



SOLIHULL

Chaplaincy Life at Solihull School

The Christian Chaplaincy plays a fundamental role in the life of the school involving students, staff, parents and parishioners in the celebration of the seven Sacraments, Occasional Offices, daily assemblies (in the Senior and Prep schools), pastoral responsibility and counselling. Sunday worship is offered during term time with the support of a fine musical tradition, superb organ playing and choirs of professional competence. We have produced a weekly order of service for the Sunday Liturgies from Common Worship and the Book of Common Prayer.

Pastoral responsibility has been high on my agenda both in school and the extended community. Weddings, wedding blessings, visiting the sick and elderly and funeral ministry have taken a considerable amount of time and energy. We have created links with the local hospice which have afforded pastoral care and opportunity for pupil placements. We have also supported the work of St. Basil's homes for young people and The Children's Society. Last year we were the best givers nationally to this important charity, money collected from our various Christmas services.

Advent and Christmas are celebrated with great panache beginning with a wonderful Advent Procession and Carol Service involving a broad range of the community. The annual Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols is a marvellous witness to the dedication and expertise of the choir. Many have grown to love this service and appreciated the use of traditional Biblical translations for the readings. Likewise, the Prep School Christmas Carol Services are a huge success involving many young people in dramatic and musical expressions.

All our chapel collections have been donated to various charities particularly supporting the work of The Children's Society from our annual Christingle Service, Christmas Eve Midnight Mass and the Easter Day Eucharist.

Our Sunday worship has involved the school community together with other local people who use the chapel as their parish church. The variety of worship has significantly accommodated the needs and backgrounds of our school community and parish, too, ranging from Choral Evensongs to Circus Services with Roly the Priest Clown; Choral Eucharists to services for the blessing of animals.

Staff and students have operated as a team supporting and sustaining the work of the chaplaincy. Through this initiative we have discovered what it means to be a missionary church and revitalised the chaplaincy, presenting a vision of how we have felt God calling us to be a multi-faith inclusive community of hospitality. We have developed the use of symbol, art, movement, space, colour and use of the senses enjoying a considerable impact upon worship and mission. IT has also been significantly employed enabling students to contribute many stimulating presentations.

My own priestly ministry has been enriched by a number of chaplaincy assistants, ordinands and musicians who have generously shared their own particular gifts, for which I have taken responsibility of training, care and appraisal whilst on placement. I have liaised with governors in matters pertaining to the chaplaincy life and been given the freedom to develop my own styles of worship and prayer. I have enjoyed

the support of a number of Christian members of staff particularly during our weekly prayer meeting. One colleague has recently initiated a new form of chaplaincy letter extending our mission and ministry to parents, staff and pupils which has been very much appreciated.

I have also voluntarily worked as a Team Priest in the local parish of St Alphege, being fully integrated into its mission, worship and organisation, finding this a very necessary support and source of blessing. St Alphege is very much a traditional Eucharistic community but being a town-centre church we have held many civic occasions and wider parish celebrations. As chaplain I have represented the school in Remembrance services and on many other occasions throughout the year.

I have prepared liturgies for the community, memorial services for staff, parents and pupils; leaver's liturgies and pilgrimage worship guides to accompany our chaplaincy and parish pilgrimages to Walsingham, Italy, Spain and The Holy Land.

Over the past twenty-four years I have worked diligently in preaching, good worship and pastoral care enabling the Faith to become real and accessible to our community and beyond. During the covid period we have recorded assemblies and other liturgies and offered online Alpha courses for staff and pupils.

There is much scope and resource for the development of this interesting and vital ministry in Solihull.

If you would like an informal conversation about the role, please contact me at the following email address: HutchA@solsch.org.uk

Canon Andrew Hutchinson
Chaplain