

Dean's Letter, 4 June 2017

Dear Cathedral family

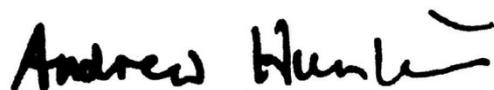
Today, the Day of Pentecost, we celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit to the church, to each one of us. The work of the Spirit is seen in the gifts of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12 – 14), and in the fruit of the Spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). St Paul writes, “Those who belong to Christ have crucified the old nature with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.” (Gal 5:24-25).

The work of the Spirit is also seen in our ongoing discovery of God's will for us: the promise of Jesus that the Spirit will lead us into all truth (John 16:13). We have seen the Spirit at work in the church's changed views on the role and ministry of women; on slavery and other injustices; and increasingly on the place and inclusion, in the life of the church and its ministry, of Christians who identify as part of the LGBTI community. At the meeting of the Cathedral Parish Council this past week, PCC watched the dvd produced recently by IAM (Inclusive and Affirming Ministries), on the place of gay or lesbian Christians in the life of the church. It was warmly agreed that we need to continue to talk and dialogue; we shall be contacting the IAM team to see if they could join us later this year, for dialogue; the dvd will be shown on other occasions for further discussion; the topic will form part of a sermon series being planned for after the Festival. All this is in line with the resolution of our Vestry in March 2016, and in the resolution of our Diocesan Synod in May 2016.

As we continue to engage, I hope that we as the Cathedral can become welcoming and inclusive in our attitudes; and that we are willing to dialogue, rather than have antagonistic and aggressive debates. I don't expect us all to agree with everything: there is a very wide range of views and experiences on this matter. But let's do our best to hear what is being said, particularly if the person speaking comes from a background and experience that is different from mine or yours.

I have a number of concerns as we continue with this discussion: that people will leave the Cathedral if we DO talk about the matter; that people will leave the Cathedral if we DON'T talk about the matter; how best to engage with a very diverse congregation – seniors, adults, teenagers, children – on this sensitive and complex issue. Amongst us are children, youngsters, and parents, who are facing this issue very personally; we know people in our families, in our friendship circles, close to us, who are transgender or in other ways are very aware that they are not like others; a member of PCC spoke of a child less than 10 years old who said recently, “I am who I am, and I will always be different.” We live in a fluid, changing world.

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 long horizontal stroke at the end.