



COLLEGE

DECEMBER 2025

Termly



More than a school, an experience...

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FROM THE HEAD'S DESK...

Dear Parents,

As we draw the curtain on another successful year at Woodridge College, I write with a heart full of gratitude and deep appreciation for a community defined by care, dedication, and unity. The strength of our community lies at the very heart of the success of our College, and 2025 has been a shining example of what can be achieved when we stand together with purpose.

This has been a fantastic year, one marked by significant achievements, meaningful growth, and countless moments that remind us why Woodridge is such a special place. It has been wonderful to witness the development of the young adults entrusted to us. Their enthusiasm, resilience, and pride in their school have been a constant source of inspiration. It is clear that they truly love their College, and their positive spirit continues to shape the culture of excellence and belonging that defines Woodridge.

Much of this is made possible by our exceptional teachers. Our staff give of themselves wholeheartedly and consistently go the extra mile. Whether in the classroom, on the stage, at camps, or on the sports field, our staff pour their energy, expertise, and care into developing young adults of significance. Their commitment not only enriches the daily life of our pupils but also strengthens the foundations of our College, ensuring that every young person is supported, challenged, and encouraged to thrive.

I would also like to take a moment to reflect on one of the most meaningful milestones in the Woodridge journey, 'The Way', our adventurous Grade 10 experience that remains a defining moment in the lives of our young people.

Each year, The Way offers our pupils far more than a physical challenge. It provides a space for reflection, resilience, teamwork, and personal growth. It is a journey that asks much of them and one that gives back even more. Watching our Grade 10s return from this experience, it is clear that they do not come back the same. They return stronger, more self-aware, and more connected to themselves and to one another.

One of the most powerful moments linked to The Way is the ringing of the bell. As each Wayfarer takes hold of the rope and sounds the bell, there is a visible sense of accomplishment. This is an acknowledgement not only of what they have completed physically, but of the character they have strengthened along the path. The bell symbolises courage, perseverance, and pride. It is a moment that captures the magnitude of their achievement and reminds us all of the depth of learning that happens outside the classroom.

We are incredibly proud of the maturity and determination our Grade 10s have shown throughout this journey. They have embraced challenge, supported one another, and discovered new confidence within themselves. These are the experiences that shape them into grounded, thoughtful, and resilient young adults. The Way remains one of the most cherished elements of our Woodridge experience, and it is always a privilege to witness its impact on every pupil who completes it.

To all our parents, thank you for your trust and partnership; to our pupils, thank you for your spirit, hard work, and character; and to our staff, thank you for your unwavering dedication. Each of you contributes to the fabric of this remarkable community, and it is because of you that Woodridge continues to flourish.

As we look ahead to the well-deserved rest that follows, may we carry with us the pride of what we have achieved together and the excitement of what lies ahead. As we look to 2026, we must carry the lessons we have learnt over the last twelve months to continue growing and developing into a community that cares deeply about the young people in our care.

Thank you for another remarkable term and an exceptional 2025!

Kind regards,

Luke Hartley



CELEBRATING THE WINS: BIG AND SMALL

By: Dr Catherine Logie
Woodridge College -Deputy Head: Academics

As we wrap up another school year, it is easy to focus on the big milestones such as award ceremonies, results and end-of-year celebrations. These moments matter, but this year I want to shine a light on something equally important: the small wins. Those quiet victories that often go unnoticed but make a huge difference in the lives of our pupils and in ours.

We live in a world obsessed with results. Parents look for top marks. Teachers track class averages. Pupils strive to finish first. But when we only celebrate the final outcomes, we risk sending the message that effort only matters if it ends in perfection. That is a dangerous mindset because it discourages persistence and resilience.

The truth is that the road to success is rarely smooth. Pupils will face setbacks. Progress can be gradual or uneven. And when challenges arise, motivation can falter. That is why the real secret is not setting ambitious goals but breaking tasks into small, manageable steps and celebrating progress along the way. Each step forward builds confidence, strengthens motivation, and teaches the most powerful lesson of all: progress is greater than perfection.

As academic reports go home this term, they provide an important snapshot of achievement. It is tempting to focus on just the marks and whether they represent a pass or a failure. But this does not tell the whole story. Behind every mark is a journey of effort, perseverance, and growth. It is important to look at work ethic symbols and teachers' comments, as these too can highlight wins. Reports are a tool for reflection, not a final verdict. They should spark conversations about strengths, areas for improvement, and, most importantly, the progress that has been made. When we look beyond the numbers and recognise the habits, attitudes, and resilience pupils have developed, we give them the confidence to keep moving forward.

Think about the pupil who improves their results, shows increased effort, or approaches learning with a more positive attitude. These changes may not earn a trophy, but they represent growth, and growth is what education is all about. When a child learns to say, 'I can improve if I try,' that mindset is worth more than any test score.

Small wins keep pupils engaged. They make learning feel achievable. And they teach us that success is not one giant leap, it is a thousand steady steps. This principle applies to all of us. Adults feel the same satisfaction when we tick off a to-do list, hit a new personal best, or watch savings grow. Each small achievement gives the brain a jolt of confidence. Pupils are no different. When they see progress they have earned, motivation naturally follows.

We all want our pupils to dream big. But big dreams are built brick by brick. When we help them value every small victory, we are teaching them how success really works. And when that truth clicks, when a child sees progress as proof that they are capable, there is no limit to what they can accomplish.

As we look back on this year, I want to thank every pupil, parent, and teacher for the effort, resilience, and commitment you have shown. Education is not just about marks or awards; it is about growth, character, and the belief that every step forward counts. Let us carry this mindset into the new year, continuing to celebrate progress and encouraging our pupils to keep building their dreams, one step at a time.

Wishing you all a restful holiday and a bright, successful year ahead.



WRAPPING UP THE YEAR: REFLECTING ON RESPONSIBILITY

By: Chantél Minnie
Woodridge College – Senior Psychologist



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*Responsibility isn't
a rule we follow;
it's a mindset we
practice.*

We have reached the finish line of the school year, and there are no more sleeps to count down until the school holidays. With summer holiday fun in the air, it's a good moment to come back to our theme for the year: *Taking Responsibility.*



Throughout the year's newsletters, we explored how responsibility shows up in everyday school life. We spoke about what it means to care for others in ways that are kind but healthy, to care for ourselves, and to stay accountable even when it would be easier to step aside. We also looked at how being proactive, rather than waiting for problems to grow roots, can make our school community feel safer and more connected.

*"If something didn't go well, I can figure out why. I'm not stuck.
I choose curiosity over self-criticism."*



We considered the responsibility we have in guiding our teens' social media presence, the responsibility we all share to create a balance between reaching out in person versus reaching out online, and the responsibility to protect our youngsters when they struggle to get this right. Responsibility isn't only about "doing the right thing" in a large, heroic sense. More often, it's found in small, ordinary moments: owning up to a mistake, checking in on a friend who seems a bit out of sorts, asking for help before things snowball, or taking a moment to reset when you feel overwhelmed. These little choices shape the culture of our school.

Let's recap some of the key points highlighted this year and continue to keep these in mind going forward:

RESPONSIBLE CONNECTION:

Let's encourage our teens to reach out to their fellow pupils over the holidays – the friends who might have received a disappointing school report and who might need a bit of reassurance, the friend who goes home to turmoil or stress, the friend who would love to connect in-person, but who can't for various reasons.

Encourage them to let the responsibility of empathy and compassionate support extend into the holidays.

RESPONSIBLE SELF-PRESENTATION:

The holidays is a jovial time for teens – parties, days at the beach, next to swimming pools. These moments are often captured and shared online. Let's remind our teens that they are responsible for the safety of others in the online community, as well as the way they are represented in the digital world.

RESPONSIBLE SELF-CARE

The holidays is a time for rest, rejuvenation and reflection. While it might be tempting to let go of all inhibitions, our teenagers still require some structure and ongoing healthy self-care practices. Nutrition, exercise and quality sleep are essential aspects of a restorative holiday.

RESPONSIBLE SELF-TALK

This time of year can bring up a lot of feelings – especially when academic reports have been released. Some students feel proud; others feel flat, disappointed, or worried about letting down parents, teachers, or even themselves.

Responsible self-talk doesn't sugar-coat things or pretend everything is perfect. It also doesn't use self-bullying phrases. Instead, it is about a healthy middle-ground – truthful, kind, and forward-facing.

“

HERE ARE A FEW EXAMPLES TEENS CAN HOLD ONTO:

“This mark isn't my whole story. It's just information I can work with.

A report is feedback, not a verdict.”

“I'm allowed to feel disappointed – but it doesn't mean I'm a disappointment. My performance and achievements do not define my identity.”

“If something didn't go well, I can figure out why. I'm not stuck.

I choose curiosity over self-criticism.”

“I don't need to be perfect to make progress.

I know that learning and progress is a zig-zag journey, not a straight ladder.”

“I can talk to someone I trust.

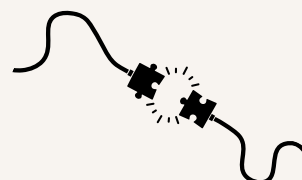
Responsibility also means not carrying everything alone.”

“My parents/peers can have strong opinions about my performance. This does not mean I need to agree with them, or let it shape the way I see myself.”

CARRYING THE GOOD STUFF FORWARD

As we step into the holidays and look ahead to a new year, maybe we can carry this with us: responsibility isn't a rule we follow; it's a mindset we practice. It helps our classrooms feel calmer, our friendships stronger, our families more supportive and our whole school community feel more like a place where everyone can breathe and belong.

*“I can talk to someone I trust.
Responsibility also means not
carrying everything alone.”*



TEACHING AS A SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITY

By: Jacques Botha
Woodridge College -Deputy Head

I was one of several staff members who attended conferences over the past term. The TEACH Conference, the Deputy Head Conference, and the Global Leadership Summit shared overlapping themes and perspectives, albeit organised and presented by different bodies and individuals. Various observers saw similar patterns emerging worldwide.

The question of **overload** for adults and children was one of those concerns. Doing more is not always doing better. Different voices called for doing less in some form or fashion.

Musicians use the "*less is more*" principle to create clarity and impact by using fewer elements, like instruments, notes, or effects, allowing each part to have a greater effect. We were challenged in both our personal lives and in how we educate our children.

Part of the beauty of the Grade 10s' experience on The Way is living more simply. All individual belongings are kept in a single box for the three weeks they are away together. Yet the days were filled with rich experiences, laughter, and lively conversation. For many, the norm is constant interaction with others, in person and especially online. We go somewhat "counterculture" when we step away from that norm. In a complex and changing world, educators are challenged to look for ways to simplify our own lives and those of the children we teach.

Permit me to share a couple of other nuggets from recent stimulating presentations that are tenuously linked.

Are excellent results indicative of academic excellence?

The most obvious context for this question is the publication of Matric results. Our examination body, the IEB, does not publish a "Top Pupil" or a "Top School". The previous CEO wrote an excellent piece to support this stance. The comparison of results for different subjects and the intake of a school would jump out as two of the problems with such lists. A 50% for one pupil could represent "excellence" for one pupil, while 80% for another does not.

Substituting "academic" for "sporting", and we arrive at a conversation held more regularly as followers of school sport read the weekend results or debate the accuracy of rankings.

When we question these priorities, we risk being described as accepting mediocrity or not facing up to the reality of the world as it is. Yet a narrow defeat against strong opposition might represent more excellent qualities, such as teamwork, grit, and integrity, than a big win over a weaker team.

Are we wrong when the excellence we strive towards cannot be summarised by a mark or a score?

Is the quickest way to teach something today sometimes the slowest way to teach tomorrow?

This could apply to the teaching of Mathematics, where a shortcut that works for questions in a lower grade might not lead to success in the higher grades. Learning something only in a particular context, such as a rhyme or similar, is often the quickest way to be able to recall it, but this could limit the application if not guided carefully. If we only learn to do questions if asked in a certain format, we have limited our ability to a set context. True learning demands that we apply our knowledge and skills in varied contexts. Pupils sometimes get frustrated with good teachers who don't just "give them the answer". This is always for a long-term benefit.

Our academic assessments, as well as our inter-school matches, present us with growth opportunities when the conditions and challenges vary in rigour and variety. This would apply to other aspects of what we as a school set out to achieve. If honesty can only be practised in some instances but not when it costs us in some way, have we really taken on that value? Do pupils try to have a strong work ethic if they only work hard when their peers are doing so?

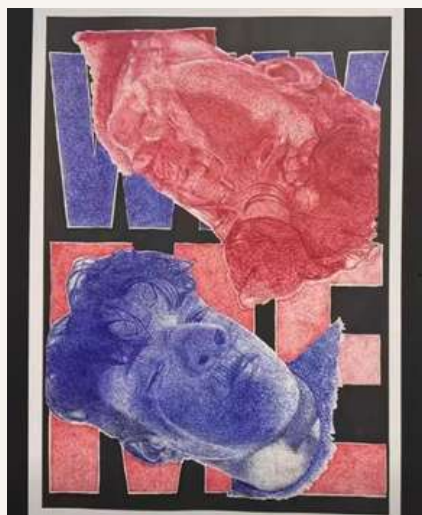
We have been challenged to keep refining our pedagogy, but education is as much art as science. We will continue to provide opportunities for pupils to try and fail, get encouragement from peers and teachers, learn from feedback, and slowly grow the essential skills needed for success. This is sometimes a bumpy road with unexpected twists and turns. We are teaching our pupils to learn, adapt, and ultimately thrive.



Arts & Culture

By: Sheree Ferreira
Woodridge College - Head of Music & Culture

A YEAR OF RHYTHM, CULTURE & CONNECTION, AND AN EVEN BIGGER 2026 AHEAD!



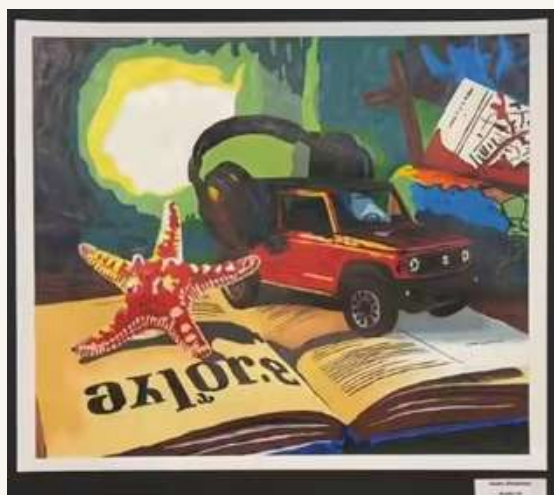
As another unforgettable year draws to a close, we want to thank our incredible community for filling every event, performance, and gathering with energy and creativity. From intimate soiree nights and a Carol service to large-scale concerts and collaborative arts showcases, 2025 was a year that reminded us why music and culture matter, because they bring people together.

But the excitement is far from over. We're already tuning up for a huge 2026, and at the heart of it is one of our most anticipated events: **The Knock on Wood Festival**. Get ready for immersive percussion experiences, talented solo and group performers by pupils, the creativity of visual arts and creative writing, to monologues for drama.

Stay tuned for more information.

Here's to more music, more culture, and more moments that move us.

Let's make 2026 unforgettable!



TRANSFORMATION, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION:

By: Nicholas Kock
Woodridge College -Deputy Head

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Belonging is not just being invited into the room – it is knowing that your voice matters once you are there

The 2025 school year has been a significant chapter in Woodridge College's ongoing commitment to driving inclusive transformation through diversity, equity, and safe spaces for belonging. This strategic goal remains firmly aligned with both the Woodridge Trust's Statement of Intent and our Transformation and Diversity Policy, guiding our actions and shaping our community culture.

A Year of Engagement, Growth, and Courageous Conversations

The year began with an inspiring Transformation Collaboration Breakfast in January. We were honoured to host three exceptional speakers:

- Mrs Katy Mthethwa, Founder of Thrive Together
- Dr Lesego Rametsi, Group Head of Health and Wellness at Absa
- Prof Cheryl Potgieter, Research Professor at the Durban University of Technology and Head of Genderjustice, Health and Human Development

Together, they led a thought-provoking dialogue with 24 delegates from schools and institutions across the Eastern Cape. Their discussions explored the complexities of transformation and the realities and responsibilities around diversity, inclusion, and belonging in school environments.

This breakfast also launched the **Thrive Together Curriculum**, which our Grade 8 and 9 pupils engaged with throughout the year. Their participation resulted in meaningful, reflective, and often courageous conversations that supported their personal and social development.

Pupil Voice and Celebrating Identity

Our **Pupil Inclusion and Belonging Committee**, driven entirely by pupils, played a central role in shaping the year's initiatives. Their projects included:

- A powerful storytelling initiative titled **“Our stories matter, this is me”**, where pupils shared personal narratives which were compiled and shared with the wider school community.
- Coordinating celebrations for significant days such as **Human Rights Day**, further enriching our understanding of diversity and justice.

Learning Through Dialogue

In June, during Pride Month, we welcomed Reverend Ken Carr of the Methodist Church, who delivered a heartfelt talk on the marginalisation of LGBTQ community members. His message, centred on love and humanity, resonated deeply and encouraged further much-needed discussions within the school.

On **16 June**, Woodridge staff also participated in **Unconscious Bias Training**, facilitated by Bloom Enterprise. Conducted in separate sessions for College and Preparatory staff, this training enabled our educators to recognise and address personal biases and equipped them with practical tools to foster inclusivity.

A strong emphasis was placed on the idea that while equity, diversity, and inclusion are essential foundations, belonging is the ultimate goal – the space where every individual feels valued, seen, and connected.

Celebrating Heritage and Community

Our Heritage Day festivities were a vibrant highlight of the year. Pupils proudly arrived in traditional attire representing cultures from across South Africa, creating a joyful display reminiscent of our rainbow nation's beautiful diversity. The day concluded with a lively lunchtime concert and a South African braai, reinforcing the warmth and unity shared within our school community.

Looking Ahead

As we prepare for 2026, we extend our gratitude to all pupils, staff, families, the Trust, and management teams of both schools for their continued support and commitment to our transformation journey. Together, we will continue building a community where everyone feels they belong – not just in words, but in lived experiences.

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Diversity is being invited to the party; inclusion is being asked to dance – but belonging is dancing like it's your own celebration.



Sports

By: Yaldren Vickery
Woodridge College - Director of Sport



As we conclude an exciting year of sports, we are proud to celebrate the achievements of our teams, who have represented the school with passion and pride at various festivals. Our summer sports teams have excelled, and the results speak for themselves.

Our water polo teams, comprising the 1st, U15, and U14 boys and girls, travelled to several festivals, where they showcased exceptional teamwork and determination. Their performances reflect the spirit of our school, and the results were impressive.

In cricket, both the 1st boys and U15 boys teams participated in competitive festivals, delivering solid performances and continuing to develop their skills and team cohesion. Meanwhile, the 1st girls' cricket team began the 2025/2026 season with an outstanding start, setting the tone for what promises to be a successful campaign.

A special mention goes to our U15 girls' tennis team, which played in their very first tournament and achieved excellent results, a true testament to their hard work and commitment.

Overall, this year has been one of growth, achievement, and pride for all our sporting teams.

As we enter the festive season, we encourage everyone to take time to rest, recharge, and enjoy the holidays, but don't forget to stay active! Keep moving, stay healthy, and return ready to make 2026 another year of sporting excellence.

Here's to more teamwork, resilience, and success in the year ahead!



Surf Lifesaving

By: Rob Smith
Woodridge College - Surf Lifesaving Manager



Woodridge is very proud of Jessica and Daniella Marcus, who both represented South Africa at the 2025 International Surf Rescue Challenge in New Zealand this past weekend. Jessica represented the South African Junior Team, and Daniella the South African Presidents' Team. They competed against the very best surf lifesavers in the world, including teams from Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain, the USA, Japan, Germany, and the Netherlands.

Unfortunately, surf events had to be cancelled on Day 1 due to extreme surf conditions. Despite the stiff competition, both Jessica and Daniella did their team and country proud, and Woodridge College congratulates them on their national selection and their performances in New Zealand. Jessica won an International Gold Medal with the SA Junior Team in the Mixed Ocean Lifesaver Relay, placed 7th in the Female Ocean Lifesaver (Ironman), and 8th in the Surf Swim. Daniella did exceptionally well, placing 4th in the Ocean Lifesaver (Ironman), 6th in the Surf Swim, and 8th in the Surf Ski.

These are fantastic results against the best surf lifesavers in the World! Well done ladies!!



THE 21 DAY JOURNEY 2025



THE 21 DAY JOURNEY 2025



THE 21 DAY JOURNEY 2025



Staff News

Congratulations



Congratulations to Mr Asiwe Swazi on his recent performance at the IFBB World Body Building Championships in Saudi Arabia. Mr Swazi placed 7th overall in the best Physiques category in the World – a simply outstanding result. This has been years in the making after many hours of hard work and sacrifice. He has made both Woodridge College and South Africa proud.



Congratulations to Christopher and Talitha Sebastian on tying the knot recently. We wish them a blessed and happy union.



“He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the Lord.
Proverbs 18:22

Staff News

Staff Movements

farewell 2025

Ms Chantél Minnie, our School Psychologist, is leaving us to start up her own private practice in the new year. Ms Minnie has been at the heart of well-being in the College over the last three years and has had a positive influence on the lives of both pupils and staff.

Mr Nicholas Kock will be leaving us in March to take up a Deputy Head role at St Andrews College. Mr Kock has been at Woodridge for a very long time and has had a significant part to play in the development and growth of Pastoral Care and Transformation, Diversity and Inclusion in the College. He ran Kohler residence for many years, and many old boys remember him fondly.

Mr Siya Mvubu, an intern, and **Mr Rusteburg**, locum history teacher, also need to be thanked for the work they have done in the short time they have been with us. Mr Mvubu is taking up a teaching position at Western Province Preparatory, and Mr Rusteburg a history position at Selborne College. We wish them well as they start their teaching careers and thank them for their contribution to Woodridge College.



Welcome 2026

Further to my email earlier in the term where I announced the appointments of Mr Chris Fontaine, Head of History, and Mrs Carla de Lange, in the Afrikaans Department, we welcome the following to our staff for 2026:

Mrs Juli-Anne du Toit joins us in the psychological support space from Edubox in KZN.

Mrs Nwabisa Ntsani joins us in the isiXhosa department. Nwabisa comes from Stirling High School.

Mr Jason Syce rejoins us from Michaelhouse after 2 years away. He will head up the College's hockey programme and will teach Business Studies and EMS. Mr Syce is involved in the national setup for U18 hockey. We look forward to having him and his family back at Woodridge.

Mr Zennon Swartz recently joined us on a temporary basis and will join us permanently next year in the Music Department. We look forward to the work he will do with a special focus on drums and music tech.

Mr Lusanda Badiyana comes to us from Hong Kong, where he played rugby professionally. He was a member of the EP Kings before he left to play rugby in France and then Asia. Mr Badiyana steps into the rugby space at Woodridge and will also be an intern while he completes his studies to qualify as a teacher.

Mr Cole Edworthy and **Ms Danielle Viljoen** will also join us as interns next year while they complete their studies. Mr Edworthy is a provincial water polo coach, and Ms Viljoen is a seasoned performer on the stage and joins the Art and Drama Departments.



[Click here for the 2026 College Monthly Planner](#) **Subject to change**



Tuesday: 13 January, Orientation Day



Wednesday: 14 January 2026, Start of School

- We ask that all pupils return neatly attired in their Number 1's.
- The boys need to ensure that their hair is cut and styled according to the guidelines in the code of conduct.
- Boarders who catch flights into Port Elizabeth must be dressed in their 'Number 1's'.



Friday: 16 January, Prefect Induction & Camp

MERRY
Christmas

AND HAPPY NEW YEAR



As we approach this joyful Christmas season, I want to take a moment to extend my heartfelt gratitude for your partnership, support, and prayers throughout this past year. It is a privilege to journey together in shaping young minds and hearts, and your steadfast commitment to our school community is deeply appreciated.

Christmas reminds us of the extraordinary gift of God's love made known through the birth of Jesus Christ. In a world often marked by uncertainty, His message of hope, peace, and redemption continues to shine brightly. May this season be a time for your family to pause, reflect, and rejoice in the blessings we share.

I pray that your homes are filled with warmth, laughter, and the comforting presence of God's grace. May Christ's light guide your steps in the coming year, and may His peace rest upon you and your loved ones.

On behalf of our entire college community, I wish you a blessed Christmas and a joyful New Year.

With warm regards and every blessing.

"The Word became flesh and dwelt among us"

-John 1:14

Luke Hartley

