

## Dean's Letter, 23 September 2018

Dear Cathedral family

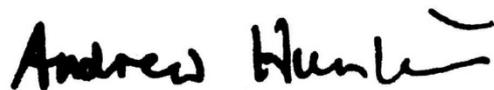
I shall be out of town for much of this week, attending Provincial Standing Committee (PSC) up in Johannesburg. This is an annual meeting and part of ACSA's provincial governance and oversight gatherings. The others are Provincial Synod, which happens every three years – our next one is in 2019; and the Synod of Bishops (SOB), which meets twice a year, in February and September. SOB will gather from today (Sunday 23rd) and then will be joined by PSC delegates during the week. The Elective Assembly for the diocese of St Helena will take place in the context of the SOB, as that diocese is too small to have its own elective assembly. The other two elective assemblies for which we are praying, Port Elizabeth and Umzimvubu, take place in December.

PSC approves the Provincial budget for the year ahead, receives reports, and engages with matters that concern the life of the church and society – our shared life together. To attend PSC or Provincial Synod is to catch a glimpse of the breadth of our life and witness as ACSA, and the many issues that confront us, or that require our engagement. It is certainly no easy ride. You and I are faced constantly with challenges to the gospel – the good news of Jesus Christ – and our witness to the love of God.

I was puzzled by the Constitutional Court ruling, this past week, on the legalisation of dagga (marijuana). It is now legal, it seems, to grow it for home use, but not to trade in it. This comes a few days after last week's horrific article in Grocotts about the effect of drugs on people's lives. Many argue that alcohol is more destructive than dagga, and alcohol-linked crime is far more of a problem than dagga-related crime. My concern is the roll-on effect of the use of dagga. If dagga usage leads users to harder, mind-altering drugs, with all the horrific family and social implications of that, then the ruling by ConCourt is seriously flawed. Yet we also recognise that alcohol abuse is a horrific reality and destroys marriages, families, communities. Do our social workers and teachers have any comments on this?

We are living in what is sometimes described as a highly contested space. We are surrounded by struggles for power and prominence; various groups are fighting for dominance or control; certain people want to define the way things should be done. Whose voice is the loudest? Who calls the shots? We see these contests being played out on campus with SRC elections or in protest actions; in the media and on the streets as different political groups try to win support and claim the upper hand; and at times in the life of the church, as we debate and discuss and argue. May the Spirit of God guide you and me in our life and witness; and guide PSC as they (we) meet this week.

My love to you all

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Hunter". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.