



**St Mary's Catholic Primary School**

Coronation Crescent, Madeley, Telford, Shropshire, TF7 5EJ

Telephone: 01952 388255

Fax: 01952 388244

E-mail: [a3357@telford.gov.uk](mailto:a3357@telford.gov.uk)

<http://stmarysmadeley.taw.org.uk>

Headteacher: Samantha Griffiths

Assistant Headteacher: Helen Lambie

School Business Manager: Nicola Pryce

## St Mary's Catholic Primary School Newsletter

Friday 15<sup>th</sup> December

**Glory to God in the Highest! May the blessings of God's special gifts be yours this Christmas and in the New Year.**



## Voucher Donations

The cost of living has spiralled, and energy costs are being raised again next year. If any of our families would like to support another family in school, please purchase vouchers from local supermarkets. We will give them to school families who will benefit from them. This will be carried-out sensitively and anonymously. Thank you in advance for your care and generosity at what can be, a difficult time of the year for many people in our community.

### The Christmas Story

*by Leanne Guenther*

Once upon a time,  
A long, long time ago.  
Begins the story of a baby,  
That most of you should know.



His daddy's name was Joseph,  
And Mary was His mom,  
This babe was very special  
He was God's only Son.

Some angels came from heaven,  
And they began to sing.  
To the shepherds in the fields below,  
"Glad tidings do we bring!"

A bright star lit the heavens,  
To light the magi's way,  
To the baby in the manger  
Who was born on Christmas day.

And all who gathered round Him,  
Rejoiced and praised His birth.  
For the babe, the King, named Jesus,  
Is our Saviour here on earth!

## Last Day and First Day of School

The children's last day of school this year, will be Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> December. They return on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

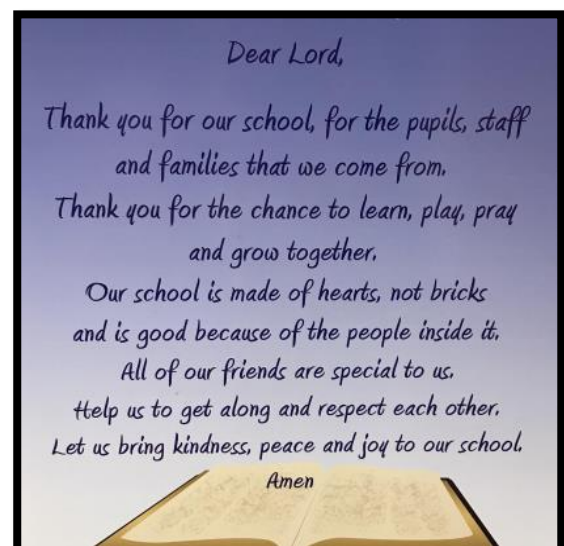


### Safeguarding

If you are sending a relative or a friend to collect your child, you must inform the office prior to them arriving at school please. We cannot and will not hand a child over to an unknown person, even if they are known to the child unless we have permission. Permission will need to be sought and the person collecting will need to wait whilst we do this. This way of working is to protect the children in our care.

### Last week of term

During the last week of term children can wear their own clothes every day. They must wear their trainers though as they will continue to do PE. On various days, classes will be having their own little Christmas parties. All food, refreshments, and prizes will be supplied by school.



## Afterschool Clubs

Don't forget that there are no clubs during the first two weeks back. A letter will go out regarding our afterschool offer on our return in January.



### Catholic Christmas Stories: Which part is your favourite and why?

*Catholic Christmas stories and scripture carry a special meaning to all of the faithful. Our seminarians were generous enough to share a few of their favorite stories and the impact these stories have had on their faith and lives.*

*"My favourite Christmas story is about how Mary and Joseph were trying to find a place to stay in Bethlehem but there was no room for them until they were eventually given a manger to have their child, Jesus, be born in.*

*When I was a kid, I watched these cartoon bible stories, which included the story of the birth of Jesus. As I watched them, I could feel the sense of desperation that Mary and Joseph had in finding a place to stay in. And then the gratitude and relief that they experience once they find a place in a simple manger where the most important birth of all was going to happen. This story helps remind me of the importance of trusting and hoping in God that He will always take care of us and give us more than we need or ask for."*

— Br. Jay-Ar San Juan, OMV

*"My favourite Christmas story is Caryl Houselander's [The Reed of God](#). The book reveals Mary to be more real as a sister and a friend than the typical Christmas displays. I read the book yearly."*

— Deacon Jonas Verdeflor, OMV



*"My favourite Christmas story is St. Joseph's role. It shows the character of St. Joseph being a God fearing man and his willingness to participate in God's loving plan in his life."*

— Miggo Roque, OMV Postulant



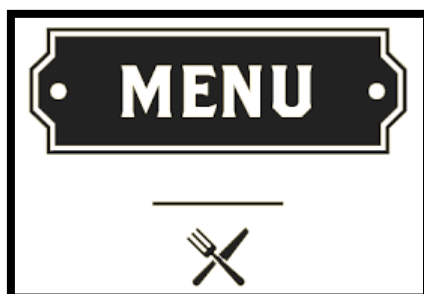
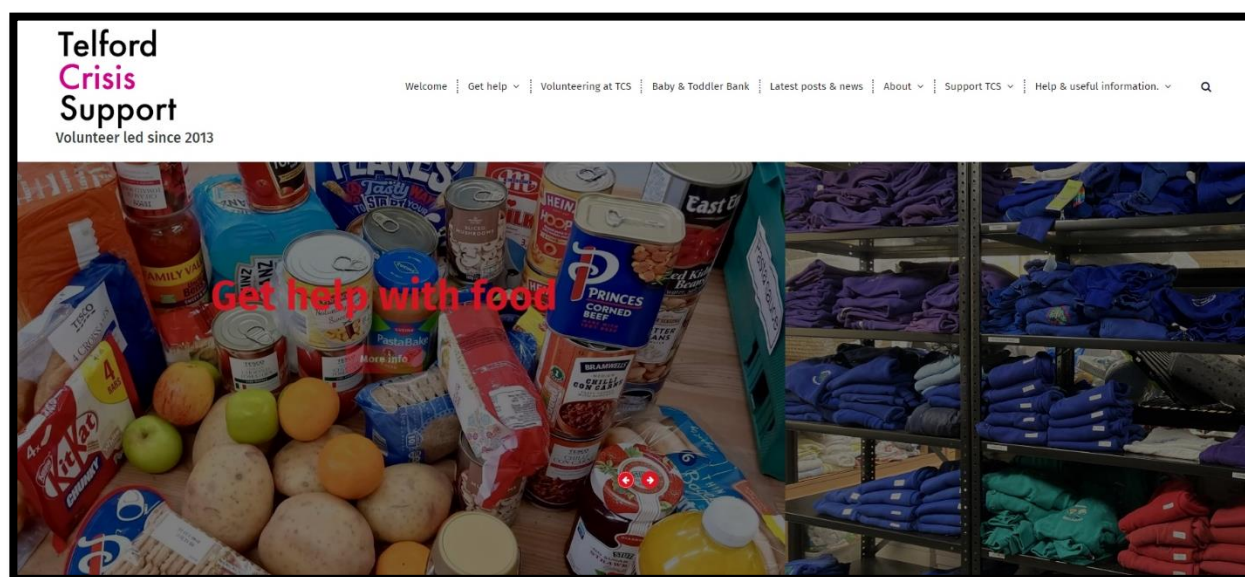
*"My favourite part of the Christmas story is the poverty in which Jesus was born. The stable in which Jesus was born was likely dirty, and smelly, and entirely unfitting for a king. A few years ago right at Christmas I was in a place of desolation, and felt like my heart was just like that stable. But after receiving Communion, the Infant Jesus settled into my heart and made me understand he was glad to be there, just like he was glad to be born in a stable. Dorothy Day said, 'I'm so glad that Jesus was born in a stable. Because my soul is so much like a stable. It is poor and in unsatisfactory condition because of guilt, falsehoods, inadequacies and sin. Yet I believe that if Jesus can be born in a stable, maybe he can also be born in me.' That was the grace I received in that Communion, and it's continued to be a source of hope and strength for me."*

— Deacon Leland Thorpe, OMV

## Support

If you are in need of support with food, baby and toddler supplies, uniform, and energy costs, contact Telford Crisis Support.

Call them on: **01952 586 646**



Our school's menu can be viewed here:

[https://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/388/st\\_marys\\_primary\\_school\\_menu](https://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/388/st_marys_primary_school_menu)



The following information can be found on the MIND website:

### [Why Christmas is hard - Mind](#)

Why Christmas can be a hard time

Christmas can be difficult for anyone, at any point in their life.

You might be struggling this year for the first time. Or you may have found Christmas difficult in the past, and you're dreading it again this year.

You may also enjoy Christmas, but not be able to celebrate it how you'd like to. Or you might find some parts enjoyable, but other parts stressful.

### Money worries

Christmas can be very expensive. And worrying about money can have a big impact on our mental health. Mental health problems can also make it harder to earn or manage money.

You may be worried about:

- Not having enough money or being in debt. See our pages on [money and mental health](#) for information and tips which may help.
- Worrying about how you're going to afford Christmas, as well as the **cost of living** in general. Citizens Advice has more information on [how to get help with the cost of living](#).
- Coping with the timings of payments, benefits or wages over bank holidays.
- Things being closed when you need them. For example, food banks and other support services might be closed on public holidays. Our page of [useful contacts](#) has information on the opening times of some services over the Christmas period.
- Extra costs and pressure to spend money. For example, worrying about the cost of buying presents. Or spending more money on Christmas food or clothes. Money Helper has more [information on managing money at Christmas](#).
- Letting people down if you don't have enough money to spend on Christmas. For example, if you can't afford to buy gifts for children or dependents.
- Existing problems with managing money and your mental health, which might feel more difficult at Christmas.

[I was constantly anxious about money, living from month to month on Universal Credit, paying off debts. There was no money spare for Christmas or birthday presents.](#)

### Practical issues

There can be lots of practical issues to think about over Christmas, which can affect our mental health:

- Finding care for children or dependents, for example if you need to work while they are at home.

- Finding enough time to do everything to prepare for Christmas.
- Travelling, logistics and staying somewhere else being difficult to organise. This may feel stressful or disruptive.
- Being a carer, such as needing to plan for the person you care for within your Christmas plans.
- Impact on sleep and your routine. See our pages on [sleep problems](#) for tips to improve your sleep.

Feeling 'other' in conversations about how people had happy holiday seasons can really take a toll, and it can make you nervously anticipate or resent upcoming holidays where a happy nuclear family is idolised in the media.

People who aren't around

Christmas can be very difficult if we can't spend it with people we would like to. There are lots of reasons why people may not be around, such as:

- Estrangement, when you're not in contact with family members. Find support from the estrangement charity [Stand Alone](#).
- [Bereavement](#), whether it's recent or if some time has passed. Cruse has more information about [coping with grief at Christmas](#).
- Fertility problems, miscarriage or baby loss. [Tommy's](#) has lots of information about baby loss, pregnancy complications and fertility.
- Divorce, separation and break-ups, which may affect how much you see loved ones at Christmas. Relate has [information on dealing with relationship issues at Christmas](#).
- Health problems, for example if you or someone close to you is unwell. This might mean you need to spend Christmas apart when you'd rather be together.
- Practical reasons. You may not be able to see people at Christmas because of problems with transport or costs.

Christmas isn't the same without Ruth

[Although I was expecting it, it was like watching it all happen to someone else.](#)

[Read Lynn's story](#)

Loneliness

Not having people around us can feel more difficult at Christmas when there are lots of images of families and friends together.

Even when we have people around us, we might feel lonely. This may be because we feel like we have to hide our feelings, or act differently around some people.

If you have a mental health or physical health problem, you might feel like you can't join in with Christmas celebrations. You might also feel this way if you're a carer.

Or if you have to spend Christmas in a care home or hospital, this may feel lonely. Particularly if others around you have been able to leave for Christmas or have people visit.

See our pages on [loneliness](#) for more information.

[I usually have to visit family but as I have autism I find this difficult as it breaks my normal routines and my coping strategies are not accessible. I try and keep the visits as short as possible and then usually come home and sleep.](#)

Difficult situations and relationships

At Christmas, we may feel forced to see people or do things that we don't want to. It can be harder at this time of year to avoid difficult or upsetting situations. This might include:

- [Abuse](#) and other [trauma](#), whether it's from the past or happening now. This may include seeing people who remind you of difficult or traumatic experiences.
- People not accepting you. For example, if family members don't accept your [LGBTQIA+ identity](#) or understand your mental health problem, or if you encounter [racism](#).
- Difficult relationships, such as with a partner, family member or co-worker. [Relate](#) has support and advice which may help.
- Dealing with other people's expectations or decisions. This might include family norms, or religious or cultural expectations.
- Demands on your time, including pressure to socialise or see people, whether it's online or in person.
- Difficulty setting boundaries and having less privacy. For example, having to spend time or share your plans with other people.
- Listening and empathy, including feeling pressure to be available for others.
- Worrying about gifts, such as what you buy, who you buy for and how they'll be received.

[I find it extremely lonely and isolating. It all seems to drag on for months as well.](#)

#### Society and the outside world

Things going on in the outside world, and society's expectations, can make Christmas harder to cope with. For example:

- Feeling pressure to enjoy yourself and look happy.
- Media, adverts and representations of Christmas feeling upsetting and hard to avoid, and looking different to your experience of Christmas.
- Stigma and misconceptions about mental health from the people around you or in the media. See our page on [stigma and misconceptions](#) for more information.
- Seeing upsetting or difficult news stories or events in the world.
- Feeling overlooked if festivals, holidays and religious events you celebrate don't get the same attention as Christmas.
- Public spaces with more noise, lights, smells and long queues than usual, which can be overwhelming.
- Worries about getting sick or feeling pressure to be around others when you don't want to.
- Expectations about food and alcohol. This may include pressure to eat and drink things you don't want to, or can't. Or hearing comments about food, diet or lifestyle. See our pages on [eating problems](#) and [recreational drugs, alcohol and mental health](#) for information which may help.

#### Coping with depression and anxiety at Christmas

[I'd go for the meal to be polite and then escape as quickly as I could from the packed pub or restaurant.](#)

[Read Kyle's story](#)

#### Access to support and services

- Some services may not open or may run a reduced service, such as [crisis teams](#) and some [helplines](#). And it can be harder to find out quickly what service to use, if opening hours change.
- GP surgeries may close at certain times over the festive period. And you might find it harder to book an appointment. For medical help, you can contact [NHS 111 in England](#) or [NHS 111 in Wales](#). Or call 999 if it's an emergency.



- [Therapists](#) often don't work over the festive period. This may include if you have online or telephone appointments.
- Pharmacies may close and it can be harder to get medication. The NHS has information on [getting out-of-hours medication and emergency prescriptions](#).

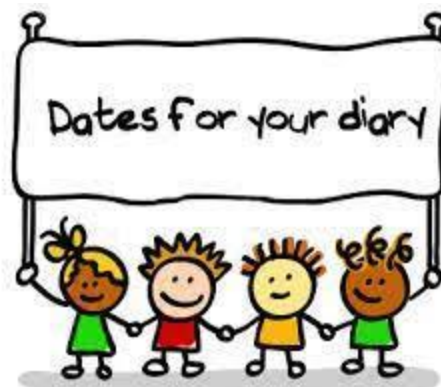
I'd be lost without Mind

Christmas is still really difficult because of all my memories of the time I spent in hospital. I get flashbacks to how things were.

[Read Nadine's story](#)

Being in hospital

- It might be hard to spend Christmas in hospital, if you need to. You may not know what to expect, and wonder what your Christmas will be like.
- Visiting rules might be different at Christmas, depending on where you are. You might not want people to visit you. Or you may have people in your life who won't or can't visit, which might feel upsetting.
- There may be fewer staff, or different staff to the ones you are used to. There may also be fewer people on your ward if some people have been able to go home during Christmas.
- You may feel you are missing out on your usual Christmas. You might feel this especially if you have been [sectioned](#) or your [discharge has been delayed](#).
- It might feel difficult to avoid Christmas if you don't enjoy it. For example, if the hospital puts up decorations or plans activities.
- You may be able to spend some time away from hospital, for example if you go home at Christmas. But this might you might feel more pressure to take part or overwhelmed by social contact.



Date	Activity
20.12.23	Year 6 – Height and Weight
20.12.23	Whole school trip to Church
21.12.23	Children break-up for Christmas
22.12.23	PD Day

08.01.23

PD Day

09.01.23

Children return to school