

Thursday 15 October 2020

Dear Friends,

I imagine that, like me, you are feeling a little anxious at the prospect of a winter filled with potential new restrictions as the 3 tier system kicks in across the country, and Londoners begins to learn how to live within Tier 2 restrictions from this weekend. The end we had all hoped for earlier in the summer – that ‘new normal’ we still long for - seems to be receding further from our grasp. At a time like this, how do we hold on to that sense of hope when the news is bleak and the future uncertain? Sometimes I find it helpful to re-visit the story of God’s ancient people, going back to a time when they too were struggling with a sense of unrest and uncertainty. When we consider the stories in the book of Exodus we hear about the Israelites packing up their old lives and travelling on in trust to an unknown future, a future which incidentally didn’t arrive for 40 years! But all through that long journey, as they learned to live through those wilderness years, they discovered how much they needed to depend on each other, they had to learn to trust and to be patient; sometimes they succeeded, sometimes they failed. The biggest lesson they learned was that the more they trusted God and the more faithfully they lived in his presence, the brighter the light at the end of their tunnel shone. Thinking about those ancient Israelites and the journey they made into the unknown prompts me to think about the experiences of the early Church too, probably because we have been reading the Acts of the Apostles at Morning Prayer for quite some weeks now. Those early disciples of Jesus, after the resurrection, left all they knew and stepped bravely into the unknown. Of course Luke tells his story in a way which smooths over the passage of time when in reality years passed by before the next great event happened. St Paul’s conversion on the road to Damascus was a momentous life-changing event, but years passed before his ministry actually began.

We may feel that we are living through unprecedented times, but our current situation is nothing new for humankind. The Israelites, the early Church, and every generation since, has had to learn to live with the unknown, unable to be confident in any future planning. Life as it is today is more ‘normal’ than we think. Living with this current uncertainty, this unknown, is a great challenge for those of us who have lived all our lives with people telling us to make goals, map out mission, take control and live life to the full because the future is what you make it. Sadly, we now realise that we are not in control, the future is no longer mapped out in a way we thought it would be.

God gave some wise life-enhancing guidelines to those ancient people long ago, guidelines which Jesus re-enforced and which shaped the early Church. Those very same guidelines give meaning, purpose and hope to the human race today: our first calling is to love God with our whole heart, and the second is to love our neighbour as we would like to be loved ourselves. In loving God we have nothing to fear as we shelter under the shadow of his mighty protective wings. St Paul reminds us that nothing can separate us from God’s love, not even death, and that gives us confidence to face the future with hope. In loving our neighbour we place ourselves and those God loves under that same shelter and that same promise. God journeys on with us through thick and thin, the light shining in our darkness and showing us the way, as we learn to care for one another and support and encourage one another. We do not live for ourselves, but for God and for each other. This is our normal, and it’s a very hopeful way to live, especially now.

The Sunday services on **18<sup>th</sup> October** will be at 9.30am at St Matthias, and 11.00am at St John the Divine. At St Mary Magdalene services will be at 8.00am and 9.30am, 11.30am and at 6.30pm. Although there will be paper copies of the Order of Services (including Matins at 11.30am) 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.

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

Anne, Neil and Wilma

*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 the Governing Body

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

...**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, Dolly May

...**the departed, may they rest in peace** – Richard Windred (former RTM PCC Secretary)

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

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.

You are welcome to come to **Morning Prayer via Zoom** on Mondays to Thursdays, 8.30am. 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!

Zoom details for October:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89255710188?pwd=eVBVTGk0Rm5aeWxTckYzMDRYWk5VWZz09>

Meeting ID: 892 5571 0188

Passcode: RTMOctober

As Tina now splits her time between working from home and being in the office does anyone has an old iPhone (excuse the brand request – using a phone with which you're familiar makes things quicker and easier) that you're no longer using that you would be willing to donate to the office? Please talk to Wilma or email Tina by replying to this email. Many thanks.

### **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.

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.

We are very pleased that Jackie Harrison will take over from Graham Hunton as Gift Aid Officer. We thank Graham for all his excellent work for the Team. Sarah Percival has offered to be the PCC Minute Taker and this has been gratefully accepted.

### **Christian Aid Autumn Appeal:**

Due to Covid-19 restrictions we were unable this year to carry out street and church collections during Christian Aid Week in May. But the needs still remain. Christian Aid works with many vulnerable communities around the world helping them support each other. One such group is a farming community in Nicaragua whose coffee farms are threatened by climate change. With your support, Christian Aid can provide tools and community training so that they can continue to farm.

Please use the link below to donate:

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/richmondchristianaid>

Go to Christian Aid's website to find out more:

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/appeals/key-appeals/global-neighbours-autumn-appeal>

## **Understanding Islam**

Under the auspices of Faithful Friends, Chris Hewer, who is an outstanding speaker on Islam, has kindly agreed to do a zoom study on 'Husayn and the struggle for Justice Today' Wednesday 21 October, 7.00pm to 8pm.

Here is the link:-

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81419336844?pwd=Sit2Slc4SFVFUGYlRyt3ZnhCQjZidz09>

Meeting ID: 814 1933 6844

Passcode: 263520

Warmly recommended!

## **Recitals at St Mary Magdalene:**

Saturday 7 November, 12.30pm Emily Christian, soprano. Emily is Choral Scholar at St Mary Magdalene.

More info about her programme next week.

Saturday 5 December, 12.30pm Rachel Smith, flute

Recitals are free with a retiring collection for the Choral Foundation.

## **A recital elsewhere....**

Alex Knight, Director of Music at St Mary Magdalene, will be giving an organ recital at Southwark Cathedral on Monday 26 October 2020 at 1.15pm. Free entry.

## **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**. Please contact Fr Neil for more details.

**Mary's Little Lambs** meets on Zoom on Thursday 22 October at 2.30pm.

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=cmEwZmNyY0toLlEwYThoSGtCdDliQT09>

Meeting ID: 848 7197 1852

Passcode: SMM MLL

After 22 October we're going to take a little break and explore if we might be able to do Little Lambs service in person. 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>

Please note that I am now working remotely on Mondays and Tuesdays and in the Parish Office (which will be open to visitors) on Wednesdays and Thursdays. This is for the foreseeable future.

With best wishes,  
Tina

Tina Roberts  
Parish Administrator  
Working Mondays & Tuesdays remotely 9.00am – 5.00pm, and  
Wednesdays & Thursdays in the office, 9.00am – 5.00pm  
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