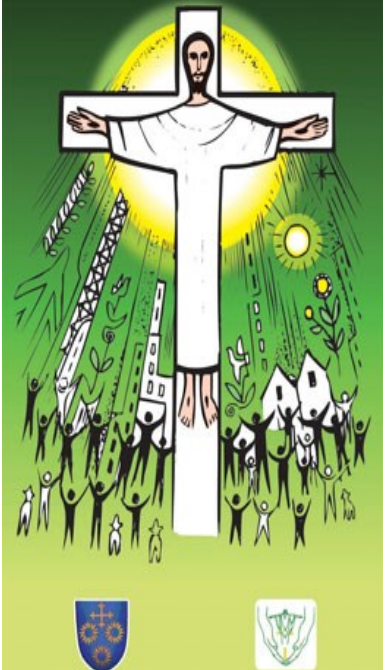




19th December 2025



Holy Cross
Catholic Primary Academy



GOSPEL VALUE: Our Gospel Value for the first week back is Simplicity. Please reflect on this at home with your child.

Weekly Reflection



The Fourth Advent Candle is Love. Love is one of our Gospel values and we have been surrounded by love this week as we enjoyed sharing the magic of this special time of preparation. The love of Jesus shines through everyone in our Holy Cross family in the kindness and care that we show to each other and to people beyond our school.

It has been a very long and busy term and I would like to sincerely thank our families for all of the support that you have given us. It has been wonderful to see the children grow and flourish in so many ways. On behalf of all of the governors and staff of Holy Cross Primary, I would like to wish all of you a very merry and peaceful Christmas and Happy New Year.

I look forward to seeing everyone on the Monday 5th January 2025 for the Spring Term.

Mrs Kerrell
Headteacher

Year 2 and 3 Carol Concerts

We were treated to exceptional Carol Concerts this week from our Year 2 and Year 3 children. They put every ounce of enthusiasm into their performances, singing with absolute Joy! It was very impressive that they had memorised all of their lines and knew so many Carols...Wow! I was incredibly proud of the children and delighted that they showed so much confidence and tried their very best. Sincere thanks to all of the Year 2 and Year 3 staff for their hard work in preparing the children and helping them to make a lasting memory.

Cold Weather

Please make sure that your child is ready for cold weather when we return to school in the new year. Hats, scarves and gloves are important so that the children can stay extra warm when they are outside. Please label everything.

Giving Tree

Thank you so much to everyone who gave to the Giving Tree. We were able to donate wonderful gifts to Manor Hatch, Abbott Care Home, White Trees Children's home and a women's refuge. They were all so grateful for the gifts.

Holy Cross and Harlow Partnership Church Christmas Mass Services

The Nativity of the Lord

Christmas Eve

Christmas Day

Venue

Solem Vigil Mass

Solem Night Mass

Solem Day Mass

Holy Cross

17:30 Children's
Mass

22:00 Carols
23:00 Mass

11:00

The Assumption of Our

17:00

22:00

10:00

17:45 Children's
Mass

23:30 Polish

10:30 - 12:15 Polish

22:30

08:30



The Words of Pope Leo XIV

The birth of the Prince of Peace (Is 9:6) reveals to us the true meaning of the word #Peace, which is not only an absence of war, but a friendship among peoples founded on justice. All of us desire this peace for nations wounded by conflict. Yet, let us remember that concord and respect begin with our daily relationships. #Christmas

A FUN-FILLED SING-ALONG FESTIVE SHOW



MEET
FATHER
CHRISTMAS
EVERY CHILD
RECEIVES
A GIFT



THE GREAT CHRISTMAS SNOW PATROL

BY KEVIN JAMES

6th-24th December 2025



HARLOW PLAYHOUSE
CREATE • ENJOY • FOR ALL

Free bursary places available via the Essex ActivAte HAF programme

Kindly funded by ECC, Active Essex and the Department for Education

Please contact the Box Office on 01279 431945 to use your 16-digit code



"...A GREAT INTRODUCTION TO THE THEATRE FOR LITTLE ONES..."

- HAVE A NICE PLAY

The Winter Essex ActivAte (HAF) programme, funded by the Department for Education, offers free holiday activity places for children eligible for Income-Related Free School Meals (FSM). Families will receive a voucher via email from Holiday Activities, which includes a booking link for up to 8 sessions during the winter holidays.

A special winter treat for the family.

#HAF2025 #EssexActivAte

The family bundle will include

4 tickets

Pizza and a drink,

A gift from Santa.

At least one of the children must be of reception / year 1 age, and eligible for income related free school meals.

Places are limited. Families can contact The Harlow Playhouse box office using their unique voucher code, to book their free tickets.

Harlow Playhouse box office. 01279 431945

ATTENDANCE MATTERS

Congratulations to this week's winners of the KS1 Attendance Award, Squirrels achieving 95% attendance. The winners of this week's KS2 Attendance Award are Foxes attaining 98% attendance. Well done!

Please ensure you are sending your child into school everyday, unless they are not well enough to attend. Attending school is so important and makes a huge difference to your child's learning. The gates open at **8:30am** until **8.55am**.

It is essential you notify us of your child's absence by 9am either by telephone or using the Arbor report absence option on every day of absence. We need full details of why your child is unable to attend school. We are frequently having to contact parents, to find out why their child is absent from school. If you do not notify us of the reason for your child's absence it may not be authorised.

Absences over 3 days require supporting medical evidence, for the additional absence to be authorised. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, antibiotics and medical appointments.

Parents of children below attendance targets will be invited in for a meeting with the Educational Welfare Officer.

Your Child's Attendance

You can view your child's individual attendance on the Arbor app and Arbor parent portal. The chart below shows you the approximate hours of education lost, so far this year.

Butterflies	93%
Ladybirds	90%
Dragonflies	92%
Grasshoppers	92%
Hedgehogs	90%
Squirrels	95%
Badgers	97%
Foxes	98%
Hares	88%
Rabbits	89%
Kingfishers	97%
Robins	97%
Eagles	92%
Owls	92%

September – Christmas Break			
Percentage Attendance	Hours of education lost	Weeks missed at school	School days missed
100%	0	0	0
97%	10	0	2
95%	17.5	0	3.5
90%	35	1wk 2dys	7
86%	50	2wks	10
80%	70	2wks 4dys	14
75%	87.5	3wks 2.5dys	17.5
70%	105	4wks 1dy	21
60%	140	5wks 3dys	28
50%	175	7wks	35



Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 21st December 2025
 The Fourth Sunday of Advent – Matthew 1:18-24

Relax

Make the Sign of the Cross † and remain still for a minute of settling silence. Then read the Gospel — preferably aloud and slowly — paying attention to any words that stand out to you.



Read This Sunday's Gospel : EMMANUEL



This is how Jesus Christ came to be born. His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph; but before they came to live together she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a man of honour and wanting to spare her publicity, decided to divorce her informally. He had made up his mind to do this when the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, and said, 'Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because she has conceived what is in her by the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son and you must name him Jesus, because he is the one who is to save his people from their sins.' Now all this took place to fulfil the words spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and they will call him Emmanuel", a name which means 'God-is-with-us'. When Joseph woke up he did what the angel of the Lord had told him to do: he took his wife to his home.

Did any words or phrases stand out to you in the Gospel? If so, take a few moments to meditate on them.

Reflect

Now read the Gospel again and consider what the Lord might be saying to you, or asking of you, through it. Then continue by reading Fr Henry Wansbrough's reflection...



Matthew begins his Gospel about the birth of Jesus with a long and elaborately formal genealogy of Joseph. But Jesus is the son of Mary, not of Joseph! The whole point of this story is that Joseph is not the genealogical father of Jesus, but adopts Jesus into his line, the line of King David. At first Joseph is hesitant to do so, presumably thinking that he is unworthy to acknowledge the child as his own, and unworthy to bond with Mary who is with child by the Holy Spirit. But the angel insists that only Joseph can do this job ('Do not be afraid,' he says). As soon as the child is born, he is given the name Jesus, and is given it by Joseph. It is the father's prerogative to name a son, and by so doing Joseph takes the child as his own. We hear little more of Joseph, but what a joy it must have been to have Jesus as a son! What a relationship there must have been! What responsibility too! When Jesus calls God his 'Father', he is using something of the concept of 'father' which must have been formed in his mind by his adoptive father, Joseph, the perfect ideal of the loving parent.

Why is it important that Jesus should be adopted into David's line? What sort of father would Joseph have been, and what can we learn from him?

Dom Henry Wansbrough OSB

Rest

Now call to mind the Lord's love for you, remembering that through this scripture the Lord is truly present. Then silently and prayerfully listen for God's voice and rest in God's love.



Respond & Request

Thank God for any insight you may have received, and respond by asking the Holy Spirit to bless you with a spiritual gift or help you to grow in a particular fruit of the Spirit.
You might pray for wisdom, courage, faithfulness, self-control, patience, generosity, joy, kindness, love, peace, faith, chastity - or another grace - to help you live out your faith this week.



Remember

This Wednesday's word for our families is **MARY**
 (To see the Family Version, please visit: wednesdayword.org)



As you pray for your loved ones, please remember to pray for the Church and for the families connected to our schools.

St Joseph, Patron Saint of Families and Protector of the Church, pray for us. Mary, Star of Evangelisation, pray for us. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.



First Reading: *The Virgin is with Child*



Isaiah 7:10-14

The Lord spoke to Ahaz and said, 'Ask the Lord your God for a sign for yourself coming either from the depths of Sheol or from the heights above.' 'No,' Ahaz answered, 'I will not put the Lord to the test.' Then Isaiah said: 'Listen now, House of David: are you not satisfied with trying the patience of men without trying the patience of my God, too? The Lord himself, therefore, will give you a sign. It is this: the maiden is with child and will soon give birth to a son whom she will call Emmanuel, a name which means "God-is-with-us".'

The readings of the last Sunday of Advent always focus on Mary, as she waits for her child to be born. The prophecy in this first reading was given in 736 BC, when King Ahaz of Judah was about to be forced into an alliance, in a vain attempt to oppose the

crushing military power of Assyria. Isaiah goes to him and warns him that the alliance would be fatal; he had better trust in the Lord. Isaiah promises a sign, which Ahaz refuses. He does not want to be convinced! What is this sign? The original Hebrew reads, 'A girl is with child and will bear a son', indicating that within a few months the threat will vanish and Jerusalem will be convinced that God is on their side – hence the boy will be called Emmanuel, in relieved gratitude. But the Greek translation of the Hebrew, made some 200 years before the birth of Jesus, translates 'The virgin is with child', which the evangelist Matthew sees as a prophecy of the birth of Jesus from the virgin Mary. The symbolic name Emmanuel then becomes a promise of the presence of God in the world at our side.

Why do you think King Ahaz was reluctant to ask God for a sign? Do you believe that God still gives signs today?



Second Reading: *The Son of God in Power*



Romans 1:1-7

From Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus who has been called to be an apostle, and specially chosen to preach the Good News that God promised long ago through his prophets in the scriptures. This news is about the Son of God, who, according to the human nature he took, was a descendant of David: it is about Jesus Christ our Lord who, in the order of the spirit, the spirit of holiness that was in him, was proclaimed Son of God in all his power through his resurrection from the dead. Through him we received grace and our apostolic mission to preach the obedience of faith to all pagan nations in honour of his name. You are one of these nations, and by his call belong to Jesus Christ. To you all, then, who are God's beloved in Rome, called to be saints, may God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ send grace and peace.

This reading gives us the beginning of the great Letter to the Romans, in which Paul lays out the saving work of Christ. After proclaiming his apostolic office, Paul presents Jesus to us.

In his introductions to the letters, Paul always briefly mentions or hints at the subject with which he is especially concerned in the letter. So here it is the dual aspect of Christ. If he were not both wholly human and Son of God, then Jesus' supreme act of obedience on the Cross would not have saved us. And yet, it is by his resurrection that he lifts his followers to perfection in the divine life, for we are baptized into his death and rise in his resurrection. According to his human nature he is a descendant of David, wholly human. At the same time he is Son of God in power through his resurrection from the dead. Paul does not, of course, suggest that before the resurrection Jesus was not Son of God, but in some way the resurrection manifested Jesus' full power as Son of God. The Incarnation (God becoming flesh) is the basis of all the theology of Salvation (humanity sharing fully in the divine life).

After describing himself, St Paul goes on to give a brief description of Jesus' life. How would you briefly describe Jesus' life? How would you describe your own Christian mission?

“Both wholly human and Son of God.”

The Wednesday Word: Connecting Home, School and Parish through the Word of God

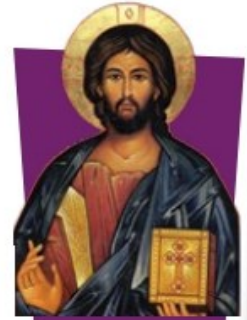
Wednesday
10th December

Good News for Families
TOGETHER TIME



1 Enjoy reading this Sunday's Gospel

While John the Baptist was in prison, he heard what Christ was doing and he sent some of his followers to ask Christ, "Are you the one sent by God, or do we have to wait for someone else?" Jesus answered, "Go back and tell John what you hear and see: the blind see again, and the lame walk, lepers are cured, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised to life. The Good News is being announced to the poor; and happy are those who do not lose faith in me." As the messengers were leaving, Jesus began to talk to the people about John: "He is the one of whom scripture says: 'Look, I am going to send my messenger before you; he will prepare your way before you'. I tell you solemnly, of all the children born of women, one greater than John the Baptist has never been seen; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he is.



From the Gospel of Sunday 14th December 2025 Matthew 11:2-11 (the 3rd Sunday of Advent, Year A)

Which words stood out for you in this Gospel, and why? What does the picture make you think about? Now enjoy exploring this Wednesday's word, which is **CHRIST**.



2

Wednesday's Word

CHRIST



"Gaze upon Christ, consider him, contemplate him and desire to imitate him" *St Clare of Assisi*

What did John send some of his followers to ask Jesus? In this Sunday's Gospel, John the Baptist had heard about Jesus Christ's miracles and all the other wonderful things that he was doing. Christ was offering people forgiveness and healing, both physical and spiritual. Forgiving and healing was his task all those years ago and, if we put our trust in him, this is what he can do for us even today. Ask your child what they think the word 'Christ' means (parent help: the word 'Christ' means 'the anointed one', the one who is sent to save the world). It may help your child if you share something that you know and like about Christ.

"For those who love, nothing is too difficult, especially when it is done for the love of Jesus Christ." *St Ignatius of Loyola*

Jesus Christ came to draw everyone into his love - to joyfully share in God's own life. How can we live and love more like Christ as we journey through Advent? Perhaps we can: always try to be fair, honest, generous and ready to go out of our way to help anyone who is in need; as a family, resolve to support a local or national good cause in the coming new year; make a special effort to let other family members know how much we love them. Find out more about Jesus Christ in church this Sunday. All are warmly invited.

3

Dear Lord Jesus **Christ**, please help us to be open to your love and healing and to grow in faith as we celebrate your birth this **Christ**mas. Amen.

WEDNESDAY WORDSEARCH

SMARTSEARCHERS FIND THESE EIGHT WORDS EITHER **ACROSS** OR **DOWN**

- JOHN**
- PRISON**
- SENT**
- FOLLOWERS**
- CHRIST**
- HEALING**
- GOOD**
- NEWS**

SUPERSEARCHERS FIND THE WORDS **BACKWARDS** OR **DIAGONALLY**

N	G	O	O	D	Q	F	Y	X	E	Q	Z
O	N	W	K	A	H	O	S	N	T	D	Y
S	E	V	Z	K	E	L	H	E	H	R	J
I	W	N	E	S	A	L	A	P	N	O	J
R	S	Y	W	B	L	O	U	R	I	T	J
P	R	E	I	U	I	W	O	I	J	D	Y
V	N	M	A	W	N	E	H	S	J	S	D
H	K	D	O	O	G	R	C	O	O	S	Z
C	H	R	I	S	T	S	N	N	H	F	Z
S	R	E	W	O	L	L	O	F	N	Q	U
E	M	I	T	S	I	R	H	C	O	X	V
S	E	N	T	Z	G	N	I	L	A	E	H

Cross out the letters **u f b** in the 4 jumbled words to find 4 real words.

huebartd mitrabclues Jothunb buwats
 While _____ the Baptist _____ in prison,
 he _____ about Christ's _____.

This Sunday - the third Sunday of Advent - is known as Gaudete Sunday and we light the pink candle on our advent wreath. The word 'Gaudete' in Latin means Rejoice!'. We rejoice that Christ is coming.

Happy Birthday this week to...

William, Daniel, Malachi, Felicity, Vivienne,
Zakary, Arthur, Yohanna-Nicole, Cristina & Jan

Happy Birthday in the Christmas holiday to...

Eddie, Adaora, Keaton, Resemiah, Salem, Holly, Adam,
Nicholas, Emilia, Zuzanna, Lola, Olivia & Elijah



*WISHING ALL OF OUR
HOLY CROSS FAMILY
A BLESSED CHRISTMAS*



*JOY
LOVE
HOPE
PEACE*

Menu week 1

Diary Dates

Monday 5th January

Tuesday 6th January

Wednesday 7th January

Thursday 8th January

Friday 9th January

Epiphany Mass 9:15

Celebration assembly 2:15 pm

All clubs and boosters are finished, with the exception of those listed above

House Points

Congratulations to the winning
house this week, St Patrick's

Wishing everyone a lovely weekend.

Mrs A Kerrell

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mrs A Kerrell'.



JUBILEE 2025
PILGRIMS OF HOPE