



# Annual Report 2015



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## Report from the Minister

*He said, "This is the message from the Lord to Zerubbabel:  
'Your help will not come from your own strength and power.  
No, your help will come from my Spirit.'*

*Zechariah 4:6*



I don't know if any of you have seen the film Exodus: Gods and Kings, starring Christian Bale. I saw it at the beginning of the year when it was in the cinema, and its loosely based on the Exodus story found in the Bible. I say loosely, it was a bit flexible with the biblical story, but overall I was pretty impressed. Anyway, I digress. What really struck me about the film was a dialogue between Moses and God. Moses had returned to Egypt to rescue God's people from slavery, and he tried to do it in his strength. He used the skills he had picked up as the general of Pharaoh's army (I told you it was 'loose') and decided to use terrorist tactics to bring about the downfall of the empire. Although his tactics were successful, they were never going to be enough to bring any real change. That's when God steps in. He tells Moses that things are happening too slowly, and instead of relying on his own strength and ability, Moses should take a back seat, and watch God get to work. That's when the plagues start. Now that bit of theatre really spoke to me, and backed up by other means God started to talk to me about the year that was to come at Ramridge. Sure we had done a lot in the church, and things were ticking over nicely, but if we want to see real change then God has to be behind it not us. We need to rely less on our own strengths and hard work, and instead seek God's vision, and God's purposes, and join in with the work he is already doing.

I believe we have just started to see the beginning of what God is doing in, with and through us, here at Ramridge.

This year we have seen 7 people become new Christians. Some through SOUL, some through The Gathering, some by regularly coming to church, some because of a particular service. Others have felt compelled to recommit their lives to God, whilst others have been prompted to consider baptism or church membership. We also had an amazing baptismal service, where 10 people shared with us the story of their faith journey, and entered the waters of baptism.

Our children's work is growing, our church is full of young people eager to learn about God. Our Sunday attendance is rising, and even our evening services are seeing new faces. We have gained 2 interns from Youthscape (Robert and Sophie), and they join Becca who is studying with Oasis and doing her work placement with us. We hope and pray that they will bear much good fruit whilst they are with us. There has also been a considerable rise in people aged between 20 and 25 coming along regularly to church and joining in with Distinctive.

As I write this I'm also reminded of the hugely positive experience that was The Election, and the conversations that were had as we offered refreshments at the Polling Station. Our local community is interested in us, and is willing to engage. This is clearly shown by the recent sports event held by the youth on the green outside the church where over the 2 days up to 20 children and young people off the estate joined in with the games.

I am feeling hugely positive about the things that God is doing within our growing fellowship, but I am also aware of the dangers. As more people come in, and we try and cater to their needs, it is all too easy to rely on our own strengths and not God's. We put on more events, and try and do as many good things as we possibly can. But God has not called us to what is good, but what is best. So our first response to our growth should be to come to God prayerfully and listen. We need to join together and discern what God wants us to do. There are many good things we could be doing, but they may not be what's best. Recent church growth findings highlighted that growing successful churches do a few things well. What are the few things that we can do well? Where is God taking us as a church? What is God already doing?

As we move forward into 2016, I believe that we will experience significant challenge and change. This prospect maybe daunting, but God will not abandon us. Even if the going gets difficult, we can be confident that if we are following in God's footsteps we have nothing to fear, as God will be there to protect us, comfort us, and lead us forward.

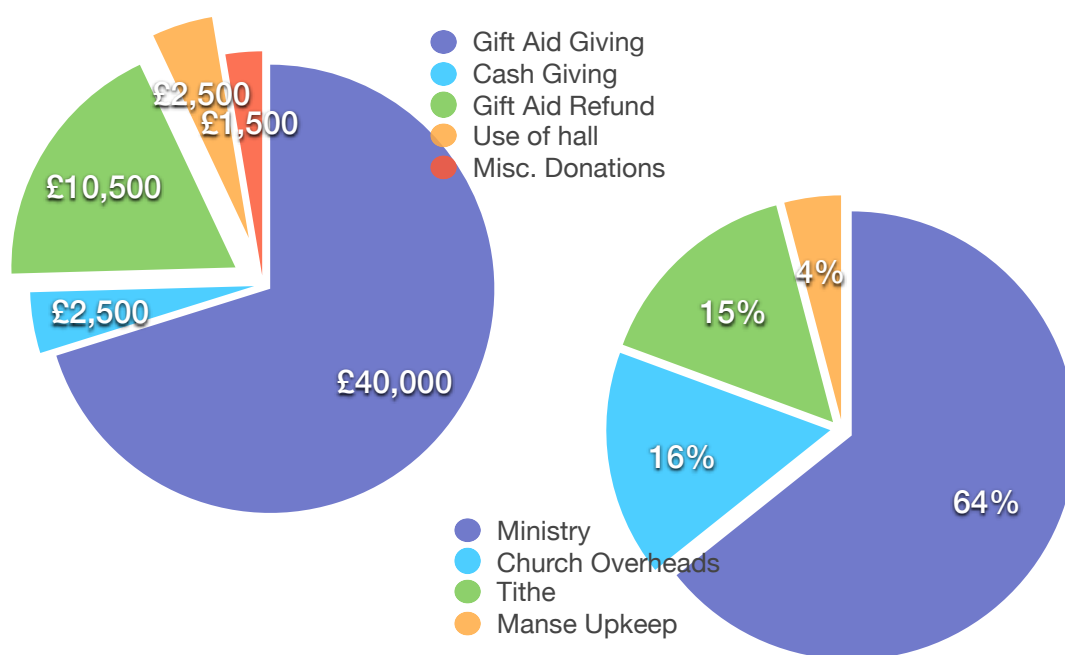
*Martin Shorey*

# Report from the Treasurer

## Overview:

- RBC is in the fortunate position as an entirely self-sustaining church financially, with no debt, property assets worth circa £600k, a healthy current balance, an income level that enables full time ministry and the various activities/initiatives of the church, together with a giving 15% from income to Christian causes.

## Facts:



- RBC income streams are – Gift Aid Giving £40,000, Cash giving £2500, Gift Aid refund £10,500, Use of Hall £2500 and miscellaneous donation £1500 – to make £57000 pa. With 39 church members this is an average of £1100 per person pa, excluding HMRC refund.
- Costs, without exceptional items such as property refurbishment, are £55000 approximately, split as follows – Ministry 63%, Church overheads 16%, Tithe 15%, Manse upkeep 4%
- Essential to the ongoing work at RBC, there have been capital projects in the past few years to finance refurbishment of the Church Hall, painting of the Church exterior, and re-roofing of the Manse. These were financed from a mixture of Church Reserves, Current Account and Grants. The impact was to reduce Church Reserves from £75k to the current £13k whilst the current bank balance has recovered through HMRC Gift Aid refunds.

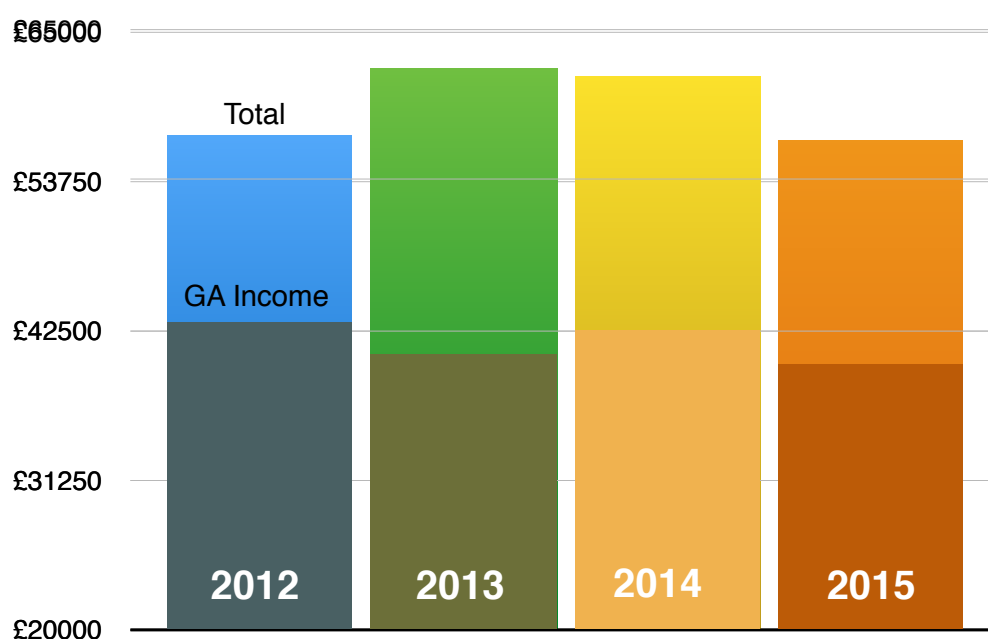
## Going forward:

- The church is growing both spiritually and numerically which are healthy indicators. With this the scope and range of our overall ministry increases, naturally leading to greater financial outlay.
- In 2016 we will see the valuable expansion of the Youth Work, sparked by Becca's initiative together with our two Youthscape Graduates (Robert & Sophie). Some measure of financial investment in these young people will be needed.
- We will see new initiatives that follow on from the Christianity Explored course e.g. as Home Groups take on a different form and indeed expand. From this we hope to reach out to the Community in new and different ways
- Whilst major refurbishment costs are behind us there remain other projects to upgrade the church premises e.g. Church Gable end soffits, Hall media equipment and Manse driveway resurface.
- In short, our aspirations, under God's guidance are to not to maintain the status quo but to make an increasing impact on people's lives as we share Christ. This inevitably requires increased funds and this is reflected in the RBC 2016 Budget that accompanies this report.

## Challenges:

The figures below show that over the past 4 years our Gift Aid income level has fallen, whilst overall things have remained static.

	GA Income	Total Income	
2012	£43100	£57222	
2013	£40781	£62298	(Grants received)
2014	£42424	£61715	(Higher HMRC refund)
2015 (Projected)	£40000	£57000	



Given the overall economic climate this represents a significant achievement. However, as we initiate new areas of work and develop existing ones, a greater personal financial commitment will be needed. We each need to consider increasing our financial contribution as our part in achieving God's plan at RBC

*Barry Brown*

RBC Financial Budget for 2016						
	2015	39 WEEKS	Year end	2016	2016	
Cost/Income items	Budget	SEPTEMBER	Projected	Budget	Capital Projects	Estimate
Pastor Stipend	-19134	-14350	-19134	-19644	Manse Driveway	2500
Employers NIC (Pastor)	-1920	-1440	-1920	-1964	UPVC Rear Church Gable	2500
Pastor Pension	-8535	-5690	-8535	-8731	Other works provision	1000
Pastor - Nursery costs	-2916	-2187	-2916	-2916	Hall Multi Media:	
Manse Council Tax	-1500	-1514	-1514	-1600	Projector	500
Manse Phone	-360	-174	-240	-200	Speakers	300
Pastor expenses	-900	-600	-900	-900	Laptop	350
Manse Insurance	-210	-194	-194	-200	DVD Player - blue ray	250
Manse Energy	-1450	-1035	-1300	-950	Mini-mixer	300
Manse Water	-450	-494	-494	-500	Mobile console	150
Manse Expenses	-1000	-2809	-10500	-1000	Hall signage	800
Children & Young People	-200	-370	-450	-3800	<b>Total</b>	<b>8650</b>
Visiting Preachers	-300	-245	-300	-300		
Music & Worship	-150	-79	-150	-150		
Catering	-450	-263	-450	-400		
Outreach & Evangelism	-500	-148	-300	-1000		
Church telephone/Broadband	0	0	0	0		
Sundries	-200	-62	-200	-200		
Subscriptions (BU, GB, Website, etc)	-325	-501	-600	-600		
Music Copyright	-400	-399	-399	-400		
Fabric & Maintenance	-2000	-1334	-2000	-1000		
Electricity	-1000	-643	-900	-1000		
Water (Church)	-200	-98	-140	-140		
Cleaning	-520	-391	-520	-520		
Audio Visual	-1000	-471	-1000	-800		
Buildings & Contents Insurance	-1160	-1225	-1225	-1225		
Fellowship Fund	0	0	0	0		
15% Tithe	-8800	-4800	-8800	-8100		
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>-55580</b>	<b>-41516</b>	<b>-65081</b>	<b>-58240</b>		
Gift Aid Income	43000	29874	39832	39000		
Non Gift Aid	2400	1632	2176	2300		
Hall Hire	2500	1750	2500	2500		
Other income	600	1824	1824	0		
Interest	7	9	7	7		
Inland Revenue Refund	10600	10659	10659	10325		
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>59107</b>	<b>45748</b>	<b>56998</b>	<b>54132</b>		
<b>Difference</b>	<b>3527</b>	<b>4232</b>	<b>-8083</b>	<b>-4108</b>		
<b>Current A/c Balance 30.9.15</b>	<b>33212</b>					
BU Loan Fund	10801					
Redevelopment Fund	2292					
<b>Total</b>	<b>46305</b>					
<b>Average weekly figures to 30.9.15</b>	<b>30.9.15</b>			<b>Budget 2016</b>		
GA	766			1120		
NGA	42			42		
IR Refund	204			198		
<b>Total average weekly income</b>	<b>1012</b>			<b>1360</b>		



# Overview of 2015

## Some notable Highlights:

### Children Work



The past year has been an exciting year for the children's work. Heather and Michelle have joined their areas of responsibility into a shared one as it was felt that family events such as the Christmas Party, Light Party, Games afternoon etc (previously organised by Michelle) linked nicely with children's work such as Powerhouse, Christmas craft morning etc (previously organised by Heather). Both Heather and Michelle were

involved in organising and attending these events so having a joint role/area seemed appropriate. Powerhouse takes place on a Sunday morning, and is a place to introduce Jesus, provide opportunities to encounter Him and to foster a desire to grow closer to Him. In 2015 we experienced an increase in our weekly numbers and now have a minimum of 10 children aged between 3yrs – 10yrs each week.

### Youth Work

In April we decided to start 'Soul' the youth version of Christianity Explored, to the older young people. This went well and we had around 16 youth each week.

This led to follow up sessions over the summer, and then a weekly youth meeting on a Friday evening organised and led by Catriona Burns. This has been well attended and grown in a short time. We are also fortunate to have two volunteers working with us from Youthscape (Robert and Sophie), and Becca who is using us as her placement church for her youth work course at Oasis College. During half term we started outreach by going out and playing sports on the green. Around 20 new faces joined us, making a total of 30. We served hot chocolate, cakes and hotdogs. We had a very positive response and were asked to do this again.



### Sisters

We have continued to have our bi monthly meetings on Fridays from 7pm to 9pm. The meetings start with a social time of eating, Pizza, salads, drinks and sweets. We have had meetings focusing on intimacy with God, knowing and loving ourselves so that we can reach out to others. Every meeting has been special in its own way, helping us to draw closer to God and to each other. We have had precious times of praying for each other. On average we have had 12 sisters or more attending. We have had new sisters coming in which has been a great blessing. Our desire is to see every woman in the church owning it, seeing it as their group to be



encouraged and to draw others too.

### Men's Ministry

This is an hugely important area of ministry within the church, and one in which we growing. Every month there is an opportunity to share food together, either breakfast at the Brache, or Dinner at Venue 360. We also had an amazing time at CVM's The Gathering. We grew as a group of men, met with God in a very real way, and Tony became a Christian!



### Christianity Explored

For the first time we tried a process evangelism course called Christianity Explored. The whole church rallied together to put on a dessert evening, followed by teaching about Jesus. The course was successful and well attended, and a new home group is planned off the back of it.

### Baptismal Service - 22nd November

What an amazing service! A packed church, 10 baptismal candidates, some great stories of faith. The whole fellowship was hugely encouraged by this service and the baptisms that took place.



### Prayer

The Tuesday prayer meetings are going smoothly, and have continued with the core people attending each time. Meetings carried on throughout the summer break, which is very encouraging. There is generally an understanding among the team such that the absence of Jonathan or myself does not affect the meetings. Everyone is willing and able to lead the prayer meetings. We have seen an answer to a lot of our petitions and intercessions.

Prayer also takes place before each church service, 10 - 10.15am. This is a time to pray specifically for the service and those attending. Its also a time to pray for protection, and discern any areas of spiritual concern that need focussed prayer.

### Talent Show

A great fun evening - how can such a small church have so much talent? Everyone who attended had a great time, and money was raised for Lendy Park, but what was great to see was so many young people willing and courageous enough to take part in the evening.

### Visit to First Baptist Church, Varna

The relationship between Ramridge and First Baptist has continued to grow, and prayer requests have been exchanged regularly. We were also able to help fund their manse project with a gift of just over £2000. The church successfully purchased a manse and Barry and Brian flew over to attend their thanksgiving service in October.

### Church Members' AGM

In November the church had its first AGM in many years. This was an opportunity for all church members to gather together, to reaffirm their covenant to one another, to celebrate the successes of the year, and to prayerfully look towards the next. The morning was spent discussing business and we found it difficult to stop for lunch (which was a delicious hotdog). The afternoon was a time to pray, reflect on the morning, and listen to God.

### St Albans Sleepout

On Friday 4th December, 25 of us (ages ranging from 13 to 57) headed off to St Albans Abbey for the annual Sleepout to raise funds for LAMP. We were all hopeful for mild weather as it had been forecast. Whilst it wasn't particularly cold for December, we had an unexpected visitor for the night called Storm Desmond! Whilst it wasn't a pleasant night for most of us, we still felt an enormous sense of achievement for doing it and a huge relief that we didn't have to do it again for another year, unlike some of the homeless young people that LAMP supports who have had to sleep rough night after night. We raised a terrific total of almost £2000 which is a great help to LAMP.



### Christmas

Christmas this year saw some changes to our usual time table of events. Rather than sing carols at the Airport and around the estate, we had an informal carol service on the green outside the



church, and served mince pies and mulled wine. For the 2nd year, the worship group led carols at Ramridge Primary School's Christmas Concert, and this was very well received. We also put on our biggest event of the year - the carol service! This was a great success, and was very well attended. The Christmas Day service was also well attended and went well a part from the tinned shepherds pie that stuck the church out and made the front few rows gag!

# Plans for 2016

Jesus told his followers to go and tell the world about him. This encapsulates the two values of mission and discipleship. At Ramridge we want to build our work in these two values as we move forward in 2016.

## Discipleship

### Home groups

Home groups are not a new thing at Ramridge, and they have been successful in many ways. However in recent years they have existed but they haven't really changed in format, nor has there been a drive to gain new members. We would like to put much more emphasis on home groups in 2016, with a new format, a renewed focus, and defined purposes.

We hope that our home groups will be:

- a place where relationships are formed, and friendships deepen
- a place of care, comfort, advice, mutual support, and prayer
- a place of discipleship and growth
- a place of teaching, learning, and faith formation
- a place of mission

### Study and Training

Last year we had a successful Christianity Explored course where we shared the good news of Jesus Christ with Christians and non-Christians alike. This was a really positive time for all involved, and even those who have been Christians for many years found the course challenging, entertaining, and informative. We would like to make this a regular part of the Ramridge calendar, though the course and form may alter each year. Also, there are many other areas in which training/teaching would be of benefit to all those who are part of Ramridge Baptist church. We will therefore be launching a teaching plan for the year, where numerous courses will be available to all who wish to attend.

## Mission

### Social Events

After feedback from the Conflabs, it was decided that there would be a social calendar planned for 2016 which will have 2 differing but complimentary emphases. These social events will be a way to build relationships within the church fellowship - a time to have fun together, and enjoy each others company. This might take the form of a charity event, or a trip to the seaside. The other purpose of this calendar is to invite friends and family along as a way of introducing them to the church and Christians. This is not a time to preach the gospel to them (though I wouldn't rule that

out), but to build relationships with them, and show them that the church really does have something to offer them.

These events will be aimed at different ages groups, but what they all need is YOU! We need you to help set up/run these events, and more importantly turn up to chat to visitors. Here are the events planned for 2016:

Saturday 16 <sup>th</sup> January	High Tea for the over 60s with special guest 3-5pm
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Saturday 5 <sup>th</sup> March	Quiz night 7.30pm
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Saturday 19 <sup>th</sup> March	Easter Games
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Saturday 11 <sup>th</sup> June	RBC seaside trip
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Monday 29 <sup>th</sup> August	Car rally
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Saturday 29 <sup>th</sup> October	Light Party
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Saturday 12 <sup>th</sup> November	Winter warmer cèilidh
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Friday ? <sup>th</sup> December	St Albans Sleepout
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### Engaging with the Community

Earlier in the year a few of us prayed about what the key thing was that we needed to do as a church. What emerged from that prayer time was a need to break down the barriers that separate us from the community in which we are situated. During half term the youth very successfully did some sports on the green outside the church, and many new contacts were made. We also had a fun time singing carols outside the church on the green. The key thing we want to do is engage and work with our community. Rather than putting on events for the community, how can we work with the community? How can we be good neighbours? How can we be influential in our area? What are the needs of our community? What sort of people live around us? We have started to

look at these questions in Conflab, but this must go beyond good ideas. This needs few resources, little planning, but plenty of prayer and courage. We believe that this is a wave of God's Spirit that he wants us to jump on and ride - are we willing to do that?

We will not be having the Church Summer Fete this year, but there are plans to get involved with the Ramridge Primary School Fete on Saturday 2nd July. This will be an amazing opportunity for all of us to go along, have fun, take part, and be in our community.



## The Leadership (Trustees)

### *Core Leadership*



Martin Shorey  
*Minister*



Barry Brown  
*Treasurer*



Kirk Dumbleton  
*DBS*



Ian Jackson  
*Secretary*

### *Deacons*



Heather  
Dumbleton  
*Family Ministry*



Sally Jackson  
*Pastoral/Social*



Jonathan  
Adeyemi  
*Prayer*



Andrew Jackson  
*Worship*



Sabina Madiri  
*Prayer + Sisters*



Michelle Baldock  
*Family Ministry*