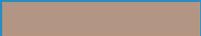


Church In Transition

Frontline Sundays – All The Difference In The World
4th July 2021



Some of the material, including text and images, in this service are provided by The London Institute for Contemporary Christianity as part of their **Frontline Sundays** resource.



Welcome

We are now back worshipping at Church in our In - Person services. We have decided that for the foreseeable future we will be continuing with our flexible worship patterns which will still blends on - line services, home deliveries and emailed copies of Church in Transition.

Today's service will be looking at: **1 Peter 1 v. 1 - 2**

The theme for today's service is: **All The Difference In The World**

An Introduction To Frontline Sundays

What, as a church leader, brings joy to your heart?

What, among the many satisfactions that accompany the challenges of pastoral ministry, puts a spring in your step, awe in your spirit, praise on your lips?

Well, of course, there are those party-in-heaven moments when someone puts their trust in Christ for the first time – praise God for every single one. But besides those, the times when I see church leaders' eyes really light up are not when they're talking about a new building (frown-browed optimism), increased small group sign-ups (quiet smile), a new church worker (relief), or even making the budget (mega-relief). No, the moments when their eyes really light up are when they're talking about people making a difference for God out in his world.

There's that student, inspired to a richer prayer life now he's seen that his seminar topic as well as his seminar buddies matter to God; that 28-year-old site supervisor who's glimpsed how she's having an impact for Christ through that construction project. And that 50-year-old

manager in a toxic office who's woken up to the reassuring reality that God wants her there and is very clearly working through her to change it. And that retiree who's suddenly realised what a mission field his sports club is and is finding all kinds of ways to connect his new friends with his church friends and community.

You can sense that kind of excitement in Jesus in Luke 10 when the 72 return from their mission – he is thrilled with them, thrilled for them. It is one of the great joys of pastoral ministry: seeing people growing in fruitful relationship with Christ out in the places where they spend most of their time – on their frontlines, with the people that they naturally connect to, doing the things they do every day for him. Alive in Christ in all of life. Monday to Saturday as well as Sunday.

How can this become a greater reality in our church communities? How can we ensure that what we do in the few hours we're gathered together fuels God's people for their mission in the many hours we're apart?

Forces against us

Jesus' focus in his own ministry was on discipling the twelve for their ministry in the world, and his final instruction to them in Matthew's account was to do the same for others – 'go and make disciples'. For whole - life disciple making to become central and effective in our churches and mission today, however, there are forces in play that we must name and resist.

It is one of the great joys of pastoral ministry: seeing people growing in fruitful relationship with Christ.

There's the spiritual reality that the evil one wants to blind God's people to the potential of their everyday lives. Imagine the missional impact of the 98% of God's people who aren't in church-paid work when they're disciplined for fruitful mission and discipleship in the 95% of their lives that they spend away from church-based activities.

There's the long - term impact of the sacred-secular divide that has elevated the value of church-based ministry over people's scattered missional lives. We may have named this force, but it takes time to re-shape a culture so that its power is diminished.

There's the multi-dimensional nature of church life and the pressure to 'keep the show on the road'. And there's the reality that there just aren't that many people in our churches right now who can come alongside church leaders and help them make whole-life disciples.

And yet, across the UK, church leaders are getting started on a fresh disciple making journey. They're finding ways to begin to create a church culture that makes disciples who are fruitful for Christ, Monday through Sunday.

Creating a whole - life disciple making church

It's happening in small churches and large, in rural and urban, suburban and fresh expressions. It's happening in churches with robed choirs and churches with bands in

T-shirts and trainers. Indeed, leaders in Anglo-Catholic, traditional, conservative, liberal, charismatic communities are experimenting in all kinds of ways to change their culture. They change the questions they ask people about their lives and widen the scope of congregational prayers. They broaden the range of preaching illustrations and refocus meeting agendas. They are asking: how can what we do when we are gathered disciple people for abundant life in Christ when they're scattered out on their daily frontlines?

Red dots in a sea of grey

Christians are a small minority in our nation in these times. Less than 6% of the population currently go to church once a month or more – six red dots in a sea of grey ones. The reality, however, is that these red dots, these people of God, are out there in the world, Monday through Saturday – traces and voices of grace for thousands of people. This is the church in mission on the frontline.

And if the scattered church is to grow ever more fruitful in mission, Monday through Saturday, we must embrace the gift of gathered church to fuel this. We're convinced that our nations will never be reached until we create open, authentic, learning, and praying communities that are focused on growing whole-life disciples who live and share the gospel wherever they are.

Why Frontline Sundays matter

Many church leaders are convinced of this too. Their real question is – how? How do they lead whole – life disciple making churches? How do they get started on shifting church culture so that the frontline mission of the whole people of God is affirmed, celebrated, prayed for, and remembered? How do the life and practices of their church, in their context, equip people, over time, to be ever more confident and fruitful for Christ in everyday life?

Learning the ways of Jesus in our context at any moment is a lifetime journey. Becoming a whole – life disciple making church is too, and you might like to check out resources for this journey on page 20. But starting well with a congregation matters. Refreshing a vision matters too. That's the role of this Frontline Sundays resource – a flexible, multi – dimensional resource to ignite a biblical and missional imagination for Monday to Saturday life. And to champion Sunday life too. And the fruit is worth it.

All the difference in the world

It's not only that people begin to see their daily contexts through God's eyes. It's not only that those who don't know Jesus get ministered to in all kinds of places, and blessed, and, in some cases, put their trust in Christ. It's not only that the atmosphere in some organisations changes from toxic to healthy. It's that God's people discover the joy of walking with Jesus in all of life, that they get more excited about him as well. And that's enough to make any leader's heart leap.

Who is it for?

Frontline Sundays is perfect for churches new to the idea of frontline discipleship. It also works very well for churches looking to refresh this vision, particularly when new people have joined the church over time.

What might it lead to?

After using Frontline Sundays, your congregation should:

- Know that they have a frontline, be able to name it, and start to 'own it'
- Be convinced that their frontline matters to God and his purposes
- See what they do, day by day, with fresh eyes
- Be confident that first and foremost they are significant because of who they are and whose they are, and that mission flows from this
- Deepen their commitment to the church family as a community of believers learning the ways of Jesus in all of life
- Be inspired by the biblical foundations explored
- Know God just that little bit more



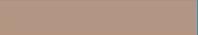
Today's service that is set out in this edition of **Church In Transition** includes **Communion**.

Beginning this week and for the next five Sundays we are looking at what it means to be a 'Frontline Church' engaging with God and others where we find ourselves throughout the week.

We hope that you will be able to engage with what has been produced for our **Sunday Service** and that you would indeed **Make All The Difference In The World**.

All the difference in the world





Frontline Sundays 1

All The Difference In

The World

We are the church in mission – gathered and scattered – and we make all the difference in the world.

The church is a body of people living a rhythm of gathering and scattering; usually gathering on Sunday and scattering for the rest of the week.

Despite being a minority, Christians make all the difference in the world for Christ – wherever they are, whatever they do, whoever they are – Monday through Saturday.

And to grow as disciples for these frontlines, we need one another; we need to be together as a worshipping community.

Call To Worship

Psalm 106 v. 1 – 5 NLT

Praise the Lord!

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good!

His faithful love endures forever.

Who can list the glorious miracles of the Lord?

Who can ever praise him half enough?

Happy are those who deal justly with others

And always do what is right.

Remember me, too, Lord, when you show Favour to your people;

Come to me with your salvation.

Let me share in the prosperity of your chosen

Ones.

Let me rejoice in the joy of your people;

Let me praise you with those who are your Heritage.



Opening Prayer

Father God thank you that you have brought each of us safely to this place this day. We gladly surrender our lives to you heavenly Father, in worship and praise this day.

Help us to remember this day, that we are your chosen people, loved by you, God the Father; cleansed by the blood of your Son Jesus, our Saviour and that we are renewed by the work of the Holy Spirit, who is at work in the hearts of all those who surrender their lives to you.

We gladly invite Your Holy Spirit to move freely amongst us. Come we pray and dwell in each of our hearts. Equip us, challenge us, comfort us, and teach us.

As we read your word in Scripture today, inspire us as we learn more about your majestic ways.

Thank you that today we dwell in your kingdom and live in your presence and love. Thank you that as we gather together we join with fellow brothers and sisters in Christ across this nation and throughout the world to glorify your holy name. Come be with us, inspire us and lead us in our time together today.

Loving Lord Jesus, as we gather here we thank you for

fellowship and friendship. We ask that you will strengthen us, restore us and inspire us with your love. Lord, would you fill us with your peace so that as we journey onwards we would pour out your love and grace to others as we meet them throughout the course of this coming week.

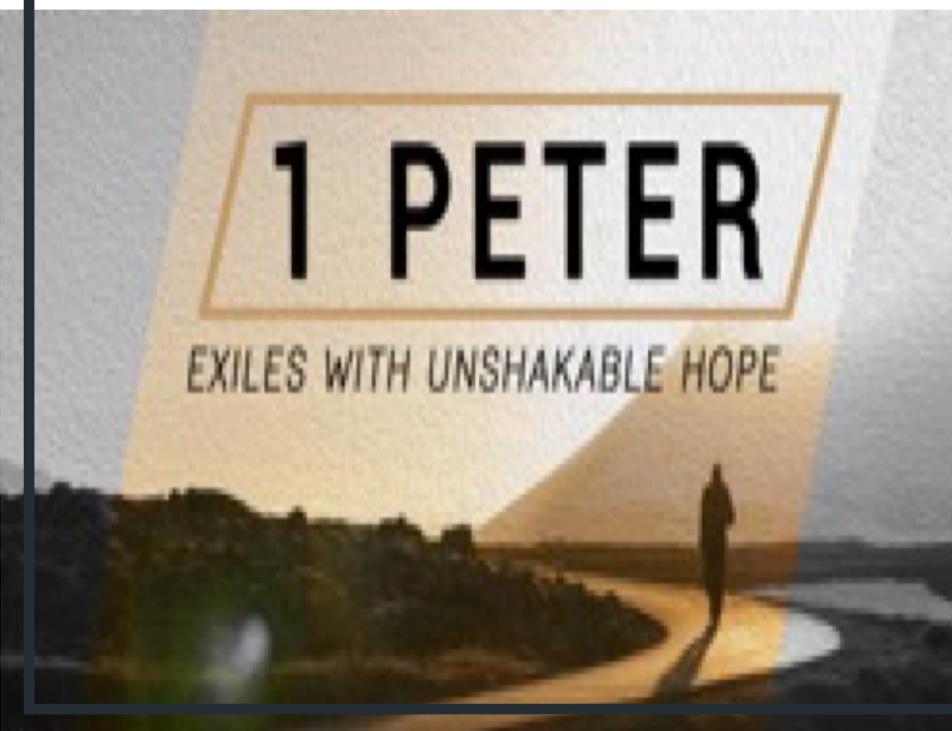
Refresh our faith we pray, in your willingness to accept us, help us enjoy our standing as your much loved children, and enable us to live lives in which you can take delight today, we pray.

We ask these prayers as we come to you this day, in the precious and glorious name of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.

Amen

1 PETER

EXILES WITH UNSHAKABLE HOPE

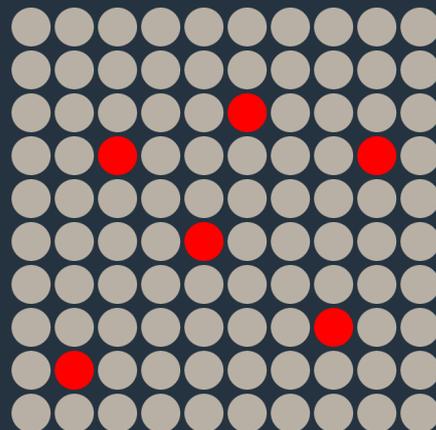
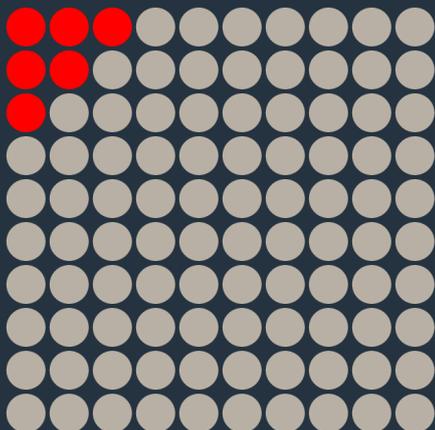


A Short Film

The film that we are about to see introduces us to the series that we will look at over the next five weeks.

It introduces the series' key messages and establishes the idea of the red dots as symbolising Christians both scattered in the world and gathered in worshipping communities.

To view the short film click [here](#). Once you're finished, return to the service to continue.



Frontline

Prayer

Thank you, Father God, that we are your church, the body of Christ in the world.

We're grateful for our Sunday life and the worship that equips us for the days when we're apart.

Help us see afresh the possibilities of our everyday lives.

May we know your presence with us in the pressures and the potential of the week.

Help us to leave traces of grace wherever we are and whatever we do.

Amen

Bible

Reading

1 Peter 1 v. 1 – 2 New International Version

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,

To God's elect, exiles scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, 2 who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood:

Grace and peace be yours in abundance.

Communion

Today is a Sunday when we would normally share communion together. We come together today remembering the love and sacrifice that Jesus made on the Cross for our sins and for our forgiveness. We gather together here in Church or at home as the body of Christ in order to share the bread and the cup together.

We are able to do this by getting a small glass of red juice (**fruit juice, squash etc.**) and a small piece of bread and 'sharing these elements' at a time that is convenient to you.

(Normally as a church we will do this during the morning service at about 11.30 am)

Our normal practice is to say these words:

For I receive from the Lord what I pass on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night that he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, **(you might like to pray at this point)** he broke it and said 'This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.' **(This is the time to eat the bread)**. In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.' **(Now is the time to drink the cup)**. For whenever you eat of this bread and drink of this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

1 Corinthians 11 v. 22 – 26

If you would like to do this today with us, if you are at home, then please do so, and may the Lord's richest blessings be with you today.



The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
Hallowed be Thy name,
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done,
On Earth as it is in Heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
The power, and the glory,
For ever and ever.

Amen



Offering



Now that we find ourselves once again holding in-person services in church, we are able to give of our finances to the work of the Lord when we are in church.

However, if you feel that you are not ready to return to in-person services yet, please keep on giving with a cheerful and grateful heart, praising God for all that he has given to you until the time arises when you feel that you can physically meet with us again and share in the finances of the church.

Church In Transition Thought

FRONTLINE SUNDAYS 1

ALL THE DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD

In his letter to scattered groups of Christians in what is modern - day Turkey, the apostle Peter writes to them to ignite their imagination and inspire hope for the possibilities of their everyday lives in a complex world. Peter begins by using two pivotal words to describe the people of God and then he reminds them of a stunning truth. These two words – **'elect'** and **'exiles'** – helped the church know who they were. They, and we in the UK today, are a small minority in nations that, in the main, do not worship Jesus.

The image of six 'red dots' in a sea of grey ones pictures this. Yet Peter is confident in what God can and will do through them. He concludes his opening greeting by joyfully

celebrating the work of the Triune God in them, day by day – making all the difference in the world.

Introduction

In general, if you tell people you go to church they will think it's because you're religious and it's what people like you do. Or they will think it's where your friends are and that it's a good place to connect with people. Or maybe they know how well we support one another and are pleased that you belong to such a community.

Whilst there is a grain of truth in all these views, they miss what the New Testament suggests the church is all about. When Peter begins his letter to small groups of Christians scattered across ancient Turkey, he wants them to understand what it means to be the church. He does it by helping them see themselves as part of the Old Testament people of God. He uses two key words and a stunning truth.

They are God's ELECT

God's purpose from **Genesis 12** onwards was that Abraham, and all his descendants, would be blessed and would be a blessing to the world around. Not all these early

Christians would have been Jewish by birth. Yet Peter draws them into the ongoing story of God's intention for the world by using the language of calling. Whatever our journey to faith in Jesus was, when we surrendered to his lordship, we became part of this '**called**' people. In the visual we're using, we are red dots.

The red dots visualise the statistical fact that in the UK around 6% of people worship in a Christian church once a month or more. It's not many but it is significant. When we gather as worshippers we remind ourselves that we believe a very particular story about the world.

We believe it is God's – he created it. We believe it's broken – because of sin; we believe that Jesus' death makes new life possible; we believe that one day everything will be transformed. We live as people with a distinct story in a culture that may not believe any of that. **We are the red dots.** And when we gather we do so to strengthen and encourage one another to be who we are – God's chosen people.

They are EXILES

The second term that Peter uses is one that recalls the great disaster of the Old

Testament – when Israel lost their land. At first they hoped for a quick return. But the prophets told them that most of that first generation of exiles would not return, though they could remain distinct and be a blessing where they were (**Jeremiah 29**).

Today, we are also scattered for most of the time. We don't spend all our time with fellow Christians. We may be the only disciples of Jesus at home, at work, or in our class, if we are part of a school or college. These are the places where we are called to shine (**Philippians 2 v. 14 - 16**). So, it's important that we don't '**grey out**', lose our distinctiveness, and become the same as the surrounding culture. God has a plan in placing us in our scattered contexts.

'**Frontline**' is a term to describe these places. Of course, it has all sorts of connotations. For some, it reminds them of a battlefield and, whilst we would want to be careful about this, for some Christians keeping a Christian witness in their place is not easy. Others will have come across the term in their workplaces – classrooms, hospital wards, offices. Frontlines are everyday places where we live, work, study, or play and we're likely to connect with people who aren't Christians.

Our hope, and experience, is that it is a term

that everyone can relate to – from school child to retiree. We are all the scattered people of God. We all have frontlines.

A stunning truth

Peter concludes his opening greeting with a reminder of the wondrous work of the Trinity in their lives:

- Our situations are known by God – his foreknowledge.
- We have been set apart by the Spirit – his sanctifying work.
- We can be confident of our relationship with God – the sprinkling of blood is a sign of being included in his covenant.

And all that is in the context of **'being obedient to Jesus'**, aligning ourselves with Christ and his purposes in the world. Peter rejoices with his readers in all that God has done for us. And he reminds them, and us, that we live out the implications of the gospel in our scattered places. We are elect and we are exiles.

The series will go on to explore the implications of this for us wherever we are, whatever we do, and whoever we are. It finishes by looking at what it means to be a disciple making community together – for

the sake of the world.

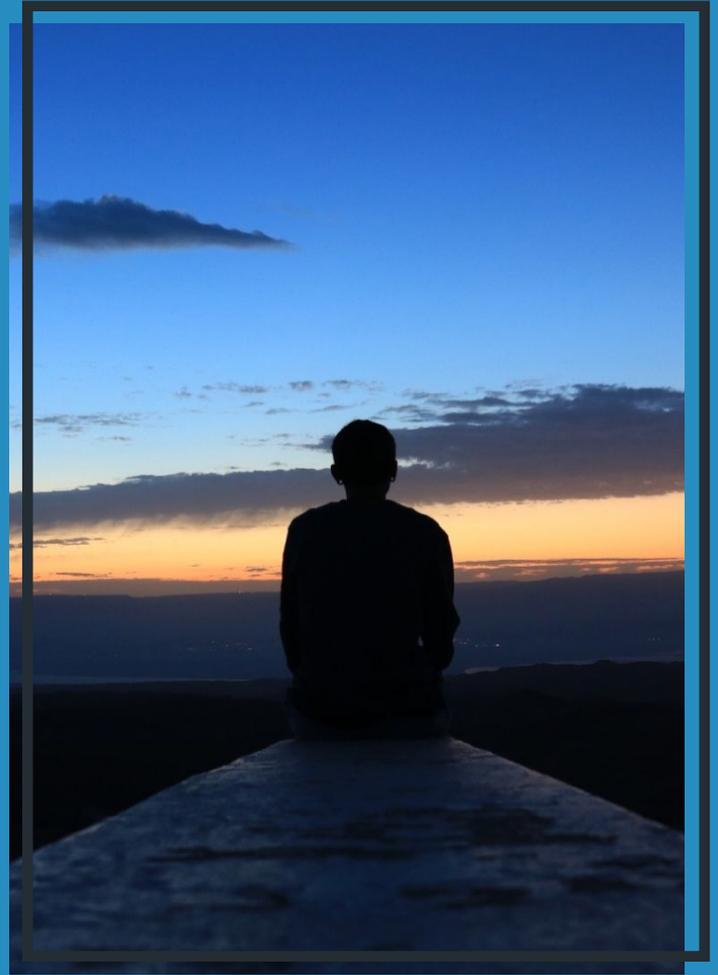
We are red dots when we gather to strengthen one another as a distinct people.

We are red dots when we scatter – to many different places with many different people.

People who can make all the difference in the world.

Song Suggestion

Love Divine, All loves Excelling



The Bible says we are

"living stones"

under construction,

being built into a

spiritual house called

the **Church.**



Prayers of Intercession

Thank you Heavenly Father that you have allowed us to meet in this place today. We pray that you will give us strength of purpose and faith in you today in order to make the right decisions in regards to our own lives and the life of your church here at Salendine Nook. Help us to understand the consequences of our actions for others, as well as ourselves, and, always, to seek your guidance through prayer.

We are reminded today, Loving Lord, of our responsibilities as your people to follow instructions and laws in order to be good disciples. When we hear and watch the news, we can see and are reminded that times are often difficult for many, including ourselves and others, help us to protect others and ourselves so, that one day we may be able to return to a more normalised way of living both here in the church building in order to worship and sing our praises to you once again. Help us to remember that the church is not the building, but that the Church is the people. Help us Lord to work together as your people to stay connected with each other and with you through these ongoing difficult



and challenging times.

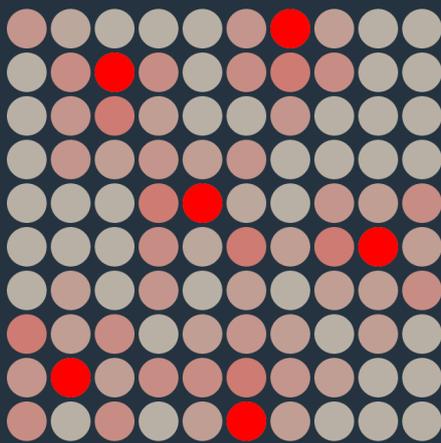
Loving Lord Jesus, may we be used by you today, to be an encouragement to someone else. Help us to strive to be more Christ - like in our attitude and daily life in order that others may see the true meaning of what it is to be brothers and sisters in Christ who love one another.

We thank you that today we have been able to begin this five week series on witnessing for you wherever our 'Frontline' is; whether that is at work, school, home, with friends and family or wherever you place us day by day. Give us a willingness to share the Good News of Jesus with others in order that your Holy Spirit may bring them to faith in you. We continue to pray for our families and friends. Lord we all face the normal ups and downs of life in many different ways. We thank you that Jesus knows our every situation. Help us we pray to face the different situations we face with dignity courage and love.

We want to pray this day for those who are unwell, both at home and in hospital, or hospice. We think of the elderly, the housebound and those in care homes who may be known to us personally. We pray for all those who care for their needs, both professionally and in the family. So again, as we share a moment of silence together, we bring before you those known only to ourselves and name them before you, Lord Jesus, in our hearts.

And finally, Lord we pray for ourselves. Help us Lord to follow your example in all that we do and say as we journey with you. We place ourselves, this Church and all your people into your loving care. Please accept these our prayers, in Jesus name.

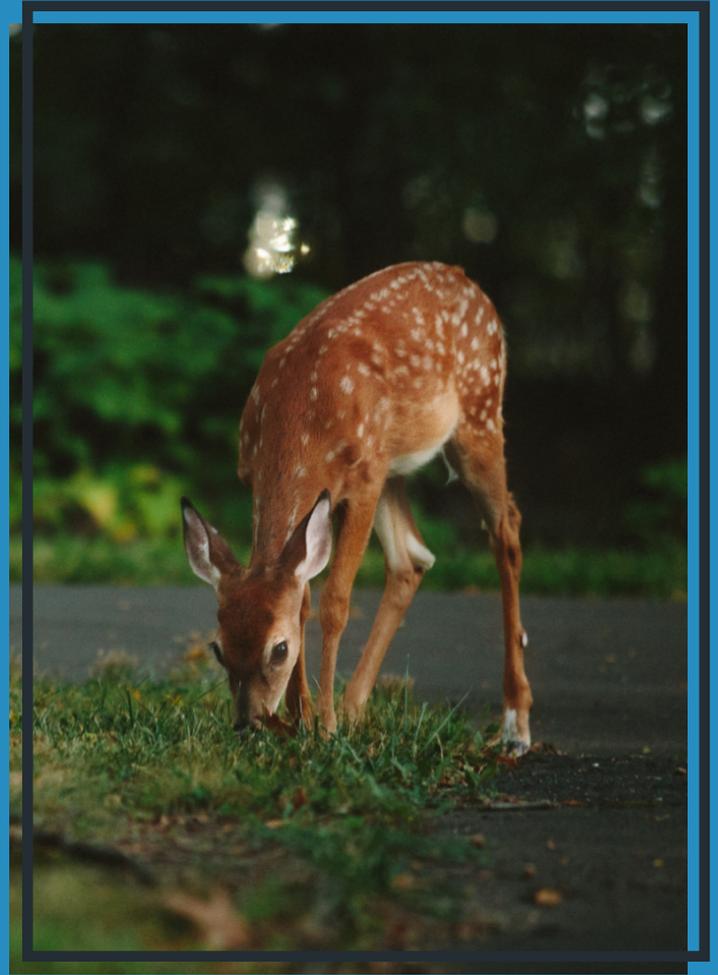
Amen



lic. Frontline Sundays

Song Suggestion

Take My Life And Let It Be





Live as servants of God.

1 PETER 2:16

Blessing



Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work among us, to him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever!

Ephesians 3 v. 20, 21

AMEN

