

St. Augustine's Catholic Voluntary Academy



Let all that you do be done in love.

1 Corinthians 16:14



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A MESSAGE FROM MRS COX

This week has been busier than ever in school as the festivities ramp up in the approach to Christmas. We've had three important visitors – Jennifer Johnson, a Director of our CMAT; Moira Dales, our Trust's Deputy CEO and Elliot, a Jewish visitor who enhanced our Multi-Faith week with Q and A sessions in each classroom. All of our visitors commented on how fabulous our school and pupils are, and how very far we have come in such a short space of time.

Darren from Roots to Food also led us in KS2 cookery workshops and the fabulous Year 6 Gala Dinner – see our Facebook page for more photos, videos and some lovely comments from those who attended.

We also delighted in Lower School's Advent Celebration at the church, where carols, costumes and readings had such a high cute factor that there wasn't a dry eye in the house!

Yesterday, I joined with the 35 other headteachers across our multi academy Trust to reflect on strategic thinking and then, in the afternoon, to share in a prayerful Advent retreat. We focussed on two major themes – how difficult it is, in the hustle and bustle of daily life, to find the time to really be still and quiet. Do we ever carve out this time to be with our thoughts, in stillness, to reflect and plan? Or do we find this to be a luxury that can leave us feeling guilty? How will we ever hear or feel the Holy Spirit, if we don't have time to listen? In a culture where our business is often worn as a badge, I urge you to take time this Advent to find a few moments each day to really think about where you are, where you're going and how best to get there – whatever that means to you.

Finally, we think again about the amazing story still being told – one of sacrifice, service, praise and great joy. The story of the Nativity sits at the heart of Christmas, but it's easy to lose sight of important roles and messages – the quiet service of the donkey, the acceptance and sacrifice of Mary, the silently steadfast support of Joseph. What role do you play in your story?

I hope that in this season of Advent, as we open our hearts to God, you all feel the love, service and support that our school and staff work hard to bring to our pupils and community.

Wishing you a peaceful and still weekend,
Mrs Cox



VIRTUES CERTIFICATES

Congratulations to all of the recipients of this week's Virtue Certificates:

Sycamore Class - A.J - **Love of Learning & Determination**

Olive Class - Storm - **Hope & Confidence**

Acacia Class - Jacob G - **Love & Respect**

Willow Class - Lila - **Love & Respect**

Juniper Class - Archie - **Love of Learning & Determination**



Well done to you all!
We are all very proud of you.



**Cedar Class are not included this week as they are having a special family Christmas crafting event this afternoon instead of assembly.*

LET US PRAY

Lord, keep us ever alert and watchful as we await the coming of your Son, so that, faithful to his teaching, we may hasten to meet our Saviour with lamps alight.

We make this prayer through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

Amen



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!



Happy Birthday to Nazim in Year 5 Willow Class who will be 10 on 11th December, and to Ava in Year 6 Willow Class who will be 11 on 11th December.

We all wish you both a wonderful time celebrating your special days!

OUR CHRISTMAS TREE

Miss Bush from EFS Cedar Class has decorated our St. Augustine's Christmas tree so beautifully. The tree is in our lunch hall for the children to enjoy every day. Thanks so much to Miss Bush, and to Cole from Cedar Class for all of his super help!



CHRISTMAS JUMPER DAY - THURS 14TH DEC

We are having our St. Augustine's Christmas Jumper Day on Thursday 14th December! This is going to be a wonderful day at St. Augustine's as we are going to see the pantomime at the Stamford Corn Exchange in the morning, and then we will come back to school for our whole school Christmas lunch...and then we have the FoSA Christmas Fair from 3.30-5.00pm!

Children can come to school in their Christmas jumper with their school uniform but there is no pressure for you to go out and buy a Christmas jumper. We will have a donation box in the front reception area if you are able to donate any pre-loved Christmas jumpers, and a box for any pre-loved baubles and tinsel etc that the children could use to jazz up their school jumpers on the day.



YEAR OF PRAYER 2024

The start of Advent last weekend saw the start of a Year of Prayer initiated by Pope Francis in preparation for the Jubilee Year in 2025. The following reflection from Pope Francis for the Year of Prayer has been provided: *'The world is divided in two: those people who do not give thanks and those who do; those who take everything as if it is owed them, and those who welcome everything as a gift, as grace. The prayer of thanksgiving always begins from here: from the recognition that grace precedes us'.*

The Year of Prayer is not a year **about** prayer, but a year **for** prayer. The image of Christ in the manger speaks of a God who wants an intimate relationship with His creation

Why the 'Year of Prayer?'

In preparation for the Jubilee Year "Pilgrims of Hope", 2023-24 has been designated the Year of Prayer by Pope Francis, with a particular emphasis on the Our Father. This presents us with a significant opportunity to revisit the basics of prayer.



BONNIE AND BAXTER

Bonnie and Baxter have had a lovely time in school this week. They have enjoyed walks with the children and have given and received lots of love and hugs...they even got a treat for posing so beautifully for this photo!



A MESSAGE FROM CANON PETER

In his church newsletter last week, Canon Peter wrote about 'A Beautiful Tradition for Advent for Young and Old':

"We have now entered December and begin the liturgical season of Advent this weekend. We are a mere twenty-two days from Christmas. The Christmas busy-ness, as we see around us in the shops, has already begun and soon it will invade our homes, decorating the house, preparing for guests, putting up lights, buying gifts, writing cards... It can be far too easy to get caught up in all this worldly preparation that can overshadow the spiritual. So, I want to suggest an Advent tradition that brings you and your family back to the true purpose of this season—not so much preparing a house for guests (though that's important, too), but preparing our hearts for Christ Himself, the most important Guest of all. In order to keep the focus on Christ, there is the annual tradition of "preparing the manger" for Him, for His birth. This is not a one-time activity, but a simple daily routine throughout Advent that helps keep Christ at the centre of our day. It is an especially suitable tradition for children, but everyone can participate. Here's how it works. You start with an empty manger, and for every good deed you do throughout the day during Advent, you add a piece of straw. If you are rich in good deeds during Advent, the manger will be full of soft straw when the Divine Guest arrives. The more good deeds you do, the softer the manger will be. On Christmas Day, place a figure of the Baby Jesus in the manger, made soft and comfortable by all those good works. You can use real straw, paper strips, yarn, or another material for the straw. For the manger, you can use a basket or box, or build one yourself. You can be creative with this wonderful tradition and add your own elements—some families take straw out if one of them does something bad, which works as a teaching tool, but I'll leave that to you and your own conscience!"



ATTENDANCE

Our whole school attendance this week was 90.82%

Our attendance by class is as follows:

Cedar - 88.37%

Sycamore - 86.36%

Olive - 91.19%

Acacia - 97.16%

Willow - 94.09%

Juniper - 88.57%

Being around teachers and friends in a school environment is the best way for pupils to learn and reach their potential. Time in school also keeps children safe and provides access to extra-curricular opportunities and pastoral care.

For more information, please visit the gov.uk website [here](#),

ADVENT AT ST. AUGUSTINE'S

We prepared for the start of Advent, the season in our Liturgical year that prepares our hearts and minds for the coming of Jesus, with a new display in our front reception area. We lit the first candle, the HOPE candle in the advent wreath, 'as we wait in joyful hope for the coming of our saviour, Jesus Christ'.

On Sunday, we will light the PEACE candle. This candle ("The Bethlehem Candle") is also purple and represents peace. When the angels appeared to the shepherds, they ended their message by saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests" (Luke 2:14).



KS1 CHURCH CELEBRATION



It was such a pleasure to see our Foundation Stage, Year 1 and Year 2 children performing their Advent Celebration in church. Carols, readings and costumes contributed to this super special start to the season. Thanks so much to all of the families that came along to watch - along with Canon Peter too. We hope you enjoyed it as much as we did!
- Mrs Cox

LIFE SKILLS WITH ROOTS TO FOOD

This week, our friend Darren from Roots To Food came to visit and help with our Year 6 Juniper Class Gala Dinner that was held on Tuesday evening. Our Olive, Acacia and Willow Classes were lucky enough to all have some time with Darren to prepare, cook and enjoy a delicious meal of Pesto Chicken pasta with peppers, tomatoes and onions.

The smell of the food in school was just amazing, and the children loved sampling what they had made. Darren talked us through a variety of interesting cooking techniques and different food groups.

Well done to everyone for listening so well when Darren was talking you through what to do, and for practising important life skills including claw grip and bridge grip when handling knives and cutting food.



SCHOOL COUNCIL & GREEN TEAM

A reminder that Mon 11th Dec is our next School Council meeting, and Mon 18th Dec is our next Green Team meeting. Please collect your child at 4pm.

FREE CHURCH CAR PARK

Please be reminded that the Free Church on Kesteven Road kindly allow us the use of their car park but we are not allowed to maintain it - please take care if you're using the car park in icy/unfavourable conditions.

CHRISTMAS CAROLS - YR 5 WILLOW AND YR 6 JUNIPER CLASS - WEDS 13TH DECEMBER

Our Year 5 Willow and Year 6 Juniper classes will be at Morrisons in Stamford at 10am on Weds 13th Dec to spread Christmas cheer to shoppers with carols. All money collected on the day will benefit our FoSA team. Please come and join us!

Art Pop-Up



inspire+

We use Inspire+ (a sports and education charity), in addition to our St. Augustine's sporting programme, using our Sports Premium. Inspire+ deliver services such as CPD for teachers, mentor & talented athlete programmes for pupils, Bronze Ambassador & Playground Leadership training for pupils and activity days including the Mini-Commonwealth Games event, and they provide support to our staff throughout all of these programmes and events. They also run our after-school gymnastics club and help with playground activities.

We also have regular visits from Olympians and Paralympians, including Dai Greene and Jonathan Broom-Edwards, who come and give inspiring talks to all of our St. Augustine's children.

Inspire+ also use our school for their school holiday camps, which is great for our St. Augustine's children who attend as it is a familiar setting with lots of wonderful activities.

FAMILY WINTER WARM SPACE

A reminder that Art Pop-Up, MindSpace Stamford and George's Food Hub have joined forces for a new initiative; Family Winter Warm Space.

Every Thursday evening until March 2024, they will be at the Free Church here on Kesteven Road to offer a free evening meal and creative corner for children and adults in a warm, cosy and friendly space.

Take a book, your homework or just go and hang out for a while.

Please book your place by clicking [here](#) and scrolling to 'Thursday' events.