

Thursday 13 March 2025

Dear Friends,

Last Saturday was International Women's Day, yesterday and tomorrow are Ember Days (wherein we pray for all called to ministry in the church), and yesterday marked the 31st of first ordinations of Women in the Church of England.

When I reflect on women's ordination, I always think of a story relayed to me by one of the interviewers on my Bishop's Advisory Panel (The BAP was the three days of interviews and assessed activities which evaluated the suitability of candidates [presented by bishops from various diocese] for ordained ministry.)

In our final service of the BAP, the advisor told this story during the sermon:

Before she had been a priest, she was a nurse, and she worked for some time on a secure psychiatric ward. On that ward was one elderly woman, Elizabeth, who had never spoken a word. She had been in the facility longer than any of the staff could remember, and was amiable and affable, but mute.

One evening, our nurse went and sat beside Elizabeth as she watched TV. Thinking that Elizabeth wouldn't mind what was on, she reached for the controls, but Elizabeth said, 'I'd like to finish watching this, please.'

Our nurse sat stunned.

She watched the TV in silence, and Elizabeth out of the corner of her eye. When the show finished, our nurse turned expectantly to Elizabeth.

Elizabeth smiled and said, 'I don't think I have long left. Can I tell you my story?' Our nurse said that she'd very much like to hear it.

Elizabeth explained that when she was a girl, growing up in Yorkshire in the early 1900s, she felt that God was calling her to be a priest. She was bright and loved God and at 16, she went to her priest to ask his advice.

The priest was appalled. He spoke to her parents and told them that he had serious concerns about her. Women could not be priests. God therefore would not call a 16-year-old girl. To suggest that she was party to God's will was quite obviously a sign of madness. On his recommendation, her parents had her confined to the asylum, and there she had remained for over 60 years. From the day she arrived she had not spoken a word.

The BAP advisor finished her story by explaining that Elizabeth passed away in her sleep that night.

When I first heard that story, at the end of an intense three days of testing my own vocation, I wept. What a privilege, that I live in a place and time where I can exercise the ministry to which I am called. There remain untold numbers of cultures, communities and contexts in which people are prevented from living out the call on their lives because of their gender, disability, sexuality, gender-identity, age, or race.

God beckons, and society bars the way.

On Ember Days, the whole church is called upon to pray for all who minister in the church and serve its people, and we are called to examine afresh what it is that God is calling us to. So, if you would, pray for your ministers, local and in the church at large – we are always in need of your prayers; and spend some time asking God again how you might best live out God's call for 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

... **Christians of Congo**

... **the sick and those in need** - Liz Velluet, Marc Cranfield-Adams, Barbara Adamson, Epp Jones, Sarah Pryce

... **the departed, may they rest in peace** - Jo Ryeland, June Smith, Phil Crowther (condolences to Shirley Crowther – 25, Connaught Avenue, London, SW14 7RH)

The celebration of Phil Crowther's life will be held at Christchurch in East Sheen (SW14 7AW) on Wednesday 2 April 2025 at 2.30pm. Dress smart, or as you wish, with colour. Family flowers only. Donations to Princess Alice Hospice or Cancer Research.

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: Upcoming Funerals

Phil Crowther – The celebration of Phil Crowther's life will be held at Christchurch in East Sheen (SW14 7AW) on Wednesday 2 April 2025 at 2.30pm. Dress smart, or as you wish, with colour. Family flowers only.

Donations to Princess Alice Hospice or Cancer Research. (Condolences to Shirley Crowther – 25, Connaught Avenue, London, SW14 7RH)

Henry Leighton-Crawford – Henry's funeral will be held at St Mary Magdalene, Richmond, on 15 April 2025 at 12pm, followed by tea and coffee. All are welcome.

New: Electoral Roll Revision

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting and the three Annual Church Meetings will be held on 18 May this year and it is then that the church officers will be elected. Church officers are the Wardens, Deanery Synod Representatives, PCC lay members and Church Committee lay members.

Everyone who has been a member of one of our churches for a minimum of 6 months is eligible to vote.

As with national elections, we have to have an electoral roll for this. As our existing roll is now 6 years old it is no longer considered valid and we have to create a new one.

Creation of the new roll will start on Sunday, 30th March. To enrol you need to complete a registration form which will be available at the back of each church from that day. The completed form should be left in the collection post box provided for these. Enrolment will continue for four weeks, so don't worry if you cannot do it on 30th March.

NEW: Women in Iran

Wednesday, 19th March from 7:00 PM, at St Mary Magdalene

This event, part of the Richmond Liberal Democrats' 2025 Programme, will offer a unique opportunity to hear the stories of Iranian women who have courageously stood up for their rights.

Members of our local Iranian community will share personal journeys and narratives, shedding light on the remarkable resilience of women in Iran.

In addition to storytelling, we will be showcasing beautiful artwork inspired by the Women, Life, Freedom movement. As we approach the Persian New Year (Nowruz), which falls on March 20th, we will also introduce the traditions of this celebration, including a special display of the Haft-Sin table.

There will be drinks, Iranian nibbles, and pastries, making this an evening of culture, history, and community.

For more information, please contact Paul Browne – 07775 928624

NEW: Lent Lunch in support of Bishop Christopher's Lent Call

At St John the Divine on Wednesday 26 March between 12:00 and 14:00. Please join us for a simple lunch, for fellowship and to support the Bishop's projects in Southwark, Jerusalem and Zimbabwe.

It would be helpful if you could let us know that you are coming!

NEW: Lent Talk

Sunday 6 April 4pm at St John the Divine.

'Wings and Whispers: The Silent Battle Between Angels and Demons'

Joe Gunby, Director of Operations at St Elizabeth of Portugal RC Church, Richmond will give a talk exploring beliefs about angelic and demonic forces. All are welcome. Followed by Q&A.

NEW: Lent Book Recommendations

'Why Church? Christianity as it was meant to be' by Scott Cowdell

Church Publishing Inc £14.99

(978-1-64065-736-6)

This is a refreshing and positive book for those of us who like to learn from history - and from the Christian faith globally - as we ponder the Church in our own times. Cowdell passionately argues that the Church is essential to Christianity: Christ is the Vine and we are the branches. It is thoughtful, positive and encourages church in church buildings with the Eucharist at the centre. It is encouraging in approach and is good for Lent study with questions after every chapter.

'Healing Wounds: the 2025 Lent Book' by Erik Varden

Bloomsbury £12.99

(978-1-3994-1040-3)

Eric Varden is a Cistercian Monk and the book is based on a 13th Century poem by a fellow Cistercian monk who focussed on Christ's wounds (the hymn 'O Sacred Head, sore wounded' is thought to be derived from this poem). It is deep, unflinching in its description of Christ's wounds and invites us to consider our own woundedness, with a final chapter on Flourishing. Eric Varden prayerfully unwraps all of this, encouraging us to see that by Christ's wounds we are healed.

NEW: Choral and Organ Scholars 2025-2026

St Mary Magdalene, Richmond, seeks to appoint an Organ Scholar and four Choral Scholars (SATB) for the academic year 2025-2026 (September till end of July).

The Organ Scholar receives an annual honorarium of **£1,500 - £2,000** (depending on experience) and generous extra fees may be available for any weddings/funerals throughout the year.

The Choral Scholars are each paid an annual honorarium of **£1,500** plus extra fees for any weddings/funerals as available through the year.

The deadline for all scholarship applications is **12 noon, Tuesday 1 April 2025**. Auditions will take place on **Sunday 6 April and Friday 11 April**.

For an application pack, or for more information, please email

music.stmarys@richmondteamministry.org

Choral Evensong at St Peter's Petersham

Our current team of Choral Scholars will be joined by guests from the Elysian Singers to sing Charles Stanford's settings of the evening canticles *Magnificat* and *Nunc Dimittis* at a special service of Choral Evensong for the third Sunday of Lent, on **Sunday 23 March at 4pm**, accompanied by Barnaby Silverstone, Senior Organ Scholar at the Chapel Royal, Hampton Court Palace. They will open the service with a lush eight-part setting of the prayer *God be in my head*, and this service of reflection will come to a close with the hymn *Glory to Thee, my God, this night*, Tallis's famous Canon, a musical 'round' for the congregation to get stuck into! It will be a wonderful opportunity to celebrate our beautiful church at the close of the day, it's entirely free, and **all are welcome!**

Petersham Passion

Jeremy Summerly, conductor, musicologist, and broadcaster, returns to St Peter's church to direct a talented team of singers and players in a one hour charity concert on **Sunday 6 April 2025 at 5pm**. They will perform music from JS Bach's St John Passion and St Matthew Passion, with words read from the King James Bible by Stuart Turnbull, and all proceeds will go to supporting St Peter's & local community projects.

Suggested donation £15

Tickets: tinyurl.com/PetershamPassion

Enquiries: events.stpeterspetersham@gmail.com

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.

Appointment process for new RTM Team Rector and Vicar of SMM

Please do make use of the Suggestion Boxes which have been placed in each of the churches across the Team. Everyone is encouraged to have their say on the appointment of a new priest: what might be the qualities and gifts which we'd like our new priest to share with us. You may leave your suggestions and comments anonymously if you wish. Please do continue to pray for God's guidance and the discernment of the Holy Spirit as we work through the vacancy towards an appointment. If you have any questions, comments or concerns about the appointment process then please do speak with one of the Churchwardens, or with a member of the clergy. Thank you.

Reflective Walks 2025

Rev'd Anne's next reflective walk is on Friday 28 March. 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

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

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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