



GREENHOUSE
Designing, growing and cultivating
fresh expressions



**THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND**

SUMMARY FOR DIOCESES



Fresh Expressions of Church (FXC) have a proven track record of growing new Christian communities and revitalising existing ones. It can be a key part of supporting diocesan strategies to deepen and increase Christian discipleship across the region in a focused and structured way.

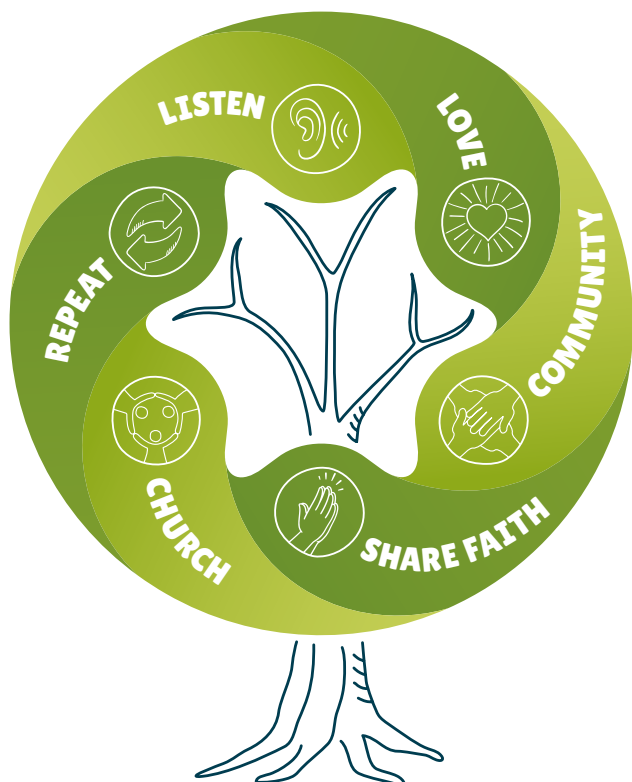
Greenhouse enables a clear and purposeful plan for supporting the growth of FXC, through supporting the teams leading them to become resilient and adaptable, and their growth be sustainable.

Teams leading FXC will receive an integrated structure of support, tailored to each participating diocese, comprising 5 elements:

- **shared focus** – the loving–first cycle (see diagram on next page), through which teams will journey at their own pace and in their own way;
- **Just–in–time inspiration** through the ‘fx: Godsend’ material, which contains frameworks and methodologies that teams will access at each stage of the cycle;
- **planning and support** through a 6–monthly gathering of the Community of Practice, in which teams will encourage each other in doing their planning;
- **ongoing mutual support** from participating teams via social media;
- **Zoom–based coaching** for teams that need it.



Shared focus



The focus will be on progressing through the developmental cycle (above). Teams will be introduced to a ‘stage, step, celebrate’ method of reflection that will help them:

- **To identify the next stage** on their journey through the cycle – most likely the next circle.
- **To plan the next step** toward that stage. To celebrate the completion of each step. To adopt an holistic approach to mission. The cycle includes a wide range of kingdom values – listening (ie respect for others), the Great Commandment to love people, community, the Great Commission to make disciples, church, and repeat (which witnesses to the expansive nature of the kingdom). The cycle maps well on to the five marks of mission, but instead of being a list it is a process.
- **To see progress**, which – according to research – motivates people. Greenhouse enables people to see progress toward a missional goal – the

next stage of the cycle. Indeed, Greenhouse is potentially quite revolutionary for the church. It encourages teams to keep mission at the centre of their thinking and to have the joy of seeing progress toward it.

- **To strengthen their unity** as members all pull toward the same goal. For example, if some team members want the team to meet more often, this can be quite divisive if it is addressed in isolation from the missional objective. But once the team has decided what to do to move toward the next stage of the missional cycle, the issue may well fall into place: ‘To do this, we’re going to have to meet more often.’
- **To be intentional and strategic** in their planning. Teams will be less likely go off at tangents, get pulled in different directions or lose their missional focus because they will have a single missional goal – to get to the next stage.
- **To adopt a methodology** used by a growing number of people leading fresh expressions in the UK and elsewhere. For example, the Protestant Church of the Netherlands (PKN) draws together almost 100 teams in a learning community for those leading Fresh Expressions. The ‘loving–first cycle’ is central to their work.



Self-paced learning

Teams will be inspired and informed by the 'FX: Godsend' material, available as an app and on the Greenhouse website. Godsend contains frameworks, methodologies and stories that will help teams navigate each stage of the cycle.

This will enable teams:

- To access the wisdom accumulated from 15 years or more of fresh expressions and allied disciplines – no need for leaders of new Christian communities to fly blind.
- To learn at their own pace, in their own way. Team members can view Godsend material together over a cup of coffee, or they can view it on their own and then discuss it as a group. And again they have options – discuss it face-to-face or via social media.
- To access what learning they need, when they need it. Teams needn't do a course in advance, learning things 'just in case' they are useful. They can access 'just-in-time' learning instead. Or, if they want, they can do a course, and then follow it up with Godsend.

Communities of Practice

Teams will meet twice-yearly in a community of practice for planning, team and personal formation, and mutual support. They will be introduced to a flexible structure for their planning, based on progressing through the 'loving-first cycle', and centred on three questions:

1. **What is?** (What have we done? What have we learnt? Where are we on the cycle?)
2. **What could be?** (What steps might take us toward the next stage of the cycle?)
3. **What will be?** (What step(s) will we take? Who will do what by when? How will we celebrate when we've done it?).

Issues of team and personal formation will be addressed by input on, and discussion of a relevant topic during the day. These topics will be designed to strengthen team members' relationships:

- With God directly in prayer, study and worship.
- With the missional context.
- With the wider church (eg through prayer partners and by learning from others).
- Within the team and within the new community that emerges.

Teams will be encouraged to pray together, share what they are learning and support one another. Values of honesty and vulnerability will be especially emphasised. Communities of practice will be encouraged to model these values to aid team and personal formation.



Support via Social Media

Between meetings of the community of practice, teams will be encouraged to support each other via social media – e.g. by exchanging news and prayer requests, sharing ideas and material that work and asking each other questions.

This will enable:

- Experience and expertise within the teams to be pooled for the benefit of all.
- Teams to experience an ongoing supportive community.
- Teams to become accountable to one another, increasing their accountability overall.

Skype/Zoom-based Mentoring

Teams that get stuck or need help will be encouraged to seek advice from other teams. If they still need help, the diocesan Greenhouse facilitator, in consultation with the national team if necessary, will arrange coaching support, normally on Skype or Zoom.

Responsibility for leading the project in each diocese will lie with a full or part-time enabler (the 'Greenhouse facilitator'), employed by the diocese or network. The facilitator will be encouraged to recruit a small team of assistants, who will gain the experience needed to help multiply Greenhouses in the diocese.

How will Greenhouse work?

A small national team, located in the Church of England's Evangelism and Discipleship Team, will provide advice and resources. These resources will comprise wisdom and learning from the experience of fresh expressions generally and from FX Greenhouse in particular, including:

- Templates, facilitation tools and other materials.
- Skype/Zoom-based consultations before (planning) and after (review) each community of practice meeting, and at other times as necessary.
- Training in facilitation skills.

Launching a Greenhouse typically involves a few simple steps.

- 1. Identify potential teams** by meeting with gate-keepers.
- 2. Sow Seeds** – host a day for clergy and potential team leaders (to explain new Christian communities, introduce Greenhouse, and invite applications to be involved).

- 3. Water** – arrange follow-up conversations, where necessary, to answer questions etc.
- 4. Germinate** – host a Launch Evening/ Half Day for participating teams (to introduce Greenhouse).
- 5. Nurture Seedlings** – Teams discuss first five units in FX Godsend app.
- 6. Greenhouse** – First Gathering. Teams gather for their first one-day 'community of practice'.

The essential DNA of Greenhouse is:

- A focus on teams.
- Commitment by participating teams to the four values of being missional (working mainly with people outside the church), contextual (progressing through the loving-first cycle in ways that fit the setting), formational (seeking to be a means to make disciples and form people in the Christian faith), and ecclesial (starting a new Christian community connected to the wider church).
- The five constituent elements (p2-5).
- Co-creation by the national team, diocese and participating teams. (The resources provided by the national team should be seen less as a blueprint and more as inputs into conversations about what will work best in the specific context. This flexibility includes starting with more than one Greenhouse and with the number of teams that feels appropriate).
- Shared learning by teams and by the dioceses that participate.



The benefits

Benefits will include:

- Teams will feel valued and supported by the church.
- They will join a community where they are encouraged and feel understood.
- They will be motivated by seeing progress.
- They will learn ('just in time') methodologies for holistic mission.
- They will be intentional and strategic in using these methodologies.
- Issues of team and personal formation will be addressed.
- Initiatives will be more resilient because teams, not just the leaders, will be equipped.
- Oversight will be exercised as teams become accountable to each other.
- Greenhouse can be integrated into, and give structure to, existing support for new Christian communities.



What next?

Contact the National Team

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Find out more online

Visit: churchofengland.org/freshexpressions



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