



The Matthew 25 Fund: Fuelling Our Missional Imagination

Inspired by the call of the Gospel and our shared vision to **Pray, Grow, and Serve**, the Matthew 25 Fund is not just a grant—it is a "permission slip" for holy experimentation. We know that sometimes the only thing standing between a God-given vision and a new community of faith is a small lack of resources.

Where there is current engagement with missional learning and a strategy for reaching out to those not yet engaged with Christian discipleship, this fund exists to provide the "extra fuel" needed to turn missional sparks into sustainable fires.

The long-term aim is to develop new worshipping communities. Guided by the Holy Spirit some fledgling activities will become worshipping communities in full flight, some will remain outreach activities, and some will have a season and then come to an end. We follow the Sower who sowed generously, even recklessly, therefore the encouragement here is to sow, and pray for growth.

1. Rooted in Our Vision: The Five Priorities

The Matthew 25 Fund is designed to breathe life into the **Diocese of Exeter's Five Missional Priorities** so that we can better respond to what the Holy Spirit is doing to connect people with the love of God found in the gospel of Jesus Christ. **The priority of Vocations** in this context is helping people answer the question 'what is God calling me to next?' and runs through all we do. So we are looking for initiatives that embody:

- ***Missional leadership:*** equipping and resourcing the ordained and lay leaders of our Christian communities as best as we can to develop disciples and make new disciples.
- ***Missional DNA:*** encouraging outward-looking, invitational churches, hospitable to outsiders and engaged with their wider communities.
- ***Children and young people*** being placed at the heart of our life, mission and ministry.

- **Mixed ecology:** *understanding that we need different ways of doing and being Church. Alongside time-honoured Church we need all sorts of Christian communities which can engage with the 95% of our population who are as yet unengaged.*

2. Who is Invited to Apply?

We want to empower those already walking the path of missional formation. You are eligible to apply if you are:

- **Clergy in (or have been in) the Exeter Leadership Development Programme (ELDP):** Ready to activate your learning in your local context.
- **Commissioned Lay Leaders:** Graduates or participants of pathways like *Lay Leaders of Mission* and *Growing Faith Leaders*

The aim is that this grant is not the main focus, but a little help and encouragement on the journey towards a larger vision for mission expressed in the commitment of at least one person in current, outward looking training and development.

3. Sowing Seeds: What the grant is for

The fund offers micro-grants of **up to £3,000** to help your pilot project take flight. This is "catalytic" funding for:

- **Essential Equipment**
- **Missional Resources**
- **Sacred Space**
- **Launch Events**

Please Note: To ensure long-term fruitfulness, existing salaries, routine building maintenance, or costs that replace regular parish giving can't be funded.

4. A Simple Pathway to Launch

We've kept the process light-touch so you can focus on ministry, not paperwork.

1. **Conversation:** Talk to your Local Mission Enabler or, until they are appointed, your Archdeacon first to refine your vision.
2. **Application:** Submit a brief form. Show us how your idea aligns with our **Five Priorities** and include a simple budget and PCC endorsement.

3. **Local Wisdom:** Your application is reviewed by your **Archdeaconry Mission Co-ordination Panel**, ensuring those who know your specific rural or urban context are part of the journey.

5. Learning Over "Success"

In the Kingdom of God, nothing is wasted. We believe in a "**permission to take risks and experiment**". If a project doesn't become a permanent community, we celebrate the attempt as long as the lessons are shared and the funds were used as effectively as possible.

- **Reporting back:** Whatever happens, roaring success or apparent disappointment, we want to learn from all the initiatives using Matthew 25 funding. It is also a requirement from the national church that we report back on the impact of each grant. Therefore, one of the conditions of receiving this grant is that you commit to completing the questionnaires we will send.
- **Sustainability:** We'll look for your plan for how the ministry might continue once the initial seed funding has done its work.

6. The 'not so' small print

- Mission communities will be expected to be paying the Common Fund in full, or be in conversation with the Archdeacon about how that might be achieved.
- As a grant is contributing to the missional strategy of a Mission Community/benefice a benefice in vacancy will need to wait for the appointment of an incumbent to lead that strategy before applying to the Matthew 25 fund.
- There may be one application for each Mission Community unless the Archdeacon decides to make an exception and accept a second request.