Welcome! Haere mai!

St John's Anglican Church, Ōtūmoetai



Sunday 8th November 2026

Liturgy: p476 *OT 32* *Psalm 78:1-7*

Greetings all:

Some final thoughts as I lay down my responsibilities as priest-in-charge, and you prepare to welcome a new vicar to work with and care for.
Are you ready to join the party? That is the question our gospel asks us for the next few weeks. Of course, other questions go with that—like what kind of party is it, and when is it?

When the early church began, they expected Jesus back tomorrow. And after the Jerusalem fell and the temple was destroyed, they thought that meant today. But maybe ten years later they were struggling to hold hope in the face of persecution and disappointment. These remain big questions today. When is this party kicking off, and what kind of party is it?

In Matthew, Jesus' last block of teaching is all about these questions, finishing with four parables: the wicked servants, the bridesmaids, the outrageous lumps of money (talents), and the sheep and the goats. Jesus's parables are not nice stories with neat meanings; they provoked, shocked, disturbed and left room for multiple interpretations. These four are no exception and should be read together, bouncing off each other toward a climax. Together, they help us describe the party we might be waiting for and how we might wait faithfully.

So, what kind of party? We find the answer whenever the prophets talk about the kingdom to come - when God's reign replaces human unfaithfulness with God's faithfulness and justice, restoring humanity and renewing creation. Matthew bookends his gospel with this vision, from the

Beatitudes at the beginning to the story of the sheep and goats at the end. It is some party!

And when is it? In the bridesmaids' story, some streetwise virgins weren't sure of the timing and brought spare oil, while others thought they knew and found themselves short. Getting stuck on the details distracts us from what Matthew was pointing to. It's a made-up story; don't fret about virgins not sharing or bridegrooms, brides and whanau being tardy. Matthew's community had waited a long time and wondered if they had enough oil to last. Matthew's answer is: the party will begin when it begins. Be ready to wait.

In the meantime, keep that light burning. And don't wander off. This is not the "sitting around having a snooze" kind of waiting that ALL the virgins do. This waiting involves getting the world ready for the party. It involves seeing the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, and the peacemakers as the most important people and seeking to become like them. It is being numbered among the sheep, even if we didn't realize it. Maybe all this is the oil. There is a lot of work to be done. Keep that light burning.

And maybe the party has begun already. It's been happening for a long time everywhere God's reign of justice and peace breaks out and all those listed above are esteemed and honoured. Maybe we are invited to both wait and join in.

What kind of party do we think we are being invited to actively wait for? How do we respond?

John Hebert SSF.

WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY: 8th November 2026

Sentence:

Watch and be ready, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.
Matthew 24:42, 44

Collect

Father,
let us not serve you grudgingly like slaves,
but with the gladness of children
who delight in you
and rejoice in their work;
through Jesus Christ our Redeemer.
Amen.

OT Reading *Joshua 24:1-3a, 14-25*

NT Reading *1 Thessalonians 4:13-18*

Gospel *Matthew 25:1-13*

Prayers of the People

As we look towards the New Zealand elections, we pray for wisdom and guidance for all who vote and may our communities remain united, even when we have different opinions, and we pray for the people of Mount Maunganui parish 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.

Christmas Giving – Mission to Seafarers & Foodbank

As we celebrate Christmas, we invite you to share a little kindness by donating some Christmas goodies for the Mission to Seafarers and/or our local Foodbank. Please bring your donations unwrapped so they can be distributed to those who will appreciate a little extra Christmas cheer. Thank you for your generosity!

New Vicar – You Are Invited

A service to install Rev'd Andrea Jerry Ryan as Vicar of St John's will be held at **3pm** on **Saturday 14 November**.
We look forward to welcoming Andrea to our parish and celebrating this special occasion together.
Following the service, please join us for afternoon tea. Everyone is welcome, and please bring a plate to share.

🎤 Tauranga Blues Festival – Sunday 15 November 🎷

Enjoy an afternoon of live blues music at Holy Trinity Tauranga, featuring some of New Zealand's finest musicians, including Kokomo, The Mojo 3 and Mike Garner Trio, plus special guests and a Festival Jam.
Tickets: $39 per adult / $165 for a group of five | Free for under-18s
https://www.httvenues.nz/event-details/tauranga-blues-festival-1

This Week Beginning: 9th November 2026

Tuesday	3:15 pm	Communion at Radius Matua
	7:00 pm	St John's Women's Fellowship
Wednesday	10:00 am	Mid-week Communion
	2:00 pm	SAYGo in the hall
Friday	9:30 am	Senior Chef
Saturday	3.00 pm	Installation of Rev'd Andrea Ryan
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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