

Thursday 26 June 2025

Dear Friends,

Because of the island's great beauty and attractive physical features, tourists visit Aay all year round – to the west and south Aay has a vast shallow lagoon enclosed by reefs, and on the northern side, open to the sea, several of the beaches receive high surf. The tropical climate is pleasantly moderated by the trade winds.

'Aay: Island of Winds' from *The Islanders*

Presently, I am reading *The Islanders* by Christopher Priest (author of *The Prestige*, which you may have heard of, among many other excellent titles). *The Islanders* is a travellers/tourist/visitors guide to a vast belt of islands which cover the equator of a world where the nations to the north and the south are at war with one another.

It is ideal reading for this time of year, as the weather shifts: muggy and sticky, to dry and hot, to warm and windy, to shady and thick, and the lives of the islanders are so readily affected by the whims and caprices of the weather. (As we just passed the Summer Solstice, perhaps we recognise that in our own lives too: I am quite sure that I have heard more car horns recently, as tempers heat up with the mercury.)

However, the entries in *The Islanders* are less concerned with hotels and languages and currencies, than with telling stories which give you a far more fundamental and fulsome sense of each island: the story of a scientific exploration gone horribly wrong; the work, life, and affairs of an artist whose art made the island famous; the necessary moral and legal controls on an island where they have cured death.

Now, why am I telling you about the novel I am reading at the moment? Partly, to recommend it to you for some slightly more unusual and unnerving summer reading! But also, because it has had me reflecting on the Bible.

The Islanders is a collection of stories, from different times (centuries apart, though it's hard to tell exactly when they're set, or when 'now' is), from different places, describing different people with more or less context, cut through with themes; of island lives, the effects of the climate, the abiding nature of humanity. And one story which is woven through the text, appearing sometimes and then not for a few islands, about the death of an innocent man.

We pick up a copy of the Bible, and it feels to us complete, cohesive, a single volume. Or we see a paragraph, lifted from its context and popped into our Sunday Service Sheets. However, it is a collection of stories, from different times (centuries apart, it's hard to tell exactly when they're set, though there are some clues and indications), from different places (Palestine, Egypt, Turkey, Greece, Syria, Yemen) with names which are more or less familiar to us (Jerusalem, Rome, Penuel, Ur, Nazareth, Gilead), describing people with more or less context, cut through with themes: of God's enduring love, the hope of salvation, the abiding nature of humanity. And one story which is woven through the text, appearing sometimes and then not for a few chapters, about the coming of the messiah and the death (and resurrection and ascension) of an innocent man.

Now, the late Christopher Priest may not have appreciated my take on his favourite of his own works, but I say this because I think that it is good and helpful to recognise the strangeness and otherness of scripture. It is a compilation of art, story, history, song, prophecy, poetry, spanning 2000 years, inspired (in creation and compilation) by the Holy Spirit of God. And God still speaks by and through it.

I hope that this letter has inspired you to have a read. Perhaps you want to try Esther (4th century BCE) an Old Testament national story which reads like a pantomime, in which the good guys triumph and the bad guys get their comeuppance), or Jonah (probably post-Exilic, 2nd century

BCE) which tells the story of an angry, selfish little man whom God calls, and through whom God saves thousands) or the swashbuckling adventures of Paul at Sea in Acts 27-28 (around 100 AD). Perhaps with the support of the [Bible Project](#) or the [SPCK Exploring Guides](#). Enjoy your summer reading!

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** - Marc Cranfield-Adams, Epp Jones, Sarah Pryce, Peter O'Toole, Elisabeth Lourandos nee Chalmers, Philippa Morgan, Georgina Merchant, Gerald Fearn, Julie Burman, Paul & Caity Manning, Jennifer Thornton, Crista Brown
... **the departed, may they rest in peace** – Eva Viski

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: Wilma in Tel Aviv

Wilma and Ann are hoping to fly back tomorrow and would appreciate our prayers for a safe passage home.

NEW: St John's is now on Instagram!

Follow St John's on Instagram:
[@stjohnsrichmond9](#)

NEW: Visitation Service – thanks to all involved

On Wednesday 18 June, Richmond Team Ministry hosted 200 churchwardens and their supporters, from throughout the Wandsworth Archdeaconry. We received feedback from Charlie, the Archdeacon's PA that "It was such a special evening, and many of the churchwardens (and priests!) said it was the best one they'd been to." And our new Archdeacon Bridget likewise commended the team for their tremendous efforts for this special service.

Our sincere thanks to everyone who helped with hospitality, welcoming, safety, music, and clearing up. Wonderful work, and so very much appreciated!

Scrubbies for a Steinway – with thanks

A note of heartfelt thanks to Jutta's daughter, Phili, for her fantastic effort in raising money for the piano fund at St Mary Magdalene.

Jutta has been crocheting eco-friendly dishwashing scrubbies, and Phili - who runs [Naked Larder](#), a plastic and packaging-free grocery business based in Herne Hill, South London, has been selling them through her shop. It is a perfect partnership, as these reusable cotton scrubbies are a sustainable alternative to plastic sponges and last much longer.

Thanks to her hard work, Phili has raised an impressive £142 for the Steinway Model D!

NEW: Introducing the Richmond Women's Hub – Supporting Women in Richmond

Richmond Women's Hub is a free, welcoming weekly space for women in the borough - particularly those affected by domestic abuse, violence, isolation, or mental health challenges. They meet every Wednesday from 11:00 AM to 2:30 PM at The Vineyard Community Centre, Richmond, TW10 6AQ.

Sessions include:

- Wellbeing activities (e.g. mindfulness, tea and coffee, choir)
- Creative workshops and pampering
- A hot lunch
- Peer support and a safe, friendly environment
- Free access to an experienced psychotherapist

More information is available at: voh.org.uk/richmond-womens-hub

NEW: Job Opportunities at HTR

Holy Trinity Richmond are currently looking for an Office Administrator (full time, initial six-month contract) and a Youth Pastor (0.6, with possibility of expanding to full time) to join their staff team. Please go to htrichmond.org.uk/jobs for further details.

NEW: Bishop Martin's Pennine Way Challenge

This August, my faithful border collie Jem and I will be running 267 miles in ten days along the Pennine Way, sponsored by people in churches in the KEA to raise money for children's education in Zimbabwe.

I'm inspired to take on this challenge – running a marathon a day for 10 days – by the incredible children and teachers I met on my trip to Matabeleland last year, many of whom are currently forced to walk long distances in remote areas to get to school. The money raised will help build local schools and improve children's education.

We have also made a short film about this challenge, which can be found [HERE](#). My Just-Giving page can be found [HERE](#).

Jem and I set off on August 1st, and you can follow our progress on X, Instagram, and other channels.

Best wishes and prayers,

Martin

Update on The Vacancy

The position for Vicar of St Mary Magdalene and Team Rector of Richmond Team Ministry closed for applications on Sunday 15 June. Interviews will take place on Thursday 10 July. Prayers that God sends the right candidate.

A New Piano for St Mary's - SUNDAY 29 JUNE - **FINAL CALL FOR DONATIONS**

We are looking at wrapping up our fundraising efforts by SUNDAY 29 JUNE, so now is the time to give if you haven't yet done so. Please contact Seb for any final gifts/key sponsorships.

Christ School Governors vacancy

We are currently looking for a new foundation governor for Christ's School. Four Foundation Governors are appointed by the PCC of the Richmond Team and we have an empty space. If you are interested and would like to contribute to the life and work of this Church of England

Secondary School, please have a conversation with Rev'd Joe or Faye Johnstone. A visit to the school is also strongly recommended.

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 (emeredithe@ctpa.org.uk) to book.

The RTM Green Team looks forward to seeing you there!

A poster can be downloaded [here](#)

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

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

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

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 or admin@richmondteamministry.org

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

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.

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.

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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