Sermon:

**Whoever gives even a drink of cold water to one of the least of these my followers because he is my follower, will certainly receive a reward.** (Matthew 10.42)

Not easy being a teacher – they often get brickbats; Sharon was offered a brief stay on Stewart Island.
Not expected, but welcome.

Jesus sent disciples to proclaim the Kingdom of Heaven is near, which two weeks ago I said was Jesus’ bucket-list. Some would oppose them, but others would welcome and help. Not expected, but welcome.

These others’ attitude to God’s messengers indicates their attitude to the Kingdom, and so to God. They would receive a reward – TEXT.

The TEXT reverses our common understanding that it is *us* who are to be welcoming.

Disciples are being asked not to welcome, but to be themselves in the vulnerable position of being recipients of the hospitality of others. How hard is this for us – individually and as a church?

The key is about being responsive to the Kingdom that is near; whether this response is from those with whom we share the Kingdom, or between ourselves. So by extension we can also help each other.

All hospitality, given or received, is good.

We understand this; what is important is why we should be welcoming and offer hospitality.
As before, it’s not because we’re good; it proves the Kingdom and so fulfils Jesus’ bucket-list.

Two things to remember:

[1] Nothing is too small to be a part of Jesus’ Bucket List.

Parishes tend to think in terms of big things – the old mission campaigns, op shops, daily soup kitchens.

Many a parish cannot manage that kind of commitment, so becomes disheartened.

TEXT indicates very small things are OK too. Getting *cold* water in JC’s day was a big effort. Our small things might represent a huge effort, eg. talking to a stranger, scarf knitting with arthritic hands.

[2] It is not about us, but about the Kingdom.

Often I get the impression that parishes do outreach to get more ‘bums on seats’. Cf Rice Christians (coined in Harper Lee's book To Kill A Mockingbird). At Lindisfarne we do things to declare Kingdom – eg Friday Club this week.

TEXT – most versions say **“not lose their reward”** (NIV). What reward? Not money, fame, status. But the joy of seeing the Kingdom more real, more active. Let’s do what we can, great or small, to further that end!