

Welcome! Haere mai!

St John's Anglican Church, Ōtūmoetai



Sunday 18th October 2026

Liturgy: p404

OT 29

Psalm 99

Greetings all:

This week we welcome Graeme Brock, Waiapu Engagement Lead for the Diocese.

There are some big theological themes at play in today's readings. They should give us cause to pause and wonder at their implications as we approach election time.

The gospel reading is a well-known story that has led Christians over the centuries to declare that religion and politics do not mix. So, let's put it back and take a look. We are still in the temple, but now the long, tense, conversation between Jesus and the privileged Jerusalem Temple elite is on pause. It began when they asked by what authority Jesus did ALL these things: teaching in the temple, healing, forgiving sins, eating with sinners etc..., overturning money changers tables – and more. Now the Pharisees and Herodians, very strange bed fellows, are working together to trap him. Their question, veiled in flattery, is a good question. Jesus will be in serious trouble however he answers, either with the crowd who hate the Romans and their taxes, or with the Romans themselves. Jesus' response seems simple and clever, pay to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's. Except for Romans' Caesar was god (the coins carried an image of Caesar's head with the title "son of god" making them idolatrous to Jews) and all things belonged to that god. For Jews the opposite was true – all things belong to God, nothing to Caesar. What he was saying depended on where you stood. It is filled with layers that we too often miss, layers of idolatry, of whose image we

bear, and most importantly, what exactly is God's, and what might rightly be called Caesar's?

The Greek for "pay" can also be translated "give back or owe". Maybe Jesus is warning his hearers and us who we owe a debt to, and what the nature of that debt might be. Or to put it another way, this reading asks of us what we hold as the coinage of the kingdom of God – what does God value that we might owe. Maybe the kind of world view held in the Beatitudes where all people and all things belong to God, especially the poor, the hungry, the humble, those who mourn, and the peacemakers. And we are to treat them as such. That is a big ask. Jesus' answer carried more of a punch than we might have thought.

The reading from Exodus displays Moses longings around God. As they set out again across the wilderness Moses is adamant God must go with them. God cannot be a God of one place, but a migrant God journeying with God's migrant people wherever they are. Unlike all other gods who belong to a place, this God is where the people are, whether in the wilderness, the promised land, or the Babylonian exile. In God's response we are invited into the mystery and uncertainty of God. God is present but is still beyond our control "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy" (Exodus 33:19b). We are invited to take note of our own longings for God, our own experience of this Migrant God, and to wonder how we experience God in the story of migrants of today.

I wonder how all this might influence how we talk and vote in this election?

John Hebert TSSF.

WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY: 18th October 2026

Sentence:

Give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. *Matthew 22:21*

Collect:

God of nations,
help us to reflect and share
the goodness that surrounds us.
Help us to win justice for poor and rich alike,
and bring trust and friendship
to all our different races;
through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.

OT Reading *Exodus 33:12-23*

NT Reading *1 Thessalonians 1:1-10*

Gospel *Matthew 22:15-22*

Prayers of the People

Today we pray for the mission agencies that Anglican Missions works with in Aotearoa New Zealand and around the world, and we pray for the people of Holy Trinity, Tauranga 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 and Vaughan.

Morning Tea Helpers

We are looking for people to help with the church morning tea held after the service on Sunday. If you can help, please let Frances know.

New Vicar – You Are Invited

A service to install Rev'd Andrea Ryan as Vicar will be held on the afternoon of Saturday 14 November. More details to follow. Please save the date.

Christmas Potluck Lunch

Save the date – Saturday 5th December there will be a Potluck Christmas Lunch held at St John's. The St John's Singers will provide entertainment for the event. More details to follow.

This Week Beginning: 19th October 2026

Monday 10:00 am Lavendar Craft Group
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

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