

Thursday 5 November 2020

Dear friends,

This last week has been filled with remembering: last Sunday evening we came together to remember and give thanks for our departed loved ones in the candlelit All Souls service at St John's, this following on from our morning worship when we reflected on the example left to us by those saints who continue to inspire and encourage us in our own journey of faith. And we continue with that theme of remembering through this weekend as we reflect on the deadly cost of war and conflict and wear our poppies as a sign of remembrance and thankfulness, and our commitment to work tirelessly for peace.

Remembering is very much at the centre of our discipleship. Every time we gather around the altar for the Eucharist we are re-remembering, we are bringing ourselves together with the whole company of Christ, past and present, and offering our future to God in thankfulness and praise for all that Christ made possible through his sacrifice on the cross.

Which is why it is so very painful for Christians now as once again our lives are locked down and public worship in our churches is not able to take place. We feel bereft that we cannot come together and take bread in to our hands and re-member in ways which strengthen us, inspire us and comfort us, especially when life is difficult and we are fearful. But we have been this way before, and we learned a lot about what it means to be the Body of Christ when we cannot gather physically together, and we can be re-assured that God will be with us and will make his presence felt as we navigate our way forward and do our best to care for each other and for those who look to the Church for help, support and guidance.

There's a wonderful book which I reach for when I am feeling in need of spiritual inspiration, and during the last lockdown it was a regular companion. 'A Glimpse of Glory' is sadly now out of print, but I can share some of the author's insight with you in the hope that it might comfort you in the coming days. This little book was written by a South African priest with the magnificent name of Gonville French-Beytagh. Gonville was Dean of the Cathedral in Johannesburg in the 1960s and was imprisoned in Cape Town in 1971 during the struggle against apartheid. Kept in solitary confinement, beaten regularly and denied any contact with the Church during his imprisonment, Gonville writes very movingly about his daily reception of Holy Communion in his cell: every morning at 7am he would hear the cathedral's bells ringing out and calling people to mass, and he would stand alone in his cell and in his imagination he would join them. He had no bread or wine, but he knew that just by being present to God, and by standing alongside his congregation in his heart and mind, even though he had been physically (and violently) removed from them, Christ would be with him, his love strengthening him and feeding him with all that he needed to continue his sacrificial fight against the evils of apartheid. Gonville gives a powerful witness to the Spirit at work in his life as he was locked away from the people he loved, and tells of how the Eucharist celebrated in his cell during that time of isolation and fear were for him the most spiritually nourishing he had ever known. His testimony to the power of the Holy Spirit to sustain and strengthen us during the darkest of times gives me re-newed hope and courage that, in the words of the early 15th century mystic Mother Julian of Norwich 'all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well'. Take heart dear friends!

Following the re-opening of our churches earlier in the summer, many people in our congregations continued to worship with us from their homes, protecting themselves or loved ones from infection, and so in many ways it feels as though we are now being fully re-united (re-remembered) as we join them in the virtual worshipping world of zoom or live-streaming. They have, like Dean Gonville French Beytagh experienced a spiritual communion. As we prepare now to join with them on the other side of a screen, isolated in body but not in spirit, it might be useful to offer a prayer which we can use as we stand together in God's presence and allow the Holy Spirit to sustain us as we learn a little more about what it might mean to be Church in lockdown.

Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ,
for all the benefits you have given me,
for all the pains and insults you have borne for me.
Since I cannot for now receive you sacramentally,
I ask you to come spiritually into my heart.
O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother,
may I know you more clearly, love you more dearly,
and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen.
After the Prayer of St Richard of Chichester

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, especially praying for Tom Rutter, chaplain

...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, Simon Baynes, Harold Gill.

...the departed, may they rest in peace – John Lewis, Chris Bartlett, Dennis Dyer

Church, Community and other news:

Sadly there won't be live services in our churches now until at least the beginning of December.

There will be a live streamed service from St John the Divine on Facebook (please see the bottom of this email for links to our Facebook pages) and it can be watched live if you have a Facebook account. If you don't have access to Facebook, you will be able to view the service from our website once it has been uploaded, usually on Monday morning: <https://www.richmondteamministry.org/messages>

There will be copies of the Sunday readings on our website – please go to <https://www.richmondteamministry.org/orders-of-service-readings> to download or view them.

Our churches will 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:

Tuesdays, 9.30am – 12.30pm

Saturdays, 10.00am – 12.00noon and

Sundays, 9.30am – 10.30am

St Mary Magdalene will be open on:

Wednesdays, 9.30am – 11.00am

Saturdays, 10.00am – 12.00noon

Sunday 8 November 8.00am – 11.30am; Sunday 15 November 8.00am – 9.30am.

St Matthias will be open on:

Saturdays, 10.00am – 12.00noon.

There is no Morning Prayer next week (9-13 November) via Zoom – normal service resumes on Monday 16 November, with the following info:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86352038524?pwd=amllMzQlRStHQnpzMUZVYWhlKzZzd09>

Meeting ID: 863 5203 8524

Passcode: RTMNov

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!

PLEASE NOTE that there have been several **fake emails** purporting to come from 'Rev (or Revd) Wilma Roest' saying that she's got something urgent for you to do and asking you to get in touch with her by email and not to phone her. They're coming from various gmail accounts. **THESE ARE NOT COMING** from Wilma – she will never ask you not to phone her and her emails will come from her correct email address – rector@richmondteamministry.org It's a scam and if you reply they will ask you to buy gift cards – please delete these emails if you receive one.

About APCMs and Church Meetings.....

It has been a strange year so far and not one in which many meetings have been able to take place in person. Normally in April we have an Annual Parochial Church Meeting, when we agree the accounts for the previous year and elect new Church Wardens and PCC members. That has not happened this year and we had hoped to be able to come together in October. However we have now been granted permission by the Bishop of Southwark to move the APCM for 2020 to 2021. This means that on 23 May 2021 we will hold two APCMs, in one go. In the meantime we are most grateful to all our Church Wardens and PCC members who are continuing to serve the Richmond Team. Church Committee, PCC and Property & Finance meetings will continue to take place via Zoom.

Recitals at St Mary Magdalene:

Sadly Emily's recital on 7 November has had to be cancelled, but soon there will be a little treat from Emily with Amy on piano on the St Mary Magdalene Facebook page as a ray of light for you all.

Flat available to rent in one of RTM's properties

A very spacious ground floor one double bedroom flat, with hardwood floors, off street parking and direct access to large lawned garden. Quietly located in the heart of Richmond, moments from the Town Centre shops and riverside. Available for long let. Contact letting agent Major Son and Phipps for more info. <https://www.majorsonhipps.com/properties/9468919/lettings>

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, is currently pausing to re-consider its timing. We'll let you know when a new slot is fixed.

Mary's Little Lambs is now taking a little break. We will be back soon!

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 for the foreseeable future – please do send me an email if you want to get in contact.

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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