

Dean's Letter, 24 March 2019

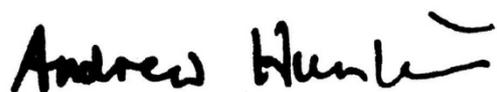
Dear Cathedral family, brothers and sisters in Christ

We can't take good governance for granted. I am so grateful to our churchwardens and PCC for exercising due diligence as we share in the oversight of the life of the Cathedral. And a crucial part of this happens at Vestry, when all parishioners have an opportunity to reflect on the life of the Cathedral over the past year, and the many facets and aspects of what is happening. Thank you to all who attended our Vestry meeting last Sunday, in the midst of the heat and the power outage! It was a happy Vestry and I think – and hope – that we all came away feeling positive. Our Vestry meetings are a vital part of good governance and the outgoing team of churchwardens and PCC worked very hard to ensure that all was in order as we prepared for Vestry. My very sincere thanks to all, and to Lou-Anne, our Administrator, for her hard work and meticulous preparation of the various documents and booklets. Thank you!

It is often said that we live in a global village. Certainly when it comes to hearing the latest news from around the world, that is very true. And we are connected: here at the Cathedral we have students from Mozambique and Zimbabwe, in which cyclone Idai has caused huge damage and led to the deaths of many, many people – into the thousands; friends of ours were at the UN environmental conference in Kenya, to which delegates were travelling on the Ethiopian Airlines flight that crashed, killing all 157 people on board; and I have a niece from Christchurch, New Zealand, where terrorists attacked local mosques, killing 49 people. No matter which disaster and tragedy we are closest to, it is dreadful. Lives and dreams come to an end. And those who live are left to pick up the pieces and somehow rebuild. News coverage is often skewed, and we see more of some events than of others, but this does not detract from the sadness and tragedy of it all. My niece, Lucy, in NZ writes: "It really is our darkest day. I'm fortunate not to be closely affected, but the father of a schoolmate was killed, and in fact I think the whole of Christchurch and NZ is reeling. We appreciate your thoughts and prayers."

Our readings today, the 3rd Sunday in Lent, present to us the Lord's invitation and offer of salvation (Isaiah 55), and the reply and response of Jesus to tragedy – "do you think that they were worse sinners than all the others?" (Luke 13:4). Sometimes the response to tragedy is to assume that it is the punishment or judgement of God. People cry out "what have I done to deserve this?" Jesus's response is significant: "unless you repent, you will perish just as they did." And then follows the parable of the unfruitful fig tree, and the gardener who appeals for one more chance to feed it, before it is chopped down. We are left with a sense of unease – these are not comfortable readings or themes. It is appropriate to be disturbed and unsettled. But in the end, also, to come home to the love of God who embraces us and carries us through the darkest times.

My love to you all

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Hunt". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.