

Thursday 31 July 2025

Dear Friends,

One of our nation's favourite hymns, 'Guide Me O Thou Great Redeemer', is sung to the Welsh tune 'Cwm Rhondda', composed by John Hughes, a devout Christian from the mining town of Pontypridd in Rhondda Cynon Taf, South Wales. Like so many children of his generation in South Wales (he was born in 1873) John began working in the mines when he was 12 years old, and gradually worked his way up to a managerial role, but it was for his faith and his music that he is best remembered. Music has the ability to speak for us in ways words just can't, and Cwm Rhondda is loved as much for the stirring tune as for its lyrics, written by another Welshman William Williams.

I mention John Hughes because the chapel where he wrote his famous hymn tune has been in the news this week. Due to the decline in church attendance the Chapel has fallen on hard times and the Baptist Union cannot afford to carry out much needed repairs to the building to keep it open. The Chapel is now up for sale - it can be yours for the princely sum of £47,000. John wrote Cwm Rhondda to celebrate the Chapel's anniversary in 1907 during its heyday, and I don't expect he imagined then that the Christian faith would one day be in decline in South Wales, and the numbers coming to worship would drop so dramatically, that the Chapel would become redundant and be sold for housing.

There is hope that the Chapel will be bought now by the community to be used as a community centre – one local lady expressed sadness at the loss of the building as a chapel, but said that what was needed now was not religion but social enterprise and a place for lonely people to meet, which struck me not just as sad but a missed opportunity by the church, which really ought to be at the centre of a community offering hope and a place to belong and be known and be seen. As the daughter of a Yorkshire miner, I know how central the church was in my childhood – Anglican, Methodist and Baptist communities thriving in the town around the pits where my dad worked. Life was hard and the church was at the centre of social cohesion, especially when disaster struck and the community was grieving and in pain. That the Church is not needed now in an area where it was so strong and Christianity had such a strong and vital influence is sadly a sign of our times.

There is a warning in this for all of us who are tempted to believe that our heritage will save us, that our churches will be safe because they are historic buildings, have beautiful artwork or stained glass or magnificent organs, or because great things once happened inside them or for them, or the great and the good worshipped there. The reality is that unless our churches are home to a living, breathing, active Church community with Christ at the centre, they will die and our heritage sold for a pittance. As St Mark might say, we have much to do and no time to waste, if we are to bring Christ back to the centre of community life, and be the outward facing, mission focussed disciples he calls us to be.

So today, why not find a recording of John Hughes's hymn tune online, and use the lyrics written by William Williams to prayerfully ask for guidance for our Team's wellbeing and ministry as we journey together through the next few months of vacancy and strive to make Christ known in Richmond in our own day and age:

'Guide me, O thou great Redeemer,
Pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but thou art mighty;
Hold me with thy powerful hand:
Bread of Heaven, bread of heaven,
Feed me now and evermore.'

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

This letter was written by The Revd Anne Crawford

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, Elisabeth Lourandos nee Chalmers, Philippa Morgan, Georgina Merchant, Gordon Hamilton (Georgina's father), Gerald Fearn, Julie Burman, Paul & Caity Manning, Jennifer Thornton, Christa Browne, Cynthia Hill, Barbara Adamson
... **the departed, may they rest in peace** – Susan Robinson

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: Parish Rooms Update

The PRWG are pleased to bring the good news that (having secured the necessary go-ahead from the Council in July), construction work will start on site on 18th August. The build is expected to take about a year.

We hope to maintain good relations with the local community. The PRWG will be contacting all the near neighbours before 18th August, to brief them on the project. Thereafter, the main contractor will distribute an introductory letter to the neighbours, followed by a monthly update. In addition, the site hoarding design will include an RTM-branded description of the project and regular progress postings from the contractor.

The whole project is being managed by our professional design team (including our architect and quantity surveyor) together with the main contractor. The Parish Office will not be involved in management of the project. If you have any comments or queries, please contact Judith on judith.r.pearson@btinternet.com

Parish Rooms Working Group

Judith Pearson (Chair), Maia Rushby, The Rev Joe Moore, John Buckingham, Martin Brecknell

NEW: SAVE THE DATE: Talk from Eco Church - Sunday 7 September

RTM is committed to sustainable development as a guiding principle. Our aim is to reduce the impact on the environment from our churches and other buildings that we own and/or occupy, our employees and volunteers, and strive to make our congregations and local communities more aware of how we need to care for God's creation around us. The RTM PCC has agreed that each church should join the [Ecochurch Scheme](#) and work towards its goals as part of each church's MAP (Mission Action Plan).

On the afternoon of Sunday 7 September, Helen Stephens, Church Relations Manager, A Rocha UK, will be presenting a session for RTM. Eco Church is an [A Rocha UK](#) programme. Sunday 7 September aptly falls at the start of [Creationtide](#). While full details of the event will follow, do please put the date in your diary.

NEW: Beetle Drive Success!

Very many thanks to all who attended and supported the RTM Green Team Beetle Drive on Friday 27 June. It was an extremely fun event, and wonderful to see everyone get really involved and excited! Congratulations to Allan on his win!

My thanks to Anne and Sally for their generous hospitality in hosting us at St Matthias; to Pat and Bella for their help on the night; and to everyone who helped to clear up.

Thanks to everyone's generosity on the night and the kind donations, I am delighted to say that we raised £370! This fantastic total means we will be able to twin two toilets for each church in RTM, helping to fund projects in a community that helps families to build their own basic toilet, access clean water and learn about hygiene.

<https://toilettwinning.org>

Emma Meredith

NEW: Article: "I'm witnessing the deliberate starvation of Gaza's children – why is the world letting it happen?"

Prof Nick Maynard is the son of one of our congregation, Pat Maynard. He is a consultant surgeon at Oxford university hospital who has been travelling regularly to Gaza for 15 years. He is volunteering with Medical Aid for Palestinians at Nasser hospital in Gaza. Below is the link to his recent article in The Guardian.

https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/jul/22/gaza-israel-deliberate-starvation-ceasefire-aid?CMP=share_btn_url

NEW: Bishop Martin's run of the Pennine Way has started!

Make sure to follow his progress on social media and sponsor him to raise money for children's education in Matabeleland: tinyurl.com/4dudv4fn

Bishop's Certificate 2025/26

Sign-ups are open for the 2025/26 Bishop's Certificate, Southwark Diocese's 'life-changing' course covering the Bible, Christian history and belief, and living as a follower of Jesus. If you've been thinking of signing up this coming year - or if you know a friend or someone in your parish who would enjoy the course - email bishopscertificate@southwark.anglican.org to receive an application pack. You don't have to be academically inclined to enjoy the course. People of all ages, backgrounds, and traditions enjoy it every year. Places are filling up fast, so don't delay!

Christ School Governors vacancies

We are currently looking for two new foundation governors for Christ's School. Four Foundation Governors are appointed by the PCC of the Richmond Team and we have two empty spaces. 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 Fay Johnstone -

fsijohnstone@gmail.com

A visit to the school is also strongly recommended.

Part-time Job for Christian Charity, Embracing Age

The Richmond-based Christian Charity Embracing Age is seeking an Administrator to the CEO. This flexible and hybrid role would be a great opportunity for someone looking to work part-time (10-12 hours) providing high-level administrative support to the CEO while helping the charity make a real difference to older care home residents and unpaid carers, and equipping churches. For full details and to apply, please visit: www.embracingage.org.uk/jobs.html
Closing date Monday 1 September.

The Nicene Creed

A 4-week exploration of this ancient text is taking place at Barnes Methodist Church, Station Road, Barnes, SW13 0NH. Thursdays, 10.30-12.00 noon, starting 11 September. All welcome and questions encouraged!

Confident Faith in a Changing World

Kingston Area Lay Conference – Sat 20 Sept 10am – 4pm
at St Cecilia's Church School, Sutherland Grove, SW18 5JR
Southfields Tube station 5 mins walk.
Keynote speaker – Rowan Williams. All Welcome.
Tea, Coffee, lunch included.
See poster in church for more details.



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 will run for 10 weeks starting at 7pm and over by 9:15pm. We will break for a week on 27th October, so no Alpha that week.

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!

Date for your diary – Sunday 28 September

Charlie, our delightful curate, will celebrate her last service at St. Mary Magdalene on Sunday 28 September at **10.30am**. It will be a Team Service followed by shared lunch.

A time to express our love and thanks for her caring commitment to the community these last 4 years. An account has been opened should you wish to contribute to a leaving present.

Richmond Team Ministry Acc No 4.

Sort code: 60-17-31

Acc No: 60595477.

Reference 'Charlie'

Alternatively, I'm happy to receive cash in an envelope marked 'Charlie', at any 9.30 service at St Mary Magdalene's church.

Pat Johnston

Autumn Bible Study: Book of Jonah

Join our 4-part Bible Study on the Book of Jonah this autumn at St John the Divine. Tuesdays: 30 Sept, 7, 14, 21 Oct. Morning sessions (10am-11:15am) in person; evening sessions (8pm-9:15pm) in person and online. To express interest, contact Joe: joe.moore@richmondteamministry.org
All are welcome!

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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