

## Dean's Letter, 2018

Dear Cathedral family

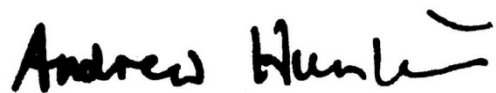
Dr Billy Graham, that well-known evangelist who died recently, described John 3:16 as the heart of the Gospel. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Indeed, it is difficult to find another verse that says so much in just a few words: God's all-embracing love; the gift of his Son; belief; being saved from death; the gift of eternal or everlasting life. There is a wealth of truth and wonder in this verse. The initiative of God in reaching out to our broken world. The gift of life through his Son. Faith. Trust. Assurance. Peace. Of course it doesn't end with this verse. We take God's love wherever we go, into our struggles for justice, for human dignity, into the question of land expropriation without compensation which is engulfing our nation at the present time, into all the turmoil and pain of our communities.

We are called to love God fiercely, passionately, with all that we are – the invitation on Transfiguration Sunday, a few weeks ago, to find our centre in God. We encounter light and darkness in the wilderness – our own struggles, doubts, failings, times of brokenness, sorrow, needing forgiveness and a fresh start, longing again for the grace and mercy of God; and angels who minister to us and strengthen us. Richard Rohr likens our experience to that of Jesus on the cross between the two thieves. The one thief hurls abuse at him; the other asks to be remembered. You and I represent both those thieves. We can be filled with grace and love; we can be raging with fury and hatred; we can be icons of reconciliation; and we can be the polar opposite. We live here in Grahamstown and in South Africa with much that is beautiful, and life-giving, and joy-bringing – music, wonderful people, opportunities, great servants of God; but we also live with people who are cruel and selfish and corrupt and dishonest. And sometimes it is you and I who reflect both the best and the worst.

So we are always people of humility and honesty. Humility, because we know we don't always get it right; honesty because we admit it when we have blundered. Humility because we depend not on our own strength but on God; honesty because we know that we need help. People of grace. We have received the grace of God. And in turn we extend God's grace to one another. We receive healing; and we reach out with God's love and healing.

May we be people of grace in our life together - as we go into our Annual Vestry Meeting; and in the days and months ahead.

My love to you all

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