

Welcome! Haere mai!

St John's Anglican Church, Ōtūmoetai



Sunday 23rd August 2026

Liturgy: p456

OT 21

Psalm 124

Greetings all:

I often use three questions to help shape our response to God: Whose are we? Who are we? What is ours to do? Our readings this week help us with these questions.

In Exodus and the story of Moses placed in an ark, we meet God working through subversive and disobedient women taking significant risks for this Hebrew boy. While the Pharaoh is un-named, which reduces his legacy to tyrant, the two midwives, Shiphrah and Puah, are immortalised as those who protect life. God acts through all these women, including Pharaoh's own daughter, to completely outsmart Pharaoh and collapse his system from the inside out. What image of God might this offer us?

Matthew 16 marks a major turning point in this gospel. Caesarea Philippi is on a major trade route to Damascus. Near a headwater of the Jordan River, Greeks had built a temple to Pan three hundred years earlier and it became a centre for Roman and Greek worship, idolizing Herodian and Roman wealth and power. Herod rebuilt it to honour Caesar Augustus—who claimed the titles "son of god" and "prince of peace". By Matthew's writing, it was the Roman occupation capital where legions celebrated Jerusalem's fall and the slaughtering, enslaving, and expelling of tens of thousands of Jews.

In this place of brutal power, Jesus asks, "In your conversations, who do people say I am?" Those responses saw Jesus as the one to free them from all this place stood for. Then Jesus asks, "In those conversations, who do YOU say I am?" And Peter responds with "You're the Anointed One, the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

Peter got a lot right but still understood very little. I wonder what kind of messiah he saw in Jesus? Having seen him feed crowds, walk on raging seas, and heal people and communities, Peter recognized the Living God at work. Jesus lived God's abundant mercy, compassion, and justice. Peter's expectation was still shaped by imperial power, but Jesus' aroha-love was changing his identity as a disciple from the inside out. On that Jesus would build his new community of those walking and living his way. How does this speak to us?

As we continue in this year of waiting, what experience do we have of God's abundant generosity and compassion? How does this experience shape our sense of who we are? How open are we to receive it and to live it?

John Hebert TSSF.

WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY: 23 August 2026

Sentence:

Martha said, Yes Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world. *John 11:27*

Collect:

Almighty and everlasting God,
by your Spirit the whole body of the Church
is governed and sanctified;
hear the prayer we offer
for all your faithful people,
that in the ministry to which you have called us
we may serve you in holiness and truth;
through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.

OT Reading *Exodus 1:8 – 2:10*

NT Reading *Romans 12:1-8*

Gospel *Matthew 16:13-20*

Prayers of the People

Today we continue to pray for the Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East. We remember all those whose lives have been affected by conflict, violence and uncertainty, and we pray for peace, healing and hope for all the people of the region. Also, we pray for the people of Central Hawkes Bay Parish and their clergy.

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

Filled with the Spirit – A Documentary

Filled with the Spirit: The New Zealand Anglican Charismatic Movement explores the history, impact and legacy of charismatic renewal within the Anglican Church from the late 1950s through to the 1980s. Told through first-hand accounts and archival material, it is an inspiring look at faith, transformation and the people who helped shape a movement.

The documentary features Edward Prebble, a former Vicar of St John's, as well as Revs Dale and Paul Williamson.

7:30pm, Tuesday 8 September

Shine TV – Channel 25 Freeview | Channel 201 Sky TV

The documentary will be available to stream afterwards at [Shine TV](https://www.shinetv.co.nz/).

<https://www.shinetv.co.nz/>

Watch the trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eG5RiVa6Uss>

Church Working Bee

It's been a long time since we've had a church working bee, so we're looking forward to coming together to give our buildings a good spruce up!

Please join us on Saturday 12th September 2026, starting at 10.30am. All the jobs will be indoors, with a variety of cleaning and tidying tasks to suit different abilities.

Whether you can spare an hour or stay longer, your help would be greatly appreciated. Many hands make light work, and it's a great opportunity to enjoy some company while caring for our church.

Team Red Bonnie 50 – Last week!



This is your last chance to support Bonnie Hebenton by donating blood during August.

Whether you're a first-time donor or returning after a break, every donation helps save lives.

When booking, mention Team Red Bonnie 50 so your donation is included in the tally. Call 0800 448 325 to book or check your eligibility.

Let's see if we can reach 50 extra donors this month!

This Week Beginning: 24th August

Wednesday 10:00 am Mid-week Communion

2:00 pm SAYGo in the hall

7:00 pm Vestry

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

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Hours: 8:30am – 1:30pm Tuesday - Friday

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