



# ST. PHILIP'S CHURCH

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142 Church Street ♦ Charleston, SC 29401

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June 2, 2017

My Dear St. Philip's Family,

"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want; He maketh me to lie down in green pastures...." For 22 years St. Philip's has been my green pastures. I have wanted for nothing. My cup runneth over.

Blessed is the day that God in his mercy saw fit to draw Nancy and me into your loving embrace. That love was never more manifest than in the farewell festivities of last weekend. Nancy and I are still reeling from the astonishing display of talent on Friday night; from the countless kind and loving remarks made both publically and privately; from the heartwarming gathering of so many of you on one of the busiest holiday weekends on the calendar.

Thanking people is a dangerous thing, especially in this case where so many people are due it. Over the next weeks I will be fully occupied writing notes to various people, but there are a few whom I must thank here.

I must begin by thanking my dear wife Nancy, who has loved and supported me every step of the way. She has sung in my choir for 42 of the 45 years of our marriage (itself deserving of a medal). When I get too full of myself she knows right where to stick the pin. She has brought laughter and balance to my life and work. Her intuitive wisdom has more than once saved me from error. So any accolades which have come my way are by rights hers to share equally.

In the last year and a half, Jeff Miller has been the ideal Rector and spiritual guide to me, as he has to all of you. And before him for many years Haden McCormick never wavered in his support for me personally and for my ministry. Similarly, the Vestry has again and again thrown their full support and backing to the many-faceted music programs of our church. That is especially true of the children's choir program, with their many trips abroad to proclaim the Gospel of Christ in foreign lands.

I have many times said that my choirs are my instrument. Without them I would have no voice. So it is to them that a huge debt of gratitude is owed. The Adult Choir which sang last Sunday morning had to have been one of the greatest ensembles to ever fill our chancel on a Sunday morning. The commissioned anthem which ended the service so gloriously is one of the greatest honors I've ever received. And, of course, one of the great joys of my life has been developing the children's choir program from their modest beginnings as a 15-voice "Junior Choir" made up of 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> graders, to the magnificent graded choir program in place today. I am grateful to Jolene Hethcox for taking over my work with the children and continuing to build the program so beautifully.

I cannot fail to thank Bill Warlick whose vision and tireless work brought to fruition Friday night's extravaganza. And I must thank the musicians who participated, from the praise team with whom I worked for many years, to the fabulous singers from years past who returned, some from as far away as California, New York, and even Italy, to honor me with their singing. The quality of the performers was at the highest level—of a sort that would cost big bucks to hear in New York.

Finally, I want to thank YOU—the parishioners of St. Philip's Church—who have provided a spiritual home for my family and me. You have nurtured, loved, and sustained me without ceasing. You have been both my anchor and my wings.

I bid you farewell, not in sadness, but with joy and thanksgiving for what came before and with confidence in what lies ahead. God bless you all.

Your brother in Christ,

Capers Cross



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Dear St. Philip's Family,

I'm not sure what words could properly express how amazed and blessed my family and I felt by being on the receiving end of your expression of love at the retirement celebration supper for Capers and me on May 26. The beautiful musical offerings and the personal messages given by each speaker were a rich blessing. And I can think of no better memento than an architectural rendering of St. Philip's from our historical archives, drawn by a professor of mine when I was studying at Clemson. You have a wonderful capacity to express love and I pray God will increase your opportunities to do so.

I am enjoying retirement and having the opportunity to do some things which had to be "put on the back burner" until now. Glo and I will continue to worship with you and it is my hope to continue to serve you in a volunteer capacity through the monthly men's lunches, ongoing small group involvement and offering worship assistance on Sundays.

Isn't it exciting how our new leadership under Jeff is so invigorating? I ask you to pray faithfully for him, the clergy staff, and the Vestry, that they will be filled with the Holy Spirit and discern and fulfill God's vision to bless all of us and make us a blessing to others in Jesus' name.

Gratefully,

Hank Avent