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## *I Will*

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

It is wedding season, and I love it. The Episcopal Church traditionally does not perform weddings during Lent; but, as soon as the first Saturday after Easter arrives, we are underway. Sure, we are in a different age than we were thirty years ago—times have changed, the couples are different, and the ages of the couples are certainly older. But, the excitement is the same; the wedding season is delightful.

I recently devoted two Sundays of the Dean's Forum to a discussion of the Episcopal marriage service (see [stphilipscathedral.org/deansforum](http://stphilipscathedral.org/deansforum) for podcasts), and I am officiating many weddings this year. Perhaps you will be attending some weddings this summer yourself.

In light of the season, then, let me highlight what I think are some of the most important words of the marriage service. They are not the vows, though the vows are critical. They are not the opening two paragraphs, which set forth the intention of the service. They are not the prayers, which are beautiful and comprehensive.

No, the words I emphasize occur early in the service, in what is called "The Declaration of Consent." They are how we determine that the couple makes their vows of their own free will:

*N., will you have this man to be your husband; to live together in the covenant of marriage? Will you love him, comfort him, honor and keep him, in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all others, be faithful to him as long as you both shall live?*

*I will.*

*N., will you have this woman to be your wife; to live together in the covenant of marriage? Will you love her, comfort her, honor and keep her, in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all others, be faithful to her as long as you both shall live?*

*I will.*

Love, I tell each couple, is not an accident. "Falling" in love is wonderful and fun, but real and lasting love is a choice. It is a matter of "willing." Thus, when the couple says "I will," they are not just saying something about the future. They are expressing a willfulness to love, an intention to love. This is the most important thing they can will: to love another person.

Essentially, love is a matter of will. When you are at a wedding this season, take note of your role. You, too, as congregation and supportive community, will be asked to will something.

*Will all of you witnessing these promises do all in your power to uphold these two persons in their marriage?*

*People We will.*

Yes, you the community have a critical role in weddings. You are asked to will your support. Will it! And enjoy!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sam Candler". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

The Very Reverend Samuel G. Candler  
Dean of the Cathedral of St. Philip