

Dean's Letter, 8 July 2018

Dear Cathedral family

Today marks the end of yet another National Arts Festival. It has been good to enjoy some wonderful music, art, lectures, and drama, and an excellent Spiritfest programme. Freezing weather, the occasional electricity blackout, and the change of our city's name from Grahamstown to Makhanda have been amongst the memorable events of the past week or so!

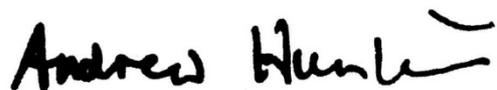
The debate and discussion around the name of our city continues to evoke strong feelings on all sides, largely on social media. That discussion will continue as the 30-day period for objections runs its course, and as the final decision is made. For some, having a functioning town and municipality, good governance, and addressing poverty, is the priority, and changing the name is a side-track. For others, a change of name is an essential step in letting go of a colonial past and embracing a new identity. If we do change to Makhanda, I shall have the privilege of being the last Dean of Grahamstown and the first Dean of Makhanda! And our diocese will need to discuss its name as well.

I savour our "small town" feel. Grahamstown (or Makhanda) is a quaint little place. A city by virtue of the Cathedral as the seat of the Bishop; the smallest university in the country, but among the best; cattle and donkeys on High Street. A place of poverty and inequality; but also a place of compassion and life and hope. A place where doors are opened, where young people are encouraged and nurtured, where people are given a second chance. I think of Amasango School and Eluxolweni; of the feeding schemes; of the GADRA Matric School. I think of hard working teachers who care deeply for their children; of academics who dedicate their lives to learning and scholarship and the pursuit of knowledge. I think of priests and pastors who lead their churches with wisdom and humility.

I think of groups like the Grahamstown Ratepayers Association and Makana Revive, who have done so much to turn our town around. I think of the young people of our Cathedral, our Youth Guild and students, with their eagerness and energy; our marimba group, our choir, Kwantu Community Choir and the World Choir Games. I think of our older adults and senior citizens who have given their lives in service to God and to others. I think of pupils and students who make this place their home for these crucial growing years, and who finally leave here as wonderful young adults. I think of the many, young and old, who live faithfully as faithful disciples of Jesus Christ in their work and at home.

We are surrounded by people who are signs of hope: those in our community and our country who over the years have made a difference, have been a sign of Christ, who have shown the way to a new country, a country free of racism and prejudice and oppression, a country where there is no poverty or injustice, a country where the rulers rule with wisdom, for the good of all who live here. Can we continue to be people of hope?

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.