



## Pray for CrossReach

- Give thanks and praise for the way that God is changing lives through the work of CrossReach. Thank God for the love that he has shown to us and that we are able to share with all we come into contact with.
- Pray for the most vulnerable members of our society who come to CrossReach for help. In situations that are very dark, pray that the light of Jesus will shine brightly to bring hope and take away fear.
- In the context of a challenging public funding climate for Social Care, pray for those individuals and their families who are affected by changes to services. Pray that those who have to make difficult decisions about finances will be guided by wisdom and compassion.
- Give thanks for all the staff who have recently joined CrossReach. Pray that they will feel a sense of welcome and belonging to their teams, and that they will be well supported in their new roles. Pray that current vacancies will be filled and that the right people will be drawn to come and work with us.
- Give thanks for all those who donate, fundraise and support the work of CrossReach in other ways. Pray that more people will hear about the work of CrossReach and be inspired to get involved too.

## Pray for CrossReach

If you would like to join with many across Scotland in praying for CrossReach each week you can use the following resources.



Click below to download the app

- Android version
- Apple version



Read our prayer diary each week. This can be viewed on the CrossReach website.

Printed copies can be requested by emailing [supporters@crossreach.org.uk](mailto:supporters@crossreach.org.uk)



Add the CrossReach prayer widget to your Church website. This will automatically update each week.





# CROSSREACH

Care you can put your faith in

## Message from the Rt Rev Dr Shaw Paterson The Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland



The Church of Scotland

Social Care Council

Operating as CrossReach, Scottish Charity No: SC011353

[www.crossreach.org.uk](http://www.crossreach.org.uk)



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## Support CrossReach



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Social Care Council

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## Future looking bright for Chris as he hopes to become counsellor

A former CrossReach service user who “wouldn’t be here” had it not been for counselling support, has shared his story as he now hopes to become a counsellor himself.

Chris McCleary, 40, from Dunbar, began his journey with CrossReach in 2012 after reaching a low point with his mental health. After visiting a doctor, he was recommended to a CrossReach counselling service.

“I had a breakdown in 2012, and I went to the doctor about it. I remember bursting into tears at the time. I was handed a leaflet for CrossReach counselling, and I was seen very quickly. They helped me recover and get things back on track. It wasn’t easy and it wasn’t a quick journey but without CrossReach I can say confidently I wouldn’t be here today.”



After being supported by CrossReach, Chris would go on to meet his wife and the pair now have a child together.

In 2013, Chris took on a 1,000 mile walk across Scotland to raise money for CrossReach, raising almost £1,500 in the process.

“After CrossReach helped me so much, I wanted to do something to help support them and the walk felt like a good idea.”

Alongside previously volunteering at Changes in Musselburgh, a charity which aims to promote positive wellbeing and mental health, Chris is now using his own experience with mental health struggles to help others. He now works as an employability support worker at The Ridge in Dunbar, where he provides high-quality and accessible life skills and training for local people.

Chris also achieved a HNC qualification in counselling in 2015 and is studying for a HND in the same subject.

“I like that I can help people and feeling the benefits of counselling first-hand through CrossReach, I knew that it was something I wanted to do. I’d like to raise the profile of counselling services and tackle the stigma of talking about mental health issues. I think talking to someone is the most important thing. When I talked to the doctor it was clear I was struggling. I don’t even think it’s necessarily speaking to a professional at first. Just talk to someone, a friend, family member, neighbour. I spoke with the minister at Belhaven Church when I was struggling. They were a big help too. Opening up is important. I read a statistic that for every suicide, hundreds of people are impacted. But I think it would also be good to know how many people are impacted by a life saved from suicide. I’m in a great place now. I have a family of my own and I wouldn’t be here if it wasn’t for CrossReach.”

[Click here to find out about support services for suicide prevention and CrossReach Counselling services.](#)





Ruth 1:1-18 and Psalm 146

Deuteronomy 6:1-9 and Psalm 119:1-8

Hebrews 9:11-14

Mark 12:28-34

## A Reflection from Rev Douglas Hamilton Vice Convener CrossReach

When the scribe approached Jesus to ask about the greatest commandment in this week's gospel reading from [Mark](#), he already knew the answer he was looking for. The greatest commandment is love – love for God and love for others. These were not new commands that Jesus had come up with, but ancient, foundational commandments that underpinned all the other commands that were set out in the Torah.

The scribe understood that this was much more important than all the rituals and festivals that dominated so much of their religious practice and their religious debates. I picture the scribe as one who was constantly getting frustrated with his colleagues in the synagogue as they debated the finer details of morality, purity laws and sabbath observance. I can imagine him regularly appealing to the other scribes, reminding them that they needed to see all these other issues through the lens of love.



When it comes to anything to do with understanding God, or figuring out how to live a life pleasing to God, Jesus agreed that the starting point is always love. We move from there to try and make sense of everything else. Love is the starting point because love is the essence of the character of God.

The writer to the [Hebrews](#) would have been able to debate the finer details of the laws of sacrifice with any of the scribes. They would have recognised the importance of these laws as part of maintaining the covenant with God, but the ultimate act of love at Calvary meant that things had changed forever. A new covenant was in place as a result of the blood of Christ. It was love that took Jesus to the cross. God's love for humanity is a sacrificial love.

God's love is also demonstrated through justice. In [Psalm 146](#) we read of God's love for the righteous and his particular concern for the poor, the humble and the oppressed.

Sacrifice and justice are not the words that tend to be accompanied by flowers, chocolates, and a Hallmark card. The love that we read of in the bible requires perseverance. Love requires a conscious decision to love, and a commitment to keep on loving. That is what is implied by loving God with 'all our heart'. Loving with 'all our soul' is about our very being. Loving with 'all our strength' is about loving with all of our abilities and resources. The foundational command in [Deuteronomy](#) is driven more by will than emotion. If we are to be the [Psalm 119](#) person who seeks God with our whole heart and keep his decrees, then we will start by loving God and loving others.

If sacrifice and justice are aspects of God's love then these should be displayed in our love for others. The passage from [Ruth](#) provides an example of what this can look like in practice. In the context of extreme hardship, tragedy and loss, Ruth is prepared to sacrifice the hope of a better future in order to show love to her mother in law. Naomi is weak and vulnerable, but Ruth is prepared to do whatever it takes to support her through the difficulties that she will face.



Love underpins all the lectionary readings this week, just as it underpins the overall message of the bible. This is the same love that underpins the work of CrossReach across all of our services. We offer loving care to people of all ages who need a helping hand, and support them to live life to the full whatever their circumstances. Everything we do in CrossReach is driven by a desire to follow the greatest commandment – to love God and to love others.

As you read through stories of the people who use CrossReach services, look at them through the lens of love. As we think about what dominates the religious practice and debate of our church, consider what is most important.

On CrossReach Sunday we have the opportunity to put love at the centre of our worship. We can give thanks for the way that our church lives out the greatest commandment through the work of CrossReach, and pray for those who deliver our services. We can pray that more people will experience this love, and that love will overflow into the families and wider communities that surround our services. We can also seek to share the love by finding ways for our local churches to work together with CrossReach through fundraising and active involvement with services.

As we ask questions about the future of our church, locally and nationally, we already know the answer starts with love, and it is from there that we will seek to make sense of everything else.

Suggested Hymns:

123 God is love: let heaven adore him

448 Lord, the light of your love is shining

519 Love divine, all loves excelling

622 We sing a love that sets all people free



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## Videos

You may find it helpful to include video links in your service/presentation. Here are a few suggestions.

You can find a full list by visiting our **YouTube Channel**



CrossReach 2024 Impact Report.




Stories from Counselling Services



BBC General Assembly. Ft. Dumbrock House, and Whiteinch Move On Service.



Tayside Recover Services  
STV News. 



Meet the Makaton Choir



Heart for Art



Recovery Volunteer Graduation



Erskine Waterfront Campus