

Christ Church's Community Day



Christ Church Primary in Ware held their first Community Day last term. Staff, pupils, parents, governors, and members of the parish came together to lend a hand and make a huge difference to the school and its environment. Christ Church is immensely

grateful to everyone who participated and contributed their time and effort to help achieve a number of remarkable improvements around the school.

Among the standout projects was the installation of a beautiful pond. In addition to this, several areas were transformed with fresh coats of paint, and windows were thoroughly cleaned to let the light shine through. They also welcomed new plants that will breathe life into the environment.

The dining room received a delightful makeover, and the staff room renovation has provided their dedicated team with a much-improved space to relax and collaborate. The enthusiasm and commitment displayed by the community were truly inspiring.

Dagnall's Christingle Reflection Spaces

The school hall at Dagnall was transformed into a beautiful reflection space for their last morning of the Autumn term. Each class had the opportunity to visit four stations to make a Christingle and learn about the symbolism of each element.



They then took part in a range of reflective activities, including making a wish for the world, drawing ways to express their love and thanks for others, and reflecting on giving gifts and how they could be a light to others around them this Christmas time.

The Headteacher, Mrs. Fleet, then led the school community in collective worship with the support of the Spiritual Leaders to light their candles and reflect on the true meaning of Christmas before the holidays began.

Vacancies Webpage

The Vacancies page on the diocesan website gives you an additional platform to advertise job openings in your school free of charge. Do send any vacancy advertisements to hpudefoot@stalbans.anglican.org

Fairtrade Fortnight at Bishop Wood, Tring

The Eco Warriors at Bishop Wood Junior led the school in activities related to Fairtrade Fortnight from 9-22 September. Fairtrade Fortnight 2024 was about discovering the risks to the future of our food, as well as what is being done and what we can do to help.



Year 6 Eco Warriors helped to lead a collective worship to explain how "Buying Fairtrade gives higher wages for farmers, who can take positive steps to tackle climate change." During Fairtrade Fortnight, pupils collected packaging from Fairtrade items and displayed them on a map to show where in the world the item was produced. Pupils and families were asked to choose Fairtrade whenever they can and encourage others to do the same. Supporting Fairtrade promotes Bishop Wood's Christian Values:

- **Wisdom:** Fairtrade is a wise choice.
- **Hope:** Fairtrade gives hope to farmers.
- **Dignity:** Fairtrade gives dignity to farmers.
- **Community:** Fairtrade helps communities around the world.

Nativity Scenes at St Michael's



The children of St Michael's, St Albans were asked to create a nativity scene as part of their RE home learning this month. They were also encouraged to involve their families in this project so that the whole school community could get involved.

The school received a fantastic range of scenes, created from a wide variety of materials; some were even edible! The scenes have been displayed in the school and also in St Michael's Church during the annual school carol service.

Harvest Festival at Albury and Puller



All Year 5 and 6 classes across the federation had the privilege of attending the Harvest Festival celebration at St Albans Cathedral. The school was honoured to be amongst other schools in the Diocese and sing in such beautiful surroundings. The pupils showed exemplary behaviour and did the school proud.

It was also wonderful to welcome many parents to their local Harvest

Festival services at the churches in High Cross and Albury. They received an incredible number of food donations, which have been very gratefully received by their local food bank.

Hertingfordbury Cowper Turns 175!

Hertingfordbury Cowper Primary had a very special day in school to celebrate 175 years of being in Birch Green. Bishop Jane (Bishop of Hertford) joined them for a time of collective worship at the start of the day.



The children and staff all looked fantastic as they came to school in Victorian costumes. During the school day, the children explored artefacts lent to the school by the British Schools Museum in Hitchin and took part in various Victorian-themed activities. There were also opportunities for the children to look at artefacts from their own school history collection, including some classes recreating old school photographs at the front of the school.

To end the day, everyone came together in Cowper Hall and sang 'Happy Birthday' before enjoying some birthday cake. Each child was given a special birthday badge as a memento of the day.

Great Barford's Remembrance Display



At Great Barford CE Academy, the Year 6 Falcon class led their Remembrance worship with readings, prayers, and hymns.

Each class designed and created their own unique wreath and presented it during worship time. Later, they displayed the wreaths along with some poems written by Year 6 Kestrels for everyone who visits the school to appreciate and reflect upon.

A Busy Summer Term at Ardeley St Lawrence

In the summer term, Ardeley St Lawrence had a variety of exciting activities planned for their pupils. They had the pleasure of singing and enjoying the activities at their local village fete in June. Following that, with a



well-being focus, the children took part in the school's annual Enrichment Week and, undeterred by the weather, they eventually enjoyed the family picnic. Then came over a week and a half of events including archery, paint splat (a softer form of paintballing), go-karting, gladiator fights, sumo wrestling, fun on a play bus, and much more. By the end of the events, the school had many tired but very happy children!



John Donne's Living Nativity



Last term, John Donne's Year 1 to Year 6 children took part in their first 'Living Nativity'. They had all the characters, lots of familiar carols (as well as some new ones), and even a real donkey called Bertie! They started the journey from the school playground where

families came to watch. They then processed behind the donkey to the church, following the star, for the rest of the Nativity outside in the churchyard. Their families and the community joined them the whole way and it was wonderful to share the Nativity story with them.

Early Years performed their Nativity of 'Whoopsie Daisy Angel' and also enjoyed singing carols on the playground with their families.

Marston Moretaine's Remembrance Service

The Year 4 children at Marston Moretaine held a wonderful Remembrance Service at St. Mary's Church last term. This included readings, poems, hymns and prayers, as well as a



collective two-minute silence. Parents joined the children, and it was a special time to reflect on their current school value of compassion.

NEWS FROM OUR SCHOOLS

Edwinstree Get Outside!

Last term, Edwinstree Middle School spent time supporting the school's wellbeing and celebrating nature by getting outside. Over four years, the school tries to complete as many of the challenges as possible set by the National Trust, who list '50 things to do before you are 11 and $\frac{3}{4}$.' Edwinstree extends the age limit to 13! As well as their conker tournament, they spent time running and rolling down the large hill at Aspenden, damming rivers, and making camps.

Harvest Festival at Layston First

In October, Layston First held their Harvest festival. The Worship Group made a Harvest Sheaf with Revd Kirsty from St Peter's, Buntingford for the service.



Harvest at Offley



The children of Offley Endowed Primary School and Nursery walked down to Mary Magdelene Church in October for their Harvest Festival. The younger children sang some beautiful harvest songs, and the choir was at their very best. It was decided this year to collect provisions for 'Feed Up Warm Up,' a charity that offers food, friendship,

and support to homeless people and those at risk of homelessness in Hertfordshire. The parents and children donated generously, and the school was extremely grateful to all of them.



Potten End's Remembrance Service



The Spiritual Leaders from Potten End Primary, alongside staff and Foundation Governors, took part in Holy Trinity Church's Remembrance Sunday Service. The children read a passage from the Gospel of John (15:9-17). The service was also attended by members of the community.

Pupils at the school have also created their own Remembrance display, where every child painted a poppy. This is now on permanent display outside the school to be shared with the community.

Weston Welcomes Visitors from Zimbabwe



Weston Primary & Nursery School were delighted to offer a warm Weston welcome to a representative from their twinned school in Kadoma, Zimbabwe, who joined them for an assembly. They have maintained strong links with

Cam & Motor Primary School since 2019 and are part of the Kadoma Stevenage Link that has been in place for 35 years. Visitors from Kadoma and the Stevenage Link team joined Weston for an assembly where the children sang 'I, The Lord Of Sea & Sky' to the visitors, one of the hymns from their Harvest Festival. The visitors shared stories about the school in Kadoma, and the children showed the visitors around their school. It was very interesting to hear about the differences and challenges the children face in Kadoma. Like Weston, they have a very strong school community based on Christian values. The pupils will continue to share work with the children in Kadoma and really look forward to the next visit.

Anti-Bullying Week at St Giles

For Anti-Bullying Week, the classes in St Giles South Mymms all took part in different activities. Class 1 talked about being kind to others and the importance of this. They made a positive affirmation mirror for their classroom. Class 2 discussed bullying and how it might make people feel. Classes 3 and 4 watched the BBC Live Lesson on bullying.



Estates Management of the Year



Last term, St Augustine's Academy's site manager, Jason Smart, was announced as the winner of the National Schools Awards 'Estates Management of the Year' at a ceremony at the House of Lords.

Jason is a former pupil of St Augustine's and is passionate about serving the school and local

community. He has a keen awareness of the children's needs and uses his resourcefulness, imagination, and creativity to continually take projects from concept to reality.

Jason's impressive and diverse skill set, determination, and drive led him to create an award-winning 1-acre Forest School, renovate the school's kitchen, and create a classroom for practical lessons. Jason is also renowned for his glistening 'Winter Wonderlands,' which captivate, amaze, and inspire.

Grants from The Jane Carts Trust and the Diocese's Community Life Fund have helped Jason to carry out some of his projects.

Congratulations, Jason!

NEWS FROM OUR SCHOOLS

St Mary's Visit to the Cathedral



After sadly failing to make it to St Albans Cathedral for the Church Schools Harvest Festival celebration when the coach broke down, the choir at St Mary's, Ware, finally arrived there in the end! They enjoyed a December afternoon exploring the cathedral and singing some carols in the grounds.

Parliament Week at St Michael's



On Tuesday, 19th December, St Michael's Woolmer Green CofE took part in an exciting opportunity for Parliament Week. As they celebrated and participated in a variety of lessons, they had a visit from the Parliament photographer, who took some fantastic photographs of the children in action.

St Michael's Pyjama Day



On Friday, 11 October, St Michael's Primary in Bishop's Stortford held a whole school pyjama day. Marnie, who attends the school, and her mum are the area coordinators for a charity called Children's Hospital Pyjamas. Each year, they collect donations of brand-new pyjamas for children aged from newborn to 18 years, which are then gifted to hospitals, hospices, and refugees. This year, the charity is supporting Princess Alexandra Hospital.

The school decided to support this work by asking the staff and children to either bring in a new pair of pyjamas or a donation in return for wearing their own pyjamas to school. These donations were then all sent directly to the charity.

Fundraising at Tring School



Tring School has undertaken two major fundraising challenges to support the local DENS charity.

First, Year 7 students took part in the £1 challenge, which sought to turn £1 for each individual into as

much money as possible. They undertook many wonderful challenges, including making 3D emotions keychains, washing cars, painting individual stones, and running a stall at the school's Enterprise market. They turned £240 into £2,423.80!

Additionally, the Philosophy and Religious Studies team organized the Christmas Food Bank Appeal, and students donated 50 bags full of high-need items for the local charity.

NEWS FROM THE SCHOOLS TEAM

Headteacher and CEO Changes

A warm welcome to our new substantive headteachers who have started this academic year:

Amanda Hopwood, Albury and Puller; Arnie Worton-Geer, St John's Digswell; Simon Urquhart, Essendon; Sarah Cook, Furneux Pelham; Matt Beach, Great Gaddesden; Michelle Moulsher, High Wych; Sarah Gray, St Mary's, Northchurch; Lisa Larham, Renhold; Michelle Speed, St Andrew's, Stanstead Abbots; Robert Getley, Christ Church, Ware; Andrew Harris, St Helen's, Wheathampstead

Our thanks and best wishes accompany those who have left their school since the start of this academic year:

Sarah Wickens, Great Gaddesden; Helen Gillingham, St Andrew's, Stanstead Abbots

Our appreciation also goes to all those who have, or are about to, step in as interim or acting heads.

VA schools and academies

Just a quick reminder that the deadline for setting your admission arrangements for 2026-27 is 28th February 2025, and that the determined arrangements must be uploaded to your school website by 15th March 2025. Please let me know if you need support with any admission queries: mjarman@stalbans.anglican.org /07443 192459

Maggie Jarman
Admissions Officer

And finally...

Focus on Governance

School governance is a highly regulated area and I receive many enquiries from governors about where to find regulatory information and guidance. Governance legislation and associated DfE guidance may not always be easy to navigate, particularly for church schools who will sometimes need more detailed information than DfE guidance can provide.

Our online briefing papers complement DfE guidance and provide a greater level of detail for church schools as needed. These are available under the heading 'diocesan information and guidance' on our governance web page at this link: [School Governance - The Diocese of St Albans](#)

The statutory regulations are there to support good governance and ultimately good outcomes and experiences for the children in our schools. I am always happy to advise on governance regulations and help you with information and interpretation for areas not already addressed in our online briefing papers.

Belinda Copson
Governance Adviser

Retirement of the Bishop of St Albans

The Right Revd Dr Alan Smith, Bishop of St Albans, has announced his intention to retire in 2025. His letter to the Diocese, shared on 7 January, is published in full below:

Dear friends and colleagues,

It has been the privilege of my life to serve as the Bishop of St Albans. However, next month I will be 68 and the time has come for me to lay down my responsibilities and to hand the baton of leadership on to whomever the Lord calls to succeed me. I am writing, therefore, to tell you that, with the support and permission of His Majesty the King, I will be retiring as Diocesan Bishop on 31 May 2025.

The past sixteen years have been full of challenges, opportunities and surprises. With God's help, I have encouraged us to 'Live God's Love' among the people of Herts, Beds and Luton and parts of Barnet, and to do so with generosity and joy, with imagination and courage. In that endeavour, I have been grateful for my colleagues on the senior staff and for the support of so many clergy and lay people across the Diocese. I never cease to give thanks to God for the warmth of your friendship. You have enriched my life and ministry in countless ways.

I plan to retire to Wiltshire, the county in which I was born and brought up, and where most of my extended family continue to live.

There will be plenty of opportunities to say our farewells in the Spring. In the meantime, I have many things I still want to do in my remaining months in office as I seek to serve God and prepare for the next phase of my life and ministry.

Please pray for me as I pray for you,
Bishop Alan

We hope you have a wonderful start to the Spring Term!

Living God's Love in Education: Enabling Life in all its Fullness

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