

Dean's Letter, 23 June 2019

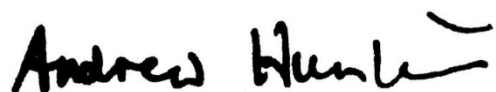
Dear Cathedral family, brothers and sisters in Christ

My personal thanks to all who helped make last Sunday's celebration lunch such a success and such fun! I felt hugely privileged and blessed to be there, and to receive the messages of appreciation and love that so many gave. And what would we do without our wonderful programme director, Theo Duxbury, our décor specialist, Rose Spanneberg, and our team of caterers and cooks – Sally Terry, Ikhona Mvaphantsi, Cathy Meiklejohn, Katie Appollis, Tandiwe Gabavana, Lou-Anne Liebenberg, Lilitha Dyantyi, Margie Antrobus, Anelisa Kelemi, Euline Bartis and Kwezi Gabavana; all who contributed and donated food and ingredients, and time and effort - the Mothers Union as a group, and numerous individuals. Thank you! And the wonderful speeches... well, I was blown away by what was said.

We are days away from the start of the National Arts Festival and Spiritfest. As always, a team effort. Although Maggy Clarke has stepped down as Spiritfest Convenor, she continues to play a key role in what is happening, and we thank her and all who have put the programme together. Details are in the various handouts and leaflets. A very important part of Spiritfest are our various acts of worship, and so let's continue to hold all involved in leading and assisting with the worship, in our prayers. And may the community of Grahamstown-Makhanda put its best foot forward and show the world that this is a good place to be, with an immense amount going for it.

Our readings today give us rich material for reflection and prayer. A key theme which emerges for me is encountering signs of God's grace and presence in the midst of chaos and turmoil. Not inappropriate as we approach Festival, or face the bigger issues around us, in our lives or our country! Elijah hears the "sound of sheer silence", the "still small voice". God is present in that space of silence, not in the earthquake, wind or fire, and it is in the stillness that God speaks to Elijah. And then, when it seems that all is lost, and that there is no hope, God does something new for Elijah and for the people: new leaders are raised up, and the tide turns (1 Kings 19). At that point of the lowest ebb, God does something new. Manna and quails are provided in the wilderness. A way forward emerges – by the grace of God. God's grace in the person of Jesus Christ meets the demoniac and sets him free from years of despair and terror and chaos, and leaves him "clothed and in his right mind" (Luke 8:26-39). And Psalm 42 becomes our prayer, as we continue along the rocky road. "As the deer pants for running brooks, so longs my soul for you, O Lord" is the prayer of one who thirsts for God, whose "soul is heavy within me", whose tears "have been my food day and night", who says to God, "Why have you forgotten me?" No easy answers, no quick fix, simply the faithfulness of God that sustains us.

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.