

## Dean's Letter, 10 May 2020

Dear Cathedral family, Brothers and Sisters in Christ

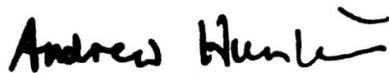
One of the things that we were planning to do today, in the life of the Cathedral, was to licence and induct Crystal Warren as Poet in Residence. Instead of this taking place in the Cathedral with everyone gathered, we are doing it anyway, in the context of our live streamed service of Evening Prayer, today. Crystal is no stranger to us: she has been a member of PCC, a Lay Minister, a Sunday School teacher, and an Altar Server. She is based at Amazwi (formerly NELM), as Curatorial Manager. She is a published poet: *Bodies of Glass* (2004) and *Predictive Text* (2019). She will be reading one of her poems to us in the context of the service.

Crystal joins the ranks of our other two Cathedral Artists in Residence, Chris Mann and Julia Skeen. The point of having Artists in Residence is to acknowledge their vital contribution to the life of the Cathedral and the community, as poets and artists, and as part of the prophetic voice amongst us. Artists at their best can help us to see the world and our lives differently. They deepen our spirituality and our lives through words, literature, film, physical works of art. We are profoundly enriched by what they give us.

Our Bible readings for the Eucharist today are challenging: there is the martyrdom of St Stephen (Acts 7); "come to the living stone" which is Christ... "you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people..." (1 Peter); "do not let your hearts be troubled, believe in God, believe also in me... I am the way, the truth and the life" (John 14). Perhaps a common theme is that of identity. Finding and discovering who we are, in Christ. Finding our purpose and our meaning as disciples of Jesus. Being defined by our belonging to Jesus. For St Stephen, his life was utterly caught up in Christ, and he died secure in that. As Christians we are part of a chosen race, chosen by God; we are a royal priesthood, the bridge between God and the world, offering our worship to Him; we are a holy nation, the new Israel, holy and set apart by God for God's purposes. It is in these troubled days, Jesus speaks words of calm to us: "do not let your hearts be troubled, believe in God..."

As the situation around us becomes more and more stormy and fraught with tension and fear and anger, it is important to be reminded who we are, our identity and purpose in Christ – who we are and how we are called to live.

My love to you all

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