The CATHEDRAL of ST. PHILIP
SERVING ATLANTA AND THE WORLD

11/8/2026

An End to a Season (Turn, Turn, Turn!)

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

Blessed be the Atlanta Dream! They came within one game of winning the Women's National Basketball Association championship. But they gave Atlanta fans a great season. Blessed be my dear Atlanta Braves! They made it (at least) through one round of the playoffs. As always, they gave Atlanta fans a great season. (The Braves once won their division fourteen years in a row and yet managed only one World Series win in that span. I didn't mind those years, because I am in it for the great baseball, not for the one great win. Sure, I love to cheer when my team wins it all! But most teams do not win it all. In Major League Baseball, there are thirty teams; and each one of them could win on any given day. Some seasons are hot streaks, and some seasons are cold streaks. Such is my life, too.)

Blessed be great seasons. And blessed be the end of seasons. Every season, no matter how successful, or unsuccessful it has been, comes to an end. We all have seasons of disappointment, and even loss. But they do not take away the fuller measure of who we are and what we have been doing.

The seasons of good sports teach us how to deal with the seasons of our own lives. Our lives do not consist just of one spectacular event, whether it was a winning or a losing event. Our lives consist of the daily engagements and decisions we make, the choices we make of how to spend our time and energy. Our lives consist of the relationships we have made and the communities we are part of. It is over time, over the many seasons of our lives, that we show our character and values.

In Atlanta, it's beautifully amazing how All Saints Day marks the turning of a season. In our climate, at least, the weather turns brisk and the leaves turn crisp right at the beginning of November — All Saints Day in the Christian year. This year, of course, we turned our clocks back, too, and left Daylight Savings Time in the past. We turned into a new time!

The Cathedral of St. Philip, like all historic Christian churches, knows how to mark changing times. We keep seasons. We know how to turn times. On All Saints Sunday morning, we baptized new Christians into a glorious communion of saints. That afternoon, we remembered by name those who had died in our wide community in the past year. On the following day, we welcomed the homeless into our cathedral for dinner and for a requiem Eucharist remembering those who died in the past year homeless in Atlanta.

At the same time that we were marking death and new life, our foliage was turning too. Leaves in our driveways needed sweeping every other day. Our temperatures were cooler. When we drove back home, the evening was dark.

When Pete Seeger wrote his song, "To Everything There is a Season, —Turn, Turn, Turn" and when the Byrds' recording of that song reached number one in the pop charts in 1965, it was proclaimed the number one pop song with the oldest lyrics ever! Of course, its lyrics come from the Book of Ecclesiastes:

"To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:
A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, a time to reap that which is planted;
A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;
A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance."

When the Autumn brings dark evenings and colder temperatures to our lives, when the world around us begins to look dark and gray, then the Cathedral of St. Philip actually remembers fresh life. We know that, out of death and departure, come life and new arrivals. The Cathedral of St. Philip, through births, lives, weddings, illnesses,

and deaths, knows how to celebrate seasons and knows how to turn seasons. Church is where we bring our births, and it is where we bring our deaths. Church is where we keep our seasons.

To everything there is a season: turn, turn, turn. As our year turns into Fall, and as we observe the communion of saints, we turn to a new season. Christ is making all things new, even in the midst of what looks like death. The season around All Saints Day is not dark and scary; it is one of the most beautiful seasons of the year. We remember dear saints. We note the turning of the leaves. We begin to prepare for Thanksgiving, and Advent, and December, and Christmas itself in our personal lives; these are new opportunities. To everything there is a season. We turn into our next season with hope, and with joy!



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

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