

Dean's Letter, 28 April 2019

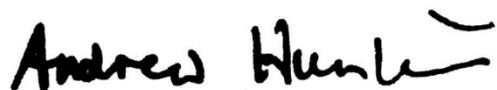
Dear Cathedral family, brothers and sisters in Christ

It was wonderful, last Sunday (Easter Day) to welcome Cameron Luke to the Cathedral and to introduce him to us all. Welcome, Cameron! Our prayers are with you as you settle down here and find your feet in this new environment. We are in an exciting time regarding our music and worship ministry, with a wonderful team – choir, with cantor and music intern Kutlwano Kepadisa (Kepa), head chorister Nzulu Nzwana, a superb team of organists and pianists - Markus Mostert, Peter Breetzke, John Jackson and Penny Whitford, and Bayanda Mthetho, our star organ scholar; marimbas and marimba intern (Asakhe Cuntsulana), the Makana Choir School committee, chaired by Prof David Gain. So much energy and creativity at work in all this. And now we have our new Director of Music! At the same time, we want to acknowledge the wonderful work done by Kepa as acting Director of Music, and our team of organists and pianists. And Maggy Clarke, who has held so much of this together for the past while! We shall have an occasion to thank and publicly affirm and acknowledge everyone, in due course. We are indeed greatly blessed as the Cathedral with this superb team of people, committed to the life of worship through music.

People quite often ask about the date of Easter, and why it changes from year to year, and how it is fixed. Easter Day is always the first Sunday following the full moon falling on or next after 21 March (AAPB pg 17). From our 2019 Anglican Lectionary notes: "Easter is not a day but a Season which lasts until the Day of Pentecost and includes the Feast of the Ascension. Easter lasts 50 days, $7 \times 7 + 1$, a 'week of weeks' plus one – an extravagance of 50 days of celebration, longer than the 40 days of the Lenten Fast...During the Fifty Days of Easter the focus of the readings is encountering the Risen Christ and living the new life which Christ's victory assures. The Gospel readings for the first three Sundays of Easter (Easter Day and the next two Sundays) bring us encounters between the Risen Lord and those who knew him".

Today's Gospel reading (John 20:19-31) is the story of Thomas's encounter with Jesus in which he first refuses to believe and then surrenders in faith. It is also the "ordination gospel" for priests, with the gift of the Holy Spirit and the words "Whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven; whose sins you retain, they are retained" (Jn 20:23; AAPB pg 592, paragraph 45). "Doubting Thomas" is a phrase or description that comes from this gospel, used to describe someone who is always sceptical and disbelieving. It could well be a description of the age in which we live! At the recent Rhodes University graduation, we were told: "The graduate looks at the world with an entirely different set of eyes. They now look for evidence for what is stated and to contest anything that does to appear to them to be valid or fair on the basis of the evidence presented." For Thomas, the wounds of Christ were the evidence he needed. The wounds of Christ today are the suffering and faithful Church, the body of Christ: acts of love and compassion, caring for others, holding one another in pain, walking with those who grieve.

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.