The Rt. Rev. Kee Sloan
Elected 11th Bishop of Alabama
The Rt. Rev. John McKee Sloan Elected 11th Bishop of Alabama

"Thanks be to God who has brought us to this place together. I thank you for trusting in him," the Rt. Rev. John McKee Sloan told our diocesan convention delegates who had just elected him to serve as the 11th Bishop of Alabama. "I am honored and humbled to be elected twice by people who know me and my faults, along with the gifts I’ve been given. I am grateful to them and to the Spirit of God," he added, as the bells in the tower of the Cathedral Church of the Advent rang out over downtown Birmingham.

Bishop Sloan, who is currently Bishop Suffragan of our diocese, was elected from a field of four nominees on the first ballot cast on July 16. He received 145 of 270 votes cast in the lay order and 68 of 118 in the clergy order; an election required 136 votes in the lay order and 60 in the clergy order. The other nominees were the Rev. Kenneth L. Chumbley, rector of Christ Church in Springfield, Missouri; the Rev. Clare Fischer-Davies, rector of St. Martin’s in Providence, Rhode Island; and the Rev. William Charles "Chuck" Treadwell III, rector of St. Paul’s in Waco, Texas.

Under the canons of the Episcopal Church, a majority of bishops exercising jurisdiction and diocesan standing committees must consent to the bishop-elect’s assuming office as diocesan bishop within 120 days of receiving notice of the election. Pending a successful consent process, Bishop Sloan will succeed Bishop Parsley, who will retire in January. Bishop Sloan’s investiture is planned for January 7, 2012, at the Cathedral Church of the Advent.

Before he became our Bishop Suffragan in 2008, Bishop Sloan served as rector of St. Thomas’ in Huntsville for 14 years and at a number of churches in the Diocese of Mississippi. He founded the Special Session program at Camp McDowell for summer campers with mental and physical disabilities and has participated in almost 20 mission trips to Honduras in addition to his mission trip to Haiti earlier this year. In the national Church, he serves as a member of the Standing Commission for Liturgy and Music.

Bishop Sloan, who is a native of Vicksburg, Mississippi, is married to Tina Brown Sloan. They have two children, McKee and Mary Nell.

The Alabama Episcopalian

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Bishop Parsley officiated at the service of Holy Eucharist before the election.

Bishop Sloan addressing the convention delegates and guests at the Cathedral Church of the Advent after his election as the 11th Bishop of Alabama on July 16; photo by Gail Perna

"An Eye for an EYE" on page 9.

Please see our story at right.
One of my favorite prayers begins, “O God, thou hast set a restlessness in our hearts, making us seekers after what we can never fully find.” The words suggest our deep human longing, the restlessness of the heart that desires to find what is most true and real. This is a holy restlessness. It is the inner longing to find our true home, which is the presence of God.

Walker Percy, a native of Birmingham and quintessential Southern writer, in his novel The Moviegoer describes this mysterious reality. He tells the story of Binx Boling, a New Orleans stockbroker, who finds himself caught between what he calls “everydayness” and “the search.” Binx’s quixotic story has much to say to us about our spiritual journeys.

For Binx, “everydayness” signifies life’s routine, the ordinary stuff of daily existence. Such as going to the bank, cleaning the house, cooking, e-mail, shopping, changing the oil, cocktail parties, etcetera, etcetera. It is easy to ‘be sunk in the everydayness of our own lives,’ Binx says. This predictable ordinary is strangely seductive, making us believe that this is all there is.

In contrast, “the search” for Binx is about breaking through everydayness into the dimension of depth and meaning. It is about the awakening of “immense curiosity and being ‘on to something.’” Movies have this effect on Binx to a limited degree, as does paying close attention to people in the streetcar. The search leads us to look past the surfaces of life to where the meaning and the mystery is hidden. “To become aware of the possibility of the search,” he says, “is to be on to something. Not to be on to something is to be in despair.”

Our spiritual lives always include the dimension of the search. Jesus invites us to “follow him.” “I am the way,” he says. The journey itself is the secret, not the arriving. In our journeys God calls us out to the depths of life, inviting us to seek his presence in the midst of our experience. When we pay attention and look deeply into life, we encounter the mystery of divine grace. It is always a search because we can never capture the goal or arrive at the end of it. It is along the way that we discover glimpses of meaning, moments of joy, and transforming experiences. “You speak in my heart, and say, ‘Seek my face.’ / Your face, Lord, will I seek,” wrote the psalmist. Such seeking is what the journey is about.

It is tempting to think that the search means always seeking some peak or exotic experience, going to Machu Picchu or rafting the Colorado or buying the latest gadget or tickets to the Sugar Bowl. These have their own value, of course. But true spirituality is about finding the holy in the ordinary, in the here and now. If our eyes are open to see, every moment is rich in beauty and meaning.

Life is crammed with such interruptions. Everydayness, however, has us too much by the throat, and we usually do not stop and take notice. It is the surprising interruptions that invite us out of being sunk in ourselves to the experience of mystery and wonder, which has power to open our hearts to God’s ever-present, unfathomable mystery.

Paul said to the Athenians, God “is not far from each one of us . . . In him we live and move and have our being.” God is not far, but near. We live and move in God every moment. That is something to be on to.

May we embrace the holy restlessness that has been set in our hearts. It is meant to keep us on the search that leads us to God, a journey of transforming experiences that is never complete . . . until we see face to face.
Hello, friends,

Years ago, our son, McKee, held out his fist for me to bump knuckles with him, and when I did, he thumped his chest twice and said, “Respect.” Then he looked at me with that look that all young teenage boys use on their fathers when we are especially old and dorky to give us a clue that we need to tune into their worlds a little. I was still clueless, so he did it again; he thumped his chest twice and said “Respect.” So I thumped my chest, too, and said “Respect,” which was all he was asking for. I’ve thought about that a lot through the years—respect was all he was asking for.

A few weeks ago several of us went to Haiti. For years I’ve been telling people on medical missions in Honduras that not speaking Spanish didn’t have to be a barrier to communication, but in Haiti the language is Creole, a form of French, and it was beginning to seem like more of a barrier than I had anticipated. We stopped in a school to listen to a group of schoolchildren practicing a song for their graduation. When they finished I went to say hello—all I know is “bon jour,” which means “good morning,” which is frustratingly formal. I put out my hand to fist-bump one of the boys, assuming he’d seen it before and said something. I don’t know if he was speaking in French, English, or Creole, but I knew what he meant. I thumped my chest twice, and said “Respect.” It was just a one-word conversation, but it meant a lot—both of us proud to be able to overcome the language barrier to convey an important idea.

Last week I was at Camp McDowell with the Special Session, a summer camp session for people with mental and physical disabilities. The staff came together on Tuesday evening for about a day and a half of training and preparation, and the campers came on Thursday just after lunch. When almost all of the campers had arrived, we rang the bell and started the Ice Cream Social, a kind of party to celebrate the community gathering. This was the 14th Special Session at Camp McDowell, and some of the campers have been to every one; for them it is a family reunion. Others were there for the first time, some of them away from home for the first time; they were a swirl of conflicting emotions. So we have ice cream—everybody likes ice cream.

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Tim is a camper I’ve known for years. One of the things I know about him is that he is very serious about his church, and he likes to pray at chapel in the morning and evening at camp. Several years ago he told me that at his church the preacher lets him preach sometimes. At the Ice Cream Social, Tim came up and introduced me to a counselor who was there for the first time. The counselor had been there for the last two days at the training session, so it was sort of funny, but we went along with it, and I told the counselor it was nice to meet him. Tim went on to tell the counselor, “Now Brother Kee, he’s all right.” And I told the counselor that Tim was more than all right and that he was a mighty preacher, which tickled Tim greatly.

It didn’t seem like much at the time, but it was respect, which was all Tim needed—respect and maybe a bowl of ice cream.

We say that someone has earned our respect or lost our respect, as if we need to dole it out carefully, as if we might run out of respect if we squander some of it on the wrong people. One of the things I’ve learned at Special Session is that we spend far too much time looking for what’s wrong with people, far too much time assuring ourselves that we’re better than somebody else, far too much time demanding respect from others but not giving it back. But really, respect comes from the realization that the other person is also a child of God, also broken and incomplete, also beloved and redeemed by the amazing grace of God, also invited into the love and mercy of God by our Lord Jesus Christ, just as you and I are.

The last question of the Baptismal Covenant is “Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?” The answer we give is “I will, with God’s help.” Surely the world and the Church would be much improved if we were more generous with our respect.

The Rt. Rev. John McKee Sloan

To see more photos from this year’s Special Session, please see pages 10-11 or visit our diocesan Web site, www.dioala.org, and click on the link to “Special Session 2011 Concludes, Yearbook & Photo Albums Available Online.”
Mission Team Visits Haiti in June

In June, a mission team from our diocese traveled to Haiti to provide much-needed medical services and to meet with the Rt. Rev. Zaché Duracin to plan our ongoing joint ministry. In the meeting with Bishop Sloan, the Rev. Pat Wingo, and the Rev. Deacon Dave Drachlis, Bishop Duracin expressed his heartfelt appreciation to our diocese for our ongoing companionship and ministry with the Dioceese of Haiti.

“He thanked us for all the work people from our diocese have done or made possible both before and after the earthquake,” says Bishop Sloan. “I told him that it has been our great privilege, and we hope and intend to continue to help.” Bishop Sloan adds that the meeting was also an opportunity for us “to tell him that all over the Dioceese of Alabama, we pray for him and his people every week. He told us that they were praying for the people of Alabama, too, especially for our recovery from the devastating tornadoes of this spring.”

Bishop Duracin also talked about the hopes, plans, and challenges of Haiti’s recovery from the 2010 earthquake, floods, and cholera epidemic. “His optimism for the future of the Dioceese of Haiti and for the rebuilding of the ruined cathedral in downtown Port-au-Prince is completely authentic and completely infectious,” emphasizes Bishop Sloan.

Our team also visited Port-au-Prince, where much of the earthquake rubble has been cleared from the streets, but little progress has been made relocating people from tent cities to permanent homes. Reflecting on his first visit to Haiti, Bishop Sloan said, “I’ve been to Honduras several times, and I’ve seen Third World poverty. I went with a team just after Hurricane Mitch, and I’ve seen the aftermath of a national disaster. Still I was amazed and distressed to see the extent of the devastation and destruction here.”

“What touched me was the people,” he explains. “The children dressed in their school uniforms, the families still living in cities of little tents 18 months after the earthquake, and the people working to rebuild after the devastating damage. What touched me was the incredible resiliency of the people I met—even after a hurricane, an earthquake, and a plague of cholera, they were still gracious, faithful, and hospitable.”

In addition to their medical work, the team visited other churches, schools, and facilities served by Father Fritz “Pere Val” Valdema, with whom our companion diocean relationship is focused. They noted that temporary repairs have been completed on quake-damaged St. Marc’s School in Lilavois and the water project at Thomazeau is almost complete.

The combined medical and ministry planning team included Will Taylor of the Nativity in Huntsville; Sharon Drachlis, Dr. Horton Smith, and Brenda Smith of St. Thomas’ in Huntsville; Martha Oyston of the Ascension in Birmingham; Bishop Sloan; the Rev. Fritz “Pere Val” Valdema, priest in charge of St. Simeon Parish in Haiti; the Rev. Pat Wingo, staff liaison for our Companion Diocese Commission; and the Rev. Deacon Dave Drachlis, co-chair of our Companion Diocese Commission.
Walking On in Memory of Deb Braden

By Elizabeth Noles

The Rev. Deborah Susan “Deb” Braden died on September 25, 2010. St. Mary’s-on-the-Highlands at the time, was enjoying a bowl of Thai noodles. I still remember how she looked up from her lunch and paused for a moment before sharing her thought with me—“the road is made by walking”—and then taking another bite.

Deb offered those words to me at a time when I had become paralyzed in my own spiritual journey. I was so uncertain of making a wrong turn that I had simply refused to keep walking.

But Deb knew better. With that simple quote, she told me what I needed to know. Walk on, Elizabeth. Walk on. Don’t wait for the answers. Seek them. Keep moving in your journey. Keep walking. And most importantly, days or weeks from now, do not be afraid to look down and find yourself still on the walk. The road is made by walking.

For Deb, her own walk during those days was a hard one. At the time she was battling cancer, and so, day by day and hour by hour, she quietly walked her walk. And she walked with more grace, dignity, and courage than I could fathom. On that road, she encountered many ups and downs, rights and lefts, sudden valleys, even a few unexpected peaks. But regardless, she met them day by day by walking in her faith—even as friends such as me stumbled in our own faith and spirit as we tried to accompany her on this journey.

For example, I remember one day when I was sitting with her during one of her chemotherapy treatments. All of a sudden my emotions began to bubble to the surface and get the best of me. I tried looking all around, up to the ceiling, out into the hallway, anywhere but into her eyes. I could not let her see my tears, my sadness, or my fear.

But then I felt her cool hand on mine. I looked up and met her eyes. If the eyes are truly the windows of the soul, then she was looking straight through those windows into mine. “It is going to be OK,” Deb said. “It is going to be OK.”

Suddenly I understood. I understood that, although it was right for me to continue to hope and pray, that “OK” did not necessarily mean a cure. Instead it meant something far more wonderful. It meant peace and shalom and a full healing beyond any mortal bonds, bounds, or barriers. And Deb knew this too.

The Book of Common Prayer teaches us that a sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. If we are right, then perhaps Deb’s trail at Camp McDowell will ultimately be just like that—a visible, obvious walk guided by an inward spiritual grace and a reminder that all paths are ultimately made by walking.

Some of Deb’s favorite walks took place at Camp McDowell in Winston County. She took many walks there—some spiritual, some literal, and some both at the same time. It is in recognition of such memories that so many of Deb’s friends have come together to design and build the Deb Braden Memorial Trail at Camp McDowell. But just as she taught me when she was here with us, the memory of her example continues to instruct me now.

As I write these words, it is evident to me that Deb’s walk continues even though her earthly walk has come to an end. Just as she taught me when she was here with us, the memory of her example continues to instruct me now. Maybe that is why such a bad thing happened to such a good person.

So what did she teach me? Simply put, she taught me to walk and forge a different road on a higher ground despite the difficult circumstances. She taught me not to worry about interim destinations but rather to rest in faith as to the ultimate destination. For if it is the process and not the end that matters the most, then perhaps it is the steps that we take and how we take them that are most important—particularly when we know that Deb through to the end. I believe it was why, in her last moments, she was able to instruct her friend and priest Huey Gardner to “tell them, tell them all, I am at peace.”

I believe that such certainty about “OK” was what led Deb through to the end. I believe it was why, in her last moments, she was able to instruct her friend and priest Huey Gardner to “tell them, tell them all, I am at peace.”

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For more information please see “The Deb Braden Memorial Trail” on the next page or visit www.alabama-cursillo.org.
The Deb Braden Memorial Trail—
Providing a Path for Pilgrims and Campers

By the Rev. Glenda Curry, Rector of All Saints’ in Birmingham, and Clif Dixon, of the Ascension in Montgomery

Maybe you knew her as a spiritual director, a wise counselor, or a loving priest. Maybe she was your classmate, your colleague, your beloved sister, or simply your friend. However you may have known Deb Braden, whatever you may have called her, she was by all accounts an extraordinary human being.

The Rev. Deborah Susan “Deb” Braden was to many of us a comfort and an inspiration. We miss her greatly and want to honor and remember her in a way we think she’d enjoy. In an effort to do just that, a group is working as an ad hoc Deb Braden Memorial Trail Committee at the request of Alabama Cursillo to help make the Deb Braden Memorial Trail a reality at Camp McDowell.

Deb loved Camp McDowell and nature, and she never missed an opportunity to walk the trails and experience “thin places” at Camp. Deb was very involved in the Cursillo movement in Alabama and credited the Cursillo experience with her deepening and intentional walk with Christ.

* She was a pilgrim at Cursillo #111.
* Five years later she became a postulant and a seminarian at the School of Theology at the University of the South.
* She was ordained and served the parishes of St. Matthew’s in Tuscaloosa and St. Mary’s-on-the-Highlands in Birmingham.
* She served as the Secretariat Head Spiritual Director and on the staffs of Cursillos #117, #147, #153, and #164.

The Deb Braden Memorial Trail will connect Miller Commons to the Chapel of St. Francis in a pedestrian environment that follows the natural contours to the greatest extent possible. The trail will approach compliance with U.S. Access Board guidelines for outdoor recreation, and its accessibility and environmental sensitivity are important factors in our design and construction.

The Deb Braden Memorial Trail consists of multiple parts.

* The trailhead Lychgate (a covered entrance way) at Miller Commons
* A hiking trail that traverses 1,252 linear feet (about 0.24 mile).
* An elevated pedestrian bridge approximately 50 feet in length
* Several shorter pedestrian bridges
* Trailside rest areas
* An elevated boardwalk of about 50 feet near the Chapel of St. Francis

The project design is currently under way, and the Department of Camp McDowell and our Diocesan Council have endorsed this project. The total cost is expected to be approximately $40,000, and currently about half of the required funds have been raised. If you would like to make a donation, please send your check, payable to the Diocese of Alabama, Alabama Cursillo, with Deb Braden Trail on the memo line, to Patrick Toomey, Treasurer, P.O. Box 330484, Birmingham, AL 35223.

Honoring Loved Ones and Adding to the Beauty of a Special Place

By Danielle Dunbar, Director of Development

Many of you have participated in a service of Holy Eucharist or celebrated a baptism or wedding in the new Chapel of St. Francis at Camp McDowell. This lovely holy space is a gift to all the people of our diocese, and we invite everyone to add to the beauty of this special place by honoring family members and friends with an engraved brick or paver for walkways and patios.

Consider giving a brick or paver as a lasting remembrance of a marriage or anniversary, a birth or baptism, a Sunday school class, a youth or Cursillo group, a choir, a garden unit, or other people and occasions that are special for you. If you would like to order a 4 by 8-inch brick ($125) or an 8 by 8-inch paver ($250), please contact me at 205/563-9990 or danielle@campmcdowell.com. You can also place an order online at www.campmcdowell.com.
Thank You, Leslie—Welcome, Susan!

A Note from Sarah Sartain, Deputy for Youth Ministry and Christian Formation

Our diocese has been blessed by Leslie Bridgers Manning’s ministry for the last three and a half years. She is an amazing woman with so many gifts and talents, and we are grateful for her ministry with and among us. She has raised the bar for the quality of programs we offer our young people.

Many of you have seen photos of the Youth Department-sponsored events she helped coordinate, but you probably don’t know about the countless hours Leslie spent providing support for our young people as well as our youth ministers during a long walk or over a cup of coffee. Leslie has coordinated events and programs for the Youth Department, youth ministers, and the Sawyerville Day Camp. The number of laypeople and clergy involved in our youth ministries has doubled thanks to her ability to recruit and equip coordinators and staff.

In August, Leslie moved with her family to Sewanee, Tennessee, to support her husband and his call to go to seminary. She will continue her ministry as the Sawyerville Day Camp Coordinator, and she will work with the Sawyerville Commission in visioning, planning, and fundraising for the camp and its various programs. Godspeed to you, Leslie—you have blessed all of us!

I am pleased to announce that Susan Oakes will serve as our interim Youth Ministries Coordinator from August through December 2011. Susan served as a youth minister for five years at St. Stephen’s in Birmingham, and she has coordinated a variety of diocesan-level events including Happening, New Beginnings, summer camp programs, Young People Paint Birmingham (YPPB), and Sawyerville Day Camp, plus a variety of spiritual retreats. Susan brings so many gifts to this ministry—we especially enjoy her contagious energy!

Bishop Parsley and I felt it was best to hire an interim at this time to support the work already in place by our Youth Department. I will form a search committee soon, and we will meet with Bishop Sloan to discuss how we will proceed with hiring our next Youth Ministries Coordinator. Thank all of you for your continued support of healthy youth ministry in our diocese!

YPPB—Learning To Serve Others and Having Fun!

By Leslie Manning, Youth Ministries Coordinator

Can scraping and painting houses in the Alabama summer heat be fun? Yes, it can! Just ask the 60 youth and adult volunteers and the Birmingham families who participated in Young People Paint Birmingham (YPPB) on June 6 through 11.

The wonderful and wild work crew and elderly West End neighborhood residents formed invaluable relationships as they worked hard and got to know each other every day over cans of paint, ladders, and brushes. Each evening the youth enjoyed singing camp songs and participating in worship programs, and the last day they relaxed and played at Alabama Adventure.

Thanks again for the hands that volunteered and served—and an extra thank you to this year’s event coordinators, Caitlin and Jackie!
An Eye for an EYE—
Episcopal Youth Event 2011

By Meredith Byars, a Member of St. Alban’s in Birmingham

Meredith Byars of St. Alban’s in Birmingham, Kit Goldschmidt of St. Mary’s-on-the-Highlands in Birmingham, Clay Hardin of the Epiphany in Guntersville, Hannah Kendrick of St. Stephen’s in Birmingham, youth leader Barlee Linton of the Nativity in Huntsville, and youth leader Lauren Wainwright of the Epiphany in Guntersville represented our diocese at the 2011 Episcopal Youth Event (EYE) on June 22-26 in St. Paul, Minnesota. The theme for this year’s gathering, “Come Together: Intimately Linked in This Harvest Work,” helped all of the participants gain a greater awareness of and make a stronger commitment to God’s mission in the world.

EYE lets you compare and contrast the way our different dioceses do things—from how services are held to how we dance to “Pharaoh, Pharaoh.”

What should the adults in our diocese know about EYE?

Thanks to your prayers and support of all kinds, the three other youth from our diocese and I had the fabulous opportunity to learn more about how the Episcopal Church works as a whole. We were blessed to have two awesome youth leaders with us, Barlee Linton and Lauren Wainwright, who gave an incredible amount of time and effort to make this a positive experience for all of us. THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

What have we taken away from EYE 2011?

“It was an honor and privilege to receive holy communion from our Presiding Bishop, Katharine Jefferts Schori. She has such a powerful, moving voice, and she uses that gift to spread God’s word and his love.

Also, this event really made us appreciate how strongly our diocese values youth involvement and leadership. When we talked with our roommates from the Diocese of San Diego one night, I learned about all the differences and similarities in our youth events. It made us realize how many opportunities the youth in our diocese have to connect with Youth Department events and events at Camp McDowell. We are very fortunate to have such things!” —Meredith Byars

and I started singing and dancing to “Pharaoh, Pharaoh” and the other youth recognized the song but not the dance moves. They had their own way of dancing to the song! So we stood around in a circle with people from other dioceses and showed our difference dances. It was neat because that one song took us from being youth around America with no similarities and different accents to one big unified Episcopal youth group.”

—Hannah Kendrick

“I really enjoyed hanging out with people my age from around the nation. It was funny to see how they sometimes viewed Alabamians stereotypically. The people were very interesting, and they enjoyed listening to me talk about Alabama in my Southern accent.”

—Clay Hardin

“We had a whole lot of fun! There were many workshops offered during the days we were there so everyone could find something in their alley. They had educational workshops, arts and crafts, ‘dorky dance’ classes, and even a hacky sack workshop! You never ran out of interesting things to do so we were always entertained! That being said, we also had time for worship, and we listened to a couple of speakers who really helped us realize how much of an impact each of us can have. Everybody can make a difference and make choices that reflect God’s love.” —Kit Goldschmidt

What is the Episcopal Youth Event (EYE)?

The Episcopal Youth Event (EYE) is a convention of youth and youth leaders from across our nation and surrounding islands. About 1,200 individuals travel from their dioceses to experience the Episcopal faith on a larger scale. We come from diverse understandings and cultural context to form the Body of Christ. We eat, worship, sing, laugh, learn, play games, and have loads of fun with each other. This event takes place every three years, each time in a different diocese.

What should the youth in our diocese know about EYE?

By surrounding yourself with people from other places, you can grow spiritually, learn more about your faith, and even learn more about your diocese. EYE lets you do that!

It is a unique opportunity to meet and form relationships with boys and girls from all over the United States who share the Episcopal faith. EYE is one of the only opportunities to do that as a teenager.

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—Meredith Byars

“What stood out to me the most was when Meredith

—Hannah Kendrick

Kit Goldschmidt, Lauren Wainwright, Meredith Byars, Bartlee Linton, Clay Hardin, and Hannah Kendrick

Clay Hardin, Kit Goldschmidt, Meredith Byars, and Hannah Kendrick holding the banner they created to represent our diocese
Sawyerville Day Camp—
A Place To Work as the Hands and Feet of God

By Sabol Rodgers from the Nativity in Huntsville

Especially in the pool, when we teach the children how to swim. Most of them claim they know how to swim a little bit and act all cool on the bus—but as soon as they sit on the side of the pool, it takes everything to get them off the wall. We go to the pool the first day, and so I still didn’t know my kids all that well, but they still trusted me with their life. I say “their life” because the way they talk about drowning you’d think the pool comes alive and swallows them whole!

It’s a 30-minute ride to the pool in Marion, and singing songs seems to make the time fly by. This year I was the person to head up all the songs on the bus rides. Sometimes the kids will jump in and lead a song, and when people start singing with them their face lights up. It’s one of the cutest things on the face of this earth.

I had trouble with one girl in my small group because she never wanted to be with the rest of us and didn’t listen whatsoever, but one day on the bus (she was in the back and I was in the front) I heard “HEY SABOL!” So I looked back and saw that it was the girl, and she was starting the “Hands Up High, Feet Down Low” (call-and-response) praise song. It made my heart swell.

During most activity sessions you can see the people who aren’t interested in whichever rotation—whether it be arts and crafts, basketball, or program—sitting on the side. Sometimes they have friends and sometimes not. This year one little boy in my rotation wasn’t interested in anything or even sitting with anyone. I would always come over and talk or at least sit with him. One day during activity time, which is where everyone runs around or dances or hula hoops, I saw him standing alone, so I asked him if he wanted to play basketball—and he did. After about 10 minutes he started looking distracted. Every time I looked at him, he was looking at everyone dancing. A few minutes later he was still looking, only now he was starting to test out his dance skills. I had never seen him bust a move the whole week, and now he was! Eventually he left me with the basketball and went and sat with the dancers, which was fine because I was happy to see him getting interested in something.

It’s incredible to see 40 or so people come together and give everything they’ve got to create a safe and comfortable and fun environment for kids they may or may not have met and who may not even like them. Sawyerville Day Camp is the place to work as the hands and feet of God.

Working as the hands and feet of God at Sawyerville means long meetings, early mornings, late nights, and an enormous amount of patience and enthusiasm—it also means creating relationships, leaning on one another, and experiencing community.
I’ve never been as hot, sweaty, or exhausted in my whole life as I have been at Sawyerville Day Camp. I’ve also never felt so rewarded, blessed or seen such a great community.

Working as the hands and feet of God at Sawyerville means long meetings, early mornings, late nights, and an enormous amount of patience and enthusiasm—it also means creating relationships, leaning on one another, and experiencing community.
Special Session 2011—Surrounded by Unconditional Love and Acceptance in God’s Backyard

By Our Diocesan Staff with photos by the Rev. Michael Rich and the Rev. Deacon Dave Drachlis

Amid hugs and tears, more than 200 Special Session campers, counselors, and staff members said farewell after the closing Eucharist on July 5. The very special memories they made together during their week at Wonderful, Wonderful Camp McDowell will bring smiles to their faces as they count down the days until next summer.

The Special Session campers bring a range of physical, mental, and emotional challenges to camp, and the high-school and college students who serve as counselors stay with the campers in their cabins and are responsible for their health and safety 24 hours a day. Young adults, most of them former Special Session counselors, plan and supervise the activities for the weeklong session, while adult staff members run the technical aspects and produce a take-home “yearbook” with everyone’s photo.

A service in the new Chapel of St. Francis begins and ends each day of Special Session. The campers and counselors spend their days together swimming, hiking, taking turns in “pie-in-the-face bingo,” canoeing, doing arts and crafts, slipping down the “soapy slide,” and participating in a variety of games. They celebrate the Fourth of July with a traditional parade and barbecue, and they take the spotlight in a two-night talent show and dance the night away to live music the last evening. This year the campers also enjoyed horseback riding, a Special Session Flash Mob, and a chance to see local wildlife up close and to touch or hold a snake.

For more about Special Session 2011, please see Bishop Sloan’s article, “Respect,” on page 4 and visit our diocesan Web site, www.dioala.org.
Holy Cross School in Montgomery Reaches Around the Globe and Around the Corner

By Kimberly Ramsey

Holy Cross Outreach reaches a helping hand to people in need globally as well as locally. Each year Holy Cross School in Montgomery chooses special outreach projects as part of their Lenten discipline.

This year the tragedy in Japan presented itself as an obvious global choice. The 6th grade students of the school’s Lenten giving will benefit Moore’s Ministry. This group of dedicated individuals, led by Henry Moore, feeds 35 elderly shut-ins each week. Students brought in rice and canned fruits and vegetables to help Mr. Moore and his team feed these people. During the final week of collection, students brought in cereal and peanut butter to help fill the shelves at the Holy Comforter Food Pantry.

These projects are just a part of the outreach Holy Cross students and faculty do each year. Our year-round projects include “pop-tops” for the Ronald McDonald House in Birmingham and newspaper collection for the Montgomery Humane Shelter.

“We believe that children learn empathy for others when they help with specific yearly outreach projects,” explains Outreach Coordinator Marcia Bazzell. “In the classrooms and in chapel, we talk about the organizations we support and what we can do to help others. Every family can help in some way, no matter how large or how small!”

From Gethryn S. Giles, ECW President

Fiona Watts, President Elect of our ECW Diocesan Board has selected “Welcoming the Stranger” as the 2012 ECW theme. On June 25, many laypeople and clergy of our diocese attended the Walkabout for the bishop nominees at St. Luke’s in Birmingham, and our Diocesan Transition Committee made this an excellent example of “welcoming the stranger.” The nominees were treated with a big dose of Southern hospitality as were the persons who attended this event. It was well organized, started and ended on time, and ran smoothly.

In the weeks since the April 27th tornadoes in Alabama, many people have experienced “welcoming the stranger.” Since I live in DeKalb County, I would like to give a couple of personal examples. When a group from South Carolina came to our area in June to help with disaster cleanup, the parishioners of St. Philip’s in Fort Payne hosted the “strangers.” At the end of the month, a group from another state stayed in homes in Mentone, and the “strangers” were hosted by the parishioners of St. Joseph’s. This is only a small slice of the hospitality that has been offered throughout our diocese following that terrible day in April.

Almost daily people in parishes across our diocese give this same kind of hospitality, and most of the time it has nothing to do with disasters. Think about the many churches that offer their facilities to AA, Boy Scouts, book clubs, quilting bees, and other groups—I have even heard of one church that hosts a weekly bridge group. Other parishes open their doors to the poor and hungry with food carts and soup kitchens.

Episcopal churches in the Diocese of Alabama welcome the stranger every day. But do we as easily welcome them on Sunday? If so, how? During 2012, look for specific ways you welcome strangers in your parish. You will be able to find many examples in the 2012 ECW Calendar/Handbook, through articles in The Alabama Episcopalian, and in ECW convocation meetings as we all strive to offer hospitality in our own unique way.
Gumbo Gala Raises $33,300 To Support Episcopal Place Residents in Birmingham

It took 6 years and 14 pounds of okra, 12 pounds of shrimp, and 9 pounds of crab claws, but the gumbo team from All Saints’ finally captured the top amateur award at Episcopal Place's annual fundraiser, Gumbo Gala. Persistence paid off for team captain Butch Williams and his cooking mates Buddy Blane, Eugene Johnston, and Bill Lenker, who also won the coveted “Most Divine Gumbo” Award from among Episcopal organizations in the competition. The team is one of only three that have competed in all six Gumbo Gala events. They are known as the “All Saints’ Wednesday Morning Sinners” and are cosponsored by Robbie D. Wood Inc.

Other Birmingham-area parish teams also fared well at the event, sweeping all of the awards in the Backyard Chef Amateur Division. The St. Mary’s-on-the-Highlands’ team, led again this year by Merrimon Epps, placed second, and St. Stephen’s Creole Crusaders came in third under team captain John Camp. The team from St. Martin-in-the-Pines, St. Martin’s RouxStars, was a crowd favorite, being voted as the People’s Choice winner by event attendees and named by judges as the Spirit Award winner for their booth decorations and crowd appeal.

Jubilee Joe’s edged out three-time winner Crazy Cajun’s for the top Professional Division award, while Crazy Cajun’s won the trophy for best seafood gumbo. Showtunes Theatre Performers had the best chicken/sausage gumbo, while Garage Café won the award for best specialty gumbo.

About 1,300 people attend the event, which raised $33,300 to provide support services to the 148 residents at Episcopal Place. Ezell’s Catfish Cabin, located in Bessemer and Auburn and owned by Agnew Hall, was the event presenting sponsor. John Pelham of Pelham Financial Group chaired the planning committee. Rob Conrad and Jeanine Jersey of Magic 96.5-FM's morning show were emcees, and the Legendary Pineapple Skinners provided the New Orleans jazz music.

“This event was started five years ago in honor of several residents who came to live at Episcopal Place after surviving Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans,” explains Tim Blanton, executive director of Episcopal Place. “Thanks to great support from the community, Gumbo Gala has grown into a lively event with great gumbo and entertainment, and all proceeds go to support a worthwhile cause.”
St. Alban’s Hosts 1st Art Camp

Nineteen children participated in the Art Camp hosted by St. Alban’s in Birmingham (Hoover) the week of June 13-17. Led by parishioners Marilyn Burrier, Max Fewell, and Abby Leach, children drew self-portraits, made picture frames, and participated in a group project to create a mural of the seven days of creation.

In addition to creating art, the children also sang and played games. The camp culminated in an art show on Friday, June 17, at which the mural of creation was unveiled. All of the children also received a special T-shirt—the girls’ shirts featured Leonardo da Vinci’s *Mona Lisa* with their face superimposed on the painting, and the boys’ shirts featured Thomas Gainsborough’s *Blue Boy* with their faces superimposed on the painting. The caption on the T-shirts was “I am a masterpiece!”

Holy Apostles’ Hosts 14th Annual Crawfish & Shrimp Boil

Boil Master Paul Gilbert and his crew had their pots boiling early to cook up the feast of crawfish and shrimp and all the fixins for the parish’s 14th annual fundraiser. Other parishioners fired up the grill for hotdogs. And EVERYONE had a great time eating, dancing, and playing in the Moon Walk. Mark your calendar now and plan to come to Holy Apostles in Birmingham (Hoover) for next year’s feast on the last Saturday in May!
Taking the Red Door Café & Thrift from a Vision to a Reality

By Bill McCartney, a Member of Grace Church in Cullman

A “flash mob” of singers from Grace Church, Christ Covenant Presbyterian, Christ Lutheran, First Presbyterian, St. Paul’s Lutheran, and Gardendale’s First Baptist recently surprised the employees and shoppers at Cullman’s Wal-Mart with a medley of “Amazing Grace” and other familiar, uplifting hymns. This “blessing” was just one of the Red Door Café and Thrift’s initiatives to help nourish the Cullman community with food, fellowship, faith, and funds while the residents rebuild their homes and lives after the devastating April 27th tornadoes. To see the “spontaneous” performance, please log on to http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bku6ajkhZ3w.

A Café to nourish; A Thrift to fund. 
Every donation given, every meal served, every purchase made helps someone.

Jesus said to Peter, “Do you love me?” He said, “Lord, you know all things, you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Then take care of them, feed my lambs!” (John 21:17)

The Red Door Café & Thrift Inc. stems from a unique vision to help fill two overarching needs every community faces: directly filling individuals’ needs for food, fellowship, and faith; and helping fund nonprofits so they can better serve those who rely on them. The vision for this “social enterprise” was the result of the Holy Spirit bumping two ideas against each other at just the right time and place.

Idea 1: Nourish all who come with food, fellowship, and faith, with no cost and no strings.

Grace Episcopal Church in Cullman took a leap of faith on May 26, 2009, when it began Grace Café to nourish all who come with delicious food, warm fellowship, and God’s amazing love, all with no cost and no strings. And what happened has been remarkable.

Instead of a soup kitchen, it is more like a family gathering where guests laugh, sing, visit, and know they are loved. It’s a reunion that consistently draws people from across the entire spectrum of society who eagerly congregate the fourth Tuesday of every month. Into its third year Grace Café has served thousands of helpings of food, fellowship, and faith to everyone brave enough or curious enough to walk through the doors, all with no cost and no strings.

But more people need more and more kinds of nourishment more often than Grace Café can provide. Unfortunately, ways to expand its reach and offerings kept bumping into the harsh economic realities we all face.

Idea 2: Develop a dedicated funding source for nonprofits.

Good Samaritan Health Clinic Director, Jerry Jacob (and soon-to-be one of our newly ordained deacons) and I were talking one evening about the clinic’s fundraising efforts. In particular, we talked about how the poor economic climate makes it so difficult for all of our nonprofits just to maintain their current levels of service.

Jerry evidently has had this same conversation with others because he told me that at two different times, a few months apart and completely independent of each other, friends asked him if he had thought about starting a thrift store to help fund the clinic. Thrifts have been very profitable for decades but have recently become even more so, and they have recently added a “chic” patina to their offerings.

While Jerry has no time and no interest in running a thrift store, he was not opposed to asking me if I would like to start one. My initial reaction was pretty much the same as his—“Thanks, but no thanks!”

Then the wheels started turning . . .

The Red Door Café & Thrift was born.

As the name implies, the highly successful Cracker Barrel-business model that creates synergy between a restaurant and retail store was adapted to accommodate a café inside a thrift store. In addition, it will offer local art, handmade crafts, and other unique goods to attract shoppers from across the region.

But what makes this particularly exciting is that the projected profits are substantial and all will be given away instead of going to owners and stockholders. Specifically, half of the profits will go to Christian mission and outreach and be administered by Grace Church in Cullman. The other half will go to women’s shelters, a free health clinic, volunteer fire departments, children’s services, and other nonprofits and benevolent organizations through a grant program.

While building profits to help other organizations meet their worthwhile goals, the café space will also be used for a Bible study group, a book club, speakers to present a variety of perspectives on current affairs, a performance choir’s rehearsal space for at-risk teens, and other activities to enrich and strengthen the community.

Bringing the Vision to Reality

Tornadoes ripped apart about 1,000 of Cullman’s homes and businesses on April 27. While Cullman was more fortunate than some other towns that day, it will still take this community of 15,000 people many years to rebuild and renew its neighborhoods and downtown business district. With so much of Cullman’s financial resources directed toward recovery, we are asking for help to take The Red Door Café & Thrift from vision to reality. For more information please visit our website TheRedDoorCullman.com. To share a thought, ask a question, or request a brochure, please contact me at TheRedDoorCullman@att.net.
Remembering the Rev. Camille L. Desmarais

The following article includes contributions from Lynn Edge and the Rev. Marianne Desmarais Stuart, the Rector of St. John’s Deaf Church in Birmingham.

“He was a remarkable man,” the Rev. Marianne Desmarais Stuart says about her father, and many people in the Deaf community across the United States agree. The Rev. Camille “Cam” L. Desmarais was a recognized leader not only in overseeing the building of houses of worship for Deaf persons, but also in working for their rights.

Cam was born on August 28, 1931, in St. Johnsbury in Vermont, and died on April 13, 2011, in Mobile. He was the fourth of seven children of Onile and Yvonne Desmarais, who were French Canadian. A bout with spinal meningitis in the fifth grade left Cam deaf, and after completing elementary school, he attended the American School for the Deaf in West Hartford, Connecticut. Later he attended Gallaudet College (now University) in Washington, DC, where he helped lead Gallaudet’s championship collegiate wrestling team.

Cam married Marjorie Crosby, his college sweetheart, in 1950, and the couple moved to Mobile, her hometown. “We attended St. Mark’s Episcopal Church for the Deaf, and it was there that I met the Rev. Dr. Robert Fletcher,” Cam recalled in a conversation shortly before his death. “During the next several years, I saw the good that the Rev. Fletcher was doing to help Deaf persons, and I decided that was what I wanted to do.”

After returning to Washington, DC, with Marjorie and their three children and completing his degree at Gallaudet, Cam received a scholarship from the Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria. He graduated from seminary in 1966 and was ordained a deacon at St. Mark’s for the Deaf in Mobile. Later he was ordained a priest and served the Deaf in the Diocese of Connecticut, where he followed in the work of the Rev. Stanley Light and played a key role in establishing the Connecticut Council of Organizations Serving the Deaf.

In 1972, Cam accepted a call to serve as the Archdeacon for the Deaf in the Diocese of Alabama and the rector of St. John’s Deaf Church in Birmingham. Marjorie spent much of her time at St. John’s creating a sign language version of the songs in the Episcopal Hymnal. Sadly, just seven years after Cam and Marjorie moved to Birmingham, she died of cancer.

In addition to serving the members of St. John’s and the Deaf community of Birmingham at large, Cam also was instrumental in developing mental health services for the Deaf and worked to gain the release of many Deaf persons from state hospitals and institutions. Cam actively participated in the national Episcopal Conference of the Deaf, serving several terms as president as well as a mentor and friend to many new priests entering the work of Deaf ministry.

Before retiring as rector of St. John’s in 1994, Cam oversaw the construction of a 5,000-square-foot church and parish house. In early 1994 on a day when subfreezing winds were blowing across Birmingham, Bishop Robert O. Miller turned over the first shovel of dirt that launched the building of a new St. John’s. Cam and the members of the parish watched their new building rise on a 1-acre site donated by across-the-street-neighbor St. Stephen’s, at the corner of Crosshaven Drive and Overton Road.

The first building St. John’s occupied had cost $150 to buy. The one they had just left had cost $38,000 to build. Their new one would be a $500,000 structure especially designed for the congregation. On September 25, 1994, Bishop Miller dedicated and consecrated the new building of St. John’s Church for the Deaf.

In 1995, Cam married Julia Boland, and the following year he and Julia moved to Mobile, where he served as priest in charge of St. Mark’s Church for the Deaf. During his time there, St. Mark’s also built a new church building. This makes Cam one of the few—if not the only—priest to oversee the construction of two churches built especially for Deaf congregations.

Cam continued to serve St. Mark’s as a pastor and retired priest whenever needed until his death. In all, his distinguished service in Deaf ministry spanned 45 years.

A funeral service was held at St. Mark’s Church for the Deaf in Mobile on April 18, and a second service was held on April 20 at St. John’s Church for the Deaf in Birmingham. Bishop Parsley and the Rt. Rev. Philip Duncan, Bishop of the Central Gulf Coast, served as cocelebrants at the service, with assistance from clergy, both Deaf and hearing, from across Alabama.

The Rev. Camille L. Desmarais is survived by his wife and his children, the Rev. Marianne Desmarais Stuart (who currently serves as the priest of St. John’s Church for the Deaf in Birmingham), Catherine Kunz, and David Desmarais, and their spouses; his two sisters, Therese and Laurie, and his brother, Donald; and many grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces, and nephews.

Good Shepherd Welcomes New Rector

Submitted by Genie Schaffer

On Sunday, June 12, the parishioners and friends of the Good Shepherd in Decatur celebrated the beginning of a new ministry. The Rev. David Dill, our new rector, began his tenure at Good Shepherd with the morning services on the Day of Pentecost, and in his inaugural sermon, he appropriately suggested that our parish observe a Year of Celebration. After the services, we gathered in the courtyard amid a cloud of red balloons and posed for our annual parish photograph. Later in the day, we gathered to welcome the Dill family with a picnic, games, fellowship, and a visit from our neighbors, three firemen and their fire truck from Fire Station #7. An evening campfire with devotions and singing brought the memorable day to a close.

David Stone Dill has a family history in the North Alabama area, and his extended families live in nearby communities. His education and experience prior to his ordination as an Episcopal priest include 10 years as a documentary television editor and writer/filmmaker, an interest that he incorporates into his parish work and personal life. He previously served as Associate Rector for Evangelism at Trinity Church in Boston. David and his wife, Mary Alex, have two daughters, Ella and Lena, ages 7 and 4.

“It is really exciting to be part of such a loving and caring community,” emphasizes David. “I am thrilled to be joining these folks in ministry here. Now we are going to spend some time getting to know one another, celebrating being the Body of Christ, and celebrating being the Church of the Good Shepherd.”

For more information about the Church of the Good Shepherd, please visit www.goodshepherd.dioala.org or call the parish office at 256/331-9935.
Grant Submission Deadline
Extended to October 3

By Judy Quick, Chair of Our Diocesan Department of Mission and Outreach

So many of our parishes were involved with tornado response efforts on the original 2011 grant submission deadline of May 9, that our diocesan Department of Mission and Outreach will continue to accept requests until October 3. The purpose of the grants is to encourage parishes to start new or expand existing outreach ministries that will become self-sustainable within three years. These grants are only for parish-based outreach and cannot be used for pass-through monies to other agencies or groups that do not directly involve parishes or parishioners.

The department has already awarded 2011 grants to Calvary in Oneonta, the Nativity in Huntsville, Holy Comforter in Gadsden, the Resurrection in Rainbow City, and St. Michael’s in Fayette. The grants are helping these parishes meet a variety of needs through beans and rice ministries, community gardens, food markets for senior citizens, and resources for families with infants.

The department also awards Domestic/Local Mission Grants to Individuals as well as Global Mission Grants to Individuals. These grant requests may be submitted at any time.

For more information about any of the available grants or submission guidelines, please contact me at jgquick@bellsouth.net or 205/669-6862.

Clergy Group Studies the Experience of the Divine

By the Rev. Dr. J. Barry Vaughn, Rector of St. Alban’s in Birmingham

This is the third and last year of my clergy group’s Institute for Clergy Excellence—underwritten project of studying the experience of the divine. During the past two years, Ray Dunmyer (St. Thomas’ Catholic Church in Montevallo), Ed Hurley (South Highlands Presbyterian in Birmingham), Bob Hurst (United Church of Huntsville), Steve Jones (Southside Baptist Church in Birmingham), Jonathan Miller (Temple Emanu-El in Birmingham), A. B. Sutton (Baptist Living Stones Temple in Birmingham), and I have traveled to Boston, Bangladesh, India, Israel, and Greece to meet with religious leaders. As part of our study project we have met with more than 25 representatives of the Roman Catholic, Anglican, Orthodox, Protestant, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, and Sikh faiths (in many cases with several varieties of each religion).

Our latest adventure took us to the cities of Jerusalem and Rome. In Jerusalem and the nearby towns of Bethlehem, Ramallah, Hebron, and Ephrat, we spoke with several Jewish leaders. American-born Rabbi Arye Ben David taught for many years in a traditional yeshiva (an Orthodox Jewish religious school) when he suddenly realized that Jews never spoke about their relationship with God. So he began to focus on his own relationship with God and developed a program that helps Jews deepen their connection with the divine.

The first woman rabbi in Israel, Kinneret Shiryon, impressed all of us with her profound and vibrant spirituality. She spoke of her struggle to be recognized as a woman and a progressive Jewish leader in Israel. Eventually, it took a decision of the Israeli supreme court to gain the funding for her synagogue that is enjoyed by all other synagogues in Israel.

One evening we had dinner with Birmingham native David Morrison, who moved to Israel in the 1990s and now spends his days praying and studying the Talmud and Torah. On the other hand, we also met with Coptic and Syrian Orthodox leaders. Of particular interest was an afternoon we spent with Lutheran Pastor Mitri Raheb in Bethlehem. Pastor Raheb has built an impressive school that uses the arts and sports to bring hope to Palestinians in the birthplace of Jesus.

In Rome, Bishop Brian Farrell, the under-secretary of the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity met with us and spoke about the dialogues being conducted with various Protestant groups, including Anglicans. Of great interest to me was the morning we spent with the Very Rev. Canon David Richardson, who recently preached at St. Luke’s in Birmingham and met with Episcopal clergy at Bishop Parsley’s home. Canon Richardson spoke of the sometimes frustrating business of seeking dialogue with the Vatican today in the very different climate of Benedict XVI’s papacy.

Our time in Rome concluded with a visit to His Excellency Dr. Manuel Diaz, the U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See. Ambassador Diaz, who is a distinguished Roman Catholic lay theologian, spoke of the importance of having a United States presence at the Vatican because of the influence of the Roman Catholic Church in nations where our country’s influence is negative or negligible. He also spoke warmly of his admiration for Archbishop Rowan Williams.

Our travels are over but not our project. In the near future, we hope to present some of the conclusions of our wonderful three-year pilgrimage.

For more information please contact the Rev. Dr. Barry Vaughn at anglcan@aol.com or 205/822-2330.
**Bishops’ Visitation Schedule**

**August 14, Sunday**
9:30 a.m.  Bishop Parsley, St. Paul’s, Greensboro

**August 28, Sunday**
10 a.m.  Bishop Sloan, Emmanuel, Opelika

**August 31, Wednesday**
5 p.m.  Bishop Sloan, Trinity, Bessemer

**September 4, Sunday**
10 a.m.  Bishop Parsley, St. Barnabas’, Roanoke
10:15 a.m.  Bishop Sloan, St. Timothy’s, Athens

**September 7, Wednesday**
6 p.m.  Bishop Sloan, St. Wilfred’s, Marion
7 p.m.  Bishop Parsley, St. Andrew’s, Montevallo

**September 11, Sunday**
9:30 a.m.  Bishop Sloan, St. Simon Peter, Pell City

**September 24, Saturday**
5 p.m.  Bishop Parsley, St. Alban’s, Birmingham

**September 25, Sunday**
9:30 a.m.  Bishop Sloan, St. Luke’s, Scottsboro
11 a.m.  Bishop Parsley, St. Matthew’s, Madison

**September 28, Wednesday**
6:30 p.m.  Bishop Parsley, St. Andrew’s, Sylacauga (combined service for St. Andrew’s, Trinity in Alpine, and St. Mary’s in Childersburg)

**October 2, Sunday**
10:30 a.m.  Bishop Parsley, All Saints’, Montgomery
10:45 a.m.  Bishop Sloan, St. Francis’, Indian Springs

**October 5, Wednesday**
6 p.m.  Bishop Parsley, Holy Cross/ St. Christopher’s, Huntsville
6 p.m.  Bishop Sloan, Good Shepherd, Montgomery

**October 9, Sunday**
10 a.m.  Bishop Parsley, St. Michael and All Angels’, Anniston

**October 16, Sunday**
10:30 a.m.  Bishop Parsley, Grace, Mt. Meigs
10:30 a.m.  Bishop Sloan, St. Luke’s, Jacksonville

**October 19, Wednesday**
6:30 p.m.  Bishop Parsley, Trinity, Clanton
6:30 p.m.  Bishop Sloan, Messiah, Heflin

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**Deacons To Be Ordained on October 1**

Culminating a formal two-year formation program in our diocesan Deacon’s School for Ministry, the third class of candidates will be ordained to the Sacred Order of Deacons on October 1 at the Cathedral Church of the Advent in Birmingham. Bishop Parsley and Bishop Sloan will ordain the vocational deacons.

Our diocesan community is invited to attend the service, which begins at 10:30 a.m. A reception will follow.

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**Responding with Relief Supplies and Steadfast Prayer**

By the Rev. Richard R. Losch, Rector Emeritus of St. James’ in Livingston

St. James’ in Livingston may have only a handful of people, but no one can say we haven’t tried to do our part in responding to the storm disasters in April.

The day after Tuscaloosa was hit, we sent a pickup truck filled with cases of bottled water. Our parish house was filled to the brim with household goods and food that we gave to the Geiger United Methodist Church to be distributed in the Geiger area. We also collected a pickup truck full of household items to be distributed to the victims in Greene County. Finally, the people of our parish gave generously to Episcopal Relief and Development (ERD)—many sent their checks directly to ERD, but we collected $275 at St. James’ and then our vestry voted to add another $500 to that, sending $775 to our diocesan staff to be used at their discretion for tornado relief.

The most important thing, however, was—and still is—to pray for the victims and for those who minister to them.

The most important thing, however, was—and still is—to pray for the victims and for those who minister to them. Three months have passed since those terrible days, and it is all too easy to forget what happened. Those who have lost loved ones or have lost their homes will not forget so easily. It is important that we continue to keep them in our prayers. Never underestimate the power of prayer to ease their pain and to strengthen and encourage them in their distress.

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**Tornado Recovery for Alabama**

By Judy Quick, Our Diocesan Coordinator for Episcopal Relief and Development

As always, after the cameras have moved on to the next disaster, Episcopal Relief and Development remains. Katie Mears, manager for Episcopal Relief and Development’s U.S. Disaster Program, visited our diocese May 23 through 25, even as she was responding to the Joplin, Missouri, tornado. Katie visited multiple sites including Cullman, Pleasant Grove, Madison County, Pratt City, St. Clair County, and Tuscaloosa, and she regrets that time constraints prevented her from visiting all of the affected areas. Katie was impressed with the local parish responses and encouraged the many and varied efforts to meet the needs of those suffering in each community.

At Katie’s recommendation, our diocese submitted a grant proposal to Episcopal Relief and Development to fund case management, construction management, and building supplies for recovery and rebuilding. These grant monies combined with the generous donations to our diocesan Tornado Relief Fund will help meet the unmet needs in the areas where parishes are working.

In *Lamplight*, the newsletter of the U.S. Disaster Program, Katie notes, “Episcopal Relief and Development supports and equips dioceses to work with congregations as they work with communities to recover in the long term.” This is the same model that Episcopal Relief and Development follows for its relief and development work in more than 40 countries to help alleviate global poverty. It is an effective model that works wonders.

If you would like more information or a presentation on the work of Episcopal Relief and Development, please contact me at jgquick@bellsouth.net or 205/669-6862. You may also want to visit [www.er-d.org](http://www.er-d.org).
Deacons Give Voice to Needs of Tornado Survivors

By the Venerable Louise Thibodaux, Our Diocesan Archdeacon

When the storms struck on April 27, deacons from Selma to Huntsville sprang into action. Our diocese currently has 23 ordained deacons and 15 candidates for the diaconate.

Some deacons were among the first responders. Deacon candidate Jerry Jacob (Cullman) worked tirelessly with the injured receiving care at the damaged Good Samaritan Hospital. Ken Lewis (Alabaster) works for the Jefferson County Sheriff’s Department, and it was his job to ensure that people and property were safe. Thinking back over the events of that day, Ken wrote, “All I could think of was the sad fact that this rubble used to be a community. It is abundantly clear how much we need each other. O how I long that we could be one, as Jesus and the Father are one.”

Other deacons began mobilizing volunteers immediately for the ministries of recovery. Mary Groff (Guntersville) worked through the Guntersville Recovery Center praying with, anointing, and counseling people affected by the storms. Deacon candidate Marti Holmes (Birmingham) turned the narthex of St. Stephen’s parish into a hub for the distribution of supplies to the Cahaba Heights community.

Deacon Joanie Hammonds visited with the families in Sawyerville. She wrote, “I visited with people and listened to their stories. There is still so much pain on their faces. My parish (St. Paul’s in Selma) has adopted a family. Somehow . . . some way we will see them through from recovery to rebuilding.”

Deacon candidate Judy Quick (Montevallo) was in touch almost immediately with people from all over the United States. Through her role as our diocesan coordinator for Episcopal Relief and Development, Judy was able to offer reassurance that volunteers from far and near were keeping Alabama in their prayers and were already planning to help with the rebuilding. Judy wrote, “I am so moved at the outpouring of love and the desire to serve from near and far. God’s still small voice has spoken through each gracious and loving offer to serve. The mighty winds may have devastated communities around our state (more than 17 different locations), yet we Easter people look to the resurrection of our communities and of our lives.”

Deacon Mary Jane Taylor (Tuscaloosa) was at work when the tornado hit her neighborhood. Returning home, she said that she could barely recognize the street where she lived. The house where she and her husband, George, lived was damaged but still partly standing. Mary Jane wrote, “Finding my house intact next to a destroyed home, and my beloved safe but stunned; and then walking five houses down to see David Meginniss’s home ripped to shreds with only the sound of his fax machine emanating eerily from the rubble of complete destruction is still foremost in my mind . . . But there is no doubt that God was there. God was in the gentle breeze that wrapped around me and the man and woman in the field behind David’s house whom I hugged and prayed with as they cried in anguish over the death of their wife and mother. HE was with the 20 or more people who were on our roof the next morning at 6 a.m. with rolls of tarpaper and roofing supplies. HE was with the angels who appeared with sheets of plywood to cover all of our broken windows. HE was with the young man with North Carolina plates on his car who pulled into our neighborhood with a trunk filled with toilet paper. HE was with those ‘Tide for Hope’ folks who set up in a mall parking lot and washed and folded our laundry. HE was with those who provided candles, hot meals, cold water, generators, and chainsaws for we folk who were without power for days. HE also continues to be with those who have brought us small replacement trees for our yards, worked with massive piles of debris, and have continued to listen, comfort us, and hear our stories. I did not have to turn to look for hope because it was there, welling up inside of me from some invisible place and working through me in a million different ways, and because of this I am a truly changed person. I will never look at a stranger’s face in the same way again, and I will never look at life the same way either.”

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At ordination, each deacon promises to “interpret to the Church the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world.” This is what every deacon in our diocese has stepped out in faith to do. Thanks be to God.
Upcoming Events, Workshops, and Retreats

Annual Pilgrimage To Include a Historic Service

By the Rev. Deacon Carolyn Foster

Annual Jonathan Myrick Daniels and the Martyrs of Alabama Pilgrimage
Saturday, August 13, at 11 a.m. in Hayneville, Alabama

This year’s Jonathan Myrick Daniels and the Martyrs of Alabama Pilgrimage will include a Service of Remembrance, Repentance, and Reconciliation for the role the Episcopal Church played in the tragedy of slavery and the sin of racism. This special service is the culmination of a three-year project conducted by our diocesan Commission on Race Relations called “Past Imperfect Present Hope.” A timeline of the history of our diocese—beginning with our earliest parishes and going through the Civil War, Reconstruction, the Jim Crow years and segregation, and the turbulent civil rights period to the present time—will be on display for educational purposes as well as personal reflection.

Parishioners who served as their parish historians, the Rural Enrichment Accessing Community Hands Inc. (REACH), and members of our Commission on Race Relations worked together to plan this historic event. The service will focus on remembering the martyrs of Alabama, lamenting the Church’s role in the sin of racism, and focusing on ways to work for reconciliation and transformation, which is one of the gifts our diocese has to offer. Bishop Parsley will preach at the service, and the mayor of Hayneville and other elected officials will attend.

Jonathan Myrick Daniels, who was an Episcopal seminarian, answered the call of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to help register African American voters in Alabama. He was shot and killed on August 20, 1965, while shielding then-16-year-old Ruby Sales from a shotgun blast as she attempted to enter a store to buy something to drink. Jonathan was added to the Episcopal Church Calendar of Saints and Martyrs in 1994.

The pilgrimage, which is hosted by our diocese and our Commission on Race Relations, will begin at the Courthouse Square in Hayneville. The procession will lead to the old county jail, where Jonathan, Ruby, and others were detained for a week, and then move on to the former Cash Grocery Store, where Jonathan was killed. The pilgrimage will end at the Courthouse with the service of Holy Communion in the courtroom where an all-white jury acquitted Jonathan’s killer. The judge’s bench will serve as the altar for the Eucharist.

For more information please contact the Rev. Deacon Carolyn Foster at carolynjfoster@bellsouth.net or the Rev. Deacon Tom Osborne at trosborne@una.edu.

Retirement Celebration Honoring the Parsleys
October 28 at The Club in Birmingham

Tickets are available for a special dinner event celebrating our ministry as a diocese and Bishop and Becky Parsley’s life and ministry among us for the past 15 years.

For more information please visit http://dioala.org/gala.html or call Denise Servant at 205/715-2060 ext. 300.

“Transformation” Recovery Retreat
September 30-October 2 at Camp McDowell

For a transforming Recovery Retreat weekend, come to the best possible setting—Camp McDowell on September 30 through October 2. There are no charges for extra baggage—just bring your extra baggage and leave it there!

Our diocesan Department of Recovery Ministries is sponsoring this illuminating retreat, titled “Transformation: Choosing To Live in Hope….”

What Do You Do with the Fears?” Guest speaker Keith Miller, the best-selling author of the life-changing book The Taste of New Wine, has spoken at many seminars and coauthored 24 books on a multitude of life-altering subjects including Christian living, addictions and co-dependence, spiritual transformation, business, and devotions. The retreat weekend will include an Al-Anon workshop directed by Robyn Noble, who will share both her expertise and her vast experience working in clinical settings. The popular, highly requested group The Rev. Bude Van Dyke and Band will provide entertainment. Along with enriching programs, good food, music, and fellowship, participants will also be able to enjoy some moments to relax, unwind, reflect, and “Choose to live in HOPE.”

Chanticleer Returns!
October 7 at 7:30 p.m. at the Advent

Mark your calendars for Friday, October 7, at 7:30 p.m. when the Grammy Award-winning and world’s top male a cappella choir Chanticleer returns to the Cathedral Church of the Advent for the third time. This ever-popular group performed at a sold-out concert in 1999 and returned in 2004. Tickets are available through the Advent’s music office; please call 205/443-8553 or 205/226-3505 for more information. You can also purchase tickets online at http://www.virginiasamfordtheatre.org. For more about Chanticleer please visit www.chanticleer.org.

“Everyone, Everywhere 2011” Mission Conference
October 13-16 in Estes Park, Colorado

“We in the Diocese of Alabama have an amazing heart for mission. Our parishes boast a variety of outreach programs, and volunteers have served our brothers and sisters in Christ in Haiti, Honduras, and other developing countries. The “Everyone, Everywhere 2011” Episcopal Relief and Development mission conference on October 13-16 in Estes Park, Colorado, will give us a wonderful opportunity to learn more about domestic and global mission through workshops, presentations, and networking. For more information please visit www.episcopalchurch.org or http://events.signup4.com/everyoneeverywhere2011; or contact Judy Quick at jjquick@bellsouth.net or 205/669-6862.
WHAT’S NEW/NOTEWORTHY AT THE EPISCOPAL BOOK STORE

Crazy Talk and Crazy Book by Rolf A. Jacobson

So much of theology is confusing and intimidating. The concepts themselves have weighty-sounding names such as incarnatio and justification—and the explanations of the concepts sometimes can be more confusing than the names. The format of Crazy Talk is similar to a dictionary of theological terms—but with a twist of humor! Each entry includes the theological term, an ironic definition, and a short humorous essay offering a fuller explanation of the term. In making each term understandable, Jacobson concentrates on the big theological issue that is at stake in the term—and why it matters. More than 50 black-and-white illustrations complement the text. Crazy Book, which is very similar in tone and organization to Crazy Talk, focuses on major people, events, places, books, and types of literature in the Bible, and it communicates insights with passion, faith, and humor. Almost devoid of scholarly jargon but filled with scholarly insight, both books are bound to inform, entertain, and leave a lasting impression.

Devil’s Ink: Blog from the Basement Office by C. S. Jeffrey C. Pugh

This collection features fictionalized blog posts from Satan as he instructs, informs, ridicules, and occasionally encourages his demonic minions to “use those things that humans have created to help us reach our goals.” Written with a light hand and witty touch, Pugh’s work succeeds in showing the reader that Satan’s deceitful actions just might be defeated by simply doing the opposite of what he anticipates.

How To Read the Bible for All Its Worth by Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart

Understanding the Bible isn’t only for the few, the gifted, the scholarly—it’s meant to be read and comprehended by everyone. This book offers biblical interpretation for both beginning and experienced Bible readers. A few essential insights into the Bible can clear up many misconceptions and help you grasp the meaning of Scripture and its application to your 21st-century life. In clear, simple language, Fee and Stuart help you accurately understand the different parts of the Bible—their meaning for ancient audiences and their implications for you today.

Handel’s “Messiah”: Comfort for God’s People by Calvin R. Stapat

If you want to more deeply enjoy and appreciate Handel’s beloved “Messiah,” this informed yet accessible guide is the book to read. You will learn about the fascinating historical background of this beloved oratorio, including its unlikely inception, and learn about its reception and impact on people from Handel’s day to our own.

Mark Your Calendar

Cursillo Weekends #179 September 7-11 and #180 October 19-23

Ordination of Deacons October 1 at the Cathedral Church of the Advent in Birmingham

Retirement Celebration Honoring the Parsleys October 28 at The Club in Birmingham

Consecration of the 11th Bishop of Alabama January 7 at the Cathedral Church of the Advent in Birmingham

Diocesan Convention February 17-18 in Huntsville

August 13 Annual Jonathan Myrick Daniels and the Martyrs of Alabama Pilgrimage, including a Service of Remembrance, Repentance, and Reconciliation, at 11 a.m. in Hayneville. For more information please see “Annual Pilgrimage To Include a Historic Service” on page 22 or contact the Rev. Deacon Carolyn Foster at carolynfoster@helloulth.net or the Rev. Deacon Tom Osborne at trusborne@usa.edu.

September 24-25 Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of St. Alban’s in Hoover (Birmingham), including a Festival Service of Holy Eucharist with Bishop Parsley presiding at 5 p.m. on Saturday followed by a seated dinner and a Gospel Evesong featuring the UAB Gospel Choir with the Rev. Dr. A. B. Sutton, former pastor of Sixth Avenue Baptist Church preaching, at 5 p.m. on Sunday. For more information please contact St. Alban’s parish at 205/822-2330 or visit www.stalbansbham.org.

September 30-October 2 “Transformation: Choosing To Live in Hope . . . What Do You Do with the Fears?” retreat with guest facilitator Keith Miller, sponsored by our diocesan Department of Recovery Ministries at Camp McDowell. For more information please see the description on page 22, contact Sarah Sartain at ssartain@dioala.org or 205/715-2060 ext. 314, or visit www.dioala.org/ministries/recovery_ministries.

October 1 1st Annual Sawyerville Day Camp 5K Run/Walk to benefit the children of Hale County, sponsored by St. Paul’s in Greenboro. For more information please contact margaret.rankin@gmail.com.

October 7-8 “Seeing the Face of God in Each Other” workshop offered by our diocesan Commission on Race Relations at Trinity Church in Clanton. For more information please contact the Rev. Deacon Carolyn Foster at carolynfoster@helloulth.net or the Rev. Deacon Tom Osborne at trusborne@usa.edu.

October 13-16 “Everyone, Everywhere 2011 Mission Conference” offered by Episcopal Relief and Development at the YMCA of the Rockies in Estes Park Colorado. For more information please see the description on page 22, visit www.episcopalchurch.org, or contact Judy Quick at jgquick@helloulth.net or 205/669-6862.

October 15 14th Annual Angel Fest at St. Michael and All Angels’ in Millbrook, featuring unique arts and crafts, a silent auction, food, and entertainment, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. to benefit the community. For more information more information please call 334/293-3385 or email Leslie.Elkind@slbh.alabama.gov.

November 4-5 SPAFER 2011 Lecture Series featuring Bishop John Shelby Spong speaking on “Eternal Life” and Jesus for the Non-Religious.” For more information please e-mail spafe@spafe.org or visit www.safper.org.

Stapert will also lead you through the entire score and provide theological commentary on each musical setting, informing, ridiculing, and occasionally enlightening.

The First Christmas: A Changing-Picture Book illustrated by Sophy Williams

Looking for a little Christmas in August? Try this magical changing-picture book that tells the Nativity story in beautiful pastel artwork. Just lift the gatefold flaps, and watch the angels, shepherds, and Wise Men arrive in Bethlehem to share the joy of the birth of Jesus.

Nativity Porcelain Box

Consider this faux Limoge porcelain hinged keepsake trinket box for the special gift you are looking for at a reasonable price.

The Alabama Episcopalian Cited for Achievement

The Alabama Episcopalian received recognition for special achievement in church communication during the 2011 Episcopal Communicators Conference in Memphis this spring. Our bimonthly diocesan publication garnered the second-place Polly Bond Award of Merit in the General Excellence Category for a newspaper with a circulation greater than 12,000.

The paper was cited for its use of graphics, layout, design, and photo composition; for its content, significance, and fulfillment of purpose; and for its production values. In addition, it was recognized for the use of compelling photos and strength of its front page. “By far, this entry has the best front page,” said the judges.

The paper was also credited with a strong focus on youth and women as well as good use of guest columnist.

“You give readers something more intellectually engaging,” noted the judges. “Your commitment to your mission to help others comes through in your smart story selection . . . very impressive coverage of (the) Haiti earthquake.”

On production values, the judges said “Absolutely gorgeous! Top-notch production from cover to cover.”

The Alabama Episcopalian staff includes Norma McKitterick, editor; Miles Parsons, art director; and Denise Servant, circulation secretary. The Rev. Deacon Dave Drachlis, managing editor and diocesan communications coordinator, accepted the award on behalf of our diocese during the Polly Bond Awards banquet.
Tornado Recovery Work Continues In Our Diocese

Diocesan Disaster Response Team Report from the Rev. Bill King, Judy Quick, and David Whetstone

Three months after the devastating tornadoes of April 27, teams from parishes around our diocese and beyond are continuing to help in the recovery and rebuilding efforts in 17 areas in central and north Alabama. The volunteers are using chainsaws, shovels, and rakes to remove debris, help clear the land, and prepare to rebuild homes. Some parishes have adopted families with unmet needs in Birmingham, Huntsville, and Sawyerville as a way of offering comprehensive support for the rebuilding of homes and lives. Still other parishes are actively participating in local unmet needs and long-term planning committees, and one parish is maintaining our disaster trailer, which is filled with tools and other recovery equipment. One of our deacons is currently building a portable shower trailer for use by volunteer groups who are staying in parish facilities.

The generous financial donations from 30 states that continue to flow into our diocese together with two recovery grants from the Episcopal Relief and Development are helping fund these ongoing efforts. We have received inquiries from more than 50 volunteer groups from at least a dozen states, and groups continue to arrive weekly from around the Southeast and Midwest. These groups are working in Cullman, DeKalb County, Hackleburg, Huntsville, Pratt City (Birmingham), Sawyerville, St. Clair County, and Tuscaloosa.

A major shift in response efforts is now under way as case management work (interviewing families and identifying unmet needs) is taking place in Birmingham, Cullman, Sawyerville, and Tuscaloosa. With unmet needs cases beginning to come before our local response teams, we will soon start reconstruction.

Much remains to be done this year and into 2012 to complete our diocese’s commitment to respond to unmet needs. Our Diocesan Disaster Response Team meets weekly at Carpenter House to receive updates on work that’s under way, brief our bishops and senior diocesan staff, and allocate resources to local response sites as requested.

For more information please contact the Rev. Bill King at bp3king@bellsouth.net (working with efforts in Cullman, Dadeville, Eclectic, DeKalb/Jackson/and Marshall Counties, and Tuscaloosa), Judy Quick at jgquick@bellsouth.net (Hackleburg/Phil Campbell, Huntsville, Pratt City in Birmingham, Sawyerville, and St. Clair/Calhoun Counties), and David Whetstone, Tornado Volunteer Coordinator at whetstone@cableone.net or 256/282-9769. Also please visit www.dioala.org/Misc/volunteer.html for additional information and an application form.

The Alabama Episcopalian

The Alabama Episcopalian is published six times a year (January/February, March/April, May/June, July/August, September/October, and November/December). For the most current news about recent and upcoming events, please visit our diocesan Web site, www.dioala.org.

Please send stories and photographs (color, if available) to Editor Norma McKittrick at apostledit@aol.com or 2156 Kent Way, Birmingham, AL 35226; the submission deadline for each issue is the 1st of the month prior to publication. Postmaster, parishes, and individuals, please send all address changes or additions to Circulation Secretary Denise Servant at dservant@dioala.org or Carpenter House, 521 North 20th Street, Birmingham, AL 35203–2682.

Keep up with the latest news from around our diocese between issues of The Alabama Episcopalian on our diocesan Web site, www.dioala.org. If you are not already receiving our “Web Site Update,” you can sign up to receive a weekly e-mail containing headlines with links to the latest news, photos, and videos about and from around our diocese. Simply send an e-mail with your name and e-mail address to ddrachlis@dioala.org and put “Headlines” on the subject line. You can “opt out” anytime.