

Welcome! Haere mai!

St John's Anglican Church, Ōtūmoetai



Sunday 25th October 2026

Liturgy: p456

OT 30

Psalm 90: 1-6, 13-17

Greetings all:

Our reading from Deuteronomy about Moses's death on Mount Nebo offers us a delightful image of the intimate relationship between God and Moses, and through Moses to the people of God. God takes Moses's body and buries him—a level of care usually reserved for closest loved ones. While that intimacy was held by Moses on behalf of the nation, today we are invited into that same closeness as God's community, knowing we are deeply loved and held in the hardest times.

Our gospel reading from Matthew is so familiar we might even miss the point. Jesus is still in the temple. Jewish leaders and the Judean wealthy elite are still trying to undermine his standing. They have one more play.

Jesus was not the first rabbi to offer this "new" way of understanding Torah. But it was innovative and is central to his teaching. By bringing together Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18, he makes them equally important and the basis for reading the whole of Torah (Law).

Many people, then and now, understand them as separate commands. Loving the Lord their God is done through obedience or going to church. Loving our neighbour is then a separate requirement. Jesus, along with some rabbis before him, binds them together, teaching that loving our neighbour is actually *how* we love God. Throughout his life and especially in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus shows that the law is meant show how to respond to that care shown Moses and God's people by being shaped as a people of compassion and mercy for all, fulfilling God's covenantal mission to restore humanity and renew creation. This sits at the very heart of following Jesus and what it means to be God's church.

The Good Samaritan story in Luke expands on this by asking: who is my neighbour? This was not the expected response. Many of us still struggle with this. Are immigrants, Māori, refugees, or other marginalized groups really our neighbours? The answer is a resounding yes. We love God by loving them as ourselves.

The repetition of the words in our liturgy, nearly all of which come from scripture, are designed to shape us into a community with this at the centre of our life and concern. As we face uncertainty on multiple fronts, we are invited to make this our focus, to be a people that loves God by loving all our neighbours. And maybe like Francis of Assisi, when we do this, we will meet the crucified and risen Christ in “the leper”.

This message of love was incredibly seditious. The word "gospel" was originally a Roman imperial term used for an emperor's military victories. Applying it to a crucified criminal and his way of love turned everything upside down. Paul in his letter is being subversive. True good news is found in loving God through our neighbour, not through military violence or colonization. It leaves us with an important question: how might all of this inform the way we cast our votes in this year's election?

John Hebert TSSF

Practical Ways to Love Strangers

How do we best love our neighbours when they ask for financial help? Last Sunday, a visitor approached several people after the service with a sad story, asking for money. While we deeply want to care, **please NEVER give money directly to those who ask.** It turns out this individual is well known to several local churches.

Instead, the most helpful step is to guide people to professional support networks. **Tauranga has dedicated services** equipped to provide long-term aid for those facing financial hardship or homelessness, while ensuring you are not taken in by scammers.

Angela has created practical forms to help you in these conversations and to point people toward available local help. You can find these in our foyer.

WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY: 25th October 2026

Sentence:

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: you shall love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Matthew 22:37–40

Collect:

Almighty God,
you teach us in your word
that love is the fulfilment of the law:
grant that we may love you with all our heart
and our neighbour as ourselves;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

OT Reading *Deuteronomy 34:1-12*

NT Reading *1 Thessalonians 2:1-8*

Gospel *Matthew 22:34-46*

Prayers of the People

Today we pray for the Anglican Missions 4 core programmes which put the love of God into action – these programmes include ensuring access to safe water and hygiene so that communities can live with health and dignity. And we pray for the people of Woodville Parish and their ministry support team.

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.

New Vicar – You Are Invited

A service to install Rev'd Andrea Jerry Ryan as Vicar will be held at 3pm Saturday 14 November. More details to follow. Please save the date as we look forward to welcoming Andrea to our parish.

Christmas Potluck Lunch

Join us at St John's on Saturday 5 December for a festive Christmas Potluck Lunch. Enjoy entertainment from the St John's Singers, browse the Lavender Craft Sales Table for Christmas gifts, and catch up with friends. More details to follow.

All Saints' Day – Names for Remembrance

A form is at the back of the church for you to add the names of loved ones you would like remembered during our All Saints' Day service on Sunday 1 November.

This Week Beginning: 26th October 2026

Wednesday 10:00 am Mid-week Communion

2:00 pm SAYGo in the hall

7:00 pm Vestry Meeting

Friday 9:30 am Senior Chef

Sunday 9:30 am Holy Communion

Op Shop 10:00 am – 4:00 pm Tuesday 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

Email: john.hebenton@waiapu.com

Ph: 07 576 9923 or 021 679 202

Parish Office: Erica Orrick Ph: 07 576 9923

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

Email: admin.otumoetai@waiapu.com

Website: www.stjohns-tga.org.nz

Administrator: Lynda Wallace Ph: 027 780 3653

Email: admin.otumoetai@waiapu.com

Wardens: Roger Clark 027 683 8466

Angela Stensness 021 040 6748