

Thursday 12 February 2026

Dear Friends,

As I write this, the rain clouds continue to roll as they have so persistently this year so far, and governments continue to reel from the latest revelations of appalling behaviour and poor judgement, so eagerly seized upon by our social media- 'trending' I think is the word.

Yet there is good news in our little corner of the world because in just over a week's time the Richmond Team Ministry will be welcoming a new Team Rector and Vicar for St Mary Magdalene, a new season will be starting with Rev'd Robert Stanier just as Lent is beginning too. I pray that the wider church- and the significance of church serving its wider community, as the Lord and the apostle Paul in particular instructed - enables growth in faith. We know that people search for meaning in their lives amongst the chaos and deceptions of the world, where sadly and so often there is more anxiety about 'being found out' than striving every day to be of good heart. Our faith as Christians is a faith of the heart. Last week our Gospel reading in church was from the Sermon on the Mount. Those three chapters of Matthew, chapters 5, 6 and 7, Jesus' direct teaching to his disciples then - and to us now, speak of humility, love, forgiveness and generous care for our neighbours. The Sermon on the Mount is probably Jesus' most well-known direct teaching and is still so relevant to be learned and lived today, shockingly so in a world where humility, forgiveness, love and generous care for others is not so obviously present on the wider world stage.

Yet as we each prepare ourselves for Lent next week, I think there is in individual action, much evidence of these qualities when we look around us and celebrate them wherever we encounter them. I want to share one example of this from a ministry that I have undertaken in the last year during the vacancy at St Mary Magdalene church, which is funeral ministry. Members of our wider community may ask for a funeral in our churches or ask for a Church of England funeral in the local crematorium. This example is from someone unknown to any of us sadly, a very elderly man without family who died and whose small home, which he rented, was cleared immediately afterwards so that another needy person could have somewhere to live. There were not even any photos of him. I was given a contact to follow up, a near neighbour and he explained that earlier last year this elderly man, a polite and pleasant person, had not been seen for some time and with another neighbour they managed to gain entry to his home. They found him very ill in bed. He had been ill for some time and virtually bedridden. He was so ashamed of his circumstances that he did not seek help beyond basic deliveries on the doorstep. The neighbours around him decided to come together and help him, literally doing everything for him: cleaning, caring, feeding and supporting him for months, sitting with him, reading to him, bringing him a beer and being a good friend. Eventually he had to go into hospital where he died a few days later, and just before he died, he asked for a Church of England funeral. When I came to the Crematorium to take the funeral he was not alone, because the neighbours had come en masse. They were his brothers and sisters before God as we bade him farewell and talking to them afterwards, it was very moving. It was love and care in action. I have seen, through funeral ministry in the last year, some of the most striking examples of those qualities that Jesus taught us to have, and which are so rarely celebrated openly: humility, forgiveness, love, and care for others.

There are many Lent books and other means of support as we all look to see how we can tread our own paths as disciples. For me, the Sermon on the Mount, which includes our Lord's prayer, together with Jesus' prayers for us all in the Gospel of John Chapter 17, will be my own guide. I have been privileged to be part of the Richmond team Ministry for 33 years, some 15 or so as a lay minister, a Team Reader, cared for and supported by many of you during this long period of my life. Early in Lent, there will be a new season for me, as I move to worship closer to my home in Kew following my retirement from work in the summer. Thank you for all you have given me, for the nurturing of my own faith amongst you and the countless examples I have seen of humility, forgiveness, love, and care for others in your midst. My prayers for you all and for Robert and his family as the Richmond Team plans to welcome him.

Ruth

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

This letter was written by Lay Canon Ruth Martin

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. For all pregnant women and new mothers in Bethlehem, and all who care for them and their babies in the Holy Family Hospital.

... **Christ Church**, the Anglican Church in Kyiv, and the people of Ukraine

... **Christ's School**, and other schools in the parish

... **All who work in the media**, especially those who risk their lives working in places of war and conflict.

... **Richmond Soup Kitchen**, for all guests and volunteers

... **Christians of Congo**

... **the sick and those in need** - Epp Jones, Sarah Pryce, Georgina Merchant, Gerald Fearn, Julie Burman, Paul & Caity Manning, Christa Browne, Irene Chalmers, Sabine Staton, Frances Irwin,

... **the departed, may they rest in peace** – Jennifer Lock, Gilly Valentine, Gordon Hamilton (Georgina's father), Barbara Adamson, Robert Thorp, John Cliff, Patricia Pyle, Susan Cox

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: The SMM prayer group meets regularly to pray in confidence over specific prayer needs. Please send your prayer requests to: richmondprayer.request@gmail.com or post a request anonymously on the prayer board at the back of SMM.

If you (or a loved one) would like to receive home communion, or if you would welcome a home or hospital visit from one of the pastoral care team, please do get in touch with the church office (admin@richmondteamministry.org)

PRAYER & WORSHIP:

St John the Divine's Sunday service at 11.00am is both in-person and live-streamed via their [Facebook page](#). 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 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 on someone else's behalf.

St Mary Magdalene's Sunday services are at 8.00am, 9.30am, and 6.30pm.

Midweek Said Eucharist at 10.00am every Wednesday, followed by coffee and biscuits.

St Matthias' Sunday service is an in-person service at 9.30am Midweek Said Eucharist at 10.00am every Thursday followed by coffee and biscuits.

Orders of service / readings for all three churches can be found on the News page of our website – here: <https://richmondteamministry.org/news/>

Morning Prayer, Monday – Fridays, at 8.30am:

Morning Prayer takes place in church and on Teams. St Matthias on Mondays and Fridays, St John the Divine on Tuesdays, and St Mary Magdalene on Wednesdays and Thursdays.

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 John Palmer if you have any concerns about this or need a hand with the tech.

Evening Prayer Wednesday at 5pm, St Matthias

Private Prayer:

St Mary Magdalene is normally open for visiting and prayer Monday – Friday 8am until 3pm and Saturday 10.00am until 12.00noon.

Lent begins with **Ash Wednesday on 18th February**, and we warmly encourage everyone to mark the start of the season as we turn again towards God in prayer, reflection, and hope. There will be three opportunities to receive the impositions of ashes:

Outside Richmond Station 7:30am-8:15am – Rev'd Joe will offer 'Ashes to Go' to those on their way to work and passers by.

Said Eucharist with Ashing at St Mary Magdalene 10am – Rev'd Dr Hannah Swithinbank, Assistant Curate in the Kew Benefice, will lead this reflective service.

Team Eucharist at St Mary Magdalene at 7:30pm – A Team act of worship to begin Lent at which Rev'd Anne will preside and Rev'd Joe will offer a reflection.

CHURCH NEWS:

NEW: Quarter Peal Attempt

The bell ringers at St Mary Magdalene will be attempting a quarter peal on Sunday 15 February at 12 noon with the intention of dedicating it to Ruth Martin.

NEW: Another GREEN project

Recycle your Birthday cards - please do drop these into the boxes at the back of the three churches. Richmond Soup Kitchen volunteers will recycle these into beautiful gift tags for fundraising - thank you

NEW: Recital+Choral Compline (6.30pm) at St Mary's

Following on from our successful pilot in Advent, the following two Sunday evensongs will be replaced with a recital followed by Choral Compline.

Sunday 1 March - Biber/Bach - Violin Sonatas

Maxim Del Mar (Violin)

Seb Gillot (Harpsichord)

Sunday 8 March - Scholars and Friends

Music from SMM Choral Scholars to mark both the penitential season and International Women's Day

Ruth Martin's Leaving Collection is closing today.

We are keen to mark Ruth's leaving the Team and are inviting contributions towards a gift for her. The collection is closing next Thursday 12th so please make sure to contribute before then if you would like to. You can either hand cash gifts to Anthony Bell or John Buckingham at St Mary's or

you can make a direct transfer to the Richmond Team Ministry No. 3 bank account, sort code 60-17-31 and account No. 27091619, marking your gift 'Ruth'.

Embroidery and Art Exhibition at St Matthias



The poster is for an exhibition titled 'CELEBRATING THE WORK OF JACQUIE BINNS'. It features the Richmond Team Ministry logo at the top left and the text 'ART EXHIBITION' at the top right. The central image is a highly detailed, textured embroidery of a bird with large, golden-yellow wings spread wide, set against a dark blue and purple background. Below the image, the exhibition details are listed: 'St Matthias Church', '13th - 15th Feb 2026', 'Fri/Sat 10.00 - 17.00', 'Sun 12.00 - 16.00', 'ADMISSION FREE', and 'Scan here to visit artist's website' with a QR code. At the bottom, it says 'LORD HARRIES OF PENTREGARTH, former BISHOP OF OXFORD is the Preacher at the Eucharist, St Matthias, SUN 15th FEB 09.30. Please join us.' The footer includes the church address 'St Matthias Church, Church Road, Richmond TW10 6LS' and the website 'www.richmondteamministry.org'.

Job Vacancy

We are seeking a self-employed cleaner required for 12 hours per week initially. 6hrs at St Mary Magdalene 9am till 11am Monday, 1pm till 3pm Wednesday and Friday. St Matthias 12 till 3 pm Monday and Thursday.

Please contact John Rushe for further details - 07394 519359
(property.manager@richmondteamministry.org)

Big Clean Up at St Mary Magdalene

We are organising a big clean up at St Mary Magdalene on Saturday 14th of February, one week before the arrival of Rev'd Robert Stanier.

If you are free, can you please come to the Church for 10.00am.
Tea and Coffee will be served

The late Susie Cox RIP

The memorial service for Susie Cox, much loved member of St Mary Magdalene church who died very recently, will be held at St Mary Magdalene on Wednesday 25 March. Details will be

announced later but it is expected to be at 2pm. Please hold Mark and the whole family in your prayers as they prepare for Susie's private, family only funeral on Thursday 19 February.

Lent Groups to discuss the book 'Easter in Disguise'

To accompany this book, we will be offering two Lent Groups:

- Rev'd Anne will lead a daytime Lent Group on Mondays at 10.00am at St Matthias, beginning on Monday 23rd February.
- Rev'd Joe will lead an evening Lent Group on Tuesdays at 7.45pm at St John's, beginning on Tuesday 17th February.

Both groups will run for six weeks and will be open to all. If you are planning to come along, please do email us to let us know:

- Rev'd Anne: anne.crawford@richmondteamministry.org
- Rev'd Joe: joe.moore@richmondteamministry.org

Installation of Rev'd Robert Stanier as Interim Team Rector and Vicar of St Mary's – Sunday 22 February, 6.30pm

Please rsvp to bookings@richmondteamministry.org

JOANNA MACGREGOR CBE - Richmond Piano Series (begins Friday 13 March)

Tickets are now live for the Richmond Piano Series at St Mary's! A limited number of Earlybird tickets are available, so book quickly!

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/music-at-st-marys-12077675351>

St Mary Magdalene in Vacancy, Special Notice

If as a St Mary's worshipper you have any pastoral concerns or worries during the vacancy, whether your own or on behalf of others, please contact either of the Churchwardens in confidence. Our emails are below. Alternatively contact John Palmer in the Parish Office. One of us or a member of the Pastoral Group will get in touch with you.

John Buckingham - SMMChurchWarden1@richmondteamministry.org

Anthony Bell – SMMChurchWarden2@richmondteamministry.org

If you would like to speak with a Priest then your Team Clergy - Rev'd Anne Crawford anne.crawford@richmondteamministry.org and Rev'd Joe Moore joe.moore@richmondteamministry.org – are available and more than happy to meet in person or via a telephone conversation.

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 be reducing the amount of administration and significantly improving our cashflow. If you have any questions, please [contact Jackie Harrison](mailto:contactJackieHarrison) or 07747 111525.

Parish Safeguarding Team:

The Richmond Team Ministry takes its responsibility to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults very seriously. If you have any safeguarding concerns, please contact our Child Protection & Vulnerable Adults Representatives

Jo Kitson - St Mary Magdalene

07880 500528

Gertrude Seaborne - St Matthias

Helen Peatfield - St John the Divine

Or, [contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor](#)

Diocesan News:

NEW: Bishop Martin's Pastoral Letter for Lent

Dear Fellow Pilgrims in Christ,

“When people are baptised, grace hides her presence until the soul makes a decision.” (Diadochus of Photike)

How much do you know about Diadochus of Photike?! I have to confess that I knew next to nothing about him when I came across this extract of his writings in Olivier Clement’s famous book, *The Roots of Christian Mysticism* (London: New City, 1993), in a chapter on prayer. But his words, the words of this fifth century bishop in what is now Greece, stood out for me.

In matters of faith, I have long been interested in where ‘agency’ lies with us and where it lies with God’s (e.g. ‘You did not choose me but I chose you...’ in John 15). So, it is striking to me that, according to +Diadochus, after our baptism there is yet more ‘decision-making’ at the deepest level of our being if we are to draw closer to Jesus. Diadochus continues encouragingly:

“when the whole person has turned to the Lord then with an unspeakable tenderness [grace] reveals her presence to the heart.”

This rings true to me. I love the idea that as we grow into our baptismal inheritance – a yearning to go deeper into prayer and communion – God reveals yet more to us.

I wonder what God is working among you – and among me – as we approach this season of Lent? What do we need to recommit ourselves to at this present moment?

All though my working life, whether in the Church or the University, I have always needed to tell myself that I can escape if the going gets too tough or unpleasant! I have never needed to take this imaginary ‘bolt hole’ but I find the thought that there is an exit – some remote mountain croft I could disappear into - consoling.

In our challenging times, I wonder if the desire to escape, to get away, or leave it all behind, is a feeling that a lot of us experience. We hear, for instance, of people turning off the news because they find it too depressing or they are fearful of what the next horror might be. Perhaps it’s a legacy of Covid but there is a sense at the moment – that many of us feel – that something is not right, that the things that we have taken for granted, that have given our life meaning, pleasure, and stability, are no longer so secure. It’s unsettling and at times frightening.

In such circumstances, it is not surprising that we might feel tempted to try and cut ourselves off from the worst excesses of the world. But is this a Christian response or even an option for followers of Jesus?

These issues were brought into focus recently in an article by Mark Clavier reviewing Paul Kingsnorth’s impressive book, *Against the Machine: On the Unmaking of Humanity* (London: Particular Books, 2025), which I read during the Christmas break. Kingsnorth captures well so much that is wrong with our society and the wider world, particularly some of the more dehumanising and destructive aspects of economics and technology or, to use Clavier’s phrase, ‘the flattening logic of managerial culture’ that is sucking the life out of community and vibrant local cultures.

At the same time, Clavier detects in Kingsnorth’s response a desire to try and hide away, to extricate oneself from the world, and somehow try and live an untainted life – all things I sometimes feel on a bad day! But, as Clavier rightly says, for Christians this must be resisted. Withdrawal may be an option for the privileged but it is not an option for most people and it isn’t the vocation of Christians. Rather, Clavier writes:

“The Christian impulse...takes up its cross and moves straight into the heart of corruption and suffering for the sake of those most affected...[F]aithful witness demands that we stand with those who bear [the] heaviest burdens: the exploited, the vulnerable, and the marginalised, whose lives reveal the...true cost [of our sinful world].”

Therefore, Christians don’t escape the world they “endure it, judge it, and reveal its contingency through their costly fidelity”. What we do in our churches week in week out – in our prayer, our worship, our reading scripture, our breaking bread together – far from being tired, dried up, meaningless acts, are acts of awesome power by which we expose the principalities and powers for what they are, and proclaim the world’s true King, while remaining “open to the possibility that even compromised institutions may yet be renewed under Christ’s judgement”.

We will rarely be thanked or admired for what we do. Indeed, many people will be perplexed by our actions, unconvinced that prayer changes anything. But it is not true. What we do makes all the difference in the world.

I give thanks to God for the churches of the Kingston Episcopal Area, for your creativity, imagination and determination, particularly when things are difficult or don’t turn out as we expect. We are communities of “patient witness” waiting on God, listening, praying for the softening of hearts and that the world may come to believe.

Against this backdrop, it is good to be able to commend to you one of our own, Joshua Rey’s book – *A Season of Silence: Deep Listening in a Noisy World* (London: Canterbury Press, 2025) – as my Lent book. Please consider joining with me in reading it this Lent. Escape from the world may not be an option but deep listening is definitely needed, and it is a gift the Church can bring, helping people make sense of each other, rediscovering our humanity in Christ, in our troubled and confusing world.

May you turn yet more to Jesus and may grace reveal her presence to you, and those whom you serve, with an unspeakable tenderness.

Best wishes and prayers,

Rt Revd Dr Martin Gainsborough, Bishop of Kingston

Community News:

NEW: World Day of Prayer. Friday 6 March 2026, 2.30pm, The Barn Church

Our sisters in Nigeria invite us to join them for the World Day of Prayer on Friday 6 March 2026. The service they have prepared reflects on the theme, “I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28-30). The World Day of Prayer is an international, women-led, ecumenical movement that shares the hopes concerns, and prayers of women from around the globe. Each year, women from a different country craft a service, sharing their unique spiritual journey and culture. For 2026, the women of Nigeria have created a service that speaks to our need for peace and solace, drawing on their faith and experiences in a world filled with struggle and anxiety.

With over 120 countries across the world taking part, this is a powerful demonstration of global solidarity. The day begins in Samoa and moves across the world in a continuous wave of prayer, finishing 38 hours later in American Samoa. It truly is a worldwide day of prayer!

The Richmond and Kew World Day of Prayer Group hosts a service every year, and this year the service is being held at

The Barn Church, St Philip & All Saints, Atwood Avenue, Kew, TW9 4HF on Friday 6 March 2026 at 2.30pm, followed by refreshments – tea/coffee and cake. All are welcome.

Getting there:

The Barn Church is located on the corner of Atwood Avenue and Marksbury Avenue.

Buses R68, 190, 419 from Richmond Station stop at the end of Marksbury Avenue (8 min walk to church approx.)

District Line/ Mildmay (Overground) Line stop at Kew Gardens Station – down North Road, left into Atwood Avenue (approx. 10 mins walk).

On street parking may be possible.

For further information and resources, please visit the World Day of Prayer website: wwdp.org.uk

Community Choir at St Mary Magdalene

Wednesdays 11am-12pm

Come and join our free Community Choir at St Mary Magdalene - fun, relaxed, and informal, no experience necessary! We will sing a wide range of music, from folk and traditional songs, to modern music, as well as music to mark the seasons. For more info, contact Seb on 07933024101.

With best wishes,

John

Parish Administrator

Parish Office, St Matthias Church, Church Road, Richmond TW10 6LR

020 8940 0362

Richmond Team Ministry

St Mary Magdalene • St Matthias • St John the Divine

www.richmondteamministry.org

Registered Charity No 1130018

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