

Thursday 13 February 2025

Dear Friends,

Tomorrow the Church, and the world, remembers St Valentine, patron saint of lovers. But who was this Saint who causes hearts to flutter and florists and chocolate makers to rub their hands in glee? Well, back in AD272 the Roman Emperor Claudius III imprisoned a Christian bishop named Valentine for disobeying a royal decree by marrying Christian soldiers (the emperor needed the men to fight his wars). While he was in prison Bishop Valentine cured his jailer's daughter of blindness and the pair fell in love (literally love at first sight!) Sadly the Bishop was executed on February 14th in 273AD and on the eve of his death the condemned man sent a passionate letter to his beloved and signed it simply 'your Valentine'. And so it began!

It's not just human beings who fall in love on St Valentine's day either. In the middle ages it was thought that the birds of the air chose their mates on 14th February, and poets often made the link between lovebirds and lovers. Apparently there were many superstitions related to birds seen by unmarried women on Valentine's Day: If a lady saw a blackbird, she would marry a clergyman; a goldfinch, a millionaire; a redbreast, a sailor; a crossbill, a quarrelsome man. The goldfinch would be my preferred option! And speaking of poets, Robert Burns is the reason for giving red roses to your Valentine because of his poem, 'My love is like a red red rose'. But if you want to be true to tradition you should give a yellow crocus to your lover instead of a rose – Valentine is said to have performed the first marriage of a pagan and Christian, bringing them together with a single crocus, a symbol of undying love.

Despite the love birds, the flowers and the chocolates, the legacy of St Valentine has survived long after his death. There was such an uproar over his execution among the Christian community in Rome, that the authorities had to bury his body quickly to avoid a riot. But three of his followers found his body and took him back home to Terni in Umbria where he had been bishop, to be buried in the cemetery there. His remains now rest in the Basilico de S Valentino in Terni, and on the Sunday nearest 14th February young lovers still travel to the tomb to make their vows of love and to receive Valentine's blessing.

One of England's most romantic Christian mystics, Richard Rolle (1290-1349), wrote passionately about his love for Christ in his book 'The Fire of Love', which is still available if you are looking for a gift for a special person this Valentine's Day. We could do worse than put some passion back in to our relationship with God this Valentine's day, and his prayer to Jesus is inspiration for those of us who need a little help:

'I know of no sweeter delight than to sing to you and praise you in my heart, Jesus my love. I know of no greater or more plenteous joy than to feel the sweet heat of love in my mind.... Come, my Saviour, and comfort my soul; make me constant in my love, that I may never cease to love you.'

With prayers and blessings from the Richmond clergy team,
Anne, Charlie and Joe

This letter was written by The Revd Anne Crawford

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** - Liz Velluet, Marc Cranfield-Adams, Barbara Adamson, Epp Jones, Sarah Pryce, Jo Ryeland

... **the departed, may they rest in peace** - Alfred Davies, Gill Doling, Valerie Llewellyn

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.

Prayer needs: Is anything weighing on your heart at present that you would like us to hold in prayer for you? The St MM prayer group meets regularly to pray in complete confidence over specific prayer needs made known to us. Please feel free to send us your prayer requests at: richmondprayer.request@gmail.com or post a request anonymously on the prayer board at the back of church in St Mary Magdalene.

Church, Community and other news:

NEW: Glasses, specs and sunglasses

As part of our Green efforts we are collecting all your old prescription (or otherwise) glasses and sunglasses. We will be sending them off to the Lions Club who use them to improve the sight of children and adults living in other less developed countries. All donations are washed and regraded then sent directly to those in need throughout the world. There will be boxes from now until the end of March in all three churches - please hunt through those desk drawers and bring all those unwanted spectacles to church.

NEW: Ash Wednesday - 5th March

The 5th of March is Ash Wednesday, marking the beginning of the penitential season of Lent. There will be 3 opportunities to receive the imposition of ashes that day:

1. 'Ashes to go' at Richmond Station - Joe and Charlie will be offering this ministry between 7:30am-8:15am for those on their way to work or passing by
2. Said Eucharist at St Mary Magdalene at 10am
3. Team Eucharist for Ash Wednesday at 7:30pm at St John the Divine

Please do make this day a priority in your diaries.

Appointment process for new RTM Team Rector and Vicar of SMM

A. Update on RTM "Conversations"

Summary of First Congregational Conversation regarding the role and qualities for the RTM Team Rector, Vicar of St Mary Magdalene. 2nd February. Following RTM Team Service for Candlemass.

Introduction.

Assistant Churchwarden at SMM Bleddyn Phillips spoke to the congregation to explain the process by which those attending all three churches could have an input into developing the role profile to be used for the new Richmond Team Ministry Team Rector and vicar of St Mary Magdalene.

The role and qualities.

Bleddyn explained that there would be a series of meetings – “conversations” - organised in each of the churches in the coming months at which people could freely express their thoughts and feelings about the qualities needed in the role of the team rector/vicar of SMM and the priorities they think a successful candidate should focus on. The Archdeacon would be liaising closely with the parish in the process of developing and agreeing the profile.

For those who preferred to make their thoughts known on an anonymous basis, there would be a box placed at the rear of each church in which people could place written messages (see also section B below).

Bleddyn explained that for each church, there were already in place “conversation coordinators” for people to approach and make any comments. For St Matthias, these were the churchwardens, Sally Gill and Alison Hall; for St John’s, Cathie Kozeluh and at St Mary’s, Bleddyn Phillips and David Powell.

Bleddyn also said that after the initial shortlist of candidates was made, each would spend a day in Richmond as part of the selection process. This would also enable the candidates to better understand the Team and the multifaceted nature of this role.

Timing of the Appointment.

On the question of the timing of the appointment, Churchwarden John Buckingham explained that besides the parish profile this depended on finding a new vicarage. The vacancy could not be advertised until the sale of the existing vicarage had taken place and a new one identified with the purchase well underway. The vicarage needed to be no more than 15 minutes’ walk from SMM. This meant that the post would likely not be advertised until around September 2025. In response to a question why the post could not be advertised until then, John explained that it was very difficult to find candidates willing to apply for the position unless they knew where they would be living.

Ruth Martin was asked to contribute to the discussion due to her experience in the Diocese. She explained that the process of finding an estate agent able to handle both the sale and purchase of the vicarage was underway and that in her experience, it had proved most efficient where one agent had handled both the sale and the purchase. In those circumstances, the gap between selling the vicarage and purchasing a new one can be as short as 3-4 months. It was not possible for the diocese to purchase a new vicarage before the current one had been sold. Ruth also explained that vicarages today are the vicar’s private homes for them and their households.

John explained that the RTM office, currently housed in the vicarage basement, was moving to St Matthias, pending the redevelopment of the parish rooms. This work on the parish rooms was currently out to tender and was expected to begin in April 2025, with an expected completion date of April 2026. The parish office would then move from St Matthias to the Parish rooms. The administrative team in the office were well advanced in their planning.

Other questions and comments.

Judy Wright and Mary Ricketts both spoke and emphasised the importance of everyone working on the profile as collaboratively as possible. The importance of drawing up a ‘job spec’ was identified by several present as being critical in helping people understand the role and what might be required to fulfil it. [NOTE: this will be followed up asap]

Bleddyn thanked everyone for attending and reminded everyone that this was the first of the conversations and that there would be opportunities in each of the churches to contribute and, on behalf of the churchwardens, he hoped as many people as possible would do so. The congregation thanked Bleddyn.

B. ‘Conversation Boxes’

To assist in the gathering of as much information as possible from as many parishioners as possible, the following message will be placed next to the Conversation/Suggestion Boxes placed at the rear of each church:

“The suggestion boxes are here placed to encourage people to offer any comments or suggestions they may wish to make regarding the qualities, profile and priorities we as a parish might wish to be mindful of in appointing our new Team Rector and Vicar of St Mary Magdalene.

People are also encouraged to place any questions or points of clarification they may wish to make regarding the process behind such appointment. These will then be collected from all three churches with the aim of drawing together common themes and ideas to help facilitate the appointment.

To assist people in this, updates will be provided in the weekly newsletter which hopefully will help guide people in their thoughts and comment.”

Prayer needs

Sometimes things seem overwhelming. St Paul encourages us to offer everything to God in prayer. If you would like us to offer prayers for you or a loved one, the St Mary Magdalene prayer group meets regularly to pray in complete confidence over prayers requests made known to us, so please be assured that all your requests will be offered to God in prayer. A new email address has been set up where you are welcome to send any specific prayer needs that you would like us to hold in prayer. The email address is: richmondprayer.request@gmail.com. Please feel free to send prayer requests to that address, or you can post a request anonymously on the prayer board at the back of St Mary Magdalene. In addition, during the 9.30am service at St Mary Magdalene on the 2nd Sunday of each month there is the opportunity, if you wish, to receive laying on of hands and to be prayed over individually by a member of the team. And, of course, you are more than welcome to contact Joe, Anne, Charlie, Ruth Martin or Sue Eastaugh if you would like to talk to someone in confidence or to receive a home visit. If you are feeling lonely, lost or overwhelmed, please do reach out to us.

Calling all teenagers!

We are starting a new Dinner and Discussion group for teens. Our first session will be on Sunday 16 February, at 6pm.

We will be cooking and eating together – and chatting about all manner of things (big and small). Nicky Holt and Charlie will be leading the group, together with a different host in a different house each month.

Please contact Charlie for more details: charlie.middleton@richmondteamministry.org
07746 695637

Joint services in February

As a team, we have made a decision to begin celebrating our patronal festivals together: St Matthias on 23 February, St John the Divine on 1 June, and St Mary Magdalene on 20 July.

Reflective Walks 2025

Rev'd Anne's next reflective walk is on Friday 28 February. If you have walked with Anne and the group before then you will automatically receive information to confirm meeting time and place, but if this is your first time joining the walk, or you would like some more information, then please email Anne anne.crawford@richmondteamministry.org

World Day of Prayer – Friday 7 March

2:30pm at Our Lady of Loreto & St Winefride Catholic Church, Kew TW9 3HB

"Our sisters in The Cook Islands welcome us and lead us for the Day of Prayer 2025. This group of 15 islands in the South Pacific Ocean has a rich and colourful Māori heritage and a deep

connection to nature. Join with us as we pray together and reflect on the theme 'I made you wonderful'."

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/>

TO UNSUBSCRIBE FROM THIS EMAIL LIST, [PLEASE CLICK HERE](#)



[Click here for St John the Divine's Facebook page](#)



[Click here for St Mary Magdalene's Facebook page](#)



[Click here for St Matthias/ Facebook page](#)