

Thursday 19 November 2020

Dear Friends,

This Sunday, 22 November, is the last Sunday in the liturgical calendar of the Church, a Sunday known to many as Stir-up Sunday. The term comes from the opening words of the Collect for the day in the Book of Common Prayer which is used on the last Sunday before the start of Advent:

*Stir up, we beseech thee, O Lord, the wills of thy faithful people;
that they, plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works, may of thee be plenteously rewarded; through
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Traditionally, families would gather together in the kitchen of their homes to mix and steam Christmas pudding on Stir-up Sunday. Everyone would take a turn to stir the pudding mix so each person involved is able to make a special wish for the year ahead. By tradition the pudding mixture is stirred from East to West in honour of the three wise men who visited the baby Jesus.

In a survey done in 2012, two-thirds of British children revealed that they had never experienced stirring Christmas pudding mix. A lovely tradition is getting lost, but maybe this year of all years, I hope families can embrace at least the sentiment of all being involved in making something together for Christmas. Further on in this letter are some other ideas!

Since the 1960's this last Sunday before Advent is also known as Christ the King Sunday, celebrating Christ as our anointed King, whose kingdom will have no end. It has been the tradition in this parish to mark this feast as a team, with a joint service. Sadly not so this year. We long for the day when we can come together again for worship, to remember we belong to each other and enjoy each other's company. But until that time we make the most of what we can do, be that saying our prayers privately, watching on line services from our churches or further afield or joining a service via Zoom.

On Sunday 29 November, we enter a new liturgical year where the focus will be on Mark's Gospel (it's lovingly known as year B). In church terms the new year begins with watching and waiting, in the season of Advent. The temptation is always to run straight to Christmas, but I hope we will all be able to find moments to stop and think about the meaning of Advent.

Inevitable this year, Advent and Christmas will be different, so our Advent preparations are going to be entitled '**Doing Advent differently**' and we would like to offer a range of ideas to help you.

First of all, on Advent Sunday, at 6.30pm, there will be a team **Service of Music and Readings for Advent** from St Mary Magdalene. This will be live streamed via the St Mary Magdalene facebook page and will be available the following day on the Richmond Team website.

It is also good to have time to reflect together on Advent, so we are offering you **4 Advent Meditations**, via Zoom, on 4 consecutive Wednesdays – 2 December, 9 December, 16 December and 23 December, 7.30pm till 8pm. Neil, Anne, Ruth and I will each lead a short reflection on the theme of Advent, which is concluded by saying Compline together. The order of service for Compline will be on the website for you to download soon.

The log in details for the Advent Meditations are as follows:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84068536220?pwd=QIV6UTJDeGxKZkw2b3VIRTFYQWlIdz09>

Meeting ID: 840 6853 6220

Passcode: 471976

You may like to read a book during Advent, so your clergy have put together a short recommended **Advent booklist**. If you have another favourite Advent book, do let us know. We can always add to the list!

Stephen Cottrell

Prayer, where to start and how to keep going

No one ever becomes an expert in prayer, but this little book sets out to help become more open to God's presence, which is the heart of prayer.

Stephen Cottrell	Let it slow, an Advent calendar with a difference <i>Christmas can be one of the most joyful but stressful times of year. This guide offers another way to approach December.</i>
Malcolm Guite	Heaven in Ordinary, a poet's corner collection <i>Everyday events and encounters, landscapes and poetry, stories, memory and a sense of the sacred: the musings of a poet's mind</i>
Carys Walsh	Frequencies of God, Walking through Advent with R.S. Thomas <i>28 reflections on Thomas's poetry as a guide for this season, exploring themes of waiting, accepting, journeying and birthing.</i>

Do you remember the wonderful rainbows people put in their windows to celebrate the NHS heroes? We would like to encourage you to embrace the Christmas story and display it in your window in December. Maybe a star or an angel, maybe a picture of Mary and Joseph travelling to Bethlehem. Maybe a different picture each week. Let's create **Nativity windows** together, for passers-by to see and be reminded what the story of Christmas is all about. Of course if you have a front garden and are very creative, you could make a nativity scene outside.... Why not make a start on Advent Sunday, 29 November?

And finally, on Monday 23 November we have to say farewell to a much loved member of RTM who was also an assistant church warden, John Roberts. Under the current government rules only 30 people are able to attend the funeral service, but if you wish you will be able to follow the service via Zoom. The details are below:

Topic: John's Funeral Service

Time: Nov 23, 2020 11:00 AM London ('doors open' from 10.30am and shut at 10.55am)

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83445587108?pwd=b0tjNVFLUnRyb3VaekNtT3NNdWZ4QT09>

Meeting ID: 834 4558 7108

Passcode: 833305

Please pray for Liz, Huw and Roo as they prepare for Monday.

We continue our prayers for all of you. May God give you strength, courage and his peace.

Anne, Neil and Wilma

This week the letter has been written by Revd Canon Wilma Roest

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 staff and students

...**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, Sarah Swanson, Joy Clarke, Chris O'Toole, Patricia Doling, Dolly May, Simon Baynes, Harold Gill, Roz Hogan

...**the departed, may they rest in peace** – John Roberts, Susan Harvey-Taylor

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 live-streamed services from St John the Divine and St Mary Magdalene on Facebook (please see the bottom of this page for links to our Facebook pages) and they 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 services from our website once the links have been uploaded, usually on Monday morning:

<https://www.richmondteamministry.org/messages>

There will be copies of the Sunday readings/orders of service 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

Sundays 8.00am – 9.30am.

St Matthias will be open on:

Saturdays, 10.00am – 12.00noon.

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 November:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86352038524?pwd=amllMzQlRStHQnpzMUZVYWwhKzZzd09>

Meeting ID: 863 5203 8524

Passcode: RTMNov

There will be an **Open Meeting with Lucy Abraham from Glass Door on Thursday, 26 November at 6.30pm via Zoom**. Lucy will be talking about the current situation for rough sleepers locally, Glass Door's intended response in line with the Covid related restrictions and the support that churches and individuals can give to Glass Door. The session will last for an hour with an opportunity for questions. **Log-in details via Zoom:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85081103245?pwd=OXcxeGp2NmJlEQndneGppYkluQWlxQT09>

Meeting ID: 850 8110 3245

Passcode: 984893

('Doors open' 6:15pm)

We hope to give you an update on our involvement with Glass Door in next week's newsletter.

Remembering rightly: a conversation on Race and Jewish-Christian relations

In a time of some tensions, how can we build solidarity between Jews and Christians around questions of race?

Join the Council of Christians and Jews (CCJ) and Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) for a special event at **11.00am on 3 December** to help start a vital conversation around race, Black British history, and Jewish-Christian relations. The event will feature Richard Reddie from CTBI speaking on what he learned on the CCJ Yad Vashem study tour and how it could be fruitfully applied to remembering the transatlantic slave trade. United Synagogue member and historian Robert Bieber from CCJ Southwest London and Dittons will consider the significance of Black British history in Jewish perspective. Discussion leaders will include Rabbi Anna Posner, of the Norwich Liberal Jewish Community; Dionne Gravesande, Senior Ecumenical Relations Manager for Christian Aid; Revd Canon Dr Rosemarie Mallet, Archdeacon of Croydon; and others. Don't miss out -- **register now by emailing cjrelations@ccj.org.uk**

A campaign called **FORK** (Feed our Richmond Kids) has been set up to raise funds for those under-fives at risk of food poverty this Christmas. It is working closely with Richmond Council and with The Vineyard Community charity to make sure it can deliver help directly to these otherwise hard to reach families. We know this is a time when everyone is asking for money for good causes and Richmond doesn't scream poverty, however 2,600 of our Richmond children are on free school meals and there are 400 pre-school children in need of help. Although the government has U-turned on offering help to children on free school meals, it doesn't seem as though it includes funding for pre-school children. These are very tough times and our Richmond pre-schoolers still need our help this Christmas: these are our Richmond Kids. Could you help by making a donation to feed pre-school children over the Christmas period:

<https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/FORK>

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.majorsonphipps.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:

Like so many things at the moment, all our activities for young people are currently on hold. But our young people are not forgotten. We daily pray for families, for those who normally attend our various groups.

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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Richmond Team Ministry
St Mary Magdalene • St Matthias • St John the Divine

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