



th – from a new congregation in a nightclub area to a weekday church - as part

The Church of England is to fund a bold series of projects to spread the Christian faith – from a new congregation in a nightclub area to a weekday church - as part of a £35 million investment in mission, it was announced today.

The biggest investment so far by the Church of England's Renewal and Reform programme is intended to help it reach tens of thousands of people including in city centres, outer estates and rural areas.

The grants will pioneer new types of churches - which may be far from the traditional image - along with outreach by the Church of England, from a social media pastor to work with school and community choirs.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, said: "Hearing and responding to the good news of Jesus Christ unlocks new joy, new belonging, new purpose and new life.

"These projects show the dynamism and drive of the Church of England's mission to share this good news with people throughout our dioceses and parishes.

"We are committed to this work because we want everyone to know how much they are loved by God through Jesus Christ, and how they can find that love for themselves."

The areas which will receive the funding boost include Birmingham, Bradford, Gateshead, Ipswich, Leeds, Portsmouth, Preston, Rotherham, Southend and Stockton-on-Tees.

In Bradford, a church with a planned gym and café on site is to be created in a nightclub area in the centre of the city as part of the Church of England's mission to students and young adults.

In Leeds, congregations that meet throughout the week rather than Sundays will be set up at Holy Trinity Church in the city centre aimed at attracting professionals working in the area.

The Diocese of Sheffield has been awarded funding including investment for music specialists at Rotherham Minster to work with school and community choirs in the town.

In Suffolk, a grant has been made available to help create small worshipping communities meeting mainly in houses in rural areas with the aim of supporting new forms of church gatherings in the region.

Several of the grants will boost the Church of England's presence in areas with high student populations. In Durham, St Nic's Church, in the centre of the city, will seek to engage with the further education sector, building on existing work amongst university students.

Also in Durham, a new group will be established, The Community of St Cuthbert, inspired by the monastic tradition.

The Church will support mission work in the digital sphere with the appointment of a social media pastor – a lay or ordained role – based at Stockton Parish Church, in the Diocese of Durham, and a digital media post in Suffolk.

In the Diocese of York, ministers will be placed in 13 parishes with a focus on outreach to people in their 20s to 40s. There will also be funding to train lay people to work with this age group, and development of St Michael-le-Belfrey Church in York as a centre for planting new congregations focused on younger adults.

The spending round includes funding for mission work through the Church of England's Anglo-Catholic tradition. In Lancashire, the City of Preston Parish, of Preston Minster and the Anglo-Catholic St George's Church, is to expand its outreach, including to under 25s and students in the town. Lincoln Cathedral has received funding to act as a centre for catholic mission for the diocese.

Churches in the Anglo Catholic tradition in east London and Essex, areas of rapid population growth, will be supported to create new congregations.

St Alban and St Martin churches on the Becontree Estate in Barking and Dagenham, the largest housing estate in Europe, are to receive funding for a new church in the parish.

The grants from the Church of England's Strategic Development Fund have been awarded to the dioceses as part of the Renewal and Reform programme aimed at creating a growing church for all people and for all places.

Debbie Clinton, Director of the Church of England's Renewal and Reform programme, said: "From a church in a nightclub area to weekday congregations and a social media pastor, the Church of England is not afraid to try something new to ensure it continues to serve every community in the country.

"We believe that everyone should have a chance to experience the hope of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the fellowship of belonging to a Christian community wherever they live, whether in an urban city centre, an outer housing estate or in remote rural areas."

Here is the full list of dioceses to receive grants:

Diocese of Birmingham

People & Places (P&P) is a major diocese-wide initiative which sets out a framework for church leadership, ministry and mission. P&P will invest in enabling more local mission by developing small, collaborative, local teams of lay and ordained leaders. Church growth will further be supported by investing in new church plants, fresh expressions of church and context specific ministries.

Strategic Development Funding awarded of £5 million.

Diocese of Blackburn

Work in the Parish of Preston Minster (St John) and St George's in Preston city centre. This fresh focus in Preston includes remits to reach those aged under 25 years old; to the local student population and those with no current church connection. The project will also seek to plant new churches on Preston's existing estates; on new housing estates planned for the future around Preston city centre and also in the wider County of Lancashire.

Strategic Development Funding of £1.5 million over five years.

Diocese of Chelmsford

Plans for 11 new congregations and a development programme for lay and ordained people across the diocese. St. John's Church in Southend town centre to become a 'resource' church providing support for the development of new worshipping communities. St. John's Church in Stratford, east London to work with All Hallows, Bow, on outreach work in a new housing development. There are also plans for a new Anglo Catholic congregation to be founded on the Becontree Estate in Barking and Dagenham and a series of worshipping communities on new housing estates in Stanway, near Colchester.

Strategic Development Funding of £3.85 million over five years.

Diocese of Durham

Investment in five existing churches in the centres of Bishop Auckland, Durham City, Gateshead, Stockton Central, and Washington with these churches in turn supporting the creation of more worshipping communities. The project will train leaders and teams through the Community of St Cuthbert, Cranmer Hall theological training college; and a ministry experience volunteer scheme.

Strategic Development Funding of £3.9 million over six years

Diocese of Leeds

Funding includes work for weekday congregations at Holy Trinity Church, Boar Lane, Leeds, from professionals in the city centre, and starting a city centre church in a nightclub area in Bradford with the aim of sending out missional congregations around the city.

Strategic Development Funding of £3.9 million over six years.

Diocese of Lincoln

Three 'resourcing' churches will be developed from three existing large churches: St Swithin's, Lincoln; St George's, Stamford; and Lincoln Cathedral. These churches will establish or revitalise eight more churches across the diocese's urban centres. Lincoln Cathedral will be developed into a centre for formation in catholic mission.

Strategic Development Funding of £2.67 million over five years.

Diocese of Portsmouth

St Margaret's Church, Southsea, to receive funding to move from a community centre into a restored church building. St Luke's in Southsea to employ two pioneer ministers to support its work with teenagers and young adults, and on developing working spaces for lone workers and entrepreneurs. Harbour Church to receive support to consolidate work in two new city congregations, within St George's Church, Portsea, and St Alban's Church, Copnor.

SDF award of £2.18 million.

Diocese of Sheffield

To create 'resourcing' churches in Rotherham, Wath and Goole, aimed at supporting the creation of 23 new congregations and 36 new activities including café churches, community meals, singing groups and support groups in the diocese.

Strategic Development Funding of £3.52 million.

Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich

Six new churches in Ipswich, alongside investment in new forms of church gatherings and funding for growth in all parishes. In rural Suffolk, there will be funding for innovative 'small missional ecclesial groups' aimed at reaching people who want to explore the Christian faith.

Strategic Development Funding of £4.95 million.

Diocese of York

Full-time ministers to be placed in 13 parishes to develop new worshipping communities focusing on people aged in their 20s to 40s. A dedicated fund will help identify and train 25 lay people to work with this age group. St Michael-le-Belfrey Church in York will be developed as a centre for development of new congregations.

Strategic Development Funding of £3.07 million over six years.

Notes to editors

Strategic Development Funding supports mission projects in the Church of England as part of the programme of Renewal and Reform.

Applications from dioceses are considered by the Strategic Investment Board – a Committee of the Archbishops' Council.



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