

Dean's Letter, 9 July 2017

Dear Cathedral family

As we come to the end of another National Arts Festival, and Spiritfest, we thank all who made these past 11 days so amazing! In particular, our thanks to Maggy Clarke and the Spiritfest planning committee. Work and thought and planning for 2018 starts almost immediately, with the “wash-up” evaluation meeting later this month. The programme for next year will need to be finalised by the end of this year/early 2018. It never stops! So much for “sleepy Grahamstown...”!

Maggy was honoured at the opening of Spiritfest, for her contribution to Spiritfest over the years; for her leadership and vision; for her love and care; for her organising skills, tenacity of purpose, encouragement and support, perseverance and integrity. Maggy, we salute you and we thank you!

We also honour and acknowledge with thanks the late Desmond Eve. A plaque in his memory was placed in the Cathedral, next to the door into the Dean's Vestry, last month. We give thanks for Des, and for Jeanette, and for their family; for Des's wonderful and sacrificial contribution to the life and well-being of the Cathedral over many years; for his work as an academic; for his love for his family and those around him. We continue to think of him and to miss his presence amongst us. Our thanks to the Eve family for the generous donation in his memory, which has enabled us to restore some of the clerestory windows.

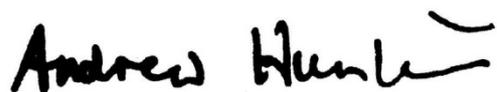
Storms are raging around us. Here in Grahamstown we have our own municipal challenges of water, road maintenance, and electricity. I am very appreciative of the supportive and helpful relationship between the Grahamstown Ratepayers Association and Makana Municipality. In Mayor Nomhle Gaga we have a person of calibre and integrity. We are on the same side and we all want to make Makana a good place to be, and for our community and city to function well. So much is at stake here. Let's do what we can.

Those with Cape Town connections will have heard of the tragic drowning of 7-year-old Louise Fowler, who was swept off the rocks by a wave, at Betty's Bay – her memorial service was held at Christ Church, Kenilworth, this past Thursday. There are no words that can bring answers or comfort in such a loss; our hearts go out to her parents and sister, family, friends. Our cousin's daughter, Nicky Fielding, was her Sunday School teacher.

The effects and efforts to rebuild after fire and devastation continue. Protests have broken out in Hout Bay due to frustration there; communities in Knysna and elsewhere face a long journey of rebuilding lives and homes. We hold them in prayer.

On a global Anglican front, the decision by the Scottish Episcopal Church to change the definition of marriage to include those of the same gender has been welcomed by some, decried by others. GAFCON (the Global Anglican Future Conference) has responded by consecrating a “missionary bishop” for Scotland and England, in their efforts to preserve the traditional understanding of marriage. Is this something about which Christians can agree to disagree? We shall tackle these and related issues in the weeks to come.

My love to you all

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Andrew Hunter". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.