

Dean's Letter, 13 May 2018

Dear Cathedral family

A very warm welcome to our new lay ministers, being licensed today: Sylvester Appollis, Siyabulela Fobosi, Tendai Goto, and Ayanda Mpofu. We also welcome The Venerable Eduardo Bukutu, the Dean-designate of Niassa, who is with us for the month of May; and our College of the Transfiguration placement team, who joined us last week. Also in town is Noel Murphy, who has come to visit our bells and our bell ringers. We have also had the "Grahamstown for Jesus" mission with African Enterprise (AE), the closing rally for that being last Sunday; a diocesan conference of Altar Servers from all over the diocese, last weekend; a number of governance meetings this past week, some very special pastoral encounters; and (yesterday) a training session in East London on the Pastoral Standards of ACSA. Personally speaking, it has been fun, busy, challenging, exciting, disturbing at times... and very worthwhile. It is good to be back in the Cathedral this morning for Sunday worship!

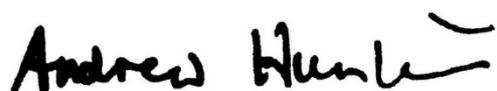
There has been anger and hurt at the remarks made by an AE speaker at St Andrew's College, during the mission week, and we as the Cathedral have received some harsh criticism on social media for hosting Theuns Pauw from AE as our preacher two weeks ago. The St Andrew's chaplain, Fr David Stansbury, is engaging with boys and staff, and he and the school have our full support in the way they have responded to concerns. As I stated in my pew leaflet letter last week, 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).

Ascension Day this past Thursday marked the start of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, 10th – 20th May, from Ascension to Pentecost. For many, the experience of the recent mission was of greater unity between a number of the churches here in Grahamstown. We don't necessarily agree on everything, and we do things differently in our styles of worship and other things; but we can and should stand together on the essentials of the Christian faith and our shared witness, what CS Lewis called "Mere Christianity". Let's see where the next few weeks and months take us with this. At our recent PCC meeting, we discussed the "Nehemiah Project" which is one of the outcomes of the mission: a shared project of all the churches in Grahamstown to strengthen our town with prayer networks, each based on the municipal wards. We see this as something valuable and want to give it our support.

Our Gospel reading for today, John 17:6-19, is part of the High Priestly Prayer of Jesus. He prays that we might be protected; and that we, as his followers, would be one – united; and that we might be "sanctified [set them apart for Your purposes, make them holy] in the truth; your word is truth" (Jn 17:17, NRSV). One of the key themes of the mission week was the call to make a personal commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, or to recommit and rededicate one's life to Christ. I know from my own experience just how important this has been, and is, for me. It was good to hear that a number of our youngsters responded to that call. As Anglicans we do this each year, though we call it by another name: we renew our baptismal vows (at Easter). We recommit and rededicate ourselves to the Lord. And then we continue on the journey of becoming faithful followers, disciples, of Christ.

Happy Mothers' Day!

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.