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## *Cathedral Fruit*

**An article from the *Cathedral Times*  
by the Very Reverend Samuel G. Candler,  
Dean of the Cathedral of St. Philip**

I rejoice in the splendid fruit of cathedral life at St. Philip's around the weekend of May 13, 2007. What a thriving Saturday and Sunday! The Sixth Sunday of Easter, in ages past, was known readily as Rogation Sunday. "Rogation" means "asking," and churches in that agricultural time used that day, and the three following days (those right before Ascension Day) as special times to pray for the spring planting. Churches prayed that the earth would be fruitful. (Hence, on Sunday morning, we also sang hymns like "All Things Bright and Beautiful.")

The Cathedral of St. Philip also used last Saturday to present our first "Cathedral Market," inviting local farmers and growers of natural produce (and meats) to gather in the parking lot and to sell directly to the community. With the great help of local restaurants, and Cathedral staff and volunteers, we were packed by 9:00 am. Within two hours, most growers, and several local craftspersons, had sold out their merchandise.

Even more important than the selling (though that was critical for our farmers and artisans!) was the community gathering at the Cathedral. Even today, cathedrals are called to continue a ministry begun in the Middle Ages, when we were natural gathering places of hospitality and grace and service for the entire village and community. Cathedrals are still meant to bear fruit for the entire community! We learn things in community. We celebrate in community. For instance, I was able to verify on Saturday that the Cathedral campus really does grow the only peach trees on Peachtree Road in Atlanta. They are flowering peach trees, and they are lovely!

What made the community happen on Saturday was Spirit-Holy Spirit-and the spirit surrounding not just the Cathedral Market, but surrounding all sorts of other events on our campus. The choristers were washing cars (raising money for their summer trip). Our spectacular Flower Guild was conducting a flower design seminar in Child Hall (what artwork!). The Episcopal Charities Foundation, of the Diocese of Atlanta, was meeting to determine where they might deliver outreach grants this year. Our diocesan deacons were meeting in the nave to learn the complexities of serving liturgically at the Cathedral itself. And our Cathedral Bookstore was conducting its usual brisk business (aided on Saturday by some Christian visitors who are not members of our parish!).

On Sunday, our community gathered again, not just for regular Sunday worship, but with special prayers for mothers and with special recognition of our youth. I loved seeing smiling mothers, and children and grandchildren! Canon Williams spoke thoughtfully about the grace of her own mother and mother-in-law. I loved hearing our youth preacher, Coston Dickinson, speak about the peace of Jesus Christ. And I loved hearing our youth lectors and intercessors speak and pray so clearly! We applauded acolytes and youth choristers and high school graduates and youth sponsors. Well done! Later on Sunday afternoon, our music department sponsored its usual fruitful recital and evensong.

I did not announce on Sunday other great signs of the fruit of the Spirit at the Cathedral of St. Philip. Our 2007 stewardship campaign has raised \$250,000 more in annual pledges than we have ever raised. As of Sunday, we have over 270 folks signed up for our regular parish retreat at Kanuga Camp and Conference Center. What powerful outpourings of commitment and fellowship!

At the Dean's Forum on Sunday, I concluded a three-week session on "Anglican History and Anglican Communion." One of the questions was, "What are the present tensions in our wider Anglican Church?" I realize that some places are tense. In fact, there will always be tensions in our community life. Even over this past weekend in our cathedral, we made some mistakes and mis-steps. Even in our most faithful marriages, we have mistakes and tensions.

But I am gladdened to report in this Rogation season that God has graced the Cathedral of St. Philip with sweet and lavish fruit. St. Paul told the Galatians "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control" (Galatians 5.22-23). This fruit goes beyond even numbers, though the numbers are strong. This fruit feeds the soul. And it is the soul of this grand Cathedral that I deeply love. Together, with God's grace, we are bearing the fruit of the Spirit.

Sam Candler signature



The Very Rev. Sam Candler