



# The Alabama EPISCOPALIAN

The Episcopal Diocese of Alabama

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“I have given you an example,  
that you should do as I have done.”

John 13:15

# Weaving a Tapestry of Mission and Outreach in Our Diocese

By the Rev. Bill King



Much can be written about the acts of goodness, charity, and justice practiced by those most dedicated to outreach in the Diocese of Alabama over the past 30 years. This issue of *The Alabama Episcopalian* is both a review and a forward

look into the great strides taken by parishes in collaboration with our diocese in the areas of outreach and mission over the most recent years.

In the late 1970s, it was primarily our diocese that funded direct outreach ministries through grants in our diocesan budget. Today our diocese primarily provides start-up funding to parishes wishing to initiate outreach ministries like food pantries, community gardens, childcare for Hispanic children, and welcoming baskets for newborns, as well as partial funding for specialized ministries including Hispanic ministries and ministry to the Deaf. With start-up grants, parishes can then continue to maintain outreach and mission ministries from their operating budgets and special local gifts. Parishes directly invested more than \$1,500,000 in 2007 in outreach and mission ministries, as reported through their Annual Parochial Reports.

Our diocese also encourages mission initiatives both domestically and internationally in partnership with parish resources. Of the almost \$100,000 generated in 2007 for our current companion diocese relationship with Haiti, our diocesan budget included support at a level of \$20,000 with an additional \$80,000 coming from parishes and local gifts, not including costs of parishioners traveling to Haiti on diocesan-sponsored trips.

Today it is the norm that just about every one of our 92 parishes and worshiping communities is directly involved with caring for the homeless through programs like Hospitality Network or Habitat for Humanity; or feeding the hungry through numerous nutrition, community gardens, and food-distribution ministries in Anniston, Auburn, Clanton, the Woodlawn and Southside areas of Birmingham, Fayette, Huntsville, Mentone, Montgomery, Selma, and Tuscaloosa; or concern for the elderly with subsidized HUD programs in Gadsden and Birmingham; or health clinics in Anniston, Decatur, and Cullman; or English as a Second Language programs directed to Hispanic immigrants in Alabaster, Albertville, Birmingham, and Montevallo; or Jubilee Ministries stretching from Athens to Montgomery; or partnerships with inner-city public schools in Anniston, Birmingham, and Montgomery; or the Sawyerville (Hale County) youth camp initiated by some of our young adults more than 15 years ago; or the Kairos ministry now in just about every state prison; and on and on. Today Camp McDowell provides summer camping experiences for those with HIV/AIDS and their caregivers as well as the Special Session, with both camps drawing on the talents of members of parishes from across our diocese. Today more and more parishes of all sizes are on the front line of servant ministries providing direct care to the poor, the hungry, the homeless,

those of all ages with educational and special needs, not to mention generous responses of human talent and financial support at times of natural disasters such as Hurricane Katrina or the 1998 Level 5 tornadoes in Tuscaloosa and western Jefferson Counties that brought together Lutheran and Episcopal outreach efforts for the first time, or the tornado in the winter of 2008 that cut through Prattville in Autauga County bringing together responders from the surrounding parishes in Autauga, Chilton, Elmore, and Montgomery Counties.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, giants of social ministries were scattered around our diocese with very little organizational support. Taylor Wingo, George Quiggle, Maurice Branscomb, Jeanne Johnston, Bill Yon, and Jim Tuohy walked urban streets surveying neighborhoods to determine what the needs of the poor might be. So many others were involved in developing agencies like the Interfaith Mission Service in Huntsville, the Jubilee Center in Montgomery, and the Greater Birmingham Ministries in Birmingham. These new kinds of ecumenical ministries of faith-building communities based on the principles of justice and social engagement formed the foundation blocks for the emergence of Alabama Arise in the 1990s and the Alabama Faith Council established in the early 21st century.

One person who transcends these past 30 years and continues to witness and participate in the growth of outreach and mission in our diocese is the Rev. Jim Tuohy. Jim was serving as the director of the Interfaith Mission Service in Huntsville in the late 1970s when Bishop Furman "Bill" Stough invited him to return to full-time active ordained ministry. Jim went on to serve parishes in Birmingham, Anniston, and Montevallo in pivotal aspects of outreach ministries. In the 1980s Jim, who was then serving St. Andrew's in Birmingham, witnessed the development of campus ministry at UAB including a Visiting Religious Scholar program, the establishment of a soup kitchen at St. Andrew's as the beginning of Community Kitchens, the establishment of Southside Ministries (now Bridge Ministries), and the continued growth of the St. Andrew's Foundation, a residential program for adults with disabilities established by the Rev. Francis Walter. Moving on to St. Michael and All Angels' in Anniston, Jim continued to encourage the growth of St. Michael's Community Clinic, a free medical clinic adjacent to the church; the beginning of an AIDS treatment program; and the Habitat for Humanity program in Calhoun County. Moving to St. Andrew's in Montevallo in the late 1990s, Jim again promoted campus ministry including the new Canterbury House for University of Montevallo students that will be built with funds from our diocesan ACTS 2 capital campaign, ecumenical and interfaith partnerships at the community level, and English as a Second Language. What a tapestry of servant ministry Jim has woven over the past three decades that mirrors what was beginning to take place throughout our diocese during the same time period.

In conversation with Jim Tuohy during Easter week, he acknowledged his participation in so many ministries initiated within our diocese since 1980, but he also quickly added that the basis for all of our outreach and mission work comes from the teaching of Jesus when he spoke to his disciples on the Mount of Olives shortly before he was crucified. Jim reminded me that our theological and spiritual basis for what

## *The Alabama Episcopalian* May-June 2009

This issue is dedicated to mission and outreach. Through their gracious and generous outpouring of time, energy, and resources, individuals and parishes are sharing God's love and meeting the needs of our sisters and brothers across Alabama, our nation, and our world. The stories on the following pages represent just a sampling of the almost countless mission and outreach projects initiated and supported by the people of our diocese.

For more information please visit our diocesan Web site at [www.dioala.org](http://www.dioala.org) or contact Judy Quick, the chair of our Department of Mission and Outreach and also our Episcopal Relief and Development (ERD) representative, at [jgquick@bellsouth.net](mailto:jgquick@bellsouth.net) or 205/669-6862; the Rev. Deacon Steve Shanks, our Jubilee Ministry Officer, at [srshanks@gmail.com](mailto:srshanks@gmail.com) or 205/960-1826; our Companion Diocese Commission cochairs Anne Kimzey at [hanahanford@yahoo.com](mailto:hanahanford@yahoo.com) or Dave Drachlis at [ddrachlis@dioala.org](mailto:ddrachlis@dioala.org) or 205/715-2060; the Venerable Louise Thibodaux, our Archdeacon, at [lthibodaux@dioala.org](mailto:lthibodaux@dioala.org) or 205/715-2060 ext. 325; the Rev. Dr. Hernan Afanador, our Missioner for Hispanic Ministries, at [hernan\\_afanador@yahoo.com](mailto:hernan_afanador@yahoo.com) or 205/381-4885; or the Rev. Marianne Stephens, our Missioner for Deaf Ministries, at [mariannestephens@juno.com](mailto:mariannestephens@juno.com) or 205/967-1437 (Relay Center 711).

For the most current news about our diocese, please visit [www.dioala.org](http://www.dioala.org).

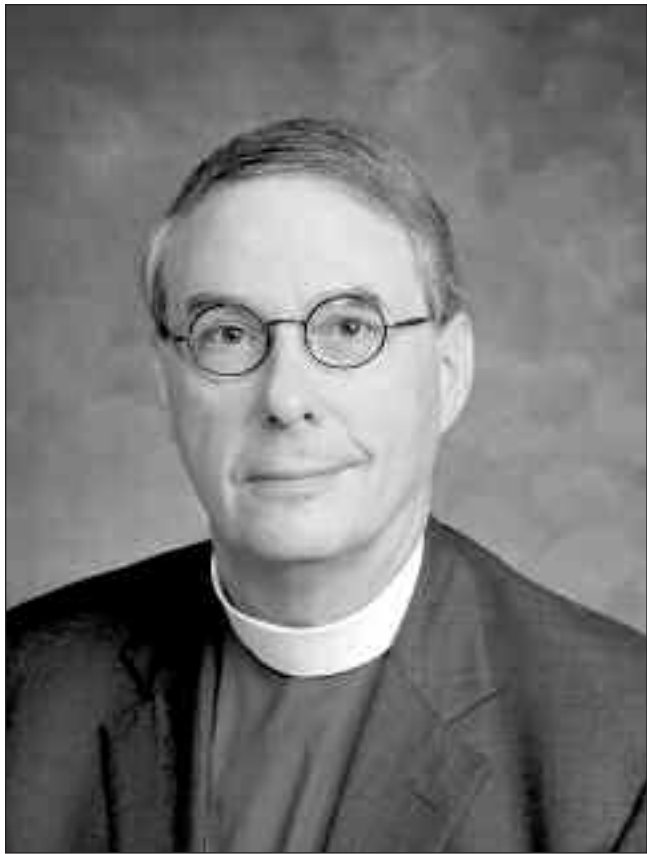
### On the Cover

Many thanks to Brenda Smith, an artist and a member of St. Thomas' in Huntsville, for the cover art for this issue. Brenda has created and donated several pieces of artwork to our diocese, including the images for a series of notecards that are used to raise scholarship funds for the Camp McDowell Special Session campers.

we do is this: "When I was hungry, you gave me food ... when I was thirsty, you gave me a drink of water ... when I was naked, you clothed me ... when I was sick, you visited me ... when I was in prison, you came to me" (Matthew 25: 31-46). "That," Jim emphasized, "is why we reach out to others who are in need. We reach out to others because Jesus is present in each person we care for. This we must do," he noted, "so that we may be followers of Jesus."

What a powerful teaching given to us by Jesus. A teaching that was understood in the earliest church at Antioch. Acting on the words of Jesus, the local congregation instructed Barnabas and Paul to take relief funds to the saints in Jerusalem where there was widespread hunger due to a famine (Acts 11: 27-30). What we do today in caring for the hungry, the homeless, those with AIDS, the unemployed, children in need, the elderly who are alone, and our brothers and sisters without clean water to drink in places like Haiti, Honduras, Malawi, and Namibia is what the Church has been called to do since the very beginning of the community of Christian faith 2,000 years ago.

Today the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Alabama continues to weave a tapestry of mission and outreach now almost 180 years old, a tapestry of caring for others in need from the youngest child to our oldest seniors, from those who are sick and without resources to those who might be physically or emotionally challenged, from those who are hungry for food to eat to those starving for dignity and self-worth. The following pages offer us a new and exciting view of this living tapestry and so challenge us all to become more deeply involved in ushering the Kingdom of God into our midst by acting on the words of Jesus.



Photograph by Billy Brown

One of the most moving resurrection stories is John's account of Mary Magdalene weeping alone at the tomb. Through her tears she sees a man who gently asks, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She supposes that it is the gardener, until he speaks her name, "Mary." Then she sees that it is the risen Christ.

I have always felt that her natural-enough assumption that the man she saw was the gardener was entirely incongruous, bordering on the comical. The last thing I could imagine the risen Christ seeming to be was a gardener! Until I read a poem by Wendell Berry that concludes with these words:

Be still. A man who seems to be  
A gardener rises out of the ground,  
Stands like a tree, shakes off the dark,  
The bluebells opening at his feet,  
The light a figured cloth of song.

# Christ the Gardener

These words stirred my imagination. His way of describing the resurrection suddenly made me see how very appropriate and powerful it was for the risen Christ to be seen as a gardener. For in a very real way this is an aspect of who he is.

Christian theology, beginning with Paul, has always described Christ as the "new Adam," the one who reverses

*Dirt on his wounded hands, I would imagine, his feet firmly planted in the soil, the morning dew in his eyes, the rising sun lighting up his face fresh from the coils of death. This is Christ the Gardener who Mary saw that resurrection morning in Jerusalem. Our mission as Jesus' followers is born in that moment. The mission is to proclaim the life-transforming news of the resurrection and to share in Christ's ministry for the repair of the world.*

the ancient fall of the first Adam and regains for us paradise lost. Now the first Adam was unquestionably a gardener, placed in Eden to care for and tend God's garden. How very right it is then for the new Adam, the risen Christ, to seem to be a gardener and servant as he reveals the way to the new creation accomplished by his victory on the cross. Dirt on his wounded hands, I would imagine, his feet firmly planted in the soil, the morning dew in his eyes, the rising sun lighting up his face fresh from the coils of death. This is Christ the Gardener who Mary saw that resurrection morning in Jerusalem.

Our mission as Jesus' followers is born in that moment. The mission is to proclaim the life-transforming news of

the resurrection and to share in Christ's ministry for the repair of the world. At its heart is the recovery of our original vocation as the stewards and servants of God's good earth. Our human brokenness is that we see the world as our possession to be exploited for personal gain, rather than God's creation for which we are called to care. Our faith calls us forward to recover that vocation. To proclaim the resurrection is to proclaim radical hope for the healing and flourishing of the world.

In the new Adam we are all meant to be gardeners, those who serve and care for creation. The resurrected life here and now is meant to open our eyes to the world and show us our true role not as consumers or exploiters of life but as servants.

What do gardeners do? They take the living seeds that God has made and plant them in the good earth. They water and feed the plants to see that they grow strong and fruitful. They weed and prune the garden to protect the plants from harm and ensure good health. Finally, they harvest the flowers and fruits of the garden and share the abundance with others. Every real gardener I have known is always giving flowers and fruits away to others, even as Christ gave the loaves and fish in their abundance.



The Compassionate Christ at the Cathedral Church of the Advent in Birmingham

The Church's mission is like that in one way or another. Planting, watering, feeding, pruning and weeding, harvesting and sharing. This is what we who follow the new Adam are called to do with our lives. When we live as gardeners, God's world flourishes and the abundance is shared by all. When we live only for ourselves, the earth mourns and suffers. The servant life, Jesus' life, is the way.

Surely in our time of environmental crises, our mission must recover the centrality of caring for the earth's resources and its beloved creatures. Environmental degradation is one of the most serious causes of poverty in the world. Loving our neighbor now means loving the earth as well. I believe that Christ the Gardener would have us, like Mary, follow him into our vocation as stewards of life.

"The Church lives by mission as a fire by burning," wrote Emil Bruner. It is the risen Christ, in the fire of the Spirit who ignites that mission. May Christ touch our hearts as he touched Mary's, calling us each by name. May the Spirit kindle our passion for service. May we plant our feet firmly in the soil and get our hands dirty caring for the world so that bluebells may open at the feet of many and the light be a figured cloth of song.

Yours in the risen Christ,

The Rt. Rev. Henry N. Parsley Jr.

## THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

**In the Diocese of Alabama**  
About 33,000 baptized members in 92 parishes and worshiping communities and 8 college campus ministries. Established in 1830.



**In the United States**  
A community of about 2.4 million members in 119 dioceses in the Americas and abroad. Established in 1789.



**The Anglican Communion**  
An 80-million-member worldwide community of 38 provinces.



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**POSTMASTER: Please send address corrections to Denise Servant, Circulation Secretary, The Alabama Episcopalian, 521 North 20th Street, Birmingham, AL 35203-2682.**



## A Nickel Bet on a Great Treasure

Hello, friends. I've been privileged through the years to be involved with several outreach projects and mission efforts, most especially medical missions to Honduras and summer camp sessions for people with mental and physical disabilities. I've also been on enough Habitat for Humanity worksites to realize that I'm mostly in the way there. From that range of experiences, I think I can say two or three things that might be worth your reading.

My experience is that working in the right ministry brings us great joy. I've listened for years with some amusement as people have told me what a wonderful person I must be for working with people with disabilities or for helping with a team taking medical and dental care to a small village in the mountains of Honduras. I don't want to be contrary or disagreeable, and sometimes I'm tempted to let them assume I'm more virtuous than I actually am, but almost always I wind up confessing that I have so much fun and learn so much from these things that I feel a little guilty. Over and over again I've learned about dignity and respect from people whose disabilities are more obvious than my own; over and over again I've learned about what it means to be thankful and loving from some of the poorest people in this hemisphere. I've been fortunate to be in a position to share the gifts and resources the rest of us have, but my experience is that we get much, much more out of any good ministry than we put into it.

All ministries are not for all people. What brings me deep joy might be very difficult, even painful for another person; what is life-giving and meaningful for someone else might be tortuous or draining for me. Most of the people with whom I've served in Honduras or at Special Sessions have loved it—but some, it must be said, haven't had such a good time. I want to be careful to give these folks credit for trying—they know it's a good thing to do, they're just in the process of figuring out that it's just not a good thing for *them* to do.

Six or seven years ago, when I was struggling to get clergy to be a part of the Special Session at Camp McDowell, I invited one of the more mature members of the clergy community, thinking that he would be perfect for the session and that he would get a lot out of it. He

thought about it for a moment or two and then told me no, that it just wasn't his sort of thing. While I was wondering how I could convince him otherwise, he told me a story of a day long ago when he was a young priest asking an older priest to join him in something that sounded like it wasn't something I'd have been interested in at all, and the older priest had said, "No, you do that for us." He said it took him a while to realize that this project he was very involved in was just not something that everybody else wanted to do. He said the older priest had blessed him and his efforts by saying "You do that for us," and that now he was going to pass that blessing on to me. I have to admit I thought he was just dodging me until the next time somebody started trying to talk me into signing up to come and work at the Habitat house my parish was building (it's a wonderful program that I support completely, but I am such a klutz with that sort of thing), and then it made perfect sense. "No," I said, "you do that for us."

Frederick Buechner wrote something like this: our true calling is where our deep joy meets the great need of the world around us. That's where we find our mission—at the intersection of what brings us joy and the needs of the world. Not every mission or outreach ministry is my cup of tea, but if I want to follow Jesus I need to find what I can do that is meaningful and live-giving to me and of value to someone else who is in need. There is no lack of need in the world; what seems to be lacking is our willingness to find what brings us joy in meeting it.

And third: just like everything else in the Church and in Christianity, it's all about love. The joy of servant ministry comes, our ability to meet another's need comes, and

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*I'll bet each of you a nickel that you'll be amazed at how much more you'll receive than you give if you find the right ministry for you, if you let it be about your sister or brother in Christ, and if you serve in love and joy.*

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the wonderful realization that we get more out of it than we put into it comes when we allow ourselves to get past the idea that it's all about us, when we know that the people we serve are just as much the children of God as we are, and when we put the welfare of another ahead of our own. That's the magic, that's the deep connection with our Lord Jesus who gave himself for us and invites us to lose our lives in order to gain them, who calls us to wash the feet of others, who said we will find Him in the least of those around us.

I invite you to find your deep joy and explore how it can lead you to meet the needs of the world around you. Then I suggest you offer yourself fully into God's love and service, forgetting yourself and giving your time and energy freely. I'll bet each of you a nickel that you'll be amazed at how much more you'll receive than you give if you find the right ministry for you, if you let it be about your sister or brother in Christ, and if you serve in love and joy.

The Rt. Rev. John McKee Sloan

## Jubilee Ministry Centers— Providing Refuge and Hope

By the Rev. Deacon Steve Shanks,  
Our Diocesan Jubilee Ministry Officer



When Jesus stood in the synagogue in Nazareth, unrolled the Isaiah scroll, and read God's promise of good news to the poor, of Jubilee—the Year of the Lord's Favor, he opened for us a window into the Kingdom of God. As we see the work of congregations, congregational clusters, and ecumenical clusters doing the work of compassion—feed-

ing, clothing, sheltering, and visiting, and the work of justice—speaking, teaching, and prophesying, we honor the commitment they are making to reflect to the world the generosity of God and the invitation to live in his Kingdom.

The concept of Jubilee was established by the words of Leviticus 25:10: "You shall hallow the fiftieth year, and you shall proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants." The stated goal of Jubilee Ministry in the Episcopal Church is to teach others to connect the *talk* of faith with the *walk* of peace and justice for all people. Jubilee Ministry is faith in action—*faith* that can be expressed as that which grows out of loving God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength and *action* that can be expressed as that which compels us to love our neighbor as ourselves. Jubilee Ministry seeks to hold these two important dynamics of our spiritual journey in tension so that God's reconciling work is known by our witness.

Jubilee Ministry Centers throughout our diocese serve as places of refuge and hope, living expressions of our Baptismal promise to seek and serve Christ in all persons.

**St. Timothy's in Athens** provides a multicultural preschool, tutoring, basic language skills programs, English as a Second Language classes, AA Groups (including a prison AA group) and a Hispanic Al-Anon, and a drop-in pantry.

**Christ Church in Fairfield (Birmingham)** provides CityWorks: The Fairfield Initiative, an interfaith Community Development Corporation that offers affordable housing with "strategic neighbors"; a literacy program; a thrift store; a prison ministry; and emergency services.



Providing healthcare

**Grace Church in Woodlawn (Birmingham)** provides 55th Place Thrift Store, Grace-by-Day, the Interfaith Hospitality House, emergency food packs three days a week at the Woodlawn Christian Center, Community Kitchens, and a Hispanic ministry.



Providing thrift shopping and raising funds for outreach

**Good Samaritan Health Clinic in Cullman** provides free primary healthcare for low-income, uninsured, and under-insured county residents; hearing testing; eye-disease exams; dental exams; free medications; and diabetic/nutrition education.

**St. John's in Decatur** provides a Community Free Clinic offering free healthcare and prescription drugs, health-related education programs, eye exams, and dental care; Parents and Children Together (PACT) offering services for at-risk families to prevent child abuse and neglect as well as child-wellness programs; and Camp Joy offering camping experience and adult and youth volunteers to serve at-risk children.

**Nativity in Huntsville** provides individual tutoring for reading, math, and computer skills in the Adult Learning Center of Huntsville; English as a Second Language classes; and the HEALS free medical clinics at target elementary schools.

**The Jubilee Community Center in Montgomery** provides an after-school program with tutoring and mentoring by volunteers from local colleges, entrepreneurial class for ages 15 and up, clothing, direct health services, the Jubilee Choir, youth-enrichment programs,

lobbying on issues affecting the community, job training, Vacation Bible School, and a free tax-filing service for working families.

**Chattahoochee Valley Episcopal Ministry Inc. (CVEM) supported by St. Matthew's in Seale and St. Stephen's in Smith Station** provides direct economic assistance; continued community revitalization efforts; programs for children and youth; women's mentoring; housing advocacy; services related to homelessness, race relations, and prison inmates; and a Peace and Justice Group that meets regularly to study social issues and offer forums and other means of education and action.

**Bishop Parsley and Bishop Sloan invite every congregation in our diocese to examine the work they are doing with and among the poor, both here in Alabama and around the world, and prayerfully consider applying for designation and affirmation as a Jubilee Ministry Center. Holy Trinity in Auburn and Trinity in Clanton** are currently in the process of applying to become Jubilee Ministry Centers.

Sometimes a Center starts with a single congregation that wants to begin walking in faith. Sometimes it begins with a cluster of churches within a community that perceive a need to serve the poor in a particular way. Any of these congregations or clusters of congregations can become designated by the Episcopal Church as a Jubilee Ministry Center if they agree to do one or more of the following: advocacy on behalf of the people they serve, empowering staff and volunteers to connect their work with their Baptismal vows, evangelizing through prayer or pastoral presence, and inviting others to share in worship. In this way all Jubilee Ministry Centers give back to God through what God has given them.

**For more information about applying to have your outreach initiative designated a Jubilee Ministry Center, please contact the Rev. Steve Shanks, Diocesan Jubilee Ministry Officer, at [srshanks@gmail.com](mailto:srshanks@gmail.com) or 205/960-1826.**



Providing education and childcare

# A Mountaintop Experience

By C. Jenkins Ross, RN, of St. Francis of Assisi in Indian Springs Village, with an introduction by the Rev. Deacon Dave Drachlis, Cochair of Our Companion Diocese Commission



During the past two and a half years, we in the Diocese of Alabama have been on a journey with our companions in the Episcopal Diocese of Haiti. It has been a journey in mutual mission. Through worship and work and the sharing of our resources, we have enabled and continue to support much-needed medical, nutrition, education, water, disaster relief, and other important ministries of the Episcopal Church in Haiti. Since beginning our journey together, 10 mission teams from Alabama have visited Haiti, where they have worshiped and worked side by side with our Haitian sisters and brothers. Along the way we have learned much about true hospitality, faith, and hope—and we have touched and been touched by God’s perfect, abundant, unconditional love.

In February C. Jenkins “CJ” Ross, RN, led the first medical team from our diocese to backpack to the remote mountain village of Crochu, where they set up a three-day clinic and provided lifesaving and much-welcomed healthcare to more than 300 patients. Here she reflects on the challenges and joys of that very special mission.



Villagers assisting the Alabama medical team on their way to Crochu

It has now been 10 weeks since I traveled to Crochu with five other hearty souls from Alabama, an eight member Haitian medical team, and the prayers and support of

countless others. It is often said that it is the journey rather than the destination that offers the greatest joy and satisfaction. This adventure to Crochu, with all of its obstacles and opportunities, was a true gift of joy.

Crochu is a remote village isolated in the mountains some 2,000 feet above Haiti’s Plaine du Cul-de-Sac. Accessible only by horseback or on foot, it has no electricity or running water. The nearest source of water—a natural spring—is a 40-minute walk from the village. It is an impoverished village, even by Haitian standards, and Haiti is the most impoverished country in the Western Hemisphere. Malnutrition in children is common, and the overall health of the people is poor. Medical care is hours from Crochu, and most can’t afford it anyway—and yet here we found a faithful, loving, joyful, and hopeful community.

We came to Crochu to support Carmel Valdema, who is a Haitian public health nurse, and her husband, Father Fritz Valdema, who is the priest in charge of St. Simeon Parish. The parish consists of six Episcopal churches and schools in geographically separate communities, the most remote and poorest being Crochu. Carmel has established a mobile nutrition clinic for malnourished children, and she spearheads an effort to bring much-needed medical care to the communities served by her husband. Together she and Pere Val, as her husband is known, make an incredible team.

Melissa Strange, a member of St. Mary’s on-the-Highlands in Birmingham; Susan Black, a registered nurse also from St. Mary’s on-the-Highlands; Camille Cornett, a registered nurse from Grace in Mt. Meigs; and a husband-wife team of doctors from Mobile, Daniel Preudhomme, who is a pediatrician/gastroenterologist, and Carol, who is an internist/gerontologist, accepted the invitation to join me on this mission trip. We knew we were especially blessed when Carol and Daniel, both of whom speak Creole and French, enthusiastically answered the call to be part of our team. Carol was born in Haiti and left the country with her mother as a very young girl during the political unrest of the Duvalier family regime. Our mission trip was an answer to Carol’s longtime prayer for an opportunity to return to her people and bring a special gift of healing.

We arrived in Haiti on February 21 with several hundred pounds of supplies including more than 200 pounds of powdered milk and a sample of a new protein supplement for Carmel’s nutrition program, an IV setup, and gallons of concentrated medications, plus syrups, pills, and wound-care items. We spent our first three nights at the St. Simeon Church rectory in Croix des Bouquets. It was my first experience to sleep under a

mosquito net. Although we were taking antimalarial medication, I began to appreciate the need to provide these simple nets to people in third-world countries. On Sunday we worshiped with our Haitian brothers and sisters, and on Monday we conducted a medical clinic at Pere Val’s church in Gorman.

After dinner the night before we left for Crochu, the Alabama team, Carmel, and some members of her support staff sat around the table in the rectory and said Compline, which the Haitians among us had never done before. I read in English while Carol translated into Creole. It was a special moment—one of those “thin places” where Christ’s presence comforted and bound us together as one in his love.

The trip to Crochu for our 14-member joint Haitian/American medical team began Tuesday morning



This small stone church high in the mountains above Port au Prince served as home and medical clinic.

with all of us sandwiched in the back of a Toyota Safari-type vehicle. Our beloved driver, Jimmy, skillfully maneuvered us up a narrow, twisting, storm-rutted dirt road better suited for the donkeys, cows, and goats we encountered from time to time along the way. Our vehicle rocked and rolled from side to side as the tires slipped and slid on the boulder and rock-strewn road. Some in our group covered their eyes to avoid looking into the deep ravines that fell away from the narrow trail’s edge.

Finally the vehicle stopped—the truck could go no farther. We would have to hike from here. We were to have been met by a group of villagers who would escort us and help us carry our supplies the rest of the way to our destination, but we had arrived early, before the villagers and before our supply truck that was to follow. So like good soldiers we put what we had on our backs and began the hour-plus hike in the hot tropical sun. As we headed down a steep trail into a deep ravine cut by last year’s hurricanes, someone offered, “This isn’t so bad.” It was an omen of things to come.

Soon one of our team members began showing signs of possible heat stroke. We laid him beside some scrub



Nurse Camille Cornett holding an infant patient during a one-day clinic in Gorman



Melissa Strange entertaining a young Haitian

we sang with them as we resumed our journey. It was another of those moments where you feel an overwhelming sense of God's presence.

Men, women, and children were already waiting patiently when we arrived at the stone church that was to become our clinic and our home while we were on the mountain. It had a cement floor, open-air windows, a rusting tin roof, and bent metal doors that made a scraping sound when they were opened. We set up our clinic, and after a quick lunch began seeing patients. By 6 p.m. when we closed the clinic, we had seen 120 people. In Crochu, where there is no electricity, the sun governed the length of our days.

Before we left for Haiti I had heard that for our security the team would be locked in the church at night without access to the outside privy. So with the



Dr. Carol Preudhomme (left) and nurse CJ Ross talking with a patient

prospect-turned-reality of sleeping with 15 to 20 others with only one "slop jar" among us, I used red-and-white checkered tablecloths, twine, clothespins, and of course duck tape to create a private area on the raised floor behind the altar. Our nighttime bathroom became an examining room and to our surprise a labor-and-delivery room by day.

The nights were as cold as the days were hot. Our generous hosts provided a bucket of their precious water for us to use to wash. We were so grateful, and we treated it with the reverence and care of a chalice running low on consecrated wine.

It rained one night, a hard tropical rain that sounded like the Blue Men group playing drums on the tin roof of the church. I wondered, and can't imagine, what it must have been like for the people of this village, who live in fragile homes with walls of mud and roofs of palm

bushes—no trees here—in what shade we could find. Fortunately the villagers arrived from Crochu bringing more water and donkeys. We rested and rehydrated. The villagers began to sing prayers of healing, as is their custom, for our team member, and

we sang with

fronds, when the hurricanes came through last fall.

We began to stir just before daybreak, and to our amazement we found more than 50 people outside sitting quietly on wooden benches and the ground waiting patiently for the clinic to open. We learned later that many had walked for as long as two days to reach us.

After a quick breakfast of Haitian (spicy) peanut butter, bread, and fruit, we set up and opened the clinic. As the metal doors scraped open, a woman came and lay down at my feet in pain and obviously pregnant. She had been carried from her home more than an hour's walk away by family and friends on a makeshift stretcher made with a mattress strapped between two poles. She was dehydrated and had been in labor for two days. The lack of properly trained midwives in Haiti is an issue, and it was fortunate that they had found us. But this was going to be a difficult delivery, and we were concerned that we might lose the baby or the mother. Fortunately we had brought an IV kit from Alabama—we were the first of our diocesan medical missions to do so, and we put it to good use.

Susan stayed with the woman during labor while the doctors and we nurses continued to see patients on the other side of the "private" area. Melissa and I took turns checking in, hydrating, and supporting the mother (and Susan) during contractions. Each time we checked, we could still hear the baby's heartbeat, and that gave us hope. Then we realized that our patient was going to need surgical assistance to deliver her baby normally—



Members of the joint Alabama/Haitian medical mission team paused to say a prayer on the slab of St. Alban's Episcopal Church in Crochu; the 2008 hurricanes destroyed the church.

but we had no suture kit and no Pitocin for post-delivery use.

Thanks be to God that in that place where there are no roads, no motorized vehicles, no water, and no electricity, cell phones sometimes work. We called Pere Val and asked him to get the needed supplies, and an elderly woman from the village volunteered to hike 7 miles down the mountain to meet him. She made it back just before the baby was delivered. When the baby let out its first mighty cry, everyone in the clinic broke into cheers. Camille and I hugged and cried and thanked God for his miracle of life. Daniel and I placed the baby girl on the altar so we could clean and examine her—what better use of God's table than as a place to accept his precious gift of life! The mother and father named the baby girl Susan in honor of our team



Nurse Susan Black with her newborn namesake and the baby's parents; Susan attended to the infant's mother throughout the labor and delivery.

member who had stayed with the mother and helped her through the delivery.

Carmel completed the surgical procedure, and as our workday drew to a close, we said good-bye to our baby and her family. Mom and the swaddled newborn were placed back on the traveling bed—how present for me was the vision of Mary, Joseph, and baby Jesus. As the villagers began their journey back over the mountain, everyone began singing in thanksgiving and praise for all God had given us that day. Later, as the sun was setting and we were preparing for our final night on the mountain, we heard the distant sound of "angels" still singing and caught a final glimpse of the villagers as they crested a distant hill.

It had been a good day. We had delivered a baby and maybe saved a life. We had seen some 187 other patients and would see 120 more in the morning before beginning our own trek off the mountain and home. But this day was special . . . we had been touched by Providence and experienced fully the amazing grace of God.

**For more about our companion diocese relationship and additional photos of this mission as well as accounts of other mission trips, please visit our diocesan Web site, [www.dioala.org](http://www.dioala.org). For more about how you can participate in future missions as a volunteer or by providing supplies and other support, please contact Anne Kimzey at [hanahanford@yahoo.com](mailto:hanahanford@yahoo.com) or Dave Drachlis at [ddrachlis@dioala.org](mailto:ddrachlis@dioala.org) or 205/715-2060.**



Drs. Carol and Daniel Preudhomme leaving Crochu and starting the long trek back down the mountain

# Building a Seminary and Training Church Leaders in Namibia

By the Rev. William A. Yon, a Retired Priest of Our Diocese

I was driving James Kauluma, the newly elected bishop of Namibia, to the Birmingham airport in the spring of 1978. Along the way, he mentioned that one of the things he hoped to do when he got back to Namibia was to build a training center. "That's two of the things I like best," I said. "Building and training. Maybe I can come help someday." The bishop said, "That would be wonderful." The matter then lay dormant, but not forgotten, for the next seven years.

Bishop Kauluma was approaching graduation from Union Seminary in New York. The Diocese of Alabama, pursuant to a goal of giving away half its money, had allocated \$30,000 for a multicultural kindergarten in Windhoek, the capital of Namibia. Formerly known as Southwest Africa, and before that German Southwest Africa, Namibia was Africa's last colony, still under the control of the Republic of South Africa, years after every other African colony had gained its independence. My affinity for southern Africa had first been awakened by reading *Cry, the Beloved Country* in 1955. Now here was this serendipitous connection to Namibia, arising from Alabama's stewardship commitment to extend its support of mission work outside our diocese.

In the spring of 1984, James Kauluma once more made a visit to Alabama. His presence nudged to the front burner the long-dormant question of our working in Namibia. As Lib and I sat by the pool one afternoon, I said, "Do we want to go to Namibia or not?" It took about 60 seconds to decide. "Let's do it!" It was a wholeheartedly joint decision. In the fall of 1985, we made the leap of faith and settled in the little mining town of Tsumeb. Our assignment was to resurrect an effort to train Church leaders. The old mission center, which had produced most of the Church's leadership, had been largely demolished in the long-running war between the Namibian independence forces and South Africa.

Train who to do what? Nothing had been specified. It would be up to us to figure out what to do and how to do it. One thing we knew: we had better not try to figure it out by ourselves. The bishop appointed an excellent committee to help us get our bearings. The single most valuable insight during that confab came from Shihala Hamupembe, who would later succeed James Kauluma as bishop: "What we need most is to overcome our missionary-dependent mentality." The Anglican Church had been planted in Namibia by missionaries from England and South Africa who brought the money with them. American Bishop Robert Mize had been especially successful in raising money from the United States to build churches and fund their operation. In the ensuing years, we would learn the significance of Shihala's comment. As plans would be envisioned for new work and the question raised about how to pay for it, the wistful hope would be expressed, "Perhaps our friends from overseas can help." A central element of our task would be to help Church leaders

learn to rely more on their own resources, and for two years we focused mostly on training lay leaders with special emphasis on stewardship education.

In 1987 Bishop Kauluma was invited to be the preacher at Trinity Institute in New York. He returned home to report that he had been encouraged to submit an application to the Trinity Grants program to assist in Namibia's training efforts. This prospect of substantial funding made it possible to consider for the first time a program to prepare a new generation of ordinands. Trinity approved a grant of \$40,000 for a pre-ordination training program. Twelve candidates were selected to begin a two-year residential program, and Lib and I would be the faculty. **When people later asked what we did in Africa, I would say: "We were a seminary."**

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*I called Jeremy Lucas, who had some of the same kind of training that had given me the temerity to imagine that I could undertake an innovative training ministry.*

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The Diocese of Alabama had been raising money for a number of years to build a "Camp McDowell in Namibia," a center to train youth and lay leaders. With some of those funds the Diocese of Namibia had acquired a working farm, and the decision was made to construct a small conference center there for the training program. My design for the buildings was accepted, and we supervised a team of workers to begin construction. After a year in the guest house in Tsumeb, we moved to the training center, called *Etameko* ("Genesis"), and the students joined me in putting some of the finishing touches on the buildings.

Our students had very limited education ranging from virtually nothing to ninth grade. All of them had been active and effective lay ministers, however, and they were responsive to our very basic curriculum. Eventually 11 were ordained priests and placed in the large rural parishes. On our return visit in 1998, the bishop said that they were the "backbone of the Anglican Church in Namibia."



Desmond Tutu, Lib Yon, Leah Tutu, and Bill Yon in Tsumeb, Namibia, in 1987

Our years in Namibia were a significant watershed in our personal journey. **Paradoxically, as we moved half a world away, we felt ourselves to be right at the heart of the Diocese of Alabama. We discovered that we had become a "worthy cause."** We received gifts of money, unsolicited, to assist with our work, and Bishop Stough made visits to Namibia on three different occasions. Episcopalians like to pray for missionaries. Upon our return home, many people said they had been praying for us every Sunday for the past four years. "Don't stop now!" I said.

Our Namibia years marked our personal BC-AD turning point. From then on we seemed to refer to everything as "before we went to Namibia" or "after our return."

**Fast forward to 2006.** A call came from Jamie Callaway, still director of Trinity Grants. He had visited Namibia, and they were once more in need of help to replenish their supply of clergy. Would I recruit a team to visit Namibia and help develop a plan? I was given a free hand to select my teammates, and **I called Jeremy Lucas, who had some of the same kind of training that had given me the temerity to imagine that I could undertake an innovative training ministry.** "We've been thinking about Africa," he said, so Jeremy and Penny and I became the team, joined by two priests from Manchester, England.

We put together another proposal to Trinity Grants, which was successful, and in the process, Jeremy decided to apply for an appointment to join the effort on the ground. Under the splendid direction of Lukas Katenda, who had just completed two years at Virginia Seminary, a very ambitious program has begun with 50 candidates enrolled. In a diocese that has some 150,000 members and only 25 clergy serving in parishes, this would constitute a massive infusion of new leadership.

**Alabama and Namibia were in a companion relationship for six years in the 1980s. Missionary policy prevents a longer commitment than that, but it is my opinion that you cannot legislate friendship. Namibia remains my other home, and my friends there remain close to my heart and will until the day I die.**

# Evangelism and Mission

By the Rev. Canon Heidi E. Kinner, of the Cathedral Church of the Advent



**The New York Times** recently ran an article about Christian mission work in Africa written by Matthew Parris, a self-confessed atheist who grew up in Malawi.

Although he was loath to admit it, he said that the most effective aid work being done in Africa is conducted by Christian missionaries and by African Christian converts. He

wrote, "I've become convinced of the enormous contribution that Christian evangelism makes in Africa: sharply distinct from the work of secular NGOs, government projects, and international aid efforts. These alone will not do. Education and training alone will not do. In Africa, Christianity changes people's hearts. It brings a spiritual transformation. The rebirth is real. The change is good."

The article goes on to highlight a number of examples of this, and the author posits a number of reasons for the effective work of Christian missionaries. As a Christian, I was thrilled to read the article. **It confirmed**

*the truth that the Gospel changes lives and has the power to transform the world. The Gospel calls us into new life in Christ, a life that, through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, is less self-centered and more concerned with proclaiming and ushering in the Kingdom of God.*

*Evangelism should be, must be the fundamental component of all Christian mission work. To provide food and medical care is life sustaining, but to provide food and medical care and share the good news of Jesus Christ is life changing.*

That is why evangelism should be, must be the fundamental component of all Christian mission work. To provide food and medical care is life sustaining, but to provide food and medical care and share the good news

of Jesus Christ is life changing. The Gospel with its message of forgiveness and new life gives people hope and courage in the midst of this broken and chaotic world. The proclamation that the Kingdom of God is come near in the person and work of Jesus Christ provides the glorious vision for what the world will be one day and encourages us to make its presence known now.

The hope and vision that come with faith in Jesus provide the basis for true change, healing, and wholeness in the hard places of the world. Those whose lives have been transformed by a relationship with Jesus Christ find themselves hungering and thirsting for God's righteousness and justice in the world, not for their own sake or benefit, but for the sake and glory of God. **When that happens, the work, be it medical, building, or nutrition, becomes less about looking charitable and more about reaching out to God's children in need, and foreign aid is no longer a way to line one's one pockets but can be passed on in genuine love for the good of others.**

Sharing the faith and pointing to the Kingdom of God must be the backbone of all our mission work for therein lies the true hope for the transformation and renewing of the world. If you don't believe me, just listen to the atheist journalist Matthew Parris.

## The Blessings of Just Showing Up in Namibia

By the Rev. Jeremy Lucas, Missionary to Namibia from Our Diocese

It has been a year since Penny and I moved to Namibia as missionaries. In that time we have learned so much—especially about how much we don't know. It is true not only about the culture and language but also about what it means to do mission work.



Jeremy and Penny Lucas

This is not just true in Namibia but everywhere. We feel that mission is the area where you understand less the more you do it. But understanding is not the point of mission and neither are results or long-term outcomes. This is not to say that we don't feel called to be here or that we are not excited about our ministry in

Namibia. There are very important projects that we are involved in, and we feel called to give everything we can to this work. But **we have realized over this past year that if your mission work is about results you may have missed the point because mission is first and foremost about showing up.**

**Before we left for Namibia, our friend the Rev. Bill Yon told us that just saying yes to the possibility of being a missionary and making the commitment to go is the most difficult part of being a missionary. It's true, whether it's about being a missionary, serving at a soup kitchen, or**

**visiting someone in prison.** Showing up and trusting the Holy Spirit to lead the way is what it means to be a missionary, foreign or domestic. Making the decision to put yourself in the midst of suffering does not always mean you know what to do or how to do it. It does not mean that you have the capability to end that suffering, but showing up means that you allow yourself to be a witness to it. Chances are that if you go into a mission setting thinking that you have all the answers, it is likely you have been asking the wrong questions.

What we have experienced over the last year in Namibia has left our heads spinning. Namibia is a place of incredible beauty and unbelievable ugliness. Whenever we go into the far out places, we never really have any idea what to expect.

**A few months ago, while our friend Monica Romano was visiting, we had the opportunity to visit the parish outstation of Onakonghundi.** It was a long drive off the main road through the flooded bush, and it took us 45 minutes to finally arrive at a big tree and a structure made of sticks. We were told that this was the church, and inside we found pews made of half logs. We had the privilege and amazing opportunity to spend most of the day with the people who meet there as part of the HIV/AIDS support group. We listened to their stories of hope and sorrow. We prayed and sang with them about dancing on HIV and, with God, destroying the disease. We were served a traditionally prepared chicken and *omalodu*,



traditional millet beer. But what was most incredible and humbling about this meal was that it was offered only to us as honored guests. No one there ate it with us. This is an area of extreme and utter desperation. There are no employment opportunities, and the people live off what they grow and raise—and here we were eating their chicken. But the fact that we ate the meal that was prepared for us and accepted their hospitality was worth more than gold. **They had accepted us by offering their hospitality, and we had accepted them by eating and drinking what was offered. Before we left many of them told us that they had never touched a white person much less shared food with them. This experience reminded us again of the importance of leaving our places of comfort and showing up in places where we have no idea what to expect. The Holy Spirit was alive in that community, and we were blessed by the very simple act of showing up.**

**For more information about Jeremy and Penny's mission work, please visit <http://missiontonamibia.blogspot.com>.**

# Listen to the Spirit and Find Your True Joy

By the Rev. Deacon Thomas Osborne



The Rev. Deacon Thomas Osborne

*Missio* means *sent* in Latin. There is no mission without being sent—and there is no being sent without being called. **To act in mission is to respond to a call from God. The most important result of being obedient to your calling is that you will find your true joy: as our Prayer**

**Book says, in God's service is perfect freedom.**

I had known since childhood that I had a vocation to teach. Sometime in my thirties I was aware that I was being called to serve God in some other way as well, but I knew I was not called to the priesthood. In

an unguarded moment I once told my rector, “I wouldn’t have your job for the world!” and immediately realized that that was absolutely true.

So it wasn’t the priesthood. What then? At first I assumed my calling was to do more of what I had been doing, teaching—but for the Church. So I taught adult church school classes. I learned a lot myself about history, the Bible, and the Anglican tradition, but it was soon obvious to me that this was not what I was called to do.

The tragedy of racism and its effects on all of us had been on my heart for years. But how was one person supposed to do anything significant about something as large and ugly as racism? I was already involved in the Kairos prison ministry, and no one who does prison ministry in Alabama can avoid being acutely aware of the effects of racism.

**Then one night I had a dream.** I saw a clown figure jumping up and down trying to get my attention. And the odd thing was that in the dream I knew immediately that this was Jesus—the clown figure is always

Jesus. Then I heard a voice that said that I had only a year, 18 months at the outside. **I awoke very agitated, unsure of what that meant. If God was trying to get my attention, he sure had!**

**Shortly after this my rector asked me to come into his office and inquired whether I would be interested in the diaconate.** I can still recall the way in which my heart leaped up within me at the question. It was instantly clear to me that it was not I who was in charge of that electric inner response. Never have I experienced so clearly what Paul spoke of when he said “it was not I, but Christ in me.” **The inner delight I felt was a message to me, roughly translated as: “Wake up dummy, this is it!”**

In 2002 I was ordained a deacon. For more than six years now I have worked in the areas of racial reconciliation and prison ministry. It is to this that I have been called and to this that I have been sent. **Now you who read my story, listen to the Spirit, and find your own true joy in being sent.**

## What I Learned Digging in Ugandan Dirt

By Daniel P. Strandlund

“They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks” (Isaiah 2:4).



From September to December 2008, I worked in Kyetume, a rural Uganda village a couple hours south of the equator, as a volunteer with the Uganda Rural Fund (URF), a small, grassroots non-profit that runs a high school, various sustainable income/agricultural and livestock projects, an after-school program, and outreach to child-headed families. The job

description of the work I did there changed from week to week, and you can read more than you’ll ever want to hear about it on my blog site, [www.mzungunotes.blogspot.com](http://www.mzungunotes.blogspot.com). Here, **I’d like to tell you what I think I’ve learned about the work of Christ in general from village life in Uganda.**

Though I’d spent a year researching Uganda and contemplating my own motives, I was still operating under the misguided notion that I was some kind of soldier who was going to go fight third-world poverty. Armed with idealism, a stubbornly prideful anti-establishment streak, antimalaria pills, and a new raincoat, I had prepared myself for some kind of one-man justice crusade against the “Poverty Monster.” Instead I found a village full of farmers doing what they know best.

I arrived in Kyetume during planting season and very quickly learned that every day here the people spend hours digging, usually in the early morning when it’s cooler and the rains are less frequent. The work is hard, repetitive, and above all necessary. Cultivating whole acres of land by handheld hoe is slow work, so the more hands you have helping to do it, the better. I began spending a couple mornings a week working



in the fields with two high-school students, Deo and Zaitun. I’d get up early and meet them at their home, and we’d head into the field. We stood together in a line, and as we loosened the earth for the roots of the plants to spread we filled the air with labored breathing and language lessons.

We worked side by side in the field day in and day out, and most of the time I didn’t notice much difference between the growing crops. Then all of a sudden one day I noticed the sheer abundance of food I’d helped raise from the earth. **All the days I showed up to do the same old work, all the backaches and blisters, all the patient tenderness I helped give to this forgotten corner of the planet had come back to feed those who were hungry—and I realized that I was one of the hungry ones too. Most important I realized I couldn’t have done it without the people around me, and I certainly couldn’t have done it without the rain, God’s own miraculous contribution.**

I’d come alone to fight some imaginary evil, and I wound up working for beans with my new friends. **It took actual farming for me to turn my social justice sword into a spiritual plowshare. I learned to stop thinking in terms of drawing a sword and to start thinking in terms taking up my share of the plowing and inviting others to work with me in the field.**

# Knitters (and Crocheters) Create Beautiful Comfort and Peace

By the Venerable Louise Thibodaux, Our Diocesan Archdeacon



The Rev. Deacon Katy Smith, Betty McGill, Marian Murphy, and Eleanor Hayden

Ever since the original cave woman (surely it was a woman!) began to loop fiber around two twigs, women have gathered in groups of two or more to knit or crochet. Their output has been astonishing. They have knit tiny coverlets for premature babies, chemo caps for cancer survivors, lap robes for residents of nursing homes, socks for soldiers and sailors, layettes for new mothers, sweaters for grandchildren, and of course prayer shawls. Through their prayerful knitting they have found both companionship and peace. Mother Teresa once wrote: "If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to one another."

In the 1970s and 80s it seemed that hand-knitting was going out of style. More and more women were working outside the home, life was hectic, and yarn was

expensive compared to the price of ready-made clothes at the store. *Why do you suppose that knitting has made such a comeback? I believe it is because women who work with their hands know that they are building community and promoting world peace, one garment at a time. It may not be practical to travel across the seas on a mission trip. But it is always possible to combine prayer and mission while working to create something of beauty.*

The community of women living in the Apartments at St. Martin's-in-the-Pines knows this well. Every Tuesday around 2 p.m. a group gathers in the library to enjoy handwork and friendship. *These women agree that it's all about sharing your life with others and having a place to know that you are of value to others.* Some women make blankets for the premature nursery at Children's Hospital (Birmingham). Some knit shawls or lap blankets for the elderly clients of the Ruth and Naomi ministry. Under the direction of the Rev. Deacon Katy Smith, they have even knitted or crocheted cotton bandages to be sent to a mission station in Africa. There are always new ways for their talents to be used.

In many parishes across our diocese, women gather to make prayer shawls. Understanding that making a

shawl is a spiritual practice, Victoria Galo and Janet Bristow began Shawl Ministry. Their Web site, [www.shawlministry.com](http://www.shawlministry.com), includes ideas for both patterns as well as prayers.

"Power Socks," a ministry I began four years ago, sells hand-knit socks and donates the money to local charities to help those who are unable to pay their electric, gas, and water bills. Since 2005 more than \$10,000 of this "sock money" has helped the needy through Greater Birmingham Ministries and St. Martin's Benevolent Fund. I am always looking for knitters to lend me their hands in making more socks!

*It seems fitting in this issue of The Alabama Episcopalian on mission and outreach that we remember the many ways that each of us can create peace and comfort in this world. As Leo Buscaglia wrote: "There are scores of people waiting for someone like us to come along. . . . Someone will live a happier life merely because we took the time to share what we had to give." For more information you can reach me at [lthibodaux@dioala.org](mailto:lthibodaux@dioala.org) or 205/715-2060 ext. 325.*



The money raised by selling hand-knit socks is helping the needy pay their utility bills.

## St. Andrew's in Tuskegee Clothes the Needy

By the Rev. Liston A. Garfield, Rector



We began our Clothes Closet Ministry in response to the needs of Hurricane Katrina's evacuees taking refuge in the Macon County community. Since that beginning, our parishioners have been serving all of God's children every Saturday from 10 a.m. to noon.

## Painting Bowls To Feed the Hungry

By the Rev. Deacon Mary Vandagriff



St. Alban's, which is tucked away in the Bluff Park area of Hoover, has become known as "the church that no one can find," but our small, close-knit

parish has a big social conscience that prompts us to reach out to the community at large in many ways. About 40 parishioners gathered on March 7 to apply their artistic skills to raw ceramic bowls, which were later fired and given as mementos at the Magic City Harvest Sixth Annual Empty Bowl Soup Lunch.

Magic City Harvest gathers perishable food from area hospitals, schools, restaurants, etc., to feed the hungry at 44 Birmingham-area agencies. The hand-painted bowls



will serve as household reminders that there are empty bowls and empty stomachs very close to our homes.

*For more about St. Alban's and the parish's other outreach projects, please contact Mary at [mavanda@bellsouth.net](mailto:mavanda@bellsouth.net) or the parish office at 205/822-2330.*

## Adventers Proclaim the Good News in Word and Deed

Many thanks to Rebecca Rone, Outreach Coordinator, for the information for this article.



Casa San Miguel in Villa Amistad in Cochabamba, Bolivia



Adventers volunteer to serve as "Carpenter's Hands" and make repairs to existing Birmingham homes.

The members of the Cathedral Church of the Advent graciously support a wide range of mission and outreach projects in Birmingham, across Alabama and the United States, and around the world. Here are just a few of them.

**In Lent 2009 the Advent celebrated 101 years of its weekday Lenten Preaching Service.** The series, which features faithful preachers from around the world, is the longest continual weekday series in

the country! Each weekday of Lent, people from the Birmingham business district and surrounding suburbs gather for a 25-minute interdenominational service followed by delicious, homemade lunches served at a modest price. The proceeds benefit Advent-supported outreach projects.

**Lauren Deibert, who is the daughter of Adventers Ed and Barbara Partridge, and her husband, Mike, serve as field coordinators for Missionary Ventures International and oversee ESVO (Escuela Vocacional) Ministries located near Managua, Nicaragua.** The



Lauren and Mike Deibert with students at ESVO near Managua, Nicaragua

school provides training in blacksmithing, carpentry, and welding for men, and jewelry-making and mosaics for women. Through discussion and formal times of prayer and Bible study, the program equips students to live a new life in Christ. Participants study what it means to work in Christ and have Bible-based relationships at home and in the community.

**Amistad Mission**, a Christian partnership between North Americans and Bolivians, was established to meet the needs of the Quechua natives through programs in the rural village of Aramasi and to raise orphaned and abandoned children to independent adulthood at Villa Amistad. Ministries in Aramasi include a medical clinic, school, and agriculture programs. At Villa Amistad, located in Cochabamba, the children live in cottages supervised by mamas (mothers) and tías (aunts) who care for them in a Christian, family environment. As the children grow, Amistad provides vocational training and opportunities for advanced education.

**For more information please contact Rebecca at [rebecca@cathedraladvent.com](mailto:rebecca@cathedraladvent.com) or 205/226-3512 or the Rev. Canon Heidi E. Kinner at [heidi@cathedraladvent.com](mailto:heidi@cathedraladvent.com) or 205/226-3502.**

## St. Andrew's Welcomes Hispanic Neighbors

By Dr. James Mersmann, Senior Warden



**St. Andrew's in Montevallo** has just completed its first year of hosting and teaching twice-weekly English as a Second Language (ESL) classes for Spanish speakers in Shelby and Chilton Counties. We began the classes last September with a fiesta celebrating Mexican Independence Day and ended this May by marking another holiday, Cinco de Mayo. We plan to resume the classes on September 21 from 6:30 to 8 p.m. each Monday and Thursday in St. Andrew's new parish hall.

The Rev. Dr. Hernan Afanador, our diocesan Missioner for Hispanic Ministries, attended last September's kickoff fiesta and welcomed more than 60 guests with information about the Episcopal Church. The Rev. James Tuohy, the rector of St. Andrew's, entertained the participants with his accordion and what might have been new musical genres—Irish mariachi and Celtic flamenco!

Michelle Duran-McLure, Mandy Heatherly, Loretta Cobb, and I taught the ESL classes. All of us are members of St. Andrew's and have experience as college professors or public schoolteachers. We used eclectic and adaptive teaching methods to match the needs and skill levels of our always changing group of learners. More than 75 different students came to classes at one time or another during the year. Following a familiar pattern for free English classes, usually more than 40 students attended classes early in the fall and sometimes fewer than 10 near the end of spring term. Our students came from various Latin American countries, with the great majority from Mexico.

We thank our diocese for awarding St. Andrew's a Parish-Based Outreach grant to cover the costs of pub-



licity, textbooks, and photocopying. We advertised the classes in *El Paisano*, *Latino News*, *Montevallo Chamber Chatter*, *The Shelby County Reporter*, *The Apostle*, and various community calendars as well as by posters and flyers distributed in schools and businesses in surrounding communities.

**For more information please contact Jim at [jimmersman@att.net](mailto:jimmersman@att.net) or St. Andrew's at 205/665-1667.**



The Rev. Jim and Elma Tuohy

# Building Relationships and Leveling the Playing Field

By the Rev. Deacon Carolyn Foster



This mutual recognition can lead to concern for one another and enable the development of mutual respect and dignity. To be a part of this process is a blessing for me, and it makes real my Baptismal Covenant to strive for justice and peace among all people and respect the dignity of every human being.

*I am so pleased that four years ago several men of the Brotherhood of St. Andrew chapter at St. Mark's in Birmingham answered my call to make a difference in the lives of inner-city boys in our community by serving as mentors in the Young Lions: Christian Rites of Passage for*

## *African American Young Men program.*

Designed to help African American males age 11 to 15 grow into well-adjusted young men, this program fosters strong self-image and positive self-esteem by instilling in these boys who they are in Christ. They experience and work through the rites of passage to becoming a man by engaging in personal relationships with Christian African American men who model and teach manhood.

Each mentor partners with a youth for the 32-week Saturday morning program, which runs from October through May. The weekly meetings, which are designed to work with the school year, cover education and careers, self and family awareness, personal responsibility, money management, and knowledge of African American culture and history. Monthly field trips built into the program enhance the teaching experiences and hands-on skill development. The participants also learn from community leaders who serve as guest speakers.

As a result of issues raised by the youth and also their

parents, the mentors have not only taught the assigned lessons for each week, but they have also visited the schools and talked with the Young Lions' teachers. The program has had a powerful positive effect on everyone involved, and last year, after hearing the mentors talk about the importance of education, the mother of one of the youths announced her intention to earn her GED!

This program continues to inspire the youth, their parents, the mentors, members of St. Mark's, teachers, and



The Rev. Deacon Carolyn Foster with the Young Lions mentors and youth

The goals of building relationships with people and working to level the playing field form continuous threads running throughout my ministry as a layperson and now a deacon. This is certainly true with my work with the Alabama Faith Council, a statewide coalition of faith leaders and laypersons who join together and serve on behalf of the poor and the vulnerable in Alabama. It's also true with my work with Habitat for Humanity, AIDS in Minorities, the Firehouse Shelter, and Greater Birmingham Ministries as well as my diocesan work as cochair of our Commission on Race Relations.

Deacons are called to make Christ and his redemptive love known by word and example and to interpret to the Church the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world. *My sense of working for fairness for all people was shaped in my early childhood growing up in Birmingham during the turbulent 1960s. I believe that most people want to do the right thing but some need help knowing what that is because the voices of culture and tradition sometimes speak more loudly than the still small voice of God.*

My heart is filled with delight when I conduct an antiracism training session and when I am sitting at a table with people from various faith traditions or backgrounds and they discover that we are more alike than different.

community leaders. In an environment where many times either there is no male presence at home or if there is it may not be a positive one, the Young Lions program may be a lifeline for young African American males who have already given up and lost hope of having a bright future. Young Lions proactively deals with critical issues in a young man's life before he makes decisions that can have long-lasting negative impacts on his adolescence and adulthood.

*For more information please contact Carolyn at [carolynfoster@bellsouth.net](mailto:carolynfoster@bellsouth.net) or 205/856-4428.*

## Sharing Christ's Love By Laura-Catherine Conville, Young Adult Service Corp (YASC) Missionary Serving in Colombia



The Young Adult Service Corp (YASC) is supported by the National Episcopal Church, and as a YASC missionary I serve under the direction of Presiding Bishop Katherine Jefferts Schori, David Copple, and Bishop Francisco José Duque of Colombia. I have been in Colombia since January 7 and am blessed to be working with Audra Krislock from the Diocese of Spokane, Washington. This is

the first time that the Diocese of Colombia has hosted YASC missionaries, and Audra and I are working to organize fulfilling and stable work for ourselves and the future missionaries we hope will work here.

Audra and I have been serving at a mission church that is an hour-and-a-half bus ride from our apartment. We teach English and also mentor the children who come to the

church after school. Most of the children are from single-mother families, and all of them have experienced home lives that can include drug and/or alcohol abuse, neglect, and/or physical-mental abuse. We love these children the best we can, and in this way we provide the discipline, structure, and security they may not otherwise experience. As we continue to build trusting, loving relationships with them, the children have begun

openly greeting us with hugs and kisses. The most amazing moments for me happen when I catch their attention and they respond with softened, loving eyes.

*My purpose as a missionary is to share my life in Christ in love and authenticity. I seek to build genuine relationships with the individuals around me. I like to call myself an ambassador of Christ. Please join me in my journey by joining my e-mail group [spiritlightmyfire@gmail.com](mailto:spiritlightmyfire@gmail.com) and visiting my blog [spiritlightmyfirecolombia.blogspot.com](http://spiritlightmyfirecolombia.blogspot.com).*



# The Welcoming Hands of St. John's Deaf

By the Rev. Marianne Stephens, Rector and Our Diocesan Missioner for Deaf Ministries



St John's Episcopal Deaf Church in Birmingham has been quietly but enthusiastically proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ since at least 1935, when the parish was first recognized in the Diocese of Alabama. Longtime historians of our diocese know well the work of the Rev. Dr. Robert Fletcher, who initially covered the entire southeastern United States riding the train from town

to town wherever the Deaf community might gather, usually in large industrial centers and in towns where a residential school for the Deaf was located. Some of these gatherings lasted several days since it was an opportunity that many wouldn't pass up. They came early and left late to see friends, share news, enjoy meals together, and learn about Christ's love.

Deaf churches eventually became the connecting place for worship and fellowship as well as counseling and networking. From the beginning of its history as a parish, St John's has not only played a key role in advocating for the Deaf but also empowering the Deaf to find their own voice as advocates. Dr. Fletcher and all of St. John's rectors since him have had a hand in finding jobs, solving problems, and advocating for anyone who needs it. Over the past three decades the Rev. Cam Desmarais and his successor, the Rev. Jay Croft, actively advocated for access to mental health services, homes for those in need, skilled interpreters, appropriate educational settings, public safety access (911), and telephone communication services.

Like all parts of our world today, communication is faster and distances seem shorter,

but our need to gather together as a religious family still remains the same. St. John's continues to be a connecting place as well as a voice for self-advocating in our community. Both the Deaf Senior Citizens of Birmingham and the Birmingham Chapter, Alabama Association for the Deaf (BCAAD) meet here monthly, providing an opportunity for people from around our area to catch up on news, exercise opinions on legislation, and enjoy social activities. We have also arranged for American Sign Language (ASL) movies to be shown here. These movies are made within the national Deaf community; are funded, written, and directed by the Deaf; have captions but no sound; and feature a talented cast of Deaf actors—and both the young and the old alike thoroughly enjoy seeing them!

St. John's Deaf Church in Birmingham—our home base, our connecting place—celebrates its 75th anniversary in 2010. The current St. John's church building is just 15 years old and was built with donations and fundraising efforts from churches large and small from all corners of our diocese. It was specifically designed with the Deaf in mind—clear sight lines, solid-colored backgrounds, and few distracting design elements. Our weekly worship services are both signed and voiced—so St. John's is not a quiet place, only quieter than most other churches. The hymns are signed into a wonderful visual poetry that transmits the full meaning to every person in the congregation. We hope everyone in our diocese will come visit and let us warmly share God's love with you with our welcoming hands.

**For more about St. John's Deaf please contact Marianne at [mariannestephens@juno.com](mailto:mariannestephens@juno.com) or the parish office at 205/967-1437 (Relay Center 711) or (fax) 205/967-1430.**



# Nurturing Young Singers

By Frances Tucker, of Christ Church in Tuscaloosa



Twenty-four years ago Karen Nicolosi, who has served as the music director at Christ Church in Tuscaloosa since 1975, had the idea of starting a choir for boys age 8 to 14. "My goal in forming the Alabama Boychoir in 1985 and later the Alabama Choir School in the mid-1990s, which included girls, was to offer choral music experiences and training that would supplement the public and private school education our children were receiving. Included in our program of music education was emphasis on the development of self-discipline and self-esteem as well as travel," she explains. Unlike some school situations, however, there is never any time for misbehavior or boredom. "Our boys and girls work in a highly structured atmos-

phere, and they have to perform 100 percent of the time," she emphasizes. "The pace is fast, and they learn self-discipline." Freida Jacobs, who volunteered to sit in on rehearsals and who now serves as executive director of the Alabama Choir School, recalls the changes that have taken place over the past 10 years. "Not in our wildest imaginations could we have dreamed that the choir would grow in magnitude as it has since 1985! We started with only a handful of children, and now we have almost 200 in the six choirs of the Alabama Choir School—the resident and touring choir for boys in grades 4 through 8, the resident and touring choir for girls in grades 4 and up, the chorus for children in grades 2 and 3, and the newly formed Chamber Chorus for high-school students."

Since 1985 Mrs. Nicolosi has directed the choirs in more than 170 concerts in venues ranging from major

cities within Alabama to San Francisco, New Orleans, New York, Dallas, Washington, Chicago, Jacksonville, St. Simon's Island, Atlanta, Pearl Harbor, Williamsburg, the Biltmore Estate, and the EPCOT Center in Florida. The choirs have also traveled to Toronto, London, Canterbury, Coventry, Rome, Florence, Pisa, Vienna, and Schorndorf.

Highlights of the Alabama Boychoir tours have included appearances at the holiday White House in Washington, an invitation to attend the weeklong Tuscany International Children's Chorus Festival in Italy, and singing at the Leaning Tower of Pisa and Sunday Mass at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. The choir has also been invited to attend the weeklong celebration of the Ottawa Children's Chorus's 40th anniversary and the Toronto Children's Chorus's 20th anniversary, culminating with a performance for the US Ambassador to Canada while they were guests for high tea at his private residence.

The choir was a special guest at Washington's National Cathedral on Alabama Day and received an invitation to be the featured choir at the National Children's Honor Choir Festival at Carnegie Hall in New York. Singers from the Alabama Choir School also toured Austria and Germany for the 250th Mozart anniversary.

The staff for the Alabama Choir School includes Karen Nicolosi, founder/conductor; Freida Jacobs, executive director; Jason Beasley, accompanist; Doff Procter, conductor of the Alabama Girls Chorus and the Alabama Chamber Chorus; Laurel Procter, artist in residence, and Barbara Steimle, administrator. **For more information please contact Barbara at [bsteimle@christchurch1828.org](mailto:bsteimle@christchurch1828.org) or 205/758-4252.**

# The Beans and Rice Church

By the Rev. Bill King, Rector of Trinity in Clanton

About a year ago, I started getting my hair cut in Clanton since I was spending several days a week in the area as the part-time rector of Trinity Church. A member of the vestry recommended that I go to Linda's Hair Salon. The very first time I walked into Linda's and introduced myself, she said, "Oh, you are the pastor at the Beans and Rice Church." That's how I knew for sure that Trinity had become known in the marketplace of



Clanton for its ministry of feeding the hungry.

This ministry began in mid-2006 during a conversation of the members of what we called our vestry, although until 2009 Trinity was not recognized as a parish but rather a worshipping community.

One of the people made the comment that Trinity should be known for something other than just being another church in Clanton. "We should be doing something for others and not just ourselves."

A few days later I was talking with my brother in Fayetteville, Arkansas, where he teaches at the University

of Arkansas and serves as part-time pastor of the Presbyterian Church of Prairie Grove. I mentioned that Trinity needed to do something in the area of community outreach ministry, and he told me that his little church provided beans and rice and a few other food items once a month to those in need in Prairie Grove, just outside Fayetteville. We decided to model our food ministry after that of the Presbyterian Church of Prairie Grove, and we have stayed with that model.

Our Beans and Rice ministry is very simple and doable by every church of any size. We advertise monthly with a signboard on the street in front of the church for one week before the Saturday morning food distribution, and we promise free uncooked beans (2 pounds of pinto beans) and rice (3 pounds of rice) to every family. No questions asked, and no names taken—we just keep track of how many families we serve and how many pounds of beans and rice we share. From the beginning that has been our promise. The first month we also provided a jar of peanut butter. Over the past two years our food distribution has grown from serving 10 families the first month to an average of serving 45 families a month in 2009. And over the same period of time, while our primary promise remains that of providing uncooked beans and rice, we now normally provide onions and potatoes purchased from a farmers market in Birmingham and usually five or six cans of vegetables and some protein, such as tuna or frozen chicken quarters, and often some bars of soap or toothbrushes. At Christmas we add some candy. In all we now are able to offer about 10 to 12 pounds of food per household as a monthly food supplement.



The members of Trinity bring gifts of food so that by the week before the first Saturday, our outreach pantry is usually full. During the week of the food distribution, a group of parishioners assemble and package the food in plastic bags. The 500 or so pounds of food we now distribute each month actually costs the parish about \$200. While our operating budget could not afford that much money each month, we have received corporate gifts from Sam's, grants from our diocese for equipment—including a freezer, multiple cash gifts from friends as well as strangers, and quantities of canned or sacked foods from other parishes and people who have heard about what we are doing and want to assist us in feeding the hungry.

Our Beans and Rice ministry does not define Trinity in Clanton, but rather it is a visible reminder to all of our members that we can take seriously the teaching of Jesus about seeing you hungry and giving you something to eat (Matthew 25: 31–46). We are honored to be known in the marketplace of Clanton as the "Beans and Rice Church."

**For more information please e-mail Bill King at [Bp3king@bellsouth.net](mailto:Bp3king@bellsouth.net), visit [www.trinityclanton.org](http://www.trinityclanton.org), or call 205/755-3339.**

## St. Wilfrid's Serves Dinner and Compline

By the Rev. Daniel I. Thornton, Rector

**"I enjoy attending Wednesday night services at St. Wilfrid's. The church members make me feel welcome."**

**"Thank you for opening your doors for us!"**

**"It's a wonderful time to share our meal and fellowship . . . and worship God together."**

These are some of the comments students made at the end of our year of dinner and worship on Wednesday nights at St. Wilfrid's in Marion. They are talking about what we call our college group meetings of students from Marion Military Institute (MMI) and Judson College.

Three years ago we revived what used to be called Canterbury Club. Two couples associated with the schools thought that students, especially the cadets at MMI, needed a place to escape the regimen of their day-to-day living. Many of those cadets came from all corners of the United States to MMI to prepare for appointment to one of the four service academies—Army, Air Force, Navy, and Coast Guard. Besides the fact that they were far from home, they were not accustomed to the hospitality of our part of the country. Judson students, although usually from closer regions, were not accustomed to the kind of hospitality offered by the Episcopal Church.

In the beginning we introduced topics for discussion like the partnership between faith and reason and the importance of holy relics to many faithful believers. This year though we decided not to offer a formal program, but to offer dinner, fellowship, and worship instead. As the year progressed our students asked if they could bring others, so our numbers grew from around 20 at the first gathering to as many as 60 on some Wednesdays.

Our program featured meals prepared by the host couples who have been involved

since the beginning: Col. Bill Hansen, USMC, Retired, and his wife, Pat; Lt. Com. Sam Stevenson, USN, retired, and his wife; and me and my wife, Molly. We met in our homes for two years, but this year we outgrew our spaces, so we met at the parish hall—and we discovered that place was less important than attitude. One of the unusual aspects of our sponsors is that each of us is connected with one of the colleges in some capacity, so our Wednesday night meetings give the students the opportunity to see us outside our professional positions.

We decided to gather during the middle of the week because most students, since the advent of automobiles on campus and loosened travel restrictions, leave campus for weekends. For many of them however the celebration of Compline with us is their only church for the week. They joined in heartily, especially after they became familiar with liturgical worship. We end each Compline by singing "Now the Day Is Over" and go back into the world with the admonition to "Go in peace to love and serve the Lord."

Although our numbers have grown during these three years, it seems more important that students continue to come—we're never sure how many will show up, but they know they are all welcome. As one student told us, "The dinner at the church was an excellent way to spend time together, have a good meal, and worship God." If they take that with them, we have done a good job. So until this fall . . .

**For more information please e-mail [rector36756@bellsouth.net](mailto:rector36756@bellsouth.net) or call 334/683-6562.**



## EPISCOPAL CHURCH WOMEN

Compiled by Fiona Watts, Publicity Chair

# Meeting Needs with Moses' Baskets, Teddy Bears, Blankets, a Food Cart, Pancakes, and "Knit Wits" Stoles

By Dee Buzby, Our Diocesan ECW President



The Episcopal Church Women of our diocese are actively using the gifts God has given them to serve others in their parishes, their communities, and the world. During the Sharing Session at our Annual Fall Conference we are all amazed to hear about the variety of missions that have been initiated and supported. I would like to share several with you.

**The members of the ECW of St. Luke's in Scottsboro have been providing Moses' Baskets since the 1980s**, and this ministry has become well known in Jackson County for serving needy young mothers. Each Moses' Basket (a large brown handled-bag lined with colorful tissue paper) holds three baby bottles, one large pack of disposable diapers, three onesies, three sleepers, three undershirts, one three-month outfit, three receiving blankets, a crib blanket, a bib, booties, a pacifier, a Golden Book, and a Mother's Care package including hand lotion, body wash, and body lotion. For the past

two years this project has received support through a diocesan Parish-Based Outreach Grant to provide for the increasing number of needy mothers. In 2008 the women of St. Luke's delivered 95 Moses' Baskets, and as of April 2009 they have already provided baskets for 35 additional young mothers who meet the federal income guidelines and are referred by the county health department.

**Since the 1990s many members of the ECW of the Ascension in Birmingham have been knitting precious little sweaters and ties to dress up attractive teddy bears** to donate, through Urban Ministries, to underprivileged children citywide and to nursing home patients who don't have families. Last year these women delivered about 400 well-dressed teddy bears. The response has been so successful that when the women learned from Urban Ministries that lap blankets were needed, they enlarged their project, **and last year they donated 36 beautifully multicolored hand-crocheted lap blankets** to wheelchair patients in nursing homes.

**The ECW and the parish of St. Joseph's on-the-Mountain in Mentone support the Food Cart ministry.** The Food Cart, which stands in the Log Room of the church, is filled with nonperishable foods 365 days a year for persons who are in need of food assistance.

The cart is restocked almost daily from items parishioners donate and additional items purchased with monetary contributions and a monthly allowance from the parish's budget.

**St. Paul's in Lowndesboro celebrates Shrove Tuesday each year with a community Pancake Supper sponsored by the ECW.** These women donate the proceeds from this event to the Seth Rogers Foundation. Seth, who served as an acolyte at St. Paul's and as a wonderful role model to other youth, sadly died at the age



of 14. His classmates at Lowndes Academy established a memorial fund to help families who are struggling to pay for a child's medical emergency care.

It is not always a large number of women working to support a mission but sometimes an individual hears of the needs of others and wants give her own time and talents for a particular project. **Carol McAdams, a member of the ECW at Grace Church in Sheffield,** attended our Annual Fall Conference last year and heard our speaker, the Rev. Jo Bailey Wells, talk about six women who were the first female priests ordained in the Sudan. Carol, who is a member of the **"Knit Wits" prayer shawl ministry** at Grace, has chosen to make prayer stoles for these women. With the support of prayers from the other women, Carol knit the stoles from white cotton yarn and added colorful crosses and edging. In April she delivered the stoles to Jo at Duke Divinity School, and Jo will take them with her to the Sudan in June and present them to the six women.



# EPISCOPAL CHURCH WOMEN

Compiled by Fiona Watts, Publicity Chair



Katerina Katsarka Whitley

**Come join everyone for this year's relaxing 102nd Annual ECW Fall Conference, October 8–10, hosted by the ECW of St. Matthew's in Madison.** Our guest speaker, Katerina Katsarka Whitley, will share her thoughts on our theme St. Anne—Grandmother of Our Savior. A native of

Thessaloniki, Greece, Katerina came to the United States at age 16 to study music and literature. She is currently teaching communication courses as an adjunct professor at Appalachian State University in North Carolina. In the past she has worked as a Church journalist on the diocesan and national levels, and her articles have appeared in state and national newspapers.

Registration forms will be mailed to each parish and will also be on our Web site, [www.alabamaecw.org/FallConference.htm](http://www.alabamaecw.org/FallConference.htm); the registration deadline is October 3. We have reserved a block of rooms at the Madison Hampton Inn—to reserve a room at the group rate please call 256/464-8999; the reservation deadline is September 24. **For more information please contact Joan East, Tennessee Valley Convocation Coordinator, at [joaneast@knology.net](mailto:joaneast@knology.net) or 256/325-1418.**

**July 31 is the deadline to order extra 2010 handbook/calendars and to submit calendar information.**

Please send orders and information to Gethryn S. Giles, PO Box 292, Mentone, AL 35984; [ggiles@tds.net](mailto:ggiles@tds.net); 256/634-3661.

**Our new Alabama Episcopalian** brings a new era to our diocesan newsletter, and we hope you will help us by providing articles and photographs of your activities for the ECW page. What a great way to advertise your parish ECW's upcoming events, fundraisers, and mission and outreach projects. Please share, and let everyone in our diocese know what your ECW is doing for your parish, our diocese, and the world. *The Alabama Episcopalian* will be published six times a year with a deadline the first of the month prior to publication. Please send your submissions to Fiona Watts at [RGW2940@aol.com](mailto:RGW2940@aol.com); 2940 Clydebank Circle, Birmingham, AL 35242. Let us hear from you!



St. Clare, the patron of embroiders and needleworkers, founded the Order of Poor Ladies (Poor Clares)

Alleen Cater reports that **St. Clare's Needle Arts Guild** is up and running, not with meetings but with contacts made via e-mail. Our first "virtual guild" or "e-guild" puts people in touch with others interested in needlepoint, prayer shawls, altar hangings, socks, and all sorts of other handwork. Recently we had a request from Auburn, one from Kentucky for a pattern for the Episcopal

## From Dee Buzby, ECW President

Each June women from dioceses across the Southeast meet at Kanuga for the three-day annual **Province IV ECW Conference**. We gather to hear a speaker, attend workshops, learn about the upcoming ECW Triennial on July 7–17 in Anaheim, and of course spend time getting to know each other and enjoying great fellowship. This year Gethryn Giles, Tora Johnson, and I will represent the women of our diocese.

**Speaking of the ECW Triennial**, the time is fast approaching when our delegates will fly to Anaheim for the 10-day convention. This will be my third Triennial, and I am greatly looking forward to it. Our days are filled with business meeting, speakers, elections, awards, and terrific workshops presented by people from all over the country. In fact Katerina Whitley, our speaker for our Fall Conference, will present one of the workshops. One of the most moving events each day is the Bible Study and Eucharist that brings together everyone attending the General Convention, the Youth Representation, and the ECW Triennial. Even though our days will be full, we will still have time for fellowship and enjoyment with the Welcoming Dinner, the UTO Dinner, and the CPC Dinner. This year we will be able to blog information and impressions during Triennial to our ECW Web site, [www.alabamaecw.org](http://www.alabamaecw.org), so you can just log on and click the appropriate link. Please keep your delegates—Gethryn Giles, Barbara Carpenter, Fran Lowe, and me—in your prayers, and we will be praying for you.

Enjoy your summer and find time for a little respite for your soul! I encourage you all to stay in touch with the women of your parish, have some "downtime" fellowship, and enjoy a good book. Our June calendar/handbook reminds us that St. Anne is considered to be Divinely Wise and is frequently shown holding a book. Right now I am reading *Same Kind of Different As Me* by Ron Hall and Denver Moore, and I recommend it to you. If you want to find something new and different, you might want to get in touch with the Episcopal Bookstore at [www.episcobooks.com](http://www.episcobooks.com) or 205/323-2959; I know Cindy Funderburk will have many excellent suggestions. Many blessings!

shield in needlepoint, and another from Alpine about providing altar hangings for a Gulf Coast parish. If you have ideas, if you need helping hands, or if you want to find "needlers" in your area, please check out St. Clare's at [www.alabamaecw/StClareNeedleArtsGuild.htm](http://www.alabamaecw/StClareNeedleArtsGuild.htm). You don't have to be an active ECW participant to use the e-guild—it's open to everyone.

**If your parish has altar hangings it no longer uses and is willing to donate them to a Gulf Coast parish or if you would like to provide for or make new ones,** please contact Kyle Brown at 256/268-2054 or 256/375-0177.

## The Lovely History of Our UTO Alms Basin

By Barbara Carpenter, Our Diocesan UTO Coordinator



Recently I have had many inquiries about parish ECWs wanting to use the United Thank Offering (UTO) alms basin during the Spring and Fall UTO ingatherings. The magnificent alms basin, which was commissioned by our diocesan ECW, measures about 18 inches in diameter and was custom designed and manufactured by Gorham Company. I thought you might like to know the history of this beautiful basin.

Mary Oliver McLemore, who served as the president of the Episcopal Church Women at St. John's in Montgomery and later as president of the Diocesan Church Women (1946 through 1948), had the idea to collect gold and silver from the women of our diocese to melt down and make a special UTO basin. In designing the basin an attempt was made to signify in scripture verse and symbols what our thank offering means to us.

The scripture on the basin—"Be thankful unto Him, Praise Him, and Make Him known"—is a shortened version of the first verse of Psalm 105. This is what we attempt to express when participating in the United Thank Offering. Our offering is given in thanksgiving for blessings our Lord has bestowed on us. The offering is presented in an act of praise of Him at a service of Holy Communion. It is used in many ways (through grants) to make Him known to many people all over the world.

Most of all, we are most thankful for God's gift to us of His Son, and it is this gift that the symbols on the basin depict. In the center of the basin is the sacred monogram for Christ, "HIS," which is the abbreviation of Jesus' name (the first three letters of Jesus) in Greek. The symbols around the rim depict some of the major acts in the life of Christ. The Lamb of God signifies the Nativity—the coming of God to earth to be one of us. The Cross signifies the redemption and sacrifice of Jesus Christ for us and also the victory and sovereignty of Jesus Christ. The Dove signifies the Holy Spirit.

**I hope you have enjoyed reading about this magnificent alms basin. If you would like to borrow it, please contact Eva Beard at the Cathedral Church of the Advent, 205/226-3510. If you have any questions about the basin, please call me at 256/721-7599.**

## CAMP McDOWELL

## Learning to Live the Gospel at Camp McDowell

By the Rev. Mark Johnston, Executive Director and Vicar

*My name is Mark, and I have the best job in the whole world!* I am the executive director and vicar of Camp McDowell, and there are many reasons why it is the best job.

One reason is that I get to see firsthand the powerful influence Camp McDowell has on the lives of the women, men, and children who come here. After spending time in God's Backyard, many of them leave with the inspiration and support they need to successfully live a life of following Jesus in loving and serving others.

Bob Gribbin, who walked into my office last week, is proof of another reason I have the best job—campers return. Bob grew up going to Camp McDowell and later served in the Peace Corps in Africa, where he met his wife. He joined the US State Department and served many stations in Africa including as ambassador to Rwanda. Now he's retired



The Rev. Mark and Maggie Johnston at the dedication of the new Chapel of St. Francis at Camp McDowell on May 2

work full-time teaching people about the wonderful world in which we live involves a personal calling from God. A dear friend of mine used to tell me that I was not good at hiding my light under a bushel, and she went on to explain that my passion for sharing God's creation with others was something I did not hesitate to act on. As director of McDowell Environmental Center I have been able to enrich the lives of nearly 30,000 people who have come through our center in the past five years and help them connect to the ecology on which we all depend.

Other people have stated much more eloquently than I can what I feel. As you read their words below, please stop and ponder them for a moment.

*"Ecological ignorance breeds indifference, throttling up the extinction of experience: . . . What we know, we may choose to care for. What we fail to recognize, we certainly won't."*—Robert Michael Pyle

and lives in Washington, DC, but he made time to drop by the place that helped shape his faith, values, and sense of mission and outreach. Certainly Bob has had influences other than Camp McDowell on his life, but his camp experience helped inspire and equip him—just as it did me and thousands of others.

Our annual diocesan conventions seem like camp reunions to me since so many of our parish and diocesan leaders have been nurtured and energized at summer camp sessions and Cursillo weekends. Many of our business, education, professional, and government leaders throughout Alabama also have Camp McDowell roots and connections. The spirituality and renewal retreats, leadership training events, social justice and environment conferences, and teacher workshops we host equip the participants with faith, vision, and the ability to serve well in their chosen careers.

The children of our diocese continue to benefit from the opportunities Camp McDowell provides them to grow in faith and become the people God created them to be. Our Special Session offers teenagers with various special needs the opportunities to have life-changing experiences of being accepted and loved unconditionally.

The children, teachers, and chaperones who participate in McDowell Environmental Center programs learn the value of teamwork, how their behavior affects others, and the importance of making wise decisions related to the stewardship of creation. They leave Camp McDowell excited about science and eager to know more about the world God created. I am so proud that our diocese is leading the way in environmental education.

Yes, I have the best job in the world serving the people who come to God's Backyard. I get to help them learn and live the Gospel of Jesus, and I get to watch them go forth in the Spirit to love and serve the Lord and others.

## Connecting People to God's Creation

By Maggie Wade Johnston, Director of the McDowell Environmental Center

My sweet husband, Mark, may declare that he has the best job in the world, but I beg to differ. *I think I have the best job!*

The reason I chose to retire five years ago from teaching science at the Alabama School for the Deaf and

My interpretation is that when you walk into a room of strangers, you are uneasy and nervous, perhaps even scared, but when you walk into a room of family and friends, you feel at ease and comfortable. Nature is like that—the more you know about the natural world—the plants, the animals, and how we are connected to them—the more valuable they are to us and the more we will work to preserve them.

*"Alabama native E.O. Wilson of Harvard in his little book The Creation: An Appeal to Save the Life on Earth calls the Church to act in solidarity with the sciences in recovering our vocation of stewardship, acknowledging that religion and science are the two most powerful forces in the works today. He writes, 'If there is any moral precept shared by people of all beliefs, it is that we owe ourselves and future generations a beautiful, rich and health environment.' We would add that we owe it to God!"*—Bishop Parsley in his Diocesan Convention Address 2008

Amen! The mission statement we developed a few years ago says that the mission of McDowell Environmental Center is to connect people to the environment, teach respect for the Earth and its beings, and promote a commitment to lifelong learning. The children and adults who participate in our programs come from all parts of the Southeast, from Memphis to the Gulf Coast and Atlanta. In addition to the teachers, the adults range from doctors and lawyers to coalminers. The participants are also from all types of religious backgrounds—Episcopal, Baptist, Roman Catholic, and even atheist. We may not all agree on some things, but it is my firm belief that we MUST agree to preserve the Earth we call home. By using ecological science—and making it FUN—to educate people about the environment, we are doing God's work here at Camp McDowell. Yes, I have the best job in the world!

## CAMP MCDOWELL

### Seeking and Serving Christ at Summer Camp

By Michael Goldsmith, Director of Program and Development



Summer Camp is here, and we have begun another season of fun and fellowship. Each day we try to provide the opportunity for the Holy Spirit to enter into the hearts of our campers. Through the joy of play and the mystery of worship, we hope to nurture, strengthen, and sometimes initiate a camper's relationship with Christ. We work to nurture disciples who will spread the Gospel through both word and example as they leave this place and go out into

the world. This mission, centered around the joy of Christ in us, urges both campers and counselors alike to engage the world with love and laughter, respect and compassion, and hope and excitement.

All of the young adults on staff are excited about continuing this amazing ministry of serving the children and youth of our diocese. I have listed their names below, and I ask you to please pray for them throughout the summer. They are an extraordinary group, and they take very seriously the opportunity they have been given to seek and serve Christ as they work and play at Camp McDowell.

*Head Counselor:* Kathryn Kendrick of Holy Comforter in Montgomery

*Activities Director:* Elisa Faison of St. John's in Decatur

*Waterfront Director:* Melissa King of Canterbury Chapel in Tuscaloosa

*Arts and Crafts Director:* Allison Kendrick of Holy Comforter in Montgomery

*Music Director:* Jeff Lollar of Holy Comforter in Montgomery

*Office Assistant:* Emily Robins of All Saints' in Birmingham

*Lifeguards:* Andrew Hunter of the Church of Our Savior in Jenkintown, Pennsylvania;

Kirby Simpson of Holy Comforter in Montgomery; and Colin McWhirt of Trinity in Fulton, Kentucky

*Ropes Course Director:* Sam Hedges of Trinity Cathedral in Little Rock

*Female Cabin Counselors:* Caitlin Gilliam of St. James' in Dickson, Tennessee; Jackie Walker of St. Stephen's in Columbus, Ohio; Alice Nix of St. Luke's in Birmingham; Kristin Hanson of St. Thomas' in Huntsville; Sloane Brewer of St. Barnabas' in Hartselle; Jenny Robb of St. Thomas' in Huntsville; and Mary Catherine Robertson of St. Michael's in Fayette

*Male Cabin Counselors:* Jordan Lee of St. Barnabas' in Hartselle; Patrick Combs of St. Matthew's in Madison; Conner Barnes of Christ Church in Tuscaloosa; Dylan Jordan of St. John's in Montgomery; Gabe Rosser of St. Petersburg in Florida; Graham Mullen of St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Sheffield; and Murray Stuart of the Ascension in Montgomery

*Workcrew:* Zach Hale of Huntsville; Sally Reese of St. Paul's in Murfreesboro, Tennessee; Joel Blackstock of All Saints' in Birmingham



### Sharing God's Gift of Creativity at The Alabama Folk School

The Alabama Folk School at Camp McDowell is "all about gathering in community to explore the gifts and talents God has given us,"



explains Director Danielle Dunbar. The school provides a nurturing, lighthearted environment where people of all ages and walks of life can share in the joy of creative expression through music, fine and

folk arts, photography, gardening, writing, and wood-working. The school also serves to reach out to people



who might not otherwise have the chance to come to God's Backyard.

Nancy Curley came to Camp McDowell for the first time to participate in the Folk Art Sampler offered by the Alabama Folk School earlier this year. "Although I have lived in Winston County for more than 30 years, my visit to the Folk Art Sampler this winter was the first time I had been on the premises," she recalls. "I had a most wonderful experience at this excellent facility. Why did I not go to the camp sooner!"

**FIRST EVER  
SUMMER CAMPER  
REUNION  
JULY 24-26, 2009  
at  
"WONDERFUL, WONDERFUL  
CAMP MCDOWELL!"**

**SUMMER CAMP**

This is going to be an amazing weekend of reunion and reflection led by the Rev. Jon Sams. Jon is a frequent pilgrim to Camp and the rector of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Troy, Michigan. All FORMER Campers and their families are welcome!

To register go to [www.campmcdowell.com](http://www.campmcdowell.com)  
Or contact Michael Goldsmith at 205-391-1300 [michael@campmcdowell.com](mailto:michael@campmcdowell.com)  
You must be at least 21 or accompanied by a parent to register.

"The camp is very well run by efficient, kind, and extraordinarily friendly people. The sampler format was just right for me as I was able to experience two arts that I never had the opportunity to try before. Although I was very 'green,' the teachers were patient, and not once did I feel intimidated by my ignorance," Nancy adds. "My life was changed for the better because I have some pottery created by my own hand, and I now possess a bass fiddle that I am teaching myself to play until I can find an instructor nearby. I have recommended the Alabama Folk School to ladies all over the state, and I hope to see some of them there soon!"

For more about the Alabama Folk School and a complete list of available classes, please visit [www.campmcdowell.com/folkschool](http://www.campmcdowell.com/folkschool) or contact Danielle Dunbar at 205/563-9990.

## FOR AND ABOUT YOUTH

## Bringing God's Love to Sawyerville

By Leslie Manning, Our Diocesan Youth Ministries Assistant

Plans are almost complete for the 2009 Sawyerville Day Camps! Before we know it we will be packing up and heading down to Hale County in the Black Belt region of our state to meet up with old friends and form new friendships. The 70 volunteer staff members will gather in Newbern to serve more than 250 children and young teens at our annual day camp.

Last year we were able to catch a glimpse of how the Holy Spirit continues to be at work in the Sawyerville Day Camp community. Trey, a “six”-year-old camper (campers have been known to fudge their age a bit so that they are age-eligible for camp) in the Lower Camp spent most of the sweltering afternoons down in Greensboro writing or drawing in his journal. The journals were one tool for the campers to tell their story and reflect on the stories of Jesus, and they were asked to share excerpts from their journal when they felt comfortable with other campers. **Trey shared from his journal that “Love came to Sawyerville, and it was good.”**

Let us give thanks for the abundance of love that is shared at Sawyerville and through the Sawyerville ministry and most of all for the gift of God's unconditional love for *all* of God's children. I want to say a special thank you to everyone in our diocese for YOUR love of the Sawyerville Day Camp and its projects!

The theme for this year's camp is “Stand by Me.”

Lower Camp (LC) is for ages 6 to 10; Upper Camp (UC) is for ages 11 to 14. The camps will run simultaneously at the Sunshine School in Newbern.

Day Camp Director and Coordinator: Leslie Manning

Upper Camp Program: The Rev. Bill Blackerby

Upper Camp Directors: Corey and Crystal Jones

Lower Camp Program: The Rev. Mark Waldo Jr.

Lower Camp Directors: Lindsay Joe and Christy Neely

Music: Worth Stuart

Minicamp Program: The Rev. Lynette Lamphere and Lanette Farguson

Staff Coordinator: Louise Griffin

Staff Lay Chaplains: Jonathan Chesney and Margaret Warren

Registrar: Emily Thornton

Meal Coordinators/Camp Moms: Carole Kelley and Evelyn Pritchard

Supply Drive Coordinators: Carol Kendrick and Memily Colvin

Prayer Partner Coordinators: Linda and Trey Kennedy

Site Coordinator: Debbie Tabb

Carnival Coordinator: Patrick Garman

**Please check out our Web site, [www.sawyervilleworkproject.org](http://www.sawyervilleworkproject.org), for ways you can support the Sawyerville Day Camp or contact me at [lmanning@dioala.org](mailto:lmanning@dioala.org) or 205/715.2060 ext. 325.**



Members of the 2008 staff from St. Mary's on-the-Highlands in Birmingham

## Learning and Serving at the SIFAT Center

By Jonathan Chesney, Youth Minister at Church of the Ascension in Montgomery



On April 17–19 almost 40 young people and youth ministers from 10 parishes in our diocese had an amazing time at a “learn and serve” retreat at the Servants in Faith and Technology (SIFAT, [www.sifat.org](http://www.sifat.org)) center in Lineville. Throughout this weekend we were encouraged to *learn* about diverse cultures, differing living conditions, and the technologies SIFAT utilizes throughout the world. While learning these things, the participants were empowered to *serve* somewhere either locally or internationally.

SIFAT is a Christian nonprofit organization that provides training in self-help programs for a needy world. The staff members seek to merge faith and technology for the purpose of enabling the poor to develop holistically in Jesus Christ. Since its founding in 1979, SIFAT has trained community leaders from 79 countries in practical skills to meet basic human needs. This means working with “appropriate technology.” For example, giving someone without electric-

ity a toaster is not helpful, but teaching them how to make a less smoky heat source from a free and easily obtainable resource, like sawdust, is helpful.

We arrived the first evening and almost immediately went into the Slum Experience. We were divided into family groups, led into a completely realistic slum “street” filled with SIFAT staff members and volunteers playing the parts of beggars, corrupt and opportunistic police, a slumlord, shopkeepers, pickpockets, and other typical slum dwellers. After being led to the end of the alley, we were told simply, “OK, go. Survive.” Our goal was to find shelter, food, and water, those basic human needs we would talk about all weekend. For additional motivation, the food we had to obtain literally was our supper that night. After milling



around in confusion for a little while, my “family” eventually found some work to do to earn money (we were paid in *bolivianos* because we were in a slum in Bolivia for the

experience.) We earned enough for everyone to get some soup and even feed one of the beggars (though, in full disclosure, we fed the beggar only after all of us had eaten).

After the experience we all sat down to process and discuss it, trying to get our heads around even our brief encounter with conditions and brutal necessity the urban poor face daily. Hannah La Rue, from Grace in Anniston, mentioned that in the slum she became someone she wasn't. Her brother Caleb thought the experience would help keep him from judging others in desperate situations. We examined our human instinct to look after ourselves before others and asked God to help us do better in putting others first. “I walked into it thinking this was all a game, that they couldn't seriously make me work for my own basic needs,” recalled Thomas Lane, of Trinity in Florence, “but within five minutes the game turned to real life.” Sarah Jessica Flowers, from All Saints' in Birmingham, noted that this experience made her wake up: “I now know what I'd like to do with my life.”

The next day we cooked our own lunch on sawdust cookstoves, learned more about SIFAT's appropriate technology workshops, and hiked to the Global Village Overnight Experience, which features several different developing world settings and shelters. We played the Grain



## Bishops' Visitation Schedule

### Sunday, June 21

9:30 a.m. Bishop Parsley, Grace, Sheffield  
11 a.m. Bishop Sloan, St. Mark's, Prattville

### Sunday, June 28

11 a.m. Bishop Parsley, St. Mark's, Boligee  
11 a.m. Bishop Sloan, St. Andrew's, Montevallo

### Sunday, July 5 and July 12

Bishop Parsley and Bishop Sloan  
76th General Convention in Anaheim, California

## St. Mark's Is Seeking an Organist/Choir Director

**Saint Mark's in Prattville** is seeking a part-time organist/choir director. While the spectrum of the parish's liturgical worship service is varied, the staff and parishioners place a high value on tradition. The performance of their new Phoenix organ (Custom PT 243 with side jamb console) is enhanced by the remarkable acoustics of the 100-year-old nave. *For more information please contact the Rev. Scott Arnold, St. Mark's Church, 178 East Fourth St., Prattville AL 36067-3110; friscott@stmarksal.org; or 334/365-5289.*

Game, where our family groups represented several different countries that produced and needed different amounts of food—and like the real world it ended up that some countries had plenty of food stockpiled and some had very little. My own country, Ecuador, actually starved during the last round. At the end of the game it was revealed that enough food went out each round of the game to feed everyone, but that due to circumstance, power, and a very human tendency to horde, even in the face of current need, some countries didn't have enough. That night we slept (a little bit) in shelters made of bamboo, mud, and/or wood.

Our weekend experiences opened a lot of young eyes and hearts to the reality of poverty and hunger and need and our place as Christians in a needy world. "There are



people who eat, and there are those who don't. SIFAT made that very real for me," emphasized Wes Long, of the Ascension in Montgomery.

Matthew Copeland, who is also from the Ascension, added, "It's funny how in one weekend your life can change . . . a theme of the weekend was looking up into the sky and

at the same time a child is looking up at that same sky praying he will make it one more day . . . it's time for us all to do something for our brothers and sisters as God calls us to do."

The Holy Spirit was obviously moving with us at SIFAT, and I hope all who went will share their experience and the sense of the call we have to aid a needy world.

## 76th General Convention To Meet July 8-17

Lay and clergy deputies from around the Episcopal Church will meet in Anaheim, California, July 8-17, for the 76th General Convention. The General Convention, which is held every three years, is the bicameral governing body of the Episcopal Church and the second largest legislative body in the world, with more than 200 members in the House of Bishops and more than 700 members (from 110 dioceses and 15

nations) in the House of Deputies.

A number of international guests from various Anglican Communion provinces will also attend this year's meeting, including the Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams. He will participate in Bible study and also give the keynote speech at a global economic forum on July 8.

While the deputies will consider numerous issues, global concerns and the Anglican Communion will be the major focuses for this year's convention.

General Convention addresses global concerns for two reasons, explains the Rev. Canon Brian



Grieves, the Episcopal Church's senior director of mission and director of the Advocacy Center. "One is in response to God's mission to reconcile all things to Christ—we join in Christ's work of salvation of the world. Secondly, we undertake this work as an expression of our partnership with other provinces of the Anglican Communion. These are life-and-death matters." Besides issues of conflict, Grieves expects climate change and global economics to be a part of convention's deliberations.

Anglican Communion issues deliberated at the convention could include consideration of a proposed Anglican covenant as well as ongoing responses to the 2004 Windsor Report, a document that recommended ways in which the communion could maintain unity amid diversity of opinions, especially relating to human sexuality issues and theological interpretations. The deputies may also discuss the recommendations of the February 1-5 primates' meeting, which called for "gracious restraint" with respect to actions that could exacerbate the current tensions in the communion, such as same-gender blessings, cross-border interventions, and the ordination of gay and lesbian people to the episcopate.

*Everyone is invited to talk with our diocesan deputies before the convention at St. Stephen's in Birmingham from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. on June 28 (please see page 24). For more about the 76th General Convention please visit [www.episcopalchurch.org/gc2009.htm](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/gc2009.htm). During the convention the Office of Communication will provide an innovative Media Hub, *tecmediahub09*, that will include videos, blogging, twitter, flickr, and live webcasting.*

## Clergy News

**The Rev. Marc Burnette** will begin serving as the new rector and chaplain of Canterbury Chapel in Tuscaloosa on July 12. Marc is currently the rector of St. Andrew's in Birmingham.

**The Rev. Doug Carpenter**, a retired priest of our diocese, has published *Terrifying Tales and Inspiring Stories as Told through the Smoke of Camp Fires at McDowell*. *For more information please see page 23.*

**The Rev. Jon Chalmers** has accepted a call to serve on the staff of Christ Church in Greenville, South Carolina. Jon previously served as the rector and chaplain of Canterbury Chapel in Tuscaloosa.

**The Rev. Deacon William "Bill" Ealy**, who served at St. Matthew's in Madison and the Nativity in Huntsville, died on April 26.

**The Rev. Richard R. Losch**, rector emeritus of St. James' in Livingston, received the honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degrees from the University of West Alabama on May 9.

**The Rev. Jim Tuohy** will retire as rector of St. Andrew's in Montevallo, where he has served for the past 10 years, on June 28.

**The Rev. Dr. J. Barry Vaughn**, rector of St. Alban's in Hoover (Birmingham), is a regular contributor to "Sermons that Work" on the Episcopal Church's Web site, [www.episcopalchurch.org](http://www.episcopalchurch.org). Barry's Pentecost 3 and Christ the King sermons are now available online.

## Denise Servant Elected Province Representative



Denise Servant, who has served on our diocesan staff for more than 25 years and is currently Bishop Sloan's administrative assistant, was elected Province IV representative at this year's gathering of Bishops Executive Secretaries Together (B+E+S+T). The organization meets annually to network and keep up with the latest technologies and practices. Denise will serve as a resource and share information with bishops' executive secretaries throughout the province.

## Kneelers for Sale

**Grace Church in Anniston** has 58 kneelers and sets of floor brackets for sale. You can see a photo of one of the kneelers and read a detailed description by visiting. *For more information please contact Lark Howell at [jlhowell@bellsouth.net](mailto:jlhowell@bellsouth.net) or the parish at 256/236-4457.*



# Scholarship Fund Helps Bring Children to Camp

By Michael Goldsmith, Director of Program and Development

evangelism is a vital piece of our life here.

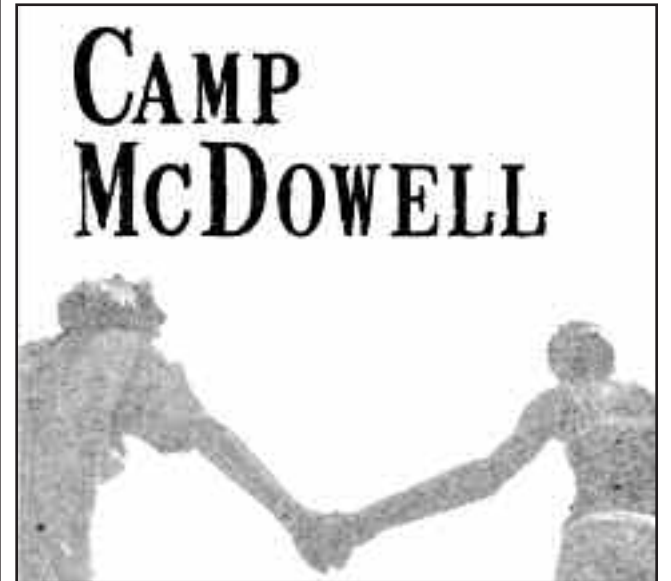
No less important is the opportunity we afford special needs campers and children with HIV/AIDS to have a place set apart for them. If you have ever volunteered for either of these camp sessions or know someone who has, then you understand that the staff and volunteers also receive a tremendous gift through their participation in these wonderful ministries.

There is another important ministry that the scholarship fund allows us to offer—bringing inner-city school-children to come and experience the McDowell Environmental Education Center in God's Backyard. Through the center's programs many of these children experience nature for the first time, and it awakens their curiosity, respect, and love for God's Creation.

**I hope you will continue to support the Camp McDowell Scholarship Fund and the ministries it provides.** There are many ways you can contribute to the scholarship fund. If your child is coming to Summer Camp, please check the box on your registration form that says you would like to donate your leftover canteen money to the scholarship fund. You can also add a donation to your camp fees. If you go to our online canteen, you can buy a Camp McDowell Bumper Sticker for \$20 (this is actually a donation to the Scholarship Fund).

The new Camp McDowell Music CD is now available as well. All the proceeds from the CD go to the scholarship fund.

During Christmastime we also offer Camp McDowell Christmas Cards. These cards notify the person of your choice that a donation has been made to the scholarship fund in their honor.



To order the Camp McDowell Music CD please e-mail michael@campmcdowell.com, call 205/387-1806, or visit www.campmcdowell.com

I want to say a special thank-you to the members of St. Mary's in Jasper for supporting Summer Camp. They are paying the fees for every child from their parish to come to camp! I encourage the members of every parish in our diocese to be aware that there may be children in your own congregation who need financial help to be able to come to camp.

**Let's keep working together to make sure that everyone gets to experience "Wonderful, Wonderful Camp McDowell!" For more information please e-mail michael@campmcdowell.com, call 205/387-1806, or visit www.campmcdowell.com.**

## ERD News

By Judy Quick, Our Diocesan ERD Representative



Christ's mandate of Matthew 25 guides Episcopal Relief and Development (ERD) as we work through the Churches in the Anglican Communion and with other local partners to raise the suffering from poverty to prosperity, from adversity to advantage, from sickness to strength, and from hunger to hope. Here is a recent story of how your ERD donations are helping others in a hurting world.

In low-resource countries, being born with a physical challenge can make earning a livelihood nearly impossible. When Diyala, a young disabled woman, was growing up in Jordan, she had to leave school before the sixth grade, and she had little hope of ever supporting herself. Everything changed for Diyala however when she was referred to the Jofeh Community Center to learn marketable skills. In cooperation with the Diocese of Jerusalem, ERD has partnered with the Jofeh Community Center for Rehabilitation, a project run by the Holy Land Institute for the Deaf to provide rehabilitation, education, vocational training, and other occupation-related services to deaf, blind, and disabled people.

Diyala soon completed training in the center's sewing and embroidery workshops, and after several months of work experience, it became clear to the Jofeh staff that Diyala was qualified to manage the workshops. Like most families in Jordan, Diyala's family did not want their daughter to work outside of the home, so the staff nurtured discussions to convince her parents of the value of allowing her to undertake this important work.

Diyala is now a self-reliant, successful manager, taking on new responsibilities and earning a stable income. Your support truly does make a difference!

To schedule a program about ERD for your congregation please contact me at jgquick@bellsouth.net or 205/669-6862. Also please visit www.er-d.org.

## Parish-Based Outreach Grant Applications Due July 15

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

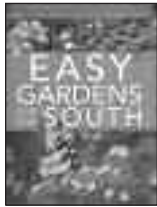
For the fifth consecutive our diocesan Department of Mission and Outreach is offering grants to start new or expand existing outreach ministries. These grants offer exciting opportunities to expand our mission and outreach across our diocese by assisting parishes launch and establish new ministries.

While parishes may—and are encouraged to—partner with other agencies or organizations in establishing and funding ministries, the grant money must be used for parish-based programs and may not be passed to other agencies or groups. The grants are intended to assist parishes who would otherwise not be able to start or extend a ministry. The grants may be renewed in some cases, but they are not intended to be an ongoing source of funding—parishes applying for grants for programs that were previously funded must show that the goals of the previous year have been achieved and demonstrate progress toward near-term self-sustainability. Parishes must also provide a report on the results of the program at the end of the funding year.

In 2008 Parish-Based Outreach Grants provided funds for 12 ministries operated by 12 parishes. The programs funded last year included food assistance, English as a Second Language, newborn assistance, children's music, and elderly transportation ministries.

In May an announcement and application form was sent to all active clergy, and an application form is also available online. **The application deadline is July 15. For more information please visit www.dioala.org or contact me at jgquick@bellsouth.net or 205/669-6862.**

## WHAT'S NEW/NOTEWORTHY AT THE EPISCOPAL BOOK STORE



**Easy Gardens for the South** by Harvey Cotton, Pamela Crawford, and Barbara Pleasant

This book shows beginners and experienced gardeners alike how to create gorgeous gardens with the easiest, most colorful, low-water plants the South has to offer. You will

learn about annuals, perennials, shrubs, and trees that thrive with little or no irrigation and only require minutes of care per year—plants that can breeze through hot, humid, Southern summers while attracting butterflies, birds, and hummingbirds. You will be able to shop for plants like a pro by taking the book with you to garden centers and checking out the latest information on the newest plants around from people who have grown them! The book is extremely easy to follow, includes thousands of color photographs, and many budget gardening tips.



**The Great Omission: Reclaiming Jesus's Essential Teachings on Discipleship** by Dallas Willard

The last command Jesus gave the Church before he ascended to heaven was the Great Commission, the call for Christians to “make disciples of all the nations.” But Christians have

responded by making “Christians,” not “disciples.” This, according to scholar and Christian thinker Dallas Willard, has been the Church’s Great Omission. “The word disciple occurs 269 times in the New Testament,” writes Willard. “Christian is found three times and was first introduced to refer precisely to disciples of Jesus.” Willard boldly challenges the thought that we can be Christians without being disciples or call ourselves Christians without applying this understanding of life in the Kingdom of God to every aspect of life on earth. He calls on believers to restore what should be the heart of Christianity—being active disciples of Jesus Christ. Willard shows us that in the school of life we are apprentices of the Teacher whose brilliance encourages us to rise above traditional Church understanding and embrace the true meaning of discipleship—an active, concrete, 24/7 life with Jesus.



**Some Day You'll Thank Me for This: The Official Southern Ladies' Guide to Being a "Perfect" Mother** by Gayden Metcalfe and Charlotte Hays

The same people who wrote *Being Dead Is No Excuse* bring us this hilarious treatise (complete with appropriate recipes from

those finicky, demanding moms) on the joys, trials, and tribulations of being the daughter of a Southern mother. Signs that you might be the daughter of a Southern mother include: you are obsessed with who got Aunt Boo Boo's silver tea service, you never leave home without making your bed, you play the “Who do you know?” game, and you continue to stand up for older ladies long after it dawns on you that you are an older lady yourself.



**Longing for God: Seven Paths of Christian Devotion** by Richard J. Foster and Gayle D. Beebe

Truly experiencing the love of God gives us a taste of his goodness and his love for us, but often those moments are fleeting. We get distracted by life. Our awareness and understanding fade, while our longing to

experience Him that way again increases. In this book, you can begin to fill that longing by developing your capacity to receive and respond to God's love. Spiritual formation is the process through which one's inner self is opened to the work of the Holy Spirit, who forms us into the image of the Son. Here Richard Foster and Gayle Beebe, who are both experienced leaders in spiritual formation, introduce you to people

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

**Diocesan Convention** February 11–13 in the Shoals area  
**Cursillo Weekends** #169 September 17–20 and #170 October 15–18

**Province IV Youth Event/PYE 2009** June 23–28  
**Sawyerville Day Camps** July 10–19 and 21–23  
**Summer Camper Reunion** July 24–26

**June 25–27** Foundation for Liturgical Music (FLM) Conference MMS XIII at Our Lady of the Valley Catholic Church in Birmingham. For more information please contact Nancy Ryan at [nryan95@windstream.net](mailto:nryan95@windstream.net) or 205/467-9170.

**June 28–July 3** Renewal Conference featuring the Rt. Rev. Mike Hill and music by the Advent's Five O'Clock Band at the Kanuga Conference Center in Hendersonville, North Carolina. For more information please call 828/692-9136, e-mail [info@kanuga.org](mailto:info@kanuga.org), or visit [www.kanuga.org](http://www.kanuga.org).

**July 13–19** 59th Annual Sewanee Church Music Conference at DuBose Conference Center in Monteagle, Tennessee. For more information please contact John Spain at [jwspain2@gmail.com](mailto:jwspain2@gmail.com).

**July 20** St. Francis of Assisi (Indian Springs) 9th Annual Golf Tournament to raise funds for outreach projects at Riverchase Country Club in Birmingham. For more information please contact Buster Norvell at [mbrnorvelljr@charter.net](mailto:mbrnorvelljr@charter.net) or 205/991-5602.

**July 24–26** First-Ever Summer Camper Reunion at Camp McDowell. For more information please see page 19 or contact Michael Goldsmith at [Michael@campmcdowell.com](mailto:Michael@campmcdowell.com) or 205/387-1806.

**August 20–22** EFM Mentor Training at Holy Apostles' in Birmingham. For more information please contact Nita Caldwell at [ncaldwell@christchurch1828.org](mailto:ncaldwell@christchurch1828.org) or 205/758-4242 ext. 121.

**August 23–28** Liturgical Arts XII—Holy Works for Holy Places coordinated by Lark Howell, of Grace Church in Anniston, at the Kanuga Conference Center in Hendersonville, North Carolina. For more information please call 828/692-9136, e-mail [info@kanuga.org](mailto:info@kanuga.org), or visit [www.kanuga.org](http://www.kanuga.org).

**October 18–23** McDowell Watercolor Workshops at Camp McDowell. For more information please contact Tora Johnson at [toradave@earthlink.net](mailto:toradave@earthlink.net) or 205/423-0922.

from the past who have known God deeply. Each person helps you grasp one of the seven primary paths to intimacy with God that have been developed throughout Christian history. The book's chapters are divided into sections with each segment surrounding a key figure and concluding with a reflection and prayer.



**NIV Adventure Bible for Kids—The Family Audio Bible** read by Dick Cavett, Marsha Mason, Andrew McCarthy, Martha Plimpton, and Tom Wopat

*The NIV Adventure Bible for Kids* is recommended by more Christian schools and churches than any other Bible for kids. It includes games, a scavenger hunt, and other

Bible fun—all with a jungle safari theme. *The Family Audio Bible* includes 36 unabridged excerpts from the Old Testament and the New Testament from the NRSV Bible that are perfect before bedtime or on the go.



**Stillness in the Storm CD** by Melanie Richardson Rodgers

The Advent's Five O'Clock Band's own Melanie Richardson Rodgers has released this lovely CD, which features a collection of hymns performed on viola and violin. “One of my biggest joys as a musician is being part of a worship experience where I can collaborate with other musicians also on fire about serving God through their music,” writes Melanie. “My hope and prayer is that this music will be a companion for you in finding that still place within where you experience our Savior's loving, restful, peaceful, and healing presence.”



**My Utmost for His Highest** by Oswald Chambers

Cherished for generations as the world's devotional classic, this book is unsurpassed in devotional excellence in offering a powerful message of hope to those seeking daily encouragement as well as for those who walk in the shadows of difficulty.

This classic daily devotional has sold millions of copies throughout the years—and the demand continues.



**God Calling** by A.J. Russell

This unique classic of devotional literature contains spiritual insights for each day of the year, offered by two anonymous Englishwomen, that provide a mine of spiritual treasures. They will bring the reality of God and His constant concern for you into your heart. They will help you overcome your daily worries and draw you ever closer to the peace you seek.

For more information about these and other books or to have a staff member research and special order a particular book, please contact the Episcopal Book Store, 2015 Sixth Avenue North, Birmingham, AL 35203; 205/323-2959; e-mail [ebinfo@episcobooks.com](mailto:ebinfo@episcobooks.com). You can also visit the bookstore online at [www.episcobooks.com](http://www.episcobooks.com). The bookstore is open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sunday from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.

## Doug Carpenter Publishes a Book of Camp Stories

The Rev. Doug Carpenter has compiled the stories he has told over the years at Camp McDowell into the spellbinding *Terrifying Tales and Inspiring Stories as Told through the Smoke of Camp Fires at McDowell*.

“People have frequently asked me to write down some of these stories,” notes Doug. “I think I put that off until now because although I knew I could ‘tell’ those stories well, I didn't know if they would come out as well in print!” The book includes eight chapters of “terrifying tales” and seven chapters of “inspiring stories” including “the ever-popular ‘Girl from Nauvoo’ and ‘Purple Boy.’”

For more information about the book and how to receive a signed copy, please contact Doug at 3037 Overton Road, Birmingham, AL 35223; or [Carpenter.doug@att.net](mailto:Carpenter.doug@att.net).

# Celebrating the New Chapel of St. Francis

By the Rev. Deacon Dave Drachlis, Our Diocesan Communications Coordinator



It rained hard on north-central Alabama on Saturday, May 2, but not a drop fell on Camp McDowell as some 450 people gathered to celebrate the completion of the Chapel of St. Francis of Assisi. The chapel was dedicated during a two-hour service followed by a barbecue picnic lunch and an afternoon of games and bluegrass music.

The Rt. Rev. Henry N. Parsley Jr., Bishop of Alabama; the Rt. Rev. John McKee Sloan, Bishop Suffragan; and the Rt. Rev. Robert O. Miller, retired Bishop of Alabama, led the service, which began with a procession to the chapel. Children of our diocese brought and placed flowers at the altar, and during the service a special window in the north transept, given by the people of our diocese, was dedicated in honor of Bishop Parsley in thanksgiving for his life and ministry.

“Camp McDowell is at the spiritual heart of our diocesan community, and our new chapel provides a visual and physical reminder—an outward and visible sign—that Christ is the center of our lives,” emphasizes Bishop Parsley. “The new chapel was designed to be very ‘green.’ With the use of a great deal of glass and natural wood, the grace of nature and the grace of worship come together as one.”

“Built at the top of the hill near the entrance to Camp McDowell, the new chapel serves to unite the three main points of focus of activity—Miller

Commons, Stough Lodge, and the lower camp,” notes Bishop Sloan. “The new chapel is a gift from the people of our diocese to be enjoyed for generations to come.”

Camp McDowell serves as our summer camp facility as well as a retreat and conference center for our 33,000-member diocese. The camp offers an annual Special Session summer camp for mentally and physically-challenged young people and adults and a camp for people with HIV/AIDS. Camp McDowell also houses and operates the Alabama Folk School, the McDowell Environmental Center, and the Venture Out! program.

Williams-Blackstock Architects of Birmingham designed the chapel, and Brice Building Company of Birmingham constructed the facility with funds from our diocese’s ACTS 2 capital funds campaign. The 500-seat, \$2.7-million Chapel of St. Francis of Assisi more than doubles the worship capacity of Camp McDowell’s Ascension Chapel, which was completed in 1957. Use of the old chapel has tripled over the past 12 years, and many events held there overflowed its 200-seat capacity. The new chapel includes a downstairs conference area for meetings and fellowship events.

*To see more photos taken at the dedication, please visit our diocesan Web site, [www.dioala.org](http://www.dioala.org); for more about Camp McDowell please see, pages 18–19, visit [www.campmcdowell.com](http://www.campmcdowell.com), or call 205/387-1806.*



Bishop Parsley



## Meet and Talk with Our General Convention Deputies

**You are invited to talk with our 76th General Convention Deputies on Sunday, June 28, from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. at St. Stephen’s in Birmingham.** During the convention, which will be held July 8–17 in Anaheim, the lay and clergy deputies will discuss many issues, with a strong focus on global concerns and the Anglican Communion.

The Ubuntu logo being used for the convention was adapted from a design by the Rev. Paul Fromberg. It depicts God the Creator in the bright center, God the Son in the cross formed by the longitude and latitude lines, and God the Holy Spirit swirling around the Father and the Son. The swirl is comprised of dancing figures, male and female, with faces of many colors, who symbolize the interconnectedness of humanity. Ubuntu is spelled out in a font especially created for General Convention by Mel Ahlborn, president of the Episcopal Church and the Visual Arts, together with a quotation from the Gospel of John. *For more about the 76th General Convention please see page 21 and visit [www.episcopalchurch.org/gc2009.htm](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/gc2009.htm).*



### *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](http://www.dioala.org).

**Please send stories and photographs** (color, if available) to Editor Norma McKittrick at [apostledit@aol.com](mailto: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](mailto:dservant@dioala.org) or Carpenter House, 521 North 20th Street, Birmingham, AL 35203–2682.