

LIVING WAGE WEEK 6-12 NOVEMBER

A Church Resource for the end of Living Wage Week 2017
Compiled by Porirua Anglican Parish

November 6-12 is Living Wage Week. This is an opportunity to reflect on the need for the Living Wage, our role in working for change and to celebrate the Living Wage. Porirua Anglican Parish has produced this resource to share with Christian congregations across Aotearoa on Sunday 12 November.



A Prayer for the Living Wage

God of Justice, we thank you for the vision of a world where all people share your good things. Be with those who work for change, especially Living Wage Aotearoa. Be with your people who are poorly paid and who struggle to feed their families. Fill us all with your hope and a willingness to work together for change. Amen.

Some sermon starter ideas for use with the Revised Common Lectionary Gospel Reading on Sunday November 12 2017: Matthew 25:1-13

- Matthew places this parable with others that Jesus links to signs of the end of the age, focussing on **urgency** and the need to endure to the end. The entire section of eschatological teaching is addressed to the disciples in private as they sit with Jesus on the Mount of Olives (24:3). This setting is not insignificant. In Zechariah 14:1-21, the prophet looks forward to a day when the LORD will stand on the Mount of Olives and be recognized as king over all the earth (14:9, 16-17). Jesus says the coming of this day is certain, as he illustrates with the coming of the bridegroom. So, there is urgency about working for justice now because we don't have much time and the poor are suffering.
- "Watch therefore" (24:13). Jesus calls people to be aware, to notice, to look deeply at what is really going on. Skills of analysis and insightful leadership are essential for bringing about real change as many stories of past justice movements illustrate. **How can we learn more?**
- **Enduring to the end:** how do campaigns like The Living Wage Movement Aotearoa keep going and remain hopeful even though gains may seem to be small? How does our faith enable us to be confident and to support each other for the long haul? Encourage each other!
- We have a frig magnet that says "**Jesus is coming** – look busy". What would you want to change in our community if you knew that Jesus was coming, and how would you go about it? The teaching of the wise and foolish maids builds on the previous teaching of the wise and foolish servants. Both parables illustrate the need to live in a manner that expects the return of the Lord, even when the return is delayed (24:48; 25:5).

- For modern ears, the wise bridesmaids' suggestion to go to the dealers to buy more oil may seem ridiculous, as the text says that it is midnight (24:6). Where will the foolish maids buy oil in the middle of the night? This detail looks unimportant but apparently the maids do find a place to buy oil (24:10). Today it is not uncommon for many people to have to work long hours into the night, as cleaners or stocking supermarket shelves. Find out about employees' working conditions and pay, in situations where often their work is invisible until we need it. **Employment justice?**
- Perhaps the five who were "foolish" may not have had the money to buy oil. Foolish women missed out on seeing bridegroom because the others wouldn't share? People miss out on fullness of life because others won't share. Take time now to fill your lamp with oil and take extra along, keep waiting and watching with joy and anticipation, but be ready to **share** when it's needed.
- Readers today may find themselves secretly sympathetic to the foolish maidens. Does the church really live as though the bridegroom's arrival is certain? Some have become caught up in trying to determine the day and the hour, while others have let their lamps run out. Surely to live in vigilance means for the disciples to do the tasks that they have been called to do in preparation for the Master's coming. In Matthew's Gospel, those tasks include bearing witness to God's kingdom by welcoming the stranger, feeding the hungry, visiting the sick and imprisoned, and making disciples in all the world. **Your call?**