

Thursday 17 September 2020

Dear Friends,

One of the most appreciated aspects of lockdown for residents in Richmond has been the reduction in air traffic, and whilst the skies are beginning to fill with the sound of jet engines again, they are nowhere near as busy as we are used to. 80 years ago the skies over London were filled with a very different sort and sound of aircraft, and this summer brings with it a poignant reminder of the Battle of Britain, a turning point in the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War when we were glad that we had an air force to protect us from invasion. The battle was a victory won against all the odds and paved the way to the freedom we enjoy.

I am writing this on 15<sup>th</sup> September, Battle of Britain Day, and I'm inspired to include the stories of two particular airmen who came from very different backgrounds and parts of the world, but who nevertheless were willing to join us and give their lives in the fight against evil. John Blair came to England from Jamaica in 1941 and volunteered to join the RAF as a navigator, flying as part of 102 Squadron. John flew 30 missions in Halifax bombers, and was then transferred to the Pathfinders Force, and went on to win the Distinguished Flying Cross. His family are incredibly proud of John, and spoke of his reasons for volunteering: his fear that if Hitler won the war then the people of the Caribbean would be returned to slavery and their freedom would be lost.

The other airman I am reminded of today is a 19 year old spitfire pilot called John Gillespie Magee who was killed in a mid-air collision over Lincolnshire in 1941. John was born in China, and had an American father (who was an Episcopalian priest) and an English mother. He was educated in England at Rugby School, and in 1938 he visited the US and won a scholarship to Yale. John longed to be a poet and when he was at Rugby School he won the poetry prize, following in the footsteps of his hero Rupert Brooke. Instead of taking up his scholarship to Yale he volunteered for war service and joined the Royal Canadian Airforce. After initial training he was transferred to 412 Squadron flying those beloved spitfires, but it was for his poetry that he will be best remembered.

His best loved poem is known as the airman's prayer:

High Flight

*John Gillespie Magee (1922-1941)*

Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of Earth  
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;  
Sunward I've climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth  
Of sun-split clouds, – and done a hundred things  
You have not dreamed of – wheeled and soared and swung  
High in the sunlit silence. Hov'ring there,  
I've chased the shouting wind along, and flung  
My eager craft through footless halls of air...

Up, up the long, delirious burning blue  
I've topped the wind-swept heights with easy grace  
Where never lark, or ever eagle flew –  
And, while with silent, lifting mind I've trod  
The high un-trespassed sanctity of space,  
Put out my hand, and touched the face of God.

The **Sunday services** this week, 20<sup>th</sup> September, are at 9.30am at St Matthias and St Mary Magdalene, and 11.00am at St John the Divine. 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 them home with you), you will 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! Please remember to wear a face covering in church, unless you are exempt from doing so.

Sadly, we are still unable to offer either a crèche area or Junior Church for our young people, so we encourage parents to bring a book, soft toy or other suitable resource for their own child, if that is helpful. But do know that young people are very welcome and belong to our worshipping community.

Our churches continue to be open at specific 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 and St Matthias will be open on Saturdays, 10.00am – 12noon.

Looking ahead, all three churches will be celebrating the **Harvest Festival** on **Sunday 4 October**.

Richmond Foodbank has indicated that they currently have ample stocks of food, but that they would very much welcome financial contributions this year to support their delivery service and, hopefully, to acquire a larger van. We will provide more details soon.

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

The latest edition of **Team Talk** is now available on our website - <https://www.richmondteamministry.org/wp-content/uploads/2020-09-Autumn-Edition-web.pdf> Paper copies are not being produced this time.

**Morning Prayer will resume again on Tuesday 22 September.**

Zoom details for September:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84123937911?pwd=MUJlVGRyWTBFUFBtMGxVVVNyMXUrQT09>

Meeting ID: 841 2393 7911

Passcode: RTMSept

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!

We do, though, continue our prayers for all members of our congregations and the community we seek to serve, and send blessings for the coming week.

Anne, Wilma and Neil

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

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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**, especially for Helen Dixon the Headteacher.

...**Glass Door Staff**, and for guests, especially those who are currently sleeping on the streets.

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

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

...**the departed, may they rest in peace** – Maureen Langley

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

### **Volunteers needed:**

It has been wonderful that so many people have been able to help neighbours and friends during these past months. Now your church needs to ask for some volunteering help. Can you offer time and skill? We are looking for people who might be able to help with the following:

- be a Foundation Governor at Christ's School (i.e. appointed by the PCC), ideally with business or finance background
- be the Richmond Team Ministry PCC Secretary, supporting the Team Rector in preparing for PCC meetings and providing a link to the Diocese.
- be the PCC Minute Taker, supporting the PCC Secretary.

All these roles need filling and all are important. Of course you would receive support and guidance as you serve the church in a unique way. Do talk to a member of the clergy, if you are interested or would like to learn more.

### **Glass Door:**

As many will know, following advice from Public Health England, it won't be possible to run night shelters this winter as we have for the last three years. Although there are many reasons, the key one is that it is not possible to maintain social distancing and a safe environment when many people are eating and then sleeping together in one shared space. Glass Door is looking at alternative provision, and we are talking with Glass Door about how for our communities can be involved.

We wanted to say a huge thank you to all our volunteers who worked so hard at the Glass Door shelters last season. Your commitment, compassion and adaptability made it possible to deliver a safe, welcoming environment and a delicious meal for 19 weeks.

If you are keen to get involved in other ways then the Glass Door Sleep Out (or In) fundraiser will look a bit different this year, taking place on Friday 2nd October. All the details of how to register can be found here <https://www.glassdoor.org.uk/Event/sleep-out-2020>

We are asking our volunteers to be patient while we work out how to support Glass Door in a way that is safe for everyone. For our Volunteer Co-ordinators the situation is frustrating, but also constantly changing. If anyone has any questions or would just like to have a chat about the current situation please don't hesitate to contact Isabelle Swann on [swannisabelle@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:swannisabelle@hotmail.co.uk)

### **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.

### **Children and Youth activities:**

**Eaglets** with story time and songs for young children, parents and carers, has now re-started, and is still currently meeting on Zoom on **Tuesdays from 3.30-3.50pm.**

**Mary's Little Lambs will restart next Thursday, 24 September** at 2.30pm,

For the time being we'll still be on Zoom, in more or less the same format we had before the summer holidays. There will be a short Diddy Disciple service with a story, a few songs, prayers and a bit of catch up time.

Here are the Zoom log in details you need:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84871971852?pwd=cmEwZmNyY0toLlEwYTthoSGtCdDliQT09>

Meeting ID: 848 7197 1852

Passcode: SMM MLL

As you will know, we have been advertising for a **Children and Young People's Ministry Leader** to join the Richmond Team and build on the wonderful work done by Helen in the past four years. Although we received a number of applications and interviewed three candidates, unfortunately we weren't able to appoint. However, the post has now been re-advertised: **the closing date for applications is next Monday, 21 September**, with interviews early in October. If you know anyone who might be interested in the job, please ask them to visit our website: <https://www.richmondteamministry.org/vacancy-children-young-peoples-ministry-leader> And do pray for the right person to emerge.

### **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

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