
Thank You, And Thank God!

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

I was overwhelmed by the generosity and the presence of so many Cathedral parishioners and friends on the night of September 26, 2008. Thank you so much for arranging, and then attending, the Reception given in honor of my ten years as Dean of the Cathedral of St. Philip.

Of course, I knew that the Reception would be held, but I did not know any details. What a grand occasion it was! A great jazz band accompanied a wondrous presentation of gifts: from the Atlanta Track Club, from the Mayor of Atlanta, from the original Search Committee here. You gave me a statue of St. Francis, since it was on that feast day, ten years ago, that I first preached as Dean of the Cathedral here.

Then, two of the most important people in the last ten years of the Cathedral got up: Tommy Holder and Jimmy Fluker. They have been hard at work in the past few months, asking for special financial gifts, with which you could honor my ministry by paying off the remaining few hundred thousand dollars of capital campaign debt. They presented the Cathedral of St. Philip a check for six hundred, fifty thousand dollars. I was deeply impressed.

All I can say is Thank You. For over two hours that night, I simply stood still while a line of greeters and well-wishers formed. I felt like I was at a reception line at a wedding or a funeral! But I loved it. Parishioners, friends from other parishes, preachers and priests from other churches, all showed up. I was deeply touched. One of the greatest gifts any Christian can give their priest is evidence that he or she is appreciated. I felt appreciated that night, and I thank you!

I hope each of you knows that I also appreciate you. You have been loyal and energetic in the past ten years, and we have accomplished an amazing ministry together. I have appreciated your willingness to work hard, to learn hard, to play hard, and to serve well! I am in the process of measuring the numbers, and I will probably say something about numbers on our (transferred) Feast Day of St. Philip, this Sunday on October 12. But I know already that the numbers show amazing growth in the past ten years.

We have struggled together, too. We developed new liturgies. We held serious and comprehensive Dean's Forums. We continued mission trips, to Equator and now to Tanzania. We held on to one another as the Episcopal Church worried about sexuality issues. We moved out of our offices for a year while our entire campus was under construction and renovation. We went through staff changes. And we loved each other through the pastoral changes of life: baptisms, weddings, burials.

I thank each of you for a wonderful ten years. A friend of mine who lives out of town heard about the Reception, though somewhat vaguely. She asked me last week, "Did you retire or something lately?" No way. Ten years means, simply ten years. It is longer than I have ever stayed at a particular parish, and I am appreciating "more than ever" the value of a long tenure.

Finally, of course, I thank God. The Search Committee and the Chapter did the discerning ten years ago. But I believe that it was God who called me. Through thick and thin, I believe that I am supposed to have been Dean of the Cathedral of St.

Philip in these past years. I thank each and every one of you, and I thank God.

Sam Candler signature



The Very Rev. Sam Candler

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