

Dean's Letter, 19 January 2020

Dear Cathedral family, Brothers and Sisters in Christ

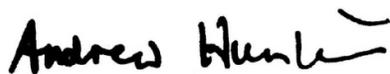
It is good to be back in town after our annual two-week break. How greatly I value and appreciate the Cathedral community, our staff team, and the various individuals who we encounter. It is good to know that we surround and carry one another in love and prayers. How much we all need that! We returned to a very dry Eastern Cape (in spite of the recent rain), wider concerns about global tensions and conflict between nations, and the fires in Australia. While in Knysna we met an Anglican priest from Australia who had just received the news that one of the churches in his parish had burned down. He is also chaplain to fire fighters and disaster management; I am sure that many of us saw the devastation on TV. This past Tuesday the High Court ordered that the Makana Municipality be placed under administration – again. And listening to the prayers and concerns shared at our weekly staff meeting on Tuesday, I realised that everyone is carrying burdens, some more obviously than others. Children starting a new academic year, or school; worries over family; personal issues; huge tensions and challenges at work. The start of the new year can be quite overwhelming.

At the same time, we have just emerged from the deep wonder and joy of Christmas and Epiphany; we celebrated the Baptism of Christ last Sunday and continue to focus on this, today; the grace of God that anointed Jesus for ministry rests upon us; we are not alone. We have been called and chosen; the Lord is faithful (Isaiah 42:1-7). St Paul writes to the church at Corinth, reminding them – and us – that they (and we) are “sanctified in Christ, called to be saints”; and that they – and we – are “not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will also strengthen you to the end...” (1 Cor 1:2-8). In our gospel reading for today, John the Baptist presents us with the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29-34). The Son of God comes into our chaos, our joys and sorrows, to bring life and hope. We are called, chosen, equipped, sent, set apart for God’s purposes and God’s will; we have received the Spirit of God; we have been given power to witness and to minister and to serve.

With the name change of Grahamstown to Makhanda, there will be discussion about the name of the diocese of Grahamstown. And my office and title: I am licensed as Dean of Grahamstown (i.e. of the diocese, not the town). So while in due course I might become the first Dean of Makhanda, I am still officially Dean of Grahamstown.

It is good to welcome newcomers to the Cathedral, as well as to the office team; we have a new office intern, Zezethu Flani (ma Dinah’s daughter) and a new cleaner, Jackie Russion. Tandiwe continues for a while as Youth Intern. We are looking and praying for more Children’s Church leaders. We long to see our youth ministry to be strengthened and to grow.

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.