

Welcome! Haere mai!

St John's Anglican Church, Otumoetai



Sunday 13 September 2020
24th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Dear Friends

One of the most powerful of human experiences is to give or to receive forgiveness. When we human beings 'admit' to one another the nature of our wrongs we invariably have an encounter that deeply enriches both sides which sometimes even changes lives. It is not about punishing one 'side' but liberating both 'sides'. It is not an exercise to regain God's love but a direct encounter *with* God's love.

Those who live in a world of 'tit for tat' will likely not understand this. Forgiveness is not a popular or easy path but some wise people have shown us how. Desmond Tutu's *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* in South Africa exemplified the practice of grace after the fall of apartheid. All had to take proper and public responsibility for their crimes, not for the sake of any punishment but for the sake of truth and healing. Indeed, the healing was in the public revealing of truth. This type of process is almost unheard of in human history but it is biblical, starting with the prophet Ezekiel and dramatically lived out by Jesus.

Forgiveness is central to Jesus' teaching: God resists our evil and conquers it with good. Otherwise how could God ask the same of us? God does not love us *if* we change; God loves us *so that* we can change. Only love – not duress, guilt or any form of social pressure – effects true inner transformation. For us, the challenge – the stumbling block on the way to forgiveness – is to hold together the

good and the bad, the dark and the light, the sinner and the saint – in each other and in the world.

It is our participation in divinity which allows us to practice the grace of forgiveness. When we forgive, we choose the goodness of the other over their faults, we experience God's goodness flowing through us and we also experience our own capacity for goodness in a way that may surprise us. Only God is spacious enough to include everything – we struggle with that. Only God in me, only me in God, can hold the contraries. Along with love, forgiveness is integral to God's identity.

With every blessing

Sue (Vicar)

WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY: 13th SEPTEMBER 2020

Sentence

If you, O Lord, should note what we do wrong, Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with you, so that you may be revered.

Psalm 130:3-4

Collect

**Compassionate God,
your forgiveness is more than we can imagine.
Enable us to take hold of the forgiveness you offer
and to have the grace to forgive others as we are forgiven.
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 *Genesis 50.15-21*

2nd Reading *Romans 14.1-12*

Gospel *Matthew 18.21-35*

Prayers of the People

Today we pray for the people of the Central Hawkes Bay parish and their clergy, and for the Bible Society of New Zealand.

We pray for those in need, especially those who have asked for our prayers: Cherie, Sherryl, Phyllis, Ron & Sue, Norman & Dinah, Colin.

LEVEL 2 PROTOCOLS

- keep 1 metre physical distancing from others as you enter church and as you take your seat.
- at the Peace, please stay in your seats and use a hands-together bow or a wave
- communion will be in one kind only

HEALTH & WELL-BEING: PLEASE REMEMBER

- good personal hygiene remains highly important: washing your hands frequently, use hand sanitiser, cough into your elbow.
- in addition to Covid, other respiratory illnesses – such as colds, 'flu and sore throats – and stomach upsets are infectious. Please do not come to church if you are unwell or have had any symptoms of these illnesses in the prior 48-72 hours. (This is in accordance with Ministry of Health recommendations). We will miss you but it is important that we care for each other and keep each other safe.

SUNDAY 4 OCTOBER – ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI

On Sunday 4th October our services will mark the Feast of St Francis of Assisi. We will be giving thanks for God's creation and God's creatures. You are welcome to bring (named) photos of an animal – domestic or wild, past or present – that you love. This could include a pet of yours or your family. Please bring these photos to the office during the week beginning Monday 28th September or to Sue Genner at church on Sunday 27th September.

