

Thursday 20 February 2025

Dear Friends,

This week, I have been laid low by norovirus. Not what I had anticipated, nor how I had hoped to spend a week! I am much recovered now, and find myself very thankful for my body and for its normal functioning.

It took a few days before I could eat anything like normal food: tentative breadstick or a plain Jacob's cracker anyone? And a couple more days before my brain could cope with anything more testing than sleep and gameshows.

My first attempt at concentration and creativity was reading through a book of Laura Gilpin's poetry, *The Hocus-Pocus of the Universe*. Sadly out of print, but available to read in full on the [Internet Archive](#).

Gilpin only published one book of poetry during her lifetime. She writes with warmth and love about the ordinary things of life, about her relations, about loss and endings. (My particular recommendations: *Concerning the Gold Fountain Pen*, *Hanging On*, *The Field Where you lost your Mother*, *The Hub of the Universe*, *The Two-headed Calf*, *Coming Home*.)

However, I shall share one with you, which rejoices in ordinary love and ordinary objects.

The Mittens My Grandmother Made

*My grandmother made me some mittens knowing I
like them better than gloves, knowing I like the way
all four fingers
keep each other warm, the way
they can huddle together into a
fist and the isolated thumb
abandoning his own sweater
to join the rest of the crowd.*

*And as I wear these mittens
I think of my grandmother,
her hands working like cricket legs all night
and the rocking chair thumping like a dog's tail,
and I think of my grandmother, thinking of me
trudging through the winter,
bundled up like a bear,
my feet buried in eskimo boots
and my hands in her mittens.*

Look around you now, for little comforts, for objects which show how you are loved, for familiar, cosy, gifted things, for worn and worn things. Notice, too, the little familiar gifts from God to you.

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

This letter was written by The Revd Charlie Middleton

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, 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: GreenTips

Issue 6 is now available. Some copies can be found at the back of church, or you can read it on our website - <https://richmondteamministry.org/get-involved/>

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.

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.

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."

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'."

Calling all teenagers!

We have started a new Dinner and Discussion group for teens. Our next session will be on Sunday 16 March, 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

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/>

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

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Richmond Team Ministry
St Mary Magdalene • St Matthias • St John the Divine
www.richmondteamministry.org
Registered Charity No 1130018

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