

Sermons at All Saints Anglican Church, Luxembourg

Preached by Rev Canon Geoff Read on Sunday 19th April 2026

Bible passage: Genesis 28:10ff

Three years ago I had the opportunity for a sabbatical

For 3 months I was able to step out of ordinary responsibilities there at All Saints to study and to be refreshed spiritually

It was a great privilege, and I hope that not only do I still benefit from it, but you at All Saints do also by what I learned and how I was shaped

One new thing I learned is that God is to be encountered in many different places

I went on two pilgrimages - one here along the Camino route in Luxembourg, the other was the St Cuthbert Way, 100km from Monrose along the Scottish borders down to Holy Island, Lindisfarne, off the coast of north England.

Holy Island is what Celtic Christians called a “thin place”, a much prayed in place where the membrane between heaven and earth is so thin it can mean it feels easy to sense the presence of God



For the walk to Holy Island I had to wait for the tide to go out and then walk for two hours and 4.5km across the sea bed out to the island

I am used to meeting God as I kneel in my study to pray each morning

I am used to meeting God in the life of All Saints, in our worship services, when I take funerals, pastoral conversations

And so I expected that it would be like that on Holy Island

But actually, it was as I walked those pilgrimage routes that I met with God in many different ways

- going with an attitude of openness to other people's kindness
- solitude
- surrounded by the wonder of creation
- facing challenges without resources and trusting in God's provision
- and also being in unusual and unexpected places - like walking on the seabed alone, not without the danger of being caught by the returning tide, depending on tall wooden polls to guide me over the slippery mud to safety in time

In the anxious slippery place alone on the sand, I had a strong sense of the presence of God, more so than on Holy Island



Our Bible reading is about Jacob meeting God in the things of his ordinary life

He isn't in an obviously holy place, nor in a very holy state himself - he is running away from the fury of his brother Esau's fury who he has tricked out of his birth right and he is in the ancient equivalent of an Airbnb

But it is here that God meets him. In the midst of the ordinary things of his life

And it's here that God speaks to him of His loving purposes, not only towards Jacob, not only towards the people God will create through him, the Jewish people, but also through Jacob and through the Jewish people, how God will bless all people

We are celebrating that blessing in our Easter services as Jesus the Jew, Jesus the Son of God dies, rises and makes possible encounter with God for all people in the midst of their ordinary lives

In our March First Sunday Service lots of people put pins in the maps of the city and Luxembourg to show where you spend most of your time, what we sometimes call our frontlines

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

These are places like the one Jacob found himself where God opens our eyes to see we are on holy ground, places where God is already at work

If you look at the film in e-News you will see how 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.



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So can I invite you, if you would like to now think prayerfully about your frontline, the place you spend most of your time - it may be a physical space, maybe an online space - and use the card to think about three questions



Presence

Pressure

Purpose

How do you experience God's presence there?

What is the pressure point there for you?

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

I am not going to ask you to say anything about what you have written, and you may only get to address one of the three Ps, but have a go

Music



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One of the keys to encountering God in our frontlines is expecting this to be true

My father was a bank manager, came to a living Christian faith later in life. His practice to remember that God was already present in his frontline was to pray each time he walked through his office door into the area where the other staff worked at the counter with customers - maybe he said: The Lord is here: His Spirit is with us

That's not a bad prayer and not a bad simple practice to help you and me too