

New ministers' retreat

How a gathering for recently-ordained ministers was 'just what the doctor ordered'.



A GROUP of recently-ordained Church of Scotland ministers came together for a three-night retreat.

The 45 ministers have each served for around five years. Many trained or were ordained during the Covid pandemic, and have entered the ministry in the midst of an uncertain time for many churches.

They gathered at the Crieff Hydro hotel in Perthshire, along with a small group of more experienced ministers, for spiritual refreshment and fellowship.

The event was organised by members of the Church's People and Training team, part of the Faith Action Programme, and funding came from the Meikle and Paton Trust. The Very Rev Dr Martin Fair,

Pathways to Ministry Manager and organiser of the retreat, said: "Ministry is as demanding now as ever it has been and many of our newer ministers really have been thrown in at the deep end without, as might have happened in former days, much opportunity for that gradual settling-in period.

"And many of these who were able to come to Crieff did their training through the pandemic and then went from that to the presbytery mission planning process.

"With these things being the case, and with quite a few of the participants being among the group still waiting to be called to their first charge, the days away really did prove to be just what the doctor ordered." ■

Welcome to the Life and Work monthly newsletter, a free resource helping Church of Scotland members stay up-to-date with everything going on in the Church and its partners.

Each month there will be exclusive features, news and updates from Church organisations.

The newsletter is free to download from www.lifeandwork.org/newsletter. Feel free to share with church members, friends and family, and get in touch if you have any comments or suggestions.

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‘A Scotland in which all can thrive’

Thomas Baldwin reports on a new five-year strategy launched by the Church of Scotland’s social care provider

THE Church of Scotland’s social care provider, CrossReach, has launched a new five-year strategy aimed at maintaining excellent services as a sustainable organisation.

CrossReach continues a tradition of social care in the Church stretching back over 150 years. Today it is one of the largest not-for-profit providers of social care in Scotland, offering care and support to around 28,000 people every year, including older people (around 22 care homes around Scotland), people with poor mental health or living with addictions, people with learning disabilities and children and families, in facilities from the Borders to the Highlands and Islands.

Its stated purpose is ‘to demonstrate Christ’s love in action by offering high quality care and support which will empower people, across Scotland, to live a full and fulfilling life’; and the strategy offers a vision of ‘a compassionate society where the worth of every individual is recognised and celebrated, and where loving relationships support all to live well and in line with their needs, choices and aspirations’.

However, the charity faces the same challenges as the social care sector

generally, with increasing demand for services, insufficient funding and problems recruiting and retaining staff.

Introducing the strategy, convener of the CrossReach board Dr Mike Cantlay writes that the organisation wants to be ‘at the forefront of change, working with local and national partners to find better ways of supporting people, and we want to do all of this in a way which is sustainable and cost-effective’.

He continues: “At the core of the ambition lies love, a deep rooted concern for others which speaks to our common humanity and dignity.

“As you read through this strategy, we hope that you too find that love in abundance and can support us in our aspirations for a Scotland in which all can thrive.”

The strategy sets out plans across five ‘operational areas’: Older People, Adult Care, Children and Families, Our Resources and Our People. Each of the five has its own set of objectives, including plans to recruit more staff and reduce staff turnover, invest in buildings, facilities and technology, ensure all services are financially sustainable, enhance the quality of life for service users and build capacity where needed to meet future demand.



The organisation says it will ‘take time to work with our partners to understand where we can add value to one another’, and will invest in the way in it communicates both internally and externally.

It also commits to advocating and influencing on behalf of the people it serves, ‘to influence policy decisions both within the organisation, our wider networks locally, nationally and internationally’.

You can read about the Strategic Plan at <https://www.crossreach.org.uk/about-us/strategy> or watch a video on YouTube (search ‘Love from CrossReach’). □

A public consultation and fundraising appeal has been launched to safeguard the future of one of Scotland's most historic and iconic churches.

The Abbey Church of Dunfermline in Fife contains the bones of King Robert the Bruce and is known the world over, welcoming more than 40,000 visitors a year.

Part of 950-year-old Dunfermline Abbey, it is facing "significant challenges" with a repair bill of around £4 million expected over the next three to five years to ensure it remains wind and watertight. A development plan to upgrade facilities in the building will cost a further £4 million.

Minister, the Rev MaryAnn Rennie, said: "These are eye-watering sums of money.

"We have a congregation of 425 and up until now, the burden has fallen on them to fund repairs and improvements as well as secure small grants from funding bodies such as The Carnegie (Dunfermline) Trust.

"However, this is an unsustainable funding model.

"Congregations of buildings of national importance should not be solely responsible for the bulk of repair, maintenance and sustainability of a historic building of this standing."

An exhibition, examining the role of the church in the local community and its history, is being held at Dunfermline Carnegie Library & Galleries from March 22 to April 6.

A fundraising page has been set up for the Dunfermline Abbey appeal at www.justgiving.com/campaign/keepingheart. Read more in March's Life and Work, available from www.lifeandwork.org/subscribe

The Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland has said that Christian Aid follows 'the example that Jesus set for us to follow, to love our neighbours, whoever and wherever we are'.

The Rt Rev Dr Shaw Paterson was speaking in Paisley Abbey at a service celebrating the 80th anniversary of the international development charity.

Christian Aid grew from the work of the Church of Scotland minister and Army Chaplain, the Rev Douglas Lister, who in 1944 appealed to the church for help for German refugees. Dr Lister later wrote that he 'was overwhelmed by Scotland's generosity' and Dr Shaw said that we see that generosity every year, particularly in Christian Aid Week in May.

Recalling visits to Christian Aid projects in Kenya and Malawi last year, Dr Shaw said: "Sometimes when we are confronted with poverty, injustice, discrimination, gender issues, natural disaster – sometimes we feel overwhelmed... that's where the often-quoted passage of scripture comes to mind: 'Whenever you did this for one of the least important of these members of my family, you did it for me.'"

He added: "Jesus commanded us to go to all people everywhere and 'do' – be involved, assist, care, love; share the Gospel... And that's where I am especially thankful to Christian Aid and to everyone who has supported Christian Aid. For 80 years it has been standing with the poorest of our neighbours – the people that Jesus commanded us to love."

The service marked the start of a series of events celebrating the 80th anniversary. For more information visit www.christianaid.org.uk/our-work/80-years-hope

What's On

Celebrating Calling

Saturday March 8, Fullarton Connexions, Irvine, 1-4pm.

The People and Training Team will be hosting the next in its series of Celebrating Calling events.

This is for anyone who has even the faintest inkling that God might be calling them to serve, generally or in the specific ministries of the Church.

There will be practical information about what is involved in pursuing the sense of call as well as inspiration concerning what modern-day ministry is all about. Some of that will come from men and women who are relatively new to ministry and who can share their experiences of both their sense of calling and the training process that followed.

The event will begin with a light lunch, will be relaxed and informal throughout and is free. You can register by emailing ministry@churchofscotland.org.uk or by calling 0131 225 5722 and asking for the People and Training Team.

The Guild Mini Gatherings

The Church of Scotland Guild has announced a series of regional 'mini gatherings' which will require less travelling than the regular national events.

The first three of the mini gatherings take place in April:

Borders Monday April 28, 11am–3pm
Old Parish & St Paul's, Galashiels.

Fife Tuesday April 29, 11am–3pm
Cupar Old Parish Centre.

Angus Wednesday April 30, 11am–3pm
St Andrews Church, King Street, Dundee.

Contact guild@churchofscotland.org.uk for more details, and visit

www.churchofscotland.org.uk/get-involved/the-guild/events for details of all the Guild's scheduled events, including the Big Sing and National Gathering.

In March's Life and Work

Served with Soul

A partnership between a West Lothian church and a charity offering companionship and meals

Healing Brokenness

Mental health charity Kintsugi Hope

Spiritual Journeying

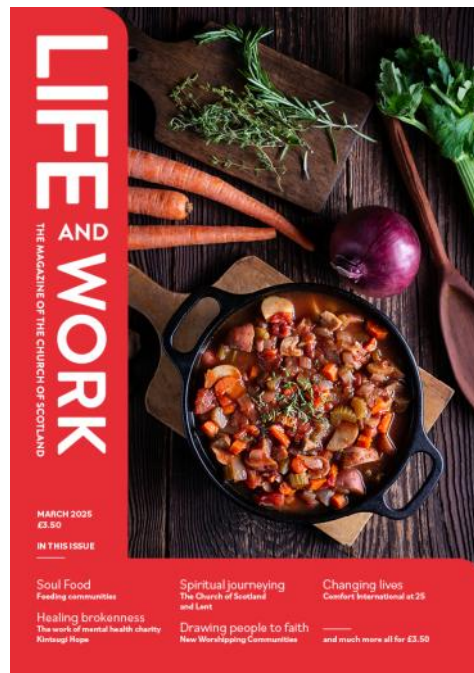
The Church of Scotland and Lent

Drawing People to Faith

Two more of the Church of Scotland's New Worshipping Communities

Shining the Light of God's Love

The story of a life transformed by one of the Church's Priority Area congregations.



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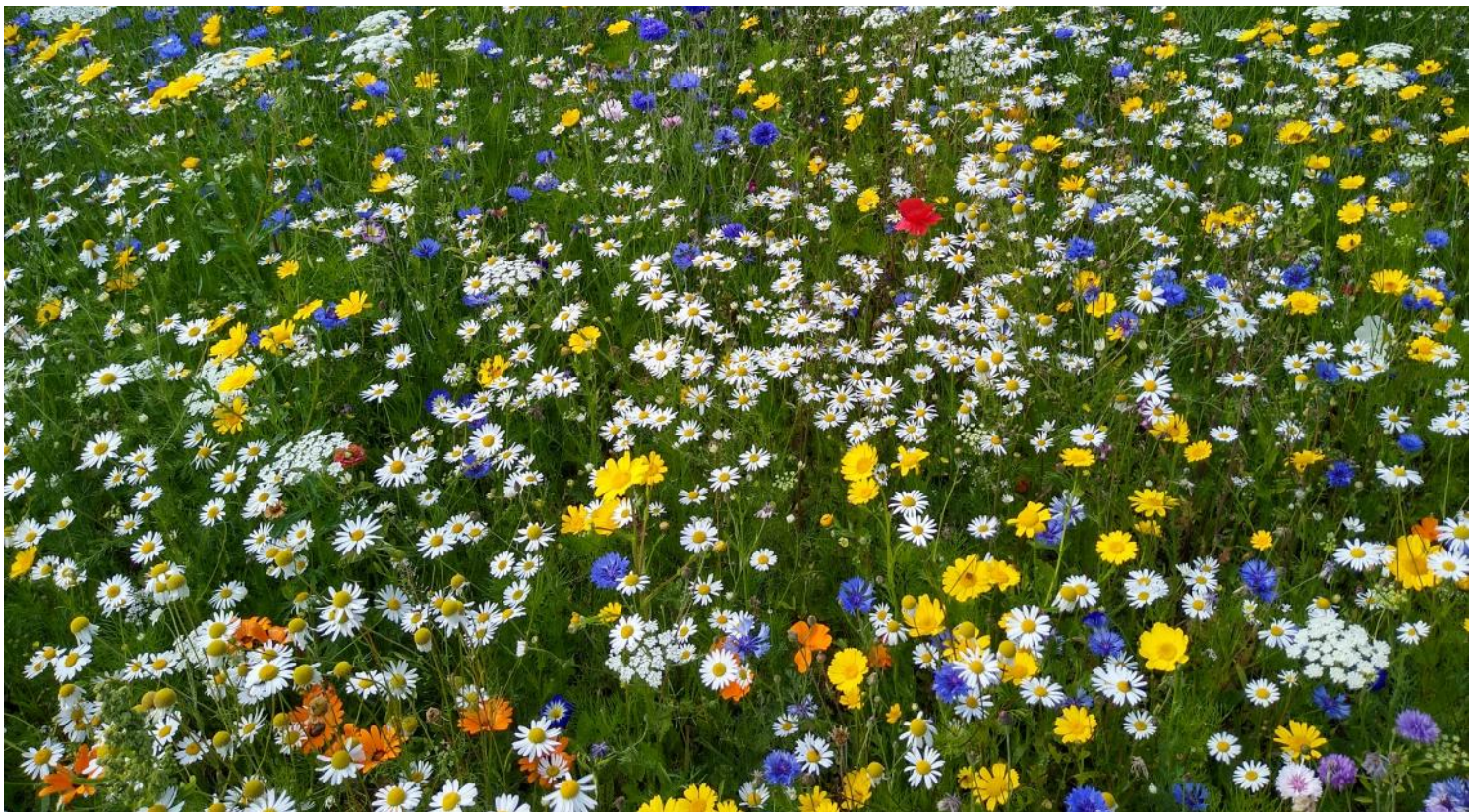
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The Big Picture

By Peter Robinson



Editor: Lynne McNeil. **Deputy Editor:** Thomas Baldwin. **Features Writer:** Jackie Macadam

Business Manager: Dianne Sanderson. **Administrator:** Melissa Grimley

Life and Work, Church of Scotland, 121 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 4YN. Scottish charity number SC011353