
What I Am Thankful For!

**An article for *The Cathedral Times*
by the Very Rev. Sam Candler, *Dean of the Cathedral*
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I am thankful this year. I know it is Thanksgiving time, and some of us dread the usual question. We are asked, at almost every Thanksgiving gathering, sometimes tediously, to declare what we are thankful for. Sometimes the assignment is just too complicated, and sometimes painful, and sometimes sad.

I get the complications and sadnesses. I feel for them. However, I must also report that this year's question seems to be no problem for me. I find myself so refreshingly thankful! Bear with me, then, as I answer the question, in the hope that you might share some of the thanks.

First of all, there is my family. I am simply thankful. Thank you, Boog, my wife! For going with me, and hanging with me, in so many places! I am thankful to enjoy such a refreshing and real and beautiful partner. I am thankful for my children's families, too, who have moved to a new school or two, a new job or two, even a new house, but whose orbits still bring them around Atlanta and around Boog and me. And we get to visit them! I am thankful for my parents, and my wider family, most of whom live in Coweta County, not far away.

I am thankful for church. Wow, am I thankful for church! This Cathedral parish has found another gear in our drive, another leg in our journey towards serving the world in the name of Jesus our Savior. This church is you, you who are reading these words, whether you attend the cathedral regularly or not. Your commitment here, your energy here, is what gives us life, day after day and week after week.


I am thankful for friends, many who are here in town, and many who are now spread around the world. I am glad to have made friends in my life, many who have stayed in touch with me even when I have not been so diligent. Some of my friends I have recently seen for the first time in years, but I have resumed conversations with them as if we had last met only yesterday. And I am thankful to still be making new friends! And young friends!

And (oh my, you knew I would get to this!): I am thankful for the creativity and construction of this parish! We are building a new chapel! The Good Faith Chapel is the result of generosity and faith, and creativity and vision. All those elements represent the vibrancy of this parish: generosity, faith, creativity, vision. Thank you for those values!

But the chapel has not been the only creative construction of this parish. With the vision and faith of good parishioners, our Cathedral Towers has also undergone a transformation. The low-income housing facility on our campus is now named Parish Grove, run by National Church Residences; but our Cathedral Parish pastoral presence there might be even stronger than it was before. Further, with the income from our long-term lease of that building, our parish will have around two million dollars a year for ministry in low-income housing for seniors. That ministry is the strong continuation of The Cathedral Towers Fund; what a transformation!

Finally, I give thanks for sharing. Thank you for letting me share my thanksgivings with you. My sermon two weeks ago spoke of offering from our poverty and our weakness. When I share personal things, I find myself somehow stronger; and I believe the same thing can happen with you. Find something to give thanks for. Even if you think you have nothing immediately wonderful to give thanks for this year, find something small to give thanks for. Find something that you might be weak in, and offer thanks for that.

The name of the liturgical rite that we pray every week is "Eucharist." We use the word all the time. We may not know, however, that it is really the Greek New Testament word for "Thanksgiving." That's right. We gather every Sunday for Thanksgiving (and sometimes we gather every day for Thanksgiving). When we add all our gifts together, from the smallest to the largest, wow, what a Great Thanksgiving that is. Let's join each other for Holy Eucharist, offering whatever we have, small or great, to the glory of God. Let's join each other for Holy Thanksgiving.

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 Samuel G. Candler
Dean of the Cathedral of St. Philip