CROSSREACH SUNDAY

Let light shine out of darkness

Nov 1st 2026

Resource Pack



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Carlas Story



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The Church of Scotland
Social Care Council

Operating as CrossReach, Scottish Charity No: SC011353

www.crossreach.org.uk

Welcome

Thank you for choosing to support CrossReach Sunday.

Our theme this year is ‘Let Light Shine out of Darkness’

In one way or another, many of the people who come to CrossReach for help and support have found themselves in a dark or difficult place, physically, emotionally or mentally. CrossReach works to help bring light into each of these situations.

In this booklet you will find sermon notes on the theme of light prepared the former Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Very Rev Dr Shaw Paterson. Shaw is also now a member of the CrossReach board.

We have also suggested some hymns, songs and prayers which could be used to hold a service focused on light and on how we, as Gods people, can bring His light into this world.

We have also prepared lesson ideas for younger people in your congregations explore the theme of light. We are grateful to Carla for sharing how CrossReach’s support brought light into her dark situation.

We have designed these materials to be as flexible as possible to allow you to use and adapt as much or as little a you feel appropriate for your service. If you would like anything else to support you on the day, please get in touch, we would love to hear from you.

Your support matters and it makes a real difference.

Thank you, from all of us at CrossReach

Suggested Readings and Hymns

All the readings from the Revised Common Lectionary for November 1st are suitable for use in this service, especially:

- Psalm 107: 1-9, 35-38
- Psalm 43
- Matthew 23: 1-12

All hymns from Hymns of Glory, Songs of Praise (Church Hymnary 4th Edition)

- Lord, the light of your love is shining (Shine, Jesus, shine) - 448
- God, whose almighty word - 112
- Immortal, invisible God only wise - 132
- I heard the voice of Jesus say, - 540
- Love is the touch of intangible joy - 115
- Beauty for brokenness - 259



Sermon Notes

Former Moderator of The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland Very Rev Dr Shaw Paterson.

Light in the Darkness.

We live in a world where it is becoming increasingly difficult to know what is real. AI (Artificial Intelligence) has changed things dramatically. We can now create photographs of people who never existed. We can make someone appear to say something they never said. We can create videos of things that never happened. Things that look real are not always what they seem and, as a result, we have become used to questioning things. We want evidence. We want to know what is genuine.

On this CrossReach Sunday, I want to say something very simple. Every day people all over Scotland who see CrossReach in action, know that what it does is very real.

CrossReach, the social care arm of the Church of Scotland, puts our faith into action by caring for some of the most vulnerable people in our communities.

Very Rev Dr Shaw Paterson, the former Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland was very moved by his visits to CrossReach projects during his year as moderator. He says:

“I have had the privilege of seeing the work of CrossReach in different parts of the country and meeting some of the people who are involved in it. What I witnessed is most definitely real. I have seen the care and compassion for myself, and I have seen the difference it can make in people's lives. Above all, I have seen genuine Christian love.”



Sermon Notes cont.

That is why this year's CrossReach theme, “Light in the Darkness to people in need across Scotland,” speaks to us all. Because ultimately, that light has a name: Jesus Christ.

Jesus said, “I am the light of the world.” We are called to share his light, not just in places of worship but in the communities where we live. We are called to reach out to those whose lives are difficult, to those who may be lonely or frightened or struggling or simply wondering whether anybody cares.

That brings us to the Lectionary Reading from the Gospel of Matthew. Jesus is speaking to the crowds and to his disciples about the religious leaders of his day, and what he says is quite challenging: “They do not practise what they preach.” Jesus is concerned about the difference between what we say and what we actually do. It is easy to talk about being a Christian and about what the Church should be doing in the world. But ultimately, what matters is whether we put those words into practice.

Jesus goes on to say something which is particularly appropriate for CrossReach Sunday: “The greatest among you will be your servant.” It is a very simple idea, but it turns much of what the world tells us upside down. The world tends to measure greatness by position, influence, status and recognition. Jesus measures it by service. When we think about CrossReach, that is exactly what we see.

CrossReach is one of Scotland's largest social care providers. Today it supports over 14,000 people across Scotland each year, with around 1,700 staff and 300 volunteers.

However, numbers are not really what matters, instead of a number we should see what Jesus sees - a person.

- The person who needs somebody to listen.
- The older person who needs care.
- The person living with dementia who needs patience and kindness.
- The person struggling with addiction who needs someone to believe that change is possible.
- The person whose mental health has made life feel very difficult.
- The family that needs support.

These are real people and CrossReach reaches out to them.

Sermon Notes cont.

Choose from the following:

Share a story from your own experience of a CrossReach service local to you, or that you have visited.

- You can find details of services in your area here.
- Carla's story highlights the difference CrossReach can make in someone's life.
- If any of your congregation have experience working at, visiting, or benefitting from a CrossReach service why not ask them to share during the service.



OR

Shaw Paterson shares more if his experiences as Moderator:

"During my year as Moderator, I visited CrossReach services across much of the country. In Inverness and Glasgow, I sat with individuals who were struggling with drug and alcohol addiction. What moved me most was the sense of isolation many felt. Family relationships had broken down. Friends had drifted away. Several spoke of feeling that nobody cared whether they succeeded or failed. I will never forget listening to one woman who told me she had been through the system five times. Yet CrossReach had not given up on her and her life had been transformed. Hers was not the only story like that. What I heard and what I witnessed was CrossReach making a real difference to people's lives."

Sermon Notes cont.



In every location that CrossReach provides one of its services, we can see much more than just an organisation delivering social care. We see the Church at work in the world. We see people using their skills, their patience, their experience, their compassion and their humour, and sometimes simply their willingness to sit beside someone and listen. There is never a great fuss about it. No need for recognition. People simply get on with the job of caring for others. Perhaps that is what Jesus is reminding us about in Matthew's Gospel. Christian faith is not simply about what we say. It is about what we do.

A single candle doesn't remove all the darkness but it makes a difference. When many candles are lit together, the darkness looks very different. That is what we see, when we look at CrossReach. We see the Church bringing light into darkness. We see Christ's love being experienced by others.

CrossReach Sunday isn't just about asking what we can give to CrossReach. It is also about recognising what we are already part of. We are part of a Church that cares, that serves, that listens and that stands alongside people when life becomes difficult. It is a Church that brings the light of Christ into places where there is darkness, and that is something worth celebrating. Today we can make a fuss about it.

In a world where we struggle to know what is real, one thing we can be sure of is that the needs we see around us are real, but so is the care, compassion and love of Christ reaching out to meet them.

Today we give thanks not simply for what CrossReach does, but because we are part of it. All of us, are part of Christ's Church at work in the world, and together we can bring the light of Christ into places where there is darkness.

The need is real, Christ's love is real. And the light of Christ is shining.

Crossreach invites all of us to join them in their mission. To add our lights to theirs, our love and compassion to theirs, so that together Christ's light and love shines brighter.

- If your congregation took part in "Light the Path Walk" or held a fundraising breakfast before the service, mention here and give thanks
- If you are having a retiring offering, fundraising lunch or other event after the service invite everyone to participate.

Prayer Points

We pray for those working with children, young people and families.
Give them patience, wisdom and compassion as they support people whose lives can be difficult and complicated. Help them to be a source of safety, encouragement and hope.

We pray for those caring for older people and those living with dementia.
Give them patience for the difficult days and joy in the good ones. Help them to see the person behind the illness and to show, through their care, that every person is precious and loved.

We pray for those working in mental health and counselling.
They hear stories which can be difficult to carry. Give them strength, wisdom and compassion, and help them to bring a little light into places where life can feel very dark.

We pray for those supporting people affected by addiction.
Give them patience when progress is slow and courage when there are setbacks. Help them never to lose sight of the person and the possibility of a new beginning.

We pray for those supporting people with learning disabilities and additional needs.
Help them to see and encourage the gifts in every person, and to create places where people know that they belong.

We pray for those working with people experiencing homelessness, poverty and disadvantage.
Give them compassion and wisdom as they walk alongside people whose circumstances may have become overwhelming. Help them to bring dignity, welcome and hope.

And we pray for everyone who works or volunteers through CrossReach.
Give them strength when the work is demanding. Give them encouragement when they wonder whether what they do really makes a difference. Remind them that they are not simply providing a service.

They are the Church at work. They are bringing the love of Christ into the lives of people who need it.

CrossReach Services

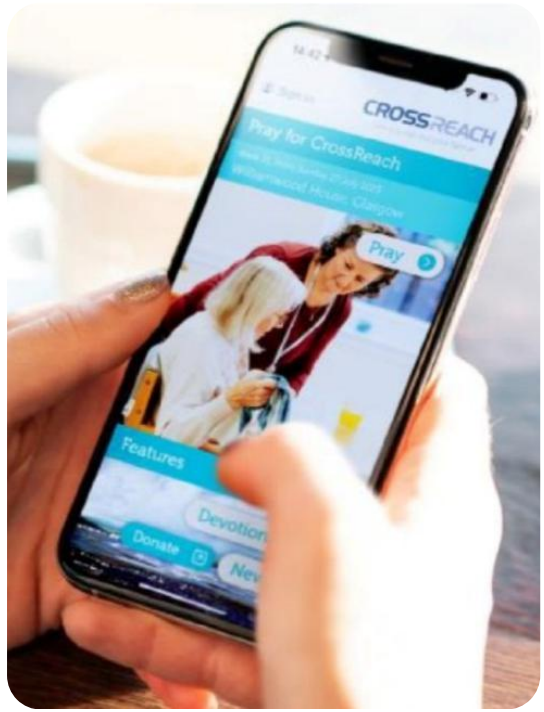
CrossReach operate over 70 services across Scotland. Use the links below to browse services in your Presbytery.

- North East and Northern Isles
- Clyde
- Edinburgh & West Lothian
- Fife
- Forth Valley & Clydesdale
- Glasgow
- Lothian & Borders
- Perth
- Highlands & Hebrides
- Lewis
- The South West

Prayer App

We can pray – Prayer makes a massive difference. Make use of the Prayer Diary –

- You can request a printed copy from CrossReach
- Read from the CrossReach website
- Download the Prayer Diary App by scanning the QR codes below
- There's even a Prayer Diary Widget which can be added to our church website. (Get in touch with us and we can help!)



This CrossReach Sunday join CrossReach in their mission, add your light and love, so that together Christ's love shines brighter.

Apple

android

Videos

You may like to include some of the videos below within your service.



Love in action



'What is this love?'



At work in Glasgow



Church Partnership



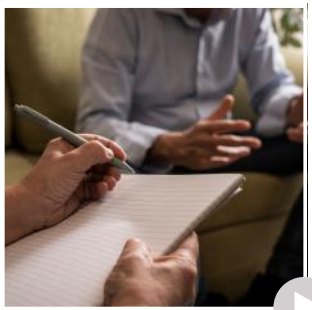
5 Year Plan



Counselling



Care Homes



Perth Prison Visitor Centre



Children & Young People



Impact Report



Makaton Choir



Recovery Graduation



Heart for Art



Tayside Recovrery Cafe



GO2 Day & Community



Daisy Chain Early Years



Recovery Services



This little light of mine