

*Welcome! Haere mai!*

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



**Sunday 27 September 2020**  
**26<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**

### *Dear Friends*

Today's Gospel reminds us that Jesus' authority, and his claim on us, rest solely on who he is – the Messiah – God revealed in human flesh who came that we might have life. Life for God's people is also the important conclusion of our passage from Hebrew Scripture as the prophet Ezekiel seeks 'to justify the ways of God to men'.

God offers the promise of life to the people of Israel. Instead of relying on sayings which blame people, God calls people to repent and choose life. God speaks through the prophet. Life is available to all who admit their ultimate reliance upon God's grace.

Ezekiel conveys the important message that, in the midst of exile and destruction, God is present. When we see devastation in the world or feel overwhelmed or in our own exile, we can be assured that God is present. In due time one greater than Ezekiel appears. Soon, Jesus says, God's kingdom will come. Then God's justice will be done.

The context of the Gospel passage is that Jesus has performed three unmistakably prophetic acts – entered Jerusalem on a donkey, expelled traders from the temple and healed the blind and the lame within the temple – all of which raised big questions about authority.

So, the religious leaders ask Jesus the question we all ask when someone makes extravagant claims about themselves or makes excessive demands on us. 'What's your authority?' 'Who gave you the right,' they ask, 'to do what you do and to say what you say?'

The authority of Jesus has always been questioned. The gospel writers present the miracles as signs that Jesus wields authority over all. But we misunderstand the nature of Jesus' claim on us if we suppose that it stands or falls by this or that proof-text or by 'signs and wonders'. Christ's divine glory is revealed in his humanity.

What marks Jesus as divine is not anything we would normally recognise as 'power' except when we begin to recognise that it is a 'power' completely outside our experience and abilities. It is one of the striking things about the Gospel accounts of Jesus, that he seems to be completely uninterested in power. Instead of building himself an army of followers, he sends most of them away. Instead of laying out his manifesto and insisting that God is on his side, he so often just refuses to answer any questions about himself.

Jesus invites us to trust and follow him. His authority does not depend on any kind of external endorsement but comes from who he is: God revealed in human flesh who came that we might have life.

Arohanui

*Sue (Vicar)*

## **WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY: 27<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2020**

### **Sentence**

Come, let us return to the Lord, that we may live before him.

*Hosea 6:1a, 2b*

### **Collect**

**God of all authority,  
enable us to hear your call and do what you ask of us.  
Forgive us for judging others,  
help us to embrace the outcast and the downtrodden.  
Transform our lives so that  
everything we do may proclaim your generous love.  
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**                      *Ezekiel 18.1-4,25-32*

**2nd Reading**                      *Philippians 2.1-13*

**Gospel**                                *Matthew 21.23-32*

### **Prayers of the People**

Today we pray for the social services agencies of Anglican Care Waiapu, and for Mission Partners serving in Northern Uganda.

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

### **SUNDAY 4 OCTOBER – ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI**

On Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> October we will mark the Feast of St Francis of Assisi. We will give 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. If you have not already done so please bring your photos to the office this week.

#### **WORSHIP in LEVEL 1**

- there will be singing at both services and post 10am morning tea!
- please share the peace using a non-contact method
- communion wine will be offered. If you are uncomfortable about taking the chalice, please remember that communion is complete in one kind (bread). Dipping of wafer into wine is not permitted.

#### **HEALTH & WELL-BEING whatever the Covid alert level**

- keep using the *Contact Tracing App* and *maintain physical distancing* when possible
- *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.* Let's keep each other safe!

