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## *Your Money or Your Heart? And Your Friends!*

**An article from the *Cathedral Times*  
by the Very Reverend Samuel G. Candler,  
Dean of the Cathedral of St. Philip**

At one particular church where I served over fifteen years ago, I remember an important stewardship call. The person I was visiting was not especially active at the local church—in fact, I had rarely seen him there at all—but he was said to be a nice guy. I had met him a few times previous to our visit.

We talked about life, about ourselves, and about the church. Finally, he looked me in the eye and declared, "You just want my money, right?" The question startled me into an answer just as direct as his question. I peered right back at him and proclaimed, "No, we want your heart." The Church could have used his financial generosity, to be sure, but what the Church really needed was him: his heart and his soul.

This season—the season of Epiphany—and perhaps this entire year, will be a heart season for our own church, too, the Cathedral of St. Philip. We have benefited from some incredibly generous gifts in the past years. But we have benefited even more by the gift of people. People have given their heart and soul to this church; and those are the gifts which give us life.

I have often thought of the season of Epiphany as the proper season for evangelism in the Christian Church. After all, the word "Epiphany" means "manifestation;" during these winter weeks we will be hearing gospel stories about how Jesus was "manifested" to the wider world. We will hear how the message of his identity and gospel spread to the wider world. Though it is wintertime, the color of this liturgical season is green: green for growth.

All of us have something to give. The wise men had noble gifts of frankincense, gold, and myrrh, substances that were quite valuable. But even the shepherds had lambs, and adoration. The beautiful hymn, "In the bleak midwinter" (#112), puts it this way:

*What can I give him, poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;  
If I were a wise man, I would do my part;  
Yet what I can I give him give my heart.*

All of us can give ourselves, our hearts and souls. But the evangelism season of Epiphany reminds us that we can give something else, too. We can share our heart and soul with our neighbors and friends. Do you have colleagues or friends who have no church community? Do you have friends in need of life and hope during these winter days? You can offer them a place here at the Cathedral. Invite them to worship one Sunday. Invite them to attend a class or event with you. Who is on your mind right now?

When the winter is darkest and coldest is when people need the Church the most. The Cathedral of St. Philip is ready and quite able to offer life and hope to this struggling world. We offer the life and hope of Jesus Christ our Lord. This is where we have put our heart and soul, and we invite others to put their heart and soul here, too. When all these gifts are offered, God can use the Cathedral to accomplish truly great things.

Sam Candler signature



The Very Rev. Sam Candler

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