

ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY CE JUNIOR SCHOOL

"Realising the potential of every child within a caring, Christian community"

NEWSLETTER



9th December 2022



The month of December continues at a pace and I am sure you are all continuing to open your advent calendars during this countdown to Christmas. With only 7 school days to go until we break up there is still so much to pack in!

Don't forget that on Tuesday 20th December we will come together as a school community in fellowship to celebrate our 'Preparing for Christmas' Eucharists with Fr. Mark in the School Hall. Lower School will hold their service at 9:15a.m. with Upper School starting at 10:45a.m. We do hope many of you will be able to join us in this special act of collective worship.

I would like to take this opportunity, once again, to congratulate all the Lower School children on their wonderful Christmas performance of 'The Egyptian Nativity' this week. It was a joy to watch and to witness the amazing individual gifts and talents being showcased. The children certainly made us smile, giggle, laugh and groan at some of the jokes – well done to everyone. My thanks also goes to all the staff who have worked so hard to ensure the performances were of such a high quality despite the many challenges we have had to contend with – mainly sickness absence. It is hard to convey to you how much time, effort, energy and love go in to these performances from all the staff involved. At a tiring end of term I am proud that their dedication was justly rewarded. Thanks to your generous donations at the end of the Lower School performances we raised **£471.69** towards our chosen charity – **Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital (GOSH)**.

Next week we look forward to our Upper School Christmas Carol Service taking place at St Thomas of Canterbury Church. The performances are:

- Tuesday 13th December @ 2:00p.m.
- Tuesday 13th December @ 6:30p.m. **[ADULTS ONLY]**

If you are due to attend this event, please can I ask you to take note of the following reminders and requests:

- You **MUST** bring your ticket to gain entry to the performance. Audience numbers are strictly limited to 200 per performance.
- Children under 12 years of age will not be admitted to the evening performance under any circumstances.
- All audience members must remain seated for the performance. Standing is not permitted.

On Wednesday we experienced another festive treat as the children and staff from both schools took part in the 'Santa Dash'. This involved completing the Daily Mile whilst listening to Christmas music and wearing an assortment of Christmas hats, hairbands and a few costumes. It was lovely to see our two school communities coming together and the older children helping out the younger ones as they clocked up the laps. By the end of the afternoon there were a few red faces, red noses (Rudolph would be jealous!) but huge smiles all round.



The celebration of Christmas brings much anticipation and joy at this time of year. In school we have been focusing very much on the true meaning of Christmas during our journey through Advent focusing on the qualities of hope, peace, love and joy. I do hope that many of you will be celebrating Christmas and the incarnation of Christ by attending church on Christmas Day. At the end of this newsletter there are further details about services taking place at St. Thomas of Canterbury Church this Christmas, including **Carols & Chilli!**

On behalf of all the staff at St. Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Junior School may I wish you and your families a safe, happy and Christ-filled Christmas and a wonderful start to 2023! I hope you get a chance to reflect on the true meaning of Christmas amongst the festive preparations and rejoice at the birth of Jesus Christ.

Attendance Matters!

The Department for Education (DfE) and Essex Local Authority continue to communicate a clear message on the critical importance of not disrupting the education of children and young people by promoting regular school attendance and punctuality.

School attendance is mandatory and all the usual rules continue to apply. Enabling children and young people to attend their education setting regularly continues to be a national priority which is fully supported by St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Junior School. All children must attend school every day and arrive on time. Sickness absence must be reported via the Studybugs app. Leave of absence will only be granted in very exceptional circumstances.

In the New Year we will be writing to parents/carers of children who have attendance of below 90%. These children are identified as 'persistent absentees' and we will want to identify any barriers to regular attendance and offer advice and guidance as appropriate.

January 2023 Return

January 2023						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
			5	6	7	8
2	3	4				
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

Thursday, 5 January 2023

The children return to school for the start of the spring term 2023 on **Thursday 5th January 2023**.

Please note there is no non-pupil professional development and training day and all children and staff return on this date.

REMINDER: Christmas Party Day – Tuesday 20th December

The children will be holding their class parties which will take place on the afternoon of Tuesday 20th December. This is a great opportunity for the children to celebrate the festive season with their classteacher, other adults and friends. It is also a nice way to unwind at the end of a very busy term! Due to a very busy school diary the parties are taking place on the same day as the school Christmas Eucharists. The children will need to come to school in their normal school uniform but will be allowed to change at lunchtime into their party clothes (non-uniform). Please send your child's change of clothes in a named carrier bag. The children must wear 'sensible' casual clothes that will allow them to take part in the normal school day routines as well as enjoy the special activities in their classes. There is no charge for this event. **It goes without saying but normal school rules still apply! We do not allow the children to dye their hair, wear make up or jewellery.** The PTA have very kindly given each classteacher £1.50 per child towards these parties and games – THANK YOU!



PTA – Thank You!

I am sure you will wish to join me in thanking the PTA Committee and all the volunteer helpers who organised the children's Christmas Fair last Friday in the school hall. There were certainly some bargains on offer and the children all thoroughly enjoyed looking and shopping for gifts for family and loved ones. Hopefully they are all now wrapped up and hidden away for Christmas Day!



I would also like to thank the PTA for their very generous donation of **£1300** towards a new amplifier and speakers for our school hall. Our current set up is very unreliable and often only two of the four speakers are working so we are delighted that this new equipment has been installed today. The children will benefit from this upgrade every day as we gather for collective worship and hopefully future PTA events will be able to rely on more consistent sound and volume.

Thank you!

St Thomas of Canterbury Church – Advent & Christmas 2022

Fr. Mark warmly invites you and your family to celebrate Advent and Christmas at St Thomas of Canterbury Church. Over the Christmas period there are a number of services taking place at St. Thomas'. Please take a look at the church website for further details – www.st-thomas.org.uk or telephone 01277 201094.

These include:

- **Friday 16th December**
Carols & Chilli Around the Christmas Tree (5:00-8:00p.m.)
- **Sunday 18th December** (Advent 4) - 6:00p.m. Nine Lessons and Carols
- **Saturday 24th December - Christmas Eve**
 - 4:00p.m. Christingle Service for younger children
 - 6:00p.m. Christingle Service accompanied by the orchestra
 - 11:30p.m. Midnight Mass
- **Sunday 25th December - Christmas Day**
 - 8:00a.m. Mass of the Dawn
 - 10:00a.m. Sung Family Mass



Finally....

On Monday morning the children will be enjoying the Hurricane Productions pantomime of 'Dick Whittington' in the school hall.

Christmas Jumpers - On Thursday 15th December we are all looking forward to tucking in to our school Christmas dinner prepared by our wonderful Catering Team. To get us all in the festive mood we are asking the children and staff to wear their Christmas jumpers! Children should still wear school uniform on their bottom half, including school shoes.

This week we have received confirmation from the Royal British Legion that St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Junior School raised **£583.75** towards the annual Poppy Appeal – well done!

Remember.....When we return after Christmas on Thursday 5th January 2023 the menu will commence with **Week 2** choices.

Wishing you all a safe and happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Mr D. Moran
Headteacher

And...please remember if you have any questions or queries or comments feel free to contact us:
admin@stthomasjnr.essex.sch.uk