



# Anglican Parish of St John

## NEWSLETTER - MAY 2026

### MESSAGE FROM REV'D SAM

When I became a teenager the Sunday morning kids programs stopped, and I had to sit in the service with all the adults and listen to the sermon. Sometimes it was boring and often it would go on too long. But the more I listened and engaged in the sermons the more I found it exciting. The preacher was able to read the Bible and ask it questions that I could never come up with myself, and then, somehow they were able to find answers to those questions that had real relevance to my life today. In those moments I would sit, literally, on the edge of my seat, with my heart burning within me, wishing I could raise my hand and ask a question. I would try to pull the preacher aside after the service, so I could ask all my questions, and then try to get home as fast as possible to read my Bible and try to figure out how this preacher got so much out of the passage.

I wonder when you have found yourself in a place where your heart has been burning within you? It may have been learning something about God, yourself or the world, or experiencing the presence of the Spirit or love of God, seeing the beauty of God's creation.

In Luke 24 it is the first day of the week following Jesus' crucifixion, Easter Sunday for us. A few of Jesus' disciples who were women went to his tomb to deliver spices and when they arrived they found the stone had been rolled away and nobody was inside. Suddenly two angels present themselves and declare that Jesus is not dead, he has risen. The women rush back to the other disciples to share the news. Later that day, though, two of those disciples are returning to their village of Emmaus and on the way they are discussing all that has happened. I love the way that Luke describes Jesus as coming near and walking with them. It gives this picture of, when you see someone ahead of you as you walk down the street that you know and so you speed up to walk with them. Luke intentionally notes that Jesus, "came near and went with". Theologically, this is a picture in concert with the incarnation. This is exactly who Jesus, the Son of God is, and so it is what he does. Jesus draws near to us, and goes with us. This same picture continues as Jesus re-interprets the entirety of the Hebrew scriptures in light of his resurrection. Jesus meets these disciples where they are at, and then journeys with them into what he has for them. Finally, we see this shift in who takes the lead. As they reach their destination, Jesus acts as if he is carrying on. This shift in Jesus' actions, propels the disciples to take the lead; to make a choice, they choose to invite (the unknown) Jesus into their home. Again, Jesus is not only moving towards and leading, but inviting the disciples to participate in the ministry; to become ones who come near themselves. Surprisingly, though, Jesus becomes the host as he breaks the bread, blesses it and hands it around the table. It is at this moment that the two disciple's eyes are opened to truly see who they have been journeying with for the past few hours. Their lives have been changed and they immediately return to Jerusalem to share with the other followers of Jesus. Here we are reminded that although these disciples have been invited to participate in the ministry, Jesus is the one whose ministry it is and into whom they have been invited.

The Emmaus road is a story of the resurrection of Jesus. It emphasises a truly physical return to life. It is this physical resurrection of Jesus that changes lives. However, I think it is also a story that shows the continuity of the character, personhood and ministry of Jesus. Throughout Luke's Gospel we have been confronted with a physical Jesus, who touches lepers, and heals the disabled, feeds the hungry, the parable of the good Samaritan, Zaccheus' giving back of finances. In all of this, the real physical lives of those Jesus comes into contact with is of great concern to him. Both ensuring they are cared for, but also that they are brought back from the margins into the community.

Jesus comes near, and goes with.

Just as Jesus came near and went with these two disciples on the road to Emmaus, so Jesus comes near and journeys with each of us. We do not have the physical Jesus meeting us as we walk to our car after Church, or as we walk down the main street of Te Awamutu. What we do have, though, is the Spirit of Jesus. This same Spirit that enlivened and empowered Jesus to come near to these disciples. This Spirit, the Holy Spirit, dwelling within each of us, draws us near to others.

I wonder, in my daily life, where might I expect to find Jesus coming along beside me and going with me? In my daily life, how might the Spirit be leading me to be the everyday person who comes near and journeys with? Amen

## WARDENS' REPORT

Yeah!!! Rev. Sam is installed and has hit the ground running! Thank you to everyone for ensuring his installation service went well. We enjoyed great hospitality and fellowship after the service. "If you want something done, ask a busy person". We were all sad to hear that Barbara Jolly passed away on Sunday afternoon after attending church and the AGM in the morning. Many of you will have seen the tribute to her from Bishop Philip. Some of you will have learnt how many roles she took on in the diocese, as well as her support for the Parish of Orakau. She continued much of this work until the last few years. Barbara epitomised the phrase: "Jesus has no hands but our hands". May she now rest in peace and rise in glory to join with all the saints who have served St John's and Christ Church. We are grateful to those who point out jobs / cleaning / gardening / other chores which need to be done around our five churches. Although it is tempting to mention it to the Wardens, Shirley, John Storey or the Vicar on a Sunday, we may well forget to action it. The best way to ensure a job gets put on the list of "things to do" is to get a quick message to Maggie on a Monday – email, phone call or leave a note as you pass by the church office.

We thank you for your patience in coping with all the changed service times. We know it hasn't been easy keeping track. Rev. Sam has looked carefully at our current schedule of services to see how he can spend time with each of our congregations. For the foreseeable future, the services in each church will remain at their traditional times:

<b>OSJ</b>	8.00am every Sunday
<b>St John's</b>	10.30am every Sunday
<b>St Saviours</b>	9.15am 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Sundays 9.15am 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday is 'Fellowship Over Coffee'
<b>St Paul's</b>	9.00am 1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sundays 4.00pm 4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday - service in Te Reo
<b>Christ Church</b>	9.30 2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Sundays 9.30 Combined Service 5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday

**Note:** 31 May is a 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday. There will be a 9.30 Combined Service at Christ Church, Kihikihi with a visiting speaker. Please bring morning tea to share.

Blessings to you all,  
*Coral Loomb and Christine Bryant*