

## Rejoicing as Strategic Funding Bid Succeeds!

fresh expressions

**Join the rejoicing at the news that St Albans Diocese will receive £1.75 million over five years from the Church Commissioners' Strategic Development Fund.**



This is the full amount sought in the recent bid which was presented at Diocesan Synod in June and which comes to the DBF this month. The money is earmarked for making new disciples through 'Reaching New People in New Ways'. The aim is 8000 new disciples of Christ through enabling the development of 300 fresh expressions of church and 1200 lay leaders by 2028. These will be part of the mixed economy of traditional and new expressions of church that fresh expressions have always encouraged. The current position is that there are 150 Fresh Expressions in the diocese with potential to develop into mature disciple-making communities. The funding is a significant portion of the cost of achieving these goals. The diocese is also expected to contribute, in kind or in cash to the £3.61 million cost of the project over five years. Welcoming the funding, Bishop Alan said: "We are investing money, people, prayer, energy and love in our communities, so that we might reach new people in new ways. We are hugely encouraged by this support." At the heart of the plans is funding for staff to support parishes in growing and in creating fresh expressions: a fresh expressions development officer in each archdeaconry, support for growing churches, communications support and an administrator. The diocese will contribute

substantially through diverting some existing staff time to achieving the aims and in other ways. The figures sound huge, but represent more modest annual amounts. Were the whole contribution sought in cash, it would still represent around 6 cappuccinos a year for existing planned givers, a modest amount. More important than the figures themselves is their implication. They are both a sign of commitment to investing in making new disciples, a call to everyone to get involved in whatever way they can and a once in a lifetime opportunity to participate in building the kingdom of God with leadership, support and investment. At the end of five years, the vision for worship in every community every week could well have been achieved through new forms of church, leadership and ministry for those currently beyond the reach of church, with a particular focus on developing discipleship amongst children, families, teenagers and young adults. In the first of a programme of projects, the diocese will develop existing and new fresh expressions of Church which intentionally grow disciples of Jesus Christ who are in turn committed to making new disciples and will equip and commission new lay leaders and lay and ordained pioneer ministers.