

Thursday 5 June 2025

Dear Friends,

June is Pride Month!

Occasionally, this morning included, people ask to speak to me about how I square my faith with queerness\*. If I am feeling sassy (not all that often) I like to ask how others square their faith with homophobia.

I speak of sassiness but actually, it is a genuine question. We all read the bible through a different lens. The lens is made up of all our preconceptions and assumptions. Many of us, myself included, were taught that the bible teaches that same-sex relationships are wrong, and that scripture forbids them. We were presented with 'clobber' verses lifted out of their context as evidence, and it was with this lens that we approach all scripture.

But... what if, we approach scripture with the assumption that queer lives are good and holy, that queer people are created in the image of God, that queer relationships can be hopeful, loving, joyful, holy, exciting, fun, and fulfilling?

What might we think then, when we read in 1 Samuel 18:1-3, that "When David had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was bound to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. Saul took him that day and would not let him return to his father's house. Then Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul"

Or that, when Jonathan died, David tore his clothes and cried for Jonathan and his father Saul, howling "greatly beloved were you to me, Jonathan; your love to me was wonderful, surpassing the love of women" (2 Samuel 1:26)?

What might we think when we read that Ruth clung to Naomi when she tried to send her away, and cried

'Do not press me to leave you or to turn back from following you!

Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge;  
your people shall be my people, and your God my God.

I Where you die, I will die— there will I be buried.

May the Lord do thus and so to me, and more as well,  
if even death parts me from you!' (Ruth 1:16-17)?

How about when we read that Joseph's dad gifted him a floor-length dress with long sleeves (depending how you translate כְּתֹנֶת פָּסִים) which prompted all his brothers to hate him, and despise him for his Father's loving kindness?

Or when we read of Paul's utter bafflement at the lure of romantic and sexual relationships, saying "I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has a particular gift from God, one having one kind and another a different kind." (1 Corinthians 7:7)

My point, I hope that you understand, is not that we *must* read scripture this way, but that we might. That there are other, different, diverse, affirming, exciting, open ways to read the bible, and to understand that people it describes. And to make us more aware of the assumptions which we bring to the bible, that we might see more clearly the lens which we wear to read it.

Wishing you all a curious, happy and holy Pride!

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

*This letter was written by The Revd Charlie Middleton*

\*I use this word extremely advisedly. I am aware that this word was and is used abusively: to other and exclude, to abuse and attack. I am fortunate to live in a culture which strives to reclaim the word. Personally, I find it helpful to scoop up together all LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, intersex, asexual, and other identities which exist outside the accepted norms of heterosexuality, cisness, and endosex-ness) in a word which has a checkered history and is now used by LGBTQ+ people with determined joy, to band us together in our diversity.

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**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, Philippa Morgan, Georgina Merchant, Gerald Fearn, Julie Burman

... **the departed, may they rest in peace** – Joy Pinnington, Peter Hallwood, Rachel Boulton

*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](mailto:richmondprayer.request@gmail.com) or post a request anonymously on the prayer board at the back of church in St Mary Magdalene.*

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**Church, Community and other news:**

**Richmond Soup Kitchen Fundraising Quiz Night!**

Come along to our Quiz Night Fundraiser on **Saturday 7 June** at 6:30pm at St John's Hall, Richmond. The evening will be hosted by a professional quiz master from Interrupt the Routine, and we'll be serving up a delicious curry dinner from Richmond Spice.

Tables of 4, 5, or 6 available

£25 per ticket – includes quiz entry and dinner

Corrected booking link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/richmond-soup-kitchen-quiz-and-curry-night-tickets-1311506584499?aff=oddttdtcreator>

All proceeds go directly towards supporting our work with vulnerable individuals in the community next winter. We'd love to see you there—bring your friends, test your trivia, and help make a difference!

If you're looking to create a team, or if you'd like to join a volunteer table, please contact Isabelle - [richmondsoupkitchen@gmail.com](mailto:richmondsoupkitchen@gmail.com)

**NEW: Rachel Boulton's funeral**

Rachel's funeral will be held at St John the Divine. The reception of the coffin into church will be Friday 13 June, 6pm. The funeral service is Saturday 14 June, 11.30am. A reception will follow in the Church Hall.

**NEW: Christ's School Year 5 Open Evening – Thursday 3 July, 5.30-7.30pm**

Christ's School is sometimes overlooked by families who assume that distance from the school affects their chances of securing a place. However, for our Christian places, distance is not a factor. Instead, we require evidence of regular church attendance - at least twice per month for two years prior to application. A supplementary form can be downloaded from our website for you to complete - <https://www.christs.richmond.sch.uk/>

We warmly invite you to our Year 5 open evening to experience Christ's School community - rooted in the Christian values of love, justice, and peace - where every student is supported to fulfil their God-given potential.

Booking is not required to attend this event, Headteacher's talks are allocated on a first come, first served basis; arrive early to avoid disappointment. We are unable to offer any onsite parking

### **NEW: Update on the Beam Works at St Mary Magdalene**

The extra scaffolding went up this week to enable further investigations. Next week this investigative work will continue but it is not envisaged that this will result in any planned closures of St Mary's. Safety is our primary concern, so our builders are authorised to close the church at short notice if they deem it is necessary. Please avoid the cordoned off areas.

We are making progress, working towards a resolution and completion in the coming weeks. We thank you for your prayers and patience.

Best Wishes

Anthony & John - Churchwardens

### **Update on The Vacancy**

The advertisement for the position of Vicar of St Mary Magdalene and Team Rector of Richmond Team Ministry was placed in the Church Times for a second time last Friday. The Closing date for applications is Sunday 15 June with interviews on Thursday 10 July. Prayers that God sends the right candidate.

### **A New Piano for St Mary's - \*\*FINAL CALL FOR DONATIONS\*\*! Only £9,000 to go!**

Fundraising for our new piano is going very well indeed, and we hope to have some specific news very soon. The very same keys which are up for sponsorship are being restored and shaped as we speak, and the piano will be ready in a matter of weeks. With several generous promises and donations, we're very close to our £100,000 goal. We are now looking at closing the final gap, and we only need a further £9,000 of individual donations to reach our target. Please contact Seb for any final gifts/key sponsorship.

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

### **Alpha is Coming to the Richmond Team Ministry – Get Involved!**

We're excited to announce that a Team Alpha Course will be running on Monday evenings from 22nd September 2025 at St John the Divine.

Alpha is a relaxed and welcoming course that creates space for people to explore life, faith, and meaning. It's especially aimed at those who are new to church, curious about Christianity, or just asking life's big questions. Each session involves a simple meal, a short film, and open, honest discussion in small groups.

There are many ways you can be part of this:

- Pray regularly for the course, for those leading and attending.
- Invite friends, neighbours, and colleagues who might be interested.
- Serve by helping to prepare and serve the meals.
- Set up or pack away the space before and after sessions.
- Facilitate or support a small group discussion.

Whether you've done Alpha before or are completely new to it, we'd love your help in making it a welcoming and fruitful time for all involved.

To offer help, register interest, or find out more, please speak to/email Joe at St John's or contact the Parish Office.

[joe.moore@richmondteamministry.org](mailto:joe.moore@richmondteamministry.org) or [admin@richmondteamministry.org](mailto:admin@richmondteamministry.org)

As we seek to be Christ Centred and Outward Focused, let's share the invitation of the Gospel together!

### **Talk about Death - Saturday 14 June, 2pm at St Mary's**

An afternoon where we hope to take the fear away about talking about death and prepare each other for the next stage of our journey. We will have a series of short talks on a variety of topics, with music between each talk. Talks to include theology of death, marking a death, what the undertakers do, the journey of grief, managing probate. Refreshments afterwards. Hosted by Charlie, Nicky and Maia.

### **Confirmations 2025**

+Christopher, Bishop of Southwark, will be joining RTM for St Mary Magdalene's patronal festival on 20 July, and he has kindly agreed to confirm candidates from all three churches during the Team Service. If you are considering taking this step on your faith journey, please contact Charlie on [charlie.middleton@richmondteamministry.org](mailto:charlie.middleton@richmondteamministry.org)

Confirmation preparation classes will take place over 4 sessions in June and July: dates to be confirmed, based on candidates availability.

### **Embracing Age Quiz Night - Friday 6 June at Stephen's Church, Twickenham, TW1 2PD**

Doors open at 7:30pm for 8pm start. Bar and light refreshments available.

Suggested donation £5.00 per ticket. Come as a team (up to 6 people) or join one on the night.

Advance booking is essential. Please visit <https://www.embracingage.org.uk/quiz.html> or phone 020 3778 0035

Embracing Age is a Richmond based Christian charity mobilising trained volunteers to befriend older care home residents.

### **Thy Kingdom Come family-friendly celebration - Pentecost Sunday, 8 June 2025, from 3:00 to 5:00pm at Southwark Cathedral**

This year's theme for Thy Kingdom Come is 'Light up the world in prayer' and to mark the global wave of prayer, Southwark Diocese is inviting people to join a family-friendly celebration, which will take a place on Pentecost Sunday, 8 June 2025, from 3:00 to 5:00pm at Southwark Cathedral. We warmly invite you and your children to join us for a meaningful and multi-sensory celebration of the Holy Spirit, as part of *Thy Kingdom Come*.

The event will be specially designed by Rachael Gledhill (Associate Vicar of St John the Evangelist, Upper Norwood) and Sharon Moughtin (Vicar of St Mary in the Wilderness and author of *Diddy Disciples*). You will hear the story of Pentecost in an interactive storytelling session using song and movement, created for the wriggliest and chattiest among us. Plus explore and celebrate the many meanings of Pentecost together across different sensory stations.

- Through touch create swirling patterns of fire with rice dyed with fiery colours
- Through taste (and edible friendship bracelets!) celebrate the Holy Spirit as our friend and comforter who gives us boldness to pray in turn for our friends
- Through smell, explore the call to be 'the aroma of Christ' to others, rubbing herbs to wake up their scent and creating mini herb bags to gift to others
- Create a sight for the eyes, making fiery headbands to remember the story of tongues of fire dancing on the heads of the apostles
- Make a joyful noise with shakers made from discarded plastic bottles: the Holy Spirit can create beautiful new things even from the things and moments we see as waste

The event is open to all and free to attend. Refreshments will be provided.

To book, visit: <https://tinyurl.com/2m7uf6xj>

### **Saturday 14 June - Heidi will be ordained priest**

Heidi Munn was ordained deacon in June last year after having spent two years training at St Mary Magdalene and is currently a curate at Norbury Church near Stockport. Heidi reports that it has been a more challenging first year as curate than she had been expecting as her vicar moved to a

new post in February. But God had prepared her for the challenges, not least through the excellent grounding that she had whilst at RTM. Heidi is pleased to announce that she will be ordained priest in a service at Chester Cathedral at 4pm on Saturday 14 June. Heidi would welcome your prayers at this further significant step in her ministry. If anyone is interested in attending the service in person, do let Heidi know by emailing [heidi.munn@btinternet.com](mailto:heidi.munn@btinternet.com). Alternatively the service should be watchable through the Cathedral's livestream. Heidi prays that both the vacancy at Norbury Church and at RTM are filled quickly with God's chosen candidates.

### **RTM Beetle Drive: Friday 27 June St Matthias Church – Book Your Tickets!**

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, and you can book your tickets now for an evening of fun for all the family. £10 for adults and £5 for children. A Ploughman's Supper is included in the ticket, feel free to BYOB. A raffle will also be held. Email Emma ([emeredit@ctpa.org.uk](mailto:emeredit@ctpa.org.uk)) to book.

The RTM Green Team looks forward to seeing you there!

A poster can be downloaded [here](#)

### **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 ([emeredit@ctpa.org.uk](mailto:emeredit@ctpa.org.uk)). Many thanks.

### **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 ([emeredit@ctpa.org.uk](mailto:emeredit@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 ([emeredit@ctpa.org.uk](mailto:emeredit@ctpa.org.uk)). Thank you.

### **Parish Office has now moved**

We are now settling in at St Matthias. Access to the office is via the Church Road entrance. There is a buzzer labelled Parish Office on the left hand side beyond the outer door. Please be patient as we are upstairs!

Our new address is Parish Office, St Matthias Church, Church Road, Richmond, TW10 6LR

Unfortunately we are still unable to receive incoming phone calls, but we are still checking the old landlines for voicemails first thing daily Monday-Thursday in the old office but you may find it easier to email us and our emails are:-

John Palmer – [admin@richmondteamministry.org](mailto:admin@richmondteamministry.org)

John Rushe (property manager) – [property.manager@richmondteamministry.org](mailto:property.manager@richmondteamministry.org)

Denise (bookings administrator) – [bookings@richmondteamministry.org](mailto:bookings@richmondteamministry.org)

James (verger) – [verger@richmondteamministry.org](mailto:verger@richmondteamministry.org)

We will respond as soon as we can, thank you.

### **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, St Matthias Church, Church Road, Richmond TW10 6LR  
020 8940 0362  
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St Mary Magdalene • St Matthias • St John the Divine  
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