

Dean's Letter, 8 March 2020

Dear Cathedral family, Brothers and Sisters in Christ

There is growing concern about the impact of the Corona Virus. We have been sent guidelines for health safety within the life of the church, and these are on the church notice boards and as an insert into the pew leaflet. Clergy and others handling the eucharistic elements need to take especial care; hand sanitisers are now in the sanctuary for the celebrant to use before consecrating the elements; and we might need to rethink how we greet one another or share the Peace, in church.

Receiving communion is another concern. Theologically, we receive the fullness of communion – the grace of Christ – when receiving one kind only, i.e. only the consecrated bread. Some already choose to intinct (to dip the wafer into the chalice) when they are suffering from flu. This is acceptable, so long as one's fingers do not touch the wine. An alternative suggested is that one simply touches the base (the outside) of the chalice, rather than intinct the bread. Let's be caring and compassionate in how we respond to this issue.

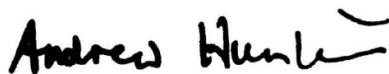
Please let us prayerfully consider who to nominate for the offices of Churchwarden/s, Alternate Church and PCC. We have had some nominations already, which is good news. As is our practice, we shall hold an election at Vestry for all who are nominated.

Today's scripture readings for the 2nd Sunday in Lent are about God's call to Abraham (at this stage he is still known as Abram; his change of name comes in Genesis 17), to leave his home country and travel to an unknown land, the land of promise (Genesis 12:1-4a). Then we hear the argument by St Paul that Abraham was justified by faith, and not by obedience to the Law (Romans 5:1-17); and then follows the discussion between Nicodemus and Jesus, with the words "you must be born from above (or born again)" in order to see or be part of the kingdom of God.

We are invited into a new spiritual existence and relationship with God. It is as new-born people, as a new creation, that we become part of God's kingdom. There is to be a spiritual transformation. It involves repentance and turning from sin; and faith and trust in God. It is a response of faith, primarily, rather than obedience to the law, that saves us and makes us new people. Then, as new people, born again, we are called to live lives of holiness, compassion, and justice.

The Sundays in Lent confront us, through the scriptures each week, with the gospel call and challenge to turn from what is wrong, and to be made new people. To embrace a deeper conversion. To hear again the words that tell us of God's love: "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that all who believe in him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

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.