

St. Michael and All Angels

Anglican Church

The Diocese of Saldanha Bay



Our Mission

To honour God by proclaiming His Word in a spirit filled church, nurturing leadership, holistic growth, missions and care groups in a Discipling Environment

Address: Letchworth Drive, Edgemoed Cape Town, 7441

Phones: (021) 558-4139 or 558-8628, Fax (021) 558-0881,

E-mail: edgemoedanglican@telkomsa.net **Website:** www.stmichaelsedgemoed.org.za

RECTOR: The Revd Canon David Mills

TO: ALL THE MEMBERS OF ST MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS, EDGEMOED

PASTORAL LETTER 2 – PENTECOST 2017

23 June 2017

Dear Friends,

Greetings in our Lord's Name. The Holy Spirit is poured out on God's Church – we receive that Spirit of empowerment and gifting for ministry and the building up of the Church. In my last Pastoral Letter I quoted the following portion from the book, "Saints and Seasons" published by the ACSA.

"The Church's year is divided into two halves of approximately equal length. From Advent to Pentecost the Church represents the drama of our salvation, following step by step in its successive feasts the mighty acts of God wrought through Christ – his life, his death and resurrection, his ascension and his sending from the Father the promised Spirit. The second half of the year, from Pentecost to Advent, is given over to the teaching of Jesus, through which Christians can ponder the implications for themselves of God's mighty acts."

I invite you to make the most of the season in which we currently find ourselves, in the Christian calendar. The liturgical colour is green which reminds us of the growth of the Church in the time which followed Pentecost and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Good and Bad Theology

It saddened me to hear recently, from one of our parishioners, how some pastors are asserting that the disasters which have befallen so many in the Knysna and Plettenberg Bay regions, are as a result of 'God's judgement'. This begs the question of how we view God – do we see God as a capricious deity, that, at the soonest opportunity, visits judgement on people for their sins? That this judgement consequently dis-empowers and plunges so many families and individuals into massive grief, through losing so much, perhaps all that they had, including the loved ones who died in the fires.

When we reflect, as we must, on events such as the fires in the Southern Cape, we need to keep a number of important principles and truths in mind – perhaps most important of all, how God has revealed the nature of God to us in the Person of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour.

- In the Gospel of St John (Chapter 11), when Jesus asked to be taken to Lazarus' tomb, seeing how the women from Jerusalem wept, he too wept - clearly that God in Jesus is in every way

human and thus able to understand the brokenness of our world, in which terrible things can and do happen.

- We do live in a broken world where many things happen as a result of accidents, or through evil and cruel acts of human beings;
- God comes alongside us and helps us with our grief, when terrible things happen to us and our loved ones – this is not a Deity who wills that we be punished through experiencing such calamities – rather this is God who, with tenderness of heart and love comes to bring, over time, healing and a new beginning.

With the above in mind, we need to be very careful before we assume that God chooses to judge and punish people, because of their sin, as a result of which they then experience calamities in their lives. How then could the same God, who causes the judgement to take place, be at the same time the One who comes alongside God's beloved people to bring them healing from the very calamities visited upon them by the Lord? This simply does not make sense – we therefore need to be guided by what we know to have been the revelation of God's nature and Being to us, supremely shown in the Person of Jesus Christ our Lord.

This then is what I would call 'good theology' and I commend it to you, as you too reflect on what has happened to the unfortunate people who have lost so much through the fires in the Southern Cape.

A closing prayer

*Be with those Lord,
who have lost so much.
As you wept with the women and
Lazarus' sisters, as they mourned his death.
So we believe that you weep too with
those who have lost so much.
Give them courage to continue to trust in
you and your healing power;
Be with all those who come alongside
them to support them in their grief.
Help us to gain insight, wisdom and
Understanding, as we experience
calamities in our world.
Through Jesus, who lives and reigns,
one God, Father Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.*

May you and yours know the power and enabling gifts of the Holy Spirit of God, day by day..

God bless,

Revd Canon David Mills
Rector

To be a Multi-Generational Church creating a culture of discipleship where all people can Believe, Belong and Become

◆ Relevant ◆ Effective ◆ Dynamic
Followers of Jesus Christ.