

## Dean's Letter, 16 September 2018

Dear Cathedral family

This coming Thursday, 20th September, will be the 10th anniversary of Bishop Ebenezer's consecration as Bishop, and his installation and enthronement as the 4th Bishop of Grahamstown. We congratulate him and give thanks for his life and ministry, together with Mama Noncedo and their family.

We continue with our *Season of Creation* series. For us as Christians, together with all people of faith, the Season of Creation is not simply talks on the environment. Our starting point is that the world and all that there is, comes from the hand of God. Yes, there was a process of unfolding and development – the big bang, millions of years ago, the beginning of time, the slow evolution of the world into what we know today, the gradual formation of the continents, the great ice ages, the age of the dinosaurs, the early stone age, the tens of thousands of years of development that we glimpse in fossils and in giant rock formations.

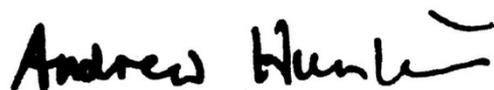
All this, we believe, comes from the creative word and power of God. "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." (Gen 1:1) With creation, including the creation of human beings, came stewardship – man was given the task of caring for the earth. Difficult words, often abused: "God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and *subdue* it; and *have dominion* over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.'" (Gen 1:28, italics added).

From dominion comes a theology of "domination", which has been used to justify the abuse of the earth, colonialism, rampant materialism and capitalism. It has allowed people to chop down tropical forests to grow soya for cattle feed and to pollute rivers with acid mine drainage as we dig for gold, to pollute and destroy and break and burn – to do as we please with the world. Rather than dominion, let us recover the concept of stewardship – to care for, manage, oversee and protect all that God owns. "Stewardship implies caring management, not selfish exploitation; it involves a concern for both present and future."

Stewardship and care of the earth is part of the theology of creation: what we believe about God and the world. It invites us to walk on holy ground. Our theology of creation and care of the earth embraces almost everything in our world: access to drinkable water, making sure that there is adequate sewerage and rubbish removal; it touches on land ownership, expropriation, and housing needs; the fracking of the Karoo, industrial developments, wage negotiations (sharing of resources), and much more besides. So to engage with the Season of Creation is to address things that are controversial, disturbing, and very important for us all.

"We thank you, Father, for the resources of the world and its beauty... Give to all a *reverence* for your creation and make us worthy stewards of your gifts."

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.