

Church In Transition

Frontline Sundays - Wherever We Are
11th 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.

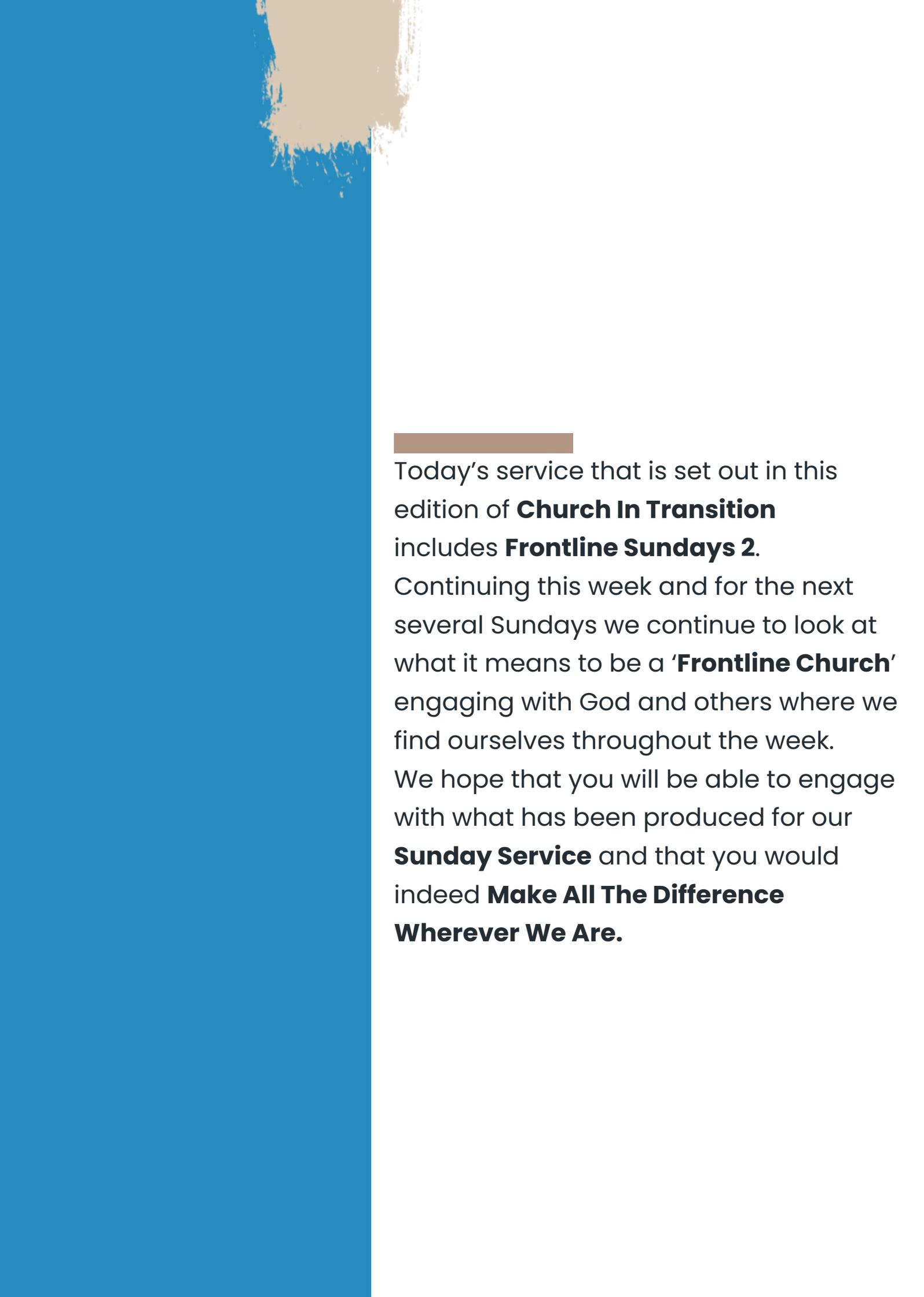


Welcome

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: **Genesis 28 v. 10 - 22**

The theme for today's service is: **Wherever We Are...**



Today's service that is set out in this edition of **Church In Transition** includes **Frontline Sundays 2**.

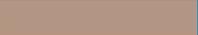
Continuing this week and for the next several Sundays we continue to look at what it means to be a '**Frontline Church**' engaging with God and others where we find ourselves throughout the week.

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 Wherever We Are**.



**Wherever
we are**

Ice - Frontline Sundays



Frontline Sundays 2

Wherever We Are

Everyone has a frontline – a place where we do life or work and where we encounter people who don't know Jesus.

We don't need to go looking for these, we are already there.

We just need to see these places with fresh eyes.

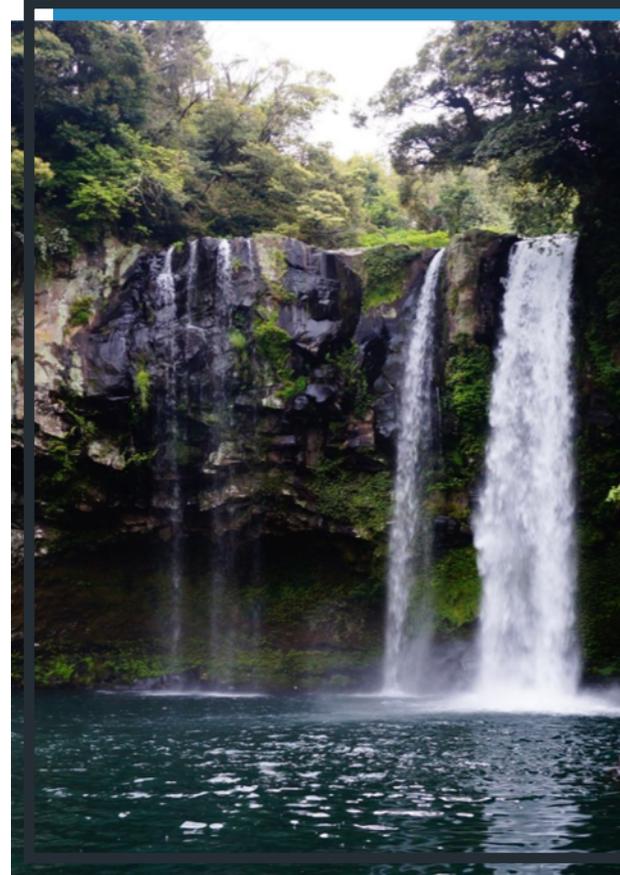
The second service in the series helps people see that God is present in their everyday places and that these can be places where God is at work with us. Even the unexpected places can become places of encounter and transformation.

Call To Worship

Psalm 63 v. 1 - 5 NLT

O God, you are my God;
I earnestly search for you.
My soul thirsts for you;
My whole body longs for you
In this parched and weary land
Where there is no water.

I have seen you in your sanctuary
And gazed upon your power and glory.
Your unfailing love is better to me than
Life itself;
How I praise you!
I will honour you as long as I live,
Lifting up my hands to you in prayer.
You satisfy me more than the richest
Of foods.
I will praise you with songs of joy.



Opening Prayer

Creator God, we praise and thank you for the richness and wonder of life itself, for the beauty of the day that you have given us and the splendour of the world around us. Thank you dear Lord, for allowing us to be part of this new day as we come to worship and praise your Holy name in this place.

Redeemer God, we praise you for Jesus, our Saviour and the glory of your work in him; we thank you for his life in all its fullness of doing and being; for his following through of your way to the end; and for your raising of him and all who follow after his ways.

Inspirer God, we praise and thank you for human history and the richness of our inheritance in your Kingdom. You come to us by your Holy Spirit and you perform new and exciting ways in our lives in order that we may be your disciples and follow you all the days of our lives.

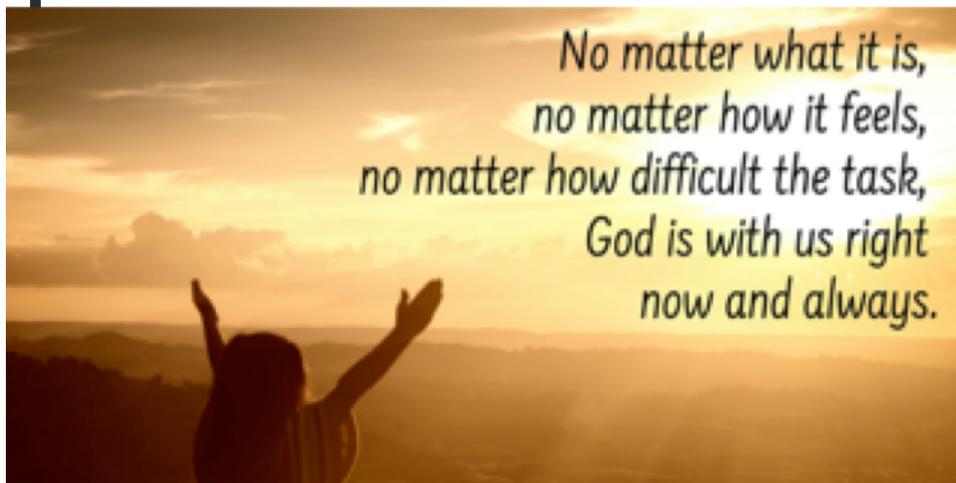
You are a generous and bountiful God, all good things come from you and we want to

say thank you for all that you have done, are doing, and will do in this place. May we be obedient to your will in order to serve you all the days of our lives.

We ask these things in the precious name of Jesus.

Amen

*No matter what it is,
no matter how it feels,
no matter how difficult the task,
God is with us right
now and always.*



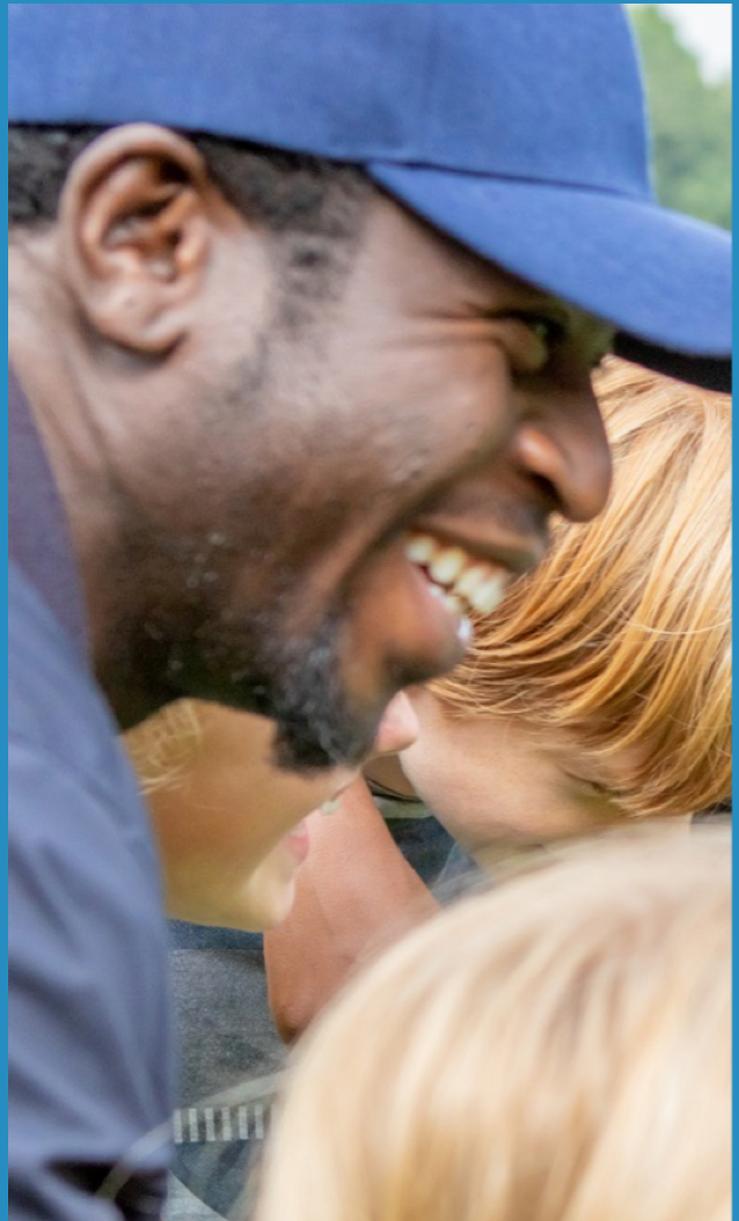
A Short Film

In this film you meet our four characters in their everyday lives.

Each has a very different frontline; a grandmother childminding, a plumber at work, a volunteer coach for a children's football team, and a business woman.

Everyone - young, old, employed, unemployed - has a frontline.

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



Frontline Prayer

Lord of all creation, thank you that our everyday, ordinary places matter to you and we make a difference there.

We offer to you the places where we live, work, study, and play.

May we serve you and bear witness to you wherever we are this week.

And may we know your presence with us in these places.

Amen

A person in a white dress is walking away from the viewer across a vast, sandy desert landscape. The scene is captured from a high angle, showing the person's path and the surrounding dunes. The text is overlaid on the upper portion of the image.

FOR I WILL NOT LEAVE YOU
UNTIL I HAVE DONE WHAT
I HAVE PROMISED YOU.

GENESIS 28:15

Bible

Reading

Genesis 28 v. 10 – 22 NIV

Jacob's Dream at Bethel

10 Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Harran. 11 When he reached a certain place, he stopped for the night because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones there, he put it under his head and lay down to sleep. 12 He had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. 13 There above it stood the Lord, and he said: "I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. 14 Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. 15 I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you." 16 When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I

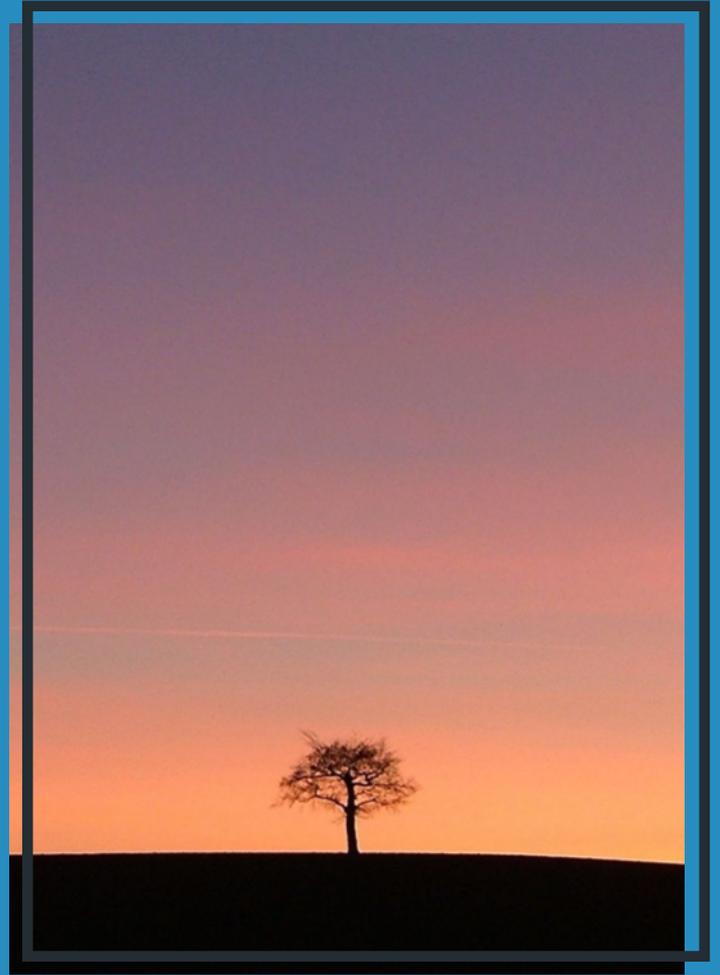
was not aware of it.” 17 He was afraid and said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven.”

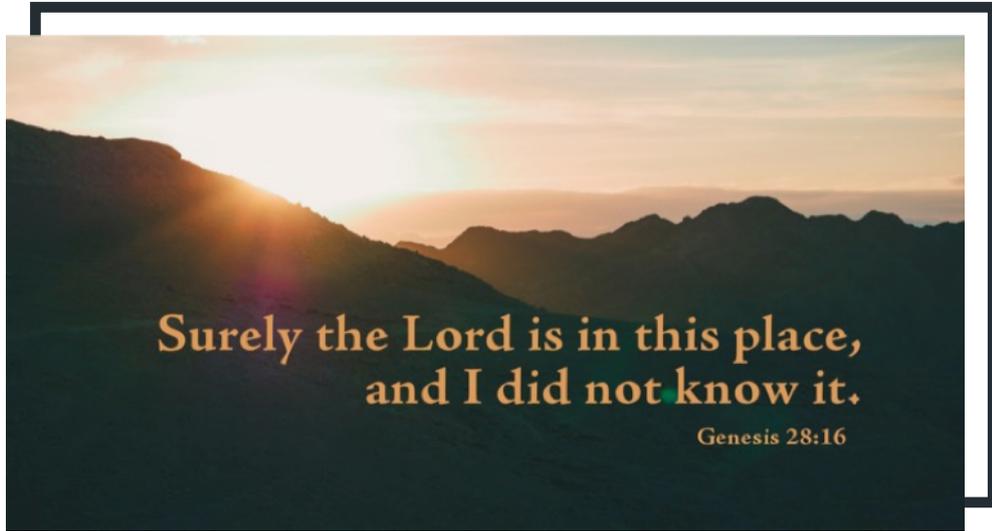
18 Early the next morning Jacob took the stone he had placed under his head and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on top of it. 19 He called that place Bethel, though the city used to be called Luz.

20 Then Jacob made a vow, saying, “If God will be with me and will watch over me on this journey I am taking and will give me food to eat and clothes to wear 21 so that I return safely to my father’s household, then the Lord will be my God 22 and this stone that I have set up as a pillar will be God’s house, and of all that you give me I will give you a tenth.”

Song Suggestion

Great Is Thy Faithfulness





**Surely the Lord is in this place,
and I did not know it.**

Genesis 28:16

Church In Transition Thought

FRONTLINE SUNDAYS 2

WHEREVER WE ARE

Encounters with God are transformative, and they happen in the course of life with all its ups and downs.

They happen in the places we find ourselves in regularly.

They happen, too, in the places that we find ourselves unexpectedly.

This particular encounter with God happens when Jacob is in serious conflict with his brother.

*Esau wants to kill him (**Genesis 27 v. 41**).*

Jacob, his grasping younger-by-minutes twin brother, has tricked him out of his birthright.

*He has taken Esau's future security from him and left him with nothing (**Genesis 27 v. 39 - 40**).*

As Jacob runs away, he meets God in the last place he expected.

'Surely the Lord was in this place, and I was not aware of it.'

As Jacob runs from the anger of his brother Esau, a very ordinary place becomes extraordinary – God meets him. It becomes a touching point between heaven and earth. Jacob renames the place 'Bethel' – 'the house of God'. When we go to our ordinary places 'in the name of Jesus', they become the touching points between heaven and earth.

God meets Jacob in an ordinary place

In church it's easy to rush over the central point of the story. God meets Jacob! It sounds like the sort of church – talk that most will accept in church surroundings but possibly be suspicious about elsewhere.

Outside the church we would want to ask – did he imagine it all? Was it because of the stress he was under?

But as Walter Brueggemann has said in his commentary on Genesis, **'Neither of these will do. The narrative shatters our presuppositions. It insists the world is a place of such meetings.'**

So, if it's easy to rush over that amazing part of the story, we then try to make it safer for ourselves by thinking that we are most likely to meet God in 'holy' places: churches, chapels, prayer rooms etc. But the Bible is clear: most of the time God meets people in the least likely places.

He meets Moses in a burning bush; Elijah not in a whirlwind, but in a whisper at the doorway to a cave. Jesus met Zacchaeus up a tree; the woman at the well, about her daily tasks; Peter at his workplace, a beach; Mary Magdalene looked for him in a tomb but found him standing behind her.

Most of the encounters we read about in the life of Jesus occur in ordinary, everyday places.

As Matthew Henry said: **'No place excludes divine visits'**.

There have been incredible stories of the places people have encountered God: prisons; schools; homes; workplaces; squash courts; pubs; fields etc.

It still happens. God is here.

God transforms the ordinary place into a holy place

For most travellers, this place was just a stopping - off place. Somewhere handy to spend the night.

But for Jacob this very ordinary place becomes extraordinary. It is a touching point between heaven and earth.

Jacob renames the place '**Bethel**' which means '**the house of God**'.

This is what we mean by frontlines - the ordinary places that are the touching places between God and his world that may not know his love.

In the film with this series, ordinary places become '**holy**' places: for the plumber, it was his customer's house; for the grandma, the front room; for the businesswoman, the office; for the football coach, it was the pitch.

When we go to our ordinary places '**in the name of Jesus**', they become the touching points between heaven and earth.

Jacob marks the ordinary place with a stone

God assures Jacob that he hasn't finished with him yet (**Genesis 28 v. 15**). God's

purposes will be worked out through Jacob.

Jacob has been a schemer his whole life and that's why he is on the run. But in this place, he hears the voice of God reassuring him that God will make a difference through Jacob in the places he finds himself.

Jacob 'owns' the place and knows that it is significant.

Jacob met God in a dream. Maybe that's significant. Maybe it's as we slow down that we allow ourselves to become more aware of God's presence with us.

When you go '**through the door**' into the places you find yourself during the week, go with an expectation that God can be at work there and seek to join in with what he is doing.

Connecting with the congregation

You might like to use the congregation activity in the booklet – This Time Tomorrow – to illustrate the sermon through interviews with one or two people in your congregation. If you're using the Scatter Pack the postcard with its questions will help people to discover the implications of the sermon in their own context.

Congregational Activity

THIS TIME TOMORROW

Take some time to see what God is doing in your life, begin thinking about conversations you can have, and affirm the work of God through his people.

Take two minutes to answer some questions.

Where will you be 'This Time Tomorrow.'?

What do you like about it there?

What is a pressure point there for you?

What might be God's purpose for you there right now?

What do you need prayer for?

Prayers of Intercession

Gracious God rejoicing in your blessings, trusting in your loving care for all, we bring you our prayers for the world.

We pray for the created world: for those who rebuild where things have been destroyed; for those who fight hunger poverty and disease; for those who have power to bring change for the better and to renew hope.

Silence

In the life of our world: **Your kingdom come, O Lord, Your will be done.**

We pray for our country: for those in leadership; who frame our laws and shape our common life; who keep the peace and administer justice; for those who teach and those who heal and for all who serve the community

Silence

In the life of our land: **Your kingdom come, O Lord, Your will be done.**

We pray for people in need: those for whom life is a bitter struggle; those whose lives are



clouded by death or loss, by pain or disability, by discouragement or fear, by shame or rejection.

Silence

In the lives of those in need: **Your kingdom come, O Lord, Your will be done.**

We pray for those in the circle of friendship and love around us: children and parents; sisters and brothers; friends and neighbours; and for those especially in our thoughts today ...

Silence

In the lives of those we love: **Your kingdom come, O Lord, Your will be done.**

We pray for the church: in its stand with the poor, in its love for the outcast and the ashamed, in its service to the sick and the neglected, in its proclamation of the Gospel, in this land and in this place.

Silence

In the life of your church: **Your kingdom come, O Lord, Your will be done.**

Eternal God: hear these our prayers, the spoken and the silent, through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with you and the Holy Spirit, be all praise and glory for ever.

Amen

Offering



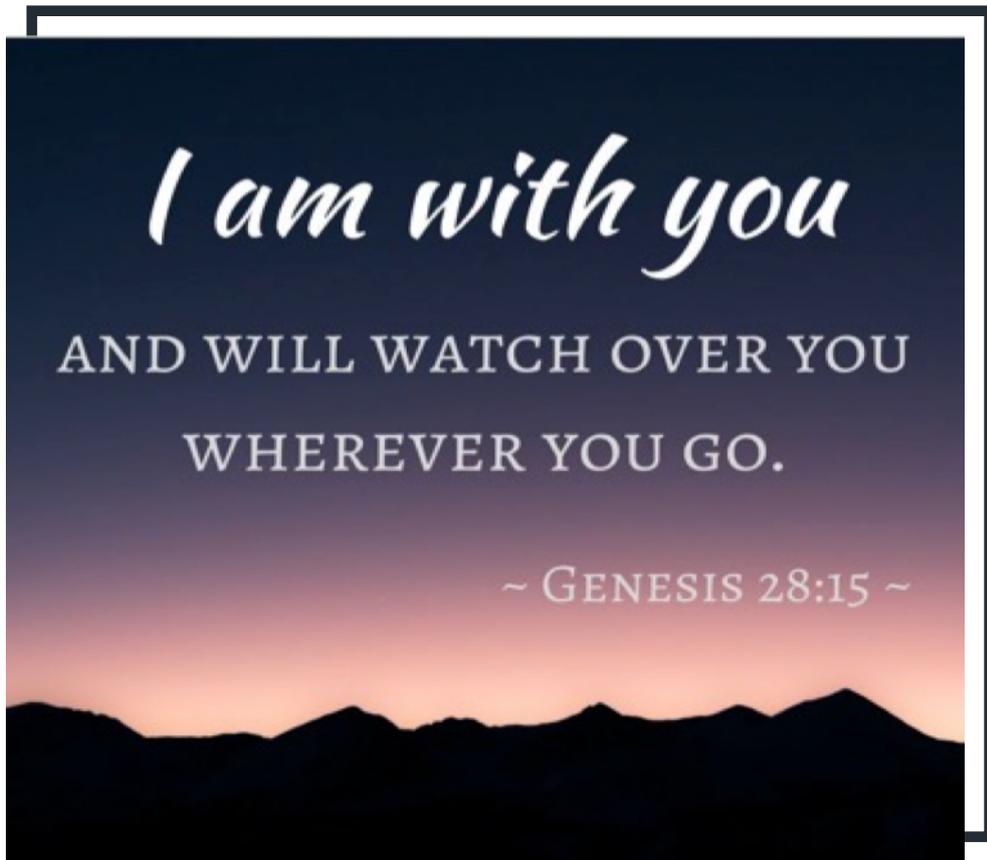
Now that we find ourselves once again holding in-person services in church, we are able to give of our finances to the work of the Lord when we are in church.

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.

I am with you

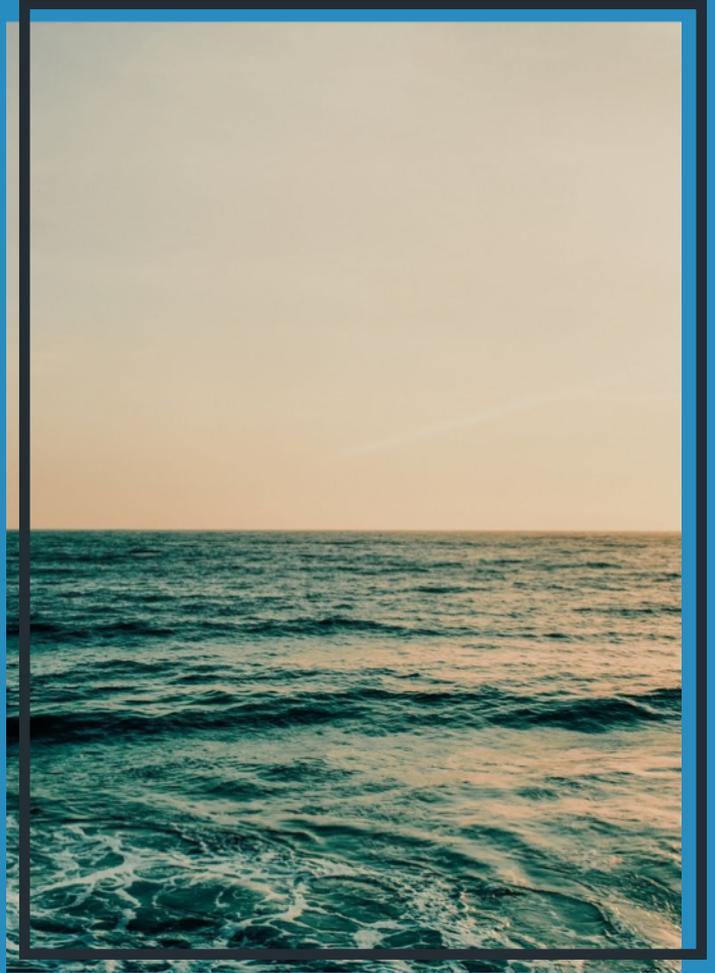
AND WILL WATCH OVER YOU
WHEREVER YOU GO.

~ GENESIS 28:15 ~



Song Suggestion

I The Lord Of Sea And Sky





Blessing

To thy name, Lord Jesus, help me: to bow
the knee and all its worshipping;
to bow the head and all its thinking; to
bow the will and all its choosing;
to bow the heart and all its loving.

AMEN

