

Prayer

- **The Weekly Prayer Meeting on Wednesday Afternoons**—held in Te Whare Karakia 2:00-3:00pm continues until Wed. 21st December. It will resume on 11th January.
- **Please pray for:**
 - * Shirley Redpath and Laura Bishop
 - * Paul and Gwladys Evans
 - * Dr Jocelyn Williams
 - * Dawn Herewini-Donovan
 - * Caleb & Chrissy married on 3 Dec.
 - * Patricia Gordon
 - * Casey Smith travelling to her mother's unveiling up north
 - * And others you know experiencing challenging times
- **The Parish special meeting/forum on Sun. 11th Dec. —see back.**

CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR SUNDAY SERVICES

- **No Christmas Eve services**
- Christmas Day Family Communion @ St Anne's
- New Year's Day Family Communion @ St Anne's
- 8th Jan. H.C. with Whitby Anglicans @ St Mary's, Whitby 9:30am
- 15th Jan. H.C. with Whitby Anglicans @ St Anne's, Porirua 10am

St Anne's Pantry Early December News

- During November we have continued to receive many requests for food parcels and deliveries. 161 food parcels were delivered to a total of 756 people during this time.
- Total deliveries for 2022 are 1624. This well exceeds the total deliveries made during the whole of 2021—1405 parcels, and there is still a month to go!
- The recent increase of COVID infections—several requests have come from people in lock down from COVID— and the impact of the difficult financial and employment times we are in, are taking their toll on families at the moment.
- As we move towards years end, we begin planning for 2023. We are very dependent on local people giving financial support. This year we will have spent well over \$50,000 buying food and groceries. The need is ongoing.
- We are also looking for designated funding to keep employing our Administrator in 2023.
- **Last Food Bank deliveries for 2022 will be made on Wednesday 21st December. Deliveries will resume on Tuesday 10th January.**



Did you used to collect first day covers? I did as a boy when Christmas cards could be posted for 4d—that's 2cents! Nowadays, and I won't be doing it, you can now post a Christmas card in New Zealand for \$1.70+. No wonder not so many are posted now. However, that doesn't mean we are not connecting at Christmas time with loved ones and friends; we're just doing it differently and most likely via a mobile phone call or using social media.

All this reminds us that Christmas is about connecting, making extra effort to communicate with those important to us, if not being physically present with them. Perhaps our cue is in the events of that first Christian Christmas when according to the gospel stories people were drawn to the Holy Family which now included the Christ child born in Bethlehem on Christmas day. See Luke 2:

¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.' ¹⁶ So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

And ever since people have beaten a path to worship Jesus Christ who came amongst us as the Child in a manger. How will you connect with Him in 2023?
Terry

Sunday 11th December

Joy in the Lord

SENTENCE

My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour.

Luke 1:46b,47

READINGS

Isaiah 35:1-10

James 5:7-10

Matthew 11:2-11

PRAYER

O God of Isaiah and John the Baptist, through all such faithful ones you proclaim the unfolding of future joy and renewed life. Strengthen our hearts to believe your advent promise that one day we will walk in the holy way of Christ, where sorrow and sighing will be no more and the journey of God's people will be joy. Amen.



Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me." Matthew 11:4-6

John the Baptist's disciples have come to Jesus with a question. John has heard about everything Jesus has been doing, and he wants to know if Jesus is the "one who is to come" or if they should be looking for someone else?

At first glance, this seems like a strange question from John the Baptist. He was the one who declared Jesus to be "the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world" (John 1:29–31). He was the one who said he was not worthy even to tie Jesus' sandals (John 1:27). He also was present when God's voice spoke from heaven and declared that Jesus was His beloved Son.

It's even stranger, in a way, because John is responding to what he has heard about Jesus' ministry. Christ was going about Galilee, miraculously healing every kind of disease and affliction. He effortlessly cast out demons. He powerfully preached about the coming kingdom. Looking back, with the advantage of hindsight, we might think of these as obvious signs.

It's likely John was expecting Jesus to bring immediate judgment on those in Israel who

had not repented of their sins. Perhaps John expected that judgment to reach his own captor, Herod Antipas, the Jewish ruler over parts of Israel under the rule of the Romans. From John's perspective, it might have seemed strange that Jesus had not yet brought earthly judgment. For many people of that era, who had lived under constant oppression, this was a common misunderstanding (John 6:15; Matthew 16:21–23). It would not be until after Christ's death and resurrection that the details prophesied in the Old Testament would become clear (John 2:22).

Another possibility is that John's question is not so much an expression of doubt as impatience—the equivalent of asking, "Jesus, are you going to do these things, or not?" John knew his life was in danger. If Jesus did not act he would most likely die. In fact that was the outcome!

Jesus now instructs the messengers to go and tell John what they have witnessed. Jesus spells that out in the following verses, and John would have understood Him to be referencing passages in Isaiah about the coming Messiah. This is Jesus' evidence to John that He truly is the One who was to come. On the basis of it John could rest assured that all is well.

What is the compelling evidence for you that Jesus is the One, the Saviour of the World to be followed? Answer this question and you too will know peace, assurance and JOY!

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SPECIAL MEETING

NOTICE

This will be a FORUM to discuss issues relating to 2023 in the Parish. Please join us in St Anne's after worship on:

**SUNDAY 11TH DECEMBER
@ 11:15AM after Worship**

Duration:

No more than 1 Hour

We'll drink and eat our morning tea together as we discuss some challenges for the new year and seek to move on positively from 2020-22!