

# Tuesday

KLIPPIES KRITZINGER

Dear sisters and brothers

You are working on the front lines of the project to house and care for homeless people during this lockdown. You are not only taking on this complex responsibility for people's lives; you are also more exposed to possible infection. You are showing the way of self-sacrifice and caring, following in the way of Jesus. We pray for you, that you may be safe, healthy and wise.

In Jeremiah 3:15 God promises the restoration of the people of Judah after the exile to Babylon: "Then I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will lead you with knowledge and understanding." We, who are not involved on the front lines, pray that this promise of God will become true in your work.

May you find the knowledge and understanding to be leaders after God's own heart. And the Lord Jesus showed us that God's heart is soft with care towards the hungry, the thirsty, the strangers, the naked, the sick and the prisoners. And that God's heart is hard with anger towards those who practice injustice, exploitation and neglect; those who do evil and those who don't care. And that God's heart is open to use everyone who is prepared to be a shepherd leader – not only men, municipal officials, educated people, or Christians....

The word shepherd in the Old Testament did not refer to a pastor or preacher, but mostly to the kings and community leaders. You are God's wise and caring shepherds at a time of crisis; you are God's gift to the community of Tshwane. But the next verse (Jer 3:16) says something shocking: The Ark of the Covenant, which was the seat of God's throne in the most holy place in the temple, the heart of Israel's worship, will not be remembered or missed or replaced or even mentioned! Israel will learn to serve God without the Ark! Jerusalem, a city with dirty streets and crowded with people, will be God's throne. As we learn to be the church of Christ in lockdown, without our familiar Arks of worship, you show us where to find the throne of God: not on pulpits, altars or Communion tables but in church halls, where homeless people are not homeless for now; in tents that give temporary shelter to the most vulnerable. May God lead us all never to be the same again.

Prayer

Merciful God

Thank you for revealing your will to us in the life of Jesus of Nazareth

Thank you for his honesty and courage, his passion for justice

Thank you for his love of the poor and excluded

Thank you for his commitment to healing, justice and compassion.

Mighty God

Give us courage today – to do what is best for the people of our city

Give us patience today – to work with people who are difficult or stubborn

Give us open ears today – to hear people's pain and fear and uncertainty

Give us wisdom today – to negotiate with authorities and providers

Loving God

Do your work in us and through us today

That your name may be glorified

That your kingdom of justice, peace and joy may come

That your will may be done in Tshwane, as it is in heaven

Through Jesus Christ our Lord

Amen