

Dean's Letter, 20 May 2018

Dear Cathedral family

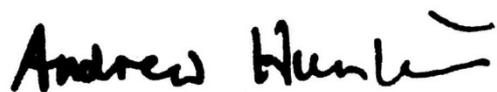
The Day of Pentecost – today – is often called “the birthday of the church”. It is the day on which the Holy Spirit was poured out on those first disciples, gathered in Jerusalem. The power of the Spirit transformed them from being timid, unsure, silent, to speaking with boldness and courage of the love and wonder of God as found in Jesus Christ. The disciples had walked and talked with Jesus over the past three years. They had run away and left him at Gethsemane, denied knowing him, slept while he wept and prayed, and were all too aware of his death on the cross. Failure, desolation, despair. Then the resurrection – the great surge of God’s power that brought Jesus out of the grave into new life; and the ascension – Jesus departing from them but leaving them with a promise – to wait until the outpouring of the Spirit, when they would receive power from on high to proclaim the good news. And that is what happened on the Day of Pentecost.

Each year at this time, on the Day of Pentecost, we ask God to once again pour out his Holy Spirit on us, to give us the power and courage we need for our life of service and witness. And God answers our prayer! We might not experience the rushing wind and tongues of flame, or the many languages – though sometimes we do – but God does give us the grace and blessing and guidance for which we ask. We are people of the Spirit.

God comes to meet our deepest longings: the longings of the heart; that deep desire for transformation and renewal; the longing and thirst for encounter with God; God moulds and shapes us; God guides us. But it’s not all about you and me. God sends us out into the world to be people of hope and love and joy. People who are salt and light. People who are instruments of change and renewal. Signs of the Gospel. Icons – living images – of the Risen Christ. Bridge-builders. Healers of broken-ness, wounded and imperfect as we are. Peace-makers. Reconcilers. At times also, revolutionaries for Christ, turning the world upside down with the love of God.

For some of us, the Spirit comes in the context of loud rallies and excited singing, and we walk away from such occasions dancing on air (almost); for others, the Spirit comes in silence, stillness, quietness, and we rise from these times of deep quiet profoundly renewed and strengthened. I don’t think we should prescribe what should work for everyone, or how the Spirit chooses to move in our lives. It is by the fruit of the Spirit that we see the move and works of the Spirit – the fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, self-control (Galatians 5:22).

My love to you all

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