ANNUAL REPORT
2025/26



Oakham
BAPTIST CHURCH

Reconciling Rutland to the Kingdom of God



Hollie being baptised; a real story of God's love breaking through.

A WORD FROM TOM

Reconciling Rutland to the Kingdom of God.
It's still the mission and I don't know about you but I feel that we are more aligned with this vision than ever before. I feel like the wonderful prepatory work God has been doing over the last 5 years is now coming into land.
The Church is now the centre of hope for the county that God called us to, it is the place of trust we longed fopr it to be, and it is a source of help and calm for so many people on a daily basis.

We are busy! God is good! The Kingdom is coming! Hallelujah.

Over the next few pages our deacons share a little about the areas they lead and reflect over the year that has been.
I know it will bring you joy to read it.



MINISTER'S REPORT

03

The past

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.
Eph 4: 4-6

So let's take a look at what main "aims" we laid out in the future section of last years report and as you read them, see if you can identify how we have approached them...

- Personal faith growth for members
- Renewed excitement for discipleship
- A hunger for more Holy Spirit occurances
- A creation of deliberate spaces for healing and ministry
- Building phase 1 commencement
- Diversification of worship gatherings (missional communities)
- Uppingham presence increasing

Looking at these plans, and I think this every year, how much God constantly goes beyond our expectations. Some of these things have come to pass, some are still growing, and some God took a whole new direction on and implemented them in a way we could not have guessed. In every sense this has been a great year; we've done lots together (Rodeos, Indian Feasts, Karaoke to name just a few) and Jesus has guided us every step of the way. What a great God.

The present

This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.
Eph 3: 6

I echo exactly what I wrote last year...
What a great year!We've had some amazing baptisms and conversions, some great new friendships have grown and new people welcomed into God's eternal Kingdom. We have also said farewell to some members; some to eternal glory and others to the next stage of their journey with God- all healthy signs of the body of Christ.

If I get to write this same reflection every year I will be a happy pastor.

Our 2025 focussed on enlarging our tents and continuing with the work already in motion, but throughout the year this changed and developed, and then into 2026 everything took a fabulously dramatic change with the acquisition of Cornerstone House. This asset changes how we operate pretty much all of church life, especially our witness and discipleship.

2025 we continued to press ahead with growth plans which have been very fruitful in terms of building RCC relationship which will bode well for all that is to come. Throughout the year we started to look at more of our internal relationships recognising that because we expanded so rapidly there were discipleship gaps opening up ad thus 2026 the focus was deepening our personal faith and our collective belonging as a church family. Our Missional Communities, especially Gathering Place, have grown and our Sunday services have found a rhythm with the 6pm rotations. Giving Communion a more central and dedicated space once a month has also been warmly received.

Overall what a great place to be in as a Church; very healthy, lots of answered prayers and a huge amount of potential for God to keep doing increasingly more both in and through us.
It's super exciting being a member of OBC right now.

The future

"For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."
Ephesians 2:10

Does anybody else feel like you've been catapulted 4 years forward in terms of God's plans? I do!
We had ideas of growth and discipleship, community witness and interaction in our heads all stemming from the completion of the new building and then all of a sudden it is here and God has cut a few years (and a large financial strain) from our timelines. So in view of these accelerated plans He has had, I have had to rethink the church's trajectory over 2026 into 2027, With that in mind, these are the areas I see us developing and focussing upon...

- Completing the purchase of Cornerstone House.
- The creation of The Rutland Hub and the start of our associated ministries.
- Planning placed for the conversion of the current building.
- 3-4 new Life Groups starting.
- Gathering Place meeting more frequently and beginning to form their own identity.
- Solidifying of Missional Communities.
- Utilising Discipleship Books, a journey of deepening our relationships.
- A clarity on OBC structures and direction stemming from Welcome Meals.
- An increased sense of Oneness and Belonging.

The Gathering Place; Uppingham (every 1st Sunday at 1pm)





06

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES

From Gill Day- Family Deacon

It's been another great year for children and youth at Oakham Baptist Church. On Sundays we are busy with all 5 in groups, as is evident by the mass exodus each week during the morning service. A huge team of volunteers is required to serve our children and young people. Thank you to everyone who serves faithfully, you are really appreciated by children and parents alike. We are blessed to have Madeleine and Su working tirelessly to enable this work to continue. Thank you both for your hard work. We are delighted that Su Ogunyemi joined the staff team this year after Sue started her ministerial training. She brings many gifts and experience to the role.

During the week Fuel Wednesdays runs as a space for youngsters in years 6-11 to meet up and bring friends. This has been a roaring success. Thanks again to the great team of volunteers and Su.

The youth trip away to Limitless was a great success with development of our young peoples' faith and sense of belonging. Plans are well in hand for this year's trip to Wildfires.

Tiddlers meets on Mondays and is attended by over 25 children with their parents and carers. Our aim is to build relationships and share the love of God with these families. Song time is a very popular part of our time together and parents go home singing 'leaning on the Lord's side' whether they like it or not!! We include a short bible story to remind everyone of the love of our God. We have an amazing team of gifted volunteers who engage with adults and children to make this such a successful and popular group. Thank you everyone for your hard work and dedication.

LEt's GO build! is still very popular meeting monthly on Saturday afternoons. Again another group of passionate volunteers make this such a success.

During school holidays we also run craft days, café creative sessions, SEND play sessions and a uniform swap. Last summer we ran a holiday club in July which was appreciated by parents and great fun for the children.

Our aim is to build relationships through these events, and it has been really encouraging for us to see many familiar faces attending. We put these events on with a minimal charge so that we can bless families and make it accessible to all. All these activities are designed to bridge into the community and demonstrate God's love in action

This year we started running Tea time church once a term on Sunday afternoons, this is designed as a bridge between our events and church. This is beginning to show success with families attending who do not regularly come to church.

All these activities only happens as a team of people work together using their talents to grow God's kingdom in Rutland. Thanks to all who planned and helped with these events.

Please pray for God to work through these activities, to show those we meet the love and peace of God.

Martha's Place, a monthly get together with tea, cake and a short service continues to attract our older clientele. Huge thanks to Steve and his team for this venture.

In the year ahead we would like to continue with the same bridges we have built into the community. We pray that the blessings we share will bring fruit in His Kingdom.

This year we have had joy together from 100th birthdays to baptisms and lots of celebrations for this great family.











08

SERVICES & GATHERINGS

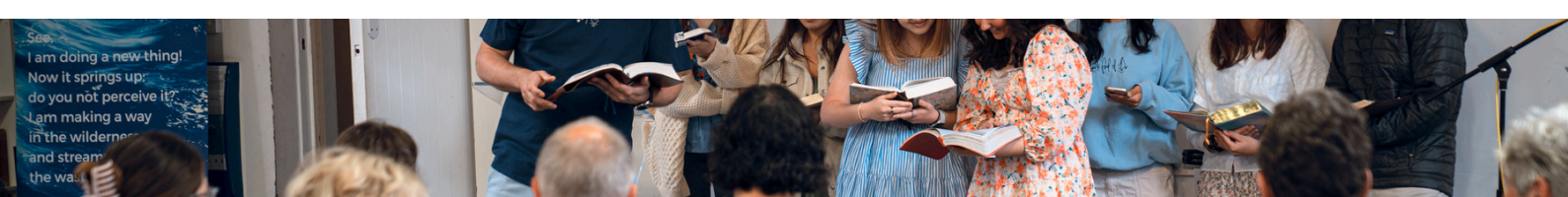
From Lotty Brown- Services Deacon

My role changed this year to overseeing services which includes our Missional communities. (Cycling church, walking church, the Gathering Place, Martha's place, teatime church) which have seen a mix of regular members and visitors. If you haven't tried one I would really encourage you to think and pray about getting involved. It's a great opportunity to invite friends to something less formal than a traditional church setting.

Our worship team continues to bless us musically on a Sunday morning and have shared some 'jam sessions' and time together to grow and learn more about what it really means to lead people into a place of worship. We have seen new members stepping up to lead on a Sunday and the team is always on the lookout for more musicians with a heart for worship. I want to thank Poppy for all she does in organising and leading the team. We are also exploring the possibility of having a worship intern to further develop the team.

If you are interested in serving on any of the teams involved in our services do get in touch (welcome, worship, prayer, refreshments or Missional communities)







DISCIPLESHIP

From Karen Holland- Discipleship Deacon

One of areas to oversee is Life Group. We currently have 12 LGs covering Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings, a Monday lunch time and a Tuesday afternoon. With 121 people attending. This is because of a committed team of leaders that have a heart to love and lead people in the Christian life. I want to thank these brothers and sisters for their service and faithfulness week by week in the encouragement of their groups. And indeed for those that attend that are eager to learn and live in Jesus. If there are those that are not in a Life group and would like to please do come and speak to me.

I also oversee Discipleship. There are a team of people that are willing to meet on a one to one basis to encourage a personal relationship with Christ. We are excited to have a new Mentoring Scheme covering 9 sessions. The idea is to meet regularly (most likely once a month) and delve into areas of discipleship together. If you feel that you need that personal discussion and encouragement and can commit to that regularity, then please do contact me. Again I thank these brothers and sisters for their love for Christ and wanting others to experience that love too.

I also oversee the Pastoral Team. These are people who have a heart and concern for those in need. We try and help where we can with reading Gods Word and praying and taking communion to them if requested, to visit and listen and hopefully lighten the day, to help with transport if possible. Although many have their Life Groups for support we recognise some need extra help or indeed don't go to a Life Group. If you feel you need a little help contact me or Fiona Birchall or Colleen and Phil Brett. Again I want to thank these brothers and sisters for their love for Gods people and wanting to bring Christs healing to them.





The Rodeo was a stunning success for the church

OUTREACH

From Suzanne Johnson- Outreach Deacon

Well, what a year it's been! Our doors have regularly been open to many, many visitors, some of whom have made OBC their home along the way, and many of whom have received much from their encounters with the church family. Our reputation in the community is very strong and well supported as we continue to grow and reach out in lots of ways.

Our first big event was our Rodeo in Cutts Close, which brought about 3,500 visitors and saw our incredible barbecue team serve over 1,800 free hot dogs and burgers! Added to which, we ran a brilliant café with cakes, a rodeo bull and bouncy castle, line dancing and games, all focused around an open-air service. We were proud to include our first ever sensory space and welcome people who may otherwise have found the event a challenge. It's fair to say the event was very well received and reinforced our reputation with the Rutland community.

We have continued with many of our community activities; Tiddlers, Martha's Place, craft days, Fuel Wednesdays, Friday lunch and café, etc. It is difficult to report on so many activities, but the work being done amongst all of these groups is outstanding and continues to connect people to our church and ultimately to our Lord Jesus.

Friday Café has grown a lot over the last 12 months since the time changed to 1-3pm. There's a group of around 35-40 people that come regularly and we rotate crafts, quiz and curry, games, and recently introduced speakers on 'Pudding Friday' which is the 2nd Friday of the month.

2 successful Alpha courses have been completed, with many attendees coming to faith and continuing to journey their faith with us. We tried one at a lunch time slot after Cafe and that worked really well.



Some of team who covered 2 days at Samaritan's Purse

We once again held our very popular Uniform Swap in August, which always sees a huge take up from the community. This is a service which is particularly appreciated as it saves families a lot of money and saves clothes from going to landfill.
In November we enjoyed collecting shoeboxes gifts for Operation Christmas Child, welcoming people in being a Collection Centre for them, and sending two teams to the Processing Centre in Coventry to help sort, pray over them and send them on their way to children who may not receive a gift at all.

Christmas was a fabulous affair with packed out carol services, birthday donkeys and the always popular Christmas day meal which was yet again a massive hit both for those attending and in terms of our reputation.

We have had 2 Easters in this annual period, last year we held a Maundy Meal and Good Friday prayer spaces. This Easter we ran a 'Find Jesus' hunt around Oakham which was a huge success, supported by Tesco who donated chocolate Easter egg prizes, to which we added a card which said 'we all need a little Jesus'. This had QR codes for people to discover more about Christianity. Around 85 children/people took eggs and there our Good Friday café with free barbecue was extremely popular
.
Our presence on social media continues to increase engagement and awareness across the community, and more and more people have lovely things to say about the work we do. Huge thanks go out to everyone who helps us to achieve all the many things we do as we continue to walk out our faith in the beautiful place to which God has called us.



12

OPERATIONS

From Andy Sugden- Ops Deacon

This year saw the creation of the new role of Operations Deacon, established to help support the wide range of activities taking place within the life of the church and to ensure that our building(s) and operations are safe, compliant, and running smoothly. The role will focus on providing practical oversight behind the scenes, supporting ministry to flourish by ensuring that necessary operational, legal, and contractual matters are managed and not a distraction.

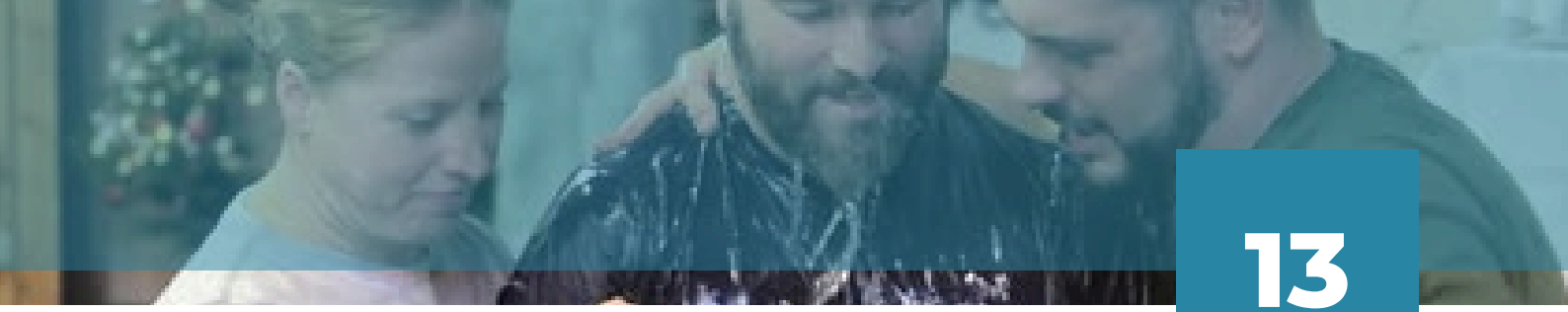
The Operations Deacon also has responsibility for Safeguarding, with the Designated Person for Safeguarding (DPS) reporting into this role, helping to ensure that safeguarding processes are clearly supported and embedded within church operations.

The role has also provided practical support to the minister, in relation to staffing and contractual matters. Assistance this year has included support for the recruitment of the new youth worker, and the introduction and updating of employee contracts.

Overall, the introduction of the Operations Deacon role will provide support to the leadership into the year ahead and support with the additional buildings and the requirements that coming with managing them.



Andy surveying the future Hub Cafe kitchen for all the essentials



IN PICTURES

Church meetings, Birthdays and Volunteer celebrations; all useful excuses to eat together







Believe, Be Baptised, Become; the guiding principles of discipleship at OBC











A FINAL WORD...

From Tom

I want to end with a prayer, thanking God for all He has done, and al He is planning to do through the year ahead...

Loving Lord we have seen you move in phenomenal and miraculous ways over the last year. You continue to astound us with your love, grace and how far you go with us and for us. Thank you for all you have done in Rutland as you continue to work out your mission to reconcile it to your Kingdom.
We look with longing and anticipation for all You have planned for us over the year ahead.
May we walk confidently, courageously and courteously into the next phase of your plans for us as they unfold in our lives.

Through Christ our Lord we pray. Amen.

I hope this report has been an encouragement to you as it has been to me as I write it, reflecting back over another great year.
May God's blessings be on every one of you.

Tom