

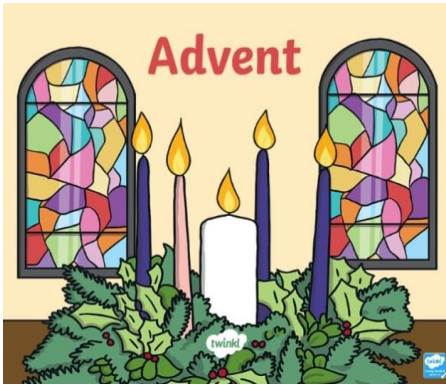
# ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY CE JUNIOR SCHOOL

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



## NEWSLETTER

25<sup>th</sup> November 2022



This Sunday we begin the liturgical season of Advent and I'm sure you will all be enjoying the daily ritual of opening the door on your Advent calendars or lighting your Advent candles from Thursday (1<sup>st</sup>) next week. The count down now begins not only to the end of a busy autumn term but to Christmas itself. At this time of year it is important to be reminded of the gift of giving rather than receiving. As we are reminded in Acts 20:35 "**Remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'**" Very often at this busy time of year it is hard to remain focused on the true meaning of Christmas; God giving us the ultimate gift of His son Jesus Christ. As much as we enjoy receiving Christmas presents let us also experience great joy in the gift of giving.

This gift of giving has certainly been in evidence in school over the past few weeks. Once again we had a fantastic response to Operation Christmas Child and the shoebox appeal. We collected and safely sent off **98** shoeboxes which I am sure will be very gratefully received and bring much joy to the children receiving them at Christmas. This coincided with our fundraising activities for the annual Children in Need appeal held last Friday. Thanks to your generosity we managed to raise an amazing **£1103!** Thank you to Class 4P, Miss Pullin and all those who helped organise and support this event.

### School Performances 2022 – Lower & Upper School

The children and staff continue to work incredibly hard in preparation for the Lower and Upper School Christmas performances which are fast approaching. Rehearsals are going well and Lower School are now putting the finishing touches to their performance, before their performances to a live audience. The air of anticipation is really exciting! Can I please remind you that Lower School ticket allocation is strictly limited to 100 people per audience.

The Lower School morning performance at 9:30a.m. generally has a few more spaces, but babies and toddlers can still be a distraction so please try to avoid bringing them if at all possible. I'm sure that there will be standing room only by the start times and, if you arrive late, you will need to come in by the rear hall entrance. You must bring your ticket with you to the performance to gain entry. We're very excited and I'm sure that you will enjoy the shows. After each performance we will be taking a retiring collection in aid of the children's chosen charity – **Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital (GOSH).**



**GREAT  
ORMOND  
STREET  
HOSPITAL  
CHARITY**

I hope you will be able to be generous in your donations and support this very worthy charity.

### PTA Christmas Fair

Thank you to everyone who came along yesterday afternoon to support the PTA Christmas Fair. This year the Christmas Fair took on a new feel and at a new time and it was wonderful to see so many people in the school hall getting in the festive spirit. The School Choir sang beautifully and even Father Christmas put in an appearance! The event certainly captured and promoted the community spirit and hopefully you found something of interest and even won a raffle prize. My thanks to the PTA Committee who work so hard for the good of our school in organising events like this and raising additional money for the children at our school. Thanks to their time and dedication as well as your generosity we have been able to fund ideas, projects and additional resources that would otherwise be beyond our school budget. It is very much appreciated.

## Winter Reading Challenge

The Winter Reading Challenge is back! Running from Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2022 to Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2023, the challenge will follow the journey of Lyra, the plucky penguin as she learns how others celebrate the winter months. Made up of six tasks, there are prizes to all who complete the challenge, as well as a special prize to those that finish early! For more information, visit the Essex Libraries website.



## New Essex Local Offer Website

I am pleased to share information with you about the new Essex Local Offer website (<https://send.essex.gov.uk/>)

This has been developed following research with families, schools and practitioners. It includes improved navigation and a new look and feel. Information about SEND services and how to access them has also been updated. The aim is to help families and professionals understand the breadth of support and early help on offer. We hope by sharing the new Local Offer website that all families can get the help they need, when they need it.

## Gift a Book at Christmas Scheme



Yesterday you should have received a separate letter via Parent Hub about the launch of our 'Gift a Book at Christmas' scheme. The idea of this new initiative is to seek parental support in enhancing our school library so that our children have access to the very best books and continue to develop a love of reading. We do hope that either as individuals or as a family you may be able to donate a sum of money (via Parent Pay) to help us purchase new books. The book list which was distributed with the letter also includes some popular periodicals and magazines which enhance our library provision. I do hope you will see this as an opportunity to buy the school a Christmas present! Thank you for your support in this exciting scheme.

## Christmas Dinner & Jumper Day

The Infant & Junior Schools Christmas dinner will be served on **Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> December 2022**. I am sure this will be a wonderful festive treat and we are all looking forward to a traditional Christmas meal with crackers - staff and children alike! To make the day even more festive we are asking all the children and staff to wear their Christmas jumpers – normal school uniform should be worn on the bottom half!

### Main Course

- Roast Chicken (Vegetarian option – Sage and onion topped Quorn fillet)
- Gluten free pigs in blankets
- Roast potatoes
- Mixed vegetables
- Yorkshire pudding
- Gravy



### Dessert

- Christmas crinkle cookie
- Ice cream tubs
- Watermelon Christmas trees
- Mince pies and cream

If your child has opted for a school dinner on this day they will receive the Christmas meal. The usual menu for this day will NOT apply. If your child normally has a packed lunch but would like the Christmas dinner on this date you will need to arrange for payment via ParentPay and inform the School Office by **Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> December**.

On Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2022 the menu choice will be chicken tikka or macaroni cheese.

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

Sadly it is necessary to remind some parents once again that school dinners must be paid for in advance. We have a number of parents who continually fall in to arrears. The School Office continue to send out a number of reminders each week to parents who are in arrears with their dinner money payments. If you have received one of these please can I ask that you clear this debt as soon as possible. We do not offer credit and meals must be paid for in advance.

## Christmas Postbox



I am sure many of your children will soon be busy writing Christmas cards for their friends, teachers and other staff at school. The Christmas postbox will be appearing in school on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2022. The postbox will be sorted on a daily basis and cards delivered and distributed to your children in their classes. Can I remind you that it is very important to ensure you address the envelopes properly to ensure they reach the right person. Please remember to write the persons full name (Christian & surname) as well as their class, e.g. Bob Smith 3S. Please remember this is an internal delivery postbox only.

## Christmas Party Day – Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> December

As in previous years the children will be holding their class parties which will take place on the afternoon of Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> 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. Please make sure all clothes are named! The PTA have very kindly given each classteacher £1 per child towards these parties and games – THANK YOU!

## Christmas Eucharists

We very much hope you will be able to take the time to celebrate the real meaning of Christmas with us this year. We have two Christmas Eucharists in school on the last day of term (Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> December). There will be a Lower School Eucharist at 9:15a.m. and one for the Upper School at 10:45a.m. The Eucharists, led by Fr Mark, will include a number of Christmas readings, Christmas Carols and performances by the school choir. Please come and join us!



## Finally.....

St Thomas of Canterbury Church are holding their Christmas Concert on **Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2022**. Doors open at 6:30p.m. with the concert starting at 7:00p.m. There are a range of performers and performances including our very own Junior School Choir. I do hope many of you will be able to go along and support this event. There will be a licensed bar and a retiring collection.

Thank you for your continued support and I hope we can bring the end of term to a successful conclusion before we all enjoy a well deserved break!

**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](mailto:admin@stthomasjnr.essex.sch.uk)