



News from the Chaplaincy Team:

A week before Ash Wednesday, we were told that we had been asked to read for the Ash Wednesday Mass at the church which the Bishop would be celebrating. Firstly, we felt nervous but very honoured to be asked. We took our time to practise so that we would be word-perfect on the big day.

When we arrived, the church was full to bursting with people ready for the Mass, especially to receive the ashes and to meet the Bishop. Some of the faces in the congregation were familiar, but many were not. The sheer number of people made us feel fearful but also excited and determined to make our school family and ourselves proud.

Butterflies were in our tummies as we approached the altar, but as we started to read, we felt calm and confident, knowing that all the practising had paid off.

We were congratulated by members of the congregation after the Mass. The elation that we felt inside carried us up the hill back to school and stayed with us for the rest of the day. The look of pride on Mr Coldwell's face and the faces of our teachers and friends told us that it was a job well done!

Written by Natalie and Maya on behalf of the Chaplaincy Team

Sacrament of Reconciliation:

Last week, Fr Antonio visited the school to offer the children from Years 4-6 the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Lent. He initially intended to stay for an hour or two, but as 98 children wanted to receive the Sacrament, he made a couple of additional return visits. He said how overwhelmed and thrilled he was at the vast number of children who had chosen to receive Reconciliation during the Season of Lent.

St Joseph's Day Mass:

We welcomed Fr Antonio to say mass in person with our Yr5/6 classes and via remote link for our other classes on the 18th March as we celebrated our patron saint's feast day a day early! In the afternoon, we had a special off timetable treat for the pupils.

Stations of the Cross:

Yesterday we continued our Lenten journey by praying and reflecting on the Stations of the Cross.

This year, children from across St Francis of Assisi Catholic Academy Trust contributed to the Stations of the Cross that were prayed throughout in each school within the Academy. Today your children will be bringing home a copy of the book that was produced containing all of the prayers and artwork for you to share as a family.

Staffing News:

At the end of this term we say goodbye to Mrs Bamlett, our SENCO, who will be taking early retirement. Thank you for your input and guidance over these last few years, Mrs Bamlett! Unfortunately, we have not been able to recruit a suitable replacement for the Summer Term and are now recruiting for September 2022. Miss Cassidy-Jones will be SENCO during the summer term and she can be contacted via the School Office.

We send our best wishes to Miss Kenny for her forthcoming marriage in the Easter holiday. May God bless their marriage and keep them in His loving hands. We look forward to greeting Mrs McKenna back from the holidays - not much of a surname change there!

News from the St Francis of Assisi Trust:

Please find attached this term's newsletter from the Trust.

School Uniform:

Please do take two minutes to check your child's uniform to ensure their name label is still clearly visible... unfortunately there is a large number of unlabelled uniform not claimed every week.

Summer Uniform can be worn in the summer term through to the autumn half term. Please ensure that any sandals are not 'open toe' as these give little protection from chair legs or the playground etc.

Details of our uniform can be found here:

<https://www.stjosephs207.herts.sch.uk/page/?title=School+Uniform&pid=35>

World Autism Acceptance Week:

During autism acceptance week we shared the following video with KS1 and KS2 pupils
Amazing things happen: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7JdCY-cdgkI>

This is a great video to help explain to children how we are all different and the challenges that an autistic person may face in the world.

Football News:

What a brilliant season for our football teams! Our Gold Team fought hard throughout the season and managed to finish fourth in the table after a slow start. A wonderful accomplishment considering the standard of the league. In the semi-finals we were just beaten by Manor Fields who realised we were much improved from the last time we played in September.

The Silver Team did equally as well having secured fourth place in the league and then reaching the playoffs. In an exciting semi-final, we just lost out to Windhill21 but should hold our heads high with the style of football and effort displayed. Well done!

World Book Day Celebrations:

On Thursday 3rd March, another fantastic World Book Day was had by all! Thank you to all parents for your support in providing your children with such wonderful costumes. The children loved talking about their favourite book characters and took part in an online event with inspiring authors and illustrators.

Following World Book Day on Friday 4th March, Years 2, 3 and 4 enthusiastically took part in a drama workshop with the West End in Schools company. The children really enjoyed the sessions and developed their acting skills along with their understanding of the characters in Ruby's Worry, Jack and the Beanstalk and Matilda.

Spring Book Fair

The children thoroughly enjoyed browsing the shelves at our most recent book fair with their classes. The money spent has raised an incredible £1527.12 in rewards to spend on books for our school!

Thank you to you all for your contributions and to those parents who supported the running of the book fair throughout the day. Your help was much appreciated.

Message From Hertfordshire County Council:

As we step into spring, we are encouraging residents to be kind and stay healthy by following simple steps to live life safely with COVID-19, stop the spread and protect others. For up-to-date information go to <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/covidliving>

The simple steps people are encouraged to follow are:

- Be kind – respect people wearing masks or keeping their distance from you. They may well be very vulnerable to infection
- Be informed – know your level of risk and get good, trusted advice on managing it
- Be vaccinated or boosted – ensure you and those around you are vaccinated when invited

- Be safe – manage your risk when socially mixing (hands, face, space, fresh air)
- Be prepared – if you get Covid, stay at home and get early treatment should you need it
- Be supported – as well as your family and friends, HertsHelp can offer support

COVID-19 vaccination

Vaccination continues to offer the best protection for ourselves and others around us from becoming seriously ill from COVID-19. There are lots of walk-in options available locally for first, second doses and boosters, you can find your nearest vaccination centre and also book an appointment at: <https://covid.healthierfuture.org.uk/>

The national booking system for healthy 5- to -11 year olds to receive their COVID-19 vaccination will open from 2 April. Parents and carers can book appointments at larger vaccination centres and in some community pharmacies. Appointments will also be available at some GP run sites, if so they will contact you directly and you can book through your practice.

Vaccinations are already available for clinically vulnerable 5- to 11-year-olds, and children in this age group who live with someone who has a weakened immune system. Until now, vaccinations for this 'at risk' group of children have been available through GPs and special schools, but parents and carers will also be able to book these through the national booking service from 2 April.

For more information on vaccinations for this age group visit:

<https://covid.healthierfuture.org.uk/vaccine-information-for-young-people>

Stay at home if you have symptoms

Guidance remains that if you have symptoms of COVID-19, **(signs of a respiratory infection, a high temperature, or feel unwell)**, you should stay at home and avoid contact with other people, regardless of a positive test result until well enough to resume normal activities and no longer have a high temperature. [Get advice about staying at home and avoiding contact with others](#)

There is support available locally to help people who need to self-isolate, call HertsHelp on 0300 123 4044, email info@hertshelp.net or visit www.hertshelp.net

Please do not send children and young people back to school following the Easter holidays if they have any symptoms or feel unwell. There continues to be a high number of outbreaks across Hertfordshire's childcare and education settings – they need our support to help protect our communities and have the least disruption to children's learning and development as possible.

We would like to say once again, thank you for continuing to play your part and for helping to keep yourselves and others safe. We hope you enjoy a great Easter break.

CAFOD Workshops

Years 1-4 have really enjoyed their workshops with John and Jane (CAFOD volunteers) over the last two weeks. The sessions focused on the following question: How can we be better as children?

Years 5-6 are looking forward to their sessions after Easter.

Early Years "Eggcitement!"

There has been much eggcitement in EYFS this term. Children in Nursery have been learning about life cycles and have been hatching eggs. The children were fortunate enough to witness some of the chicks breaking out from their eggs. The five chicks that hatched took over a corner of our downstairs library and have been a source of fascination for all of the children as they walked past. It has been lovely that children across the school were all able to share this experience. At the end of term the chicks will go to enjoy their new home at a local farm.



PARISH UPDATE

Dear Parents,

As we approach the end of term and Easter, it is wonderful that we have been able to experience a more "normal" Lent in our parish! We look forward to celebrating all the liturgies of Holy Week and Easter too, which has not been possible for the past two years. I invite you to consider joining us at church to celebrate this high point in our Christian calendar. Keep an eye on our website for all the details of what's on:

www.rcstortford.org.uk and like our facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/rcstortford>

We are also in the middle of doing a **parish census**. After the pandemic, it is a great opportunity for us to update our records and know who is part of our parish community. So, if you live geographically within the parish (even if you are new or it's been a while since you attended church) or you regularly attend Mass at St Joseph's, Bishop's Stortford, Holy Cross, Much Hadham or Most Holy Redeemer, Sawbridgeworth, then do please fill in a census form - paper copies are available at the back of church or you can fill in an online form here: <https://rcstortford.org.uk/2022/03/12/parish-census-whos-who-in-bishops-stortford/>

Wishing you a very blessed and joyful Easter,
Sophie Sullivan

DINNER MONEY FOR JUNIORS

As previously notified, school meal prices are increasing to £2.90 per day, £14.50 per week. You may pay any amount of your choice to keep your balance in credit. **Please note: Dinner money must be paid in advance** - please pay online using the School Gateway system. All you need to do to activate an account is download the school gateway from your app store or visit the website www.schoolgateway.com and click new user. You will receive a message with a PIN number and you can use this to log in. Please be sure the school office has your up to date email and mobile phone number. Two weeks' notice in writing to Angela Hoare, our Catering Manager, is required for any changes in dietary pattern.

MILK ORDER

Milk is available to all age groups through the school. (Under 5s receive free school milk). If you would like your child to receive mid-morning milk, please just visit www.coolmilk.com to register and place your order.

Finally

Thank you for your continued support of the school this term. It has been testing with managing pupil and staff absences but it is a blessing to have worked together for the sake of all of our pupils. We are looking forward to the final term ahead and the journey we will be on. I wish you a peaceful and reflective Holy Week and holiday.

Lord God,
You sent your Son into the world,
And before his hour had come,
He washed his disciples' feet.
You had given all things into his hands.
He had come from you, and was going to you,
And what did he do?
He knelt down on the floor,
And washed his friends' feet.
He was their teacher and their Lord,
Yet he washed their feet.
Lord God, help us learn from his example;
Help us to do as he has done for us.
The world will know we are his disciples
If we love one another.
Strengthen our hands and our wills for love
And for service.
Keep before our eyes the image of your Son,
Who, being God, became a Servant for our sake.
All glory be to him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
One God, now and forever.

Amen.