

Dean's Letter, 6 May 2018

Dear Cathedral family

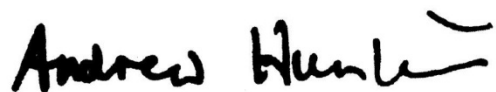
We extend a very warm welcome to our guest preacher this morning, Rev Sipiwe Sibiya. He is here in Grahamstown as part of the "Grahamstown for Jesus" week of mission, together with African Enterprise. A brief profile of Rev Sipiwe is on the insert in our pew leaflet. Some of you are aware of the storm that erupted following an address by Theuns Pauw, AE team leader, at St Andrew's College, this past week, regarding what he apparently said about homosexuality and divorce. Without being present at the talk, I am unable to comment. Nevertheless, Fr Sipiwe is with us to help rebuild the relationship between AE and ourselves as the Anglican Church.

We as the Cathedral are seeking to be fully inclusive and affirming in our welcome of all, particularly in relation to sexuality. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who we worship, invites you and me into a place of deep love and healing, reconciliation, and repentance. He came "that we may have life, and life in all its fullness" (John 10:10a).

Claire and I returned from KwaZulu-Natal last week on Monday, in time for the Reconciliation march on Tuesday morning, Workers' Day. It was so good to be part of the march, and wonderful that a significant number of Cathedral parishioners, young and old, were there. It was a happy, joy filled event, full of life and energy! What a contrast to the deeply disturbing violent protests that have been happening over the past few days, in Port Elizabeth, Cape Town, Mooi River, Gauteng, North West Province, in Grahamstown last week, and elsewhere. Some of these protests appear to be targeting foreigners; with others, we don't know. This is a time like no other to continue to pray for our community, our country, and to reach out across barriers and divisions. It is our differences and diversity that Christ brings together to form a wonderful whole, a new creation – you and me, and together the body of Christ. By our baptism – by our faith in Christ, because we belong to him – we are joined together into a unity and union far greater and far stronger than racial or tribal or cultural alliances. The statement "we are one in Christ" is radical, transforming, and deeply challenging to us all in our various comfort boxes. We serve Christ and follow God into the life of the Kingdom of God, this new and wonderful creation of all who believe and follow the Lord. And in this new relationship with God and with one another, we are called into radical discipleship, acts of love and care, profound service and compassion. Can we do it? Yes, with the grace and strength of God.

The Gospel reading for today, John 15:9-17, invites us to "abide in my love... that your joy may be complete...love one another as I have loved you...I chose you...I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last..." As the Grahamstown for Jesus mission comes to an end later today, let's see how the positive fruits of the mission can emerge in our lives, and in the life of the church together here in this city.

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.