

St John's VA C of E Primary School

NEWSLETTER

Finding the light in ourselves and each other (John 8:12)



27/11/25

Autumn Term 2

Value: Hope

Welcome message from the Headteacher

It's nearly Christmas!

Dear all,

It is nearly Christmas time, and we are excited to prepare for this busy month of the year. Each class are preparing their Christmas events with younger classes preparing nativities and shows. We want to say a huge thank you to everyone taking part in making this happen, from staff teaching lines and songs to parents and families getting costumes together. Christmas is a magical time of the year that I get very excited about. We are working with the 'Friends' and I am excited to see our Christmas bazaar in a couple of week's time.

Last week on Monday, we had our remembrance of Mrs Philbey in the sensory playground where we planted her tree and blessed her plaque. It was a moment that was put together by Mrs de la Croix as well as other staff who developed our upstairs rooms into the 'Robin's Nest'. It looks great and we are very grateful for the time and effort put into this.

I have been popping into classes and seeing some fantastic assessment for learning happening. I have seen confidence grow in the use of Seesaw in classes as well as adaptive teaching. We have also been working on our travel to school document during our travel to school week last week. Please could we remind parents that walking, scooting and cycling is a great way to travel to school. I will be looking to give out house points for those children who I see making sustainable travel to school choices. Car sharing is also another initiative that we would like to promote to reduce our carbon footprint.

Just a reminder as we head into the colder months to please bring coats to school; we aim to be outside for most break and lunch times with our OPAL approach however it is vital that children have coats for this.

We have been very busy with our sports fixtures with classes taking part in whole class events as well as teams going out for various competitions. Well done to all classes that are taking on these new sporting challenges.

Mr Worton-Geer

Pupil quote of the week: Vienna (Year 3): It is really fun, it helps us learn every day. I really enjoy learning because it is done in a fun way.

Quote from the bible: (Psalm 33:22). " May your unfailing love be with us, LORD, even as we put our hope in you. "

Improvements to the school:

We have had several improvements so far:

- Our gates should now be fully operational, we are looking at getting the gates completely replaced. Please watch this space.
- We have put Mrs Philbey's tree into the ground in the inclusion playground.
- We have built two new football goals and have new netball and basketball posts, thank you to a family for the donation for the items and another family for helping putting them all together.
- We have also had some donations going towards something for the Reception class, we are grateful for these.



Highlights

Here is some useful information that is happening in the school.

Attendance:

Week commencing 17th November 2025

Year	Percent	Place
Nursery	98.3%	2 nd
Year 1	95.5%	7 th
Year 2	95.3%	8 th
Year 3	96%	6 th
Year 4	96.8%	5 th
Year 5	99.7%	1 st
Year 6	98.1%	3 rd
Year R	97.8%	4 th

Pantomime Reminders

Please arrive at school for 08:15am so that we can register and toilet the children before leaving promptly at 08:30am. We will be catching the 09:14am train from Welwyn North and then the 12:58pm train from Welwyn Garden City back to school. Children should be in full school uniform. Please remember to choose your child's sandwich choice on SchoolGrid if they normally have a school lunch.



Remembering a Special Colleague



On Monday 17th November, the St John's C of E VA Primary School community came together with family members to honour the memory of a much-loved colleague Mrs Philbey, who sadly passed away in June 2025. The service was held in the newly built SEN playground garden, a peaceful space chosen for its significance and connection to the children she supported with such dedication.

During the service, a special tree was planted in Mrs Philbey's memory, an enduring symbol of her kindness, commitment, and the lasting impact she made on the school. The school choir gave a touching performance of "*The Lord's My Shepherd*," filling the garden with music that reflected the warmth and unity of the moment. Staff, pupils and members of the clergy also contributed heartfelt poems and prayers, offering words of comfort and celebration of her life. In a generous gesture, Mrs Philbey's family presented a donation to the school. This gift will support the development of the SEN garden through the addition of a new mud kitchen and further playground equipment—resources that will enrich the experiences of the children she cared so deeply about.

Mrs Philbey's legacy will continue to grow within the heart of our school community, symbolised by the tree planted in her honour and the joyful play it will inspire for years to come. The staff have joined together to decorate the upstairs 'group room' in the school and named it 'The Robin's nest' in her memory.

Child Prayer:

Dear God, I hope that we can all have a great week. We would like to learn fun things about lots of things. We want to learn about Jesus, Noah's ark and even more things from the bible.
Amen (Year 3- Mitch)

Calendar

Monday 1st-Friday 5th December

Art Week

Monday 1st December

Non-Uniform day – Donation of Chocolate and Wine

Thursday 4th December

EYFS Nativity Dress Rehearsal

Friday 5th December

KS1 Nativity Rehearsal

Friday 5th December

The Friends – Christmas Fate

Monday 8th December

Panto Day

Wednesday 10th December

[EYFS Nativity @ Christ the King 8:50 – 10am](#)

Thursday 11th December

[KS1 Nativity 6 -7pm](#)

Friday 12th December

Local MP Visit

Friday 12th December

Forest School – Year 2

Tuesday 16th December

Christingle – Year 3

Wednesday 17th December

Christmas jumper and Dinner day

Friday 19th December

Last day of school – finish at 1:30pm

Friday 19th December

Carol service – whole school at church for 8:50am

Friday 19th December

Forest school Year 1

Monday 5th January 2026

INSET day

Tuesday 6th January

First day back at school

Tuesday 6th January

Eucharist Epiphany at School

Friday 16th January

SATs workshop 8:50am and 1:45pm (change of date – Year 6 only)

Wednesday 21st January

Phonics Assessment Workshop – 8:50am

Wednesday 28th January

Year 4 MTC workshop 8:50am and 2:50pm

Monday 2nd February -Thursday 5th February

MOCK SAT's Week – Year 6

Monday 9th – 15th February

Children's Mental health Week

Tuesday 10th February

Safer Internet Day

Monday 16th -Friday 20th February

Half Term

Thursday 5th March

World Book Day

Monday 9th -Friday 13th March

Science Week

Wednesday 11th March

Year 1-6 Science Workshop

Thursday 12th March

Book Look Day- 2:45pm

Academic Highlights

Here is some useful information that is happening in the school.

Nursery: In Nursery, we have been thinking about our families and how families come in all shapes and sizes. As a class, we talked about who we have in our family. We drew the people who live in our house and made collages of houses using lolly and match sticks to make shapes.



Reception: In Reception we have been reading Owl Babies and learning about nocturnal animals. In forest school we created our own owls using clay and feathers. In drawing club we will be writing about our owls.



Year 1: Year 1 have had a wonderfully busy fortnight! We kicked off last week with a special Road Safety Assembly, inspiring the children to become thoughtful pedestrians and enthusiastic poster designers! Our classroom has also been buzzing with excitement as we continue our science unit exploring the five senses. From hands-on investigations to curious conversations, the children are learning not just *what* we sense, but *how* wonderfully our bodies work. A big fortnight of learning, creativity, and curiosity!



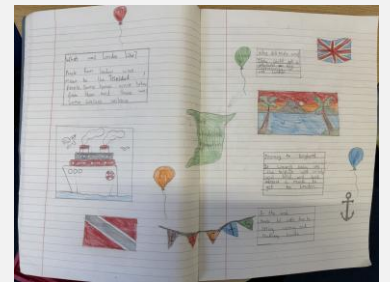
Year 2: Year 2 have been learning about microhabitats in Science. We went into the woodlands to see what microhabitats we could find and what were living there. We found worms, beetles, frogs and even eggs! We went back to class to discuss what we found and drew a picture with labels to record our findings.



Year 3: This half term in Year 3 our artwork is about Prehistoric Painting. We have been learning about 'Cave Art'. This is us creating our own cave wall. We had to stick red lentils to paper, when that dried, we painted it in cave wall colours. Next week we will draw on top of this our cave wall line drawing.



Year 4: Year 4 have been hard at work over the last couple of weeks! In English, we have been looking at the book 'Granny Came Here on the Empire Windrush'. As part of our learning, we have been researching the Windrush Generation and recently completed reports on what we found out!



Year 5: Year 5 have been learning about air resistance. The children designed and made their own parachutes. We took them outside and dropped them 3 times from the same height to get the average length of time it took to hit the ground. We then had a competition to see whose parachute would stay in the air the longest...it was very close, but in the end, there could only be one winning team, and that was Frank, Raffy and Connor. Well done boys!!!!

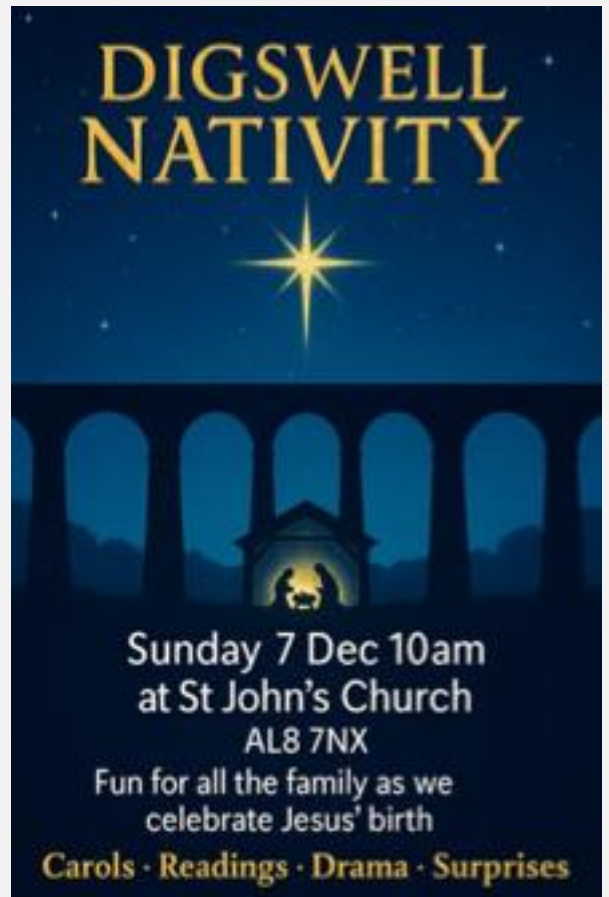


Year 6: Year 6 had an exciting and rather muddy morning at the tag rugby festival at Monk's Walk school showcasing fantastic teamwork, determination, and sportsmanship. They put their skills into action, working together to make quick passes, support their teammates, and score impressive tries. Whether they were attacking or defending, every player gave their best and cheered each other on. It was a fun-filled event that left everyone proud of their efforts.



Parish News

Here is some useful information that is happening in the Parish.



St John's School Carol Service Fri 19th Dec 8.50am

This is the last day of school where we be inviting all children (including Reception and Nursery) to Christmas carol service. We invite family and friends to this event where we celebrate the end of term and Christmas.



The Friends News

Here is some useful information that is happening with the Friends.

This academic year we are going to host the AGM at school on Wednesday 4th February 2025 at 2:45pm. Mr Worton-Geer will be hosting with Teas and coffees to invite all parents to attend so that we can build a team of support for the school. There are named roles here such as Chair, vice chair, treasurer and Secretary but also Reps for each class and non-named roles. Together we can support the school to develop a strong community that will help raise money for our children. Please come along.

Dates for the diary for half termly meetings are:

Wednesday 4th February 2025 at 2:45pm – AGM voting for roles

Wednesday 11th February 2025 – welcome new committee and discussion on World book day- a focus on Wonka.

Wednesday 25th March 2025

Wednesday 29th April 2025

Wednesday 24th June 2025



PLEASE COME AND SUPPORT OUR

AGM

**Wednesday 4th February
at 2.45pm**

**Refreshments will be
provided**



These are the cake sale dates

Yr 5 - 16/1/26

Yr 4 - 13/2/26

Yr 3 - 27/2/26

Yr 2 - 13/3/26

Yr 1 - 17/4/26

R - 8/5/26

N - 22/5/26

Our future events that we would like to run and will need support are:

- Christmas Fair
- Christmas Cards
- Mother's Day project
- Father's Day project
- Sports Day
- Year 6 Show
- Odd shoe day



The Church of England Parish of Digswell Welwyn Garden City December 2025

Compline/weekly worship available on Soundcloud Channel

Morning Prayer is via Zoom

Please ask us for details

as at 25 | 125

Monday 1	8:30am Morning Prayer 11:30am Monks Walk Symbols of Christmas at St John's Church 1.15pm Monks Walk Symbols of Christmas at St John's Church 2.15pm Monks Walk Symbols of Christmas at St John's Church
Tuesday 2	8:45am Advent School Eucharist at St John's School 10:00am Eucharist at Christ the King Hub 1:00pm Fr Rob officiates at Harwood Hill assembly 8:30pm Compline – a link is sent
Weds 3	8:30am Morning Prayer 12 Noon Advent Study Lunch at the Rectory (£8 donation requested) 4:00pm Knightsfield Trustees Meeting 6:30pm Monks Walk Carol Service
Thursday 4	9:00am Tea Toast & Toddlers at Christ the King Hub 10:05am Monks Walk Symbols of Christmas at St John's Church 11:30am Monks Walk Symbols of Christmas at St John's Church 7:30pm Parochial Church Council Meeting via Zoom 8:30pm Compline a link is sent
Friday 5	8:30am Morning Prayer 9:00am Coffee Pot at St John's Café 10:30am Parish Book Club meets at Coffee Pot 11:30am Monks Walk Symbols of Christmas at St John's Church
Saturday 6	7:45am Fr Rob presents <i>Thought for the Day</i> LIVE on BBC Radio 4 8:30am Morning Prayer 9:15am A Moment of Healing at St John's Church 9:30am Hub Café is open today
Sunday 7	ADVENT II Audio Service for This Week a link is sent 8:00am Parish Eucharist at St John's Church [<i>Lady Chapel</i>] 10:00am The Digswell Nativity for all the family 11:30am The Twelve Days of Christmas around the piano 12:15 Parish Christmas Buffet Lunch [<i>Tickets available for purchase</i>]
Monday 8	8:30am Morning Prayer 9:00am Homerswood School Assembly [Selina] 1:45pm Waterside Christingle at Christ the King Hub
Tuesday 9	8:50am Collective Worship at St John's School 10:00am Eucharist at Christ the King Hub 8:30pm Compline – a link is sent

Thursday 11	9:30am Annabel's Nursery, Christmas Story at CtKHub 6:30pm St John's School Key Stage One at St John's Church 7:00pm Knightsfield School Music and Awards Evening 8:30pm Compline a link is sent
Friday 12	8:30am Morning Prayer 9:00am Coffee Pot at St John's Café
Saturday 13	8:30am Morning Prayer 9:30am Hub Café is open today 2:00pm Welwyn Garden City Churches singing carols in Howard's Centre 7:30pm Welwyn Garden City Orchestra and Chorus Christmas Concert
Sunday 14	ADVENT 3 Weekly Audio Service a link is sent 9:30am Parish Eucharist at St John's Church 11:00am Anglican-led Service at Digswell Village Church 2:30pm Hertfordshire Concert Band Family Christmas Concert
Monday 15	8:30am Morning Prayer 10:00am Harwood Hill Christingle Service at St John's 1:30pm Homerswood Christingle Service at St John's
Tuesday 16	10:00am Eucharist at Christ the King Hub 11:30am Carols at Christine Café in Digswell [Fr Rob] 1:30pm St John's School Christingle Service at St John's 8:30pm Compline – a link is sent
Weds 17	8:30am Morning Prayer 4:30pm Digswell Parish Youth Fellowship at Rectory for Christmas tea
Thursday 18	9:00am Christmas Tea Toast and Toddlers 9:15am Homerswood School Annual Carol Service 11:00am Knightsfield School Annual Carol Service 8:30pm Compline a link is sent
Friday 19	8:30am Morning Prayer 8:50am St John's School Annual Carol Service 10:45am Harwood Hill School Annual Carol Service
Saturday 20	8:30am Morning Prayer 9:30am Hub Café is open today 4:00pm Thank you Christmas Tea at Rectory for Parish Officers
Sunday 21	ADVENT IV Weekly Audio Service a link is sent 9:30am Parish Eucharist at St John's Church 11:00am Michael Barron's Birthday Celebration at St John's
Monday 22	8:30am Morning Prayer
Tuesday 23	10:00am Eucharist at Christ the King Hub 8:30pm Compline – a link is sent



Sunday only Cleaner needed at Christ the King Haldens

Every Sunday a local church fellowship use Christ the King and we then have the hall area cleaned in time for the Nursery who use the facilities on weekdays.

We are urgently seeking a cleaner to take on the role on Sunday afternoons - for full details of the job description, pay etc please email info@disgwellparish.org.uk or phone 07775 882011

Volunteers to help with Coffee Pot on Fridays

Our ever popular Friday morning Community Cafe Coffee Pot at St John's is looking for a couple of volunteers for a couple of hours once a month to join our lovely rota. This is a really rewarding role and would be ideal for someone looking to put a bit back into the local community .For full details of the job description please email info@disgwellparish.org.uk or phone 07775 882011. This is a voluntary role.