

# ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

*"Let all that you do be done in love." 1 Corinthians 16:14*



## NEWSLETTER

28<sup>th</sup> February 2025



Happy St. David's Day! Although technically a day early, we have marked St David's Day today ahead of the actual feast day tomorrow. All our children in St David's House have proudly worn their yellow items of clothing and we have even seen a few Welsh flags on display! The 1<sup>st</sup> March is also the meteorological start of spring and already there are signs of daffodils and other spring plants awakening from the winter months. It is also decidedly brighter and lighter in the mornings which is a welcome sign that we are leaving the long winter months behind. This always makes us feel hopeful for a new season in which to enjoy the wonders of God's creation.

On Monday it will be National Secondary School Offer Day. Year 6 children across the country will be notified of their secondary school places for September 2025. Please do pray for these children and their families as they receive this important news in preparing for their continued learning journey in to Key Stage 3.

As always, thank you for your trust, care and love for our school.

### Consecration of the New Bishop of Richborough

The consecration of the new Bishop of Richborough, The Venerable Fr Luke Irvine-Capel, took place yesterday at Canterbury Cathedral. Bishop Luke has succeeded Bishop Norman Banks, who retired last Easter, who was a familiar face to many in our parish and a frequent visitor to our school.

I am delighted that myself, Mrs Forder (School Business Manager) and six of our Upper Key Stage 2 Worship Leaders were invited to attend this opportunity to welcome our new Bishop and be part of this historic service that took place in the Nave of Canterbury Cathedral. It certainly was a very moving and thought-provoking occasion which showcased many liturgical colours and traditions, enhanced by prayer, music and the overwhelming presence of the Holy Spirit. This was a rare opportunity to see up close this momentous occasion and I know the children in attendance are looking forward to sharing their experiences with the rest of the school.

Like Bishop Norman, we are hoping Bishop Luke will be able to become a frequent visitor to our parish and school. Please do pray for our new Bishop as he starts his new ministry.



## Times Tables Rock Stars – PTA Sponsored Event

Thank you to all the children and parents/carers who supported our PTA TTRS sponsored event last half term. Across the course of the TTRS week we saw many 'battles' taking place and I am pleased to be able to share with you the top 3 classes:

- 1<sup>st</sup> place – 5S (Mrs Stonebridge) – 60,159 points
- 2<sup>nd</sup> place – 4B (Mrs Burrus) – 36,717 points
- 3<sup>rd</sup> place – 5DC (Mrs Dunn & Mrs Cassidy) – 22,182 points

NB: Parents/carers came in 12<sup>th</sup> place with 4,950 points!!

Congratulations to our top 3 fundraising children who were:

Joey Hardwicke (4M)  
Phoebe Tolliday (5S)  
Ariana Belov (1NC)



Thank you to everyone who took part. Your participation will have improved your times tables knowledge and raised additional funds for the school – a double win! The PTA have now totalled all the money received and I am delighted to share with you that we have raised a grand total of **£1,117**

## Staffing Update

Many of you will be aware that Mrs Antrobus is pregnant and rapidly approaching the time she will go on maternity leave. Mrs Antrobus' last day in school is Friday 14<sup>th</sup> March before she finishes for a well-deserved rest and a chance to relax ahead of the birth of her third child. I am sure you will join me in wishing her continued good health and best wishes for the arrival of the new addition to her family!

From Monday 17<sup>th</sup> March Class 1A will be taught by **Mrs Bernadette Danagher**. Mrs Danagher is a qualified teacher and we look forward to welcoming her to our school and supporting her as she takes on this new role in Year 1. Mrs Antrobus has had the opportunity to hand over comprehensive notes and other documentation to ensure there is a smooth transition between them both. I know that Mrs Danagher will also be very well supported by both the teaching and non-teaching staff and I am sure our parent/carer community will also make her feel very welcome!

Parents/cares of children in 4M will also have received information about some staffing changes that will be taking place this half term, beginning from Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2025. Ms Marshall will be undergoing some long-awaited surgery next week which will see her absent from school for the rest of this spring half term. Once the procedure has been completed there will be a lengthy recuperation period to allow Ms Marshall to recover and return to full strength. I am sure you will join me in wishing her well and praying for her and her family over the next few weeks.

## St Francis Hospice Charity Day

You will remember that our CATS Reps organised and held our St Francis Hospice Charity Day on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> February, where we encouraged our children and staff to wear yellow, orange or hearts in return for a 'hearty' donation! Thanks to your generosity and support I am delighted to report that the school raised a very impressive total of **£1330** for St Francis Hospice! Thank you for all your support.



## St Patrick's Day – 17<sup>th</sup> March 2025

Now that we have determined the new names of our 4 Houses – named after our patron saints – St George, St Andrew, St David and St Patrick, we reach the third of their feast days. We will be celebrating St Patrick's Feast Day on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> March!



On this day we are inviting all the children who are in St Patrick's House to wear non-school uniform and dress in their House colour which is **GREEN**. This opportunity is only for children in St Patrick's House as the other Houses have either celebrated their saints' day or will get their opportunity later in the academic year – April for St George. We do hope that all the St Patrick's children encouraged by their House Captains will take pride in marking this event. In preparation, the children in St Patrick's House may like to research some facts about the life of St Patrick and share it with their classteacher.

## School Uniform – Reminder!

Although we are still some way off, I would like to take this opportunity to remind parents/carers that **AFTER** the Easter break all children must be wearing **summer uniform** as set out in the school prospectus. The Governing Body continue to uphold high expectations by regularly reviewing and tightening up the uniform policy and we would request that all parents/carers adhere to this. From the beginning of the summer term all children **must** wear summer uniform as set out in the school prospectus and home school diaries.

### SUMMER

*[Must be worn for the summer term and first half of the autumn term]*

#### EYFS/Key Stage 1

Green gingham check dress, **\*bottle green cardigan or jumper**, White socks must be worn.

Grey tailored shorts or tailored trousers, **\*white polo shirt**, **\*bottle green jumper**  
Grey or black socks only.

#### Key Stage 2

Green gingham check dress (compulsory for Year 3 & 4)  
and/or **\*white polo shirt** with grey skirt (Year 5 & 6 have option of both).

**\*bottle green cardigan or jumper**,

White socks must be worn.

**\*white polo shirt**, Grey tailored shorts or tailored trousers,

**\*bottle green jumper**,

Grey or black socks only.

#### N.B. Items marked \* must have the school badge embroidered on the garment.

Shoes need to be sensible black leather (not boots) with soft soles or leather sandals (black or brown). Black trainers are not permitted. We do not like lights or toys in the shoes so please bear this in mind when you are purchasing any new shoes. Incorrect or inappropriate uniform will be flagged up in the new term by putting a gentle reminder sticker in your child's home school diary. Please help support us in achieving greater consistency, smarter presentation and a sense of pride – thank you.

A reminder - jewellery can cause problems in school due to Health & Safety requirements. Children may wear an inexpensive named watch to school providing it is not too big or colourful and they will not be distracted by wearing it. Smart watches are not permitted in school. Smart watches can cause issues with data protection and data security if these devices are trying to access our school Wi-Fi or have the ability to record and/or capture video or audio. No bracelets, rings or necklaces are permitted.

Children are not allowed to wear earrings for PE under any circumstances so it makes sense to leave these at home altogether. However, if you insist on your child wearing earrings please ensure they are plain gold or silver studs and that they are capable of taking their earrings out themselves.

May I also remind you that long hair must be tied back with a black, white or green hairband. Children's hair should not be coloured or have patterns shaved into it.

## Parents' Evening – 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2025

Over the next couple of weeks, you will receive a Parent Hub message with details about booking appointments for Parents' Evening. Spring term Parents' Evening will be taking place on **Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> April** and **Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2025** – 4:00 – 7:00p.m.

The letter and accompanying SchoolCloud guide will explain how to make your appointments online. Please note that the booking window will open at 6:00p.m. on Friday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2025. We will also send you a Parent Hub reminder to alert you to when this booking window goes live.

I do hope that all parents/carers will take this opportunity to meet with your child's classteacher to discuss their progress to date and celebrate the achievements they have made since September 2024. We look forward to seeing you.



## News from St Thomas' Church contributed by Fr Mark

This Sunday, we stand on the threshold of the season of Lent, as this Sunday is known as the Sunday next before Lent. It is still in what we call Ordinary Time, so green vestments are worn when we celebrate the Eucharist and the church is lit up with green lights. All are welcome as we gather for worship as follows:

08.00 Said Mass (lasting about 45 minutes)  
10.00 Sung Mass (lasting about 75 minutes)  
18.00 Choral Evensong and Benediction (lasting around 50 minutes)

Lent begins on Wednesday, which is known as Ash Wednesday, when we come to church to receive the ash cross on our foreheads as a mark of our repentance and our desire to become more Christlike through our Lenten devotions. On Ash Wednesday, in addition to our usual 12.15 Said Mass, there is a Sung Mass at 19.00.

To assist us in our keeping of Lent, we have the opportunity to walk the Stations of the Cross on Saturday mornings at 10.15 and have a study group meeting on Sundays in Lent after the Sung Mass.

In the week that follows;

Wednesday mornings are always 'Cake and a Cuppa' when friends old and new gather to catch up on the news and enjoy a slice of delicious homemade cake. This runs from 10.00 to 12.00, and some will stay on for the 12.15 Mass.

On Thursdays, our toddler group meets in the church at 10.30 for a short story and a few songs before moving into the hall for playtime until 12.00.

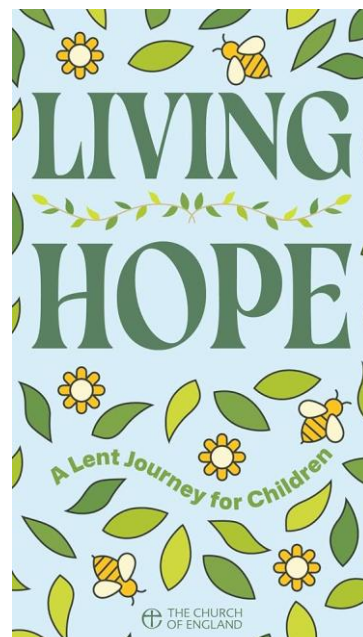
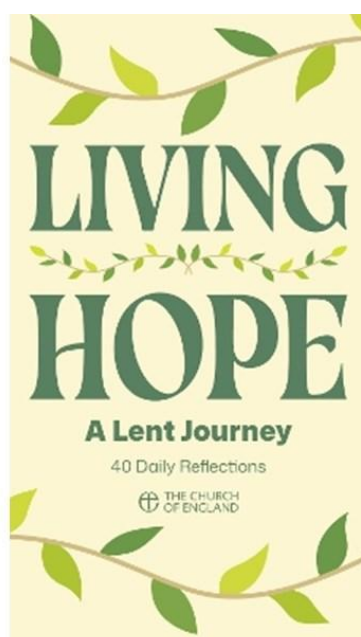
On Friday, we have a 'Crafty Fridays' group when there is an opportunity to undertake various craft activities with the chance for a natter. This runs from 10.00 to 12.00.

Sunday, the 9th of March, is the First Sunday of Lent, and we gather for worship as follows.

08.00 Said Mass (lasting about 45 minutes)  
10.00 Sung Mass (lasting about 75 minutes)  
18.00 Choral Evensong (lasting around 50 minutes)

## Finally....

Next week we enter the liturgical season of Lent. Lent is more frequently seen as a time of solemn observance and preparation for the celebration of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ at Easter. From its start on Ash Wednesday (5<sup>th</sup> March 2025) until its conclusion on Easter Sunday, Lent is a traditional time for fasting or giving something up or abstinence. Just as we carefully prepare for events in our personal lives, such as a wedding or birthday, Lent invites us to make our minds and hearts ready for remembering Jesus' life, death and resurrection.



In your preparations you may decide to give up just one item for Lent, more commonly a 'luxury' such as chocolate! It is also becoming increasingly common for people to give up other things in order to refocus their faith during this time; such as watching TV, going to the gym, even computer games! And, of course, more and more Christians are turning to the **40acts Challenge** as a way of doing Lent differently; using simple daily reflections and acts of generosity as a way of putting others first during preparations for Easter. This week we have started exploring the 40acts challenge with the children in collective worship – ask your children to talk to you about it!

I would like to give a special mention to Class 1A who have helped us understand the importance of the 40acts Challenge by leading collective worship in both EYFS/KS1 and KS2 – thank you to all the children in Mrs Antrobus' class – you were fantastic!

In the coming weeks we will be sharing with you the new school dinner menus for the summer term which will begin after the Easter holiday. Please look out for this information and remember to return your menu choices as soon as possible.

I wish you all a wonderful weekend – see you on Monday!

**Mr D. Moran**  
Headteacher

**And...** please remember if you have any questions or queries or comments feel free to contact us:

[admin@stthomaspri.essex.sch.uk](mailto:admin@stthomaspri.essex.sch.uk)

*A Christian community where children are known by name and loved, which empowers them to learn and to grow in faith, knowledge and fellowship.*