

Thursday 20 August 2020

Dear Friends,

Over the last few weeks as we've adjusted to the necessary restrictions placed on our prayer and worship in church, the reality that this situation may continue long in to the future is difficult to contemplate. I am not finding mask wearing easy or comfortable especially in hot weather; conducting a wedding with a small congregation spread apart from one another has felt unnatural and odd to say the least; and not being able to hug the bereaved after sad and difficult funerals has been unbearably hard. As I've reflected on the changes and the impact on our worshipping life, especially on the way it impacts on our relationship with one another, has prompted me to ask fundamental questions about the way we worship, for instance, why we do what we do, and why do we do it the way we do?

As we continue to find our way through this strangest of times I have begun to wonder whether God has provided us with an opportunity to look at worship with fresh eyes; is this moment in time a God given opportunity for us to consider other ways of worshipping and expressing our corporate identity as the Church? We have all experienced an increase in congregation numbers through lockdown, visitors finding their way to our worship via links on Facebook or YouTube, quite often people with no church background but searching for hope and comfort. Being able to drop in to church anonymously helps – we've all be in a shop and when asked if we needed help have replied with 'no thanks, just looking'. If we've learned anything at all during this pandemic, it is that people are searching for meaning and purpose in their lives, which as a Christian, I interpret as a hunger for God. The BBC is currently showing a series of programmes on a Sunday afternoon called 'Stories of Us', which explore the many ways human beings search for and connect with God. In the four episodes so far we've encountered people finding God by being immersed in the natural world: wild swimming, sacred drumming, yoga on paddleboards, forest bathing (who knew there was such a thing?!), tea ceremonies around a camp fire, farming, Forest Church and Mossy Church, Calisthenics (where knives used in crime have been melted down to provide outdoor gym equipment – flexing muscles in a healthier way), wind surfing and roller blading, painting and mosaic making. It's inspiring and uplifting to hear the stories of people's lives being turned around by finding a route to God through nature, using all their senses in worship which may seem unconventional but which none-the-less provides spiritual depth and integrity. And no matter which pathway people are taking towards a deeper relationship with the Divine, all of them are discovering communities where they find a sense of belonging, and which create an environment where they can finally express themselves and begin to flourish. It's inspired me to consider ways in which we could perhaps offer outdoor worship where masks aren't needed (!) and where some of those people who've been tempted to give online church a go might feel brave enough to join in something which is new not just for them but for all of us.

The Sunday service this week, 23rd August, will be at 9.30am at St Matthias and St Mary Magdalene, and 11.00am at St John the Divine. In addition there will be a Eucharist on Wednesday morning at St Mary Magdalene at 10.00am. Although there will be paper copies of the Sunday Order of Service available for those who would like one (these paper copies will 'belong' to you alone – please take it home with you), you will now be able to download a copy of the order of service on to your phone or tablet before coming to church – please go to <https://www.richmondteamministry.org/orders-of-service-readings> and download it - don't forget to bring your device with you. Do remember to wear a face covering in church, unless you are exempt from doing so.

Our churches continue to be open on specific days and times **for private prayer**, when you will be able to light a candle and reflect or meditate:

St John the Divine will be open on Saturdays, 10.00am – 12noon and Tuesdays, 9.30am – 12.30pm

St Mary Magdalene will be open on Saturdays, 10.00am – 12noon.

As you will know, we have been advertising for a **Children and Young People Ministry Leader** to join the Richmond Team and build on the wonderful work done by Helen in the past 4 years. Although we received a reasonable number of applications and interviewed 3 candidates, we were, sadly, unable to appoint. We will start the process again next week. Please pray for the right person to come forward.

As churches and places of worship have been closed to visitors for several months this year **Open House London 2020** have asked us to take part by having our church buildings open. We would like to take part on Saturday 19 September. St Matthias and St John the Divine will be open between 10.00am and 12noon, St Mary Magdalene between 10.00am and 4.00pm. If you are able to help by welcoming visitors and ensuring spatial distancing, we'd love to hear from you. An hour or two of your time would be much appreciated!

You are welcome to come to **Morning Prayer via Zoom** from Monday till Thursday, 8.30am.  
Zoom details: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86533609294?pwd=MDhPRXNkT2M2a1c4czRiYzUrd3BsZz09>  
Meeting ID: 865 3360 9294  
Passcode: RTMAugust

Do make sure you are signed in just before 8.30am as we start on time. If you have access to Daily Prayer, that helps, but even without a book or the app you can still join in prayer!

**Prayers for the week ahead** This coming week we celebrate the faith of two members of the same family: on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> we remember Monica, mother of Augustine of Hippo, who died in 387AD, and on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> we give thanks for her son St Augustine of Hippo (430AD). Monica prayed faithfully and persistently that her son would find Christ and come to a living faith in his love. As we think about those people today who are searching for God and longing to find peace and a place to belong, we give thanks for Monica's example of faithful devotion, that we may share her confidence, patience and trust as we pray for those like her son Augustine who need support and encouragement to find their way home.

**St Monica, mother of Augustine of Hippo, 27<sup>th</sup> August**

Faithful God,  
Who strengthened Monica, the mother of Augustine, with wisdom,  
and through her patient endurance encouraged him  
to seek after you:  
give us the will to persist in prayer  
that those who stray from you may be brought to faith  
in your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

**St Augustine of Hippo, 28<sup>th</sup> August**

Merciful Lord,  
who turned Augustine from his sins  
to be a faithful bishop and teacher:  
grant that we may follow him in penitence and discipline  
till our restless hearts find their rest in you;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

We continue to pray for you and your loved ones.

With every blessing for this coming week,  
Anne, Neil and Wilma

*This week the letter has been written by Revd Anne Crawford.*

---

**Please pray for:**

...**Fr. Jamil Khadir and the Anglican congregations in Nablus** in the West Bank and the Anglican Church in Beirut.

... **Christ's School**, for all those who received exam results this week, those who are celebrating and those who are re-considering the path ahead.

...**Glass Door** staff, and for guests, especially those who are sleeping rough

...**all those who work for the NHS**, for carers and key workers

...**the sick and those in need** - Hermione Lockyer, Ron Bond, Madge Thorns, Bob Smith, Molly Lambert, John Roberts, Sarah Swanson, Joy Clarke, Chris O'Toole

---

## **Church, Community and other news:**

Congratulations to Wilma on becoming an Honorary Canon of Southwark Cathedral in recognition of her service to the Diocese. Although there can't be a Service of Installation just yet, Wilma is allowed to use the title 'Canon' from now on and has been given a lovely badge to add to her preaching scarf. Please note that she's not leaving us, it is simply an honorary title and an honour!

## **Give A Little**

We are hugely grateful to so many who continue to make their weekly or monthly contribution to the finances of the Team, by standing order or direct debit. Contributions can also be made electronically in church and there will also be a plate for cash collections at the back of each church.

However if anyone would like to make an additional donation to the work of our churches this can be done at <https://givealittle.co/campaigns/5260a080-4ee0-49b6-a1c3-d552ef9a0700> Whilst this is a challenging time for many, financially as well as emotionally, I hope we can continue to count on your support for the work of our 3 churches.

## **Things for our Children and Youth:**

Our children and youth Zoom meetings are now taking a summer break.

We hope to start again soon – watch this space!

## **Where to watch church services or access resources while church buildings remain closed:**

The Church of England have a special page for you to light a virtual candle and make time to pray which you can view here: <https://www.churchofengland.org/our-faith/light-candle>

You can also access more online services produced by the Church of England here: <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/church-online>

With best wishes,  
Tina

Tina Roberts  
Parish Administrator (Mon – Thurs, 9.00am – 5.00pm)  
Richmond Team Ministry  
The Vicarage  
Ormond Road  
Richmond  
Surrey  
TW10 6TH  
020 8940 0362  
[admin@richmondteamministry.org](mailto:admin@richmondteamministry.org)  
[www.richmondteamministry.org](http://www.richmondteamministry.org)  
Charity Number: 1130018

Our Privacy Notice can be viewed at: <https://www.richmondteamministry.org/wp-content/uploads/Privacy-Notice.pdf>



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



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



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



[Click here for the Team Rector's Twitter feed](#)