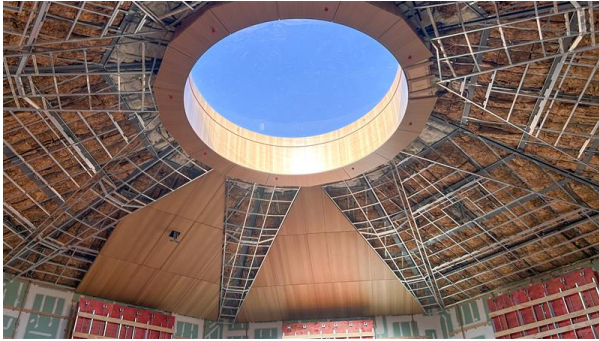

Levavi Oculos



by the Very Rev. Sam Candler
Dean of the Cathedral

an article for the *Cathedral Times*

“Levavi Oculos.” The phrase is Latin, and it means “I lift up eyes.” More broadly, we say, “I lift up my eyes to the hills, from which comes my help,” in Psalm 121. If you have a Book of Common Prayer, you can read that very Latin inscription, “Levavi oculos,” at the beginning of Psalm 121.

One year ago. We prayed that psalm one year ago, only one year ago, when we gathered in the old Andrews Drive playground to break ground for the Good Faith Chapel.

And what a glorious, truly glorious, construction has occurred since then. I am simply awe-struck, overwhelmed, overflowing with thanks, humbled with glory, inspired, by what is occurring in the Good Faith Chapel. Many of us got a quick glimpse inside on Homecoming Sunday, in August; but I realize that not everyone has had a chance to see inside. It is still under steady construction and not open yet.

But, wow. I do get a chance to peer inside as the construction continues. Wow. Just as we prayed, the Good Faith Chapel is becoming a place where we will lift up our eyes. The Good Faith Chapel will inspire us to experience the holy in a new breadth. Inspiring worship happens in at least two dimensions: the up-close and the far-above. The classical theological terms for these two dimensions are the immanent and the transcendent. When we see God up close, we know the immanence of God. When we see God far above, or far beyond, we experience the transcendence of God.

The Good Faith Chapel, with eight interior sides, will shape our gathering so that we are looking at each other, in a circle. The altar (always movable) can be in the center of the room with all of us looking at it and each other. In that way, we see each other in our prayer, and we see the holy in each other. The Good Faith Chapel will thus inspire our knowledge of God immanently.

But the Good Faith Chapel will also inspire our knowledge of God transcendentally. At the top of the chapel is a clear, round, window, 20 feet across, an eyepiece to the heavens. We call that window an “oculos.” That view is already tremendous. That view opens us to the transcendence of God.

Yes, the Good Faith Chapel is an oculos, just as that mentioned in Psalm 121. It will be where we lift up our eyes to see God — to see God in each other and to see God in the heavens.

We are not finished yet! And we have not finished raising all the funds yet! We still need contributions, generous contributions, for this glorious project. I am still attending neighborhood gatherings, and writing thank-you letters, weekly, to generous parishioners and friends. And we are receiving tremendous contributions even

from friends who are not parishioners!

I am amazed that we are in the midst of a holy stewardship. We have become a part of something that is really huge. I thank God, and each of you, for being part of this stewardship.

"To you, O God, I lift up my eyes," says Psalm 123. And the Latin for that verse is "Ad te levavi oculos meos." There is oculos again. I thank each and every one of you generous parishioners and friends, you who are reading this article, for helping me lift my eyes to God. I see God in you, and I see God in the heavens!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sam Candler". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

The Very Reverend Samuel G. Candler
Dean of the Cathedral of St. Philip