

## Dean's Letter, 24 – 25 December 2017

Dear Cathedral family

We gather once again with Christians all over the world, to celebrate the birth of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, at Bethlehem, over 2000 years ago. St Bernard of Clairvaux, a French monk of the 11th century, described the three “comings” of Christ, past, present and future: “In the first, he was our redemption; in the last he will appear as our life; in this middle coming – the present – he is our rest and our consolation.” Today, on the feast of Christmas, we celebrate his coming as our Redeemer and Lord, our Saviour.

Christmas is many things: a time for family gatherings, a time for giving and generosity, a time to celebrate the end of a year, its achievements and successes, as well as its times of sadness and grief. Not always an easy time! Christmas carols and decorations in the shops, Christmas spirit on the streets – but above all, a time to worship. We acknowledge and believe that the child Jesus Christ, born at Bethlehem, is our Saviour and Lord.

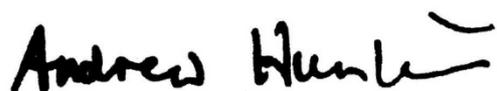
This is the feast of the Incarnation – God made flesh, God becoming a human being, God taking human form and entering fully into our humanity. As the Nicene Creed says, “We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God... for us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and was made man.”

The birth of Jesus Christ into our world says that God is with us. We are not drifting aimlessly through an empty cosmos, a harsh and alien world. We are part of a world that is loved by God, with all its brokenness and loneliness. God holds the world – you and me – in the palm of His hands. Julian of Norwich was a 14th century English mystic, who saw in a hazelnut a symbol of all that God has made, was given the words: “It lasts and ever shall, for God loves it. And so have all things their beginning by the love of God.”

For Julian, and for us, we are like that hazelnut. God made us. God loves us. God keeps us. All things have their beginning, their life, by the love of God.

Jesus Christ comes to us in our every-day lives, whether ordinary or exciting – into our joys and our desolation – as our rest and our consolation. As we gather in worship and hear the well-known Christmas story, let us be open to receive the love and grace of God, poured into our hearts and lives. May we be people of light and hope in the year to come.

My love to you all

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