

Thursday 7 October 2021

Dear Friends,

Two years ago, I spent Harvest season serving a collection of small farming villages just outside Cambridge. I spent time with farmers and farmers' wives, prayed Morning Prayer among chickens, tasted locally grown produce (where locally grown meant just outside). I felt like quite a fraud, I can tell you! I have never picked produce (beyond the odd strawberry) or harvested grain, nor – to my shame – grown my own vegetables, so I have been mulling over what Harvest means for us who live in the city in the 21st century.

The celebration of Harvest in the church calendar began in 1843, when the Reverend Robert Hawker invited parishioners to a special thanksgiving service for the harvest at his church in Cornwall. In the 19th century the whole community, including children, needed to help with the harvest right up until the end, as lives depended on its success.

Life has changed immeasurably in the last two centuries but over the last couple of years many of us have become all the more aware of where our food comes from and how fragile our way of life remains: with the fear which stripped the shelves at the beginning of lockdown; fewer pickers and lorry drivers from Europe; and increased awareness of the Climate Crisis and how it affects all of us. It strikes me that Harvest is a season to remember that we are, completely and utterly dependent on God, not just for sustenance, but for all good things, and to rejoice in the beauty and abundance of God's creation.

Last Saturday some of us gathered at St Matthias to hear from Dr Martin and Rev'd Margot Hodson about the Climate Crisis, about the change which is urgently needed, about what we can do, and about the hope we have. It was an excellent opportunity to learn and to reflect on our place within the interconnected web of creation.

As the weather gets colder and the nights draw in and the sense of victory which accompanies the Harvest fades away we would do well to hang on to that sense of thankfulness to God, awareness of our dependence on God, and our commitment to share all of God's blessings.

For, as St James writes "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows," (James 1:17) and as St Paul reminded Timothy, "we brought nothing into the world, so that we can take nothing out of it; but if we have food and clothing, we will be content with these." (1 Tim 6:7-8)

With our prayers and blessings,

Anne, Charlie, Neil, and Wilma

This week the letter has been written by Revd Charlie Smith

Alan, priest and friend

It is with great sadness that we share with you the death of Revd Alan Sykes. Alan died earlier this week at home, with his wife Fee by his side. Alan was probably one of the most gentle priests one could meet, with an enormous pastoral heart. He served at St Mary Magdalene and in the Richmond Team for all his ordained life (including through two interregna) and was a member of the congregation for many years before that.

Information about the funeral service will come in due course.

We give thanks to God for Alan's ministry, for his friendship and his generosity of spirit.

May he rest in peace and rise in glory.

Please pray for:

...**Fr. Jamil Khadir and the Anglican congregations in Nablus** in the West Bank and the Anglican Church in Beirut; also for the peace of Jerusalem

...**Christ's School**, for all staff, students and governors

...**Glass Door staff** and for all volunteers as we plan for the next winter season and our involvement

...**the sick and those in need** – Hermione Lockyer, Ron Bond, Madge Thorns, Joy Clarke, Harold Gill, Pat Mygind, Veronica Huci, Penny and Michael Carleton-Smith, Megan Vaughan-Jones, Claire and Peter Day, Jenny Powell-Smith

...**the departed, may they rest in peace** – Molly Lambert, Paul Bunnage, Revd Alan Sykes

Church Services:

At St John the Divine this Sunday, the 11.00am service will be both in-person and live-streamed via their [Facebook page](#).

St John's midweek service is an hour of contemplation, between 6.30-7.30pm on Tuesdays, with the Blessed Sacrament as the focus. If you would value a time of quietness, thought and prayer, you are welcome to drop in for as long as you like during the hour.

St Mary Magdalene will be holding in-person Sunday services at 8.00am, 9.30am, 11.30am (third Sunday only) and 6.30pm. The 9.30am service will also be live-streamed via their [Facebook page](#). During the week St Mary Magdalene will be holding an in-person service at 10.00am on Wednesdays.

St Matthias' 9.30am Sunday service will be both in-person and online via Zoom (please [contact Revd Anne Crawford](#) for log-in details). The midweek Eucharist at St Matthias is held on Thursdays at 10.00am.

Orders of service and readings can be found here <https://www.richmondteamministry.org/orders-of-service-readings>

Harvest Thanksgiving

Thank you for everyone who has contributed to the Harvest celebrations last weekend! Most gifts have been taken to the Foodbank, with some kept in church for distribution throughout the winter to people who come to ask for help.

Private Prayer:

St Mary Magdalene will be open for private prayer on Saturdays between 10.00am and 12.00noon when you will be able to light a candle, and reflect or meditate.

St John the Divine is normally open on Tuesdays between 9.30am and 12.30pm, Saturday mornings between 10.00am-12.00noon, and at various other times when Fr Neil is working in the office.

Morning Prayer, Monday – Fridays, at 8.30am:

Morning Prayer is now taking place in church and via Zoom. We will meet at St Mary Magdalene on Mondays, on Tuesdays we will be at St John the Divine, Wednesdays and Thursdays are at St Mary Magdalene and Fridays at St Matthias.

During October, **Monday – Thursday**

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82668051680?pwd=ZXkwSmNmMkNsdjNXWEhvdGhTeVg3QT09>

Meeting ID: 826 6805 1680

Passcode: RTMPrayer

And on Fridays:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2379519854?pwd=akZFeU9jcTZtMG9vTm94ckRROStldz09>

Meeting ID: 237 951 9854

Passcode: FriPrayer

Evening Prayer Please note that **there will be no Evening Prayer from Monday, 4 October to Monday 18 October inclusive.**

On **Sunday 31 October** we will mark **All Souls' Day** with a Sung Eucharist at 6.30pm at St John the Divine. Please write the names of departed loved ones on the lists at the back of church (or, if you're unable to get to church, please [email me in the Parish Office](#)) so that their names may be read out during the service, and come to the service to commemorate and give thanks for them. **Please note there will be no Evensong at St Mary Magdalene on 31 October.**

Church, Community and other news:

Confirmation? Admission to Holy Communion?

What is the next step on your journey of faith? Is it baptism, if you have not yet been baptised? Is it being Admitted to Holy Communion, particularly for young people? Or would you like to be confirmed? Whatever your next step is, we want to help you and provide preparation classes. Do talk to a member of the clergy for more information.

Living in Love and Faith

How do questions about identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage fit within the bigger picture of the good news of Jesus Christ?

What does it mean to live in love and faith together as a Church?

The Living in Love and Faith project is the Church of England's national process asking individuals, parishes, deaneries and communities to reflect on matters related to sexuality, gender and relationships. The Church of England have produced an introductory video (click [here](#)) and a podcast (click [here](#)) if you want to find out more.

The Richmond and Barnes Deanery is running the Living in Love and Faith course which aims to help us think more deeply about what it means to be human and about how to live in love and faith. This five week course covers the following topics and is available via Zoom or in person at St Mary Magdalene, Church Walk, Richmond:

1. **Learning Together**

What does it mean to *learn together* as followers of Jesus Christ?

7:30 - 9pm, Wednesday 13th October via Zoom

2:30 - 4pm, Sunday 17th October at St Mary Magdalene, Richmond.

2. **Identity**

How does our *identity* in Christ relate to sex and gender?

7:30 - 9pm, Wednesday 20th October via Zoom

2:30 - 4pm, Sunday 24th October at St Mary Magdalene, Richmond.

3. **Relationships**

What kinds of *relationships* does God call us to?

7:30 - 9pm, Wednesday 27th October via Zoom

2:30 - 4pm, Sunday 31st October at St Mary Magdalene, Richmond.

4. **Sex**

Where do our bodies and sex fit in to all of this?

7:30 - 9pm, Wednesday 3rd November via Zoom

2:30 - 4pm, Sunday 7th November at St Mary Magdalene, Richmond.

5. **Life together**

How do diversity and difference affect our *life together* as a church?

7:30 - 9pm, Wednesday 10th November via Zoom

2:30 - 4pm, Sunday 14th November at St Mary Magdalene, Richmond.

To join the Zoom meeting the details are:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87585449850?pwd=cTdXWXNESjN4djB5eXdGYWZFYWxuUT09>

Meeting ID: 875 8544 9850

Passcode: 792773

The [Children's Book Project](#) – has your child / children out-grown some of their books? The Children's Book Project would very much like to clean, sort and distribute those books via teachers and schools to children in the UK who are 'book poor' and do not have any (or many) books at home. When books are available at home children spend more time reading thereby helping with their literacy. To donate books please send an [email to the Parish Office](#) and, if possible, drop them off at St Mary Magdalene which is now a drop-off point.

Memorial Service

The family of Byron Criddle, who died in February 2021, would like to invite you to a memorial service to celebrate Byron's life on Tuesday 19 October, 11.30am at St Mary Magdalene.

Ever thought about being a **local trustee**? If you're interested in finding out more please join an online Trustee Recruitment Event on Thursday 14 October 2021, 6.30-8.00pm and hear about the difference you could make. To find out more and to register, go to www.richmond cvs.org.uk

GlassDoor winter 2021-22 - update

Friends, Many thanks to all of you for volunteering to help with the GlassDoor winter season coming up. It's fantastic to see how many of you are able to participate again. We have some news to communicate that will affect how the season runs in the Richmond circuit. On Monday evening there was a Zoom meeting with volunteer co-ordinators where GlassDoor chief executive Lucy Horitz told us that the start of the season in Richmond is going to be delayed. We were very cheered last summer when government principles were published allowing for rotating night shelters to take place this winter, where there is need in a local area. Despite this and despite stringent planned safety measures, local public health teams have not been supportive of night shelters reopening in their boroughs. GlassDoor trustees have been weighing up the health, reputational and legal risks of opening and will make a final decision on Monday 11 October. In all likelihood, GlassDoor will need to start the shelters on a staggered basis, with Kensington & Chelsea and Wandsworth opening in November and others hopefully opening after Christmas. To meet guest need it is important that there is one circuit operating north of the river and one south, with Wandsworth being more suitable over Richmond as many guests travel from Lambeth. This staggered start will provide an opportunity to evaluate data on demand for the shelters, as well as their success and safety.

This is, of course, hugely disappointing for everyone here in Richmond, but it is not something that we can change. For GlassDoor these are hugely important decisions and much is at stake. Volunteers and churches might want to write to their local MP/the media etc, but GlassDoor asks us not to do that right now. At present they're working hard to manage the relationships with local authorities and although grateful for the offer, they urge people to hold off from doing so at present.

We here in Richmond are grateful, as ever, for your patience and commitment to supporting people in dire need of help over the winter. Regardless of what happens with church night shelters, GlassDoor will continue with their 55-bed hostel at Paddington from mid-November to early May, as well as the casework support they put in place to help people into stable employment and accommodation. And the Vineyard Centre will be up and running with daytime support, as well as other local initiatives. We will be in touch in December to let you know about starting up in Richmond in mid-January. And if we have other news we will be in touch before then.

In the meantime if you have any questions please do ask me; I will do my best to answer. And again, thank you so much for the help you have already given in previous seasons and any that you can offer in the future. We truly couldn't do it without you.

Best wishes, Isabelle, Pat and Sarah (Glass Door volunteer coordinators for RTM)

Recital at St Mary Magdalene

The next recital will be on Saturday 6 November at 12.30pm. Free entry, with a retiring collection for the St Mary Magdalene Choral Foundation.

Weekend Retreat Saturday 20 - Sunday 21 November at The Royal Foundation of St Katherine, Limehouse. This short retreat will focus on preparation for Advent, and we will be helped by a retreat conductor who will guide us prayerfully through the peace and stillness of this extraordinary place. More information will follow shortly, but it's not too early to register your interest with [Revd Anne Crawford](mailto:Rev Anne Crawford) as places for overnight accommodation will be limited.

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.

With best wishes,
Tina

Tina Roberts
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Richmond Team Ministry
St Mary Magdalene • St Matthias • St John the Divine
www.richmondteamministry.org

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