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## *The Cathedral of St. Philip Never Cancels Sunday Services*

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

Where were you during the ice storm last weekend? For many of us, the ice and freezing rain and fallen limbs and power losses were exhausting, but also exciting. It all starts with this principle: The Cathedral of St. Philip never cancels Sunday services.

On Saturday, our custodial staff, living some distance away, could not get to the Cathedral to shovel sidewalks or re-set thermostats. Trucks were already arriving with material to set up for the Cathedral Antiques Show. We had a diocesan guest staying in the apartment of the Lanier House.

So, some of us walked to the Cathedral, or drove carefully, to help out. John Mark Wiggers unlocked the back door so that the Antiques Show movers could get in. Liz and Jack Wiggers, and Boog Candler, shoveled snow and ice. Tom Ford and Bill Johnson went out to purchase de-icing salt. Pam Ford organized our moving tables and chairs so that the early Antiques Show folks could set up. Judy Johnson was attending to administration and getting our telephone answering machine set up. The new message was simple: "The Cathedral will hold all Sunday services as usual, but use safe judgment in getting here." Bruno drove in on his day off so that the Cathedral would be clean. Willie, traveling my MARTA, was delayed; but he would get here.

Then, by mid-afternoon, the electricity at the Cathedral was off. We had a wedding scheduled for 6:00 pm. Wedding volunteers did arrive. They set out candles along the floor of the Cathedral and along the top of the altar. Even without electricity, the Cathedral was absolutely gorgeous. Bruce Neswick drove across town to pick up Todd Smelser, the officiating priest. At the wedding's blessing (voila!), the electricity came back on.

On Sunday morning, chief verger Richard Perry was here by 7:00 am, setting up for the day. Nancy Rizor arrived for altar guild duty. We persuaded her to call her husband, Randy Rizor, who brought over his chain saw and removed the huge tree limb that had fallen over the Andrews Drive entrance.

We had church on Sunday-and on Saturday-because of the commitment of these folks. That's the way we have church every day in this place. 7 people came to our 7:45 service. Almost 100 were at the 8:45 service. 212 attended the 11:15 service. Our child care workers reported at 8:00 am. Our kitchen staff had coffee and donuts ready. Various Christian education classes combined forces and shared the gospel with one another. Some folks came to church because their own homes were without power!

This Cathedral functions because of such folks' commitment. Many, many people-of all different attitudes and means-give their heart and soul to the work of Jesus Christ in this place. I wish I could thank each one of you, face to face. That is how the Cathedral of St. Philip has become so beautiful. That is why neighbors came to this Cathedral on Sunday, when their own churches had cancelled services!

As Dean of the Cathedral, I know I cannot make everyone happy. I really do regret that. However, I also know that it is my job to provide a place where people can give their heart and soul to God. This Cathedral needs soul. The Cathedral of St. Philip needs your soul! Your soul is the ingredient for true Christian community here.

Yes, in spite of all this, some folks call themselves members of the Cathedral, and yet they do not pledge a single dollar to the annual operation of this place. Is that a mis-understanding? Is it an oversight? Is it laziness? Is it a sin? Or is it a shame?

Sam Candler signature



The Very Rev. Sam Candler