
The Cathedral Farmers Market as the Ultimate Coffee Hour!

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

The last several Saturday mornings have been utterly delightful for me.

Ah! There is nothing better than enjoying a cup of great coffee without needing to be somewhere in a hurry. That coffee seems better when I don't even need to have showered yet. It's even better when there are good friends with me, in the same condition of unshowered unhurriedness!

Then, that cup of coffee reaches a zenith when luscious fruits and vegetables, meats and produce, honeys and pestos, fresh crepes, flowers and crafts, and all manner of local artisans surround me. When I purchase one of those items, I am satisfying my senses; and I am supporting our local Atlanta economy.

Of course, I am talking about the Cathedral Farmers Market, one of the greatest^{est} and one of our newest^{est} parochial entities of the Cathedral of St. Philip. It does business as the Peachtree Road Farmers Market at the Cathedral of St. Philip, and surely you have seen it, or visited it by now.

I, and you, have enjoyed the Farmers Market for several years now. We started it in the hope that the market would fulfill an old vision of what Christian cathedrals were meant to be. We were meant to be centers of spiritual life, community life, and economic life. So it is that medieval cathedrals were at the centers of towns, and they were the places every citizen visited, sometimes once a day.

Our Cathedral Farmers Market fulfills that vision. We are supporting our local economy, while also teaching the world what a Christian cathedral is^{not} not an obstacle to deep spirituality, but a witness to the common good. People of Christian faith, at our best, are witnesses for the common good.

But it was only this year that I realized fully another function the Farmers Market is fulfilling for our community and for the city. We are becoming a wonderful and traditional coffee hour!

Now, coffee hours are hard to come by these days. They certainly are for me on Sundays. While I grew up in a parish that had a lovely and relaxed coffee hour every Sunday after church, or before church, I now find it impossible to enjoy a relaxed cup of coffee on most Sundays. I am on my way to the next service, or on my way to class, or answering some hurried question, or figuring out how to adjust the air conditioning or heat. So, Sundays are not days of coffee hours for me.

But Saturdays! Saturdays have become coffee hours for me! Perhaps I have just finished my morning run (which makes it look like I am in shape, even if I have a long way to go!), perhaps I have already showered and returned to church for a meeting, or even for a wedding. I stroll through the Farmers Market and it is absolutely lovely.

Last week, for instance, I learned that one parishioner was about to float down the Chattahoochee River. Another was recovering beautifully from cancer. I talked to another one about my son's wedding and their child's upcoming wedding. I

spoke with one of my Jewish friends who brings his family to the market every Saturday. I saw my uncle there, who lives out of town, and whom I had not seen in almost a year (in town for another wedding!). I met friends and strangers alike.

A cathedral is where people gather for sustenance of all kinds. I am thrilled and gratified that the Cathedral of St. Philip provides that sustenance, in spirit, in community, and in economy. Join us for worship or class or program. But join us, especially for the Cathedral Farmers Market. We are supporting our local economy and our local community. And we are enjoying the greatest coffee hour of the week!

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