
2015 Christmas Letter

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Here in Atlanta, we are accustomed to Christmas arriving in the cold of winter time – even when you define “cold” by our southern standards! Many of the images we sing about at Christmas have cold winter associated with them: “In the bleak mid-winter...snow on snow,” and “The first Noel...on a cold winter’s night that was so deep” (and we mustn’t forget “dashing through the snow!”).

This year, however, the cold has not caught up to us yet. We are preparing for Christmas and the temperature has occasionally gone over 70 degrees! What’s up with that?

I will leave conversation about global warming for another time. Instead, I want to note only this: if Christmas is really about God becoming flesh, God becoming real, then God’s incarnation is not restricted to just one time a year. We can have Christmas even when the weather is warm!

It is wonderful that we celebrate Christmas in December, and it’s good to focus our thinking about love during this time of year. But what if we had occasion to remember Christmas at other times of the year? What if, for instance, we sang Christmas carols in the heat of summer? Of course, our Christian friends in the Southern Hemisphere do just that, and they report a wondrous sense of new celebration! The Christian Church exists to proclaim God’s love throughout the year, not just during the warm and cozy nights of American winters.

So, I urge you to remember the Church, and I urge you to remember the Cathedral of St. Philip, throughout the year. But, of course, that also means right now! Your special gift to the Cathedral during December allows us to proclaim God’s love even in the summertime!

In the final analysis, it is uncertain exactly when Jesus of Nazareth was literally born; many say it must have been in the spring. But it doesn’t matter. Jesus is born in December, and in March, and in June, and in September, every year – somewhere or another. I pray that Jesus will be born again in you this December, even if it is quite warm. And I pray that Jesus will be born in us over and over again in the coming year.

Meanwhile, please help us, the Cathedral of St. Philip, proclaim the love of God throughout the year. Our fiscal year ends December 31, and we always need people’s generosity at the end of the year in order to meet our balanced budget. And we usually do! But we need your gifts. We need your love!

Indeed, we need you to proclaim Christmas! You are a Christmas person, no matter what the weather or the season is.

Thank you!

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

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