

Dean's Letter, 3 December 2017

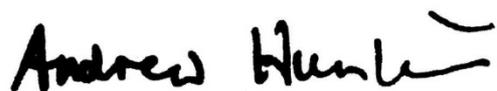
Dear Cathedral family

Today is Advent Sunday. With World AIDS Day being December 1st, today is also AIDS Awareness Sunday, when we acknowledge all who are infected and affected by HIV-AIDS. And we are in the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence. I joined the Mothers Union march in King William's Town at the start of the 16 days, last week. A very helpful statement was drawn up — a copy is on the notice board — and presented to a senior representative of the SAPS, calling for a partnership to ensure support for victims of gender based violence. I was impressed by the response of the SAPS with a clear commitment to partnership, and by their efforts to make reporting these attacks, somewhat easier. At the same time, as we know, we have a long way to go, with very few sexual assaults actually being reported — it is estimated that only 1 out of 9 rapes that take place, are reported to the police, and there is an extremely low conviction rate. This was one of the cries and concerns raised by student protesters during last year's Reference List protests at Rhodes University.

The Elective Assembly for the next bishop of the diocese of Khahlamba is scheduled for this week, 6th — 8th December, in Queenstown. The names of the candidates are: Revd Siphiso Barn; Archdeacon (and current Vicar General) Moses Madywabe; and Bishop Tsietsi Seleokane, Suffragan-Bishop, diocese of Natal. Let's hold that diocese, and all who are part of the elective assembly — all licensed clergy of the diocese, and elected lay representatives from each parish — in our prayers, as they seek to discern under God who the next bishop of the diocese is to be. May the Holy Spirit guide them! Sometimes I think that elective assemblies bring out both the best and the worst in people. Power, ambition, longing for status; but also humble service, great love for God and for the church as the body of Christ, a life of faithful witness, ministry, the call into apostolic leadership. And this coming Saturday is the installation and enthronement of the new Bishop of Mthatha, Bishop Nkosinathi Ndwandwe. He has been suffragan-bishop in the diocese of Natal for a number of years.

Today, Advent Sunday, is the start of the church's new year: our season of preparation for the coming of Christ in his birth at Bethlehem, and in his return as king and Lord and judge. It is a season which gives expression to our longings and hopes for new beginnings, change, transformation, justice, peace, reconciliation, a new world — and when our longings and dreams are matched and answered by God's promises and by the coming of Christ and His kingdom. While the town quietens down as schools close and students leave, this is a season of quiet hope and waiting, in expectation. Let's savour the moment.

My love to you all

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Hunt". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.