

Thursday 10 April 2025

Dear Friends,

This week, I have had the joy of attending an academic conference: The Society for the Study of Theology conference. Its theme this year has been Flesh and Blood Theologies: thinking about embodiment in relation to God.

It has been a very interesting few days, stretching my thinking in all manner of new directions.

By dint of not reading the abstracts of all the papers available to go and listen to, I accidentally attended several sessions which were completely unexpected: theology reflected in works of high fashion; the theology of experiential theatre, where distinctions between 'performer' and 'observer' become blurred; the voice as bodily (rather than thinking about speech as disembodied words).

And I have thought and heard a great deal about Christ's Body: born of Mary, dwelling among us, dying on the cross, still wounded in the resurrection, broken each Eucharist, composed of us. We've heard and talked about death and life; race and nationhood; skin and flesh; gender and blood.

Last night, several of us were reflecting on the papers which we enjoyed most, and what has been our favourite aspect of the three days. An extraverted friend declared that more than any of the papers, it's been the people and the experience of doing theology together in questions and conversations which he has most enjoyed.

It is a bit only a joy to do theology (God-talk) together, it is essential to do so. Theology is the work of community and creativity. Testing, together, our experience of who God is and who God is calling us to be. And our theological community, The Church, spans geographical and temporal boundaries. Early Church Fathers (from the first 4 centuries after the Ascension) still contribute to the conversation. And fresh thoughts and experiences are taken seriously and contribute to our joint understanding.

Just like we do at church: in chatting about the sermon over coffee, discussing the sermon, asking for someone's prayers, reflecting on the vacancy and discernment, describing to friends a situation or encounter.

We just find less use for words like 'ontological,' 'apophatic' and 'hermeneutic' in the theology we do.

Particularly, we do this work in Holy Week, often in silence, in action, and in music. Holy Week offers us the opportunity to do experiential, embodied theology together: to cheer Christ's arrival or to call for his blood, to have our feet washed, to wait in the garden, to watch in horror from the foot of the cross, to celebrate resurrected and eternal life.

It is my strong encouragement to you to join us for Holy Week, not just to move from Triumphal Entry on Palm Sunday to Triumphant Resurrection on Easter Day, but to make that journey together and with Christ along the road that leads to death and through death. To ask, again, what it means.

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, Epp Jones, Sarah Pryce, Peter O'Toole, Elisabeth Lourandos nee Chalmers
... **the departed, may they rest in peace** - Henry Leighton-Crawford

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: May Fair Saturday 10 May

We are excited to be running the May Fair again at St Mary Magdalene and in the church yard. There will be tower tours and a series of music and dance performances in the church as well as refreshments in the church and our fundraising stalls outside. HOW YOU CAN HELP. We need you all to start bringing your donations of books (please only books in good condition) and new bottles and unwanted gifts for the tombola (wine, bubble bath, oils, gift sets etc). We are also hoping to run a toy stall so again toys and childrens' books in good condition please. There will be boxes at the back of church. We will also need cakes and savoury items to be baked for the event so please start thinking about your best recipes. Just as importantly we need volunteers on the day and on the Sunday (as we will continue our book sale after church that day). There will be a rota at the back of church for sign up after Easter Sunday. Thank you for all your help.

New: Richmond Soup Kitchen News


As we near the end of the season, we wanted to take a moment to update you, express our gratitude for your continued support, and highlight some upcoming events, as well as share other ways you can contribute to our work.


This has been our busiest season to date. We've supported 1,240 guests, providing a hot meal, a warm welcome, and a listening ear to all who've come to visit us. None of this would have been possible without the dedication of our wonderful volunteers - 74 volunteers who have helped in the kitchen, served food, and spread kindness every step of the way. We've also had 51 cake and soup makers who have generously provided the homemade goods that make our work possible. To each and every one of you: thank you. We truly couldn't do this without you.

Upcoming Events – We'd Love to See You There!

Volunteer Thank You Tea

We're hosting a special afternoon tea to celebrate and thank all our amazing volunteers who give so much to our community.

 Saturday, 17th May

 2.00pm – 4.00pm

 St John the Divine Church, Kew Road, TW9 2NA

Feel free to bring a friend — the more, the merrier! There'll be plenty of tea, cake, and good company. Please do RSVP so we know how many to cater for.


Quiz & Curry Night – Fundraiser for Richmond Soup Kitchen

Come along for a fun evening of trivia, tasty food, and good company, all in aid of our work supporting local people in need.

 Saturday, 7th June

 6:30pm start

 St John the Divine Church Hall, Richmond


 £25 per ticket – includes a curry meal from Richmond Spice

 Quiz hosted by Interrupt the Routine

Menu

 Vegetable Samosa

 Butter Chicken or Tarka Daal (vegetarian)

 Saag Aloo & Pilau Rice

Only 60 tickets available — with tables of 4, 5, or 6 — so gather your team and book your place early!


 [Book via Eventbrite](#)


Special Thanks to Our Partners


- Richmond Spice – For delicious curry! [Visit their website](#)
- Interrupt the Routine – For hosting the quiz! [Visit their website](#)

Support Us at the May Fair!

We are honoured to be one of the causes chosen for support at this year's May Fair, organised by St Mary Magdalene Church, Richmond.

 Saturday, 10th May


 10.00am – 4.00pm


 St Mary Magdalene Church, Richmond

Money raised will help us continue providing hot meals and support to those in need in our community.

Petersham Open Gardens – Supporting RSK

Enjoy a rare opportunity to visit some of Petersham's most beautiful private gardens, with proceeds benefiting local causes, including Richmond Soup Kitchen.

 Sunday, 18th May

 11.00am – 5.00pm (last entry 4.30pm)

 Tickets: £12

 petershamopengardens.org

It's a wonderful day out for garden lovers and a lovely way to support our work in the community.

May Fair Donations Request

We're seeking donations for the May Fair tombola and stalls. If you're able to contribute any of the following items, it would be greatly appreciated:

- Books (new or good condition)
- New bottles (wine, bubble bath, oils, gift sets, etc.)
- Unwanted gifts (e.g., perfume, candles, bath sets)
- Toys and children's books
- Cakes and savoury baked goods for the event

You can bring your donations to St John the Divine Church during your volunteering session or when the soup kitchen is open. Every little bit helps!

Other Ways to Help – We Need You!

There are several ways you can contribute and support the vital work we do at Richmond Soup Kitchen:

- Join our social media team – Help spread the word by managing and sharing posts across our platforms.
- Volunteer in the kitchen – Join our team and support us in preparing meals for those in need.
- Help with food collections – If you have a vehicle, we'd love your help collecting surplus food donations.
- Offer a home for our freezer – Our current freezer is being moved, and we're looking for a new space (e.g., a garage or outbuilding) where it can be easily accessed.
- Get involved with upcoming events – We'd love extra hands at our Quiz & Curry Night and the May Fair — if you can volunteer, please get in touch!

Every bit of support makes a huge difference — we truly appreciate whatever you can offer.

Thank you once again for being such an important part of our community. Whether you're offering your time, skills, or a donation of baked goods, you help us create a safe, welcoming place for those who need it most.

With warmest wishes,

The Richmond Soup Kitchen Team

Easter Flowers

We will be collecting donations at all three churches towards the Easter flowers after each Sunday morning service in the run up to Easter. If you feel able to contribute we would be hugely grateful.

The Vacancy: Seeking a new Team Rector and Vicar of St Mary Magdalene

We have been reflecting on and praying for this vacancy, and about the qualities which we would like from a new Team Rector and Vicar of SMM for 4 months, and it is time for us to begin to collate all the thoughts and feedback. We are beginning the process of bringing together common themes, concerns and ideas for how we might best address the issues raised and take matters forward.

To that end, each church will want to convene a congregational meeting as soon as possible to discuss any matters which have not yet been voiced, about RTM and what we are looking for in a new Rector and Vicar: concerns, hopes, reflections, experiences, and joys! Conveners from each of the churches are organising these now. SMM will hold its congregational meeting after its 9:30am service on 6 April, and members of all the congregations at SMM are invited to come. SJD and SMT, notices will be given in church as soon as appropriate dates and times are agreed.

Following that, all three churches will meet together again, with a view to beginning work on a Parish Profile which reflects our wonderful Team Ministry, each of our churches, and the whole community in Richmond.

Goodbye to the Vicarage

The Vicarage on Ormond Road has been a place of meeting and eating, working, praying, learning and growing for decades!

We're going to have a short service mark the end of an era as the Vicarage goes on the market; to remember all that building has meant to the life of the church.

The service will be on the front steps of The Vicarage, Ormond Rd TW10 6TH on Saturday 12 April, at 12.15, followed by drinks and cakes in the garden. All are welcome!

Parish Office on the move

The parish office will be functioning as normal through to Easter and the week after Easter, but we have also started the first phase of the move to St Matthias Church.

The parish office meeting room, and the offices themselves already look much clearer!

The phone lines are continuing and the office is open the same times as before and our parish administrator John Palmer is still based in the basement office, as is Denise our bookings administrator. The timeline for the final phase of the move will be confirmed in our newsletter but is likely to be Monday 28 April.

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.

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 valid, has to go into the bin and we have to create a new one. This means everyone who would like to vote has to enrol; your name will not be brought forward from the old roll.

Creation of the new roll will start this Sunday 30 March. To enrol you need to complete an application form which will be available at the back of each church. The completed form should be left in the collection post box provided for these. Enrolment will continue up to and including Sunday 27 April.

A Scrubbie for life!

Jutta is crocheting long life scrubbies which save plastic and will also raise money for the piano fund. The beautiful scrubbies will be on sale during coffee at SMM from this weekend and also at the May Fair - don't delay, get your order in asap! - jutta@uwclub.net Colours to suit.

Save the Date: Beetle Drive – Friday 27 June, St Matthias Church

The RTM Green Team continues to explore ways to help us all on our sustainability journey, in particular with our goals under [Eco Church](#).

One aim of the Green Team is to “twin a toilet” for each of the three churches within the Team. <https://toilettwinning.org> is a charity that offers the twinning of a toilet which helps fund a project in a community that helps families to build their own basic toilet, access clean water and learn about hygiene.

To help raise funds for this, RTM is holding a **Beetle Drive at St Matthias on Friday 27 June, 7-9pm**. Please put the date in your diary. More details to follow!

RTM Green Team needs YOU!

As you will hopefully be aware, RTM has a Green Team, created to help us all on our sustainability journey, in particular with our aims under [Eco Church](#). The group is small but perfectly formed, representing the three churches but we are always looking for new and enthusiastic congregation members - young and not-so-young - to help with our current plans and of course to bring any new ideas. We meet three-four times a year, in person but also online - which is very green as no transport is required at all! If you would like to talk about joining us for one off projects or coming onto the Team, we would love to hear from you. Please contact Emma Meredith (emeredith@ctpa.org.uk). Many thanks.

Servers and Sacristans at St John the Divine

St John's is looking for those who might be willing to act as servers on Sundays at the I Am Eucharist. There are various roles that all contribute to the worship, including acolytes, thurifer and crucifer. This could be as often or as little as you're available. If you would like to find out what these roles entail, please do contact Rev'd Joe: joe.moore@richmondteamministry.org We are also looking for Sacristans, those who might be willing to help prepare the church for worship before Sunday services, including laying out the silver plate and vessels for Holy Communion and lighting candles. We are also looking for those who might be willing to clear away after the service too. Training and guidance will be offered.

Again, please contact Rev'd Joe on the email address above. Thank you!

Welcoming at St Mary's

St Mary's is open each weekday until 15:00 and on Saturday mornings between 10:00-12:00. Two people are present to welcome for two hours during these times. The lovely Welcomers are a quiet presence in church, and are very much appreciated by those who enjoy popping into St Mary's, whether by design or happy chance. It is an extremely important ministry.

If you feel moved to welcome for two hours during the week or on a Saturday morning, please contact Emma Meredith (emeredith@ctpa.org.uk).

There is also the opportunity to welcome at Choral Evensong on Sunday evenings at St Mary's, 18:30-19:30. Evensong is a beautiful service of quiet contemplative words and exquisite music. If you would be interested in welcoming at the service, again please contact Emma (emeredith@ctpa.org.uk). Thank you.

Faith In Ageing Poetry Competition

Embracing Age's poetry competition is back and open to anyone over the age of 50. For more information visit <https://www.embracingage.org.uk/poetry.html>

The closing date is Friday 9 May.

A New Piano for St Mary's

We are raising funds for a new piano for St Mary's. This will help with our ambition to make St Mary's a cultural hub in Richmond and a musical centre of excellence.

Full details can be found on our website - <https://richmondteamministry.org/news/>

Booklets are also available at the back of church.

Underground

The next Preteens (for 8-13) meet will be Sunday 13 April, 4-6pm: treasure hunt and BBQ at SMT.

Upcoming Funerals

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

Calling all teenagers!

We have started a new Dinner and Discussion group for teens. Our next session will be on Sunday 25 May, 6-8pm.

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

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.

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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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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