
Two Welcomes and a Family Meeting--Buddy Crawford Begins His Ordained Ministry With Us!

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

As the Cathedral of St. Philip enters the month of July, I have two welcomes and a family meeting to announce. The most exciting welcome is to The Reverend Buddy Crawford. Many of you know, or remember, Buddy Crawford. He has been a loyal member of this parish for 24 years, serving as everything from Sunday school teacher to verger to the dean's search committee to Chapter itself. He has done almost everything around here. He mentored EfM classes for 16 years! He taught adult and youth confirmation classes for 10 years!

But several years ago, we said good-bye to Buddy as he answered God's call to ordination. He left us to attend seminary and to serve in various other parishes in the Diocese of Atlanta (including Church of the Nativity in Fayetteville and Church of the Good Shepherd in Covington). The Cathedral had raised up Buddy for great ministry, and we sent him off into the world. We witnessed his ordination as a deacon here at the Cathedral in December of 2008.

Then, about a month ago, as Buddy was finishing his seminary career, I learned that he was still searching for that perfect first call, the first church he would serve as a priest. We have not been able to be in an official search for a full-time priest, but Buddy's availability was enticing. Thus, we have worked out a way for Buddy to return to the Cathedral on a part-time basis as a Pastoral Associate of the Cathedral. Finally, The Reverend Buddy Crawford, ordained a priest just last Sunday, will begin his priestly ministry with us, starting July 1, 2009. What a great journey this has been, and will be, for Buddy! Stay tuned for ways in which we will formally welcome him; but do look for him starting this Sunday. And welcome him back home!

The second welcome that occurs in July is one that we began almost ten years ago, just after I had arrived to serve as dean here. On Saturday, the Fourth of July, early in the morning, the Cathedral of St. Philip will welcome over 55,000 visitors. Most people will know them as runners in the Peachtree Road Race, but we see them as people of God passing by the holy place we know as our Cathedral. Thus, we will welcome them!

Join me early on Saturday (the wheelchairs begin at 6:45 am!), and help me bless this great throng of humanity. Our holy water sprinkler system has been renovated! My new silver bowl is brimming with holiness! Your voices and presence are all that is needed! As the race is concluding (at about 9:30 am) we will circle around an altar in the Front Lawn itself. We will celebrate the Holy Eucharist for Independence Day, giving thanks for this great country and giving thanks for the teeming diversity of people we have just welcomed. It is a glorious event, and I invite you to join us.

Then, on Sunday, July 5, I am off in an airplane, flying to Anaheim, California, for the General Convention of the Episcopal Church. There are lots of ways to describe General Convention; I always say it is one third "politics" (with two great legislative bodies, like our federal government), one third "county fair," and one third "family reunion"! The legislative work will be intense. I am serving as Chair of the Prayer Book, Liturgy, and Music Committee; and we have-at last count-54 resolutions to consider and present to convention.

At its best, the General Convention is a "family meeting;" and I pray it is a strong and unifying family meeting this summer (it meets every three years). Sure, there are important family decisions to be made. Sure, we must take care of certain needs and pastoral concerns. But the event is also a time to celebrate being a family, The Episcopal Church branch of this great larger family known as the Anglican Communion. It will be an honor for me to be a deputy for the Diocese of Atlanta, and I hope you will pray for all of us. For updates, including daily reports, check out the website of the Episcopal News Service (www.episcopalchurch.org/news) or the web site of the General Convention itself (www.episcopalchurch.org/gc2009).

Sam Candler signature



The Very Rev. Sam Candler