

Thursday 14 May 2026

Dear Friends,

Last weekend I spent some time visiting a friend who has just begun a new ministry in rural south east Norfolk. The Rectory is situated in a small village, which alongside the church has a post office and village shop, and a few homes dotted along the main street. It is a very different setting to ministry here in Richmond: whereas we are a single parish with three churches each having their own full time priest, my friend's new ministry stretches across 10 parishes with 13 mediaeval churches, with only a single full time priest colleague to share the load. My friend isn't full time either – she is what's called a 'house-for-duty' priest, which means she doesn't receive a stipend, but does have accommodation provided. So these 13 churches have 1.5 priests effectively, which means that pretty much all of the ministry is overseen by a team of very dedicated lay people. Of the 13 churches only one has the full complement of two churchwardens, the other 12 churches have one churchwarden each, and yet it works. After a very long vacancy, these dedicated church congregations decided that they wanted not just to survive but to thrive and to do that they realised they had to work together: their ministry symbol is a rowing boat with everyone taking an oar and pulling together. So much of their worshipping and community life is dependent on people offering themselves for training so that they lead non-eucharistic services when a priest isn't available in their particular church on a Sunday – they now have 3 local lay ministry leaders helping with pastoral care and worship, and 2 authorised worship assistants. And the parishes are thriving. I was told that as many as 19 people might attend Morning Prayer in one of the village churches on a weekday morning, and with a population of less than 100 people in this particular village, this is quite something! The population of each parish is varied, anything up to 1,000 people, and usual Sunday attendance stands at between 35-50. And like us here in Richmond this coming Sunday, this rural ministry team will hold their Annual Meetings, giving thanks for all they are managing to achieve together with God's help, despite their very limited resources, celebrating life as the body of Christ in this part of Norfolk.

In one of the ancient parish churches in this vast ministry team – St Margaret and St Remigius, in the little village of Seething – is a 14th century wall painting of the Ascension. The painting shows the disciples looking up to heaven as Jesus is lifted away from them, his pierced feed hanging down below the cloud which is hiding him from view, a reminder that Jesus carries in his risen body the suffering of the world he came to save. On this Ascension Day it's good to remember that, when we are fearful of falling numbers or an aging congregation, when we are concerned about who will share the load, who will do the work which needs to be done to keep our church buildings in good order, or help to make the coffee after our services, or be willing to sing in our choirs, that we are enough. As those early disciples discovered after Jesus had ascended in to heaven, God doesn't leave us on our own, we are given all that we need to make a difference, to take the gospel forward, to live the life which is ours in Christ and to share that life with others generously and with joy. We don't need money to do that, we just need a willing heart!

As we celebrate our communal life on Sunday evening at our APCM, may we know ourselves to be blessed with the abiding presence of our risen ascended Lord, and have the confidence to row together in the direction God would have us row, so that his love is made known in and through the corporate life of our team of 3 churches here in Richmond.

With prayers and blessings from the Richmond clergy team,
Robert, Anne 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 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
... **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** - Sarah Pryce, Georgina Merchant, Gerald Fearn, Julie Burman, Christa Browne, Irene Chalmers, Sabine Staton, Rebecca Fitzjohn
... **the departed, may they rest in peace** – Peter O'Toole

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.

From April to early June, Tuesdays will be open for prayer from 6.30pm with Said Eucharist at 7pm with no exposition.

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 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 4pm, 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.

CHURCH NEWS:

Lot's happening this weekend with the APCM and Richmond Hill Open Gardens!

NEW: Ascension service TONIGHT, 7.30pm St Mary Magdalene

As you open this on a Thursday afternoon, possibly from an office desk somewhere, you might perhaps consider that, were you living in France, Germany, Iceland, Sweden, or indeed most of Europe (as well as, curiously, Vanuatu), you would now be on holiday. The Feast day of the Ascension is a national holiday in all these places and, even in this country, older members of the congregation may remember having had a half day off school when it came around.

Of all the major feasts in the Church year, it is the least marked today, but we will be marking it with a team service tonight at St Mary Magdalene, and all are welcome. Come and explore the significance of this moment in the church year with beautiful music.

NEW: Peter O'Toole's funeral service at St Mary Magdalene

Peter's funeral has been arranged for Thursday 28 May at 11.15am at St Mary Magdalene. Ruth Martin will be taking the service. All are welcome. There will be refreshments in the church after the service.

CHRISTIAN AID WEEK

This is Christian Aid week. You can see lots of publicity and they are particularly focussing on education and agricultural projects for mothers in Nairobi, Kenya.

[Christian Aid Week 2026 | Christian Aid](#)

There will be the chance to collect among the general public on Saturday in George Street. Please contact Bella at St Mary Magdalene if you would like to do this, perhaps for an hour.

Bella.hobson@gmail.com

We will be giving our collection at St Mary Magdalene to Christian Aid this week. It's possible this is happening at other churches in the team; I confess I haven't got round to finding out. But there will certainly be chances to donate at each church.

Christian Aid is a brilliant charity and their work is all the more important as governments around the world, including our own, have gradually been spending less on aid and development.

The link below can be used by to make online donations for Christian Aid Week. If this link is used, then the donations get 'credited' to our group.

<https://caw.christianaid.org.uk/envelope-2026/richmond-kew-christian-aid-week-2026>

Bell Sunday: this Sunday at St Mary Magdalene

If the Feast of the Ascension is a genuine holy day of obligation, just not that well observed, I confess that, coming in from another parish, I never knew about Bell Sunday until arriving at St Mary Magdalene. However, as I'm finding out, St Mary Magdalene is big on bells; so big that we mark 'Bell Sunday', on the nearest Sunday to the feast day of St Dunstan (May 19th), who is the patron saint of bellringers, on the grounds that he possibly experimented in forging bells at some point in the 10th Century. Some might say that's slightly tenuous; I couldn't possibly comment. While I won't be doing a sermon on bells, there will be bell-related hymns and music at the 9.30am service, and an exceptional peal on the day. I am greatly looking forward to it.

Team Evensong and APCM: this Sunday at St Mary Magdalene

The churches take it in turns to host the APCM (Annual Parochial Church Meeting) and this year, it's St Mary Magdalene's turn, and we're going to do it after Evensong this Sunday. So each

individual church has had its ACM (Annual Church Meeting), either last Sunday or the Sunday before that. Now we have our shared APCM. In this, we'll receive all the churchwardens, duly elected at the ACMs, but also take a financial report, receive some other reports and there's a chance to ask me questions. I'm not proposing to say much: the thing is, it's a meeting about 2025, when I wasn't here, but equally, I'll be there. Overall, I would anticipate the meeting lasting about half an hour or so, but it slightly depends on what comes up.

Evensong will be at 6.30pm

I would expect we would start the APCM at around 7.30pm.

Finally, there will probably be a few people who head to Rincon for a glass of white wine after the meeting's end, but feel free to head back home to continue bingewatching 'Rivals', taking a call from Wes Streeting/ Angela Rayner/ Andy Burnham (delete according to your preference) about whether you'll back them to challenge for Prime Minister, or watch 'Match of the Day' or whatever your preferred method of spending Sunday nights is.

Richmond Piano Series @ St Mary's - Sunday 7 June, 3pm

The series continues with a recital given by two astonishing young artists, clarinettist **Joseph Shiner** and pianist **Keval Shah**. Their programme takes a journey through both repertoire written for the clarinet and arrangements for the instrument, including iconic music by Rachmaninoff, Weber and Reena Esmail. Tickets available at:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/richmond-piano-series-joseph-shiner-keval-shah-tickets-1980038150409?aff=oddtcreator>

ST ALBANS PILGRIMAGE - Saturday 20 June

Rev'd Anne will once again be leading a group from our Team's churches on Pilgrimage to St Albans. Each year, thousands journey to the city of St Albans to honour a story that took place 1700 years ago and continues to inspire Christians all across the world today. The city comes to a standstill as the story of St Alban, Britain's first Christian martyr, is retold through a vibrant procession of giant puppets which weave their way through the city's streets to the ancient Cathedral built on the hillside above the old Roman city of Verulamium. As the story comes to a close, pilgrims make their way in to the Cathedral for a festival Eucharist – the guest preacher this year will be Ruth Dearnley OBE. Ruth is former CEO of Stop the Traffik, the global anti-human trafficking charity she helped to establish in 2008. After a break for lunch (picnic on the Abbey orchard, or in one of St Albans many pubs and restaurants) we will gather for the festal Evensong, sung by the Cathedral choir, followed by procession to the rose-filled shrine of St Alban. We will travel to St Albans by train, an easy journey from Richmond which takes about 45 minutes. If you would like to join Anne on 20th June then please email to register your interest anne.crawford@richmondteamministry.org More details to follow.

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.

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 Kelsey](#) - St John the Divine

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

Diocesan News:

NEW: Invitation to the Leading Your Church into Growth Conference 2026 11-12 September, St John Walworth

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

I am delighted to invite you to this year's Southwark Diocesan Leading Your Church into Growth Conference — a practical and hope-filled opportunity for us to gather as the people of God and reflect on how we may faithfully nurture growth in our parishes.

This year, we are pleased to offer the conference at a significantly discounted cost compared with last year - £65 for both days - in the hope that as many as possible will be able to attend.

Across our diocese, we continue to give thanks for the rich diversity of our communities and for all who labour generously for the Gospel. Parish life flourishes best when clergy, lay leaders and congregations work together for the Kingdom - and this conference offers a valuable space to learn, to pray, and discern together. It's designed to help leaders grow in confidence and strategic thinking as we seek to see our churches flourish in Christ's name.

The programme will encourage you to think afresh, to pray deeply, and to act boldly. Whether your parish is large or small, rural or urban, you are warmly invited to attend — either with your leadership team or on your own. All who are passionate about mission and the life of the Church will find this gathering inspiring and practical.

In particular, the conference offers an opportunity to...

- Learn from experienced church leaders and practitioners
- Explore practical strategies and tools for numerical and spiritual growth
- Be refreshed and encouraged in your ministry
- Connect with others across our diocese who share a heart for mission

Participants in last year's conference reported a significant impact on their ministry, with 89% saying they left with an achievable plan for growth and more than a third feeling inspired to start a new worshipping community. This conference is a wonderful opportunity to think, pray, and plan for the growth of Christ's Church together. I commend it to you warmly.

Details

Dates: Friday 11 September & Saturday 12 September. Followed by 3 online sessions to check on progress and encourage each other – dates to be confirmed.

Location: St John Walworth Centre, SE17 1NQ

Refreshments will be provided, but please bring your own lunch.

Spaces are limited, and I encourage you to secure your place soon. Please feel free to share this invitation with others in your parish or network who may benefit from attending.

[You can find more details and book online here.](#)

With my prayers and good wishes,

The Bishop of Southwark, The Rt Revd Christopher Chessun

Community News:

NEW: RICHMOND HILL OPEN GARDENS ~ Sunday 17 May

This year 16 beautiful gardens will be open to the public. All within walking distance of each other, the gardens will be open from 11am - 5pm, with plant sales at some locations. St Matthias will once again be open and serving tea and delicious homemade cakes throughout the day. This year we are supporting local charities and community projects: [Holly Lodge Centre](#), [The Real Junk Food Project](#), and [Richmond Soup Kitchen](#). Tickets can be purchased on the day at St Matthias, or online via the website at richmondhillpengardens.org

Can you bake for Open Gardens day?

Sunday 17 May – 16 private gardens in Richmond will be open to the public to raise money for charity, including the Richmond Soup Kitchen. Teas will be served at St Matthias, and donations of home-made cakes will be very welcome. The best for sales are the 'old-fashioned' varieties such as coffee, carrot, lemon drizzle, Victoria sponge and chocolate but we are grateful for all donations. Please bring them to St Matthias from 11am on 17 May, and also please tell us in advance so we can send you a form for ingredients and allergens. Tickets (£12.50 in advance, £15 on the day) are available from <https://www.richmondhillpengardens.org/>

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

Our Privacy Notice can be viewed at: <https://richmondteamministry.org/gdpr/>

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