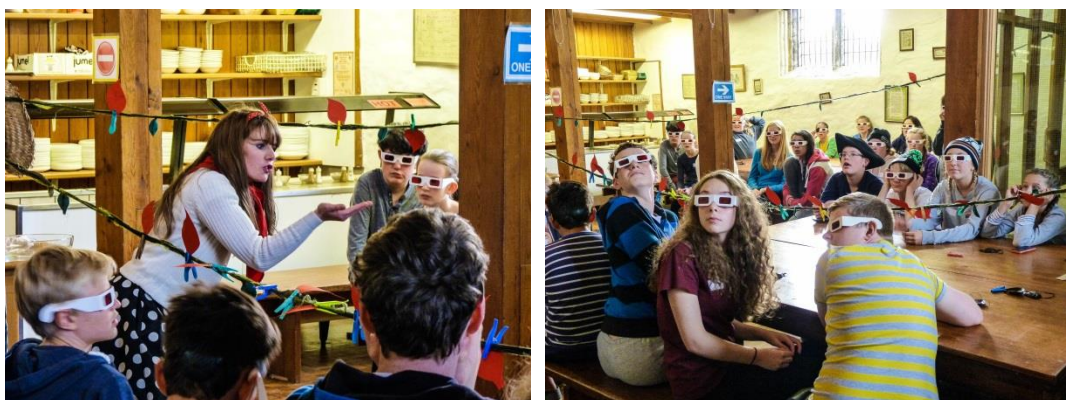


## A Year Of Christian Worship At St Aidan's, 2016-2017

### **Friday 30<sup>th</sup> September to Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2016**

Liz Shores, Chris Ives and Mark Pallant accompanied 30 pupils from Years 8-10 on the annual Away Weekend to Marrick Priory. Pupils took part in a range of activities starting with icebreakers, games and a night time walk on the Friday evening. On Saturday morning they watched Lynsey Jones' thought-provoking and interactive drama, "Miss Dotty's Spectacles" which was followed by two workshops reflecting on their own personal journeys and ways in which we might hear from God.



After lunch and on the following morning, pupils took part in outdoor pursuits – including canoeing and climbing – where friendships were strengthened and fears challenged.



Prayers were held each morning and evening and we ended the weekend with a short service of reflection on Sunday afternoon.



## **October 2016**

For the month of October, St Aidan's teamed up with Oatlands Community group to encourage everyone to show kindness to someone else in our community. This could be an act as simple as holding a door open for someone, putting a neighbour's bin out for them or walking a friend's dog. Pupils filled in slips reporting acts of kindness they had done or experienced and the results were displayed on noticeboards outside the Chapel and via the Oatlands Community website as part of their local community campaign.

## **Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> October 2017**

On the evening of 12<sup>th</sup> October, we held our school Harvest Festival. The service was well supported by staff, students and their families and included dance and drama as well as traditional presentation of gifts and musical items from the newly formed Chamber Choir and Junior Choir. The speaker for the evening was Diocesan Officer for the Environment and St Aidan's parent, Jemima Parker, who reminded everyone of the importance of eating well but understanding the impact on the world of the choices we make.

As in previous years we collected vast numbers of tins and other food items for St George's Crypt in Leeds and a monetary collection for the work of Christian Aid.

## **Monday 7<sup>th</sup> to Friday 11<sup>th</sup> November**

During the week leading up to Remembrance Day, pupils in all year groups were invited to contribute to an interactive prayer space in the Main Entrance. It was the first time we'd undertaken something on this scale and the results were both beautiful and reflective. Form tutors were issued with poppies and pupils in every form were asked to think about and write on them the names of people or places they particularly wanted to remember. The submitted poppies were then used to create a powerful display for the whole school community to reflect on.

On Remembrance Day itself, pupils paused for two minutes at 11 o'clock after which trumpet players stationed around the school played The Last Post.





## Christmas 2016

From the 5<sup>th</sup> December we undertook another school-wide interactive prayer activity. Form tutors were issued with strips of coloured paper and encouraged to ask their forms to write on them someone or something they were particularly thankful for this Christmas. A volunteer then posted the slips in a box from which they were collected, stapled together and strung up as paper chains along the main corridor.



Lots of staff and pupils took part, some of their most memorable “thank you”s being recorded below:

- for family and friends who care for me and love me no matter what.
- that my dad will be home for Christmas Day since he normally works away.
- for my grandma. She really makes Christmas special.
- for the doctors and nurses who have looked after my nan and made her well.
- for the fact my grandma doesn't have cancer anymore
- for chocolate.

- for fresh water straight from the tap.
- for having a warm bed to sleep in.
- for a cosy house to live in
- for this school.
- for opportunities.
- for music because it makes people smile

For the last two weeks of term we sought to re-tell the Nativity story via a new display in the main entrance. Using an advent calendar theme, the events leading up to and immediately following the birth of Jesus were revealed in instalments each day. The stable scene beneath gradually expanded as each episode of the story unfolded.



### **Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> December**

On the afternoon of the 14<sup>th</sup> December, all of Year 12 attended our Associated Sixth Form Christmas Liturgy service. This simple act of worship included traditional readings and carols, music by the Chamber Choir and readings/reflections written and led by pupils from both schools to the lighting of candles. The central message of the service was relayed to pupils via two videos – the advert “Christmas Starts with Christ” and a short film entitled “Social Network Christmas.” The latter re-tells the Christmas story entirely in Facebook status updates – an approach which seemed to resonate well with our very diverse congregation.

### **Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> December**

On the evening of Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> December, St Aidan’s held its annual Carol Service at Christ Church on the Stray. We were delighted to welcome St Aidan’s pupils, staff, their families and friends to this traditional service of nine lessons and carols. Musical items were presented by Junior Choir, Girls Choir and Chamber Choir though the highlight was the massed choir rendition of Michael Card’s ‘Immanuel’. Readers represented every year group, the staff body, governors and directors of YCST and prayers were led by school

Worship Co-ordinator, Liz Shores. We were also especially pleased this year to hear from retiring Bishop of Ripon, Rt Rev James Bell, who inspired us all with his Christmas message and an impromptu lesson in Makaton.

### **Friday 16<sup>th</sup> December**

The families of Year 7 pupils were invited in to school on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> December to celebrate with us in our Christingle Service. Again, we enjoyed contributions from the Year 7 Dance group, Drama Club and Junior Choir as well as some beautiful singing from the whole year group, in both English and French! Our speaker for the service was the newly appointed vicar of St Andrew's, Starbeck, Rev Phil Carman who brought along his own, giant Christingle made out of a watermelon!



### **Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2017**

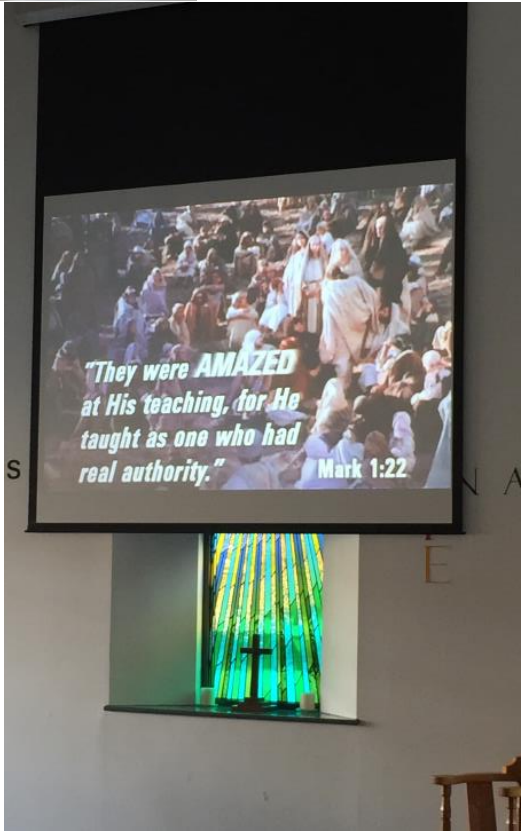
On Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> March all pupils in Years 7 and 8 had a specially extended form period in order to attend year group services of Communion for Ash Wednesday. The services led by local clergy, Rev Ben Askew and Rev Guy Donegan Cross, were prayerful and reflective and, as well as receiving Holy Communion, many pupils also chose to be ashed.

### **Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> to Friday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2017**

During the last week of term, the Chapel was turned into a space for prayer and reflection on the theme of Easter. There were three simple stations inviting visitors to reflect on aspects of the Easter story - the Last Supper, the cross and the resurrection as well as a very short film retelling the life and death of Jesus.

One of our teaching assistants designed and created a beautiful Easter garden while the Foundation Learning group, who'd recently been studying Palm Sunday, had made palm leaves which we borrowed to mark the way in.







### Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> April 2017

On the afternoon of 5<sup>th</sup> April, we again brought the whole of Year 12 together for our Easter Liturgy Service. The service began with a reading entitled One Solitary Life, taken from an essay by Dr James Francis. There then followed a video-clip retelling of the events of Easter – Follow - again in the style of Facebook updates (to mirror our Christmas reflection). Further prayers and readings were chosen and led by pupils from both schools before everyone watched an excerpt from popular TV series, Dr Who in which the Doctor sacrificed himself to save his human friend. A choir of sixth formers from across the two schools united to sing 'Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?' before we held a simple shared meal of hot cross buns.



### Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> to Friday 26<sup>th</sup> May

For the last week of this half term we were pleased to host a prayer installation in our main entrance led by youth workers from a number of different churches in Harrogate. The

display was themed around the Gospel verse: 'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.' John 14:27 We had thought this text would be especially helpful to anyone about to sit exams, targeting Year 11s and 13s particularly, but, in view of the Manchester bombing that week, it turned out to have much wider significance. Pupils from all year groups were encouraged to take part by answering a simple question about where they find peace and writing it on a paper dove which was then added to the display.



### **Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> May 2017**

Members of Year 13 from across the Association gathered in the Chapel at St John Fisher for our annual Leavers' Service. The event was very well attended by pupils from both schools who joined in with congregational hymns with much gusto and a hint of nostalgia! Prayers for the students were led by our Heads of Sixth Form and closing thoughts offered by head boys and girls from both schools as well as the head teachers.

### **Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> and Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> July 2017**

Liz Shores represented St Aidan's at the Church on Show at this year's Great Yorkshire Show, welcoming members of the public and showing them around the exhibition. Visitors were invited to make models, write prayers and create a flower for our huge display as a symbol of hope in a troubled world.





## Monday 17<sup>th</sup> July 2017

On the evening of Monday 17<sup>th</sup> July, we were delighted to share Eucharist with members of our school community who have, in the last year, been baptised, confirmed or admitted to membership of their church. Pupils and their close families joined us for a special Service of Celebration led by our parish priest and school governor, Rev Matthew Evans. Prayers centred on jigsaw pieces which everyone took away as a reminder of their distinctiveness and unique call as well as their interconnectedness with others and crucial role in God's "big picture".



## **Friday 21<sup>st</sup> July 2017**

We ended the school year as we always do with year group Eucharist. Pupils and staff attended in one of four venues where services were led by local clergy aided by teams of staff from St Aidan's.

### **Regular Acts of Collective Worship**

Throughout the year we have maintained our schedule of acts of collective worship. Pupils have attended two year group assemblies each week and form tutors have delivered Thoughts for the Day during form periods. The content of all of these acts of worship have reflected the diverse interests and concerns of our staff and pupil body and we have also been pleased to invite in a range of speakers including the police, the Gideons and local church youth workers. Topics have naturally centred around major Christian themes and festivals but pupils have also learned about Ramadan and Chanukah. We have reflected on topics of immediate concern to teenagers such as coping with stress and keeping safe on the internet but have also enjoyed finding out about and celebrating events and features of the world around us from the Tour de Yorkshire to International Women's Day. Heads of Year have encouraged forms and individual students to lead or contribute to year group "assemblies" and have appointed representatives of the student body to keep records of the different themes and messages presented.

Services of Holy Communion have taken place each week for two forms at a time. These have been led by a team of local clergy representing ten local churches as well as Archdeacon Beverley Mason.

### **Christian groups in school**

The Senior Christian Union really flourished this year under the leadership of Year 13 student, Seth Jamieson. Supported by Liz Shores and Mark Pallant as well as a team of visiting speakers from local churches, the group devised their own programme of worship and teaching and maintained a regular Monday lunch time slot in the school Chapel.

Youth workers from Mowbray Community Church, St Mark's Church and Hope Church continue to come into school every Tuesday lunch time to lead Rock Solid – a Christian group for KS3 pupils. Whilst numbers have diminished slightly over the year, a core group of about 20 students attend regularly for lots of fun and games followed by a short talk.