

*Welcome! Haere mai!*

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



**Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> October 2026**

*Liturgy: p456*

*OT 27*

*Psalm 19*

### *Greetings*

This Sunday marks the final day of this year's Season of Creation, and we read this well-known and deeply troubling gospel story (Matthew 21:33-46). Bad tenants doing bad things to the landowner's slaves who came for the rent. And then they kill the son. All a great metaphor for what was about to happen to Jesus and the Jews. All the bad people get what they deserve in the end. Stories like this have left us "Gentile Christians" feeling smug and have been used to justify horrendous violence against our Jewish brothers and sisters. Maybe we need to put the story back and ask where we are in the story.

Jesus came to Jerusalem and caused a stir in the Temple. The next day he returns, cursing a non-fruit bearing fig tree on the way. The Chief Priests and leading Pharisees ask, "Show us your credentials. Who authorized you to teach here?" These are the Judean elite who are profiting from their alliance with Rome. This is the third part of Jesus' response. Talking to these absentee landowners about bad tenants is one way to get them to lower their guard, until they realise they are the bad tenants. The fruits of their authority are violence, death, hardship, and poverty; the enslavement of those they were to protect.

This is not the way outlined in the 10 Commandments we hear from Exodus 20, or the whole Mosaic law. These laws were given to a freed nation of slaves to help them live out their response to this gift of freedom in the land. It offered an ideal where everybody took care of everybody else, including the foreigners. Rest is honoured, the land is

honoured, God is honoured. This God's way. So different from what they had experienced. But the pull of the old ways of Egypt is strong. With Matthew's community we are invited to compare the fruits of the Judean elites' leadership to that outlined in both the giving of the Law, and to Jesus and the fruits of his authority. The fruits of true authority are compassion and generosity, restoration, and aroha. The Judean elite were outraged by Jesus' story and invoke the ways of all empires and all the privileged wealthy today, ways of violence and death.

I wonder how we respond and where might we be in this story. Maybe we are the wicked tenants. We too have not acknowledged the owner. We too have not shared the fruits of the vineyard. But unlike the tenants of Jesus' story, we have not tended the vineyard well and creations fruit bearing days are coming to an end. We are paying the cost of our pollution with bio-diversity loss and climate change. A troubling story indeed.

Today also marks the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of St Francis of Assisi. This strange saint whose over half a million followers today still seek to live the gospel of life and love, often among the poorest and discarded. When Francis embraced Lady Poverty as his bride - literally taking the command to sell all he had and give to the poor and then go follow Jesus; he let go of all he needed to protect and found goodness – the Goodness of God seen in creation and humanity. He lived that goodness for the rest of his influential life. He became the patron saint of care for creation and the preacher of God's peace.

Richard Rohr – Franciscan Priest from USA writes, "The goodness of God fills all the gaps of the universe without discrimination or preference. God is the gratuity of absolutely everything. The space in between everything is not space at all but Spirit. God is the goodness glue that holds the dark and light of things together."

May we live in God's goodness and peace, tending the vineyard, honouring all who share it with us, and in doing so honour the true owner, God the Source of All Being, who is also our Pain Bearer and Giver of Life to all.

John Hebert TSSF.

## **WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY: 4<sup>th</sup> October 2026**

### **Sentence:**

Forgetting what lies behind and straining for what lies ahead, let us press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

*Philippians 3:13b–14*

### **Collect:**

O God, you show your glory throughout your Creation,  
calling it very good:

Grant us the fullness of your blessing,  
that we, stewarding your garden,  
may become partakers in your joy;  
through Jesus Christ the Wisdom of Creation,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
now and for ever. Amen.

**OT Reading**     *Exodus 20:1-4,7-9,12-20*

**NT Reading**     *Philippians 3:4b-14*

**Gospel**             *Matthew 21:33-46*

### **Prayers of the People**

Today we pray for the Moana Community of St Clare in Fiji, and all those who are in similar communities that care for the vulnerable and marginalised, and we pray for Chaplains to Retired Clergy & Spouses.

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

### **Christmas Potluck Lunch**

Save the date – Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> December there will be a Potluck Christmas Lunch held at St John's. The St John's Singers will provide entertainment for the event.

### **Thank You to Vaughan and Carol**

Thank you to Vaughan and Carol for the use Vaughan's organ over the past year and for helping us purchase the new organ at cost price. As a small gesture of thanks, Vaughan and Carol were given some ready-made meals. They were very appreciative of the thought and sent their thanks to the Vestry and congregation, saying that the meals "could not have been better and were a real help at this time".

### **Office Closed Friday 9<sup>th</sup>**

Erica is on leave Friday October 9<sup>th</sup>, so the office will be closed.

### **This Week Beginning: 5<sup>th</sup> October 2026**

**Tuesday** 11:00 am Funeral for Margaret Iles

**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

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**Hours:** 8:30am – 1:30pm Tuesday – Friday (not Fri 9<sup>th</sup>)

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