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## *Easter 2018*

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### **2018 Easter Letter** **by Dean Sam Candler**

This grand and cozy Cathedral of St. Philip sure sees a lot of people every Sunday. I like to think that we celebrate Easter every Sunday, throughout the year.

But I realize that Easter does not happen every Sunday, for everyone. This morning, I noticed some happy and rejoicing people, for sure. But here comes a man, too, whose wife has just died. Over there is a woman still mourning the loss of her husband last year. That child running down the hall has a brother with serious cancer. Here is my friend who is still looking for a job. Inside many of our polite smiles lie frustrations and dilemmas.

I see happy people at church, for sure, but I also see lots of pain. That pain is not their fault. And it is not God's fault. Suffering is a part of all our lives.

Even when people are hurting, however—maybe especially when people are hurting—I am touched when they come to church. Yes, when I see you come to church, even when you are hurting, you actually give me strength. You touch me. Thank you for your courage and strength.

This beautiful Cathedral of St. Philip is a community of all sorts of people. On any given day, and on any given Sunday, we are carrying most every emotion available to humanity. And we bring it all to church.

Thank you for bringing it all to church.

For what you bring to church is what God uses to create something enormously powerful. God accepts us, right where we are, and creates new life in us. In other words, there would be no Easter if we did not bring the suffering of Good Friday with us.

This next week, our church will walk through the triumphalism of Palm Sunday, its story of passion and betrayal, and then the intimacy of Maundy Thursday (with foot washing and a holy meal). We will walk through the empty agony of Good Friday and the cross. And then will we then wake up on Easter morning with the claim of new life and joy.

I know that every Sunday is not Easter. But it sure can be, in little ways. It sure can be if we are willing to bring our own illness and suffering to church. Please join us this Holy Week and Easter. We are practicing and rehearsing new life. We are practicing bringing our suffering to God, so that God can create new life. We are practicing Easter!

(Again this year, I hope that you can make an Easter [financial gift](#), too. Your gift might come from pain, and it might come from joy. Whatever it is, it is your gift, and the Cathedral appreciates it. With God, your gift will become Easter here. Thank you!)

Grace and Peace to you,

Sam Candler

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