

Welcome! Haere mai!

St John's Anglican Church, Ōtūmoetai



Sunday 26 July 2026

Liturgy: p456

OT 17

Psalm 128

Greetings all:

One of my favourite authors, N.T. Wright, argues that the biblical goal is not escaping Earth for heaven, but God bringing heaven and earth together in a renewed physical creation. This shapes how we read today's scriptures, especially Matthew and Romans.

In Matthew, Jesus describes the "kingdom of heaven" not as a post-death destination, but as a present reality. It is what we pray for in the Lord's Prayer: "Your will be done on earth as in heaven." It means God's justice, hope, and generosity replacing human dysfunction, deceit, and injustice we see all around us, in the news and in the Genesis story of Jacob's family. As Paul writes in Romans, it is what creation groans for—or as B.B. King put it, it is what happens when "love comes to town."

Jesus uses a scattergun collection of everyday parables to describe this reign of God. While we often treat them as comforting moral tales, scholar Amy-Jill Levine suggests they should be read as absurd, provocative, and disturbing. Jesus speaks of seed scattered willy-nilly, invasive mustard plants deliberately planted, yeast hidden in flour, selling all for buried treasure, a merchant selling all and buying a fine pearl, and dragnets. These varied, contradictory images teach us where to look for this surprising kingdom happening around us and within us.

Where do we see ourselves in these stories? Are we the soil, the seed, the yeast, the treasure, or the fish? Or are we the ones sowing, hiding,

searching, or fishing? What images would you use today to describe your experience of the reign of God?

John Hebert PSSF.

WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY: 26 July 2026

Sentence:

Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:38–39

Collect:

**God of mercy,
you have blessed us beyond our dreams;
you have set before us promises and perils
beyond our understanding;
help us to struggle and pray
that the perils may be averted
and your promises fulfilled.
Hear this prayer for your love's sake.
Amen.**

OT Reading *Genesis 29: 15-28*

NT Reading *Romans 8: 26-39*

Gospel *Matthew 13: 31-33, 44-52*

Prayers of the People

Today we pray for the churches operating throughout Africa, especially the Anglican Missions partners in Ethiopia, Uganda, and Tanzania, and we pray for the Tauranga Hospital Chaplains, Matiu Best, Leanne Brooks, Shelley Gilmore and Graham Silkstone.

We pray also for those in need, especially those who have asked for our prayers: Craig, Viv, Lynda, Lawrence, Reg, Jon, Angela R.

Thank You

Thank you to everyone who gave so generously to our collection of goods for women seafarers – your gifts were very much appreciated.

Choral Evensong

All Parishioners are invited to attend the liturgy of Choral Evensong at St. Peter's Anglican Church in Mount Maunganui on the first Sunday of every month at 4.00pm. August: The Victorians! Works by Stanford, Parry, Goss & others.

This Week Beginning: 27th July

Wednesday 10:00 am Mid-week Communion
2:00 pm SAYGo in the hall
Friday 9:30 am Senior Chef
Sunday 9:30 am Holy Communion

Op Shop 10:00 am – 4:00 pm Monday to Friday
10:00 am – 1:00 pm Saturday
Playgroup 9:30am – 11:30 am Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday
Toy Library 9:30am – 11:30 am Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday

Contact Us

Priest in charge: The Reverend John Hebenton tssf
Email: john.hebenton@waiapu.com
Ph: 07 576 9923 or 021 679 202

Parish Office: Erica Orrick Ph: 07 576 9923
Hours: 8:30am – 1:30pm Tuesday - Friday
Email: admin.otumoetai@waiapu.com
Website: www.stjohns-tga.org.nz

Administrator: Lynda Wallace Ph: 027 780 3653
Email: admin.otumoetai@waiapu.com

Wardens: Roger Clark 027 683 8466
Angela Stensness 021 040 6748