

## Dean's Letter, 24 November 2019

Dear Cathedral family, Brothers and Sisters in Christ

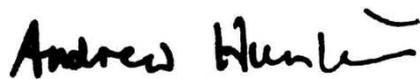
We extend a very warm welcome to our guest preacher at both morning services today, the Revd Dr Mary Ellen Ashcroft, from the USA. She is a long-standing friend and colleague of both Claire and me; we go back a long way. Some might remember her from a few years ago when she was with us for our Palm Sunday service. It is good to have her here again.

Today is the Feast of Christ the King - the Reign of Christ – and the Sunday before Advent. It marks the end of the Church Year, with next Sunday (Advent Sunday) being the beginning of our new Church Year. Advent is a time to dream and to vision – to hear God's vision – for the big story, the story of hope and new possibilities, the emerging picture of the kingdom of God, the rule of Christ in our lives and in the world. Today, the Feast of Christ the King – the Reign of Christ – is a statement of faith and trust in the final victory and lordship of Christ over all things, in spite of the gloom and despair that surrounds us. Peace and goodness and justice and hope will prevail, the light shines in the darkness and the darkness will not overcome it (Jn 1:5).

Our Gospel reading for this morning (Luke 23:33-43) is part of the crucifixion, when darkness and evil triumphs and crushes and destroys – yet even there, on the cross, the penitent thief meets his Saviour (Luke 23:40-43). In contrast, Colossians 1:15-20 (our 2nd reading) gives us the picture of the “cosmic Christ” – he who is “the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation... in him the fullness of God was pleased to dwell...” (1:15, 20). Darkness and despair do not have the final word. Today's celebration helps us to see the bigger, cosmic picture, to trust, and to hold on. In the face of a crumbling economy, rising unemployment, foreign refugees clamouring for support, the potentially devastating SAA strike, the looting of PRASA and other state-owned enterprises, we share in the life of the kingdom of God. We are part of God's story: a world wonderfully created by the Father, redeemed by Jesus Christ the Son, with the transformative power and new life poured into our lives through the Holy Spirit.

Tomorrow, 25th November, is the start of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence (25th Nov – 10th Dec). It comes on the back of a dreadful few months, the rape and murder of Uyinene Mrwetyana, and similar tragedies, being uppermost in our minds. I hope to reflect on this next Sunday (Advent Sunday), particularly as I wish to speak as a man to men and boys. Are we as Christian males ready to take a stand? I hope so!

My love to you all

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