



A few years ago, the Telegraph newspaper ran an article entitled 'The greatest love stories ever told'. "If there's one thing we all enjoy, it's a decent love story," the article began, and I would imagine that most of us would agree with that sentiment.

The choice of love stories isn't too surprising. Drawing from time-honoured works of literature, the list includes Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, *Wuthering Heights* and *Pride and Prejudice*. The top love story was William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, which might seem rather predictable but nonetheless is a story that's stood the test of time.

What's perhaps surprising is how many of those stories - all of them in some ways - are tragic stories as well as love stories. The tale of *Romeo and Juliet* is a classic example: star-crossed lovers, doomed from the beginning, yet continuing in their ill-fated romance. Again and again, in literature and fiction, love and tragedy seem to go hand in hand.

It might seem that way with Easter as well.

Christians declare Easter to be a story of God's love for us. Yet it includes Good Friday, which appears to be the ultimate tragedy: Jesus, who lived a life of such love and goodness, nailed to a cross and killed as a common criminal. If there was ever a story of love and tragedy, surely this is it?

Easter is certainly a story of love, but it's not the story of tragedy that it might first appear to be. Jesus himself explained the meaning of Good Friday in this way:

Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends

(John 15:13)

Easter is the story of Jesus laying down his life for his friends - that is, you and me. The idea of self-sacrifice lies at the heart of true love and the best love stories, and it lies at the heart of Easter too. Jesus'

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death on the cross isn't a tragedy but a sacrifice, not a mistake but the very act of love by a God who calls us his friends.

Easter is a story of love and not tragedy because it doesn't end at Good Friday. *Romeo and Juliet* might be a classic story, but it's a tragic one because it ends (spoiler alert!) with the demise of our star-crossed lovers. Love is defeated by death in Shakespeare's story.

But the story of Easter tells a powerfully different truth: that death has been defeated by love. Jesus didn't stay in the grave but rose to new life on Easter Sunday. The love story doesn't end in tragedy but continues in resurrection life. Easter is wonderfully good news because it tells of a love story that never ends, a love story that you and I are invited to be part of and participate in. Will you enter into that greatest love story this Easter?

Rev Dan Wells

Praying 'Thy Kingdom Come'

For the last couple of months we have been thinking, planning, dreaming of how we can get people to pray together more at HTR. We felt that it is important to come together in prayer and we were thinking of ways to make praying together more accessible. Then the coronavirus pandemic hit our shores and upset the whole apple cart. Or did it?

The reality is that we are probably praying together more now than ever before. Suffering, isolation, fear and uncertainty has a way of focussing our prayers better

than a 5-step action ever will. Never underestimate the unifying power of a common enemy!

And so we can be united in our prayers against anxiety, even though we are separated by walls. We can be united in our prayers for the sick, even though we are self-isolating. We can be united in our prayers to God, who sees all and hears all, even though these times are trying to convince us otherwise.

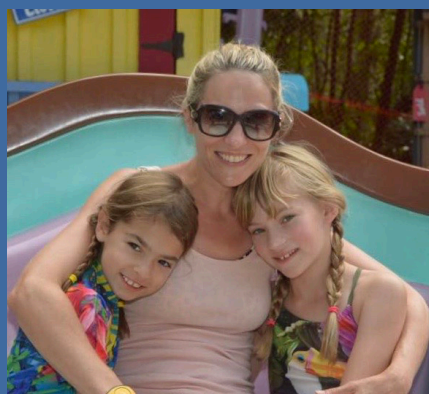


As such we will use the Church of England resources that will be made available on its [website](https://www.churchofengland.org.uk/) (with links on the HTR website) to join together in prayer between Ascension Day and Pentecost (21-31 May) as we pray Lord Jesus, let Thy kingdom come.

Nico Marais

Introducing Our New Administrator

I've certainly joined HTR at an interesting time! On 10 March I began my role on the Staff Team as part-time Administrator. However, with the Coronavirus situation taking a hold it has turned life upside down.



My journey with HTR started at the tender age of 10; I have been told there

is a photo of me knocking around in the church somewhere, but thankfully this is yet to surface! After many years away from church life, I re-joined HTR six years ago and I've not looked back since.

Having lived in Richmond my whole life, I attended Holy Trinity Primary School, as do my two daughters, Amber and Isla.

I feel a strong desire to grow and be part of the wonderful community we have here.

I have spent the last 18 years working at the Walt Disney Company Head Office in Hammersmith, a totally different environment to the office at HTR but a change that I have welcomed. I am

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really looking forward to my life taking a completely new direction and cannot think of a better place to do that. You have all been so wonderfully welcoming and supportive!

One thing outside of church life that keeps me busy (apart from being a mum) is circuit training and gym classes. I'm yet to sign up for a half-marathon of some kind, a goal that I have set myself, although one I manage to talk myself out of each year. But for now I think I'll stick to the odd run along the river.

Rebecca Reynolds

Christmas 2019

Last Christmas was once again a wonderful time for our church and the hundreds of people we welcomed from our local community as we celebrated The Greatest Gift.



We hosted events and Services for four local schools - Rainbow Nursery, Christ's, Marshgate and Holy Trinity - with the Nursery's Nativity featuring live donkeys, sheep, goats, pigs and hens!

Our own special Services included a Wednesday Carol Service followed by Christmas Lunch, a Sunday morning Nativity Carol Service, Christingle and Midnight Communion Services on Christmas Eve and a morning celebration on Christmas Day.

Keith Nurse



Morning Questions

Ladies - What do you like doing on a Friday morning? If you are like me, housework and the weekly shop don't feature high on the list, but meeting for a delicious slice of cake and a cup of coffee or tea with the Oasis group at HTR does. After Christmas we did the Alpha Course, which tackles big questions like "Why am I here?", "Is there more to life than this?" and "Is this it?" To do this we have been watching excellent videos that look at such things as "Who is Jesus and why did he die?" How to pray and how to read the bible are two of the other topics. Here's how some people found the Course:

"Alpha has been a really exciting step for our

Oasis group - reaching out and inviting friends to a morning presentation, with our trademark coffee and homemade cakes to get us going. We all loved the videos that kicked things off each week - we got so much out of them. Discussions were lively and full of debate, and all of us could see our faith was growing. It has been such a worthwhile venture and I'm pretty sure we all met with God, especially on our refreshing, inspiring Holy Spirit Day."

"A precious opportunity to rediscover my faith in new ways and meet with others to discuss what Christianity means in our modern world."

"I would advise everyone to attend Alpha for

a second time, as I could clearly see the great work God does in people and in my life!"



You're invited. Try Alpha

"Alpha is such a good opportunity to ask questions, whether you already have faith or none. The testimonies on the videos were really powerful, and showed how God gave hope and a new start for those who were broken."

Catherin Tidmarsh

Celebrating 150 years

The first Service at HTR took place on 18 June 1870, so this year is our 150th anniversary! Our plan was to have our main celebration on 20 June, the nearest Saturday to this, although it now seems likely that we will need to change this. The idea was to have a church morning together followed by lunch, and in the afternoon the Bishop of Southwark, Christopher Chessun, would join us for a Service of Thanksgiving followed by tea. We were also hoping to arrange other special events during 2020, which we will keep under review as the year unfolds.

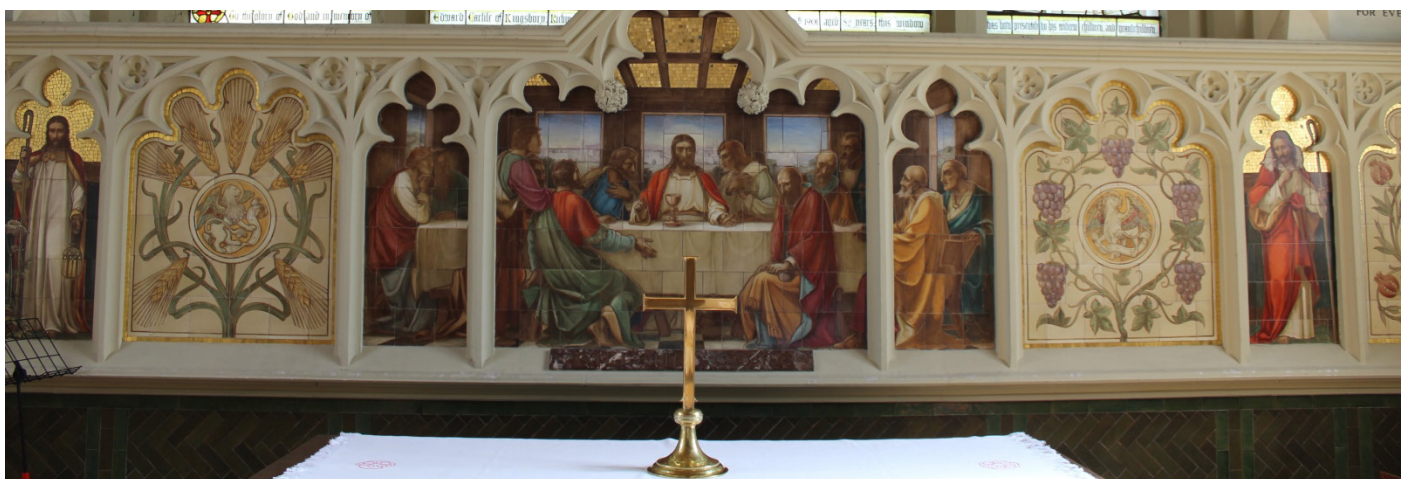
The 28 August 1869 edition of the Surrey Comet reports on the laying of the Foundation Stone of our church on 26 August by Princess Mary Adelaide of Teck, a granddaughter of George III, grandmother of Edward VIII and George VI and great grandmother of Elizabeth II. The report explains that towards the end of 1868 "... a number of persons, feeling the need of more Church accommodation in St John's parish, owing to the great increase of population, consulted together



and formed a committee for the purpose of promoting the building of a new district Church, to be called the Church of the Holy Trinity." The committee made its first appeal for subscriptions in November 1868, so it's remarkable that the first Service took place little more than 18 months later!

The report describes in some detail the physical plans for the church and the funding needed, as well as the laying of the Foundation Stone, an event attended by some 2,000 people that ended in interesting fashion! - "The Princess had hardly left the place before several men - the attention of the police and of the committee being temporarily diverted - commenced, in a very rough manner, pulling the festoons and wreaths to pieces, in order to secure the flowers of which they were partly composed. Probably it was done for the purpose of securing something, however frail, as mementos of the occasion, but it might have been done in a more becoming manner."

Keith Nurse



Dates for your diary!

We're not listing any future dates in this edition as we don't know when church events and activities will be able to resume. Instead we're giving a reminder of how we can keep in touch and be church while we're physically apart. Each Sunday we have [Worship at Home online](#), with a live stream of a Service at 1000 along with a Service sheet and children's activities to download. These Services are available throughout the week, so join in on Sunday at 1000 or any time that works for you.

If you haven't already done so we encourage you to sign up for a new service called [Choyr](#), a website dedicated to providing a private social network for churches, where we can chat, discuss, and post ideas and prayer requests. It is also a place for Life Groups to connect and keep in touch. All of our existing groups have a space on the site where members can send messages and contact one another. If you are already part of a group you will be added to your group(s) after you join. If you aren't part of a group and would like to join a new or existing group, please contact us (office@htrichmond.org.uk) and we'll set that up. There are also open areas where people can message and post. In particular there is a prayer room where you can post prayer requests, your own prayers and even pray along with each other.

You will also find information on our church website, and specifically our dedicated webpage htrichmond.org.uk/coronavirus, which will be updated regularly. There you can subscribe to receive a daily message of encouragement, access prayer points, follow Sunday Service links and find out how you can help our local community in practical ways. We'll also e-mail a weekly update and Sunday Service information.

We will continue to explore other ways of keeping in touch, and particularly how we can best encourage and support those who aren't online.

Welcome to HTR

Are you new to HTR? We'd love to link up with you. If you would like more information, please contact us.

020 8404 1112

www.htrichmond.org.uk

[f](#) [HTR - Holy Trinity Richmond](#)

[@church_htr](#)

Verses to live by

*Be still and know that I am God
Psalm 46 v 10*

It is reassuring to know that our God cares so much about everything in our lives, both big and small. When life becomes difficult and troubles arrive, we can still find refuge and peace. In the eye of the storm it is always calm and peaceful. The storm whirls around causing chaos and fear, but in the very centre it is still. The



troubles of life may surround us, but it is possible to find peace in the centre of the chaos. We can have this perfect peace by inviting Jesus to stand with

us in our messy lives. He doesn't mind the mess; He will be with us, loving, protecting and gently guiding us through the storm.

Troubles may surround, but God surrounds

it all! He is so much bigger than any trouble we can face.

Evelyn Thompson

Time To Say Goodbye

We spoke to Keith Nurse when he retired as our Operations Manager at the end of 2019, after nine years in the role ...

What will you miss the most?

Seeing first-hand the huge breadth and depth

of ministry that takes place at and through HTR seven days a week, the privilege of standing alongside people in times of both joy and vulnerability, the wide and sometimes bizarre variety of issues that arise and need to be addressed (like a morning of animal husbandry when the Nursery that uses our Hall had live animals at its Nativity last Christmas!) ... and lots of biscuits and cakes.

So how was it for you?

An unexpected joy! This type of role was never in my thinking, but sometimes God has other plans!! What our church felt it needed seemed to match well with things I'd done and skills I'd learned in other roles, so it was a wonderful opportunity to serve our church more fully.

What were some of the highlights?

That's a very difficult question. In some ways it's things that go on all the time that have left the biggest impression on me, like seeing the faithful and selfless ways so many people serve through our church life, and being part of such a supportive, inspiring and fun Staff Team. But playing a part in helping to launch the church plant at Holy Trinity Barnes in 2012, and seeing that community grow and flourish since, has been especially encouraging.



future?

I'll still be around as an active member of HTR, serving in a variety of ways. Outside church, hopefully more time for walking and photography, and possibly learning to play a musical instrument. And generally learning to be still a bit more often.

And what about the