

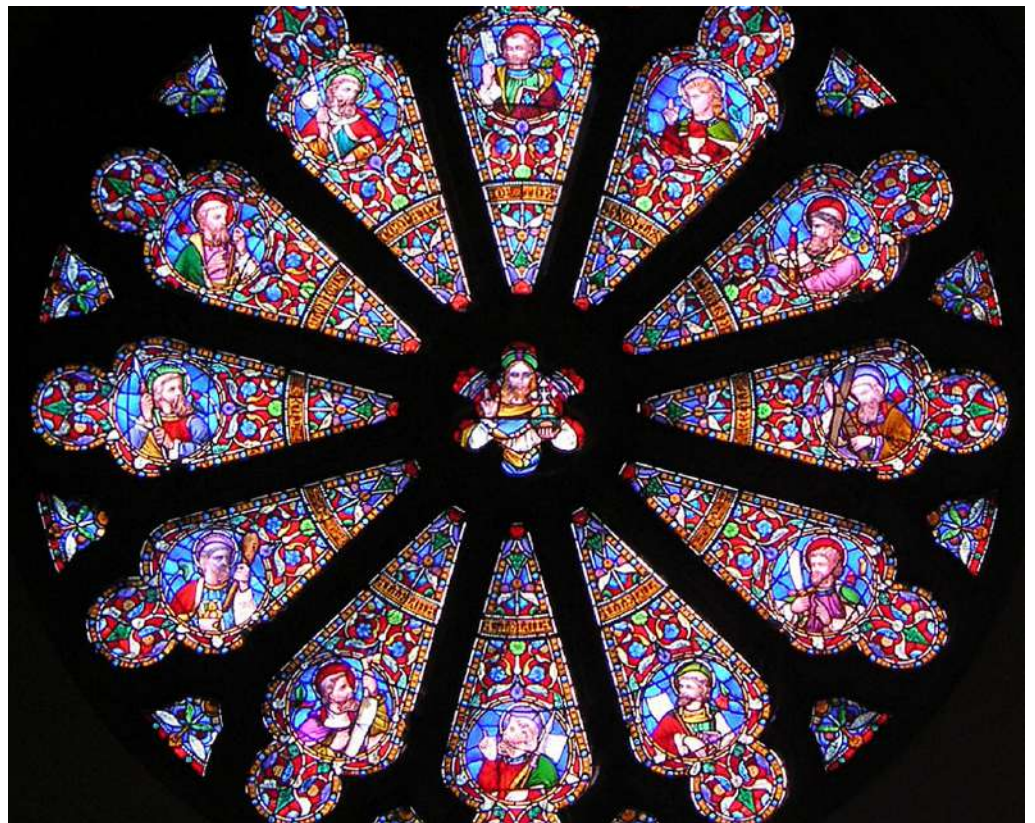


## TEAMtalk Spring 2025

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*The Rose Window at St Matthias - Public Domain T Taylot*

For many years our three churches have celebrated their patronal festivals individually and not as a team. However, from 2025 all has changed and RTM will hold a team service on each of the three festivals. This seems sensible since we value and respect our churches and their traditions and all should have the chance to

rejoice with them on their special day. So on 23 February the RTM congregations came together at St Matthias for the first of these new team services. Ruth Martin, RTM's Reader gave the sermon and referred to the importance of the faith of the laity in our churches.

'Today we celebrate as a team, St Matthias, who took the place of Judas as one of the 12 apostles, after Jesus' death and resurrection. So he wasn't amongst the first 12, but came later, and so we don't know so much about him from Scripture, as Jesus did not personally appoint him.

... continued on page 2

## *St Matthias Patronal Festival - continued*

Matthias was first and foremost a follower, a latecomer to becoming an apostle compared to others - let us give thanks for all newcomers and latecomers.

I felt called to be a minister, but very much a lay minister as what prompted me was the challenges of being a Christian at work - and how my faith had sustained me. I wanted to share that and help develop others in their faith and support them. Faith is a blessing and a Grace. If we place Christ first, Grace and Insight will follow.'

The readings in the service included a description in the Acts of the Apostles 1 v 15-26 of the process of how Matthias was chosen to replace Judas. It must have been quite a challenge for Matthias

stepping up to the role in such circumstances. As an apostle he went on to preach the Gospel in Jerusalem, in what is modern day Turkey and in Ethiopia amongst other places. What happened to him is not altogether clear but he was martyred for his faith, being executed. It is said that Matthias' remains were brought to Italy by the Empress Helena, mother of the Roman emperor Constantine and laid to rest in the Abbey of Santa Giustina, Padua, with further of his remains going to St Matthias Abbey in Trier, Germany. St Matthias Church itself was consecrated in 1858 by the Rt Revd Charles Richard Winton, Bishop of Winchester, Richmond being then in this diocese. It is not apparent why the church was named after St Matthias but it was

built on land given by the well known and influential local Selwyn family and the choice of saint may have been at their request. At the west end of the church is a magnificent rose or wheel stained glass window - with portraits of each of the apostles and their individual symbols. St

Matthias is shown holding an axe, representing his martyrdom by execution. In the centre of the rose is a window of Christ. RTM looks forward to the patronal festivals later this year for St John the Divine on 1 June and St Mary Magdalene on 20 July.



*Tomb of Saint Matthias, Santa Giustina, Padua - Didier Descouens Creative Commons*

## *The Bells of St Mary's - We need to ring the changes*

*Amanda Adams*



*St Mary's Bell Ringers*

You may have heard the ringing of call changes in anticipation of a service or the persistent call of the single "five-minute" bell shortly before the service starts? The bells of St. Mary Magdalene have been ringing out for centuries! And bell ringing is not simply making music; it is a form of musical worship that makes up the fabric

of our church and our community. However, the bells at St Mary's are not the easiest to handle and the musicality of their sound is not ideal. This has influenced the ability to recruit and retain new ringers and to attract bands to ring at our church. During a project that started well over ten years ago, the bellringers have been considering



how to improve the bells at St Mary's. The project has not been straightforward: the bells are hung on wheels within a frame at the top of the church tower but the wheels are smaller than they should be for the size of the bells. This makes them more difficult for the ringers to handle. Over the years we have lost numerous recruits who have found our bells too difficult. In addition, some of the bells are not in tune and so the ringing is not as melodious as we would like.

These challenges have meant that our bells need a complete overhaul. Over the years, we have consulted extensively with several bell hangers, numerous historical bodies, the Diocese, our church committee and independent advisers. Several possible solutions have been considered and discussed with the various stakeholders. We have been unable to identify opportunities to relocate our bells in other churches in the Diocese (or elsewhere) and the historical bodies were very keen to ensure that the older bells are kept/used within St Mary's. We have recently obtained approval from the major stakeholders to replace five of the bells with new bells and tune the three oldest existing bells to form part of the new ring of eight bells. Our largest bell, the tenor, will be melted down and its metal re-

used in new bells. The tenor is a poor-quality bell with little historic merit and is the largest and is most cumbersome of the bells. Using the metal is a positive way of establishing some continuity for our bells and will allow a modest reduction in the cost of the new bells. We have also received the support of the historical societies and church committee to display three of the smallest bells in the church to reflect the heritage of St Mary's. For maximum flexibility, Peter Bowyer has kindly designed frames for the bells that are compact and moveable with lockable wheels so that they can be moved to accommodate any layout within the church. The last remaining bell will be stored in the clock room above the ringing chamber.

A public notice is currently on display on the church noticeboard for a 28-day period after which we will be able to proceed with the faculty submission. If we are successful in gaining the Chancellor's approval with the proposals and obtain the faculty, we will embark on a major fundraising exercise – the estimated cost is in the region of £150,000. The project will include the refurbishment of the church clock bell to enable it to strike during the daytime. So, the project is not yet at its



*Ringing*

conclusion, but we are grateful for the support that we have received to date from the church officers, the committees, the clergy and the congregation! The aim of the project is to secure the future of our bells for generations

to come and to signal our worship in the environs of St Mary's with the beautiful, tuneful music of its bells!



*In The Tower*

## 2025 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

From May to the end of July 325 a council of Christian bishops from around the world met in Nicaea, an ancient Greek city, under the Roman Emperor Constantine, to affirm their Christian faith. From this meeting came the Nicene Creed used in Western Christianity. 1700 years have elapsed since the Council of Nicaea and it is fitting that the theme for the 2025 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity celebrates this anniversary and the importance of the Nicene Creed. A joint service with RTM was held at Raleigh Road United Church, Richmond on Sunday evening 26 January. with Evensong at St Mary Magdalene being cancelled in order that people could attend. The service was also under the auspices of the ecumenical organisation Churches Together in Britain and Ireland.

The theme of the service was entitled 'Do you Believe This?' taken from John 11 v17-27 in which Jesus, after the death of Lazarus, arrives at his home and assures his sisters Mary and Martha that their brother would rise from the dead. Jesus asked Martha 'Do you Believe This?' and she replied that she did. The service included a meditative reading for three voices on this story. A further reading also from John's Gospel on another aspect of belief was

the story of Thomas the Apostle who doubted the resurrection of Jesus when told about it. Only days later when he encountered Jesus and saw the fresh wounds from the Crucifixion. did he finally believe in the resurrection. The sermon was given by the Revd Derrick Thompson, Chaplain to the Richmond Charities Almshouses.

The centrepiece of the service was the recitation of the Creed and the lighting of candles with members of the congregations sharing the light with each other and then placing the candles on a table at the front, where they shone so brightly. The prayers of intercession which followed included words of belief from venerable individuals - for example:

*'What wonder then, if coming to God we first of all profess that we believe, seeing that, without this, not even common life can be lived.'* Rufinus of Aquileia (c 344-411) a monk, philosopher and historian.  
*'Truth sees God, and wisdom contemplates God, and from these two comes a third, a holy and wonderful delight in God who is Love'* Julian of Norwich (1343 – after 1416) divine, anchoress and author  
Music was an important part of the service, not just hymns but also Taizé chants in which the same words sung over and over help



Icon depicting the Emperor Constantine the Great accompanied by the bishops of the First Council of Nicaea holding the Nicene Creed of 381 - Public Domain  
The first line in Greek reads 'I believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth'

one to listen deeply to God and to meditate on Jesus and all that he gives us. So these chants included 'Jesus Remember me when you come into your Kingdom' and 'In the Lord I'll be ever thankful'. After the service everyone enjoyed refreshments and talking to fellow worshippers. Thanks

to all at Raleigh Road United Church for their hosting this special service and their warm welcome and kind hospitality afterwards.



## *Walking the Way of Discipleship: Living Out the Five Marks of Mission*

*Rev'd Joe Moore*



*Dove of Peace - flight.svg nevit Dilmén Wikipedia*

Christian discipleship is a lifelong journey of following Jesus Christ, seeking to become more like him in word and deed. It is not a status we attain, but a path we walk—daily, deliberately, and often imperfectly. In a world marked by rapid change, polarisation, and deep need, discipleship is both a personal calling and a communal witness. As members of the Church of England and the wider Anglican Communion, we are invited to live out our faith through the Five Marks of Mission—a framework that helps us understand and enact the work of

discipleship in our time.

Yet discipleship is not a self-powered endeavour. We cannot live as Christ's followers through effort alone. The life of discipleship is only possible through the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit working in us and through us. As St Paul writes, "It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me" (Galatians 2:20). The Spirit breathes life into our witness, strengthens us in our weakness, and equips us for the mission of the Church.

### **What is Discipleship?**

Discipleship is not merely about belief - it is about transformation. The Greek word for disciple, *mathētēs*, means "learner" or "student." Disciples are those who sit at the feet of Jesus, learning his way of love, justice, humility, and service. As the Gospel of Matthew

records, Jesus' parting command to his followers was clear: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19). This Great Commission remains at the heart of the Church's mission.

Rowan Williams, former Archbishop of Canterbury, once wrote that being a



*To safeguard the integrity of creation - Elspeth Fearn*



*Loving Service by feeding the hungry - Bread - Klaus Hopfner Creative Commons*

disciple is “not about being a supporter of a cause, but about living in a certain way because of who Jesus is” (*Being Disciples*, SPCK, 2016, p. 2). Discipleship is not something we do alone; it happens in community, through worship, prayer, and action. It is shaped by Scripture and sacrament, and sustained by the power of the Spirit.

### **The Five Marks of Mission**

First articulated by the Anglican Consultative Council in the 1980s and widely adopted across the Anglican Communion, the Five Marks of Mission provide a practical, holistic vision for how

Christians can live as disciples in the world. They are:

1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
2. To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
3. To respond to human need by loving service
4. To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation
5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth

These five marks are not a checklist but a dynamic pattern of life rooted in the Gospel. Each mark flows from the life of Christ and

invites us into the work of God’s kingdom—made possible by the empowering presence of the Spirit.

### **1. Proclaiming the Good News**

At the heart of discipleship is the joyful proclamation of the Gospel. The good news that “God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself” (2 Corinthians 5:19) is not something we keep to ourselves. We are called to speak of Christ’s love in our words and show it in our lives.

This proclamation is not ours alone—it is the Spirit who gives us boldness and wisdom. As Jesus promised his disciples: “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses” (Acts 1:8). Evangelism is not about pressuring others, but about offering the hope we have found in Christ with gentleness and joy. Archbishop Stephen Cottrell has said, “Evangelism is not about imposing belief, but about proposing the good news as a gift for all” (*Dear England*, Hodder & Stoughton, 2021, p. 32).

### **2. Teaching and Nurturing**

Discipleship involves growth. Just as Jesus taught his disciples through parables, actions, and close relationship, so we are called to nurture others in faith. This happens through catechesis, Bible study, mentoring, and prayer.

The Spirit of God is our ultimate teacher. Jesus told his followers, “The Advocate, the Holy Spirit... will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you” (John 14:26). As we study Scripture and form new believers, it is the Spirit who enlightens hearts and deepens understanding. Christian formation is a lifelong process shaped by grace. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer reminds us, “Christianity without discipleship is always Christianity without Christ” (*The Cost of Discipleship*, SCM Press, 1959, p. 59).

### **3. Loving Service**

One of the most visible expressions of Christian discipleship is service to others. Whether it’s feeding the hungry, visiting the lonely, or providing shelter to the homeless, we embody Christ’s love when we respond to human need. Jesus tells us, “Just as you did it to



one of the least of these... you did it to me" (Matthew 25:40).

Service is a fruit of the Spirit's work in us (Galatians 5:22-23). The Spirit softens our hearts and opens our eyes to the needs around us. When our acts of love are empowered by the Spirit, they become signs of God's kingdom—tangible reminders that no one is forgotten, and all are loved.

#### 4. Transforming Unjust Structures

Discipleship is not confined to private piety—it has public implications. Jesus consistently confronted injustice, challenged religious hypocrisy, and stood with the marginalised. To follow him is to do the same.

This mark of mission calls us to engage with issues of poverty, racism, homophobia, gender inequality, and environmental injustice. It is not partisan politics, but prophetic witness.

And it is the Spirit who gives the Church courage to speak truth to power and strength to work for change. As the prophet Zechariah declared: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says

the Lord of hosts" (Zechariah 4:6).

When we seek justice and peace, we do so in the power of the Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead—the Spirit who renews and restores.

#### 5. Caring for Creation

In recent years, the fifth mark of mission has gained renewed urgency. The climate crisis is not just an environmental issue—it is a spiritual and moral one. As disciples of Christ, we are stewards of God's good creation.

The Holy Spirit, present at creation (Genesis 1:2), continues to breathe life into the world. When we care for creation, we participate in the Spirit's

renewing work. As Pope Francis reminds us in *Laudato Si'*, "The Spirit of life dwells in every living creature and calls us to enter into relationship with the world" (*Laudato Si'*, §88). Whether through eco-church initiatives or prayerful attention to our lifestyles, caring for creation is an act of Spirit-filled discipleship.

#### Discipleship: A Spirit-Empowered Journey

The Five Marks of Mission remind us that discipleship is not an abstract ideal. It is rooted in action, in community, and in hope. It is expressed in our worship and our witness, our service and our solidarity, our prayer and our politics. But none of this can be done in our own

strength. As Rowan Williams writes, "Discipleship is being where Jesus is. And as we know from the Gospels, Jesus is usually found in the company of the poor, the outcast, and the broken. To follow him there, we need the Spirit's courage" (*Being Christian*, SPCK, 2014, p. 27).

As we continue our journey together as Richmond Team Ministry, may we open ourselves more deeply to the Spirit's presence and power. Whether we are young or old, lay or ordained, new to faith or long on the road, each of us has a part to play. Let us walk the way of discipleship, living the Gospel with joy, courage, and love.



The Power of Water - van Aken CSIRO Creative Commons Burdekin River

## Church Urban Fund

RTM gives 10% of its direct giving income each year to charities, both church and secular. For many years as part of that programme of giving, donations have been made to the Church Urban Fund. The origins of the Fund go back to a landmark report 'Faith in the City' issued in 1985 and headed up by the then Archbishop of Canterbury, Robert Runcie. The report followed the examination by an 18 person Commission over two years. on the Church of England's place in inner cities, urban areas and housing estates. It triggered an immediate debate on urban decay and the relevance of the church in modern society. The report made recommendations on how the church and other agencies such as Government should respond. It challenged them to look afresh at issues affecting urban life and received a contentious reception at first with accusations from some of Marxist theology. The report remains an important

event in the history of inner city ministry. One of the report's recommendations was that a Church Urban Fund should be established to strengthen the Church of England's presence in urban areas and to promote Christian witness there. The fund was created in 1987 to work in poor and deprived areas of the country, with low employment prospects and overcrowded housing. Originally the Fund began by giving grants but now works as a development agency via the dioceses, providing support to local communities. There are for example, 21 Faith Based Partnerships to tackle social inequality, the Near Neighbours Programme brings people together building relations of trust within communities, and initiatives such as the Just Finance Foundation encourages the financial education and well being of young people and their families. 2025 sees the celebration of 40 years since the original report's



Front cover of the original 1985 report - Church of England

publication. The late Queen Elizabeth II was a long standing patron of the Fund and since 2024 King Charles III has taken on the patron's role. The Church Urban Fund continues its important work of equipping people

and churches to make a difference where they live. More information on the Fund can be found at <https://cuf.org.uk>



## *Patience School Uganda*

In July last year the children were able to go on a trip to Entebbe. They travelled by coach, probably a first for many, to the international zoo. This was followed by a visit to the weather station, which is situated near Entebbe Airport – probably the closest these children had ever been to an aircraft. The day was rounded off by a visit to the leisure park where the children enjoyed face painting, ice creams, slides, rides and best of all swimming. According to Annet the head teacher this trip has left enduring memories with all the children who went.

Some members of Richmond Team Ministry support the teaching staff at Patience School by financing a teacher training course at the National Education Resource Centre in Kampala. A newly appointed teacher Reginah will be joining this course and she has written to thank RTM for sponsoring her.



*Setting off in the coach - Patience School*



*Arriving at the zoo - Patience School*

## *George Herbert and his Poems*

On 7 November last year, Southwark Cathedral held a fascinating discussion on the poetry of George Herbert, the metaphysical poet (1593 - 1633). The event featured Richard Harries, former Bishop of Oxford, on his new book 'Wounded I Sing: From Advent to Christmas with George Herbert'. Poems were read aloud and analysed and it is clear that Herbert still has many appreciative admirers nearly 400 years after his death.

George Herbert was a well connected kinsman of the Earl of Pembroke, and educated at Cambridge, where he held the prestigious post of Public Orator to the University which meant that he gave formal addresses in Latin to distinguished visitors, including King James I. A glowing career beckoned in diplomacy and politics - indeed he did briefly serve as an MP. Herbert then changed direction by being ordained priest in 1629 and becoming the

rector of St Andrews, Bemerton in Wiltshire, a small country parish outside Salisbury. He cared greatly for his parishioners especially the poorer ones. Sadly, because of constant ill health he was only rector for a few years and died in 1633 leaving a young widow.

His poems had never been published. But, just before he died he sent the manuscript of 'The Temple' containing 180 of his poems to his close friend Nicolas Ferrar, requesting him to publish them. These achieved great success with 13 editions alone between 1633 and 1709. RTM members Ruth Martin and Sue Eastaugh, were at the event at Southwark Cathedral and thought it might be interesting to host discussion groups within RTM based on Bishop Harries' book - see Sue's article about the groups.

It is hoped that it may be possible in due course to run an RTM pilgrimage



*Stained Glass Window in Bemerton Church of George Herbert and his friend Nicholas Ferrar - Weglinde Creative Commons*

day trip to Bemerton (which is now part of modern day Salisbury) to see St Andrew's Church where Herbert is buried and which also contains a

stained glass window from the 1930s showing the friends Herbert and Ferrar.

## *Exploring George Herbert's poems for Advent*

*Sue Eastaugh*

Ruth Martin and I each led an Advent Group reading and discussing George Herbert's poems, selected by Bishop Richard Harries in his book 'Wounded I Sing'. That phrase is a quotation from one of Herbert's

poems and captures so much of Herbert's voice. Most people in the group knew some of Herbert's poems but the book had some less well known poems too. We were struck by Herbert's honesty and vulnerability. He was a highly educated

man born into the nobility but in his poems he wrestles with God, reproaching as well as praising. He reveals his confusion and anguish at both knowing God loves him but also seems to frustrate and limit him. 'Yet though thou

troublest me, I must be meek,  
In weakness must be stout,  
Well, I will change the service, and go seek  
Some other master out  
Ah my dear God! though I am clean forgot,  
Let me not love thee, If I love thee not.'



## *Fan Vaulting*



*Fan vaulting at St John the Baptist Church, Cirencester -  
Hugh Llewelyn and Creative Commons*

Fan Vaulting is a special feature of English Gothic architecture. Roof ribs radiate in various directions in a manner which resembles a fan, hence the name. They are a glorious sight - medieval society always aimed that its art and architecture were to the highest standards so reflecting the full glory of God. The fan vaulting rises above us like a glimpse of Heaven. The earliest vaulting of this type was at Gloucester Cathedral 1351 - 60 and the largest is at Kings College Chapel,

Cambridge. Although fan vaulting is often found in cathedrals and abbeys it is also to be seen in some parish churches, particularly in places like the Cotswolds where wealthy wool merchants gave money to finance the best churches that could be built.



*Fan Vaulting at Sherborne Abbey -  
Michael Garlick and Creative Commons*

*Fan Vaulting at King's College Chapel,  
Cambridge - Tom Ait and Creative Commons*





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## *Our Churches*

