



The Nehemiah Fund – FAQs

Introduction

The Bishop of Sheffield and the Yorkshire Baptist Association (YBA) have both invited STC to consider how we can play our part in serving our city (and the wider region) by Church Planting.

What is Church Planting? It's sending out a leader or leaders, with a team, to either start a brand-new church community from scratch, or to graft into an existing one to begin a revitalisation process.

This is a really exciting prospect because it means that we would join in with what God is doing around the country through church planting.

This isn't the first time STC has been involved in Church Planting. In 1904 STC built the 'Tin Chapel' which was on the side of the Bole Hills. (In 1910 it moved to Slinn Street and became St Timothy's church hall!) Throughout the late 1990s, the church met in different locations: at Pond's Forge, The Roxy and, in 2002, bought the Philadelphia Campus and planted a church there. This became what is now called 'Network Church Sheffield.'

Our church has had a rich history of operating in clusters & communities across our city; while often remaining in close contact to the 'centre' (STC). The distinctiveness of the Nehemiah Fund is that in this next season of Church Planting, we will release and send out leaders and teams that will be independent of STC, and they will come under the authority of either the Diocese of Sheffield or the YBA.

If STC is going to play its part in planting churches across the city of Sheffield and the region, it will require a significant financial investment. That's why in Advent 2021 we're launching the Nehemiah Fund. This will be a brand new financial pot to help us fund church planting.

Why plant churches?

- We believe it's Biblical. The late missionary Roland Allen said this: 'Paul did not go out as a missionary preacher merely to convert individuals; he went to establish churches'.
- The Holy Spirit is doing it across the nation.
- The Diocese and YBA have invited us to do so.
- It's a key aspect where we can help bring life to our city.

'The vigorous, continual planting of new congregations is the single most crucial strategy for (1) the numerical growth of the body of Christ in a city and (2) the continual corporate renewal and revival of the existing churches in a city. Nothing else—not crusades, outreach programs, parachurch ministries, growing megachurches, congregational consulting, nor church renewal processes—will have the consistent impact of dynamic, extensive church planting.'

Timothy Keller – Theologian, Missionary & Church Leader

What is the Nehemiah Fund?

- It's a pot of money set aside to use for church planting across Sheffield and the region.

Why is it called the Nehemiah Fund?

- We had a prophetic 'sense' we should call it that.
- Cities are important to God. It's where a lot of people live and work and where culture is formed. In the Old Testament we read about God calling a man named Nehemiah to Jerusalem when the city was in tatters. He had a vision in his heart of what it could become, and he set about rebuilding the city. New churches across Sheffield will be one significant way of building the kingdom in the city, as God "makes all things new" (Revelation 21:5).

What will the fund be used for?

- Renting meeting spaces (such as redundant churches) for the church plant to gather and operate from.
- Paying towards salaries (Stipends / Salaries – part time or full time) or to cover a plant leader's salary for a season while the plant establishes & grows.
- Set up costs – this could be buying equipment or other resources that the new plant needs.
- If we plant into an area of social deprivation we would look to provide long term financial support to that church.

Who will oversee the fund?

- A small group of STC's Trustees including the church wardens and clergy will have specific oversight of this fund and will report back to the wider church council.

Do we give one off gifts? Can we give regularly and should we tithe our regular giving to the Nehemiah Fund?

- One off Gifts: As we launch the fund in Advent we would encourage everyone to give a one off gift if you can.
- Regular Giving: You may also wish to give longer term – a certain amount per month or year. That would be wonderful!
- Tithe: If you give to church in a committed way, then we would ask you to continue to do so. The 'General Fund' runs our church: paying staff salaries, keeping the lights on etc. We will also give to the Nehemiah Fund from the General Fund each year. If you don't already give to church in a committed way – now might be a great time to start giving to both funds!
- Find out how to give at www.stcsheffield.org/nehemiah or email finance@stcsheffield.org with any questions.
- If you need to change or stop your giving to the Nehemiah Fund at any point, again please email finance@stcsheffield.org.

How will we be updated?

- As well as launching the Nehemiah Fund, we'll also be launching Nehemiah Prayer. We'll share testimonies and that way you'll know what's happening and also be able to pray for planting in the city of Sheffield. We'll also update the church family yearly at the ACM (Annual Church Meeting).

What are the planting plans? Short term? Long term? Medium term?

- We're in conversations now with both the Diocese of Sheffield and the YBA about a potential plant (Baptist) and graft (Anglican) in 2022. Please be praying! We're also having conversations about longer term plans and thinking through how we raise up potential planters from within STC.
- Working with the institutions in this way is new for us and it takes a huge amount of patience and diplomacy. Prayer is so important.

If we don't raise enough will we still go ahead with planting?

- Yes. It's a faith journey for our church!

Is there money coming from elsewhere?

- We will look to raise funds from other sources where we can.

How long will it take?

- Planting can be a slow process. For example, to plant or graft an Anglican church can take anything between 1-3 years to plan, negotiate and make happen. It's much quicker with the Baptists – but the longer term plan is to plant multiple churches over the next 10 years.

What will church planting look like working with the YBA and the Diocese?

- Honestly, we don't know yet. Both are very positive and the Diocese have designated us a Resource Church which means we will be able to help and serve their planting vision. The YBA have just recruited a new team member to spearhead planting new churches across Yorkshire.

What does it mean to be a Resource Church?

- The C of E defines a Resource Church as:
'A resource church is designated by its Bishop to be a church-planting church which trains leaders to resource and support mission across a diocese.' We're hoping to be able to serve Bishop Pete as best we can by giving away and sharing our resources.

What will be STC's ongoing relationship with church plants?

- Our heart would be to champion them, support them (with prayer, finance, resources, training and bags of love) and cheer them on!

Where are we going to church plant?

- We don't know yet! We're trusting the Lord to make that clear, but it will be discerned through conversation and prayers with the YBA & the Diocese of Sheffield.

Who will we be sending to plant churches?

- A leader - who may be ordained or not ordained.
- A team - members of STC who feel a call to that specific plant.
- Maybe you will hear God's call and he will send you! Do get in contact if/when you do, and we will help you process that call.

What can I do today/right now?

- Pray
- Give a one off gift
- Consider a regular standing order