

Dean's Letter, 13 December 2020

Dear Cathedral family, Brothers and Sisters in Christ

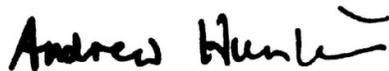
It is said that Grahamstown (Makhanda) is a place of transition. People come and go – students, school children, tourists, those here for a season. As newbies, we realise that “a thousand years is but a day” and that those who are born and bred here have roots and memories that go back for generations. The history of this place, whether written or oral, is rich and deep. There is both pain and joy. The scars of our past are tangible. Layers of history. Sites of struggle. Conflict embedded in memories. Memorial plaques and monuments. Names and name changes. Events that inspire us – Masicule, the National Arts Festival, poetry and art and music and drama; iconic people who pour their lives into this community; civil society groupings that hold the town together; the network of relationships, societies, NGOs, our churches and other faith-based groups, service organisations, environmental groups, the life of the university and our schools ... This is a town and a community like no other. I salute and I thank you all.

My family and I have been here for thirteen years, and now that we are leaving, how do I sum up my appreciation for this place and all its people, in a few words? For me, it has been an immense privilege to live and work here, to serve at the Cathedral and to be part of all that has happened here over these past years. To be part of the rhythm of this place. To join in the joys and the sorrows. To carry the pain. To feel the frustration and the despair. To be part of the solution. Again, and again it has been the energy and initiative of individuals that has helped to make a difference, turn the situation around, bring life and hope. The recent community response to the Covid pandemic has shown what can be done.

We are in the liturgical season of Advent, the time of preparation and waiting for the coming of Christ at Christmas, and as Lord and King and Judge at the end of time. We hold together the expectation of what can be, with the “not yet” of our broken and imperfect world, and yet a world that is full of potential and hope. As Christians we understand our world as needing redemption. Created for joy and delight, we have damaged and destroyed and broken what we have been given. The 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence (25th November to 10th December) is a terrible reminder of our broken world. Cruelty, lust, greed, rage, selfishness, apathy, callousness, abuse of power, structural oppression ... all this is played out in our society and experienced in our lives. The good news that we receive in Jesus is that God has come amongst us to bring us the healing and restoration that we so desperately need.

My family and I look back over our years here with immense gratitude. It will be a wrench to leave. My prayers are with all who live here, all who call this place home; and for all who look and long for a future. Thank you for our life and journey together.

My love to you all

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Hunter". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.