The CATHEDRAL of ST. PHILIP
SERVING ATLANTA AND THE WORLD

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Happy Birthday to You!

An article for *The Cathedral Times*
by the Very Rev. Sam Candler, *Dean of the Cathedral*

“I am glad you were born!”

That phrase has become one of my frequent comments to people having a birthday. I celebrate their birthday by being glad they were born! Their being born has changed my life. I have been loved by them, and I have loved them. That love, in both directions, changes the world. That love changes the world for the better. I am glad you were born!

I write this article on September 8, which is the observed day of another birthday, the nativity of the blessed Virgin Mary. This is an ancient observance, like many church feasts are; but the observance has no biblical reference. Instead, a late second century document, the *Protoevangelium of James* gives an account of Mary’s birth. Her parents were said to be Anne and Joachim.

Legend and lore take over after that. Mary might have been born in Sepphoris, Israel, near Nazareth. Other sources say Mary was born in a house near the Sheep Gate in Jerusalem. That place in Jerusalem, where Mary’s parents were said to have lived, is on a spot known as the shepherd’s pool. And it is on that spot where a beautiful church, The Church of St. Anne, now stands.

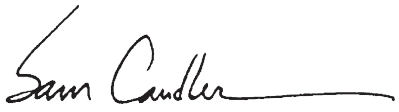
I have visited St. Anne’s Church, in Jerusalem. The acoustics of that church lend themselves beautifully to singing! I have led many a pilgrimage group in song, in that church. What glory!

We remember birthdays in order to be glad that someone was born. Whether or not we know the accurate details, we are glad—so glad—that Mary was born! She is the one who has carried and delivered the Savior of the World. She is the Theotokos, the God-bearer. We give thanks for the birth of Mary on September 8.

In fact, I give thanks for September 8, because it is the better-documented birthday of another person for whom I am thankful: my wife, Boog! Yes, I am glad she was born, too! I give thanks for the life and lives that she, too, has delivered to the world! Every one of us can be a God-bearer.

In fact, Boog—my wife—has been with me in St. Anne’s Church, in Jerusalem. We have joyfully sung in that very church. We have been glad for the life of Anne, the life of Mary, and the lives of each other in that church.

Whatever day it is today, whenever you are reading this, be glad today that someone was born! Sing with them! Be glad they were born, whether it is their birthday or not. Happy birthday to you! I am glad you were born!



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

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