



The Alabama EPISCOPALIAN

The Episcopal Diocese of Alabama

• Pentecost •

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Ministry To and With Our Youth

The Alabama Episcopalian July–August 2009

The Rt. Rev. Robert Oran Miller, who served as our Bishop Suffragan from 1986 to 1989 and our Ninth Bishop from 1989 until his retirement in 1998, died on June 29. His family and friends filled the Cathedral Church of the Advent for his funeral service on July 3. “He loved the people of Alabama, and we loved him. I can’t imagine a more wonderful Episcopal colleague than ‘Number Nine,’ as I affectionately called Bob,” Bishop Parsley noted in his sermon. *Please see “Celebrating the Life and Ministry of Bishop Miller” beginning on this page.*

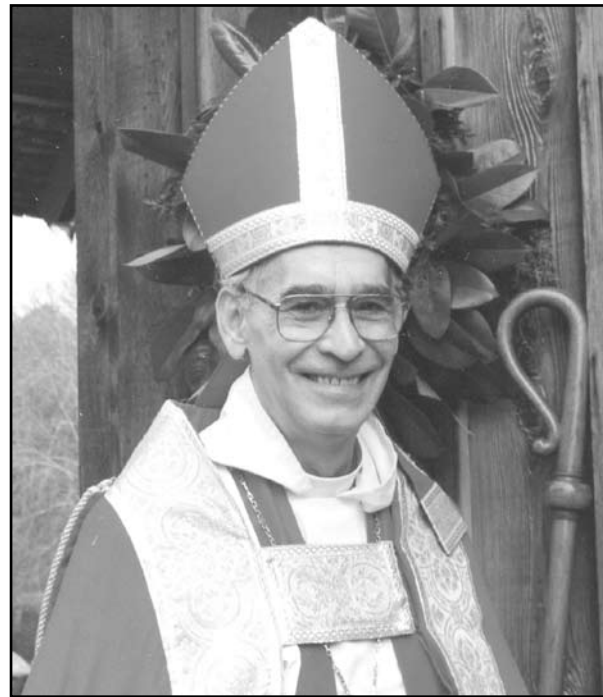
Our bishops and delegates represented our diocese well at the 76th General Convention in Anaheim. Bishop Parsley shares his reflections about the convention in *Salt and Light: From the Bishop: “Deep Time and the General Convention” on page 6. Also please see “General Convention Highlights” (page 7), “Proudly Presenting Our Diocesan UTO Contribution” (page 20), and “Representing Our Diocese” (page 24).*

This issue highlights youth ministry in our diocese with stories and photos of Summer Camp and Special Session at Camp McDowell, Sawyerville Day and Mini-Camps, and Young People Painting Birmingham. Youth Ministries Coordinator Leslie Bridgers Manning and other youth leaders also share their thoughts about building Christian community with our young people. *Please see From Bishop Sloan: “Let It Shine!” (page 8), “It’s Okay To Come Awkwardly Dressed and Early—Creating Safe Space in Youth Ministry” (page 9), and “Ministry To and With Our Youth” (pages 10-18).*

For the most current news about our diocese please visit www.dioala.org. Please send stories and photographs (color, if available) for *The Alabama Episcopalian* to Editor Norma McKittrick at apostledit@aol.com or 2156 Kent Way, Birmingham, AL 35226; the submission deadline for each issue is the 1st of the month prior to publication.

On the Cover

The cover photo for this issue was taken at Sawyerville Mini-Camp, an extension of this year’s annual Sawyerville Day Camp held in July at the Sunshine School in Newbern in Hale County. The image beautifully represents this summer’s theme, Stand by Me. A six-year-old camper is putting the finishing touches on a much-admired arts-and-crafts project. The campers painted their hands and placed them where they wished on the strips of colorful banner paper—hands upon hands from all different backgrounds coming together to create a lovely mural of God’s love expressed in community, a piece of the Kingdom.



The Right Reverend Robert Oran Miller
February 14, 1935 – June 29, 2009

The Rt. Rev. Robert Oran Miller died on June 29 at the age of 74. He served as our Bishop Suffragan from 1986 to 1989 and as our Ninth Bishop from 1989 until his retirement in 1998.

“Bishop Miller was a much beloved bishop in our diocese,” notes Bishop Parsley. “He was a devoted pastor to many, a champion of the Church’s ministry among the poor and persons in special need, and a leader in expanding the ministry of the Episcopal Church in Alabama. He will be greatly missed.”

His ordained ministry spanned almost half a century, beginning with his ministry as a pastor in the Methodist Church in 1963 and continuing as Associate Minister for the First Methodist Church in Anniston and Director of Wesley Foundation at Jacksonville State University. He was ordained a deacon and priest in the Episcopal Church in 1968.

During his ministry in the Episcopal Church in Alabama he served as rector of St. Wilfrid’s in Marion, priest in charge of Holy Cross in Uniontown, rector of Holy Comforter in Montgomery, and rector of St.

Francis of Assisi in Indian Springs Village. He also served as chaplain at Judson College and Marion Military Institute in Marion.

After his election and consecration as Bishop Suffragan of Alabama in 1986, he assisted the Rt. Rev. Furman “Bill” Stough until being elected to succeed him as Bishop of Alabama. Under Bishop Miller’s leadership our diocese grew with the addition of five new parishes and worshipping communities and a significant expansion of Camp McDowell. He personally directed numerous summer camp sessions visited almost every camp session. He placed special emphasis on ministry to children and young adults, and he created a full-time diocesan position to develop youth ministries.

Bishop Miller also played a key role in supporting the development of Birmingham Episcopal Campus Ministries, and he was instrumental in the formation of our diocesan AIDS Task Force. In addition, he served as a member of the Standing Liturgical Commission of the Episcopal Church, a Nonalcoholic Trustee on the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, and a trustee of the University of the South.

Bishop Miller was born in Winnville, Alabama, in 1935 and attended Phillips High School in Birmingham. After serving in the army from 1957 to 1959, he completed his Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology from Birmingham–Southern College in 1960. He received his Bachelor of Divinity degree from Candler Theological Seminary at Emory University in 1963 and did postgraduate work at the School of Theology at the University of the South. He received an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from University of the South in 1988 and the Distinguished Alumnus Award from Birmingham–Southern College in 1991.

Bishop Miller is survived by his wife, the former Margaret “Peggy” Fisher, their daughters, Margaret Slater Miller and Vivian Miller Campagna, and their granddaughter Lila Grace Campagna. People from across Alabama attended his funeral service on Friday, July 3, at the Cathedral Church of the Advent. The committal was held at Camp McDowell the morning of July 4.

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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



Bishop
The Rt. Rev. Henry Nutt Parsley Jr.

Bishop Suffragan
The Rt. Rev. John McKee Sloan

Carpenter House
521 North 20th Street
Birmingham, AL 35203
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In the United States
A community of about
2.4 million members in 119 dioceses
in the Americas and abroad. Established
in 1789.



Presiding Bishop
The Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori
Episcopal Church Center
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212/867-8400

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



Archbishop of Canterbury
The Most Rev. Rowan D. Williams
Lambeth Palace, London
England SE17JU

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Celebrating the Life and Ministry of Bishop Miller

The Right Reverend Robert Oran Miller IX Bishop of Alabama

Sermon Preached by The Right Reverend Henry N. Parsley Jr. on July 3, 2009

We are gathered together in this Cathedral to offer our humble and hearty thanksgiving for the life and ministry of our beloved brother and bishop, Bob Miller, and to commend him to God's eternal care and keeping.

In this liturgy of the church two mighty rivers come together, the river of our grief and the river of our Christian joy. Our human tears and our Easter faith meet here and mingle as two rivers making a restless harbor.

We weep, as Jesus wept at the tomb of his dear friend, Lazarus, because we have lost our brother Bob too suddenly and too soon in this life, and we will miss him profoundly. Our hearts go out to Peggy and Vivian and Margaret especially, and all their family, in their grief. Grief we know is always a measure of our love, an expression of our deep affection for those we love and have to bid good-bye on these earthly shores.

Yet, as we weep, we rejoice with the joy of those who know that Christ is the resurrection and the life. We celebrate and give thanks for Bob's extraordinary life among us his family, friends, members of his Episcopal family, and the larger faith community. We rejoice because we are Easter people who see beyond the horizons of this life to shores of light uncreated, who see the communion of the saints where the last word is never death. It is always resurrection and new life.

As Frederick Buechner's Godric said, "The secret that



Bishop Parsley and Bishop Miller share a happy moment in December 1998; photo by Ann Chambliss

more wonderful Episcopal colleague than *Number Nine* as I affectionately called Bob. He always treated me as a dear and welcome friend and partner in ministry and we could not have had a better relationship during these years since I came to be his successor. Bob was a devoted pastor and a gifted preacher. He was a friend to all, a fervent advocate for the poor and those in special need and for the ministries of compassion and justice that we share in the church and faith community. He was a man who reflected the love of Christ and lived it as fully as God gave him the gifts to do so.

It has been said somewhere that vocation "keeps making more of you." That was certainly true of Bob and his journey of ministry. From being a Methodist pastor to an Episcopal bishop, God kept calling him forth in new journeys and challenges in the life of the Church and Bob never failed to say yes. His great sense of humor, his infectious laugh that we the diocesan staff loved and will miss, his rich capacity for tears at important moments, his firm resolve about what is really important, and his leadership for the growth of the church's mission have blessed us all.

Bob has departed but his light remains and will continue to shine in the life and story of this diocese and his family from generation to generation.

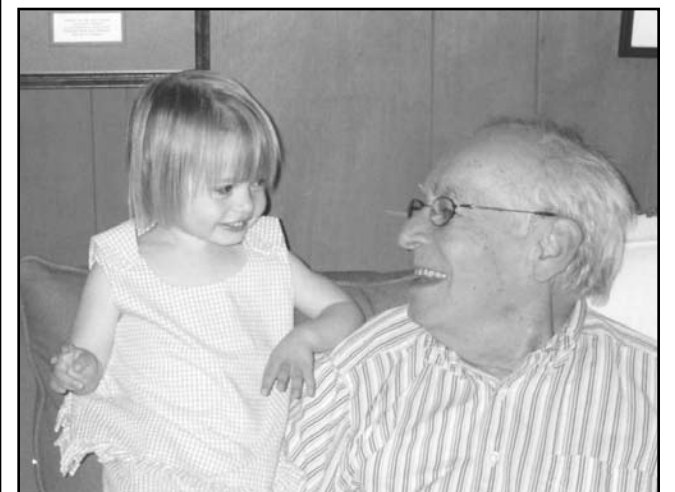
In recent years Bob loved doing Episcopal visitations when we needed him, and those visitations were always a favorite part of his Episcopal ministry. "I do visitations," he loved to say as his constant mantra, "but I don't do problems." What a deal! Bob was marvelously happy with this arrangement and with the precious time in retirement he had with all his three girls and especially his new granddaughter. I always think of him at our last clergy conference in the spring driving

around in his new VW convertible. Never did I see him looking so happy. Peggy told me that he had said before Christmas as they talked about gifts that he had everything he ever wanted except a VW Beetle convertible. So, God bless her, Peggy gave him one.

So this year you might say Bob had it all—what a time to go to heaven. Now in the mystery of the resurrection, this life beyond life that we share in Christ, he has even more—a larger life even than the one he has already lived. And I bet that the apostolic band beyond the stars is enjoying Bob's laughter and that he and St. Paul are having a lively theological debate on a few points!

Jesus said in today's gospel, "I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep and my sheep know me." That was true of Bob Miller. He was a good shepherd.

In his great novel *Look Homeward, Angel*, Thomas Wolfe wrote that death is the "last voyage, the longest, the best." Those are the dimensions of our Christian hope, fully extended. In that journey we are finally and

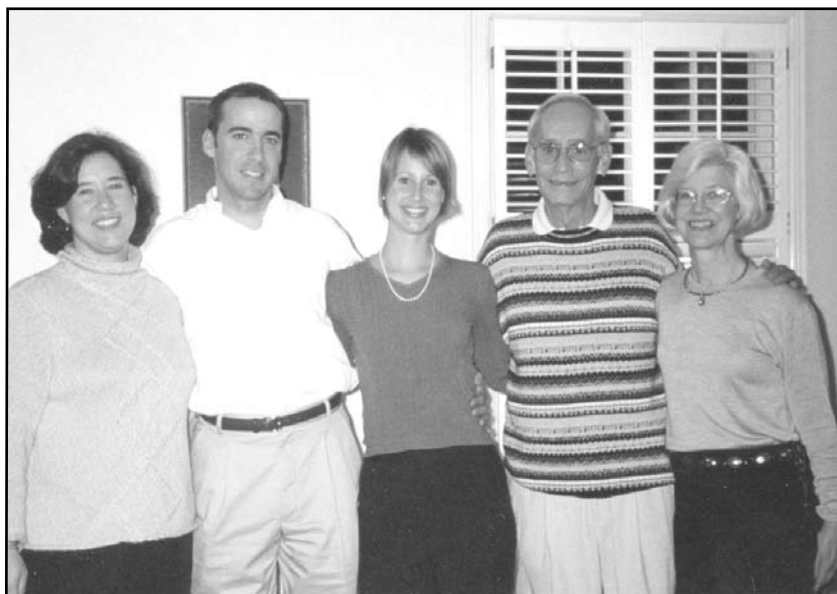


Bob enjoying some special time with his granddaughter, Lila

forever joined in the love of Christ from which nothing, not even death, can ever separate us.

Today the rivers of grief and the rivers of joy mingle together in the restless harbor of our hearts. But we finally and confidently make our song today "Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia." We look homeward with Bob and say not farewell but "fare forward." Fare forward dear brother and bishop, beloved husband, father, friend, into the fullness of life and joy that our Lord has prepared for you and for all who love him. Fare forward on the tide of Christ's deathless love and know that with you go our deepest affection, our abiding gratitude, and our absolute commitment to continue the work of the Gospel for which you gave your all. Well done, good and faithful servant.

Thanks be to God, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia. In the name of Christ who is the resurrection and the life. Amen.



Margaret Miller and John and Vivian (Miller) Campagna with Bob and Peggy

we share I cannot tell in full. But this much I will tell. What's lost is nothing to what's found, and all the death that ever was, set next to life, would scarcely fill a cup." That is the hope and faith of our hearts.

Bob lived by that faith and hope as a beloved priest and bishop in this diocese for over 40 years. He loved the people of Alabama and we loved him. I can't imagine a

CELEBRATING THE LIFE AND MINISTRY OF BISHOP MILLER

“Tell the Love of Jesus and That He Died for All”

By the Rev. Ken Fields

The Rev. Ken Fields served as coordinator for Christian Education at Holy Comforter in Montgomery, associate rector of St. John's in Montgomery, founding rector of St. Thomas' in Birmingham, our diocesan Deputy for Communications and Clergy Deployment, editor of The Apostle, and rector and chaplain of Canterbury Chapel in Tuscaloosa. He is currently the vice rector of St. Martin's in Houston.

Almost 30 years ago I was a newly minted deacon serving under Bob Miller at the Church of the Holy Comforter in Montgomery. I had already distinguished myself on my first Sunday there by reading the wrong Gospel lesson and destroying the altar rail gate when I tried to close it . . . hardly an auspicious beginning to what turned out to be a wonderful ministry with a remarkable mentor who became one of my dearest friends.

Not long after that first disastrous Sunday, I received a call that there had been a death at the home of one of our parishioners. I no longer remember the names of the parishioners, but I remember what happened and always will because it helped shape the course of my ministry from then on. I went to the home of the parishioners, Book of Common Prayer under my arm. Bob was already there, sitting in the living room with members of the family and talking and crying with them. The body had not yet been removed from the bedroom, and there were police all around. I tried to be as inconspicuous as possible and probably succeeded. I remember being surprised that Bob was crying since I thought we, as clergy, were to be strong

towers of strength at times like this. I also remember that Bob prayed without using the Prayer Book, another novel experience for the novice.

In time the police left along with members of the family to see to whatever paperwork needed to be taken care of. Bob walked out with the members of the family, still tearful. I and a few others remained inside, with me trying still to be invisible. Bob soon returned, dried his tears, and told those of us who were still there, “We need to get to work now.”

“Work?” I thought. “What work?” The work Bob had in mind and the work he led was cleaning up the house, not an easy task considering what had transpired, but we did it. We did it because Bob said we should and because he was right. From his ministry of presence to his ministry of service, Bob taught me that night more than I had ever learned before—or since—about being a priest. I remain in his debt for that lesson, and I hope I have put it to good use over the years since.

As time went by, I would work under Bob's immediate direction once more as a member of the diocesan staff. And there, too, I saw, purple shirt or not, that same commitment to the ministry of presence and the ministry of service.

Bob's death came near the Feast of St. Peter and St. Paul, near the anniversary of my own ordination and the events I have described above. I was reminded of the old hymn “There Is a Balm in Gilead,” which Bob, with his Methodist

upbringing, and I, with my Baptist one, would remember. I think it sums up Bob and his ministry: *Though you cannot preach like Peter, and you cannot pray like Paul, you can tell the love of Jesus and that he died for all.*



Bishop Miller at the dedication of new construction work at Holy Comforter in Montgomery

Few of us can preach like Peter or pray like Paul, but then few of us could ever do as good a job as Bob Miller did of telling—and showing—the love of Jesus and that he died for all. I shall miss him and continue to hope that I can make him proud of me.

The Many Gifts of Bob Miller

By the Rev. Massey Gentry

The Rev. Massey Gentry served as the rector of Trinity in Wetumpka and St. Francis of Assisi in Indian Springs (Pelham) before Bishop Miller selected him to be his Canon to the Ordinary. Later he served as rector of Christ Church in Las Vegas. He retired from his position of vice rector of St. Martin's in Houston in December 2008.

As the saying goes, “There are many gifts.” Some are powerful preachers, and some are articulate teachers. Some are effortless liturgists, and some are ecclesiastical diplomats. Some are persons of “presence,” while others have reputations that precede them. There are many gifts.

One of Bishop Bob Miller's gifts was that he was never quite sure he wanted to be a bishop, much less the Bishop of Alabama. His gift was his humility in the call. His gift was the human being that he brought to the Office. His gift was a constant awareness that he, indeed, was there as a servant of God rather than as the consequence of ambition.

To be frank, it was Bob's easygoing humility that drove me crazy. He would give someone an appointment that we would schedule for an hour, and two hours later, three hours later Bob would still be chatting away with them in his office. Did he not know there were “important things to do?” There were decisions to be made, letters to be answered, phone calls to be made, important people waiting to see him. In Bob's mind, however, the person he was listening to at the time was the most important piece of business before the Bishop of Alabama.



Bishop Stough with newly elected Bishop Miller, Peggy, and Margaret

Bob's ease with himself was a part of his humble spirit. Once again, it drove me up the wall. When Bishop Stough was still alive I had the privilege of traveling overseas with him several times on behalf of 815 [the Episcopal Church Center, 815 Second Avenue in New York]. In all the time that I knew him, in all of those trips, I only called him “Bill” one time (and that was in the bar of the Intercontinental Hotel in Manila). Bob, however, insisted that everyone call him by that name.

Once we had a young transitional deacon we had taken from another diocese. It was a favor to the other bishop, and not something that normally happened. You know the type. I would not have been surprised if the deacon had placed his name in nomination for an episcopal seat the

day he entered seminary. In any event, we had made it crystal clear that, when we took him, he would be expected to serve in Alabama for two years. The week before he was to have been ordained a priest, we discovered that the young man had been courting a position as a rector in another diocese.

Bishop Miller asked me to talk to him, and I, in an approach that was anything but polite on my part, informed him that we would release him that day without ordination and that, furthermore, he should never bother applying for a position in Alabama for what might remain of his ministry.

Throughout the conversation, he feigned being “incredulous that we would forbid him from listening to the call of the Holy Spirit” and consistently referred to his close relationship with “Bob.” Practically throwing him out of the room, I ended by telling him that I had known Bishop Miller for 20 years, had eaten dinner in the Miller home with Peggy and the kids on numerous occasions, counted the Bishop among my closest friends, and that, since his being elected, I could count on one hand the times I had called him “Bob.” Unchastened, the young man shot back, “Well, he told me to call him that—what do you expect me to do?”

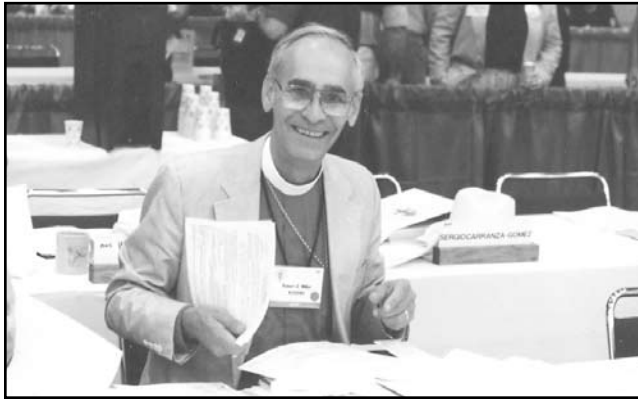
“You say, ‘Thank you very much, Bishop.’”

Bob Miller laughed and said, “I don't care if he calls me Bob.”

This is not to say, though, that Bob could not make the

hard decisions. In the first three years of his tenure, Bishop Miller faced a number of challenges: Bishop Stough resigned as Bishop of Alabama to serve on the presiding bishop's staff, Ed Freeland died suddenly, and there were two major parish fires, two parish embezzlements, and the imposition of the professional misconduct prevention guidelines by the Church Insurance Corporation. The latter policy alone probably did more to shift the focus of the House of Bishops from pastoral oversight to administrative/CEO.

Time and again I watched as Bob "did the right thing," indeed the "hard" thing, when it came to demanding that clergy live up to our vows. It was a move that was frequently unpopular (and misunderstood) among the clergy. Even when it was controversial, though, Bob refused to defend his decisions by divulging confidential but politically expedient information. I can think of at least three lawsuits that were stopped in their tracks because of Bob's uncompromising insistence that he would not discuss a particular case of clergy discipline. I can think of just as many



instances in which a clergy person's career was salvaged despite that same priest's public criticism of the Bishop.

He was equally forceful in insisting that parishes take responsibility for their own parish stewardship; if you wanted a full-time priest of your own choosing, you could pay for it. He was fervent about outreach and justice. He

believed in the Church as a Communion. He was committed to the expansion of Camp McDowell. He was committed to the ongoing revitalization of ministry to the hearing impaired by funding the priest as a member of the diocesan staff. The diocese grew; we led the nation in category after category.

I suppose, however, that histories are best written by professionals who can parse the data and draw dispassionate conclusions. I am not in a position, on any of those counts, to do those things. I will lay my odds (and I know something about the Las Vegas line) though, that, when the history of the Diocese of Alabama is written on the day the Roll is called, the episcopacy of Bob Miller will demonstrate that he served with distinction, with success, and with a favorable comparison to the line of succession in which he stands.

Finally, allow me this privilege. I loved Bill Stough like a father. I loved Bob Miller like a brother. It was an honor. It has been a gift.

"Great Souled"

By the Rev. John Cruse

The Rev. John Cruse served as the curate at Holy Comforter in Montgomery, assistant to the Anglican bishop in Jerusalem and the Middle East, interim rector of St. Paul's in Selma, rector of Grace Church in Mt. Meigs, rector of St. Alban's in Birmingham, rector of Holy Comforter in Gadsden, and chaplain at St. Dunstan's in Auburn. He is currently serving as the chaplain at St. Martin's in-the-Pines in Birmingham.

I have two texts. One is from Luke's gospel: "All who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted" (Luke 18:14). That text speaks for itself, and this remembrance is but commentary upon it. The second comes from St. Paul, writing to the Corinthians: "I have become all things to all people, so that I might by any means save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel" (1 Corinthians 9:22, 23).

It is odd that this missionary virtue should be looked upon with suspicion in our own day. St. Paul became all things to all people through conviction, not uncertainty. He says, "To the weak I became weak so that I might win the weak . . . To the Jews I became a Jew in order to win Jews." It didn't always work, of course. When Paul preached in the Areopagus he tried eloquence to impress the sophisticated Athenians, but he founded no church there. Yet to the Corinthians Paul spoke of the church as the Body of Christ in a city where the human body was the source of sensual excitement. These days we might say that Paul began where people were to draw them to faith in Jesus Christ. Paul's subtlety has often been underappreciated—but then subtlety, if true to itself, should pass unnoticed.

Bishop Robert O. Miller loved the color, order, and beauty of the Catholic tradition, and the Episcopal Church captured his soul as a young Methodist minister. He received his religion through the eyes quite as much as through the ears. His faith was a faith of all the senses. Sermons were to be elegant, poetic, an art form. They were to be labored over, words weighed for both truth and impact. They were to reflect the attractiveness of God.

Bob wanted people to be drawn in their humanity to the God in whose image they were made. He always saw God in them as well as the flaws and failures that make human beings seem so frequently ridiculous. It is this incongruity between our status as children of God and our vanity and foolishness that was the source of so much of his sense of humor. That was why he was so patient with a fallen world and a defective Church. He could never be a recruit for

the single-issue fanatic or the moralizing majority; his sense of proportion frequently irritated them. But this did not eradicate Bob's urge to identify with everyone he met. To the Jews he became a Jew. With the weak he was weak. He connected with people high and low.

In all this Bob had a deep love for his roots, his history, and his family. He instinctively put himself at the service of others. That was why he was a great pastor. His was an incarnate religion.

When Bob retired as the Ninth Bishop of Alabama, he moved over gladly to be replaced by Bishop Parsley. In subsequent years he often assisted with Episcopal visitations in our diocese and also in the Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast and other places. He was always helpful, but not intrusive.

In many ways the episcopate is not family friendly; it can be an irritating competitor for the wife seeking her husband's attention or the child or teenager wanting some fatherly care. The freshness and liveliness of the Miller family (Peggy, Margaret, and Vivian) show how it can be done, but Bob would never have been able to tell you how. That's partly the secret. Peggy was his constant and faithful companion and friend, but she never allowed anyone to determine who she was as a priest's wife or a bishop's wife—and Bob fully supported her independence. With Peggy by his side, there was no chance of Bob becoming donnish and remote.

Bob Miller was an achiever but curiously resistant to recalling his achievements. I cannot remember a single occasion when he made reference to himself or his accolades, which could have made him a bore rather than a boon-companion. Bob was reticent, and that's one of the reasons why so many of us loved him.

He was also curiously detached from material possessions, but not because he lacked an aesthetic eye. Bob loved beautiful things, but there was sparseness to him and a discipline as well.

Those of us privileged to work with Bob Miller also prayed with him every day. He was incapable of public displays of piety, but his Christianity permeated the whole of his personality. It was no easy faith. There was nothing glib about it. That was why it convinced, or put better he convinced.

Yes, there is more to be said. Indeed as we all know, there is a biography still to be written. What we do today is honor

Bob Miller, the man, the husband, the father and grandfather, the companion and friend, the Christian priest and bishop. He left people feeling better—more in touch with themselves and with God—for having met and known him. He was Good News, and that is spiritual stature.

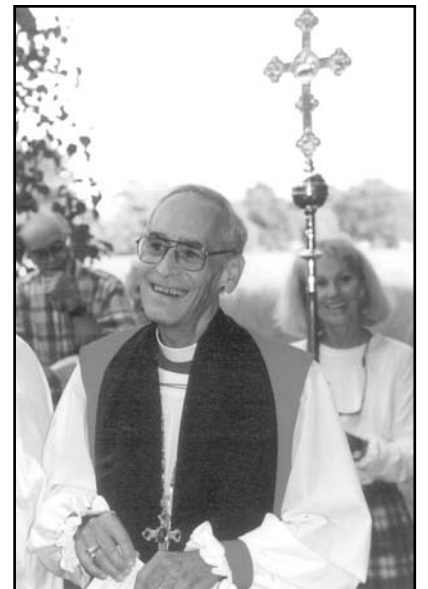
The following poem by Ann Lewin called "After Word" draws the themes of this remembrance together.

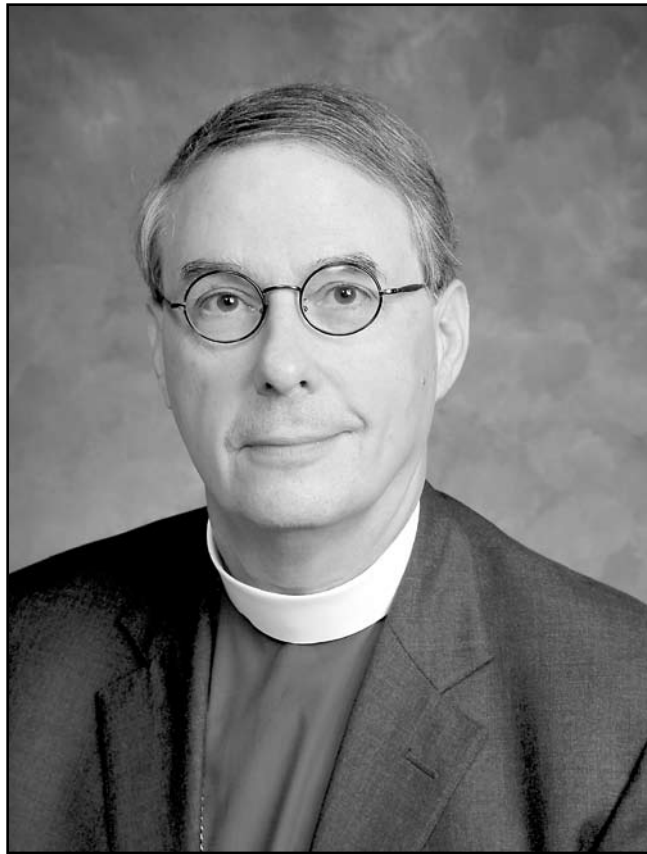
Thus heavens and earth were
Finished, and were good. But
In the middle of the night, God woke,
"It might be burdensome," he thought,
"To give dominion over all created things
To earthling folk; lest they should
Take themselves too seriously,
I'll give them music and a
Sense of fun, to lighten duty and
Enliven praise."
So in wise mercy did Creator God,
And all the seventh day, he rested,
Well content.

On this seventh day we delight in Bob Miller's life and ministry, which has lightened duty and enlivened praise.

Finally, there is a word from the language of classical Greek: *Megalopsychos*, "Great Souled." If I were to write Bob's epitaph on the simple rock that is his headstone at Camp McDowell, it would be that: "Great Souled."

For more about Bishop Miller, please visit www.dioala.org/094.html.





Photograph by Billy Brown

Deep Time and the General Convention

all right. He told us that we must love one another. And he assured us that he would be with us as we struggle with tough questions in every age, leading us into all truth. On the issues of our day it is sure that we will discern the mind of Christ together as best we ever can discern it. As the Archbishop of Canterbury has recently said, this will have to be based on “the most painstaking biblical exegesis” and will need a “strong level of consensus and theological grounding” in the Communion and ecumenically. (I’ve been saying this for years, but it is more eloquent coming from Canterbury.) On the journey we can be led to see new things, but only in God’s good time.

The second insight the Grand Canyon gave me was that, because of the canyon’s complex formations and constantly changing light, there are many differing perspectives on its beauty. Each view, each moment of the day offers a different angle and a varied way of seeing.

I encourage you to keep all things in perspective and to renew our abiding commitment to God’s mission. Like the Grand Canyon the Church’s journey in time is long and winding, and it is often our imperfections and rough edges that reflect the best light.

So it is in the Church’s life. As we contemplate the transforming love and wisdom of Jesus Christ, we see different perspectives. As Augustine wrote, “Christ’s is a beauty ever ancient and ever new.” From different angles and in varied contexts we see Christ the healer, Christ the sacrifice for sin, Christ the teacher of moral wisdom, Christ the prophet, Christ the image of God’s love. The cross and resurrection are at the center of them all.

Each image is true and is reflected in the witness of scripture and tradition. Each gives us a certain perspective on issues. As human beings in different places the living Christ will meet us in varied ways, and the Church in diverse contexts will respond in varying ways to the demands of the one Gospel. Always we must make room for one another, as God in his infinite mercy has made room for us.

We as Episcopalians have long wrestled with what we call Anglican comprehensiveness. We recognize the tragic tendency for the Church to divide into camps on certain things. We have been led, in contrast, to strive in all charity to contain as much of the truth of Christ as we can in one comprehensive fellowship, held together by common worship and the Book of Common Prayer.

Either/or answers are more seductive than both/and ones. But our peculiar heritage has inclined us to

give a wide berth to the manifestation of the truth and love of Christ among us. This means that we have always been a diverse body and that we will disagree on things without breaking the communion and fellowship of the saints. Conservative, liberal, moderate, high church, low church, catholic, evangelical, confused . . . each is valued and respected. We are all on a journey.

Our Anglican heritage calls us to an abiding humility and to be “eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” as we seek the wisdom of Christ afresh in every age. At urgent moments of disagreement Anglican comprehensiveness can be difficult. But in the long run it pays the greatest dividends.

I realize that these are challenging days for us as we, along with many denominations, struggle with complex ethical issues of human sexuality. There are different perspectives about the meaning of convention’s resolutions, and considerable “spin” abounds. Let me say again that my view is that the historic teaching of this Church about marriage has not been altered, even as we have affirmed the valued place of gay and lesbian persons in this Church. We have not approved rites for blessing same sex unions. I think it very wise that we have resolved to study these matters in theological depth with our Anglican partners. The policies and practice of the Diocese of Alabama have not and will not change, unless there is a new theological consensus in the Anglican Communion around these matters.

You should know that in the House of Bishops, Bishop Sloan and I signed what is being called the “Anaheim Statement.” I rarely sign such things, but in this case it seemed essential. The statement affirms our loyalty both to the Episcopal Church and the larger Anglican Communion, and it affirms our continuing commitment to honor the moratoria requested of us by the Windsor process. This has been and remains my viewpoint, even as I assure you that God loves us all and that every one of us has a place in his beloved Church.

Let me conclude by reminding us that in Christ we are saved by grace through faith. This is God’s radical gift through the cross. Salvation is not earned by our righteousness or good works or right doctrine. It is by grace alone. We claim the absolute truth of Paul’s words, “no one is righteous, no not one.” And yet by the love of Jesus all who would follow him are welcome, forgiven, and included in the family of God.

In “deep time” that makes for great beauty and holiness. So I encourage you to keep all things in perspective and to renew our abiding commitment to God’s mission. Like the Grand Canyon the Church’s journey in time is long and winding, and it is often our imperfections and rough edges that reflect the best light.

Your servant in Christ,

The Rt. Rev. Henry N. Parsley Jr.

Our return from the General Convention in California included a two-day visit to the Grand Canyon. I had never been before, and I was raised never to go on a journey without seeing something new. Besides, Becky said that I had to! It turned out to be a great gift. Contemplating this majestic natural wonder was spiritual medicine after the rigors of convention. Its ancient stillness and eloquent silence stirred my soul.

In relation to convention the Grand Canyon seemed to offer two insights, one about time and the other about perspective.

Geologists in the canyon speak of “deep time,” the glimpse into millions of years of Earth’s history afforded by the beautiful layers of rock cut through by water and wind. The beauty of the Grand Canyon would not be but for the patient passage of time and the river. Much of its majesty is found not in perfection but in a rough and broken landscape, which reflects the best light.

This spoke to me of the deep and long providence of God. In convention the issues of the day, such as those around human sexuality, seem ever so immediate and urgent, tempting us to believe either that we must get it all right or that we have it all wrong. In reality God’s purposes in history ripen slowly, and we are merely a small part of their mysterious unfolding.

The lesson worth learning is that we need to live by God’s time, rather than by the tyranny of the urgent. Things are changing in our society with respect to our understanding of the mystery of human sexuality. This is bound to affect the Church. As Christians we are seeking ways to help those of us who have different sexual orientations discover how to order their lives by the deep store of Christian wisdom. We are seeking to be both the just and inclusive Church our Lord calls us to be and also one that preserves the moral compass of the Scriptures and apostolic teaching. As we struggle to see clearly, there are sharp disagreements and no lack of anxiety among us. This is a call to practice patience and “not so much seek to be understood as to understand.”

In “deep time” two things seem very clear. Jesus did not tell us at the end of his ministry that we must get it

General Convention Highlights

The following article includes information provided by the Episcopal News Service.

Last month's 76th General Convention of the Episcopal Church is now history, and Alabama's bishops and deputies have returned home after spending 11 long days worshipping and working together.



The Venerable Louise Thibodaux (front row, far right), our diocesan archdeacon, assisted during the Sunday morning service on July 12.

"While a few of the convention's actions have dominated the news, much other important work was accomplished as together we worshiped and worked to discern the mind of Christ and further the mission of God's Church in the world," said Bishop Parsley.

The convention addressed some 400 submitted resolutions and adopted more than 300. In its work the convention:

- Adopted a significantly reduced budget for the 2010-2012 triennium in recognition of the economic realities of many dioceses and church endowments. The \$141-million budget asks for less money from dioceses and cuts Church-wide spending by \$23 million while maintaining an emphasis on the Episcopal Church's mission in the world.
- Maintained its commitment to the Millennium Development Goals through 0.07 percent to the NetsforLife® program partnership of Episcopal Relief & Development, which is in addition to approximately 15 percent of the budget already committed to international development work.
- Made a commitment to a domestic poverty initiative meant to explore coherent and constructive responses to some of the worst poverty statistics in the Americas: Native American reservations and indigenous communities.
- Adopted a health plan to serve all clergy and lay employees that is expected to lower costs across the whole of the United States portion of the Church and continuing work to ensure adequate health coverage in the non-U.S. parts of our Church.
- Mandated pension coverage for lay church employees who work at least 1,000 hours a year.
- Adopted a proposal for full communion between the Episcopal Church and the Moravian Church Northern and Southern Province.
- Revised the Church's canons related to clergy discipline, both as an act of solidarity with those who may suffer at the hands of clergy and an act of pastoral concern for clergy charged with misconduct.
- Adopted liturgical changes including adding more saints to the calendar and new prayers for specific situations.
- Adopted resolution D025, "Anglican Communion: Commitment and Witness to Anglican Communion." It:
 - reaffirms our commitment to and desire to pursue mission with the Anglican Communion;
 - reiterates our commitment to Listening Process urged by Lambeth Conferences of 1978, 1988, and 1998;
 - notes that our own participation in the listening process led General Convention in 2000 to "recognize that the baptized membership of the Episcopal Church includes same-sex couples living in lifelong committed relationships 'characterized by fidelity, monogamy, mutual affection and respect, careful, honest communication, and the holy love which enables those in such relationships to see in each other the image of God'";

- recognizes that ministry, both lay and ordained, is being exercised by such persons in response to God's call;
- notes that the call to ordained ministry is God's call, is a mystery, and that the Church participates in that mystery through the process of discernment;
- acknowledges that the members of the Episcopal Church and of the Anglican Communion are not of one mind, and that faithful Christians disagree about some of these matters.
- Adopted resolution C056, "Liturgies for Blessings." The text adopted was a substitute for the original. It:
 - acknowledges changing circumstances in the United States and elsewhere, in that civil jurisdictions in some places permit marriage, civil unions, and/or domestic partnerships involving same-sex couples, that call for a pastoral response from this Church;
 - asks the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music and the House of Bishops to collect and develop theological and liturgical resources for such pastoral response and report to the next General Convention;
 - asks those bodies to invite comment and participation from other parts of this Church and the Anglican Communion;
 - notes that bishops, particularly those in dioceses within civil jurisdictions where same-gender marriage, civil unions, or domestic partnerships are legal, may provide generous pastoral responses to the needs of members of this Church;
 - resolved that the Convention honor the theological diversity of this Church in regard to matters of human sexuality.

While there has been much discussion of these two resolutions, "my view is that the historic teaching of this Church about marriage has not been altered, even as we have affirmed the valued place of gay and lesbian persons in this Church," said Bishop Parsley (see "Deep Time and the General Convention" on page 6). "We have not approved rites for blessing same sex unions. I think it very wise that we have resolved to study these matters in theological depth with our Anglican partners. The policies and practice of the Diocese of Alabama have not and will not change unless there is a new theological consensus in the Anglican Communion around these matters."

Summarizing the convention in her July 22 letter to the Church, Presiding Bishop Jefferts Schori said, "Above all else this convention claimed God's mission as the heartbeat of the Episcopal Church. I encourage every member of this Church to enter into conversation in your own congregation or diocese about God's mission and where you and your faith community are being invited to enter more deeply into caring for your neighbors, the 'least of these' whom Jesus befriends."

After spending extensive time together during convention in worship, learning, discussions, and voting, many of the participants have said that "the gathering lived into its statement theme of *Ubuntu*: I in You and You in Me." As House of Deputies President Bonnie Anderson explained, "We did not all agree 100 percent. We have been struggling. We have heard each other. We have been so careful to make sure that we have listened to and responded to the needs of our Church."

The convention welcomed numerous visitors from other parts of the Anglican Communion, including the Most Rev. Rowan D. Williams, the Archbishop of Canterbury. Reflecting on the time he spent at General Convention, Archbishop Williams noted, "No one could be in any doubt about the eagerness of the Bishops and Deputies of the Episcopal Church at the General Convention to affirm their concern about the wider Anglican Communion. Their generous welcome to guests from elsewhere, including myself, the manifest engagement with the crushing problems of the developing world and even the wording of one of the more controversial resolutions all make plain the fact that the Episcopal Church does not wish to cut its moorings from other parts of the Anglican family. There has been an insistence at the highest level that the two most strongly debated resolutions do not have the automatic effect of overturning the requested moratoria, if the wording is studied carefully. There is a clear commitment to seek counsel from elsewhere in the Communion about certain issues and an eloquent resolution in support of the 'Covenant for a Communion in Mission' as commended by ACC13. All of this merits grateful acknowledgement. The relationship between the Episcopal Church and the wider Communion is a reality that needs continued engagement and encouragement."

For more about General Convention, please see pages 20 and 24, and please visit www.dioala.org/094.html.



Hello, friends. See if you can spot the flaw in the lyrics of this old camp favorite, sung with resounding gusto at the closing service of the recently-ended Special Session at Camp McDowell:

This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine;
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine;
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine;
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine!

It was chosen for the moment because it's a happy, perky tune, and in the last service we need something uplifting. It had been a full and wonderful week, as the tears on the last morning attested, and if we'd chosen to sing something sweet and slow, we might have been inviting sob-related injuries.

Shine it all over CAMP McDOWELL, I'm gonna let it shine!
Shine it all over CAMP McDOWELL, I'm gonna let it shine!
Shine it all over CAMP McDOWELL, I'm gonna let it shine!
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

We had, as a camper a long time ago told me, "had us a time." The moments that had been hot, frustrating, and exhausting were well outweighed by other moments, moments more likely to be remembered and treasured, moments that spoke to all of us of the love of God without condition or limit, of the joy of being the children of God, of celebrating the gifts we have all been given while helping each other work around our shortcomings and disabilities.

By the time I got back to Camp McDowell after our brother Bob Miller's funeral (where I heard one of the finest sermons I've ever heard—please see page 3 of this issue) it was free time at Special Session, just before supper. All of the campers and counselors had survived my absence, most of them without having noticed that I'd been gone. David Meginniss, our session codirector,

had everything running smoothly.

I paused on my way to the dining hall to take in the sight. There were 10 or 12 campers sitting in the rocking chairs in front of Eppes Hall, with 5 or 6 counselors sitting and rocking with them. In a moment of clarity I saw them for who they are: old and young, black and white, with a wide mix of talents and disabilities, all of them completely at ease in each other's company, all of them children of one Father, sisters and brothers in Christ. As I looked, I saw a sister scratching another's back, a brother hold open the screen door so a person in a wheelchair could come out, another laugh at something funny, another listen to another's concern.

This is the light we are given to shine, this is the joy we have to share—it is nothing less than the love of God for all people made known to us through Jesus Christ. It is light and love and joy entrusted in Christ's Holy Church to pass on to those who are far off and to those who are near and to those whom it would be easier for us to forget.

At the 2009 Special Session at Camp McDowell, we had 105 campers and 64 high-school and college students serving as counselors. You might think a summer camp session is all about swimming pools, arts and crafts, music and canteen. And indeed these are the outward and visible signs. But the inward and spiritual grace is . . . it's just beyond my ability to describe the richness of the tapestry of our time there, all the fabrics of very different textures and colors woven together, all the acts of kindness, all the dignity and respect, all the presence of the Spirit of God, before us and behind us, in us and through us.



Photo by the Rev. Michael Rich

the work—are the counselors and staff. A young man goes with his campers to the pool, keeping one eye on one in particular because he has seizures. A high-school junior makes sure her camper, a woman with Down's syndrome, is ready for her moment on stage in the Talent Show, knowing it's something she'll talk about all year long until she comes back next summer. A 16-year-old

Let It Shine!



Photo by the Rev. Michael Rich

shaves his camper for the big dance, wondering how long it will be before he has to shave too. A young lady going to the University of Alabama in the fall sits and talks to one of her campers who's making another string of beads or something out of popsicle sticks—the untrained eye might think it's a waste of time, but the good counselor knows these things are taken home and treasured as reminders that there is a place where people

with disabilities are treasured and treated like people.

These counselors come from all over the diocese, as well as a few from beyond. They are our children, the youth of the Diocese of Alabama, and they are involved in a miracle. Part of their story for the rest of their lives will be a week in early July 2009 when they touched, when they were touched by, the love of God in a unique community. If you know such a young person, ask them about their week, and I believe you will hear, in the midst of descriptions of how difficult and how hot and how tiring it was, a glimpse of the Kingdom of God.

The flaw in the song is in the word "little." There is nothing small about the light we are given to shine and no limit to how brightly we can shine it. It is the light of Christ, shining the love of God for all of His children. We are not to hide it under a bushel, No! Or to let Satan blow it out, No! It is the light of Christ given to all of God's children, the light of the world.

I give thanks for all of the young people who come to Camp McDowell, especially for those who serve at the Special Session, to share and shine the Light, and I invite all of us to join in the chorus: "Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine!"

Please see pages 9-18 for more about Special Session and our diocese's Ministry To and With Our Youth. Also please visit www.dioala.org/094.html.

+ KEE

The Rt. Rev. John McKee Sloan



Photo by the Rev. Michael Rich

It's Okay To Come Awkwardly Dressed and Early—Creating Safe Space in Youth Ministry

By Leslie Bridgers Manning, Our Diocesan Youth Ministries Coordinator



Leslie Manning on the Youth Department's Pilgrimage to Alaska in 2008

His name is Samuel. I was introduced to him several years ago on a beautiful late-summer morning. It was one of my first Sundays as the so-called “youth minister” of a wonderful and incredibly loving Episcopal church. In my early days “youth minister” was synonymous with “cruise director.” I should have been called the Sunday Evening Activities Director. Suffice it to say at that point in my journey I was not confident enough in my own gifts to supply anything but Ultimate Frisbee, flashlight tag, “sardines” in the nave, or in this case a late-afternoon pool party.

There Samuel was dragging his mother down the main aisle during communion as he anxiously awaited the Cup of Salvation. I watched as he awkwardly rambled toward the front, and I soon found myself puzzling over just what exactly this little boy was wearing. It seemed like a nice-enough Sunday morning outfit, but something about it was not quite right, something did not fit. As I peered closer I realized he had a bathing suit on. Now this in and of itself was peculiar, but there was even more to the picture. What caught my eye was that he had pulled his bathing suit on *over* his nice church pants. Samuel had arrived for the pool party a mere six hours early.

I was reminded in this moment that God always has a lot in store for our time together in community. I had no idea how much God had in store for my time with Samuel, but then again I am accustomed to underestimating God and God's people.

Samuel was the young man who everyone knew to say the Lord's Prayer in a delayed fashion just moments after the rest of the congregation, to call out my name and ask me a question in the middle of a Sunday morning service, to laugh the loudest at the sermons, to not only “dip” his piece of bread into the wine but also literally his whole hand if not his entire forearm. Samuel was the disruptive one, the one who could turn a reverent Anglican moment into a cacophony of NASCAR

commentaries and nonsensical noises. He was, in a word, special.

Some of you have heard me talk about my young friend before; some of you might even know my dear friend Samuel or perhaps at times feel just like him. Thanks be to God. Thanks be to God that there is a place for us in this Church awkwardly clothed and early for the party.

I have the great gift of being in youth ministry full-time. Professionally that looks like supporting the work of our incredible youth leaders, both volunteer and paid, hanging out and designing events for junior and senior-high young people, and assisting in the development and direction of youth ministry across our diocese, including the Sawyerville ministry that takes place in Hale County.

But what does that mean in real, day-to-day human terms? Here is what I think God is calling me to do by engaging in youth ministry. I think God is calling me to help create safe space for young people (and those who mentor them) to be *comfortable in their own skin*. To be exactly who God created them to be, to struggle and rejoice in that within the safety and acceptance of Christian community. Where else if not the Church are we free to find out who God is calling us to be, to both rest as well as grow within that?

In all honesty that “space” can look like an Ultimate Frisbee game on a Sunday evening in a church parking lot. It can look like serving food at a homeless shelter, engaging in small groups and Bible studies, and going on beach trips as a youth group. It can look like participating in a Sunday school class, being the crucifer, or singing in the choir on Sunday mornings. We simply open up our space and activities and allow God to move in and draw us closer to Christ, healing and renewing us.

Stanley Hauerwas and William H. Willimon have this to say about Christian community in their book *Resident Aliens*: “Yet what if our true selves are made from the materials of our communal life? Where is there some ‘self’ that has not been communally created? By cutting back our attachments and commitments, the self shrinks rather than grows. So an important gift the church gives us is a far richer range of options, commitments, duties, and troubles than we would have if left to our own devices.”

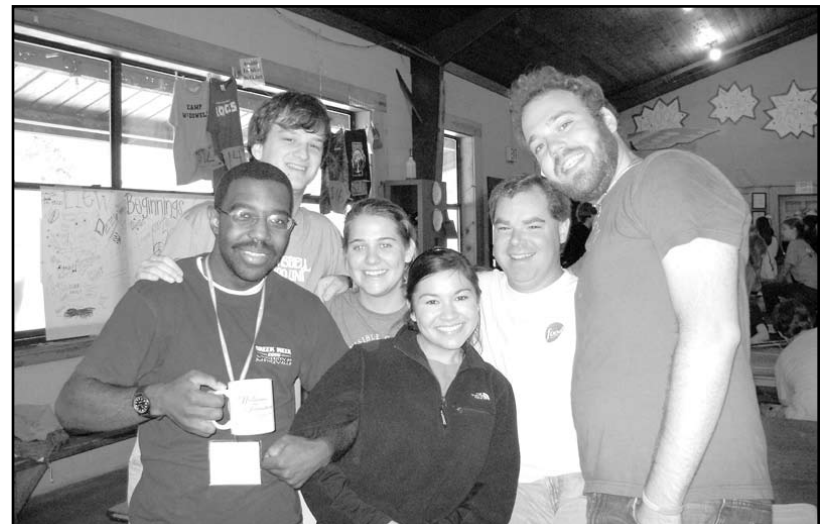
I give thanks for the life of Christian community that is so deeply alive and well in the form of youth ministry in the Diocese of Alabama.

I challenge and urge you to take time to reexamine your ministries to young people and ask yourself whether or not space is being created where young people are free to show up and be comfortable in their own God-given skin. I urge you to prayerfully consider whether or not your ministries to youth and to one another are full of mirrors, places where we can learn things about

ourselves and face those things that separate us from God. Is your ministry a place where a hand is outstretched, ready to pull someone up, help dust them off, and then hold their hand as they continue on this wild and wonderful journey? Are there pool parties full of joy and laughter? Are there lessons being taught that proclaim the Good News? Are your young people being invited over and over to be exactly who God created them to be and encouraged to fall into a pattern of living in Christian community?

I give thanks for those who currently give their lives to being cohosts to this Come as You Are Pool Party. I'm thankful for all the good people who spend their weekends going to football games, baseball games, and ballet recitals in support of our young people and the lives they lead, and those who spend countless hours responding to text messages and Facebook posts. I give thanks for the many volunteers who bring food on Sunday evenings, who have ever driven a church van, who attend diocesan events and sponsor young confirmands.

I give thanks to the clergy across our diocese who again and again choose youth ministry, who choose to love the young and old, and who delight in God's chil-



Brandt Montgomery, Worth Stuart, Lauren Banks, Lindsay Joe, the Rev. Thomas Joyner, and Jonathan Chesney helped lead the New Beginnings retreat in 2008.

dren—even if that means getting dunked in a dunking booth on a warm afternoon after three morning services.

I give thanks for the young people who serve in leadership positions and attend youth events, even when they are tired or stressed out, because they know that they depend on these moments of Christian community when the journey gets tough.

I rejoice in the fact that not only in this diocese do we minister to “our own” but also to those who are outside the Episcopal Church, everywhere from Honduras to Hale County, and in turn we enter into relationships that are more life-changing and life-giving than we could ever have imagined. I give thanks to the Diocese of Alabama and our bishops who understand that young people are not the future but the present—they are God's children right now searching for the right bathing suit and the right pool party.

SUMMER CAMP AT CAMP McDOWELL

Making Lifelong Friendships in God's Backyard

Summer Camp provides a unique opportunity for our youth to serve and be served—and to form relationships that will last a lifetime. As campers and counselors spend time living, working, worshiping, and playing together in God's Backyard, they make new friends and renew old friendships with people from every part of our diocese, building a strong Christian community.

This summer 1,234 campers (30 more than last year!) came to Summer Camp, and youth from parishes across our diocese and beyond served as Summer Camp staff, including:

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 Our Savior in Jenkintown, Pennsylvania; Colin McWhirt of Trinity in Fulton, Kentucky; and Kirby Simpson of Holy Comforter in Montgomery

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

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



Male Cabin Counselors: Conner Barnes of Christ Church in Tuscaloosa; Patrick Combs of St. Matthew's in Madison; Dylan Jordan of St. John's in Montgomery; Jordan Lee of St. Barnabas' in Hartselle; Graham Mullen of St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Sheffield; Gabe Rosser of St. Petersburg, Florida; and Murray Stuart of Ascension in Montgomery
Workcrew: William Blackerby of Trinity Commons in Birmingham; Joel Blackstock of All Saints' in Birmingham; Zach Hale of Huntsville; Sally Reese of St. Paul's in Murfreesboro, Tennessee

The Camp McDowell permanent staff and our diocese say a special thank you to everyone who came to a Summer Camp session as well as all the clergy and lay adults and youth who served on staff or as volunteers. We also thank everyone in our diocese for your continuing support of the Camp McDowell ministries.

For more about Camp McDowell, please visit www.campmcdowell.com or our diocesan Web site, www.dioala.org.



YOUNG PEOPLE PAINTING BIRMINGHAM

We Came To Paint, Play, and Pray

By Brooks Boylan, Youth Minister at St. Mary's-on-the-Highlands in Birmingham



48 youth (the largest group to date to participate in this annual event) also spent time together making new friends, singing, playing, and discussing some of Jesus' more poignant lessons. This year's theme was "Ego Ami: Becoming the 'I AM' of Jesus." When we weren't working, we discussed how the simple phrase "I AM" allowed Jesus to explain not only who He is and what His ministry is and was, but also who He wants us to be. We talked about becoming and embracing these statements and what it means to be the Light of the World, the Good Shepherd, the True Vine, the Way, the

Truth, and the Life. We also discussed how by becoming and following these "I AMs" we become the hands and feet of Christ while we serve each other.

I saw our young people make a difference as they embodied the "I AM" statements of Christ. We saw Christ in the families who lived in the homes, in our relationships with the broader neighborhood, and through our relationships with each other.

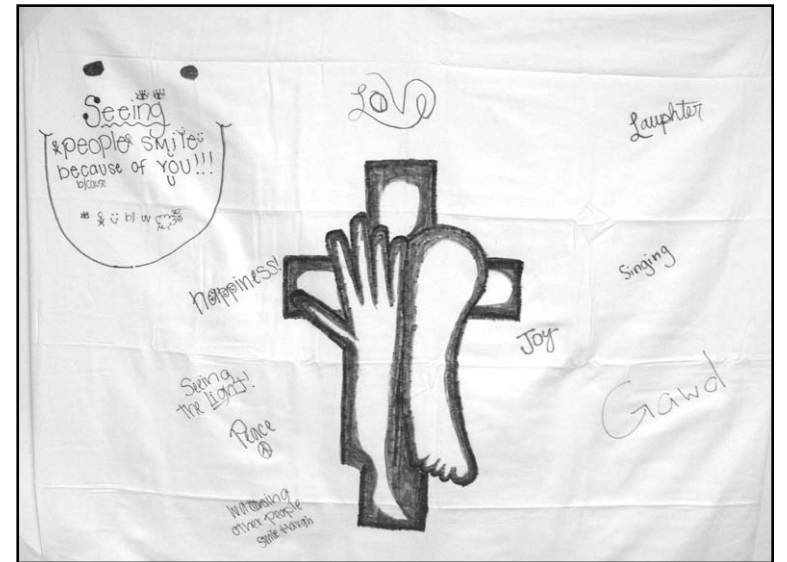
I was also excited to see our youth participants jump right into discussions and share of themselves with the rest of the group. This amazing experience, along with all the hard work and the fun at Alabama Adventure on our last day, allowed us to form a truly amazing fellowship. During this mission experience, we made a difference in the lives of four families and the people in their neighborhood—and in doing so we became examples of the absolute truth Christ taught when He said, "I AM."

Here are some insights from our youth participants.

I saw Christ clearly on the first day. The sun was shining on the red team's house, and I was so thirsty for something with more flavor than water (orange juice, soft drinks—anything but water!). One of the neighbors came over a little after noon, and she gave us popsicles. They were so delicious—I don't think anything ever tasted as good! No other popsicles compared to this love-filled treat. Every workday I saw Christ working through our hands and feet to spread love. —Nichole Edge

During worship we talked

about all the "I AMs" (the Good Shepherd, the Vine, the Light, the Hands and Feet, etc.). I learned that we can show God's love to others by doing, not just saying. By working and doing things for others, we show God to people. I always thought the only way you showed God was by teaching a lesson or sharing a verse. I always thought helping the less fortunate was about making



YOUR relationship with God stronger—I didn't think about how it helps build the person who is getting your help's relationship with God too. If I were going to persuade a friend to go with me next year, I would say, "It's awesomely fun because you get to hang out with friends all the time and you get to meet new friends—and at the same time you get to grow with God and help others tremendously." —Adelaide Cochran

YPPB was awesome! It felt good helping people.
—Katherine McCown

For more about Young People Painting Birmingham, please visit www.dioala.org/094.html.

Hope is contagious. Did you know that? To see this for yourself, all you have to do is look at a neighborhood where any type of outreach work has taken place. There you can observe how even the smallest amount of work, compassion, and kindness can ignite a spark in people to lift themselves and their community up to a better place.

As co-coordinator of **Young People Painting Birmingham (YPPB) 2009**, I had the extreme pleasure of seeing this happen firsthand. During the first week of June, 48 7th-9th graders and volunteer adult advisors from all over our diocese stepped out of the comfort of their own lives and came together to serve and participate in the lives of four families. While we painted and worked on the houses, we witnessed how the people in the neighborhood first came to see what we were doing and then began working on projects in and around their own homes. Whether it was bringing our youth popsicles, throwing away trash, or finishing neglected projects, hope spread from person to person as each began improving his or her home.

In addition to scraping and painting four houses, the



SAWYERVILLE DAY AND MINI-CAMPS IN HALE COUNTY

Learning To Love, Respect, and Trust Each Other

By Emily Thornton, Sawyerville Staff Member



Charles with La'Anthony; photo by Emily Thornton

Driving back from the pool on a big yellow schoolbus, 10-year-old La'Anthony is sitting in the seat behind me. La'Anthony's new best friend, Charles, another staff member, is sitting beside him. La'Anthony begins calling my name and tapping me on the shoulder with excitement. "If Charles was my dad," he said, "we would travel around the world in a day!" I smiled and eagerly began asking La'Anthony where the two of them would travel and what he would want to see on this quick trip around the world with Charles.

I did not realize until recently how powerful this statement from La'Anthony really was. La'Anthony, only knowing Charles for a few days, was already beginning to think of Charles as someone he trusted and looked up to as a father figure. To La'Anthony, Charles was his new best friend, his superhero, his buddy to travel with around the world. To La'Anthony, with Charles's help, he could

do anything—no task was too big, not even traveling

around the whole world in a day. Sawyerville Day Camp continues to amaze me with these kinds of relationships—relationships that blossom within a few days and turn into such amazing and unique friendships.

The first day of camp is something to behold. We open the big double doors to the gym and more than 200 kids rush through. Almost instantly, the staff is greeted with

hugs and hellos as we excitedly reunite for the coming week. How special to be remembered. I expect to be one random staff member to these kids, but I am always delighted to be greeted with smiles and hugs. For a week we come together to play and sing and make time to get to know one another, and though most

of us do not see each other the rest of the year, the reunion is incredible.

The staff thinks about these kids all year, retelling funny stories and counting down the days until we all get to spend another week in the Hale County summer heat. I have had the great privilege of living in Hale County this summer. Running into kids around town, I always ask if they have ever been to "summer camp" before. Some shake their heads no, not understanding what I am talking about, but others light up immediately. We have something in common, a shared experience.

There is a mutual love of this place from both the campers and the staff members. Camp has moved from the community of Sawyerville to Greensboro and this year Newbern, but we are not attached to the physical space. It is the memories and relationships that are formed in this space that make staff members from all over Alabama and children from all over Hale County smile.

Together we sing and be silly, together we learn to love and respect and trust each other, together we make new memories—and maybe even take a trip around the world together.



Carter Glaus with a camper; photo by Carole Kelly

Unconditional Acceptance and Community

By Isabel Hagood, a Member of the Advent in Birmingham



When I signed up to be on the staff of Sawyerville Day Camp, I had no idea what I was getting into. I knew little about Hale County or the people in it.

During the days leading up to the crazy week that was camp, I learned a bit more about the children I would be spending time with. I figured I would be doing a good thing, and that it was a nice way to help some people out.

Once I met my campers though, all thoughts of "doing a good deed" disappeared. Instead it quickly became apparent to me that Sawyerville isn't as much about serving as it is about community.

Even though my campers and I, as well as my fellow counselors, came from different places, we were all in the same gym singing the same songs, sweating the

same amount. I could never have imagined that the children would give me more throughout the week than I could ever give to them. I had completely forgotten the unconditional love that six-year-olds have no problem giving out.

In high school it's so easy to put walls up as a protection from becoming a misfit. That week at Sawyerville I had no walls up because neither did anyone else. If I was a misfit, so was everyone



2009 Sawyerville Day Camp staff; photo by Carole Kelly

else. You can't sing "Pharaoh, Pharaoh" well and have walls up at the same time.

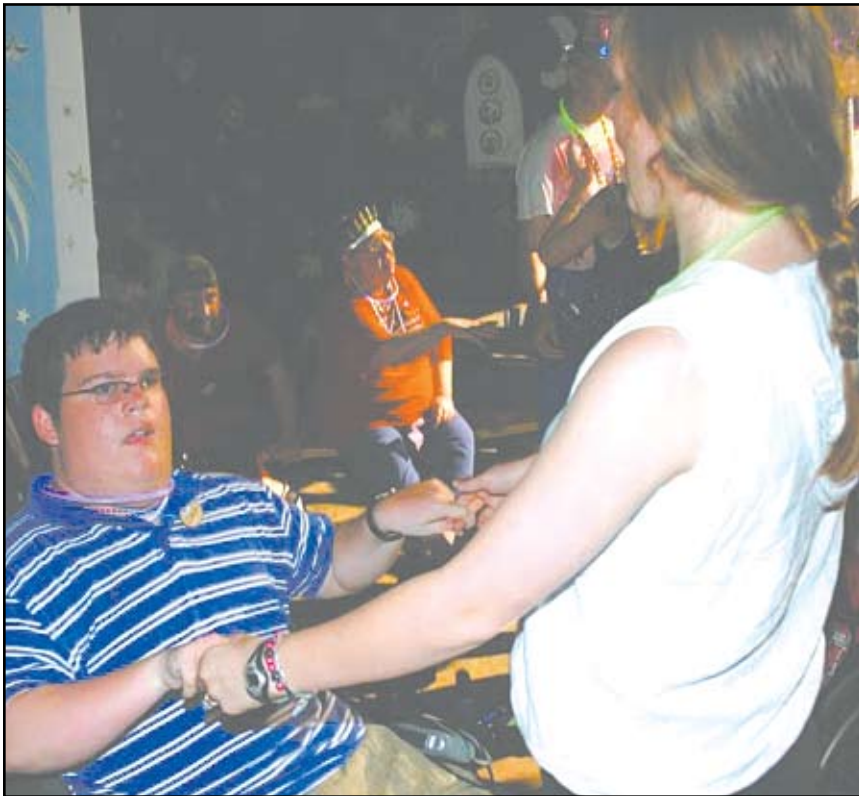
I grew attached to my campers so quickly simply because they were so willing to accept me from the moment they saw me. At the beginning of the week the theme "Stand by Me" meant to me that I needed to stand by my campers. By the end of the week I understood that "Stand by Me" applied to everyone there. A simple squeeze of the hand from a child or an exchange of silly faces reminded me that they were standing by me too, and it meant just as much.

For more about Sawyerville please visit www.dioala.org/094.html.

SPECIAL SESSION AT CAMP McDOWELL

A Wonderful Chance To Do “Normal” Stuff

By the Rev. David Meginniss, Rector of Christ Church in Tuscaloosa



Special Session Counselor Zach Wooley (at left); photo by the Rev. Deacon Dave Drachlis

and generally enjoying the joy of being in “God’s Backyard.”

Special Session works so well because of two assumptions we make at the beginning. First, we believe we all have some disabilities, we all have weaknesses, we all have challenges—it’s just that some are more obvious than others. Second, we are all children of the same heavenly Father, which means all of us should be celebrated, all of us should be valued, all of us should be respected, regardless of how obvious our challenges may be. And if we are all children of the same Father, that makes us brothers and sisters—part of the same family, and we should care for each other as family members.

Last year a young man came to be a camper because he’s confined to a wheelchair. But because of his wisdom and insight, we brought him back this year to be a counselor. His name is Zach Wooley, and we asked him to say a few words about Special Session.

“When I think of Special Session, I think of one thing—normalcy,” says Zach. “When you have a disability you are often viewed as different or strange. Special Session at Camp McDowell allows those of us with disabilities to not be seen as different. For one week the campers of Special Session get to be just typical kids—swimming, laughing, singing, and just doing whatever it is they want to do without their disability being apparent. It is imperative that kids with disabilities have this opportunity so that they may see ‘I am not that different.’”

“In addition to benefiting kids with disabilities, I believe Special Session also benefits the staff of students volunteering to work for the week,” adds Zach. “They have the opportunity to get to know kids with disabilities for who they are and not their disability. I believe when they leave and go back to their lives they are able to take what they have learned and see people with disabilities are people just like them. I have had the opportunity to develop friendships

with kids from all over, friends who see *me* and not my wheelchair.

“I consider myself very fortunate to have a place like Camp McDowell to attend and just be a kid!” Zach emphasizes. “What a wonderful thing that Camp McDowell has provided this opportunity to these kids and young adults. It makes me proud that my church is part of a diocese that has the foresight to see this need and make it happen!”

For more about Special Session please visit www.dioala.org/094.html.



Photo by Katherine Burch



Photo by Katherine Burch



The Rev. David Meginniss on stage with one of the campers; photo by the Rev. Deacon Dave Drachlis



Bishop Sloan and campers celebrating the Fourth of July; photos by the Rev. Deacon Dave Drachlis

Experiencing Living in Love with One Another

By Saunders McElroy, a Youth Department Member from St. Luke's in Birmingham



2009 EYC Convention at St. John's in Decatur; photo by Lisa Beatty

As an upcoming sophomore I didn't know what to expect in my first year of high school. I wasn't sure what kind of experiences I was going to have, especially considering that my junior-high years were not the best of times.

My previous summer's highlight had been my first year at Senior Camp at Camp McDowell, where I had made some really exciting new friends. Still I couldn't quite convince myself that high school was going to be a fun time in my life, and I knew that it would not be easy. My first semester was decent, but it was certainly not amazing, and as I had expected high school was off to a rather bland start.

In November, however, one of my good friends from Senior Camp encouraged me to sign up for Christmas Conference, an event at Camp McDowell put on by the youth of our diocese. So I signed up, hoping to somewhat relive some of the good times I had experienced the summer before—I was not prepared for the magnitude of the impact it would have on my life. The second I arrived, I entered into an almost utopian community unlike anything I had ever been a part of. Everyone around me participated in the practice of sharing God's love unconditionally to all there, and I knew I had entered into a special bond with this community that would have a lasting impact on me. Each person shared fellowship and love for one another, and being surrounded by this changed my life forever.

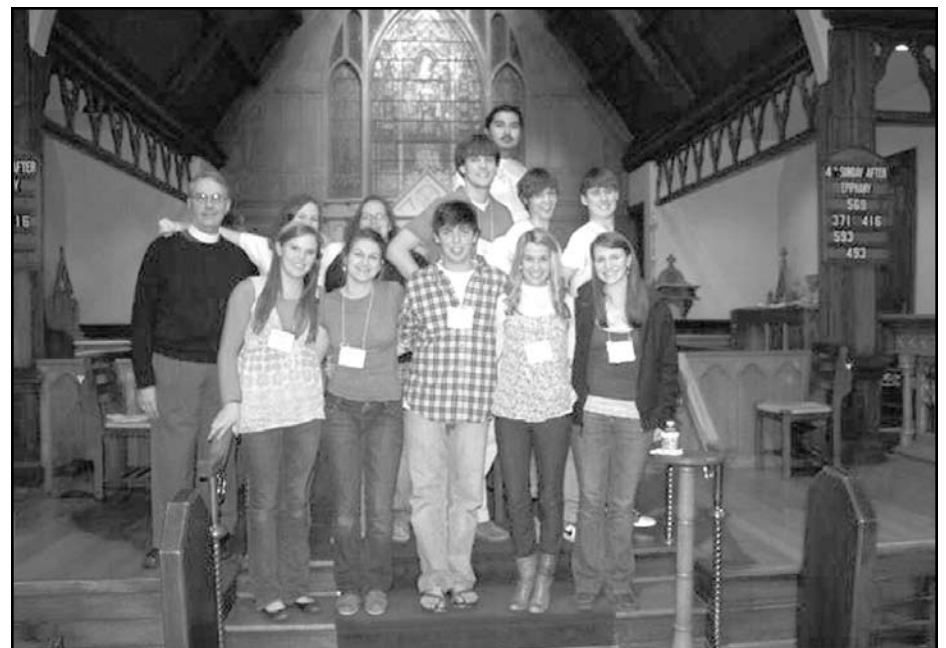
Now I am about to enter my senior year, and this

will also be my second year as an at-large member of the Youth Department (YD), which is a group of 11 youth from throughout our diocese who are elected at the annual EYC Convention to organize and put on events such as Christmas Conference. I consider myself truly blessed to have been able to have this experience, and my time on YD has without a doubt been the best and most exciting of my entire life. It is clear to me, however, that it is *not* simply the time I have spent organizing and participating in events with the rest of the department that has made it special. What has made my time as a member of the YD so powerful to me is not *my* experience—it has been getting to be a part of everyone else's and simply being a witness as people travel from all over the state in order to spend a short weekend as a part of an incredible community. I can guess that it must take something beyond just a good time to move people

to sign up, pay registration fees, and travel for miles just to hang out and participate in activities with people who they otherwise would not even know. This community is a truly special one, and I am sure of this just by having the blessing of getting to spend my most cherished moments as a part of it.

As it turns out high school has been more of an amazing time than I could ever have expected it to be. I have had an incredible opportunity to be a witness to the spread of God's love through so many young people in our diocese. I have formed incredible friendships through my involvement with the YD, friendships I hope will last forever. Of course not everything is perfect, and every now and then I am brought down by typical high-school struggles. But instead of letting them tear me down, I am always brought back up because I know that there is an entire community full of people who will always be there for me when I am trying to fight through hard times.

I strongly encourage all the youth of our diocese to make every attempt they can to get involved in Youth Department events and summer camp at Camp McDowell—you never know when something could change your life. Please see "Upcoming Youth Department Events" on page 15.



The current members of our diocesan Youth Department were elected at the 2009 EYC Convention: (front row) Catherine Poellnitz from All Saints' in Birmingham, Ginny Nix from St. Luke's in Birmingham, Wil Benton from Ascension in Montgomery, Liza Lee Tweedy from St. John's in Decatur, Julia Erwin from St. Thomas' in Huntsville, (back row) Bishop Parsley, Katie Wood from Holy Comforter in Montgomery, Emily Hanson from St. Thomas' in Huntsville, Saunders McElroy from St. Luke's in Birmingham, R.J. Garcia from St. John's in Decatur, William Talieffer from St. Luke's in Birmingham, and Walker Cole from St. Luke's in Birmingham; photo by Lisa Beatty

Being Appreciated for Who You Are

By Lauren Wainwright, Youth Director at Epiphany in Guntersville



Last September I packed my bags, my furniture, and everything else I owned and moved to Guntersville to serve as the youth director at the Church of the Epiphany. My journey as a youth director began in my hometown of Hattiesburg in 2007 after I finished my master's in political science at the University of Southern Miss. Soon after graduation I took a completely different route and participated in a program called the Bishop's Mission Corps, which is offered for young adults in the Diocese of Mississippi.

Through this program, for the first time I felt called to work in the Church, and I found the community that was the Church. As a result I quickly took a job at my home church in Hattiesburg serving as the Youth and Christian Education Director until I moved to Alabama.

Sometimes being a youth director can be quite overwhelming. After all, no one teaches you how to deal with parents, handle being a perpetual 15-year-old in a 26-year-old body, eat a banana in under 30 seconds, or understand the world of teenage angst and hormones. I believe however that there is a youth director "instinct" that some people just have. This includes, for instance, always having a first-aid kit within reach for when that game of outdoor football in the mud doesn't work out quite as you had planned. What I have also come to realize is that what youth appreciate the most is when you are just yourself and nothing more. For me, that would be the complete nerd and Harry Potter-loving person I am.

Oftentimes one of the most difficult tasks is just getting youth through the front doors. How do you compete with what else is being offered in today's world? How do you get kids as excited about a project or event as you are? Much of what we are called to do as youth directors is running the race with perseverance. It's the long stretch after the excitement at the start of the race and well before you can see or feel the relief at

Upcoming Youth Department Events

The Youth Department thanks the following people and parishes for their support of the 2008-2009 Youth Department Events: the Rev. Marc Burnette, the Rev. Thomas Joyner, the Rev. Lynette Lamphere, the Rev. Richard Lawson, Fran McKendree, John Talbert, Grant Thompson, and the staff and members of St. John's in Decatur for hosting the 2009 EYC Convention.

We encourage all the youth of our diocese to participate in upcoming 2009-2010 Youth Department events, including:

| | |
|------------------|--|
| October 2-4 | New Beginnings weekend for 7th-9th graders at Camp McDowell |
| November 6-8 | Fall Fling for 5th and 6th graders at Camp McDowell |
| November 6-8 | Happening #55 at Trinity in Florence |
| December 27-30 | Christmas Conference at Camp McDowell |
| January 15-18 | Winter Weekend for 7th and 8th graders at Camp McDowell |
| March 5-7 | Happening #56 at St. Luke's in Birmingham |
| March 12-13 | Spring Fling at Camp McDowell |
| March 26-28 | Summer Staff (2009-2010) Retreat at Camp McDowell |
| April 16-18 | EYC Convention at St. Thomas' in Birmingham |
| April 16-18 | Mother/Daughter Retreat at Camp McDowell |
| July 24-August 7 | Youth Pilgrimage to the Holy Lands (sponsored by Kanuga and Province IV) |

Please keep checking www.dioala.org/ministries/youth and www.campmcdowell.com for more events and registration information! As always you may contact Leslie Manning, Youth Ministries Coordinator, at 205/715-2060 ext. 325 or lmanning@dioala.org for more information.

the end. It's the idea of constancy and consistency.

I call serving as a youth director my "job," but it is pretty much my life. Who else other than a youth director can say that their job includes washing cars, painting toilets, participating in cemetery scavenger hunts, staying up all night, and sleeping in a bamboo hut . . . and that's only the half of it! I have been honored, exhausted, thrilled, exhausted, humbled, exhausted, and blessed with the youth I have worked with, and I can't wait to see what happens next each day.

Our Youth—A Vital, Important Part of Our Church Today

By Ben Smolin, Youth Director at St. Thomas' in Birmingham

I have been a youth director for about a year now. Thanks to the enthusiasm of the youth and the support of the parents and staff, we now have an ever growing EYC group at St. Thomas' of about 20 to 30 young adults.

During this first year of ministry I have learned much about young people, myself, and most importantly God. I have experienced both victories and failures, and I have loved every minute of it. I realize that I still have much to learn, and I have only just begun to scratch the surface of what youth ministry really is. Out of everything that I have learned this year, one thing stands out above all to me—the importance of respecting young people and taking them seriously for who they are, not who they are one day going to be.

It is easy for us "adults" to place much emphasis on the fact that children will one day be adults. It is easy to say that the youth of a church will one day be the leaders of the church, while forgetting that they are an equally vital, important part of the church as they are right now.

I believe that in order to effectively minister to children we must take them seriously and minister to them not simply as young adults who may be going through a phase, but as a person made in the image of God. We understand that many of the issues that youth possess will change as they grow older. Even so, does this really mean that these hopes and desires are any less important? God certainly does not laugh at our fears and desires, as petty as they must sometimes seem to him.

It may seem unimportant if a boy is upset and crying because he got picked last in tag or if a girl didn't get asked to go to prom by the boy she liked. However unimportant

these things seem, they are what these children are dealing with in their life right now. If they are important to our youth, then we should view them seriously as well.

I am confident that a mortgage is not a very important or pressing of an issue to God, who created time and the entire universe. We know however that God takes us seriously for who we are, sinful and stupid as we may be. We know that we can take even our smallest fears to God, and he will care.

Following this model, in order to successfully minister to youth, I believe the youth must feel that they can come to their adult leader with their problems and he/she will never say, "That's not that big of a deal." They must know that the adult they are coming to will respect them not as "Youth," but as people, creating an honest, "real" relationship.

To me, youth ministry is very important, and almost no verse says it better than Mark 10:13-16: "People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this he was indignant. He said to them, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who does not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.' And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them."

Jesus knew how important the ministry to young people is, and I feel very blessed to be a part of that ministry at St. Thomas'. Just as God continues to love and respect me, I will attempt to love and respect the youth I have been so privileged to come in contact with.

Nurturing Spiritual Formation with Prayer, Sharing, and Bible Study in Small Groups

By Cameron Cole, Director of Youth Ministries at the Advent in Birmingham

In the fall of 2005 I accepted a call to serve as the director of youth ministries at the Cathedral Church of the Advent. Early on it became clear that the focus of our ministry should be pursuing lives transformed by the Gospel for the sake of God's Kingdom.

Since we sought transformation, I decided to interview spiritually mature high-school students and Advent EYC alumni to see what programs of the youth ministry contributed most to their spiritual formation. I interviewed approximately 30 students, and the majority of them told me that a weekly small group Bible study had the greatest influence in making them a follower of Christ.

Consequently our youth staff determined that we would make a high quality and quantity of small group Bible studies for our students a priority. After four years of investment, our youth program grew to a point of conducting 17 small group Bibles studies each week for boys and girls in nearly every grade during the 2008-09 school year. Anywhere from 4 to 12 students in each group meet weekly wherever it's convenient—from Starbucks and V. Richards to homes and a stairwell in a local high school.

In time we have seen that most important components of these studies are corporate prayer, authentic

sharing, and study of scripture. As youth ministers we think the crisis among youth in the postmodern era relates to alienation and disconnectedness. Therefore

Believing, as Hebrews 4 says, that God's word is "living and active" and something that "penetrates" the hearts of people, we focus on creating an environment where explicating scripture becomes a personal interaction with God Himself.

students sharing about their joys and pains each week and then praying together produces an environment where participants are known by each other and known by God.

The greatest richness of the study comes from



An 8th-grade girls small group meeting

exegetical study of the Bible, where each study ultimately centers on the grace of Jesus in the midst of our brokenness and imperfection. An older, wiser parishioner said to me during my first week at the Advent, "I read a lot of theological books as a youth and young adult, but I regret not focusing more on knowing scripture back then." Believing, as Hebrews 4 says, that God's word is "living and active" and something that "penetrates" the hearts of people, we focus on creating an environment where explicating scripture becomes a personal interaction with God Himself. In four years we have done studies on just about every part of the Bible, including the Books of History, Ecclesiastes, Romans, John, Mark, Ephesians, Titus, Colossians, and all of the Minor Prophets.

We are grateful to have seen God bless this aspect of our EYC ministry and to have enjoyed rich relationships with the students in these groups.

The Blessings of Sharing the Love of Christ

By Worth Stuart, Youth Director at Trinity in Florence



I am truly blessed. How often can we really say that to ourselves? Well if you ever get the opportunity to work with youth, you may find yourself saying that a whole lot. This has certainly been the case for me and my ministry.

I hit the one-year mark as the Youth Director here at Trinity in Florence in August. Having worked for four summers as a counselor at Camp McDowell, I considered myself fairly seasoned at working with youth, so I began my work at Trinity with at least a little bit of confidence. I soon found out, however, that working as a youth minister was all together a whole new ball game. The idea of taking two chartered busloads of youth to the mountains of North Carolina and letting these kids hurl themselves (some aimlessly) down the side of the mountain would scare any normal human being—BUT NOT A YOUTH MINISTER!

Although fun events like ski trips, lock-ins, and cosmic putt-putt are an integral part of youth ministry, the part I love most is the fellowship. I have grown the most personally from the relationships that I have seen form within our EYC community and our diocesan-wide youth community.

Youth are capable of so much! The youth of our diocese put on so many events and activities and show such amazing strength and resilience in their faith and their ability to never stop sharing the love of Christ with each other and the world. From Happening to New Beginnings and from Sawyerville to each parish's own Youth Sunday, these youth amaze me constantly. We've all seen it!

My ministry here at Trinity has taught me a lot about myself. It has taught me when to say "Yes" and when to say "No." It has shown me my limits and my gifts. Most of all, my ministry has shown me every day what Christ's love is all about. I give thanks for the youth of my EYC here at Trinity and for the youth across our diocese. Because they are a part of my life, I am truly blessed.

Youth Touching Lives at Home and Abroad

By Judy Quick, Our Diocesan ERD Representative



What can a young person do to show Christ's love in the world? The answer is obvious. A lot! For instance, the youth in our diocese are

supporting the work of Episcopal Relief & Development (ERD) in a number of ways.

ERD has financially supported Mission on the Bay every year since Hurricane Katrina (2005) to help rebuild the communities of the Mississippi Gulf Coast. The Rev. Jennifer Riddle and Youth Director Lauren Wainwright of Epiphany in Guntersville have led a number of youth group trips to Mission on the Bay to help with the ongoing hands-on work.

The Rev. Mary Anne Akin and the Club 5-6 Christian Formation Teachers Madeline Mullins and Elizabeth Foster encouraged the youth of the Nativity in Huntsville to lead a campaign to support ERD's Nets for Life® Program. What an amazing effort! The youth researched the facts about malaria and learned that it kills 3,000 children every day in Africa. They participated in a dialog sermon with Mary Anne and handed out colored paper to parishioners; when the people holding a certain color were asked to stand, they were told that malaria would have killed them during the time of the church service. The youth also related the gospel lesson "Who is my neighbor?" and sold cookies for \$12 a dozen. Their "Caught in the Net of Love" effort raised \$1,735.85.

In addition to raising funds for Nets for Life (\$12 for one mosquito net; \$300 to help 25 families), youth can powerfully connect with and help youth around the world by raising funds to purchase a goat or a fruit tree or support a micro-credit loan from the Gifts for Life catalog.

I challenge youth groups, Sunday school classes, Journey to Adulthood participants, EYC, and Episcopal School classes across our diocese to choose one ERD effort or one Millennium Development Goal (MDG) to support during the 2009-2010 school year. The MDGs provide a blueprint for achieving significant, measurable improvements in people's lives by 2015, and they guide not only ERD's emergency response and sustainability projects but also outreach ministries in our diocese, including our mission trips to Honduras and Haiti, our Jubilee Ministries, our AIDS Task Force, and our outreach to the homeless in our neighborhoods as we work together to alleviate poverty and ease suffering among the "least of these."

Which MDG resonates with you? Is it "Achieve Universal Primary Education for Children"? What can you do? How about creating a bulletin board about children of the world who are unable to attend school: child soldiers, AIDS orphans, refugees, and displaced children. Place the bulletin board in a high-traffic area of your church and update it often. Find resources online and in magazines and newspapers. Pray for these children. Tell your friends and family and encourage them to become involved. Let them know that \$80 educates one child orphaned by AIDS and \$400 educates five children (Gifts for Life Catalog).

Please let me know which projects you are supporting so I can share the stories about your experiences. For more information please contact me at jgquick@bellsouth.net or 205/669-6862. Also please visit www.er-d.org.

Giving Sawyerville Children the Gift of Reading

By Bertha P. Smith, a Member of St. Mark's in Birmingham

The Bible Study Group of St. Mark's in Birmingham presented Memily Colvin, a Supply Drive Coordinator for the 2009 Sawyerville Day Camp, with a gift of 54 books titled or authored by mostly African Americans appropriate for ages 4 to 14. Memily had expressed a need for any of the Coretta Scott King Award books such as *Bud, Not Buddy* and *The Watsons Go to Birmingham* by Christopher Paul Curtis for the day camp.

The St. Mark's group, led by our priest in charge, Sara-Scott Wingo, saw this as an opportunity to reach out and share in this wonderful project by giving the gift of reading. We were doing a weekly in-depth study on the Gospel of Luke at the time, and one of the goals of our group is the extension of God's kingdom by means of service and/or donations to as many outreach projects as possible. Our outreach project for 2008 was a donation supporting the "Young Lions" ministry designed to assist young males grow up to become well-adjusted young men. Realizing that there are so many tremendous opportunities to reach out and touch others with love, our group will continue to do our share to help as much as possible wherever we can.



Heager and Nettie Hill, Mamie Hymes, Bertha Smith, the Rev. Sara-Scott Wingo, Memily Colvin with her grandson Gus, Mary Williams, and Olivia Washington; not pictured Cassandra Joseph and Sundra Smith

A Girls Night Out for Sawyerville

By Sarah Sartain, Our Diocesan Deputy for Christian Formation and Youth Ministries



(Front row) Sarah Sartain, Marquita Cocke, (back row) Julie Farmer, Leanne Sauer, Betty Roberts, Caroline Collins, Ann Adger, and Leslie Lynch

I don't know if you are like me, but the days of a leisure gathering shared with close girlfriends sipping wine and enjoying a delicious appetizer while catching up on life's adventures away from the demands of family and professions (this known as Girls Night Out) is becoming increasingly harder to schedule.

Then I had an idea! Maybe I could gather the girls together by inviting them to serve Christ through the Sawyerville ministry. You see, I received a request from the Sawyerville Coordinator to help provide a hot lunch for the staff and campers one day during the camp. The other

alternative was to work with the local school to provide free "sack lunches" for the group. Have you ever seen what is in a free lunch? I couldn't let that happen, so I sent a quick group e-mail to the "girls," and before I could blink all replied with an all-caps YES! This rag-tag group of women (I call them special soulful sisters) gathered at St. Thomas' in Birmingham one evening with tomato sauce in hand along with bundles of French bread, bags of noodles, a refreshing beverage, and an appetizer to share.

As we boiled noodles, buttered bread, and assembled Betty Roberts's famous Husband's Delight dish, we recounted our summer adventures, announced a recent job change, shared a relationship struggle, updated the group on medical improvements, and made prayer request. After 31 pans were assembled, bread buttered and securely wrapped, and dishes washed, we joined in a circle around the kitchen island, hands clasped, and began to pray. Our unsophisticated prayers included

thanks for the Sawyerville ministry and those families in Hale County, for the opportunity to serve God, for laughter and stories, for wine and baked brie, and for each other, women on a journey with Christ and each other.

Thank you, Lord, and thank you, Sawyerville, for getting the "girls" back together.

If you want to have a Girls Night Out for Sawyerville to help support the ongoing Sawyerville ministry, please contact Leslie Manning at lmanning@dioala.org or 715-2060 ext. 325. For more information about the Sawyerville ministry please see page 12 and visit please visit www.dioala.org/094.html.

Don't Miss Fall Fling!

By Margaret Warren, Youth Minister at Christ Church in Tuscaloosa

I hope every 5th and 6th grader in our diocese will get flung into the arms of Camp McDowell for a wonderful Fall Fling, November 6-8, at Camp McDowell!

When I first started preparing for my second time to do Fall Fling last fall, I was beyond excited. I was so thankful that Michael Goldsmith, Director of Program and Development at Camp McDowell, had even asked me to do it. The week before the big weekend, I suddenly realized I would have 110 campers with me for the weekend! I couldn't believe it.

I decided to do a program on the Psalms and called it "Psalms and Songs: The Music and Poetry of God," fittingly enough. Even though it poured buckets of rain the first night, my helpful staff moved some things around, and we made do in Eppes Hall and decided to have a Bag Auction for oldtimes' sake. A Bag Auction consists of all the campers going back to their cabins and stuffing one pillowcase with everything they can think of and fit inside. When they come back, they are asked to bring certain items to a judge and are given points appropriately. It

started with a toothbrush and ended with a barbershop quartet and love poem. The kids took charge and tried to bribe the judges with compliments and candy. It was a hysterical and momentous occasion.

The weekend consisted of drum-making, psalm book creations, community ice-breakers, and a drum workshop to top it all off. The campers sang, danced, and wrote their own poetry to God joyfully. They made a very loud, very joyful noise!

I am so thankful for the counselors and program staff who volunteered to be with 110 wild and crazy 5th and 6th graders that weekend. I couldn't ask for a better time myself. As Saturday night ended with a Tri-Wizard Tournament of a Lip-Sync, Talent Show, and Dance, I realized exactly why I was a Youth Director—the youth



of our diocese are absolutely, without a doubt, amazing! They have changed my life forever, and I sing joyfully to the Lord with praises. I know Fall Fling 2009 will be just as memorable!

For more information about Fall Fling 2009, please contact Michael Goldsmith at Michael@campmcdowell.com or 205/387-1806.

Making Music at St. Alban's in Hoover

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

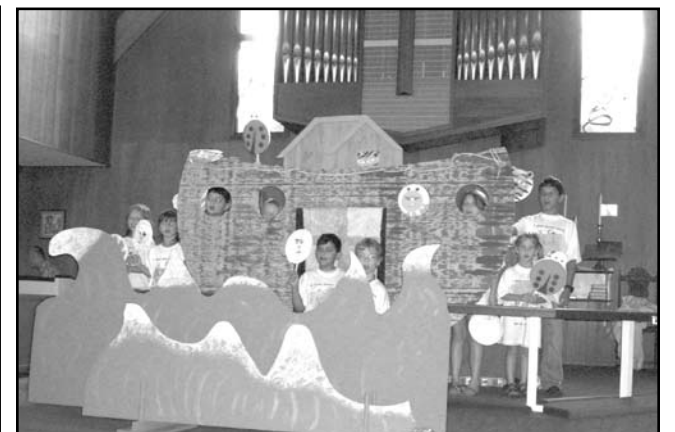


Codirectors Nick Voermans and Caitlin Huie with the children

A Parish-Based Outreach Grant from the Department of Mission and Outreach helped launch a children's music camp at St. Alban's in Hoover in 2008. The Rev. Barry Vaughn, rector of the parish, had found success with similar programs at St. Stephen's in Eutaw and wanted to offer the gift of music and the Good News of the Gospel to neighborhood children who live in the Bluff Park area of Hoover near St. Alban's.

Janet Nelson, who subsequently became the parish's organist/choirmaster, directed last year's inaugural camp, and two recent Samford graduates led this year's camp, which was held June 21-26. At the end of the week the young musicians presented "100% Chance of Rain," the story of Noah and the Ark. A highlight of the performance was the Noah rap: "Noah said, 'Yes! I'll do my best. We'll always be glad that Noah said, 'Yes.'"

Junior Warden Charles Brush built "a really cool" ark



for the show. Betsy Gordon and Meg Stubbs played key roles in the music camp's success.

St. Alban's hopes to continue the music camp in 2010 and make it one of the parish's signature events. Father Vaughn says that the program is very cost effective and can be accomplished for about \$2,000, a worthwhile investment to help raise the parish's profile in the community, attract new members, and help build community within the parish.

If you would like to have the ark used in this year's music camp production, please contact Father Vaughn at 205/492-3809 or anglcan@aol.com.

Learning about God's Love at VBS

By Lee Ann Mack, Christian Formation Director at St. Matthew's in Madison

We had a great Vacation Bible School this year at St. Matthew's in Madison. More than 40 young people participated in the safari-themed exploration of "The Kingdom of the Son." They sang, danced, and heard wonderful Bible stories as they discovered the meaning behind the Lord's Prayer and learned more about God's love and how he provides, forgives, protects, and listens. It was a very enjoyable experience for everyone.



St. Luke's Promotes Stewardship of Creation

By Joyce Lanning

Last fall the Stewardship of Creation Committee at Saint Luke's in Birmingham offered three Wednesday night programs and a community e-cycling day. Bishop Parsley spoke of his own efforts to live more sustainably and how we can recover the spiritual vision of our Christian heritage that sees the Earth as divine gift and all living creatures as holy and sacred to God. Our creation story calls us to tend and keep God's creation and experience our opportunities for conservation rather than remain caught in our culture of consumption.

Wendy Jackson, Executive Director of the Freshwater Land Trust, shared hope by showing the positive changes resulting from the Five Mile Creek Partnership, which earned the 2007 Phoenix award for the Southeast for conversion of Brownfields to Greenfields. With seven communities along the creek working together, what was known "Creosote Creek" became a canoe trail, and walking trails are open with more planned.

Michael Churchman, Executive Director of Alabama Environmental Council and a member of All Saints' in Birmingham and our diocesan Task Force on Stewardship

of Creation, spoke on Saving Energy, Saving Water and Saving Money. His organization and the Alabama Rivers Alliance received a grant from the World Wildlife Fund, which also funded the Task Force's adult Christian education curriculum, Watersheds and Warming. Since so much energy is used to clean, transport, and heat water, there are many ways we can help the environment and our pocket-books with water conservation, efficiency, and reuse.

The Technical Knock Out E-cycling event was a big success! Some 120 very appreciative people from the parish and the community took advantage of the opportunity to recycle their old electronic equipment. The 16-foot box truck was packed completely full, with two pickup truckloads needed for the overflow. The landfill



was spared and the materials carefully recycled by processors in the United States. Special thanks go to John Talbert and Lindsay Joe and Senior High EYC members Andin Mullis and Adam Wilson who worked with Elise Warren of TKO to sort and stow the equipment. Thanks also to volunteers Cornelia Buchanan, Temple Cox, Brooks Kimberly, Max and Noble Krebs, Sarah McClees, Scott Tully, and Patrick and Will Wilder.



Members of the Founding Board: Ida Rush George, John Wilson, Ann Longshore, Susan Meehan Hurst, Dr. Mac Porter, Dick Arrington, Hazel Mathis, the Rev. Robert Wisniewski, John Parker, Harold Nicrosi, the Rev. Roy Elam, Helen Wells, Mary Lil Owens, Fred Matthews, Pam Swan, Mildred Wakefield, and the Rt. Rev. Henry N. Parsley; not pictured are Katherine Crum, Mary Ann Durr, the Rev. John Keith, the late Rt. Rev. Robert O. Miller, Chadwick Morris, Slaton Slaton, Young Stevenson, and the Rev. Richmond Webster

Holy Cross Celebrates 10th Anniversary

Holy Cross Episcopal School in Montgomery culminated its yearlong 10th anniversary celebration by honoring the members of the founding board at the Annual Low Country Boil at the end of the 2008-09 academic year. "This school is one of the finest efforts the Episcopal Diocese of Alabama has ever been involved in," noted Bishop Parsley at the festive dinner event.

The school's board and staff are committed to recognizing the God-given gifts and abilities of all persons and seeking to develop these gifts by creating a Christian community in the Episcopal tradition and providing a nurturing environment in which students of all socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds grow spiritually, intellectually, and physically.

Learning More about Caring for the Earth

Earlier this year parishioners at St. Catherine's in Chelsea had an opportunity to learn more about caring for the Earth during a Sunday School class taught by Cammie Sanders. Cammie presented the Watersheds and Warmings curriculum developed by our diocesan Task Force for the Stewardship of Creation. "Our folks loved it!" emphasizes the Rev. John Mark Ford, rector of the parish. **For more information about the Watersheds and Warmings curriculum and other Task Force for the Stewardship of Creation initiatives, please contact the Rev. Deacon Gerri Aston at 205/879-8390 or 871-6926 or gerriaston@charter.net.**



EPISCOPAL CHURCH WOMEN

Compiled by Fiona Watts, Publicity Chair

Proudly Presenting Our Diocesan UTO Contribution

Barbara Carpenter, who is our diocesan UTO Coordinator, has expressed how honored and proud she felt as she presented our three-year contribution of



Zona Tounsley, the Province IV Representative to the National UTO Board, and Barbara before the UTO Ingathering offering at the UTO Sunday Eucharist

\$108,705.46 at the UTO Ingathering Eucharist during the 46th ECW Triennial Meeting, held concurrently with General Convention from July 8 to 17 in Anaheim. Thanks to each and every one of you, our diocese made one of the largest diocesan contributions.

During Triennial the delegates voted on which of the many grant requests submitted would receive funding. We submitted a grant request from the Good Shepherd in Decatur for funds to purchase a van for the Boys and Girls Clubs of Morgan and Lawrence Counties, and we received a partial grant of \$15,000. The 12-passenger van will be used to transport children to some of the afterschool programs offered by the Boys and Girls Clubs that meet at multiple sites as well as to a nearby day-camp program. The parish will also occasionally use the van to transport elderly parishioners.

President Dee Buzby, President Elect Gethryn Giles, Missions and Ministries Chair Fran Lowe, and Barbara represented us well at the 46th Triennial Meeting (**please see their photo on page 24**). Everyone agreed they had a wonderful, albeit somewhat exhausting, time attending meetings and workshops every day from morning to evening. They especially enjoyed hearing the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, speak at one of the Triennial meetings (**please visit <http://extra.alabamaecw.org/TriennialBlog.php> and www.alabamaecw.org to read more about their experiences and reflections**).



Dee receiving the Triennial Cross from Presiding Bishop Jefferts Schori

From Dee Buzby, ECW President

The 60th Annual Women's Weekend was another successful event that brought women from all over our diocese to Camp McDowell to enjoy wonderful fellowship. What a great time we had laughing and singing while focusing on our 2009 ECW theme, "St. Anne, Grandmother of Our Savior." The ladies at Eppes Hall pleased all of us with delicious meals. Cindy Funderburk from the Episcopal Book Store brought a wide array of items and books to purchase including two books

ment her talks, and the spiritual sounds it made touched everyone and seemed to resonate with the very core of our beings.

Many thanks to Cathy Blackney, Women's Weekend Coordinator; Sally Marsh for the worship services; Sue Jeffries for planning the music; Cherie Blair for planning the Ice Cream Social; and everyone on the Women's Weekend Committee. I especially thank all of you who came to enjoy a relaxing weekend among your sisters in Christ. We hope

each of you will come to Women's Weekend next year—it's always the third weekend in May.

The time for our **102 Annual Fall Conference** is fast approaching. All women of our diocese are invited to come to St. Matthew's in Madison on October 8-10. The Board asks that each ECW send two delegates to represent your parish. The Tennessee Valley Convocation has planned a memorable Fall Conference, and our speaker, Katerina Whitley, promises to be very entertaining and informative. Come and congratulate the 2010-2011 ECW Board that will be installed, learn the news from the parish ECWs, and enjoy the



Women from across our diocese thoroughly enjoyed our 60th Annual Women's Weekend at Camp McDowell.

best fellowship. **For more information please visit our website, www.alabamaecw.org, or contact Joan East at joaneast@knology.net or 256/325-1418.** I would like to personally invite all of you to St. Matthew's; we look forward to offering you the same warm hospitality that you have shown me when I visited with you. Please come!

by Adele Colvin, who came for a book signing. The workshops provided opportunities to learn from Gwen Gissendanner about memory quilts, from Joan Byrum on how to make old-fashioned handkerchief dolls, and from Sally Marsh who led a Taizé workshop. Many of us also enjoyed the experience of line dancing for the first time thanks to Sondra Gerber. We had an ice-cream social that featured every topping imaginable, and a silent auction to benefit the ECW Scholarship Fund. The Rev. Mark Johnston celebrated Eucharist in the lovely new St. Francis Chapel, where our singing sounded so very beautiful.

This summer I hope you have time to relax, read several good books, attend services wherever you travel, and be refreshed. Our Handbook/Calendar August page teaches us that St. Anne is the Patron of Fertility, and because of her love of the garden she is also the patron of the soil. In Italy it is said that "rain is St. Anne's gift," and in Germany, July rain is called "St. Anne's dowry."

I cannot say enough about our speaker, Sissy Wile, Director for EFM at Sewanee. She entertained all of us with three talks on the "Grandmother" theme. Sissy brought her "singing bowl" to comple-

ment her talks, and the spiritual sounds it made touched everyone and seemed to resonate with the very core of our beings.

Each of you will come to Women's Weekend next year—it's always the third weekend in May.

Furnishing a Church, One Cookbook at a Time

By "The Church Ladies" of Trinity in Wetumpka



Phyllis Kennedy, Dianne Searcy, and Voncille Lankford selling the ECW's cookbook to raise funds for the parish's soon-to-be completed building

Sometime in the fall the members of Trinity in Wetumpka will be moving into a beautiful new worship space. It's a long, long story . . .

Conversations about a new church building began nearly 10 years ago when the Rev. Steve Gruman was our rector. We had outgrown our charming but small cotton warehouse-turned-church space. Later, when the Rev. David Meginniss came to be our rector, a building committee was formed under the leadership of the late Conrad Ward, and we started to plan for fundraising. As Conrad's health declined, he passed off the job of Building Committee Chair to Warren Jones Jr. who has now held the position for five years! We had our first capital campaign, and just as we were starting to get a good head of steam, David broke the terrible but not unexpected news that he had accepted a call to be the rector of Christ Church in Tuscaloosa.

Clearly our top priority had to be the search process for a new rector, so our building plans were put on hold. To keep the parish focused on the need for a new

building though, a group of Trinity's women started talking about and planning for a cookbook, the proceeds of which would be used for our new building.

In the beginning it really was a ruse to keep the parish focused on building, but soon the cookbook took on a life of its own with the name *Shall We Gather, Recipes and Remembrances of a River Town*. No church meetings or services were allowed to take place without some important cookbook announcement being made, most of which were about yet another meeting. The women of our parish, with the help of a few men, gathered recipes, tested recipes, and talked endless hours about the merits of one cake over another. From the more than 600 recipes submitted, 192 top-quality ones were chosen for their originality, simplicity, taste, and the use of Alabama farm products. They were not chosen because they are gourmet recipes, but simply because they are good!

We were enormously blessed with beautiful original artwork by parishioner Hope Brannan that vividly portrays the parish life of Trinity and the scenic Wetumpka environment. John Berendt, author of *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*, opened many doors for the cookbook committee by writing a forward for the book.

"The Church Ladies" have been creative and indefatigable in their marketing efforts. We have visited other Episcopal churches during their coffee hours, prevailed upon friends to host in-home *Shall We Gather* parties, and even "invented" a hugely successful Gathering at the River cookbook fair, which was held again this August 22. Committee member Rebecca Gregory's research found that the only other such event in the world was somewhere south of Paris!

Now with more than 4,000 of 6,000 printed books sold, the Church Ladies are making a contribution of



more than \$30,000 toward furnishing our new church. A stained-glass window will be placed in memory of two of our cookbook committee members who have died, Virginia Waddle Lott and Carol Holland.

"But," according to cookbook chair Phyllis Kennedy, "most of the profit is in the last 2,000 books. We have the potential to make another \$40,000 if we can find buyers for these books," she emphasizes. Currently the *Shall We Gather* committee is scheduling opportunities to visit other churches on Sunday mornings, Wednesday evenings, and any other appropriate time—our visits are accompanied by tasty treats to tempt everyone's taste buds.

Warren Jones, chair of the parish's building committee, describes the new building as "outstanding, like a small cathedral." Marshall Design Build Construction of Montgomery is constructing the new worship space on U.S. Highway 231 in Wetumpka. The building, which is costing more than a million dollars to complete, will be a new Wetumpka landmark that more than 40,000 cars will pass each day. The Rev. Ben Alford, our rector, notes, "We have designed this building with the idea of inviting others to share our worship experience simply through the design, warmth, and curb appeal of the new structure. In a fast-growing county, we want to be prepared with space for all who want to worship with us. The new building will be truly fabulous."

To buy a cookbook please visit www.trinitywetumpka.org or call 334/567-7534. Please call June Ward at 334/567-3199 if you would like to have us visit your church or if you have other opportunities to suggest.

ECW of Holy Comforter Celebrates 120th Anniversary

By Frances Steele, ECW President



The Rev. Drake Whitelaw, rector of Holy Comforter, with Nancy Boston

The Episcopal Church Women (ECW) of the Holy Comforter in Montgomery hosted a grand reception the evening of July 14 to recognize the ECW's 120th anniversary. Church records indicate that in 1889 the first parish branch of the Women's Auxiliary (now the ECW) in our diocese was organized at Holy Comforter and formalized by the Rt. Rev. Richard Hooker Wilmer, the 2nd

Bishop of Alabama. In 1920 the Women's Auxiliary became the general Division of Women's work in the national Episcopal Church.

We sent invitations to the reception to all of the local church women as well as special guests. In conjunction with the celebration, we displayed parish historical memorabilia, including a book of vestry minutes dating



Ann Montgomery, event coordinator, with the Rev. Thomas Joyner, curate of Holy Comforter



Ann Speaks, Dede Harbin, and Carol Kendrick

back to May 27, 1898, and antique vestments and altar hangings.

Ann Montgomery chaired the festive occasion, which concluded with a drawing for a beautiful afghan knitted by Nancy Boston. Our rector, the Rev. Drake Whitelaw, was the lucky recipient. The memorable event truly celebrated the rich and blessed history that has carried us through the decades to 2009.



The pilgrims at the church of St. Mary the Virgin in Lindesfarne

On a Celtic Pilgrimage

In late May the Rev. Bill King, the Rev. Bill Winters, and the Rev. Jim Tuohy led 35 folks from around our diocese on an 11-day pilgrimage focusing on Celtic spirituality. In addition to extended stays on the islands of Lindesfarne (in England) and Iona (in Scotland), the group visited Melrose Abbey and the Kilmartin Valley, which has burial sites older than the pyramids of Egypt.

The Rev. Dr. James F. Tuohy Retires

By Judy Quick, Senior Warden of St. Andrew's in Montevallo



More than 100 guests from throughout our diocese gathered in the parish hall of St. Andrew's in Montevallo on June 20 to bid farewell to the Rev. Dr. James Tuohy. After retiring from St.

Michael and All Angels' in Anniston, Jim had agreed to be the part-time rector of St. Andrew's for perhaps three years. To the delight of his parishioners, he remained there for 10 years.

The ECW organized a beautiful party, and guests offered their tributes to Jim and his wife, Elma, during the celebration and in written form in the Tribute Basket. A gathering with Jim Tuohy would be incomplete without

the accordion, and he led us in a variety of favorite tunes. Daughter Naimh Clarke serenaded us with her violin accompanied by six-year-old Aiden and his violin, with the assistance of his baby brother Dylan! Son Fergus joined in the festivities as well.

Jim was ordained a Roman Catholic priest on June 18, 1961, in Ireland. He came as a missionary to Alabama where he served in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Mobile-Birmingham. In the 1970s he directed the Interfaith Mission Service in Huntsville. After completing his Doctor of Ministry from Vanderbilt Divinity School, Jim was received as an Episcopal priest in 1980 in our diocese, and he served parishes in Anniston, Birmingham, and Montevallo. Jim will return to St. Andrew's in Birmingham, where he began feeding the homeless more than two decades ago, this time to enjoy the services from the pews. Jim has led numerous pilgrimages to Ireland including one this past May (please see "On a Celtic Pilgrimage" above) and, through his deep prayer life and joyous spirit he has led many to a deeper knowledge of Christ's love. To know Jim Tuohy is to be blessed.

A "Little Portion" for Quiet Retreat

By A. Kelley Hudlow, the Third Order of the Society of St. Francis

The Rev. Mark Johnston, Lucy McCain, Frank Romanowicz, the Rev. Mark Waldo, family members, friends, and I joined gathered with Yvonne Willie at Camp McDowell on June 13 to dedicate Clare's Cottage. Bishop Parsley presided at the dedication, and the Rev.



Yvonne Willie and the Rev. Mark Johnston, vicar and executive director of Camp McDowell, at the dedication of Clare's Cottage

Bill King served as the celebrant assisted by the Rev. Deacon Clyde Pearce. Rain had moved through the area that morning, but the clouds cleared and the sun began to shine before the service began. As Bishop Parsley blessed the cottage, we cast wildflower seeds to the wind around it.

Clare's Cottage is a collaborative labor of love for Mark Johnston, Clyde Pearce, and the volunteers who

worked on it. It was constructed in an economically and environmentally friendly manner, with many of the materials being re-purposed, reclaimed, or recycled. The wood used for the outside siding came from the trees that were cleared to build the Chapel of St. Francis of Assisi at Camp McDowell, and the stones for the fireplace also came from the camp property.

The cottage is given in honor of Lou and Yvonne Willie, the founders of the Third Order of the Society of St. Francis in Alabama. It is named for St. Clare of Assisi, the founder of the Poor Ladies. St. Francis visited Clare for when he needed encouragement and rest, and she took on the way of life of St. Francis. Although Clare was cloistered, she maintained the principles of Franciscan poverty and humility. During her lifetime she saw orders of Poor Ladies founded throughout Europe.

This simple cottage is designed for solitary retreat, for going away to a quiet place as Jesus and the saints did to contemplate (Mark 1:35 and 14:39; Luke 6:12).

For information about staying at Clare's Cottage, please contact Mark Johnston at mark@campmcdowell.com or 205/387-1806. For information about God's Joyful Fools, please visit <http://sites.google.com/site/godsjoyfulfools> or contact Nancy Hamner at nr327@bellsouth.net.

Clergy News

The Rev. Steve Mosher has accepted a call to serve as the rector of St. Andrew's in Maryville, Tennessee. Steve previously served as associate rector of the Nativity in Huntsville.

Bishops' Visitation Schedule

Sunday, September 6

8 a.m. Bishop Parsley, Trinity, Alpine
11:15 a.m. Bishop Parsley, St. Andrew's, Sylacauga

Sunday, September 13

10:30 a.m. Bishop Parsley, Good Shepherd, Decatur
10:30 a.m. Bishop Sloan, Emmanuel, Opelika

Sunday, September 20

10:15 a.m. Bishop Sloan, St. Timothy's, Athens
10:30 a.m. Bishop Parsley, St. Paul's, Lowndesboro

Sunday, September 27

11 a.m. Bishop Parsley, St. Michael and All Angels', Anniston

Sunday, October 4

9:30 a.m. Bishop Sloan, St. Simon Peter's, Pell City
11:30 a.m. Bishop Parsley, St. Andrew's, Prairieville
4 p.m. Bishop Parsley, St. Alban's, Birmingham

Sunday, October 11

11 a.m. Bishop Parsley, St. Matthew's, Madison

Sunday, October 18

9 a.m. Bishop Sloan, Good Shepherd, Montgomery
10 a.m. Bishop Parsley, St. Mark's, Prattville

Sunday, October 25

10:30 a.m. Bishop Parsley, St. Catherine's, Chelsea
10:30 a.m. Bishop Sloan, St. Thomas', Huntsville

Wednesday, October 28

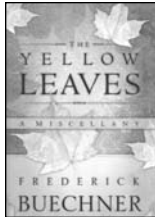
6 p.m. Bishop Parsley, St. Luke's, Jacksonville

Sunday, November 1

9:30 a.m. Bishop Parsley, Grace, Cullman
10:45 a.m. Bishop Sloan, St. Francis', Indian Springs

WHAT'S NEW/NOTEWORTHY AT THE EPISCOPAL BOOK STORE

Here are just a few of the books recommended by the speakers who preached at the Cathedral Church of the Advent this past Lent.



The Yellow Leaves by Frederick Buechner

In these original essays, short stories, and poems, Frederick Buechner reflects on the moments of transcendence in the midst of his daily life. He finds the presence of the divine in commonplace activities and invites us into their realities. This master edifies,

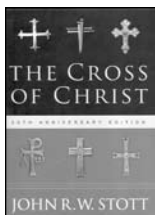
inspires, and offers a timeless model for approaching the human experience.



The Life You've Always Wanted by John Ortberg

The Christian life is about more than being forgiven or making it to heaven. The heart of Christianity is about transformation—about a God who wants to impact every aspect of our daily lives—that all of our daily life has the

potential to be lived as if Jesus himself were the one living it. In this book John Ortberg offers modern perspectives on the ancient path of the spiritual disciplines. It's a road map toward true transformation, starting with the object of our journey, Jesus Christ. And the secret lies not in trying harder, but in training consistently.



The Cross of Christ by John R. W. Stott

Why should the cross—an object of Roman distaste and Jewish disgust—be the emblem of our worship and the axiom of our faith? And what does it mean for us today? In this thoughtful, comprehensive study of Scripture, tradition, and the modern world, John Stott brings us face to

face with the centrality of the cross in God's plan of redemption. This

is John Stott's masterpiece. The book's headings are Approaching the Cross, The Heart of the Cross, The Achievement of the Cross, and Living Under the Cross. (Available in both hardback and unabridged audio CD.)



Justification: God's Plan and Paul's Vision by N. T. Wright

Few issues are more central to the Christian faith than the nature, scope, and means of salvation. Many have thought it to be largely a transaction that gets one to heaven, but in his newest offering, N. T. Wright explains that God's salvation is radically more than this. At the heart of this book is the term the apostle Paul uses in several of his letters to describe what happens to those in Christ—justification. Paul uses this dramatic image from the court of law to declare that Christians are acquitted of the cosmic accusations against them. But justification goes beyond

this in Paul's writings to offer a vision of God's future for the whole world as well as for his people. Wright offers a comprehensive account and defense of his perspective on the crucial doctrine of justification. Along the way Wright responds to critics, such as John Piper, who have challenged what has come to be called the New Perspective. Ultimately, Wright provides a chance for those in the middle and on both sides of the debate to interact directly with his views and form their own conclusions.

UnChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks about Christianity and

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Diocesan Convention February 11–13 in the Shoals area

Cursillo Weekends #169 September 17–20 and #170 October 15–18

Youth Minister Gatherings September 10, October 8, November 12, and December 10

September 7 Labor Day Picnic to benefit the parish's building fund at St. John's Deaf Church in Birmingham. For more information please contact Cathy Rogers, VP: 205/623-0121 or page Lucyfan93@aol.com, or Joan Jordan at VP: 205/621-3550 or e-mail Jordan54@charter.net.

September 10 Diocesan Youth Ministers Gathering from 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. at St. Stephen's in Birmingham. For more information please contact lmanning@dioala.org or 205/715-2060 ext 325.

September 11-13 Integrity Alabama Fall Retreat, "A Spirit-Filled Movement for LGBT Equality," led by Harry Know, the director of the Human Rights Campaign's Religion and Faith Program, at Camp McDowell. For more information please contact Jane Pierce, Integrity Alabama Convener, at 205/592-0356 or piercem@zebra.net.

September 25 Midday Musical Menu featuring bass-baritone Paul Houghtaling and pianist Kevin T. Chance at 12:30 p.m. in Clingman Commons at the Advent in Birmingham. For more information please contact Music Associate Charles Kennedy at 205/226-3505 or kennedy@cathedralavent.com.

September 27-29 3-Day Centering Prayer Retreat led by the Rev. Geoffrey Butcher at St. Mary's Sewanee. For more information please visit www.centeringprayermidtn.com or call 615/373-0613.

September 27-October 3 Sacred Images, Icon Writing with Theresa Harrison at Kanuga Conference Center in Hendersonville, North Carolina. For more information please call 828/692-9136, e-mail info@kanuga.org, or visit www.kanuga.org.

October 3 Interfaith Dialogue as Spiritual Practice, a program for clergy and lay leaders ministering in a global society, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Nativity in Huntsville. M. Basye Holland-Shuey, M.A., M.T.S., D.Min., who teaches in the School of Religion at Belmont University and serves as an interfaith consultant and facilitator with the Episcopal

Church, is presenting this program as part of Nativity's Reconciliation Ministries. For more information please call the parish office at 256/533-2455 or e-mail basye@knology.net.

October 4 Evensong presented by the Cathedral Choir under the direction of Dr. Stephen G. Schaeffer at 4 p.m. at the Advent in Birmingham. For more information please contact Music Associate Charles M. Kennedy at 205/226-3505 or kennedy@cathedralavent.com.

October 8 Diocesan Youth Ministers Gathering from 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. at St. Stephen's in Birmingham. For more information please contact lmanning@dioala.org or 205/715-2060 ext 325.

October 17 12th Annual Angel Fest from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at St. Michael and All Angels' in Millbrook with the proceeds benefiting caring for the community. Come take advantage of this great opportunity to raise funds to meet the needs of others while shopping, eating, and enjoying fun with your whole family! For more information please call the parish office at 334/285-3905 or e-mail leslie.ekdaht@almore.k12.al.us.

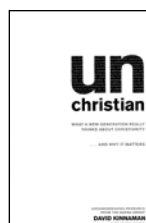
October 18-20 11th Step Centering Prayer Retreat led by Roberta Oster/Becky Hannah at St. Mary's Sewanee. For more information please visit www.centeringprayermidtn.com or call 615/373-0613.

October 19-22 Lansing Lee Conference featuring the Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori as keynoter at Kanuga Conference Center in Hendersonville, North Carolina. For more information please call 828/692-9136, e-mail info@kanuga.org, or visit www.kanuga.org.

October 23 Midday Musical Menu featuring Cathedral Music Associate Charles M. Kennedy in an organ recital at 12:30 p.m. in Clingman Commons at the Advent in Birmingham. For more information please contact Music Associate Charles M. Kennedy at 205/226-3505 or kennedy@cathedralavent.com.

October 23-24 Author, columnist, professor, and Lutheran pastor Martin Marty presents three lectures—The Paradoxes of American Religion (7–9 p.m. Friday), Wildly Religious and Mildly Irreligious: The American Scene (9–10:30 a.m. Saturday), Mildly Religious and Wildly Irreligious: The American Scene (11 a.m.–12:30 p.m. Saturday)—sponsored by SPAFER at Shades Valley Lutheran Church in Birmingham.

The Rev.



Why It Matters by David Kinnaman

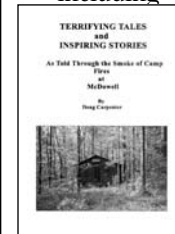
Christians are supposed to represent Christ to the world, but according to the latest report card (a study conducted by the Barna Group) something has gone terribly wrong. Using descriptions like "hypocritical," "insensitive," and "judgmental," young Americans share an

impression of Christians that's more . . . unchristian. Find out why these negative perceptions exist, learn how to reverse them in a Christlike manner, and discover practical examples of how Christians can positively contribute to culture.

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 ebsinfo@episcobooks.com. You can also visit the bookstore online at 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

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.

76TH GENERAL CONVENTION AND 46TH TRIENNIAL MEETING

Representing Our Diocese



The Alabama Episcopalian

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

Please send stories and photographs (color, if available) to Editor Norma McKittrick at apostledit@aol.com or 2156 Kent Way, Birmingham, AL 35226; the submission deadline for each issue is the 1st of the month prior to publication.

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Bishop Parsley and Bishop Sloan represented our diocese in the House of Bishops, while Sears Barnes, The Rev. John Mark Ford, the Rev. John Fritschner, Virginia Hillhouse, the Rev. Susan Sloan, Marcellus Smith, Elouisa Stokes, and the Rev. Robert Wisnewski represented us in the House of Deputies at the 76th General Convention held July 8-17 in Anaheim. The Rev. Ben Alford, the Rev. Scott Arnold, the Rev. Alison Carmody, Ernest Edgar, Tom Gamble, Bill Giardini, the Rev. Lee Lowery, Jill Lunsford, Frank Romanowicz, Kevin Smith, the Rev. James Tuohy, the Rev. Bruce White, the Rev. Drake Whitelaw, and Cecil Williamson were on call as alternate deputies. Dee Buzby, Gethryn Giles, Barbara Carpenter, and Fran Lowe served as our ECW delegates to the 46th Triennial Meeting, which met concurrently with General Convention. For more about General Convention, please see pages 6-7; for more about the ECW Triennial Meeting please see page 20.