

St. George's School Newsletter

Friday 12th December



From the Head

Update on Chapel this Term

This term, our chapel series has explored a theme inspired by *Who Do You Think You Are?*, the BBC genealogy series. The Rev and other members of staff have been guiding pupils through the ancestry of Jesus from Matthew's Gospel. Matthew traces Jesus's lineage back to Abraham, and throughout the term we have reflected on how figures such as Jacob, Rahab, Ruth, Solomon and of course, Mary help illuminate Jesus's identity. Each talk has considered how His story is shaped and foreshadowed by those who came before him. Jesus doesn't stand alone. He's a part of history, part of the story of the Jews and God's desire to be in relationship with all humanity.

At the same time, I have been reading a book by Owen Eastwood called *Belonging*. In it he sets out the Māori concept of *Waka Pāpā*, which expresses the idea that each of us stands in a long line of ancestors, and that understanding our place in that line helps us feel more grounded, connected, and whole. Just as Jesus's story is enriched by his heritage, so too our own sense of identity is strengthened when we understand the people and stories that have shaped us.

This time of year offers many of us the opportunity to reconnect with family, friends, and traditions that give us a sense of grounding. And we also do this in school; whether it's by taking part in one of our Carol Services, sharing Christmas Dinner on Wednesday, exchanging gifts in tutor bases, or just by enjoying the decorations around school, we are reminded that we are part of a community that goes back in time. These are our traditions, and they connect us to those who came before us.

We will bring this chapel series to its conclusion next week, culminating on the final day of term with a focus on Jesus himself. I hope you will speak with your young people about what they have been hearing and considering in chapel this term, as we draw together the threads of this rich and rewarding series.

A Busy Week at St George's

This week has been busy as we head towards the end of term! The week started with an amazing Junior Carol service where over 60 pupils played, sang and read in Chapel (see the report below).

Meanwhile, Year 11s have been focused on finishing their mock exams and return to lessons next week. This is an important process for them and I would like to thank Mrs Monson, our Exams officer, and her team of invigilators as well as teaching colleagues who are busy marking scripts to get feedback ready.

Year 13 students have also been busy preparing for mocks after Christmas: A-Level English students went to an inspiring poetry conference to further their studies, and our artists and linguists have been taking some of their mock exams early.

On Thursday, the Jazz Band brought festive cheer with their traditional “Winter Warmer” concert – a real treat for everyone! Thanks to Ms Humphrey and Mr Burrett for all they are leading at this busy time of year.

We also had fixtures for netball, rugby and basketball.

Next week promises even more excitement. Our Old Georgian Carol Service takes place on Saturday afternoon, and pupils are welcome to join one of our Carol Services at 5.00 pm or 7.00 pm on Sunday. We also look forward to our Boarders’ Christmas Dinner, the House Art competition finals, and of course our Christmas Lunch on Wednesday.

It’s shaping up to be a wonderful end to a busy term – full of activity, learning and festive celebration!



Junior Carol Services: Juniors Rock Around the Flock!

On Sunday, our junior students delivered the most magical, heart-lifting carol services, filling the chapel with music, joy, and a celebratory feel. From a beautifully poised opening of *Once in Royal David’s City*, to the junior band launching into *Troika* with real gusto and flair, the service just kept getting better. The Junior Choir’s touching performance of *It Was a Starry Night* even moved parts of the congregation to tears.

Parents joined in enthusiastically for *O Little Town of Bethlehem*, before we were swept through *While Shepherds Watched*, *The Holly and the Ivy*, and a wonderfully spirited *We Three Kings* from the Junior saxes. The clarinets shone in *The First Noel*, and hot on their heels came the trombonists with a lively rendition of *Drummer Boy*.

And just when we thought the celebration had reached its peak, the Junior Rock Band burst onto the scene with *Step into Christmas*—complete with a special guest appearance from The Rev on vocals and guitar. The finale, a heartfelt rendition of *Christmas Song*, wrapped the whole service in warmth and festive cheer.

Performed twice, the entire event was a true feast for the ears and a powerful reminder of the meaning of Christmas. Everyone left glowing with seasonal spirit.

A huge thank-you to the wonderful Ms Humphrey and Mr Burrett, as well as The Rev, Mr Tucker, and the sixth formers who helped conduct and support the performances. As always, impressive student leadership.

Senior Carol Services this Sunday

We are very much looking forward to welcoming students and families to our Senior Carol Services this Sunday at 5:00pm and 7:00pm. Students should arrive and be seated at least 15 minutes before the service begins to ensure they are able to get a seat. Parents and carers are warmly invited to attend.

In addition, our annual Old Georgians' Carol Service will take place on Saturday at 3:00pm. Any student who attends in uniform will be given a chapel ticket

End of term arrangements

A reminder that the term finishes at 11:00 a.m. on Friday 19th December. Students are expected to travel straight home (or directly to a friend's house) and should not be in Harpenden town centre in school uniform unless traveling through on their way home.

Please could you also encourage your young person to take home all their belongings before the end of term including their PE kit.

Students in Years 7–11 who have not yet met the expectation of attending three Sunday Chapel services this year will be contacted by their Head of House next week. Those students will lose their early-leave privilege and will not be dismissed at 11:00am

Festive Fun in the Library!

The festive fun continued this week as more of our twenty-four beautifully wrapped books in the library Book Advent Calendar were unwrapped. Cecile S (Year 10) was thrilled to open *Keepers of the Lost Cities* (a great fantasy series), particularly as she had requested that the library purchase this series on numerous occasions! Mrs Chalkley opened Dominic Sandbrook's *The First World War* (from the brilliant Adventures in Time series), followed by Hector C (Year 8), who revealed Hunt for the *Golden Scarab* (a Time Keys adventure series by the ever-popular M. G. Leonard) and Olive B-L (Year 7) with Nathanael Lessore's *What Happens Online*. It will be interesting to see whether this proves to be as popular as *King of Nothing* by the same author – currently all 8 library copies of this are out on loan! Lucky Mr Williams offered to open *Factfulness: Ten Reasons We're Wrong About the World - and Why Things Are Better Than You Think* by Hans Rosling (coincidentally Mr Williams had recommended this to Mr Wright the very morning he opened it). The week finished with Emma L (Year 9) opening Sophie Jo's *Red Flags* (a lovely little romance), whilst Mr Ellis discovered the joys of *Liberalism and its Discontents* (perfect wider reading for A Level Politics students). There are plenty more books to be opened next week - the countdown continues!

Christmas Crafts

It's now looking very festive in the Library thanks to all the students who participated in our lunchtime Christmas craft sessions over the last two weeks. Students have enjoyed recycling old magazines into book Christmas trees (what a great way to recycle our old magazines!), decorating them with 3D stars, as well as creating some beautiful hexagonal baubles, which are now hanging on the library Christmas tree. Huge thanks to everyone involved – the Christmas trees and baubles look very effective!



Rhyme and Reason in the Capital: Year 12 Trip to 'Poems of the Decade'

On Tuesday, 32 English Literature A Level students went into London to attend the EMC "Poems of the Decade" conference. It was a fantastic opportunity to hear poets on our syllabus speak about their poems and get a better sense of what it would be like to study English Literature at degree level.

Our students were outstanding throughout - they engaged well with the content and learned loads! The general favourite was Patience Agbabi, pictured with Phoebe from Year 13, whose blend of humour and wisdom made for a fantastic presentation. Thank you to all parents who supported this trip.



A Debating Round-up

It has been a busy half-term for our debaters: with fixtures against Berko, KWS and the Harpenden Schools debate competition.

Our teams have performed brilliantly across the board. We are also getting over 100 students regularly attending Debate Club: showing that the future is bright.

Last week in the chapel, we hosted 'St George's Question Time' which included a panel of some of the leading journalists in the country and a student panellist (Honrick C). This took place in 'Friday 5' with all the sixth form in attendance. Events like these are an amazing showcase for oracy. We would like to thank all the new senior debate captains and leads who worked so hard behind the scenes and presenting to make this showcase event run so smoothly.



Over the last half-term, some of our Year 12 students have attended evening lectures at KCL and UCL on a range of political and economic topics.

Talks have ranged from 'Votes for 16+' to 'wealth tax'. The organisers of the events have commented on the confidence and academic dexterity of our students. They have asked questions to an expert panel in an audience of academics and university students. This exposure to high level academia and super curricular opportunities are so important for university applications and we look forward to providing them with more of these opportunities next term. These include a trip to Balliol College, Oxford and visits from Old Georgians and Oxbridge professors.



Parent Voice Opportunity: Let's talk about AI

Mr Tweeddale, the school's AI Lead, is keen to open a conversation about the role Artificial Intelligence plays in your children's education. He would like to invite a group of parents to join him for a tea/coffee, cake and an informal chat on January 15th at 3:30 p.m. for about 30–45 minutes to share ideas, answer questions, and look at how we can navigate this exciting technology together. If you would like to be one of the 15 parents to join this initial group, please drop him an email at stweeddale@stgeorges.herts.sch.uk We look forward to hearing from you!

Please help up keep everyone safe and well for Christmas

The 48-hour sickness rule is a guideline, mainly for schools, childcare, and food service, stating that anyone with vomiting or diarrhoea must stay home/away until they've been symptom-free for a full 48 hours (two days) to prevent spreading infections like norovirus. This strict policy applies to everyone, regardless of how well they seem otherwise, because germs can linger, and it protects vulnerable people from highly contagious viruses. If someone vomits at school, they usually need to go home and can't return until two days after the last episode.

Key aspects of the rule:

- When it starts: The clock starts after the last bout of sickness or diarrhoea.

- Why it's enforced: To stop the easily spread germs (viruses, bacteria) that cause stomach bugs from circulating in close-contact settings.
- Who it affects: Children in schools/nurseries, staff, and anyone working with open food.
- What to do: Stay home, rest, drink fluids, and avoid spreading germs.
- When to see a doctor: Consult a doctor if symptoms are severe, prolonged (over 2 days for adults, less for babies/young children), or if there are signs of dehydration.

Please do not send children back before the 48-hour period as they will be sent back home!

Please support our foodbank

Christmas collection

Goddard House are busy collecting food items for the local Christmas Foodbank appeal. If you would like to support this, do ask your child to bring donations to the Goddard House office before the end of term. Thank you!

Police Survey for Young People

The local Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) is currently seeking views from residents as they set their next round of local policing priorities.

Officers are keen to hear from young people about the issues that matter most to them, to ensure they are capturing opinions across a wide age range - often lacking in feedback from our younger community.

They are asking parents and guardians to please encourage young people 11+ to take part in [Hertfordshire Constabulary's Local Priority Survey](#) to make their views heard.

Christmas appeal

Help support your food bank this Christmas
In the three weeks leading up to Christmas, the food bank will provide over 1,100 food parcels for local individuals and families facing hardship.

Donate food
Donate an item or two from our shopping list, ensuring we can provide food for people facing hardship in your local community.

Donate money
Scan the QR code to donate. You will help us get food to local families in crisis, cover the costs of distributing food, and develop sustainable community projects that tackle the root causes of hunger.

Shopping list

- Tinned meat/fish
- Tinned veg/fruit
- Cooking sauces
- Coffee
- Milk (UHT)
- Cereals
- Fruit juice (long-life)
- Tinned pudding
- Jam
- Tea bags

www.stalbansdistrict.foodbank.org.uk

Christmas in the Maths Club

The Lower School Maths Club has been busy transforming the Maths Department into a winter wonderland as we gear up for Christmas!

Our year 7 and 8 mathematicians have been exploring the fascinating world of fractals, learning how complex patterns can be built from simple repeating shapes.

We investigated classic examples such as the Sierpinski Triangle and the Koch Snowflake, uncovering the beauty of infinite detail. The students then worked together brilliantly, showcasing their problem-solving skills, to build a fractal Christmas tree using interconnected Sierpinski Tetrahedrons.





Save the Date — Next PSA Meeting, 19 January

Our next PSA meeting will be held on **Monday, 19 January 2026 at 8.00pm**. All parents and caregivers are warmly invited to join us.

It's a great chance to hear updates, share ideas, and get involved in upcoming events. Whether you're a regular or joining for the first time, we'd love to see you there.

Please pop the date in your diary — everyone is welcome!

Request for lidded plastic containers

As the festive season approaches, if you have any spare lidded plastic containers (sweet tubs are ideal) it would be appreciated if they could be passed on to the Food Department for use as spare containers. The staff would be very grateful. Please drop them off at Goddard Reception. Thank you in advance.

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Monday-Friday 5pm-10pm

Saturday 9am-5:30pm

Sunday 9am-10pm

 sportshall@stgeorges.herts.sch.uk

 01582 716229

 St George's Sports Centre,
Sun Ln, Harpenden AL5 4TD



Everyone's Welcome!

Free Community Carol Singing

Christmas Eve 6pm – 7pm

Gates open at 5.30pm

Harpenden Common, beside the Harpenden Arms



**CAROLS
ON THE
COMMON**

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Supporting Our Community

www.theharpendentrust.org.uk