

*Welcome! Haere mai!*

## **St John's Anglican Church, Ōtūmoetai**



**Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2023**  
**6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter**

### *Dear Friends*

It has been said that I Peter was written to change people. (Of course, one could arguably say that about the entire Bible.) I Peter is clearly written to congregations who were already beginning to know what it was like to live in a hostile environment where other people made it tough for them just because they were Christians. We live in a post-Constantinian, post-Christian world. In the 2018 NZ census more than 2 million people recorded that they had no religion. As an idealistic young Christian, I sometimes wished I could experience what it was like to live in Biblical times - well- we're getting closer all the time. We are perhaps missing out a bit on the martyrdom and opportunities to fight lions. The opposition to Christianity is now not coming so much from other religions as from apathy and general disinterest and an unwillingness to be told what to think or believe. We are NOT a Christian country. This epistle of Peter's then may be quite topical.

Here in NZ, there is considerable opposition to "inflicting one's religion" on others. There is opposition to prayers in parliament, enforced holidays on Christmas and Good Friday and any limitation on Sunday trading. And to be practical why not? We are not a Christian country - why do some of us insist on everyone continuing traditions which are no longer relevant for them? People who do promote such practices are now sometimes met with outright hostility.

Peter suggests we change the focus. Rather than focus on what other people or governments are doing about religion, Peter asks us to turn the focus back on ourselves and what we are responsible for. Do good and maintain a good conscience he urges us. When he speaks of possibly suffering for doing what is right - the word “right” doesn’t refer to what is “correct” but to what is **just**. Micah 6:8 speaks of what God requires of us “*to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God*”.

What does doing what is just and right look like in our world today? On one level it means what it has always meant - advocating for the poor and powerless; standing between a system (determined to squash and exploit others for power and profit) and those who are vulnerable may indeed cause suffering. We may find ourselves maligned or punished or injured in some way. Remember we follow Christ who was crucified doing what was right. How do we honour Christ as Lord of our lives? By loving and advocating for others.

The most important part of our witness is our lives - our lives of hope and love, driven by a passion for justice and mercy. We need to live lives that make other people ask, “Why do they do that?” As the Message paraphrase has it *Be ready to speak up and tell anyone who asks why you’re living the way you are, and always with the utmost courtesy.*

Arohanui, *Sue* +

## **WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY: 14<sup>th</sup> May 2023**

### **Sentence**

‘Those who love me will keep my word,’ Jesus promises, ‘and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.’  
*John 14:23*

## **Collect**

**God who speaks in silence;  
help us wait in quietness.  
When you seem absent,  
grant us the faith that knows you are there,  
bringing to fulfilment all you have started.  
Through Jesus Christ our Liberator,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. Amen**

**1st Reading**            *Acts 17.22-31*

**2nd Reading**           *1 Peter 3.13-22*

**Gospel**                    *John 14.15-21*

## **Prayers of the People**

Today we pray for Anglican Financial Care and for the people of the Parish of Whakatane and their clergy.

We pray for those in need, especially those who have asked for our prayers: John, Lou, Isabel, Sheryll, Taylor.

### **Foodbank**

As winter approaches let's bump up our Foodbank donations – your assistance with this is much appreciated.

### **Pentecost Lunch**

We hope you will be able to join us for a finger-food lunch after the combined Pentecost service on 28 May. A sign-up sheet is at the back of the church.

## Lavender Craft

Meet at Liss Lloyd's, 20 Andrew Place (ph. 576 9103).

### **This Week Beginning: 15<sup>th</sup> May**

<b>Monday</b>	10.00 am	Lavender Craft
<b>Wednesday</b>	10.00 am	Mid-week Eucharist
<b>Friday</b>	9.00 am	Senior Chef
<b>Op Shop</b>	10.00 am - 4.00 pm	Monday to Friday (ph. 576 2422)
	10.00 am - 1.00 pm	Saturday
<b>Playgroup</b>	9.30 - 11.30 am	Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday
<b>Toy Library</b>	9.30 - 11.30 am	Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday

### **Services for Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> May –**

8.30 am	Holy Eucharist
10.00 am	Holy Eucharist

### **Contact Us**

**Priest-in-Charge:** The Reverend Sue Genner

**Ph:** 576 9923 or 021 235 5051

**Email:** [sue.genner@waiapu.com](mailto:sue.genner@waiapu.com)

**Parish Office:** Lynda Wallace Ph: 576 9923

**Email:** [admin.otumoetai@waiapu.com](mailto:admin.otumoetai@waiapu.com)

**Website:** [www.stjohns-tga.org.nz](http://www.stjohns-tga.org.nz)

**Wardens:** Bill Aldridge 021 982 984  
Roger Clark 027 683 8466