
Retreats And Advances

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

I once spent a weekend on a religious retreat that called itself an "advance." You get the meaning. A good retreat is not really a move backwards at all. A good retreat is a step forward. It is a deliberate time away from our routines so that those very routines can be energized and inspired for the future.

Such was the case this past weekend for the new Cathedral Chapter, our "selected and elected" Laypersons and Dean who together give leadership to this spiritual corporation which is the Cathedral of St. Philip. We learned even more what a vast and complex and beautiful and vibrant community this cathedral parish is.

During Part I of our retreat, we listened to the wisdom of Harry Pritchett. During Part II, we discussed every ministry area and every parochial entity of the place. We learned a lot! We also took the time for a graceful, open, and frank discussion on special issues. All in all, we became another "small group" in this cathedral community of small groups, and I loved it. We prayed together and ate together and enjoyed one another.

I hope that everyone here is part of a small group, a special constituency in this complexity of ministries! I also thank all of you for your prayers for this chapter and for this parish in the coming year. In many other ways, the Cathedral of St. Philip takes times for retreats that are meant to advance us. Our major one, meant for anyone in the parish, is the weekend of Memorial Day. We often plan retreats for our youth, or for women of the parish, or for married adults, or for mission trips. If you'd like to organize or attend some such special retreat, speak to a priest or to one of our ministry leaders. This is the time to plan.

On another note, I announced to the chapter some sad news and some good news. Lara Lowman, our joint Director of Stewardship and Director of Communications for the past three years, is being led to step away from the stewardship position. She has served admirably and faithfully during one of the most critical times of our history! Thank you, Lara, for such expertise and for such devotion. That is the sad news. However! Lara is staying on with us as Director of Communications! That is the good news. Perhaps her retreat from the stewardship position will be an opportunity for another kind of advance (if God is giving you the name of an excellent replacement, let me know, too!).

We also learned over the weekend that this Cathedral's marvelous generosity has come through again during the past year. During the month of December, we needed over \$500,000 in contributions to finish the year financially even. And we did it. That is to say, "You did it!" You were faithful to your pledges, some of you made extraordinary gifts, and we all returned thanks for what God has given us. Thank you, thank you, thank you!

Two more staff advances: Next week, we will be able to announce the call of a new Director of Children's Ministries! Thank you for your prayers and recommendations and advice! We think we have the right person to take us to the next level of children's ministry and education. Also, I have asked the Reverend George Maxwell to accept the title and responsibility of a new position here; that of Canon Vicar. He will continue to nurture the congregational life of the cathedral parish, but he will also take responsibility for overall administration and daily operations of the Cathedral. As "vicar" (which means "in place of"), he will function when necessary in place of the Dean in daily operational and program situations. Thank you,

George!

As I said last week, I like the New Year's observance. Many folks take a few days to "retreat," to rest, and to plan, even in our households. But we all advance, too. We turn the page. This new year at the Cathedral will be tremendous, and I am looking forward to it! (And get your Cathedral pledge in!!!!!!!!!!!!!!).

Sam Candler signature



The Very Rev. Sam Candler