

Dean's Letter, 27 September 2020

Dear Cathedral family, Brothers and Sisters in Christ

We extend our very warm congratulations to Bishop Ebenezer Ntlali, 14th Bishop of the diocese of Grahamstown, on the 12th anniversary of his consecration as bishop, which we acknowledged in prayer last Sunday. We give thanks for his apostolic and pastoral ministry amongst us, his wisdom and love, and his gifts of ministry. We pray for God's blessing on him and protection over him, over Mama Noncedo, and the whole family.

We also congratulate Mary Birt, founder of Food4Futures, for her Ubuntu Award from Kingswood Rotary Interact club. Mary is a member of Christ Church and an ardent feeder of the hungry. Her ministry in this area increased exponentially with the onset of lockdown in March 2020. We as the Cathedral, with the support of others, joined up with her in this huge project for much of the lockdown period. While we are having to reduce the number of food parcels in the weeks ahead (from 500+ to possibly around 100), the reality is that the need is just as great. The Covid pandemic helped to highlight the long term need for food security in our community.

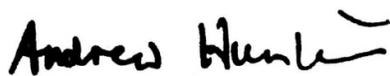
We also congratulate Revd Canon Dr Vicentia Kgabe, rector of the College of the Transfiguration, who has been elected, by the Council of Rhodes University, to the position of Vice-Chairperson of Council. She succeeds Judge Gerald Bloem in this position, following his assumption of the Chair of Council w.e.f. 1 July 2020. Dr Kgabe becomes the first woman to ascend to the office and position of Vice-Chair.

All going well, the Cathedral doors will open from tomorrow (Monday 28th) for visitors and quiet prayer; and we shall have our first gathered acts of worship on Sunday 4th October. We are doing our best to observe and fulfil the requirements for doing so under the current circumstances. So it won't be "back to normal" just yet: no congregational singing, communion in one kind only, masks to be worn, social distancing to be observed. But we shall do our best, and it will be very good to be together again.

This past week was the annual meeting of Provincial Standing Committee (PSC), the governance body of ACSA. It was an intense and deeply engaging three days, held virtually with people meeting in front of screens in diocesan centres all over southern Africa. We are a profoundly incarnational church, as Anglicans, and our focus showed this: we tackled rebuilding after Covid-19, gender-based violence, environmental decay, concerns around discrimination and racism in our Anglican schools, the election of women to the episcopate, the formation of a Portuguese-speaking Province consisting of Angola and Mozambique, ongoing concerns and attention given to Israel/Palestine; holding virtual Elective Assemblies (with ongoing Covid-19 being a possible factor); and remembering those who have died due to Covid-19 over these past months. As so often in these meetings, we touch and experience one another's pain. There were moments like that, for me.

Our Gospel reading (Matthew 21:23-32) speaks of doing the will of the Father. In all that we do, let that be our prayer and our heart's desire.

My love to you all

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Andrew Hunter". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.