4 acc

Nat West

Sort code: 60-17-31

Account no: 60595477

Reference 'Emma'

Thank you!

"Wounded I sing" Advent Group (Wednesdays at 11am on 4th, 11th, 18th December or Thursdays at 7:30pm, 5th, 12th, 19th December, and 9th January)

'A new book for Advent has recently been published, 'Wounded I sing', a reflection on 24 of George Herbert's poems, especially chosen for Advent. It is written by Richard Harries, formerly Bishop of Oxford. Should you wish to use these next few weeks in Advent to prepare for the coming of Christ as a human babe in the company of George Herbert, this book is a daily treasure and structured for a poem each day and a reflection by Richard Harries.

Sue Eastaugh and Ruth Martin are offering some times in Advent to come together, read and reflect and discuss these poems.

Sue is going to host a group at St Mary's on Wednesdays, at 11am, on 4th, 11th, and 18th December with a fourth and final session in January at a date to be finalised. Please contact Sue at sue@eastaugh.net Ruth is offering to host an evening equivalent at her flat in Kew which is a two minute walk from Kew Gardens station or a 5 minute walk from a 110 bus stop (or easy parking outside). She can offer Thursdays, at 7.30 on Thursday 5th, Thursday 12, Thursday 19th and then in January a final session on Thursday 9 January. Please contact her on ruthtea304@hotmail.com if you would like to attend.

'Wounded I sing', published by SPCK, is very widely available at prices from £8.99-£10.99 (RRP) and also is offered on a Kindle. Please let Ruth know if you would like us to obtain a book for you as she is going to explore a sale or return bulk purchase.

Whether you are already a devotee of George Herbert or this will be your first dip into this 17th century poet who continues to have huge appeal in our own times, you will be very welcome to join a group if you are able.

Advent Reflection Groups

During Advent this year we will be reading the Archbishop of York's Advent Book 2024, Rachel Mann's "Do Not Be Afraid: The Joy of Waiting in a Time of Fear."

This is a book of daily reflections on waiting well, which we will read individually throughout advent and then discuss together.

After the service on Sunday mornings (9:30am at St Matthias, 9:30am at St Mary's, 11am at St John's) each Sunday of Advent (1, 8, 15, 22 December), there will be an opportunity to discuss the readings from that week and reflect together. Do get hold of a copy, and join with us in reading and reflecting!

Electronic ADVENT Calendar

Rev'd Anne will be creating an electronic advent calendar again this year, with a daily image, reflection and prayer arriving in your inbox each morning throughout Advent. If you have received the calendar in previous years then you will automatically receive again this year (unless you have changed your email address since the end of Dec 2023!). If you haven't received the calendar before and would like to, or would prefer not to receive it this year, then please contact Anne at anne.crawford@richmondteamministry.org

Parish Rooms update

We now have a rough timeline for the works on the Parish Rooms. The next big step is to appoint the contractors who will do the actual work, which will start in early 2025, with completion in

March 2026. Before that we have still quite a lot to do, including clearing the parish rooms of everything that is currently stored there. If you have things hidden away somewhere in parish rooms, do retrieve it now! The building needs to be completely empty by the end of November.

Bells for your birthday?

Church bells are the most historic things that many of us ever hear. The bells ring to call us to worship on Sundays and also as a joyful celebration of weddings and more sadly when tolling for funerals. Here at St Mary's we offer you the opportunity for a unique gift for those special people in your lives. We will ring to celebrate birthdays, anniversaries, births of children and grandchildren and any other special occasions you can think of. We can also offer a personal tower tour as part of the gift. Contact Jackie Harrison, Tower Captain for more information and an indication of proposed donation jackieharrison456@gmail.com
For all the latest bell ringer news, visit <https://richmondteamministry.org/bell-ringing-news/>

Holocaust Memorial Day

Richmond Synagogue and Richmond Council proudly invite you to their Holocaust Memorial Day event at 7pm on Sunday 26th January 2025 at Richmond Synagogue, Lichfield Gardens, TW9 1AP. Please register early to be assured of a seat - <https://myus.theus.org.uk/events/117018/annual-holocaust-memorial-day-2025/>

The doors will be open 6.45pm for a 7pm start. The event concludes at 9pm, followed by refreshments and conversation. Please note that the small car park is open only to blue badge holders, but there is plenty of street parking available near to the Synagogue and a car park in Paradise Road.

Giving, one off, regular and planned

At the end of each service you will find a plate at the back of church for your cash offering. Gift aid envelopes are available if you are a UK taxpayer. You can also give by using the card machine. If you can, would you consider making a regular gift to the Richmond Team, for the upkeep of our churches and the work of the Team?

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. The last Tuesday of the month our regular Said Eucharist at 7pm is a Eucharist for Healing and Wholeness, with the opportunity to receive the Ministry of Laying on of Hands with Prayer and Anointing for yourself or to receive it on someone else's behalf. All are welcome.

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 via [St Mary Magdalene Facebook page](#). You can watch the service live as it happens, or once it is uploaded. 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 Teams. We meet at St Matthias on Mondays and Fridays, at St John the Divine on Tuesdays, and at St Mary Magdalene on Wednesdays and Thursdays.

We have now moved from Zoom to Microsoft Teams.

Morning prayer will be here every day:

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 331 749 912 278

Passcode: 96s9Aa

You may already have Teams downloaded on a Microsoft computer. However, if you are joining from an iPad or other device, you may need to download the App.

Please contact Charlie if you have any concerns about this or need a hand with the tech.

With best wishes,

John

Parish Administrator

Parish Office, The Vicarage, Ormond Road, Richmond TW10 6TH

020 8940 0362

Richmond Team Ministry

St Mary Magdalene • St Matthias • St John the Divine

www.richmondteamministry.org

Registered Charity No 1130018

Our Privacy Notice can be viewed at: <https://richmondteamministry.org/gdpr/>

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