

40 Days of Compassion

Journey through Lent with

CROSSREACH

18th February - 2nd April



The Church of Scotland
Social Care Council

Operating as CrossReach, Scottish Charity No. SC011353



Dear friends,

As we enter the season of Lent, we are invited once again into a time of reflection, prayer and renewal. These forty days help us slow down, notice God's presence more deeply, and consider how we live out Christ's love in the world around us.

This year, we warmly invite your church to journey with CrossReach through 40 Days of Compassion. In the Gospels, Jesus shows compassion by seeing people, listening to them and meeting their needs. Lent gives us the opportunity not only to reflect on that love, but to practise it together in our worship, homes and communities.

Across Scotland, CrossReach supports children, families and older people facing challenging circumstances. Each day, staff and volunteers walk alongside those needing reassurance and hope. By taking part this Lent - through prayer, kindness, giving or shared activities your congregation helps that care continue.

This resource is designed to be flexible and easy to use. You may follow the full journey, focus on one week, or simply include CrossReach in your prayers. However you participate, you join a wider community of churches making compassion visible.

Thank you for sharing in this season. We pray this Lent will bring encouragement and blessing to you and those you serve.

With gratitude and every blessing,

CrossReach Fundraising & Engagement team



Ways to Live Out Compassion Together

Lent invites us to practise compassion not only as individuals but together as a church family. Even small shared actions can shape our life and witness in the community, whether you choose one idea or several across the season.

However your church participates, these acts reflect Christ's love in everyday life - where prayer, action and generosity become a sign of hope in our communities.

Pray

Compassion begins with turning our hearts toward God and lifting others before Him.

Ideas

- Include CrossReach and those receiving care in weekly intercessions
- Hold a short prayer gathering during Lent
- Invite members to take home weekly prayer points
- Create a prayer board where people can add prayers for others
- Encourage members to pray for one person intentionally each day



Act

Faith becomes visible when we care for people in practical ways.

Ideas

- Write encouragement cards for people receiving care
- Deliver small kindness gifts to neighbours or community members
- Visit or reconnect with someone who may be feeling isolated
- Offer practical help such as shopping, transport or a phone call
- Volunteer time locally or support a CrossReach service



Give

Generosity allows compassion to reach further than we can alone.

Ideas

- Hold a Lent offering or collection
- Set aside daily coins throughout the 40 days using our boxes
- Host a simple soup lunch after worship
- Give up a treat and donate the savings
- Take part in a small sponsored challenge as a group



Your Lent Journey

Overview

Lent is a journey, walked one step at a time. Over these forty days we pause, notice others more closely and respond with compassion in everyday ways.

This resource supports your congregation week by week with Scripture, a short reflection, prayer and a practical action. It can be used in worship, small groups or personal devotion — and adapted to suit your community.

Each week moves gently from awareness to action:

Week	Focus
Ash Wednesday	Seeing others - Beginning with openness, asking God to help us notice the needs around us.
Week 1	Listening - Offering attention and presence to those who feel unheard.
Week 2	Kindness - Small acts of care that make a real difference.
Week 3	Justice - Standing alongside people with fairness and dignity.
Week 4	Community - Strengthening relationships so no one walks alone.
Week 5	Sacrifice - Giving up something so that others may gain.
Holy Week	Love that endures - Reflecting on Christ's love shown on the cross and shared through us.

You may follow the whole journey or choose individual weeks that suit your church. Our hope is that these forty days will shape lasting habits of compassion beyond Lent.



Ash Wednesday

Seeing Others

Scripture:
Luke 10:33-34

Reflection

Lent begins with honesty. We pause and recognise our need of God but also our tendency to pass by. The Samaritan in Jesus' story first noticed the wounded man. Compassion always begins with seeing. In busy lives, it is easy to overlook those who are lonely, struggling or anxious. Today we ask God to open our eyes. Who is already in our path that needs kindness? Compassion often starts not with grand plans, but with attention.

Prayer

Lord, open my eyes to the people around me.
Help me not to hurry past need, but to notice with your love.
Amen.

Compassion Action

Take time today to intentionally notice someone - greet, check in, or offer conversation.

Giving Idea

Begin a Lent jar: set aside a small amount each day for others - we have handy collection boxes - simply get in touch to get yours today!



Week 1

Listening

Scripture:
James 1:19

Reflection

To listen is one of the simplest and most powerful acts of compassion. Many people carry worries silently – grief, fear, or loneliness hidden beneath everyday conversation. Listening does not fix everything, but it tells someone they matter. Jesus listened to people others ignored and allowed them to share their stories. This week we practise patient attention, resisting the urge to rush or respond quickly.

Prayer

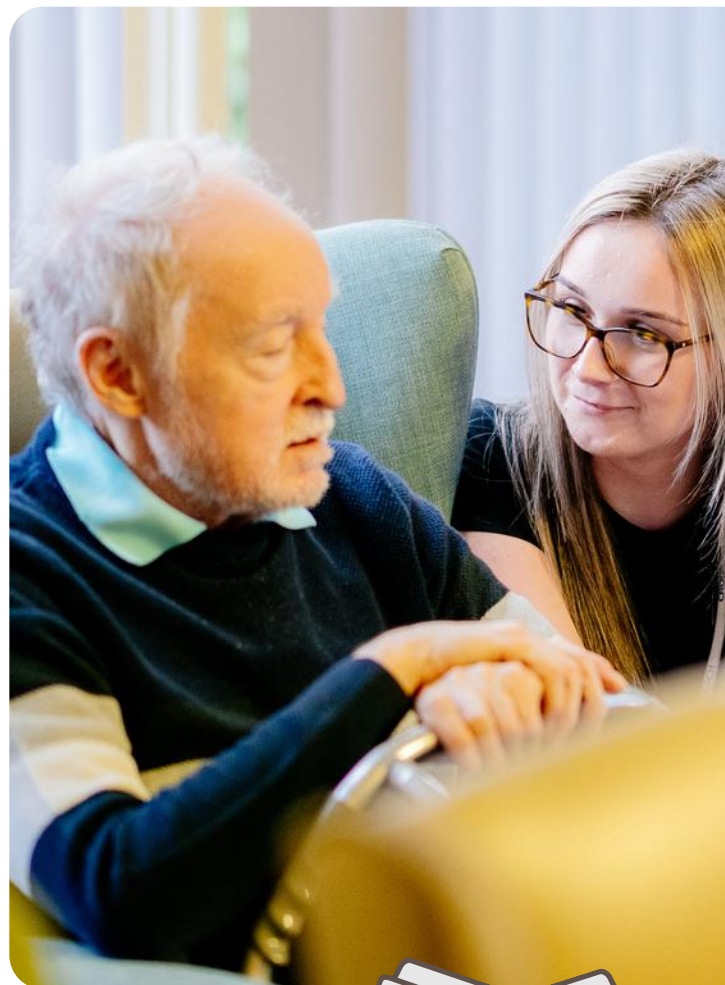
God of understanding,
teach me to listen with patience and
kindness.
Help my presence bring comfort to others.
Amen.

Compassion Action

Give someone your full attention without
interruption.

Giving Idea

Donate the cost of a takeaway coffee and spend that time
talking with someone instead.



Week 2

Kindness

Scripture:
Ephesians
4:32

Reflection

Kindness is rarely dramatic. It lives in small gestures; a message, a visit, a favour quietly offered. Yet these moments can change a day or even a life. Jesus showed compassion in ordinary encounters: meals shared, people welcomed, dignity restored. When we choose kindness intentionally, we reflect that same love into the world.

Prayer

Loving God,
shape my actions today with gentleness
and care.
May simple kindness speak of your love.
Amen.

Compassion Action

Do one unexpected act of kindness for
someone this week.

Giving Idea



Set aside money saved by giving up a treat this week.



Week 3

Justice

Scripture:
Micah 6:8

Reflection

Compassion is not only comfort; it is fairness and dignity. Jesus stood alongside those pushed aside by society and restored their worth. We are called not only to help people, but to honour them, recognising every person as valued by God. This week we consider how our choices, words and attitudes can support dignity and inclusion.

Prayer

God of justice,
help me treat every person with respect
and fairness.
Guide me to stand alongside those who
feel overlooked.
Amen.

Compassion Action

Support someone who may feel excluded
- include, invite, or advocate.

Giving Idea

Be sponsored to walk a certain amount of steps every day with
the money you raise helping vulnerable people.



Week 4

Community

Scripture:
Galatians 6:2

Reflection

We were never meant to walk alone. Community forms when burdens are shared and joys celebrated together. Compassion grows when we recognise we belong to one another. The church becomes a place of hope when people know they will be welcomed and remembered. This week we strengthen connections around us.

Prayer

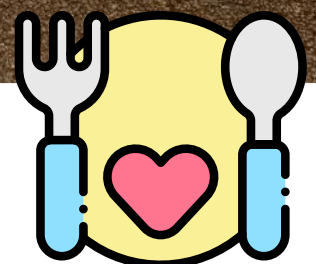
God of fellowship,
help me build community through
encouragement and care.
Make our church a place of belonging.
Amen.

Compassion Action

Reach out to someone you haven't seen
at church recently.

Giving Idea

Host a simple shared meal and donate what you would have
spent eating out.



Week 5

Sacrifice

Scripture:
Matthew 6:21

Reflection

Lent reminds us that love often costs something. We let go of small comforts to make space for generosity. Sacrifice is not loss - it redirects our attention to what matters most. When we give up something willingly, we learn gratitude and share with others in need. Compassion grows when we loosen our grip on our own comforts.

Prayer

Generous God,
teach me to give freely and trust in your provision.
May what I release become blessing for another.
Amen.

Compassion Action

Give up one comfort this week and use the time or money to help someone.

Giving Idea

Donate the savings from your Lent commitment.



Holy Week

Love That Endures

Scripture:
John 15:13

Reflection

Holy Week brings us to the cross, the fullest expression of compassion. Jesus' love remained present even in suffering, offering forgiveness and hope. We are invited to carry that same enduring love into our lives. Compassion continues even when it is inconvenient, tiring or unnoticed. Because Christ stays with us, we stay with others.

Prayer

Faithful Christ,
help me love with perseverance and
grace.
Let your love be seen in me.
Amen.

Compassion Action

Offer encouragement to someone going
through a difficult time.

Giving Idea

Bring your Lent giving together as an Easter offering of
gratitude.



Fundraising Ideas



40p for 40 Days

Each person sets aside 40p (or any amount) each day during Lent.

How to run it:

- Provide small jars or envelopes (if you would like CrossReach boxes, get in touch and we will send you some.)
- Invite participants to bring their total as an Easter offering.



Soup Lunch

Share a modest meal after worship and donate what would normally be spent on lunch.

How to run it:

- Ask volunteers to prepare soup and bread. Keep it simple to reflect the spirit of Lent.

Give Something Up

Participants give up a small comfort (snacks, takeaway coffee, treats) and donate the savings.

How to run it:

- Encourage people to keep track weekly and bring the total at the end of Lent.



Coffee Morning & Bake Sale

A simple gathering for fellowship with donations invited.

How to run it:

- Keep costs minimal and focus on community and welcome.
- Encourage congregational members to donate baked goods and time.

Children & Young People Resources



Lent is a great opportunity for children and young people to see faith in action through kindness, generosity and care. These simple activities help them take part in 40 Days of Compassion in practical, creative ways

40 Day Kindness Challenge

Encourage children to complete one small act of kindness each day during Lent. Print off the chart on the next page for them to track their challenge.

Examples:

- Help at home without being asked
- Sit with someone who is on their own
- Say thank you to a teacher or helper
- Pray for someone who is unwell
- Share a toy or game

Prayer Pebbles

Give each child a small pebble or stone. Invite them to hold it while praying for someone who needs care that day. They can keep it in a pocket or school bag as a reminder to pray.

Encouragement Cards

Children create simple cards with messages or drawings to brighten someone's day.

This could be shared with:

- Church members who are unwell
- Local neighbours
- People supported through
- CrossReach services



Compassion Coin Box

Provide each child with a small box or envelope to collect coins during Lent.

How it works:

- Add coins when they choose to give something up
- Add coins after doing a kind action
- Bring the box back at Easter as a shared offering

This helps children connect generosity with helping others.



CROSSREACH 40 Days of Kindness Challenge

Day	What I did	Day	What I did
1		21	
2		22	
3		23	
4		24	
5		25	
6		26	
7		27	
8		28	
9		29	
10		30	
11		31	
12		32	
13		33	
14		34	
15		35	
16		36	
17		37	
18		38	
19		39	
20		40	

Share your journey!

We would love to hear about your experience of journeying through Lent with CrossReach. Your church's moments, big or small, can encourage and inspire others to take part in the future.

Send us photos or videos from your services or events, share artwork or stories which could be featured on our CrossReach social media as well as our fundraiser spotlight!



How to get in touch

You can email photos and stories to:

 fundraising@crossreach.org.uk

If possible, make sure to include:

- Name and location of your church.
- A short description of what you did.
- Confirmation that you are happy for your lent journey to be shared.
- Any feedback you may have for future CrossReach resources.

A video for your service



We've created a short film about CrossReach that you may wish to show during a Sunday service this Lent. It helps congregations see how their compassion supports people across Scotland and is suitable for all ages.



Click above or scan the QR code to access.

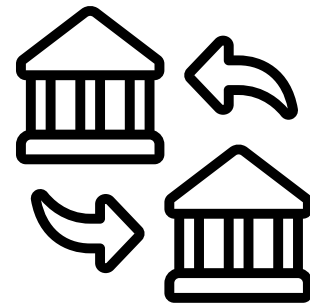
How to donate to

CROSSREACH

Bank Transfer

You can make your donation directly by bank transfer using the details below:

Bank Name: CrossReach
Sort Code: 80-41-21
Account Number: 00227186
Ref: 'Lent Giving'

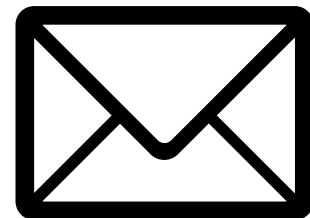


If you are wanting the funds raised through your lent journey to be designated to a specific CrossReach service, get in touch to let us know by emailing fundraising@crossreach.org.uk.

Cash or Cheque

You can also send a cheque made out to 'CrossReach' or cash to the following address and we will process it.

**Fundraising and Engagment,
Charis House,
47 Milton Road East,
Edinburgh,
EH15 2SR**



If you are wanting the funds raised through your lent journey to be designated to a specific CrossReach service, notify us with the cheque or cash enclosed.

Thank you for journeying through these forty days with CrossReach.

Whether you prayed, gave, encouraged others, or quietly showed kindness in everyday moments, each act of compassion has mattered. Together, churches across Scotland have shared Christ's love in practical ways - reminding people that they are seen, valued and not alone.

Our hope is that the habits formed during Lent will continue long beyond this season, shaping lives, strengthening relationships and offering hope wherever you are placed.

Prayer of Blessing

Loving God,
thank you for the compassion you have shown us
in Christ.

As we continue beyond Lent, help us carry that
love into our homes,
our churches and our communities.

Give us attentive hearts, generous hands and
patient spirits.

Where there is loneliness, help us bring friendship.
Where there is anxiety, help us bring reassurance.

Where there is weariness, help us bring hope.
May your peace guide us and your grace sustain
us,
so that all we do reflects your care for the world.

Amen.

With gratitude and every blessing,

Love from CrossReach

