

Trustees' Report to the Annual Church Meeting of Rugby Baptist Church on the Year 2011-12 – 24th June 2012

Following recent changes in Charity Law for churches with an income of over £100,000 it is now necessary for the Chairperson of the Trustees of the Church (The Diaconate) to provide an annual report of our activities. This is that report which will be forwarded, in due course, to the Charity Commission along with the examined accounts of our Church and associated papers.

The Diaconate. The Diaconate (Trustees) have met 12 times over the course of the year 2011-12, including at an Away Day in January. Over the course of the year we welcomed a new Deacon, Mary Stringer, onto the Church's leadership team. Alan Thomas was appointed as our new Church Secretary in September 2011. 2011-12 has been the first year in a planned four year experiment – to help our church realise more of its mission potential – by employing two Ministers to work full-time among us all. A very generous 2011 Gift Day result (£10000+), and an encouraging increase in our weekly offerings (to over £1635 a week) has helped us to finance this significant step of faith for our church community. The need to overhaul and upgrade the heating in part of our buildings (the Regent Rooms) and national problems with the BUGB Pension Fund (requiring larger employer contributions for both of our Ministers) has however placed additional financial pressure upon our church this year – as the accompanying accounts reveal. The Diaconate has reported regularly to the Church Meeting, which meets bi-monthly, to discuss, share information and to take decisions together. Our principal activities as a Church, are 1) Worship and prayer. 2) The teaching and sharing of the Christian Faith. 3) The pastoral care of individuals, and 4) Service to the local community and the wider world. A full list of our Church Activities and Appointments and Church Accounts is attached. These will give an indication of the wide range of activities we undertake as a Church and how we fund them.

New Initiatives. Among new initiatives this year have been: the welcoming of a young BMS Action team recently back from mission service in Nepal; the introduction of a regular healing ministry on a Wednesday afternoon; giving a lead to an ecumenical Winter Shelter scheme in the town which helped over 50 people who otherwise would have been sleeping rough; an overhaul of the Church's health and safety and child and vulnerable adult protection policies; a new Christian spirituality course; the awarding of Eco Congregation status to our church by the national body overseeing such applications; and – perhaps most significantly - a commitment to work towards refocusing the life and activities of our local church in the light of materials provided by the international Purpose Driven Church movement. Task Groups are now being set up to explore our church – past, present and future - in the light of five core purposes: Discipleship, Fellowship, Ministry, Mission and Worship.

Membership. As at 31 August 2011 (the date of the BUGB statistical returns) our Church community had some 172 members and over 100 Adherents (people who worship with us regularly or occasionally). We also run programmes and activities for well over 100 children and young people, the majority from families on the fringe of our Church. Our Brigades and Toddlers are all reporting new faces. It has been a particular joy this year to see our Toddler Group grow in size and confidence and to witness the successful introduction of "family funtime" for young families monthly after morning worship. We have also continued to run a Holiday Club programme three times a year which attracts still more children and families. Our former Church Secretary Jane Robson continues to study at Regent's Park College, Oxford with our support, and is serving well at Kingswood Baptist Church near Watford, while training; so well that she has recently accepted their invitation to become their full-time Minister after her training ends. As part of her degree in Spanish and Portuguese, one of our young people Kit Meeson spent September 2011 to January 2012 in Paraguay with the Baptist Mission Society. She worked with a pre-school education programme called PEPE and has come home with many fascinating stories.

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Cluster. We have maintained a good working relationship within the Baptist families of Dunchurch, Wolston and Rugby. We have met for joint worship with them on three occasions over the year. A number of those with preaching gifts continue to help the smaller fellowship at Wolston on a regular basis.

Church Teams. Part of the Trustees' main responsibility is that of ensuring that teams of volunteers are in place to run and deliver our Church's wide-ranging programme of events and activities. Pastoral Care is overseen by a dedicated team of around 10 people who work alongside the Ministers in a wide range of pastoral care responsibilities. A team of at least 12 leaders deliver a well supported and varied House groups programme and meet together several times a year to plan this. Among the studies we have undertaken together have been a look at the "Just 10" series on the Ten Commandments, at the Old Testament prophets Joel, Jonah and Amos and a Lent Course: Handing on the Torch. Other examples of teams of volunteers, who help to make our service to both church and community possible, include those who plan, cook and deliver cooked lunches to around 50 elderly people most Tuesdays of the year; a small dedicated team who arrange a "Holiday at Home" programme each autumn; those who attend our Youth Forum every two months with oversight over a wide and varied children's and youth programme here; those who serve as volunteers in the ecumenical teams that makes the work of Hope4 (among homeless and badly housed people), the new Rugby Foodbank, Christians against Poverty and Street Pastors possible here in Rugby each week; and some 30 or so new volunteers who have helped us to deliver a winter shelter in our John Lees Hall every Wednesday of the winter months. Those who operate our church's various coffee and food rotas, and a small but committed property and cleaning team also deserve special mention here. In common with Christian Churches the world over so much good work and service is only possible because of the time, dedication and energy of hundreds of such volunteers each year. It is our privilege to both witness and help to co-ordinate these remarkable levels of commitment week by week throughout the year.

The Future. As 2012-13 unfolds, some immediate priorities spring to mind. To find ways of securing our church finances for the remaining three years of our paid team ministry experiment; to continue the re-examination of Rugby Baptist Church from the perspective of the five core purposes; and above all to find ways of winning new people to faith in Christ among us: "New believers must be won, welcomed, supported, taught, encouraged and then sent out as witnesses to those around them" (Nick Cuthbert).

All of this is, of course, part of our commitment as Trustees to '...advance the Christian faith according to the principles of the Baptist denomination and to advance education and carry out other charitable purposes in the United Kingdom and other parts of the world.'

**Revd Dr Michael I Bochenski (Minister) and Alan Thomas (Church Secretary)
for and on behalf of the Church's Trustees' Board – the Diaconate.**

Presented to the Annual Church Meeting on 24 June 2012