

Dean's Letter, 4 November 2018

Dear Cathedral family, brothers and sisters in Christ

As Anglicans, we are entering the final four Sundays of our church year. This month of November takes us through a profoundly significant time. It is a time of remembering: All Saints Day today, with our All Souls service this evening; Remembrance Sunday next week (11th November); Mission Sunday (18th November); and then the last Sunday of our liturgical year, the Sunday before Advent, the Feast of Christ the King (25th November). We are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses, all those who have gone before us in the way of Christ; the centuries upon centuries of faithful lives in Christ.

Remembrance Sunday (11th November) is a very painful time, as we remember the immense sacrifices made, the deaths and suffering of millions in times of war. Remembrance Sunday this year is of particular significance, as it will be the 100th anniversary of the end of World War One. Armistice Day – the final cease-fire at the end of the war – came into effect at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, in 1918. The parade that will take place on Church Square on that day will mark that solemn occasion.

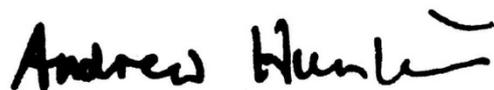
Our All Souls service this evening – the Commemoration of the Faithful Departed – has become an intimate service of thanksgiving for loved ones who have died. I take great comfort in this act of worship; it is a sad one for me as I remember my parents before God, and reflect on their lives, and the gap that their deaths has left. Almost all of us, I would think - apart from the very young – have our own experience of death, particularly the deaths of loved ones. There is nothing quite like the death of someone we know and love. I still remember the first funeral I ever attended; and I shall probably never forget the funerals of my parents. Grief is beyond words.

And yet...in the grieving and loss, we discover that we are held in the love of God; that we go through the valley of the shadow of death, and emerge the other side, changed but also strengthened; that we can with perfect confidence place our loved ones into the hands of God; that nothing in all creation can separate us from the love of God which is ours in Christ Jesus our Lord.

So our services today, and in particular our service this evening, are an opportunity and an invitation to throw ourselves into the everlasting arms of God; to rest in God's presence; to take comfort; to grieve but also to give thanks.

I am out of town this week, attending the annual Deans' Conference – the gathering of Deans and Senior Priests from all over ACSA. We have been in various venues in recent years, including Namibia, Cape Town and Swaziland. This year we are meeting in Mpumalanga.

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.