
Bells and Thanks During All Saints Week

**An article for the *Cathedral Times*
by Dean Sam Candler**

Thank you! Thank you, thank you, thank you, to so many people during this week of All Saints observances at the Cathedral of St. Philip!

As you know, our observance of the Feast of All Saints is not a single event; sometimes, it takes almost a week. We start on All Saints Day itself, November 1, with a full day of preparing for, and welcoming, people in Atlanta who are homeless. Thank you to all who prepared food, organized busses, served tables, bussed tables, made desserts, and welcomed, welcomed, welcomed so many saints into this holy place. We modeled our Cathedral values: Grace, Excellence, and Hospitality!

A few hours later, we celebrated a special Requiem Eucharist in the Cathedral itself, praying by name for those who died while homeless in Atlanta. During the blessing of bread and wine, we processed wooden crosses with the names of those who had died. As we prayed each name, our Cathedral bells tolled. Thank you to each person who came to that service, who served at that service, and who prayed at that service. And thank you to so many service agencies who served and ministered throughout the day—washing feet, distributing clothes, making appointments. Wednesday, November 1, was a grand day of sainthood. To a lot of us, it looked like the kingdom of heaven.

Prayer for the saints continued through the week. I was touched by people remembering loved ones who had died, and loved ones who are still alive! On the Sunday morning after All Saints Day, All Saints Sunday, we baptized new saints. How lively were the young children being baptized. And how excited was the adult our community baptized at the later service. Thank you for a glorious morning! The bells were happy!

After church on Sunday, I was honored to officiate in the Memorial Garden for the interment of the ashes of a man who has died too young. He had moved away when he died unexpectedly, but I remember his meeting his wife at one of our early Young Adult groups here at the Cathedral, the 20s30s Group, back in the old days. He was—and is!—a saint, and I was so glad his wife wanted to be back in Atlanta for the interment of his ashes. Again, there were tears and bells.

Finally, at 4:00 p.m. on All Saints Sunday, our splendid choir helped us sing a Choral Eucharist while we prayed, by name, for each of the 172 friends and family and members of our Cathedral community who died in the past year. Again, we rang a bell with each name. Like you, I knew many of those people personally, and the mere mention of their names brings back images of love and life. Even deceased, they remain holy members of our community.

Our neighbors heard Cathedral bells all week! Our policy is to ring our Cathedral bells only on holy occasions—not simply on the hour or quarter hour—but only after Sunday services, after weddings, and at funerals, or specially acknowledged holy times. Those bells were incessant this past week. We rang the bells after the praying of each name who had died, on Wednesday and on Sunday.

Thank you, saints! You are not just those who died in the past year. You are still here, present among us, serving and loving. I have “met you in school, or in lanes, or at sea – in church, or in trains, or in shops, or at tea.” I have met you in hallways and parking lots, in pews and in kitchens, in homeless shelters and in prisons, in memorial gardens and in parish

halls. Our Cathedral bells are still ringing for you, whether you have died or whether you are alive. Indeed, in the Kingdom of God, in the Communion of Saints, we are all alive in Christ. 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 Samuel G. Candler
Dean of the Cathedral of St. Philip

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