

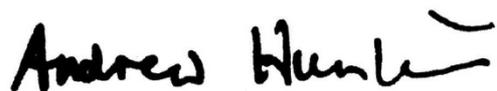
Dean's Letter, 12 May 2019

Dear Cathedral family, brothers and sisters in Christ

Today, the 4th Sunday of Easter, always has part of John chapter 10 as its Gospel reading. The central theme of this chapter is Jesus as the Good Shepherd, and so today is traditionally known as Good Shepherd Sunday. The image of God as the shepherd and guide for his people is a familiar one. "The Lord is my shepherd, therefore I shall lack nothing" (Psalm 23:1). Ezekiel chapter 34, which is sometimes the Old Testament reading for today, is a powerful indictment against the rulers of the nation, shepherds who have fed themselves instead of caring for the sheep. John 10 gives us a picture of Jesus Christ as the Good Shepherd, who lays down his life for the sheep; "my sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me" (Jn 10:27). The Good Shepherd knows us by name; he leads us out of the kraal; he is the gate or door for the sheep; he came "that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10) – words that are inscribed next to the fountain in the foyer of the Monument, up the hill. The Risen Christ is our Good Shepherd.

Our Diocesan Synod is to be held this coming week, 15th – 18th May, at St Alban's, East London. It will be attended by all the active (i.e. not retired) clergy of the diocese, and by elected lay representatives from each parish. The Cathedral lay representatives are Theodore Duxbury and Tandiwe Gabavana. Synod is normally held every three years; this will be the 68th session of Synod since the start of the diocese of Grahamstown in 1853. Synod is a bit like Parliament, though we don't have political parties, and nor do we have the shouting matches that seem to be the norm in Parliament these days. But it is meant to be a place of discussion and debate, and it is a very important time in the life of the diocese for us to look back with thanksgiving, to look around at the life of the church and the world, and to look forward in vision and hope. Part of what we try to do, when we meet like this, is to express the mind of the church on matters of concern; to be the conscience of our communities; and to hear the voice of God in our deliberations. We spend a fair amount of time in worship, which is very good. The days are long: we begin each day at 7 a.m. with the Eucharist, and the daily proceedings end about 12 hours later. It is an intense and demanding time. So let us please pray for Synod, for our Bishop as he delivers his Charge at the opening Eucharist of Synod and as he chairs and leads Synod; and for all Synod delegates.

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.