

Thursday 27 August 2026

Dear Friends,

The Preachathon is approaching and I confess I'm now at the daunted stage. But among the debates among the planning team has come the intriguing question of whether to use the pulpit or not.

Most Anglican churches were designed for sermons to come from the pulpit, and certainly, when a church is absolutely full, it's visually and practically useful to be higher up, rather than just standing in front of the altar. Using the pulpit becomes almost essential.

It does, though, change the dynamic of the preacher-congregation relationship. Recently, after ascending up to the pulpit at Southwark Cathedral to give a sermon to which I was listening, Bishop Christopher noted that he was now eight feet above contradiction. And that's definitely a part of the issue, which both attracts and alienates people. In some sense, giving a sermon inherently involves taking the high ground; a preacher expects to be listened to, and for the congregation to give some weight to what has been said. So it certainly involves talking *to* people; but it is an occasion of talking *at* people, or - worse - talking *down to* people?

On balance, the feeling among the planning team was that I should *not* use the pulpit, that I would have better quality of engagement if I preached from the floor, rather than in the pulpit. I am happy to go with that, but it does mean that the pulpit in St Mary Magdalene's could be regarded as superfluous. Putting a pulpit up in churches comes from a time certainly before microphones but perhaps more intriguingly from a time when a preacher's sense of himself (and in those days it would be *himself*) was that of a confident authority which possibly goes against the grain of today's culture, where the average person is less likely to see themselves as inherently submitting to the higher authority embodied in the preacher. Or does the decline in use of the pulpit signify a decline in confidence in preachers' confidence in the church's message? Some might argue so. But perhaps all this is overthinking it a bit. In the meantime, I should focus more on getting twelve hours of material together.

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

This letter was written by The Revd Robert Stanier

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, Sabine Staton, Loïc Burn, Vrouwkje ten Klooster, Ian Rainsford

... **the departed, may they rest in peace** – Michael Speer

If you would like your own name added, simply [email the parish office](mailto:richmondprayer.request@gmail.com).

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:

Update: Tuesday 22 September Preachathon

The countdown to the Richmond Preachathon has begun. Robert is training hard for his marathon and the guests are sharpening their questions. Everyone is looking forward to a unique and memorable day.

Robert will be preaching, story-telling and unravelling the complexities of modern life in a 12-hour dawn to dusk epic that starts as the sun comes up on September 22. He will be in action from 6.47am until darkness officially falls at one minute to seven.

To help Robert through the long day we have invited an impressive cast of local celebrities to engage him in conversation (details to follow....) and there will be music from the choir, other guest appearances and videos from well known supporters. And to show what a tough challenge

this is, Robert has been working on Olympic trainer Greg Whyte's fitness programme. By Preachathon day we will have an exceptionally fit vicar.

All this effort is in aid of New Bells for Richmond and the Richmond Soup Kitchen.

Please come to St Mary Magdalene to support Robert on the day - you can sign up for a slot (or 2 or 3...) on the attached link <https://volunteersignup.org/CBMJ9> or simply turn up on the day. There will be a silent cafe in the church to keep us all going!!! The event will also be broadcast live all day on our Facebook page - www.facebook.com/StMaryMagdaleneRTM/ You can also visit our Crowdfunder page to support Robert's efforts - we are hoping to raise £1000 per hour of preaching! <https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/p/8695557631153a1b9685454ed252ffef> The new bells are due to be installed in the tower before Christmas when the soup kitchen will be in full winter action on behalf of the needy.

NEW: Late August Bank Holiday

The parish office will be closed Monday 31 August.

NEW: Day Pilgrimage to Canterbury Cathedral Saturday 14 November 2026

Join us for a day pilgrimage to Canterbury, the historic heart of the Church of England. We will travel by coach from Richmond and enjoy a guided tour of Canterbury Cathedral, exploring its remarkable history, architecture and sacred spaces. There will then be free time to discover the city, visit its shops and cafés, or spend some quiet time in the Cathedral precincts. Our pilgrimage will conclude with the beautiful service of Choral Evensong in the Cathedral before we return to Richmond.

Further details, including departure times and cost, will follow.

Please indicate your interest by emailing Joe:

joe.moore@richmondteamministry.org

All are warmly welcome.

NEW: Hope for All Creation – A House of Bishops' New Report

The Church of England House of Bishops is one of three Houses that make up the General Synod, and it has a special role with matters relating to doctrine, liturgy or Sacrament.

The House of Bishops has recently issued a publication, Hope for All Creation, which shares the Church of England's position on environment and climate change.

More information is available on the CoE Environment and Climate Change page:

[Environment and climate change | The Church of England](#)

The Hope for All Creation can be downloaded here:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2026-06/hope-for-all-creation-for-web-new.pdf>

The RTM Green Team will take time to consider the report's findings and recommendations for action.

NEW: Learn more about God's creation in the Season of Creation (Creationtide)

The Dioceses of Southwark and London are running a course '*Caring for God's Creation: Faithful Living in a Changing World*'.

Taking place over three Zoom sessions (19:00 – 21:00) on 16, 23 and 30 September, the sessions will explore what faithful discipleship looks like in a changing world and what it means to care for God's creation as Christians today.

The course is for anyone seeking to deepen their understanding of environmental issues from a Christian perspective. It will also help participants grow in confidence as they take practical action within their church and wider community.

Find out more and sign up [here](#).

NEW: ZERO WASTE WEEK 7-11 September

The RTM Green Team invite you to recycle your 'as new' socks, gloves and hats (maybe even knit or croquet one with left over wool) for the guests at Richmond Soup Kitchen. There will be boxes in each church for your donations. Thank you.

NEW: Twickenham Stadium Zipwire

Huw Morgan, who worships and is a regular server at St John the Divine, will be taking part in the Twickenham Stadium Zipwire, flying 150 metres over the pitch and raising money for Skylarks Charity - a local cause helping children and young people with additional needs, and their wider families. His own family benefited from the charity's help when their children were small. Every pound raised helps ensure these services can continue and grow.

He, and the charity, would be extremely grateful for financial support. Please follow the link below and do use giftaid if you're able to.

<https://skylarks.enthuse.com/pf/huw-morgan-0ab4e/post/26686904>

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](#)

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](#)