

Thursday 25 June 2026

Dear Friends,

What is a Christian?

It is a simple question, but one that lies at the heart of our faith. In a world where Christianity is often reduced to a set of beliefs, moral values, or cultural traditions, it is worth returning to the essence of what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ. The first Christians were not known primarily for belonging to an institution. They were known because they followed a person. Indeed, we read in Acts that “it was in Antioch that the disciples were first called Christians” (Acts 11.26). Before they were called Christians, they were called disciples - learners, followers, apprentices of Jesus.

At its heart, Christianity is not about religion; it is about relationship. A Christian is someone who has heard the invitation of Jesus and seeks to respond. When Jesus called his first disciples, he did not hand them a list of doctrines or rules. He simply said: “Follow me.” (Matthew 4.19) Those words remain at the centre of the Christian life. To be a Christian is to hear Christ’s invitation and begin the lifelong journey of following him. This journey begins not with our efforts, but with God’s grace. Christianity teaches that God loves us before we deserve it, seeks us before we seek him, and calls us before we are ready. As St John writes: “We love because he first loved us.” (1 John 4.19) A Christian is therefore not someone who has earned God’s favour. A Christian is someone who has received God’s love and seeks to live in response to it.

This response leads naturally to the idea of vocation or calling. The word vocation comes from the Latin *vocare*, meaning “to call”. Christians believe that God calls each one of us by name. Yet vocation is not only for clergy or church leaders. Every Christian has a calling. Our first vocation is not to a particular job or role but to Christ himself. St Paul writes that God’s purpose is that we should be “conformed to the image of his Son” (Romans 8.29). In other words, the calling of every Christian is to become more like Jesus. God calls each of us into a relationship with him and then sends us into the world to reflect his love. That calling may be lived out through family life, teaching, healthcare, business, hospitality, volunteering, creativity, public service, or ministry within the Church. Whatever form it takes, every vocation matters in the Kingdom of God. As St Paul reminds us: “There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord.” (1 Corinthians 12.4–5)

One of the great privileges of ordained ministry is having conversations about faith. Clergy spend much of their time listening to people’s stories, accompanying them through life’s joys and sorrows, and helping them discern where God may be at work. Yet churches can sometimes become preoccupied with other things. We spend time discussing buildings, finances, rotas, committees, and all the practical matters that keep parish life running. These things matter, but they are not why the Church exists. The Church exists to help people encounter Jesus Christ and grow as his disciples. So here is a gentle challenge. Why not surprise your clergy? Invite us for a coffee, a drink, or a meal - not to discuss church business, but to talk about faith. Tell us about your spiritual journey. Share what gives you life in your relationship with God. Ask the questions you have always wanted to ask. Tell us where you sense God calling you, where you are struggling, or where you are finding joy.

Your clergy would be delighted to have those conversations. Indeed, they are often the conversations that remind us why we were called to ministry in the first place.

I am also deeply grateful for the gift of Team Ministry and for my clergy colleagues. The Church is at its best when it reflects St Paul’s image of the Body of Christ, where each person brings their own gifts, skills, and vocation. I am deeply thankful for John Palmer (Parish Administrator), Denise Mahoney (Bookings Administrator), Wendy McAvoy (Finance Officer), and James Nicholson (Verger/Caretaker), whose dedication and professionalism (especially in extreme heat!) contribute so much to the life of our parish - they are superstars! Their work, alongside that of

our churchwardens, treasurer, PCC members, readers, servers, musicians, flower arrangers, welcomers, volunteers, bellringers, cleaners and many others, reminds us that ministry belongs to the whole people of God.

Every act of service, every prayer offered, every word of encouragement, every practical task completed, and every act of generosity becomes part of the Church's witness to the love of Christ. Recent events in public life remind us how quickly things can change. Political leaders, governments, and institutions come and go. Yet Christians place their ultimate hope not in any earthly leader but in Jesus Christ. As the writer to the Hebrews reminds us: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever." (Hebrews 13.8) In a changing world, Christ remains our sure foundation and enduring hope.

Perhaps, then, the question "What is a Christian?" can be answered quite simply. A Christian is someone who knows they are loved by God, called by Christ, and continually being transformed by the Holy Spirit. A Christian is someone who seeks to follow Jesus, not perfectly, but faithfully. And a Christian is someone who recognises that this journey is never meant to be travelled alone. We walk together, learn together, pray together, and serve together. As we continue that journey together, my prayer is that each of us may grow in confidence as disciples of Jesus Christ, discover afresh the calling God has placed upon our lives, and help others encounter the transforming love of God.

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

This letter was written by The Revd Joe Moore

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** – Jean Hodgson

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 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:

Don't miss the unique opportunity of seeing the bells at St Mary's this weekend! See below for more details.

NEW: Bells on display at St Mary's

There's a unique opportunity to see the bells of St Mary Magdalene this weekend. Never before have the eight bells, plus the clock bell, been on public display and until Sunday evening they are laid out for viewing inside the church. These are the bells whose sound will be familiar to members of the Sunday morning congregation.

The bells were made between 1680 and 1740 and have been brought down from the tower in a two-day operation. You will be able to see the inscriptions on the bells before they go to bell hangers Whites of Appleton for retuning. For five of the bells this is the end of their ringing career as they are being replaced by five new bells.

We will also be selling the old wheels and the old clappers which make fabulous and unusual garden features on the morning of 29th June. If you would like to make an offer before then please contact Jackie Harrison - jackieph456@gmail.com

NEW: Insect Week

The GREEN team present Insect Week 2026 - a celebration of all things insect! www.insectweek.org/

We have insect hotels at our three churches and we are encouraging our congregation to build bug homes in their gardens or even on their balconies - these can be palatial or tiny - check out

this link for more ideas - <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/blog/2026/02/how-to-make-a-bug-hotel/>

Do send us any pictures of your own creations.

NEW: Pilgrimage Visit to St Albans Cathedral

Hello everyone

There was great disappointment that this year's trip to the Alban Pilgrimage had to be cancelled due to railway engineering works putting a stop to trains operating to St Albans from London on Saturday. However I have been in touch with the Cathedral and am delighted to say that they are able to accommodate a mini tailor-made pilgrimage for us on Friday 24th July – not quite the same as the all-singing-all-dancing affair we are used to, but I can promise that it will be awesome and a brilliant way to get to know more about St Alban, and the Christian community which has worshipped on this sight since Roman times.

We have the option of a guided tour exploring the Cathedral as a place of pilgrimage in the morning of our visit, and then after lunch a guide will lead us through this ancient building looking at mediaeval graffiti and some of the wall paintings. I'm hoping we will be able to join a midday Eucharist at the Shrine of St Alban, and there is also the option of evensong at the end of the day (although the cathedral choir will be on holiday so this will probably be said rather than sung). Lunch can be taken either in the Cathedral refectory, or in one of the nearby pubs or cafes (there are plenty to choose from). Or you might prefer a sandwich from M&S and a picnic in the Cathedral vintry.

If you would like to join me on this visit then please email to let me know (anne.crawford@richmondteamministry.org) so that I can firm up numbers with the Cathedral in good time. We will travel by train (overground and then Thameslink from West Hampstead – about 45 mins in total), leaving Richmond at 9am to benefit from cheaper fares.

I am hoping to re-start our monthly Friday morning Reflective Walks again in Sept. Please keep an eye on the weekly newsletter for more info and dates.

With every blessing,

Anne

NEW: World premiere of new music at St Mary Magdalene

At St Mary Magdalene at Evensong this Sunday, we'll be having a world premiere of responses written by one of our own. The Chan responses will be sung at 6.30pm this evening: do join us for this occasion.

Bring and Share Lunch this Sunday

Anne O'Neil the new curate's first Sunday will be on Sun 28th June. Her first service will be at the 9.30am service at St Mary Magdalene. This will be followed by welcome drinks and nibbles and will be another 'Sticker Sunday' at St Mary's, where we'll be asking people who come to write their names on stickers, in order to make life easier for her to learn names. It'll also help the rest of us who just might not quite remember all the names we'd like to have remembered to get a little reminder.

Then, everyone in the team, St Mary Magdalene, St Matthias and all are invited to St John the Divine for a bring and share lunch, at St John's, which will start *after* their service is finished, so around 12.15pm. Do bring your preferred food that you'd like to share: ham sandwiches, sausage rolls, subtly textured quiches, potato salad, caviar, crab, or even custard creams to St John's, for that date. If you're able to contribute, please use the sign-up sheets at the back of church.

And if you can't bring anything but would like to help, doing the washing up at the end of lunch would be a very valid way to do that. Looking forward to it.

In the meantime, do pray for Anne. Her ordination service will take place at Southwark cathedral on Saturday 27th June.

Robert moving house

Robert and family will be moving into the new vicarage at 5 Mount Ararat Road on Tuesday. Robert was told today that they will be sharing their first fortnight with a number of decorators during the day time as various bits of wiring, painting etc. have not yet been completed, but otherwise it'll be nice for them actually to be living in Richmond. Robert won't be doing other parish things on Tuesday but will be back on it for the rest of the week.

Friday 3 July, 7.30pm - Richmond Piano Series: Adam Heron

The series continues with a recital given by the outstanding young pianist and composer Adam Heron. Adam will play the music of Chopin, Beethoven, Handel, William Bolcombe, as well as some of his own compositions. Tickets available at Eventbrite or speak to Seb.

Giving, one off, regular and planned

A few years ago, we introduced the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS). Many thanks to those of you have joined the scheme. This helps us enormously by reducing the amount of administration and significantly improving our cashflow. If you are still making regular donations by standing order, envelope or GiveALittle, please do switch to PGS if you are able to:

parishgiving.org.uk/donors/find-your-parish/richmond-team-ministry-richmond

If you have any questions, please [contact Jackie Harrison](#)

(stewardshipcoordinator@richmondteamministry.org) 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: A message from Bishop Christopher

Historic adoption practices

18 June 2026

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

I am writing to inform you about an apology issued today for the Church of England's role in historical adoption practices. As you may be aware, a number of mother and baby homes, or similar, were overseen by diocesan moral welfare councils as part of a wider network of provision for unmarried mothers and babies, particularly in the years between 1949 and 1976. There has been growing awareness in recent years of practices within these homes and their outcomes for mothers and their babies.

Further information on the research and apology, and support, is available here:
www.churchofengland.org/adoption

The Church of England played a significant role as part of a wider system shaped by social attitudes and legislation which often stigmatised unmarried mothers. The apology reflects the deep sorrow felt by senior church leaders for the pain, trauma and stigma experienced - and still carried – by many people affected. Whilst the policy of the Church of England's Moral Welfare Council was to encourage mothers and babies to be kept together where possible, we recognise that this guidance was not always upheld in practice within individual homes. Some mothers have described harsh and unkind treatment whilst resident in Church of England-affiliated homes, while others were not given a meaningful choice about whether to keep their baby.

I recognise the impact this may have on people living in your community, now and in the future. It's likely that the number of mothers and babies connected to Church of England-affiliated homes is in the tens of thousands during the period covered by the research (1949 to 1976). However, because of the nature of the records that still exist, it is difficult to verify information from that period. Southwark Diocese has been able to identify up to 20 mother and baby homes that may have been connected in some way to the diocese. These are listed on a dedicated page on our diocesan website, which also highlights further sources of information and support for those affected.

While the number of those affected is unknown, some people in our congregations and parishes may have been affected in some way - as mothers, adoptees, or perhaps as those who were employed in the homes. For some, this may be a wish to tell their stories and be heard by their clergy or church family. For others, there may be a need for more specialist support. We encourage you to signpost people to the support services listed on our website, or, where appropriate, to diocesan safeguarding colleagues.

I recognise that this is a complex and wide-ranging history that may affect you also - and that people have had very different experiences of this system. The apology does not seek to make a blanket judgement on everyone involved, nor the motivations of those who worked and cared for others at the time, including those who worked in the homes and adoptive families.

I am very grateful that Mother Joyce Forbes has offered to be available as a listening ear for those who are affected. She worked as a social worker for many years and was also a magistrate on the family bench – and so is very familiar with the issues involved. She can be contacted via
historicadoption@southwark.anglican.org.

Please be assured of my prayers and together let us pray:

*Loving God,
you hear the cry of the afflicted and gather the outcast.
Look with mercy on all whose lives
have suffered rejection, loss, or neglect.
Bind up the wounds of the broken-hearted,
assure them of your love,
and grant us grace to walk in the way of your Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Amen.

H Christopher Southwark

The Bishop of Southwark, The Rt Revd Christopher Chessun

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/>

TO UNSUBSCRIBE FROM THIS EMAIL LIST, [PLEASE CLICK HERE](#)



[Click here for St John the Divine's Facebook page](#)



[Click here for St Mary Magdalene's Facebook page](#)



[Click here for St Matthias' Facebook page](#)



[Click here for St Matthias' Instagram page](#)



[Click here for St John the Divine's Instagram page](#)



[Click here for Revd Joe's Instagram page](#)