

# THE RED SWEATER LETTER

A newsletter from St. John's Middle School



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## Message from Head of School

By Mrs A. Elwell

Welcome to the final Red Sweater letter of 2021, as I sit here and reflect upon the term that has just passed, I remember in September the optimism of schools returning to normal for the new academic year and I reflect upon the highs and lows that the term has delivered.

There has been much to celebrate with a return to a comprehensive programme of extra curricular activities and the delight of children performing on stage in drama club and the sound of elated teams returning after a winning their sporting matches, as they finally competed for the first time at St John's. We once again heard the singing of our choir and witnessed the excitement of the children as they left school for the end of term reward trips. Year 5 staff reported feeling moved to tears at the children's reactions and expressions during their trip to the theatre. For me simply seeing our Year 8 mentors sitting next to our younger children around school, listening to them read, encouraging them and discussing their books made me outwardly smile. All priceless moments that in the past years we have taken for granted.

## Continued ...

Behind the scenes the staff have been working very hard to ensure that any missed learning due to lockdowns has been addressed and that the children continue to make excellent progress. Zoom lessons have resumed once again for those children isolating and many children have received social and emotional support from our dedicated pastoral team.



We certainly haven't stood still, every day we have aimed to move forward and make progress against our aspirational school development targets, improving, refining and ensuring we deliver the best education we can to our children. We are determined that the pandemic will not get in our way.

This has all taken place under the cloud of COVID-19, the endless updated guidance and expectations, the testing, vaccinations, outbreaks, illness, reintroduction of measures, staff shortage and the emotional toll the last two years has taken upon our community as a whole. However, the community has shown resilience and perseverance, through our values we have demonstrated love for each other and the "show" has carried on and it will continue to do so whatever the New Year has in store.

So on that note I would like to thank you as parents for being so supportive and enduring the constant communication with updates and notifications of COVID-19 contacts and following the advice to keep our community as safe as possible. Additionally, I would like to thank the whole staff team who have worked relentlessly to ensure the school continues to educate and care for the children, whilst facing many challenges of their own. Thank you to you all.

I would like to finish by wishing you all a very Happy Christmas and a healthy New Year.

Please stay safe.

With my very best festive wishes  
Mrs Alison Elwell

## Dates for the Diary

Start of Spring Term

Wednesday 5th January - KS2

Thursday 6th January - KS3

Year 5/6 Boys & Girls Athletics

1st February

Year 7 & Year 8 Boys and Girls Athletics

2nd February

Year 7 Poetry Slam

7th February

Half Term (inclusive)

21st - 25th February





# Collective Worship

By Miss C. Russell

As we wind our way through Advent journeying, like Mary and Joseph, the Shepherds and the Magi, towards that lowly stable where heaven and earth meet in the birth of a small, frail, human baby; it can be easy to let the tinsel, baubles, shopping and plethora of mince pies and chocolate, drown out the quiet but pervasive song of eternity which underlies both the joy and celebration of Christmas, and also the stress, the worry the loneliness which many also experience at this time of year.

Two thousand and twenty-one years ago Jesus was born not into a palace, but into a manger, a trough where animals fed; into a country not at peace, but a people under Roman occupation and ruled by a puppet King whose murderous rage would force them to flee as refugees into Egypt.

We might find comfort in amid the disruptions and uncertainties of the past two years, that Jesus too knew what it was like to live in uncertain times. As the well-known Christmas Carol 'Once in Royal David's City' puts it "He was little, weak and helpless; tears and smiles like us he knew." Wherever and however we find ourselves this Christmas; Christ came for us, was born on earth for us. He comes 'to the least of these', and 'for such as time as this'.

We will gather together in St John's Church (God willing) on Friday to light our Christingles, hear the Christmas story and sing about Christ's birth; celebrating that in spite of all the world might throw at us, "the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." (John 1:5)

Evelyn Underhill, twentieth century Anglican mystic and writer, wrote about the need to 'tune into the music of eternity'; to stop and pause and find a moment of silence in which to listen and just 'be'. In her words: "I do hope your Christmas has had a little touch of Eternity in among the rush and pitter patter and all. It always seems such a mixing of this world and the next - but that after all is the idea!"



It came upon the midnight clear,  
that glorious song of old,  
from angels bending near the earth,  
to touch their harps of gold:  
"Peace on the earth, to all good will  
from heaven's all-gracious king!"  
The world in solemn stillness lay,  
to hear the angels sing.

Yet with the woes of sin and strife  
The world has suffered long;  
Beneath the angel strain have rolled  
Two thousand years of wrong;  
And man, at war with man, hears not  
The love-song which they bring;  
Oh, hush the noise, ye men of strife  
And hear the angels sing.

Miss Russell  
Head of Collective Worship



# Attendance & Epraise points

Class	epraise Points	Attendance
5KLH	6288	97.2%
5SW	5643	97.8%
5CGO	5793	98%
5MJ	6281	97.9%
5CW	6105	95.3%
5AKE	6038	97.3%
6LF	6512	97.7%
6GM	5527	98.8%
6KD	5577	96.8%
6BC	5833	97.7%
6RSE	5582	97.9%
7WW	5130	95.1%
7PM	5064	95.2%
7MMO	5116	95.8%
7ALK	5296	95.7%
7MH	4875	96.5%
7JD	5112	98.1%
8JCD	5674	94.8%
8NGE	5618	93.8%
8MF	4815	95.4%
8KLN	4795	94.2%
8MC	5212	97.8%
8CSS	4704	93.7%



# Gingerbread Man



## Method

### STEP 1

Heat oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Line 2 baking sheets with baking parchment. Melt butter, sugar and syrup in a pan. Mix flour, soda, spices and a pinch of salt in a bowl. Stir in the butter mix and chopped ginger to make a stiff-ish dough.

### STEP 2

Wait until cool enough to handle, then roll out dough to about 5mm thick. Stamp out gingerbread men, re-rolling and pressing the trimmings back together and rolling again. Lift onto baking sheets. Bake for 12 mins until golden. Cool 10 mins on the sheets, then lift onto cooling racks.

### STEP 3

To decorate, mix icing sugar with a few drops of water until thick and smooth. Halve then slice cherries thinly to make smiles, and cut ginger into small squares. Spoon icing into a food bag, snip off the tiniest bit from one corner, then squeeze eyes and buttons, and a tiny smile onto 1 man at a time. Stick on a cherry smile and ginger buttons. Repeat; leave to set. Will keep up to 1 week in an airtight tin.

## Ingredients

140g unsalted butter, 100g dark muscovado sugar  
3 tbsp golden syrup, 350g plain flour, 1 tsp bicarbonate of soda, 2 tsp ground ginger, 1 tsp ground cinnamon, pinch of cayenne pepper (optional), 2 balls stem ginger from a jar, chopped

### To decorate

50g icing sugar, a few glacé cherries (we used undyed), 2 balls stem ginger



# Heads of Year Message

By Ms R. Bourne - Head of Year 8



As we near the end of a rather eventful and festive term, our pupils are no doubt very excited for Christmas to begin at home and the holidays to start. Despite the ever-present health concerns in the news and on social media, at St John's we are endeavouring to focus on the joys that Christmas brings and discuss the true meaning of Christmas with our pupils. It is a very special time indeed, particularly in a Church School such as ours.

The corridors and classrooms have been adorned with tinsel and pupils have eagerly participated in helping decorate with renewed enthusiasm this year. We are striving to maintain as much festive normality as possible so expect lots of Christmas cheer coming home with the children this week! I have personally recommended various key learning materials such as pens, pencils, glue sticks and study guides as Christmas gifts, much to the moans and groans of some pupils but I'm sure Santa would agree, the gift of learning is just as good as chocolate! (OK, perhaps not Cadbury's - that surpasses everything!)

Whilst we will be closing our doors on the 17th, we send out our heartfelt best wishes to all our families this Christmas. It will be a time tinged with sadness for some who have faced illness and loss this year. Reflecting upon the last couple of years and the journey we've all been on I'm sure one message is clear, never take loved ones for granted, hold those dear to you that little bit closer and most of all, enjoy every day that God gives you on this beautiful Earth.

Merry Christmas everyone, have a wonderful holiday and we look forward to welcoming you back in January, looking to the future and ready to learn.



“

*BE A  
RAINBOW  
IN  
SOMEONE  
ELSE'S  
CLOUD*

”

# House Cross Country

By Mr M. Cowdery - Head of PE

On Tuesday 30th November we held our annual House Cross Country competition for the crazy cats who just love to run in the cold and mud!

## Scoring:

Each competitor was given a number upon completing the race. The lower the number, the better they did. The best scoring 4 competitors from each house were added together. The house with the lowest overall score were the winners for that year group.

## The Results:

Winning houses were awarded 4 points down to 1 point for the lowest scoring team in each year group. The house with the most points across the whole school received 50 points towards their Sports Day score. 2nd got 30, 3rd 20 and 4th 10.

## Overall House Cross Country Results

1st - Tudor  
2nd - Stuart  
3rd - Windsor  
4th - Hanover

An amazing 152 children took part in the competition which was a fantastic turnout!

## The Course:

Year 5 & 6 - One full lap of white - 0.7km

Year 7 & 8 - One full lap of white + blue - 1.1km





# Christmas Card Competition

By Mrs C. Woodward

A local IT (computing) company very kindly asked us to design their Christmas card again for this year. They print up the winning design and send it to all their customers. The company is called "Fly-Wheel IT". They awarded an 'Alexa' to the winning entry! ...

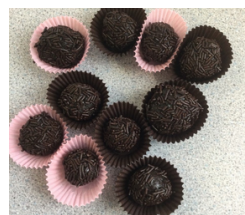
The winner of the Christmas Card competition was chosen by the company( Flywheel IT) . Congratulations to Flynn Cleaver in 8CSS. The company was so impressed by the entry of Maisy Faulkner in 5CGO that they decided to give a second prize too. Congratulations to you both!



## Food Technology

By Mrs C. Stables

Christmas has arrived in food technology! Year 7 pupils have been making Yule logs, truffles and shortbread! Lots of fun was had by all . They have achieved so much, we are very proud of them all.





# A Message from The Church

By Rev. Ray Khan

The greatest gift that I have ever received is the Amazon Wish List!! At last my wife can put down what she would like. It has helped me to give the best gifts that she wants (of course I do get something not on the list - usually a last minute dash to Cupitts!!) The tradition of giving gifts at Christmas time is a very ancient one, with links to the Winter Solstice and the Roman festival of Saturnalia. When the Roman empire became Christian the tradition continued, but its meaning was to reflect the giving of the gifts given to Jesus by the wise men. Gifts were then given on Jan 6th!!!

There is something rather wonderful about giving and receiving gifts - seeing the reaction on peoples faces as they open their presents is a joy to behold! For the church the giving and receiving of gifts is a reflection on the generosity of God at this time - a reminder that God gave the best in order that we may be renewed in our lives.

This Christmas, I am sure that there will be a moment when you can just have a bit of time to yourself, why not reflect on how you can respond to the generosity of God with the words from the Christmas Carol "In the Bleak Mid-Winter", you can choose to make it a quiet prayer

What can I give him? Poor as I am  
If I were a shepherd I would give a lamb  
If I were a wise man I would do my part  
But what I can I give him Give him my heart  
Give him my heart.

May God Bless you this Christmas.



## Christmas

@ St Johns Bromsgrove

<b>Sat 11<sup>th</sup> Dec</b>	<b>5pm</b>	<b>Christingle</b>
<b>Sun 19<sup>th</sup> Dec</b>	<b>6pm</b>	<b>9 Lessons &amp; Carols</b>
<b>Fri 24<sup>th</sup> Dec</b>	<b>5pm</b>	<b>Scratch Nativity</b>
	<b>11.30pm</b>	<b>Midnight Mass</b>
<b>Sat 25<sup>th</sup> Dec</b>	<b>10.45am</b>	<b>Family Worship</b>
<b>Sun 26<sup>th</sup> Dec</b>	<b>10.00am</b>	<b>Said Holy Communion</b>





## Year 6 Trip to Panto

By Salma Koderia and Candi Bayliss 6BC

On Thursday 9th December the Year 6 pupils and teachers went to see Jack and The Beanstalk at Redditch Palace Theatre. Having spoken to other pupils we rated our experience as 5 Star!. The Main characters were: Jack, who was played by Mark Read from the Band A1 and Princess Jess, who was played by Andrea Valls from CBeebies. The music was great and Mrs Hirons was delighted when we all sang along with the cast. By the time we returned to school everyone was exhausted from being such a great audience. We spoke to a few pupils who said:

"The pantomime was super entertaining; the actors did a fantastic job!" (Miles Thompson 6LF)

"It was so funny!" (Henry Raven 6BC)



## Year 5 Trip to Panto

By Ethan Hall and Evie Proudman

On Tuesday 14th December, we went to see Peter Pan at the Malvern Theatre. On the way, we went on a coach and we saw lots of sights of Worcestershire. When we arrived, we went through the building to auditorium 7 and sat down.

Everyone found the theatre really exciting and fun, especially when we got to join in. The funniest parts were when the 'Tik-Tok Croc' came on and did Tik-Tok dances and also when captain Hook squirted water all over the audience. The saddest part was when Tinkerbelle got captured. At the end of the performance, we got to sing and dance with Captain and Smhee. On the way back, we had lots of fun on the bus and luckily nobody got sick!

People from year 5 said:

"It was a really fun and exciting trip to the theatre" Ellie Godwin

"It was funny and good when the tik-Tok Croc came on stage" Alex Cheshire



# Enrichment Day

By Pia Broadhurst and Avinas Inkarachselvan



On Friday the 10th December we had our enrichment day all about perseverance. Our favourite part of the day was the active session as we had a lot of challenges which were hard but funny. We felt happy and excited all day as there was so much to learn and do. The tower making challenge was the hardest and really tested our growth mindset. All the children we spoke to said they had a great day. We are really looking forward to another day like it next year.

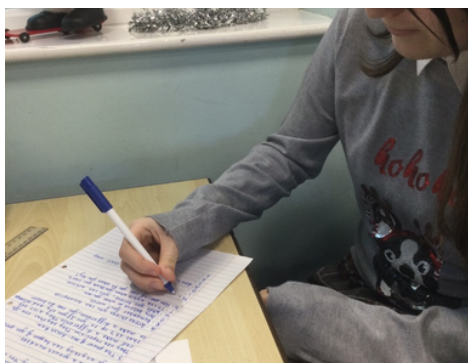
Jazmine from 5MJ said, "It was an amazing day, I loved the active sessions "

"It was fun and exciting but also made me realise I can do anything when I focus." Sophie Drew 5AKE



A growth mindset isn't required,  
Yet it is what some have desired,  
Keep on going, persevere!  
A growth mindset is present here.  
"You can't do it!" someone divulged,  
In my mind an idea bulged,  
On how I would do this,  
Some others went hit and miss,  
But I used my growth mindset,  
And others, before my success, placed a bet,  
That I would fail and give up,  
But I persevered and my mind filled up,  
With all the plans that didn't work,  
After each fail, people would smirk,  
And reply with "See? Told you so!"  
But I told myself that it's worth one more go,  
So after all those highs and lows,  
My brain now knows,  
A growth mindset is best,  
But to others it's a leaving guest.  
So I conspired,  
And I inspired,  
Others without one,  
To have their fixed mindset gone.

By Charlie Tranter





# Festive Fun



Our beautiful real Christmas tree, donated by Dave's Christmas trees is looking for a new home for the rest of the festive season. Please contact Mrs Hine if you are interested, first come, first served.



Londoners and visitors probably know the iconic spruce that stretches to the sky in Trafalgar Square each year, but few realize where it comes from. Every year since 1947, the people of Norway have gifted the tree to the people of London. They donate the tree in gratitude for Britain's support for Norway during World War II. Now that's what we call goodwill toward men.

St John's Church of England  
Middle School



## Christmas Menu

### MAIN

#### ROASTED TURKEY MUSHROOM & VEGETABLE PIE (V)

*served with a choice of*  
Pig 'n' Blankets  
Cranberry Sauce  
Roasted Winter Vegetables  
Creamed Cabbage  
Buttered Minted Peas  
Rosemary & Garlic Roasted Potatoes  
Gravy



### DESSERTS

#### ASSORTED FRUIT JELLY *or* FESTIVE YULE LOG

On Thursday 16th November we walked up to Bromsgrove for our Christmas Lunch.

We attended in two sittings:

**KS2 at 12 p.m**

**KS3 at 1 p.m**

We thoroughly enjoyed celebrating the festive period at Bromsgrove School.

Thank you for having us.



# Christmas Jumper Day 2021 - Friday 10th December



## Christmas Present Ideas for Keen Readers

By Mr N. Edwards

*"Christmas Jumper Day 2021 was the awesome-  
est day ever.*

*Every single penny helps kids around the world  
get the stuff they need to see the magic in the  
world again.*

*Thank you for making the world better in a  
sweater!" - Coach Christmas*

We raised an amazing £370! Thank you to everyone  
who donated.



I have listed below a few books that fit well with the  
topics students are currently or will be studying in their  
History lessons at St John's for each year group.

If you would like more information about these books,  
which includes reviews completed by children, please  
click on the link below. You may, however, find that  
books other than those suggested below take your  
interest.

**[CLICK HERE](#)**

- Year 5 -
  - Children of the Benin Kingdom Dinah Orji  
Dinosaur Books Ltd
- Year 6 -
  - Jasper: Viking Dog Hilary Robinson Strauss  
House Production
- Year 7 -
  - The Siege of Caerlaverock Barbara Henderson  
Pokey Hat
  - The Great Revolt Paul Dowswell Bloomsbury  
Education
- Year 8 -
  - The Austen Girls Lucy Worsley Bloomsbury  
Children's Books
  - I, Ada Julia Gray Andersen Press
  - The Undefeated Kwame Alexander, Illus Kadir  
Nelson Andersen Press

Below is a link to the calculator that  
Miss North suggests her KS3  
Mathematicians use:

**[CLICK HERE](#)**

I hope you find this list is of value and you have a  
happy and restful Christmas.





# Instrumental and vocal tuition in school

By Severn Arts



Severn Arts teaches children music in our school. If your child is interested in learning to play an instrument or would like to have singing lessons during the school day this can be arranged with Severn Arts.

Instruments in the brass, stringed and woodwind families are all taught as well as percussion, piano and guitar, and many of the instruments taught are available to hire.

Lessons are available as 20-minute individual lessons (£12.90 per lesson), 20-minute group lesson (2 people - £6.45 per lesson, per person) or 30-minute individual lesson (£19.35 per lesson).

Severn Arts teachers are enhanced DBS checked and safeguarding trained.

To book lessons please follow this link <https://online.severnarts.org.uk/spring-term-in-school-lessons/> Online payment is required when you make your booking. Once you have completed and submitted your application form, Severn Arts will then agree lesson details with the school.

Making music and learning a new skill can have a huge benefit to your wellbeing and can be lots of fun!

For further information or any queries please contact Severn Arts:

[info@severnarts.org.uk](mailto:info@severnarts.org.uk)

[www.severnarts.org.uk](http://www.severnarts.org.uk)

**EARLY HELP IN WORCESTERSHIRE**  
Help and support for Children, Young People and their families or carers.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT THE FAMILY HUB:**  
[WORCESTERSHIRE.GOV.UK/FAMILYHUB](http://WORCESTERSHIRE.GOV.UK/FAMILYHUB)

Scan me with your smart phone

WORCESTERSHIRE CHILDREN FIRST

