

Dean's Letter, 17 February 2019

Dear Cathedral family, brothers and sisters in Christ

This is a tough and challenging time for many of us here in Makhanda - Grahamstown – with the water outages. Many homes and schools have been without water for days and days. A useful public meeting arranged by the GRA (Grahamstown Ratepayers Association) was addressed by the new Mayor, Mr Mzukisi Mpahlwa, and the new Chief Financial Officer, Mr Gerard Goliath, this past Monday evening. We wait to see what happens regarding the crises we are facing. Individuals, and various institutions, have been helping with supplying water over parts of town and the township.

The week ahead sees the Synod of Bishops meeting in Johannesburg, followed by the consecration and installation of Revd Dr Eddie Daniels as Bishop of Port Elizabeth, in Gelvandale, PE, on Saturday. Let's hold our bishops in prayer this week; they face a number of difficult matters, for which there is seldom an easy "quick fix" answer. Their discussions are, by nature, confidential; but they will as usual be issuing a statement at the end of the week, which will give some insight into their work and time together. So we hold them in prayer, particularly Archbishop Thabo as he convenes and chairs their meetings.

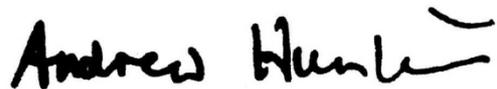
Our scripture readings for today provide a contrast between two ways of life, two paths that people choose: to walk with God and to depend on God, or to "trust in mere mortals and make mere flesh their strength, whose hearts turn away from the Lord" (Jeremiah 17:5). Those who "delight in the law of the Lord" (Psalm 1:2) will be like trees "planted beside streams of water that yields fruit in due season" (Ps 1:3). But the ungodly – those who do not trust in God - says Jeremiah, "are like a shrub in the desert" (Jeremiah 17:6). "The way of the ungodly shall perish", says the psalm (1:7).

In our Gospel reading, Jesus takes this further, and more radically: the poor, the hungry, those who weep, and those who are hated or excluded "on account of the Son of Man" are blessed; but "woe to you who are rich", "you who are full now", "you who are laughing now", those who are praised by others (Luke 6:20-26). Tough and uncomfortable words! These words link back to Luke 4:16-19, when Jesus reads from Isaiah, "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor" (Luke 4:18).

So Jesus comes to disturb and unsettle the status quo; to call us to face one another across the divides; to offer hope and a way forward together; to invite us into the community of the kingdom of God where our love for one another is radical and life-changing.

A colleague and friend of mine prayed recently: may we be people of integrity; and may we as the body of Christ here in this town be salt and light in these troubled times.

My love to you all

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Hunt". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.