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## *I Give Thanks for Those of You Who Give Thanks*

**An article from the *Cathedral Times*  
by the Very Rev. Sam Candler**

My immediate family members have resigned ourselves this year to a separated Thanksgiving. We will not be together. Of course, it's a challenge every year, determining which child will go to in-law families and who will be out of town. Boog and I have three married children and now six grandchildren. Further, I have parents whom I want to visit; and I have three married siblings. I like seeing all of them!

Yes, though there are inevitable disappointments every year in the Thanksgiving arrangements, the Thanksgiving arrangements for the year 2020 are, of course, tremendous. Every one of us, it seems, with or without families, is planning a separated Thanksgiving. The wonderful urge to gather people together, or to attend gatherings, is sadly absent during this coronavirus pandemic.

What do we do, then, whether with people or not, about that particular typical Thanksgiving gathering exercise? You know the one I mean. It occurs when we pause to ask our inner selves a Thanksgiving question. Or, the person at the head of the table, asks that particular question. Someone, everywhere, will ask: "What are you thankful for this year?"

My immediate family asked that question this past Sunday. Knowing we would miss being together during Thanksgiving week, a few of us in the Atlanta area gathered outside at a pasture, under a pavilion-type hay barn on a windy afternoon, ten days ahead of time, for a Thanksgiving turkey sandwich picnic. (We had agreed that the turkey sandwiches on the day after Thanksgiving are just as good, if not better, than the Thanksgiving feast itself!) Outside in the wind, with no one sitting too close to anyone, we felt fairly safe.

Still, who knows? During this 2020 year, the disappointments and losses, the anxieties and the worries, and calamitous diseases themselves, have come crashing into us week after week. We bear up against one wave, only to have another wave slam into us the next week. The waves, like demons, are legion: social isolation in a pandemic, unease with political elections, online schooling, too many online meetings, social unrest, economic uncertainty, financial worry, those regular annual sicknesses that are not Covid-19, and then the constant re-planning and re-arranging of most everything in our lives. Those of us still standing are tired, fatigued, exhausted.

Right: the list of things I am not thankful for is itself overwhelming! What could I possibly be thankful for during this year's Thanksgiving season?

I have one answer this year. I am thankful for those of you who do give thanks this year. I am thankful for those around me who give thanks. It really is something else. It is wonderful, overwhelmingly powerful, when I hear someone stand up at a table, or speak out at a meeting, testifying of something they are thankful for. And it is happening! Last Sunday at our family Thanksgiving picnic, in many a church meeting, in conversations with friends, I have heard you offer thanks. And what a wonderful collection of thanksgivings we heard in last Sunday's online service! From our screens, we heard waves of thanks from our Cathedral families and children, arranged by our cathedral staff observing United Thank Offering Sunday. Thank you!

It is your mere act of thanksgiving that touches me deeply. The simple act of thanksgiving is the generous event. Yes, the things for which we are thankful are themselves beautiful—family, friends, relationships, time, a job, peace, health, whatever—but the act of thanksgiving is even more beautiful.

It takes courage and grace to give thanks in times of disappointment and loss. I am so thankful for those of you

who find that courage and grace. I am thankful for those of you who give thanks. Your example, your thanksgiving, is providing strength, and health, and hope, and grace, for the world! That is love. Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sam Candler". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

The Very Reverend Sam Candler  
Dean of the Cathedral of St. Philip

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