

Dean's Letter, 22 October 2017

Dear Cathedral family

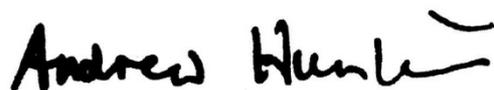
We are moving towards the culmination of our month of Dedication and Stewardship. Today our focus is on dedicating our whole lives to God. Next Sunday is our Patronal Festival. During the sermon time at both our morning services next week (29th Oct), there will be an "open mic". Anyone who would like to, may come forward to give thanks to God for blessings received, or give testimony to God's goodness and grace. We may want to thank God for the blessing of this past year, or the birth of a child or grandchild, or success and achievement with studies, or a home, or a job, or our journey with Christ, or for the life of the Cathedral, or for signs of God's grace – or all of the above and more besides! Let's take time this week to think about what we would like to say, and be prepared to take courage and come forward!

Next Sunday is also the time when we are asked to return our completed pledge forms for the year ahead, and to offer ourselves and our resources to God as an act of faith and love and trust. This is so important for our life as the Cathedral, so that we may continue to be a vibrant and growing part of the body of Christ, because where all parts of the body are active and involved, the whole body can function. And as we know, it is our giving, our pledging, that is crucial to sustain the running of the Cathedral. This includes maintenance of our buildings, support for ministry – your full-time clergy, music and admin staff – and support for ministry beyond the Cathedral itself, i.e. the wider diocese and Province.

What is the church? It is the community of Christ, all who follow the Lord and acknowledge the presence of God in our world and in our lives. It is the community where we encounter Jesus in the sacraments – in baptism and Eucharist. It is the place where we come to hear and receive the Word of God read and preached. It is the body of Christ gathered, with all its flaws and weaknesses, as a sign of grace and love and hope.

For some, the church is an unnecessary and optional extra, not really essential, a "nice to have" in times of crisis, but something not relevant for today's world, from a bygone era. How do we respond to those sentiments? Obviously I have a personal stake in all this! Nevertheless, I would argue very strongly that a community without the church – without Christ – without the gospel – is a community that is unravelling, decaying, and that is in trouble. Our world, and our communities, with our conflicts and anger and fear and divisions are a sad illustration of this. We are dysfunctional: hobbling along with a broken leg, trying to get by, trying to walk or run. But our broken leg – our selfishness and sin, our ego and cruelty and greed and lust for power – trip us up again and again. We need the good news of God's love, that reaches out, calls us to repentance, heals and forgives us, makes us whole, and sets us on our feet again. The good news of hope and redemption and new life. New beginnings. Open to the possibilities of the Holy Spirit. Transforming us and making us new. Without that, we are doomed to a life of emptiness and destruction.

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.