**Broxbourne’s World Day of Prayer Service**

Broxbourne Primary attended a ‘World Day of Prayer’ church service on 6 March. The same service was held in over 170 countries, in halls, schools, churches, prisons and open spaces, forming a 36-hour wave of prayer for Zimbabwe throughout the world. Children from Year 5 read a letter they had received from Zimbabwe during the service. They read with heartfelt meaning for the plight that Zimbabweans find themselves in today. Currently the country is enduring a debilitating drought, and are still experiencing political and domestic violence, huge unemployment, and poverty. As those attending the service heard about the Zimbabweans’ situation, they were asked to join with them and: “Rise! Take our mats of the past and walk on paths of love, peace and reconciliation.”

The children also sang, ‘Make me a channel of your peace’. Several adults present said that the contribution made by the children was a highlight of the service. They sang beautifully and the World Day of Prayer committee thanked them for giving such a ‘lift’ to the service.

This year the women of Zimbabwe have challenged people to make their own commitments to Love, Peace and Reconciliation, and to take these commitments into their communities. The children have ‘picked up their mats’ and have formed the B4C (Broxbourne Committed Community Clean-up Crew), committing to a weekly litter pick and recycle in the surrounding local area.

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**Holywell School’s Artwork Selected for National Exhibition**

As part of their Remembrance Day reflections, the Art Department at Holywell School, Cranfield created a moving installation with their Year 8 Art Option Group - a memorial flame made up of a myriad of burnt matches. Written around the flame was a bible verse from Isaiah: ‘For those who live in a land of darkness, a light will shine.’ Faith, the student who wrote the verse, commented that she felt a great responsibility writing the words, as they meant so much to the survivors and their relatives.

The artwork was submitted as an entry in the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust’s ‘75 Flames’ competition. Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) 2020 marks 75 years since the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau. The theme for this year was ‘Stand Together’. The artwork was one of 75 memorial flames chosen to represent each year since the liberation of Auschwitz. These were displayed at an exhibition shown at the UK Ceremony for Holocaust Memorial Day in London on 27 January 2020. The 75 artworks are going on tour to various galleries around the UK. The HMD project administrator commented: “On a personal note, I found Holywell’s flame particularly moving. It helps make the scale of the Holocaust more comprehensible and I was touched by your school’s act of remembrance.”

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**Carlton Primary’s Spirituality Day**

Everyone at Carlton Primary worked hard to plan and execute this year’s Spirituality Day, a day of well-being, mindfulness and Christian reflection supported fully by their local church community.

The day was planned by the school’s Collective Worship leaders, Revd Peter, Revd Lynne and Headteacher Mrs Highton. The aims of the day were to: improve the staff and children’s understanding of God and Christianity; to experience God in nature and creativity; and to enable everyone to express their feelings and beliefs in different ways.

A range of activities was organised to enable this, including making a ‘Living Cross’ from natural and man-made materials, investigating symbols in the Christian faith, and 3 different mindfulness workshops.

The school were also thrilled that the Bishop of Bedford spent the day with them. The children asked him a wide range of questions and came away from his workshop with a much deeper understanding of the role of a Bishop and of the Christian faith.

It was a calming, uplifting and inspiring day for all involved.
All Saints Academy Reflect on the Holocaust

As part of ‘God in this Place’, Lent 2020, during class-based learning, the children of Cockernhoe School have enjoyed thinking about their dreams for a better world. The children decided that they should be mindful of God and what He has provided for them, as well as what expectations He may have for them to look after the world. They thought that the world would be a better place with world peace and knowing God is in everything they do. The children decorated stones with their thoughts and reflections. They also thought about what they would write on the ‘last piece of paper in the world’. One Year 6 pupil’s message was particularly moving:

‘Burn forests burn the trees… there shall be no more. Take the water from the earth… this Holy piece that you hold… let it rest in your palm, to be known as the last piece of paper. Never again will be one like this. Never again will be one like this. Killed, our beloved nature whom once roamed the earth. Gone… gone, this last resemblance of nature is resting in your hand… We put blames on other people but it is we who are to blame.’

Tring School’s Holocaust Memorial Flame

In the lead up to Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 January 2020, tutors at Tring School discussed genocide and the Nazi persecution with their tutor groups. Many questions and thoughts surrounding the reasons why Jews were targeted and the importance of commemorating Holocaust Memorial Day were raised. The groups summarised their conversations into one word on a flame. All 62 were put together to create one cohesive flame display that represents solidarity and ‘standing together.’

St John’s Communion Table

Early in January, St John’s Primary, Digswell, learnt that Harpenden High Street Methodist Church (HMC) were seeking a new home for a communion table they no longer need. It was made by master carpenter Richard Richardson of Prinknash Abbey. Headteacher Simon Horleston wrote to ask if the church would consider giving it to the school, as they currently used a gym bench as a communion table.

HMC agreed to donate the communion table to St John’s and a special service took place to bless this most generous gift. Revd Mark Hammond from HMC along with guests from all the churches involved were in attendance. It was a pleasure to hear Revd Mark explain to the children the history of the altar table as well as its importance. The HMC Leadership Team were encouraged that the table would play such a significant role in the Christian lives of the many children that will pass through school in the years to come.

‘God in this Place’ at Cockernhoe

As part of ‘God in this Place’, Lent 2020, during class-based learning, the children of Cockernhoe School have enjoyed thinking about their dreams for a better world. The children decided that they should be mindful of God and what He has provided for them, as well as what expectations He may have for them to look after the world. They thought that the world would be a better place with world peace and knowing God is in everything they do. The children decorated stones with their thoughts and reflections. They also thought about what they would write on the ‘last piece of paper in the world’. One Year 6 pupil’s message was particularly moving:

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Archdeacon Janet Visits Edwinstree

This year during Lent, Edwinstree Middle School have been thinking about ‘God in this place’ exploring the story of Jacob and how God travelled with him on his journey. They learnt that even when Jacob made mistakes, God was by his side. To support them in this exploration, the school received a visit from Archdeacon Janet. The Archdeacon held a special Collective Worship and everyone marvelled at her ability to create a spiritual and peaceful atmosphere throughout the school.

She also held a Q & A session, giving students the opportunity to ask her a variety of questions about her life, how she changed her career from teaching to ordination and how her life’s journey had altered.

Australia Day at Weston Primary

The Reception & Nursery Class at Weston Primary spent the week leading up to Australia Day learning all about Australia, in particular its native animals and how they were affected by the bush fires.

The children designed their own aboriginal artwork based on the koala, using various tools including straws, doweling, pencil ends and paintbrush ends. They finished the week by wearing colours from the Australian flag and bringing a pound to donate to the World Wildlife Fund Koala Protector Appeal. Parents joined the class later in the day to purchase artwork and cakes made in class for a small donation.
NEWS FROM OUR SCHOOLS

World Book Day!

**St Ippolyts Primary**
The children and staff of St Ippolyts Primary always go above and beyond for World Book Day, and 2020 was no exception, with some incredible costumes and imaginative book choices. In the annual parade, each child goes on stage to act out their chosen character. The overwhelming favourite this year was one of the school’s Year 6 boys who announced “I am Jesus, from the greatest book ever to be written”; he then proceeded to read from John 13, from where the school’s vision originates. Top marks!

**St Augustine's Academy, Dunstable**
It was great to see the Bible represented at St Augustine’s Academy on World Book Day. Every year, the school participates in this event, along with others across the country. They always enjoy seeing the wonderful costumes that children and staff come to school in, but this year, there was one costume that wowed them all: the amazing ‘Joseph’s Coat of Many Colours’ was actually created by stitching together ties bought from charity shops. As you can imagine, the task was a real labour of love but the result was truly special.

**Godly Play at Park Street Primary**
Park Street Primary were delighted to welcome Revd John Fellows to lead a staff Inset day and pupil workshops on ‘Godly Play’. He demonstrated how it is an exciting, creative way of understanding, sharing and reflecting on Christian stories. During the afternoon, John shared the story of Creation with Reception class and The Lost Sheep with Year 6, using special props and materials. The children were given the opportunity to respond to ‘wondering questions’ before making a personal response to the story.

Park Street look forward to buying their own ‘Godly Play’ resources, funded by the Board of Education’s ‘Community Life Fund’, to develop their teaching of Bible stories in Collective Worship and as part of the RE curriculum.

**Paul Sturgess visits St Helen’s**
St Helen’s Primary, Wheathampstead, recently received a visit from basketball player Paul Sturgess. He started with an inspiring talk to the whole school about the discrimination and challenges he has faced because of his size. He then went on to talk to the children about how he had used his height to his advantage and the exciting opportunities his basketball career had afforded him. All pupils then went on to have basketball workshops with Paul.

Paul’s visit linked well to the school’s vision statement: ‘We work together to understand, show and share God’s love. Adults and children act with honesty and kindness, appreciate each other’s differences and love their neighbours. We strive to approach all learning with a positive attitude, a sense of collaboration and a desire to achieve.’

**St Giles’ Become ‘Classtronauts’**
Pupils at St Giles’ Primary, South Mymms became near-space adventurers after a successful test launch of a weather balloon at the school last term. Working with Gary and Ed from Schools in Space, the ‘classtronauts’ were on a mission to launch a video camera into near space to capture views of the UK from 34,000 meters. The KS2 aligned programme enabled pupils to define their mission, explore the physics behind buoyancy and balloons, calculate payload and gas requirements and research the geography of the UK to ensure a successful launch and recovery.

The young mission-controllers found out whether their efforts proved successful when Gary and Ed returned to the classroom with footage of the balloon’s release and ascent skywards, capturing the British Isles and the majesty of space.

**Northaw’s Spiritual Garden**
In the Autumn Term, children at Northaw Primary were invited to design a Spiritual Garden. Having previously secured some funding, the school appointed a local gardening company to turn the ideas into reality. In November, Archdeacon Janet visited the school to bless and officially open the garden - a special place where children and staff can sit to enjoy some peace and tranquillity.

As the warmer weather arrives, they hope some additional planting will enrich the space and attract the butterflies and bees too!
Focus on Governance

Key governance and virtual meetings: At this difficult time, you will need to ensure that the governing board continues to function effectively to make essential decisions. You will also need to decide which matters can be put on hold for the time being. The National Governance Association (NGA) has provided advice on these and related matters such as holding Virtual Governors’ Meetings. See the following link, which is being updated with new information as needed: www.nga.org.uk/Knowledge-Centre/Executive-leaders-and-the-governing-boards/The-Coronavirus-Information-for-governing-boards-M.aspx

Foundation governor appointments: The local practicalities of foundation governor appointments may be more difficult at this time. To avoid undue delay in completing appointments, please do get in touch with us if we can help. Whilst all statutory and safeguarding requirements must still be met, we can where necessary find ways of easing the practicalities, such as accepting emails instead of physical signatures.

As always, for any other governance advice specific to church schools, please don’t hesitate to contact us.

Belinda Copson
Governance Officer

An Easter Reflection

As I write this I am, like many, adjusting to the reality of a socially distanced life complete with home working, video conferencing and online team interaction. My daily routine, so long established, has been replaced with something new. I am having to consciously re-create my day: how I use my time, how I use the different spaces in my house and what I do in my time away from work. Initially this was disorientating; it seemed that I wasn’t experiencing life in all its fullness and proved a constant reminder of my own human vulnerability.

However, as the days have progressed, there has come a recognition that although the awareness of my own vulnerability can bring with it fear and anxiety, it can also bring joy and thankfulness as I witness and receive care, compassion and love from others, including those who are not known to me. Each new day is indeed a new creation, something to rejoice in and celebrate. It is a gift.

Whenever I read morning prayer, I am always struck by the following passage:

As we rejoice in the gift of this new day,
so may the light of your presence, O God,
set our hearts on fire with love for you;
now and for ever. Amen.

May each day, in this present time, be a gift to you and may our hearts, day by day, be set on fire with love for our Risen Lord, who embraced our vulnerability and through His death and resurrection brings us new life, life in all its fullness.

David Morton
Director of Education

Headteacher Changes

A warm welcome to our new substantive headteachers and heads of school this term: Lynne Osborne, St Mary’s Primary, Northcurch; Sarah Bush, Headteacher of Christopher Reeves, Podington and Executive Headteacher of the Chellington Federation.

Our thanks and best wishes for the future accompany those to whom we will say goodbye this Easter: Sue Wilcox, Dewhurst St Mary’s Primary and Charis Geoghegan, Little Gaddesden Primary.

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

We wish you all a blessed Easter.

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

Distinctively Christian ● Community Focussed ● Serving the Common Good

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