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## *Homecoming This Past Sunday!*

**An article written by the Very Reverend Sam G. Candler**

On this past Sunday, a friend of mine told me what it was like, many years ago, when Daylight Savings Time was just beginning. He and his wife were dutifully attending church that Sunday morning, and, as was so often the case in those days, they got the time wrong. They showed up for church an hour early and the place was deserted. Truly bewildered as to why no one else was there, they thought to themselves, "Is this the day, when, statistically speaking, it was bound to happen?" According to statistical theory, some percentage of parishioners will not be present for Sunday church. But, theoretically, every parishioner could choose the same Sunday not to show up. The chances are slim, but they do exist. "So," my friend thought, "this must be it; the odds have finally been rolled; everyone has chosen the same day to miss church."

He was telling me this story because, on this past Sunday, just the opposite occurred. It seemed to him, and to me, and to everyone else at the Cathedral of St. Philip, that everyone had chosen the same day to attend church. We were packed! We had over 550 people at the 8:45 service, and over 450 people at the 11:15 service; our other services swelled too. 125 youth were at education hour. Hundreds of friends and family were roaming through Child Hall during the Ministry Fair. Every ministry had prepared tidbits and morsels for tasty consumption as we browsed their tables.

It was, perhaps, another glimpse of the kingdom of heaven at the Cathedral of St. Philip. We have several days each year that are like that. Sure, there were some important people who were unable to be with us, but it sure seemed that almost everyone else was here. Like the kingdom of heaven. Joy and newness and seeing friends that we hadn't seen in a long time. More tasty things to eat. Hugs and kisses and laughter. Admiration of children who have grown a foot over the summer.

It was amazing and exhilarating. It was the kind of Sunday I live for at the Cathedral. Homecoming Sunday. I think the kingdom of heaven will be like that.

On Sunday evening, we thanked the organizers of our Parish Life Committee for arranging another Homecoming Dinner - not a straight barbecue this year, but an Hawaiian Luau. Our Hawaiian guests (we gave them the Episcopal history of King Kamehameh) were entertaining, but they especially deserve praise for making our Cathedral clergy think it was Mardi Gras again. At least we were forced to act as if it was Mardi Gras again. Celebration and laughter. Homecoming. Great fun.

The kingdom of heaven has opened another season at the Cathedral of St. Philip. I know several wonderful families and people are still away. I know that others will have other Sunday engagements in the weeks to come. But the Cathedral is celebrating, last Sunday and every Sunday. Come to church. Statistically speaking, there might be one Sunday when every parishioner will actually attend on the same day. We almost got there this past week. Maybe this Sunday will be that day. The closer we get to that possibility, the closer we get to the kingdom of heaven.