

THE MISSISSIPPI EPISCOPALIAN

February, 2010 • Volume 135, Issue No. 2

Opening council address cites growth and obstacles to mission

By Scott Lenoir, Editor

In his opening address to the 183rd Annual Council in Tupelo Friday night, Bishop Duncan Gray III gave thanks for the growth and commitment of the Diocese as well as highlighting obstacles to our efforts to do the mission work we are called to do.

The bishop noted that despite the very real financial obstacles and the internal disagreements in the last three to four years, there have been twenty two churches in the diocese that have either launched, completed or seriously considered capital campaigns for the expansion of their facilities.

“Such progress at the local level is surely one sign of the vitality of the church in this diocese,” said Gray.

In the last eighteen months Gray blessed four new churches: St. Peter’s by-the-Sea, Gulfport; St. Mark’s, Gulfport; St. Patrick’s, Long Beach and St. Columb’s, Ridgeland.

He also mentioned the major expansion of facilities at St. James’, Jackson and St. John’s, Ocean Springs.

“In the next few months, I will be dedicating new facilities at Trinity Church, Pass Christian; Christ Church, Bay St. Louis and at Nativity, Greenwood.”

Ecumenical effort

On the ecumenical front, the Bishop cited the historic Covenant of Common Life signed in March of 2009 between the Mississippi United Methodist Conference and the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi



Jim Carrington/photo

continues to have an impact in congregations throughout the Diocese of Mississippi.

United Methodist Bishop Hope Morgan Ward and Bishop Gray will travel to Meridian on the Feast Day of John and Charles Wesley, March 3, 2010, where Mediator Church will host an event for east central Mississippi similar to the one hosted by St. Andrew’s Cathedral and Galloway United Methodist in Jackson in 2009. Haven’s Chapel United Methodist Church will co-



host the March celebration with the Church of the Mediator.

Gray said that he was grateful for the initiative that many Episcopal congregations have taken throughout the diocese “to seek out common vehicles of ministry with their Methodist sisters and brothers.”

Congregations for Children is another ecumenical effort that the Bishop said has matured and provides a way for Episcopalians to work closely with the Roman Catholic and United Methodist Churches.

Also Gray stated that Lutheran Episcopal Services of Mississippi continues to expand in its social advocacy ministry throughout the state of Mississippi.

There is also a Lutheran-Episcopal congregation which was born in Perkinston, Mississippi in Stone County. The Bishop promised to present the Executive Committee with a petition from the congregation to formerly establish it as a mission station of the diocese which will be called the “Lutheran Episcopal Mission of the Annunciation.” (See page 24 of the January edition of the Mississippi Episcopalian for more details.)

“A crisis is a terrible thing to waste”

Due to the severity of the financial burdens in the last two years, Bishop Gray said that the Diocese of Mississippi has been forced to ask what is essential and foundational in our diocesan ministries.

Opening Council Address, Continued on page 5

2010 Budget passes council unanimously

By Scott Lenoir

The 183rd Annual Council adopted a \$2,290,780 budget in Tupelo on Feb. 6th which will have to be cut further due to more complete information not available to the Executive Committee when it first adopted the budget.

Diocesan Treasurer Ed Thurmond presented budget details at council which contained several cut backs in various areas of ministry. Some line items present in the 2009 budget were completely dropped in 2010.

Greatly hampering the 2010 budget formation was a lack of data. When the Executive Committee accepted the budget from the Finance Committee last December, the numbers used to gauge the receipts were a best guess estimate according to diocesan Treasurer Ed Thurmond of St. Mary’s in Lexington.

“The numbers we used to come up with the budget only reflect about 65% of the parishes and missions who returned a pledge. So we made our estimate based on the previous year’s giving and other information. We hit on some of those estimates and missed on others,” said Thurmond.

Now that most all of the pledges are in, the data indicates a further cut of \$35,000. This means that the Executive Committee may be looking to form a total budget of \$2,255,780 which is a \$118,799 drop from the 2009 budget. As the remaining congregations report, that figure could change.

2010 Budget,
Continued on page 4

Winter Solstice camp focused on Holy Week

By Scott Lenoir, Editor

Young people from around the diocese gathered for Winter Solstice after Christmas at Gray Center. The group was treated to a study of the most powerful days of the liturgical year: Holy Week.

“We started with Maundy Thursday and ended with Easter,” said Winter Solstice staffer, Chelsea Knight.

“Our daily activities surrounded the theme and we wanted to teach that the days of Holy Week and Easter are not about school days off and the Easter bunny, but about the sacrifice of Jesus and the resurrection.”

Knight said that the age of the young people allowed the staff to have some intense services and activities where the campers were asked difficult questions and allowed time to share their thoughts and questions.

The use of light and darkness were incorporated into the observances much like they would be in the parish. The Camp chapel was completely blacked-out with dark paper which allowed the campers to focus on what was going on inside the chapel.



Chelsea Knight/photo

Can you spell “solstice.” Young people from around the diocese met after Christmas for the annual winter camp.

The Rev. Annie Cumberland, Diocesan Youth Director, leads the Winter Solstice Camp in an Easter Vigil at Camp Bratten Green.



Chelsea Knight/photo

Notes & Quotes

by Maria Watson



Notes February 2010
By Maria Watson

The admonition from the Rev. Editor was to keep it short-like to 600 words — so when I hit 600, I'll

stop. Because of the hiatus of this column for the January issue, I have very little up-to-date material to work with so the paraphrased KISS (Keep it Short, Stupid) acronym works very well this month.

Herewith, your Notes and Quotes...

As this goes to press, many of you are once again preparing for those Shrove Tuesday pancake suppers: **St. Paul's, Columbus**, combined with bingo and a silent auction with proceeds going to EYC summer missions; **Grace, Canton**; and **Nativity, Greenwood**, sponsored by the EYC. Farther south, we are saying "Laissez les bons temps rouler," with **Holy Trinity, Vicksburg**, having a Carnival parade February 13; **St. Peter's by-the-Sea, Gulfport's**, Young Adults inviting all to supper prior to walking a block to watch the night parade on Mardi Gras, February 16; and **St. Peter's by-the-Lake, Brandon**, having a "Mardi Gras Drawdown" with proceeds to be split between the winner(s) and the rector's discretionary fund.

All Saints, Tupelo, celebrates its 140th anniversary this year. **St. John's, Ocean Springs**, dedicated its new parish hall and Sunday School facilities, the focus of an ambitious capital campaign, recently; and **St. Patrick's, Long Beach's** new church was the subject of an article in the local daily, *Sun Herald*. **Redeemer, Biloxi**, reports that it should soon be starting its new building.

The ECW of **St. Alban's, Vicksburg**, is collecting recipes for its second cookbook, hoping

to publish directions for about 500 delicious creations in a hardcover book. **St. Columb's, Jackson**, is launching a newsletter, *The Cantor*, which, apparently will be received via email.

St. Pierre's, Gautier's, Sunday School and EFM plan a trip to the Malbis Greek Orthodox Church in Mobile March 13. **Trinity, Natchez**, will offer a Chamber Music Series featuring regional artists and small ensembles on Fridays during March.

NOTABLE QUOTES...

"By the time you're 70 years old, you will have spent nearly a quarter of a century sleeping. The average person spends about 23 years of his/her life in bed...Some estimates of how most Americans spend their waking hours during those 70 years: 11 years working; six years eating; four years being educated; two years reading; eight years in leisure pursuits; five years grooming; three years talking; six months worshipping God. Perhaps Sunday morning worship isn't as long as it seems." (**Trinity, Yazoo City**).

From **St. Pierre's, Gautier**, some things to think about as we enter 2010:

- Don't believe all you hear, spend all you have or sleep all you want.

- Never laugh at anyone's dreams.
- Remember that great love and great achievements involve great risk.
- Remember the three Rs: *Respect* for self, *Respect* for others, *Responsibility* for all your actions.
- Remember that silence is sometimes the best answer.
- Remember that not getting what you want is sometimes a blessing.
- Approach love and cooking with reckless abandon, and most importantly: • Pray. There is immeasurable power in it."

"Lent is an Anglo-Saxon word for spring that means "lengthen" (as in the lengthening of the days), and it is a time when we are encouraged to enter into reflection, prayer, devotion and are called to repent of those things which draw us away from the love of God and to return our focus and attention toward God." (St. Peter's, Gulfport.)

Deployment Report For the Mississippi Episcopalian February 2010

NEW CALLS/APPOINTMENTS

The Reverend Scott Lenoir, to be Priest Associate, Chapel of the Cross, Madison

The Reverend Luther Ott, to be Interim Rector, St. Paul's Church, Meridian

The Reverend Pamela Rhea, to be Deacon, St. Paul's Church, Columbus

The Reverend Scott Williams, to be Deacon, St. Peter's-by-the-Sea, Gulfport

The Reverend Dennis Wilson, to be Deacon, St. Peter's-by-the-Lake, Brandon

OTHER CHANGES

The Reverend Gene Bennett, *retired*, as Rector, Church of the Redeemer, Brookhaven

The Reverend Bill Livingston, from Pastoral Missioner on the Mississippi Gulf Coast, to be Interim Rector of St. Alban's Church, Hickory, North Carolina

The Reverend Greg Proctor, *retired*, as Rector, St. Paul's Church, Meridian

IN TRANSITION

Church of the Redeemer, Brookhaven

St. George's Church, Clarksdale

Church of the Mediator-Redeemer, McComb-Magnolia

Trinity Church, Natchez

Continually published for 132 years in the Diocese of Mississippi



The Mississippi Episcopalian

Official news organ of the Bishop and the Diocese of Mississippi
118 N. Congress Street - P.O. Box 23107
Jackson, Mississippi 39225-3107

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Ninth Bishop of Mississippi

The Rev. Scott Lenoir
Editor

The Mississippi Episcopalian (USPS 024755) is published monthly by the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi, 118 N. Congress St., Jackson, MS 39201. Periodical postage paid at Jackson, MS. POSTMASTER: Send change of address to the Mississippi Episcopalian, P.O. Box 23107, Jackson, MS 39225-3107. In giving changes of address send the old address as well as the new. We cannot be responsible for the return of manuscripts or photographs.

O GRACIOUS Father, we humbly beseech thee for thy holy Catholic Church; that thou wouldest be pleased to fill it with all truth, in all peace. Where it is corrupt, purify it; where it is in error, direct it; where in any thing it is amiss, reform it. Where it is right, establish it; where it is in want, provide for it; where it is divided, reunite it; for the sake of him who died and rose again, and ever liveth to make intercession for us, Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord.

Amen

1928 BCP, pg 37



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The Bishop's Journal

December 22 – In office most of the day. Staff Christmas lunch at noon. Very grateful for the generous sharing of gifts and talents from the staff that are such a vital part of our common life in this diocese.

December 23 – Brief visit to the office this morning. Extended mentoring phone conversation with the Rt. Rev. Shannon Johnston of Virginia. Home with family in the afternoon.

December 24 – At home in the morning. Kathy, Tabitha and I drive to Clinton for Christmas Eve worship at Creator, then dinner with Duncan IV, Amber and the girls.

We return to Jackson where I preach and celebrate at the midnight service at St. Andrew's Cathedral.

December 25 – “The word became flesh Christmas Day — and dwelt among us.” Come let us adore him.

December 26 – Home with family.

December 27 – St. Andrew's Cathedral in the morning, then Kathy and I drive to New Orleans to spend a few days with Peter and Julianna.

December 28 – New Orleans with family.

December 29 – New Orleans with family.

December 30 – Return to Jackson. Go to office in the evening briefly.

December 31 – Brief visit to office in morning, then out to Gray Center for a visit with the staff and participants at the Winter Solstice camp for high school students. Also spend some time with Gray Center staff as they prepare for a very large New Year's Eve event sponsored by Gray Center and the Camp Bratton-Green Alumni Association.

January 1 – I celebrate a more than five decades New Year's tradition by watching football bowl games with my father.

January 2 – Brief trip to Gray Center as the Permanent Staff interviews begin. Hurry home to watch the Cotton Bowl. Pleased with an Ole Miss victory.

January 3 – With family at St. Andrew's. Spend the afternoon catching up on administrative matters put on hold during the Christmas break.

January 4 – Annual visit with my optometrist. All is well. Spend some time at Gray Center continuing my tree-planting project.

January 5 – Staff meetings in the morning. Afternoon appointments with the Rev. Margaret Ayers. The Rev. Bryan Owen (annual consultation) and John Juarwel, a Sudanese student from Ole Miss.

January 6 – Drive to Gray Center to spend all morning listening to the Diocesan Discernment Committee discuss their conversations over the past two days with various aspirants for holy orders. Though they later will submit a formal

report to me, these discussions, in my presence, illuminate much that would be hard to describe in a formal document.

After lunch with the Committee, I meet with Gray Center employees Sarah Shelby and Grae Dickson to talk about trips to various congregations to showcase the special ministry of Camp Bratton-Green.

On my way back into town, I stop at St. Andrew's School to visit with the Rev. Jennifer Deaton about the Center for Formation and Mission.

January 7 – Breakfast with our Chancellor, Granville Tate, and Canons Johnson and McCormick. Spend the rest of the day in the office. Annual consultation with the Rev. Christopher Powell.

January 8 – At home in the morning working on my pre-council comments that I will take to all seven convocations in preparation for Diocesan Council in Tupelo. Afternoon in the office.

January 9 – At St. Andrew's Cathedral, I ordain Scott Williams, Pam Rhea and Dennis Wilson to the diaconate. Scott has been assigned to St. Peter's-by-the-Sea. Gulfport; Pam to St. Paul's, Columbus; and Dennis to St. Peter's-by-the-Lake, Brandon.

Following the ordination, I drive to Ocean Springs to prepare for my annual visitation to St. John's tomorrow. Overnight at the Gulf Hills Inn.

January 10 – Celebrate and preach at two services at St. John's. After the earlier eucharist, we process through the new parish house to bless and consecrate this wonderful new facility. Serious work toward this construction has been taking place for almost ten years, surviving a brief interlude called Katrina.

At the later service, I also confirm 14 and receive 2. It has been a very full day for the people of St. John's!

After a good visit with the Rev. Deacon Jim Lancaster, I drive to Woodville for dinner with the vestry of St. Paul's. Very upbeat gathering and I leave renewed by the commitment and resiliency of these folks. Return home to Jackson very late.

January 11 – Oversee some repairs at our home, then drive to Oxford for the first of our pre-council convocation meetings. I have made the decision to travel to these meetings with Canons Johnson and McCormick to talk about our responses to the financial challenges we face.

Very large crowd at St. Peter's as the Gray-Johnson-McCormick traveling show begins with clergy and lay delegates from the Northern Convocation.

Distressed to hear of ruptures in Jackson water system. Kathy and Tabitha assure me all is well with them.

January 12 – Take care of personal business in the morning. Brief visit later with an aspirant for holy orders, then drive to Tupelo for the pre-council meeting of the Tombigbee Convocation.

We gather in the new and spacious parish hall at All-Saints' with a good crowd. Overnight with my brother Lloyd and his family.

January 13 – Up very early to return to Jackson. Our Fresh Start meeting with new clergy has to be moved to St. Columb's, Ridgeland, because of the water problems in Jackson. I arrive at St. Columb's to discover the St. Andrew's preschool has also made its temporary home at St. Columb's.

Afternoon appointment with Rev. Annie Cumberland. In the Evening, we make our pre-council presentations for the Central Convocation at St. James, Jackson

January 14 – In the morning, Tabitha, Kathy and I make a visit to Hinds Community College so Tabitha can get a feel for what may be in store for her next year.

Return to office briefly before leaving for the Coast. Coast Convocation pre-council meeting is hosted by St. Marks, Gulfport. Several questions are raised about what we will do if “a certain team” makes it to the Super Bowl which is scheduled for the weekend we are at Council. Home to Jackson late.

January 15 – In office all day. Morning appointments with Mr. Chuck Barlow. Annual consultation in the afternoon with the Rev. Deacon James Henry LeBatard and the Rev. Mary Berry

January 16 – Spend some time in hospital visitation, then enjoy the rest of the day with Kathy.

January 17 – Up very early to drive to West Point for visitation to the Church of the Incarnation. I preach, celebrate and confirm eight in the midst of a very large congregation. Enjoy lunch with the parish family and stay to participate in their annual parish meeting. Increases in average Sunday attendance, pledges and income and giving to the diocese, as well as debt elimination and a significant 2009 surplus are all signs of a very healthy parish.

Return to Jackson in the late afternoon.

January 18 – Day off. Office is closed in observance of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday.

January 19 – Staff meetings in the morning. Spend much of the middle of the day with the task force planning next fall's Clergy Conference. Following the meeting, Canons Johnson, McCormick and I share a ride to Indianola for the pre-council meeting of the Delta Convocation. We have a good meeting and on the way back to Jackson, I am aware of how appreciative I am for a chauffeur named Johnson.

January 20 – I work at home in the morning beginning my preparations for my address and sermon at Diocesan Council.

Drive to the state penitentiary at Parchman for a visitation with the inmates who make up St. Vincent's Mission Station at Parchman. Have dinner at Church of the Advent, Sumner with several clergy involved in prison ministry. We then go together to Parchman. At the eucharist, I preach and celebrate with approximately 20 inmates. Afterwards, I am the featured speaker to a much larger group bound together by the ecumenical Kairos ministry.

It is, as always, a moving moment to sit with those in prison.

Return home to Jackson late.

January 21 – Work on Council address in the morning, appointment with the Rev. Chan Osborn de Anaya in the afternoon before traveling with Canons Johnson and McCormick to the pre-council meeting of the Old River Convocation at St. James, Port Gibson. The people of St. James serve us dinner at our meeting - a real treat!

Home to Jackson late.

January 22 – Morning appointment with Lee Davis Thames. Annual consultation with the Rev. Deacon Bill Hanna.

Afternoon appointments with seminarian John Kellogg and Floyd Patrick.

January 23 – Drive to Gray Center for board meeting of the Gray Center Board of Managers. Leave from Gray Center to drive to Holly Springs.

Good visit and dinner with the Rev. Bruce McMillan. Overnight stay at a very lovely bed and breakfast on the square in Holly Springs.

January 24 – Visitation to Christ Church, Holly Springs. I preach, celebrate, baptize one, confirm four and receive one. Very large crowd. Lovely luncheon follows. After a final visit with the rector, I drive to Oxford.

Early afternoon appointment with Adams McDavid. Later, at St. Peter's I ordain to the priesthood, the Rev. Jan Oller, chaplain to the students and faculty at Ole Miss. To this point, Jan has been canonically resident in the Diocese of Indianapolis, so I ordain with the permission and on behalf of the Bishop of Indianapolis.

Lovely reception follows, but I can't linger because I am scheduled to preach and celebrate at the Spanish language eucharist that followed closely after the ordination.

The Bishop's Journal,
Continued on page 5

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A Celebration of Discipline?

By Janet Nail

What are you giving up for Lent?

Even in the aggressively Evangelical tradition in which I grew up, this was a question that came up on Ash Wednesday every year



(we knew about Ash Wednesday because the few Roman Catholics in our midst got out of school at midday and came back with smudges on their foreheads).

From the earnest primary grades, when I would resolve to give up candy, to the smart-alecky junior high years, which saw everyone resolving to give up homework for Lent, we knew that we were supposed to do this. What we didn't know was why.

I am embarrassed to admit that I always thought we were supposed to suffer because Jesus suffered on the cross. I was an adult before I heard the word "discipline" in the context of Lent.

What exactly is discipline? According to the dictionary, discipline is training that is expected to produce a specified character or pattern of behavior, especially that which is expected to produce moral improvement.

If Lent is supposed to involve discipline, how do we learn discipline? What better source than the classic, *CELEBRATION OF DISCIPLINE* by Richard Foster (HarperSanFrancisco, 1978; 1988; 1998)?

Foster is actually referring to the classic disciplines, or central spiritual practices, of the Christian faith, but isn't that what we are supposed to be developing? He divides the spiritual disciplines into three movements of the Spirit and shows how each of these movements contribute to a balanced spiritual life.

The inward disciplines of meditation, prayer, fasting and study offer avenues of personal examination and change. The outward disciplines of simplicity, solitude, submission, and service help prepare us to make the world a better place. The corporate disciplines of confession, worship, guidance, and celebration bring us nearer to one another and to God.

Foster opens by cautioning readers not to turn the disciplines into laws. When this happens, they are used to manipulate and control

people. This deterioration of the spiritual disciplines results in pride and fear. Pride comes because we come to believe that we are the right kind of people, who have the right to judge others; and fears comes because we dread losing control. The disciplines are a blessing, not a curse, when we let go of the need to manage and control others and trust that God can do His own work.

Nor are we expected to embrace and immediately conquer all the disciplines at once. I liken it to learning to read. You don't start with Shakespeare; you begin with the alphabet, then phonetics, then you suddenly see these letters as words. The first words you read are on the level of the Dick and Jane primers of my childhood. You increase in skill and knowledge until-yes-you are reading Shakespeare. Begin where you are; you will grow.

The purpose of the inward disciplines is the preparation of the self to approach God. Through the practice of meditation, prayer, fasting and study, we quiet our minds and learn to listen. As Foster observes, hurry is not of the devil, it is the devil. And we have developed a culture of hurry. As we meditate, we learn to listen to God. We pray as we come into His presence. We fast so that we may subdue our appetites. And we study so that we will draw closer to God as we learn more about God.

In the outward disciplines of simplicity, solitude, submission and service we place ourselves in the world. We learn to be content with what we have, to cease striving for more, more, more. We learn to be alone so that we may invite God to be with us. And we learn that to submit is not a defeat; it is the greatest victory, the victory over self. In service we reach out to others on the spiritual journey.

All the disciplines lead us to come together to worship and grow in our spiritual journeys. And don't forget to celebrate!

The A-V Center has the program *CELEBRATION OF DISCIPLINE* available if you want to explore this book. And another program that addresses the disciplines is *SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES FOR ORDINARY PEOPLE*. If you are interested in using these programs, you may call me at 662-998-2327 (yes, I have a cell phone now; be patient, I am still learning how to use it) or e-mail me at grandmastruck1994@yahoo.com.

BISHOP'S BARBEQUE



MAY 29, 2010

2010 Budget

Continued from page 1

Thurman ended the budget presentation citing the eight congregations who give the suggested norm of 15% in their voluntary proportionate pledge to the diocese. The churches are varied in their budgets and location throughout the diocese: they are St. Paul's Columbus; Redeemer, Greenville; St. Mark's, Gulfport; St. Christopher's, Jackson; St. Paul's, Meridian; St. Peter's, Oxford; Resurrection, Starkville; and Incarnation, West Point.

"If all 83 congregations would meet the norm and give 15% of their operating budget we would have an additional \$528,023 to work with this year. That is 23% more than our projected receipts for 2010," said Thurmond.



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Opening Council Address

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"That conversation has begun at several levels and will continue through the coming year. We have engaged a consultant, Mr. Reb Scarborough, to assist us in having a diocesan-wide conversation about our priorities in Mission. The next step in that conversation is a computer based survey that will be available throughout the diocese shortly after Council adjourns. Details will be forthcoming."

Bishop Gray stated that good stewardship is an area which will receive a lot of attention to help stem the tide of a "flabby theology of stewardship that is, in part, responsible for our current challenges."

"This new budget, for all its cuts, has invested \$20,000 for the beginning of a new initiative around planned giving. Have you remembered the church and its ministry in your will? Kathy and I have. I trust that you will be hearing much more about this in the near future."

New models of ministry

Gray stated that the traditional models of ministry in the diocese are often ineffective in carrying out our Christian vocation and God's mission for us. "Simply opening our doors to a spiritually hungry world is not enough," said Bishop Gray.

St. Alexis in Jackson, a recently established church house in Hernando, and the new Delta Missioners were cited as ministry initiatives which seek to address new ways of bringing the Gospel message in new ways.

"The vibrancy of so many other churches in the diocese - those that, at least on the surface, look rather traditional - does suggest that some of us have indeed discovered something that needs to be shared with others. We are beginning to look at various ways to share 'best practices' with one another.

Disagreements among us

The difficult and seemingly ever-present disagreements in our diocese over human sexuality have inflicted heavy casualties as we seek to do that which God calls us to do.

"We all drink from the same cultural cup that seeks to caricature, stereotype and demonize those with whom we disagree. "Homophobic" or "revisionist" are not used as comments about someone's ideas, but are rather meant to suggest ontological statements about another person's very being," said Gray who called his flock to reconsider the earliest Christian Creedal statement, "Jesus is Lord."

Noting that the church always has disagreements in her history, Gray said that, "the intensity of our current conflict, the name calling and the drawing of lines in the sand so that there can be only winners and losers, suggests to me that this radical, revolutionary statement, 'Jesus is Lord,' is often forgotten.

"To say 'Jesus is Lord' means that everything else that I claim as true - my theology, my deepest beliefs, my world view - must be subordinate and under judgment, or it has become an idol, replacing Jesus as Lord of my life."

The common factor in all our lives with the claim of "Jesus as Lord" necessarily means, according to the Bishop, that we all stand in need of forgiveness and humility as we struggle

to live out a confession of faith.

"All theological positions, all biblical interpretations, all denominations, every political party, all economic systems, every country and nation stand under the ultimate judgment of the one we call Lord. All are imperfect, impure, and incomplete. All fall short of the Kingdom. All are in need of forgiveness and redemption."

Gray frankly addressed the concerns he knows exist within the diocese regarding his episcopacy and openly stated that he has disappointed all in the diocese in some ways.

"Because of my refusal to be bound to any particular group, I have been called wishy-washy, a chameleon, even sometimes to my face. I prefer to call it, being a bishop."

Drawing from a letter he wrote last summer, Gray restated these words by which he continues to stand: "I have a God-given moral imperative not simply to be sensitive to the theological views of those who disagree, but to reach out proactively to those whose hopes and dreams seem to be thwarted by my actions."

The Bishop announced that The Anglican Covenant, which was years in the making, including a final editing by the Archbishop of Canterbury, will be studied by the different provinces of The Episcopal Church and voted on at the 2012 General Convention. The document was released last December and sets the stage for the transformation in what it means to be a part of the Anglican Communion.

Overseas mission opportunities

Another emphasis of the bishop's opening address involved a challenge for each parish and mission to in some way involve itself in overseas missions. Of particular interest to the Bishop are missionary opportunities in Honduras, Uganda, the Virgin Islands, Panama and Haiti.

Each delegation to council received a brochure that detailed ministry opportunities in each of the nations mentioned above including names of people in the diocese who may be contacted to learn more about the work being done.

"With this Council I am inviting you to take that journey with me. By the time we gather next for Diocesan Council, I would like for every congregation to have initiated an ongoing relationship with one of our overseas partners. That relationship can be as simple as a line item in the budget for overseas work, or as complicated as sponsoring one of our medical missions."

The complete text of the
Bishop's Address to the
183rd Annual Council
may be found by logging on to
www.dioms.org.



The Bishop's Journal

Continued from page 3

My Spanish has only gotten worse since my time in Oxford, so I stumble mightily through the eucharist. The congregation is kind and forgiving. It is good to see old friends in that service.

Overnight in Oxford with Ed and Penny Sisson.

January 25 - Return early to Oxford for pastoral session. Most of morning working on Council business. I take the rest of the day off.

January 26 - Breakfast at Galloway United Methodist Church where Bishops Latino, Ward and I host Roman Catholic, United Methodist, and Episcopal legislators to talk about the priorities in this year's session for Congregations for Children.

After our Tuesday staff meeting, I meet with our chancellor to talk about Council.

Afternoon appointment with a clergyman from a different denomination who is interested in the Episcopal Church - I've had several of these overtures recently.

Afternoon conversation with Mr. Jon Lever and others.

Drive to Hattiesburg for final pre-council gathering at the Church of the Ascension. Good conversation. Return home late.

January 27 - Most of the day spent working on my Council address. Late afternoon service with the program board of the Center for Formation and Mission. Good communion as we seek to create a new programs model without an executive director of CFM.

January 28 - Spend the morning at St. Andrew's Episcopal School preaching at both the

middle and upper school chapel services. Afternoon appointments with all of the aspirants for holy orders who met with the Commission on Ministry recently. Very emotionally wrenching time for all.

January 29 - In the morning, I preach at the Christian Unity Week worship service at St. Joseph's Catholic School. This has become a wonderful tradition due to the efforts of the headmaster at St. Joseph's.

Over lunch, the entire diocesan staff goes through the details for Council to make sure everyone is prepared.

Afternoon spent answering correspondence.

January 30 - Free morning, then drive to Tunica in preparation for my visitation at the Church of the Epiphany tomorrow. Enjoy the hospitality of Penn and Norma Owen where I have dinner and spend the night.

January 31 - At the church of the Epiphany, I preach, celebrate, baptize one and confirm eight. Very large crowd. Despite a terrible year for the farming community, Epiphany has made good progress.

Lunch follows the service, then I have an opportunity to meet with the vestry of the parish. Very good, and encouraging meeting. Leave the meeting to drive to Hollandale for a visitation to St. Paul's. I preach, celebrate and confirm two in this small, but faithful congregation. I also have the opportunity to pray over an engaged couple who will be married in a couple of weeks - a very special first for me.

Wonderful dinner afterwards, then return to Jackson late.

BISHOP'S BARBEQUE



MAY 29, 2010



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ANNUAL COUNCIL NEWS



New clergy in the Delta Convocation include Bailey Norman, Calvary, Cleveland; Susan Crawford, St. James', Greenville; Betsy Baumgarten, Redeemer, Greenville; St. Paul's, Hollandale; St. John's, Leland; Robert Wetherington, Advent, Sumner; St. Mary's, Lexington.



New clergy on the Coast are Patrick Skutch, Christ Church, Bay St. Louis; Deacon Ann Harris, St. John's, Ocean Springs; Elizabeth Wheatley Jones returns to the diocese as LESM's Director of Mission on the Bay in Bay St. Louis; and Deacon Scott Williams serves St. Peter's by-the-Sea, Gulfport.



The Rev. Marian Fortner returned to the Diocese of Mississippi from the Diocese of Arizona to serve as Rector of Trinity Church, Hattiesburg.



The Rev. Jan Oller is the new chaplain for Ole Miss and an assistant priest at St. Peter's, Oxford.



The Rev. Judy Morris, Curate and Deacon Dennis Wilson both serve at St. Peter's by-the-Lake, Brandon.



New clergy to the Tombigbee Convocation are Carol Mead, MSU Chaplain and Assistant at Resurrection, Starkville; Deacon Pam Rhea, St. Paul's, Columbus; and Ann Benton Fraser, St. Paul's, Corinth.



Subdeacon Babs Fowler stands with the Rev's Shannon Manning and Minka Sprague of St. James' Jackson. The three are decked out in Saints gold for the closing Eucharist at Annual Council. The effect was achieved by reversing the surplus which revealed a perfectly colored gold lining offset by the traditional black cassock. Who Dat!



Rather than a miter, Bishop Gray chose to don a chapeau promoting Saints of a different sort during part of his Annual Council opening address.



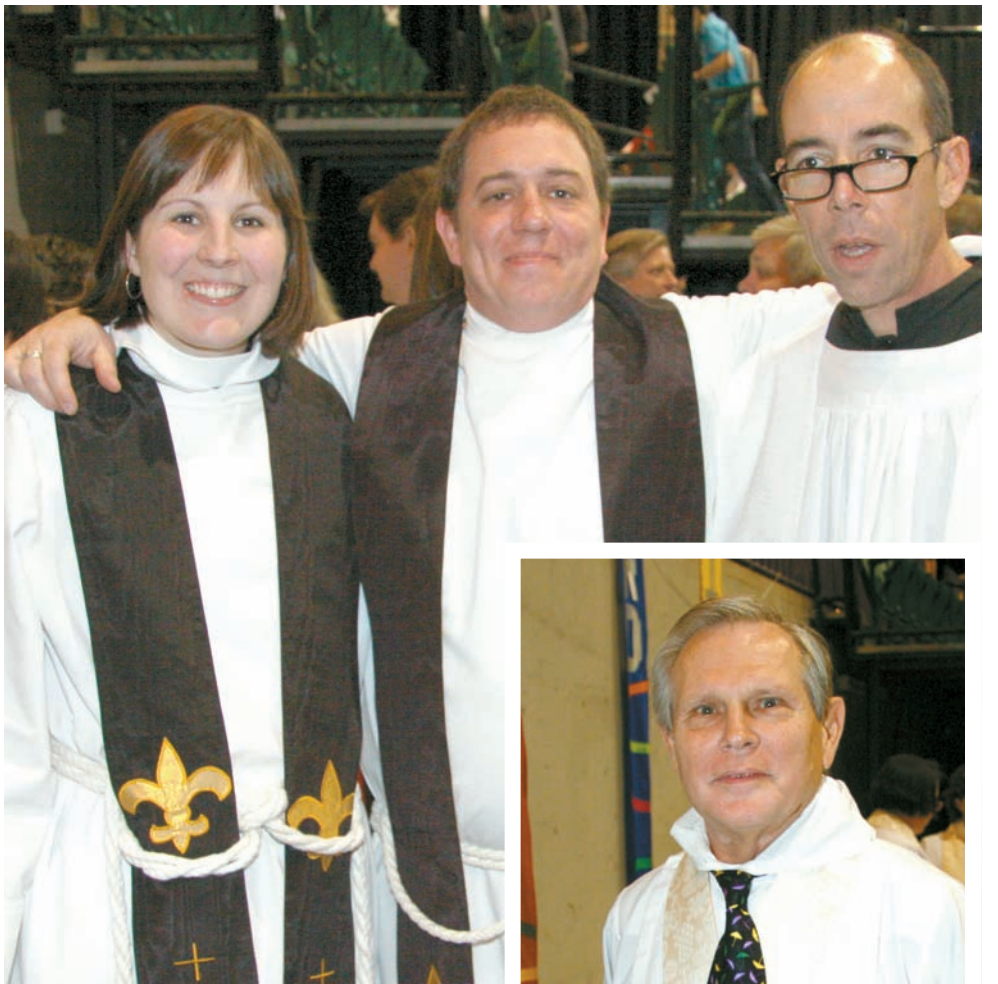
Elected to serve terms on the Executive Committee are (left to right) Steve McNair, St. Patrick's Long Beach; Alice Perry, St. James', Jackson; the Rev. Jeff Reich, St. John's, Laurel; and the Rev. Patrick Sanders, St. Timothy's, Southaven. Also elected, but not pictured, is David Sheley, Trinity, Hattiesburg.



The Rev. David Knight, St. Patrick's, Long Beach and David Sparks, All Saints', Tupelo were elected to serve terms on the Standing Committee of the diocese.

2010 COUNCIL MEMORIES

Jim Carrington/photos



Bennett honored at Redeemer, Brookhaven

The Church of the Redeemer, Brookhaven held a celebration honoring the Rev. Dr. Gene Bennett in January on the occasion of his retirement from forty-five years in ministry.

Bennett served Redeemer for the last eight years. Prior to his cure at Redeemer, Bennett served as interim Rector of Trinity Church in Hattiesburg.

Bennett graduated from Sewanee 1965, and has served in several dioceses. He returned to Mississippi in 1998.

The Rev. Charles Floyd, former Canon to the Ordinary under Bishop Chip Marble, was the preacher at the service honoring Bennett. Floyd was a seminary classmate of Bennett's at Sewanee as was the Rt. Rev. Chip Marble and the Rev. Ben Bell.

"Gene is a literary scholar, theologian, counselor, sage, and a wonderful orator and preacher, but chiefly he is a pastor. Gene Bennett has been a holy man in my life and I suspect a holy man in your life too," Floyd said to those gathered at the celebration.

Senior Warden Les Bumgarner said to Gene



The Rev. Dr. Gene Bennett

and his wife, Carole, "You, my friends, are hard to let go."

Bumgarner presented the Bennetts with a cash gift from the congregation as well as a painting of Redeemer Church by artist Maxine Minter, a member of the parish.

"We needed a healing pastor, and he was just what the doctor ordered," said Martha Morgan, the financial assistant at Redeemer. "We love him dearly and will miss him tremendously."

Nichols New Chairman of Cursillo

By Shaula Hailey

Nick Nichols has been tapped as the new Chairman of Cursillo in Mississippi. Nichols is a communicant of St. Mary's, Lexington and is a veteran of several three day weekends. He has served on the Secretariat and is also active in Kairos, the renewal program for those in prison which is based on the Cursillo format.

Thanks and congratulations to Tom Welsh, St. Philip's, Jackson, who served for two years as Chair of the Secretariat. Welsh stepped down when he was elected to the Cursillo National Episcopal Committee as Lay Representative from the Southeast District.

Cursillo #118 will be held March 11-14th at Gray Center. Kay Duda will serve as Rector and Cecil Fox as Head Cha-Cha. There is still time to sign up for this event, so Cursillistas all over the diocese are encouraged to prayerfully consider sponsoring someone to #118.

Also, mark your calendars for May 14-16, 2010 when the Diocese of Mississippi will host a national event: the Episcopal Cursillo Leaders Workshop (ECLW). Bishop Gray is inviting Cursillistas from around the country to Mississippi to attend. This event will meet at the



Nick Nichols

Hyatt Place Hotel in Ridgeland and St. Columb's, Ridgeland will host the closing Eucharist. Look for additional information on our website: www.cursillo.dioms.org

This website address is new and we have a wonderful new site hosted through the diocese. Emily Everett, Assistant to the Canons at the Allin House, is our new Webmaster. Emily may be contacted at Everett@dioms.org for any news or prayer requests. Please bookmark this new site and use it!

For facebook fans, Cursillo has a page where Cursillistas may sign up as a friend.

Annual Ultreya dues of \$15.00 per Cursillista for 2010 are now due. We encourage everyone to donate according to your ability, and any additional amount as you may feel inspired to send to support this important ministry is graciously accepted. Checks should be made out to: Cursillo in Ms and either sent individually or collectively as an Ultreya to P.O.

Box 16836, Jackson, MS 39236-0834.

Please help us update our contact information on all Cursillistas in the Diocese! One of our goals is to create an address book that will be posted on the website. Send me an e-mail with your name, address, phone number, e-mail address and the number of the Cursillo that you attended to: Shaula-Cursillo@comcast.net.

Wishing many blessings to all! Ultreya and peace!!



St. Mary's, Vicksburg host to Diocesan Altar Guild

by Linda Tolliver

On the first weekend in December, the Altar Guild had scheduled its annual meeting. The plan was to change the time of year hoping to attract more members. To the surprise of the entire state, snow and sleet fell as far south as Gulfport and as far north as New Haven. Needless to say, the attendance was smaller at St. Mary's, Vicksburg than expected. But the members who braved the elements were blessed with a wonderful treat.

The Rev. Billie P. Abraham, Rector of St. Alban's Church, Bovina was the guest speaker. Her presentation was about the effectiveness of having a worship space in our homes, a space that would support and give us a place in our homes for daily meditation, serenity, prayer and self reflection.

Finding a space and setting up a home altar

would be a resource for our spiritual serenity, reflection, and prayers. Abraham said that having an altar is an ongoing process through which one can become a better observer of oneself, one's relationship with God and family.

Altars feed the longings of the heart. Even taking a few minutes, you can stop, pray, meditate and reaffirm your intentions. Altars turn our rooms into sacred space. They remind us to keep our hearts open and our spiritual lines of communication well tuned to our Lord.

After Abraham's thought provoking talk there was a discussion about the use and symbolism of the Advent wreath.

The Rev. Denny Allman celebrated the Holy Eucharist at the end of the meeting. This was followed by a hearty lunch of soup, sandwiches, and desserts prepared by the women and men of St. Mary's of Vicksburg.

Top 10 iPhone apps for organizing a priest's life

By Michael Pipkin, February 02, 2010

[Episcopal News Service] As priest-in-charge of a growing church, I am in good company with many of my colleagues when it comes to finding a happy balance between work, family and everything else that life throws at us.

The church is a sometimes-frenetic place that often doesn't fit well into our culture's 9 to 5, Monday through Friday paradigm. How do we find time to help out with grocery shopping, house cleaning, plan for vestry meetings and worship, manage staff, read and respond to 100+ e-mails a day, spend time with our children, plan a great adult education program, spend meaningful time with our spouse, and cultivate a rich spiritual life that feeds?

Certainly there must be some way to simplify everything while maintaining our sanity, enhancing our marriage, ensuring that all of our tasks and administrivia are not overcome by events, and most importantly, helping to strengthen our spiritual foundation so that everything else makes sense. And if that wasn't a tall enough order, it must be pocket-sized.

Bring in the iPhone. My iPhone is not just an amazingly beautiful piece of technology, it is also my professional brain, and lately, I've been discovering some amazing applications - commonly referred to as apps - for the iPhone that help sync my administrative, personal and spiritual lives.

My Top 10:

- 1. Facebook** — Yes, Facebook. If you're not using this tool for ministry yet, then we need to talk. My Facebook app allows me to keep up with the roughly 75 percent of my parishioners who also use Facebook. Even more, if you've got a Facebook page for your church, you can update your church's page through the app.
- 2. iBCP** — It's not free, but it's worth the \$5 you'll pay never to be without a prayer book again.
- 3. NAB Bible Reader** — It's not cheap, either, but it's a great translation of the Bible, and it's searchable. Better still, you can highlight and make comments.
- 4. Things** — Things is a productivity manager, aka a To Do list, based on the GTD (Get Things Done) format. It will sync with "Things for Mac." Everything that I am supposed to do is organized and prioritized in Things.
- 5. WordPress** — I can edit my church's webpage from my iPhone. Can you? Seriously, if your church's website is based on Wordpress formats, you can use the WordPress app to control nearly everything on your website: create new pages, add news and information, upload pictures, etc.
- 6. MileBug** — Current IRS mileage rate is .50c/mile. MileBug will help you track your miles and then export a report for your taxes or expense reporting.
- 7. iXpenseIt** — Keeps track of budget line items, tracks spending, creates expense reports, etc. iXpenseIt also allows you to take pictures of receipts so that you never lose one again.
- 8. Maps** — The Google Maps function on the iPhone is good enough to get me to every parishioner's house because I've got all of my parishioners' names and addresses in my address book.
- 9. Contacts** — Seriously. Download your parish directory into the iPhone and you'll never be without the name, address, or phone number of that pastoral contact that must be made today.
- 10. Pocket God** — Stay sane by laughing. It's probably bad form to name the pygmies after parishioners, though.

The Rev. Michael Pipkin is priest-in-charge, The Falls Church (Episcopal), Falls Church, Virginia.

Lent can be a season of giving

By Cathy Halford

During the 2009 General Convention, a resolution was passed that designated the first Sunday in Lent to be known as Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday.



Episcopal Relief & Development Healing a hurting world

Episcopal Relief & Development, the international relief and development agency of the Episcopal Church, takes its mandate from the words of Jesus Christ found in Matthew 25:37-40, that call us to feed the hungry, care for the sick, and welcome the stranger.

As the Lenten season approaches, many people begin to contemplate what they might give up as they think of Jesus when he was tempted by the devil and fasted for 40 days in the wilderness.

Lent is a time for self-reflection, meditation and prayer. As Jesus prayed and prepared for his status as the Son of God, he looked toward His mission in the world. What is our mission?

Sometimes we may think it is enough and oh so simple to give up drinking coffee, eating sweets, or, perhaps, shopping on HSN. But what is not so simple are the millions of people who are fighting hunger, poverty, and disease.

Episcopal Relief & Development goes beyond just giving food and other supplies. It gives people hope, knowledge, and courage to find their potential. Teaching people how to be self-sustaining gives them a voice to stand up for themselves and to grow into productive citizens in their communities and the world.

Please let this season of Lent be one of giving not just giving up: giving to those in the world who don't have the resources that we have, giving to those who are counting on us to help them to make it to the next day, giving to those who believe that God will sustain them.

Let the light of Christ shine through us, and let all of those in need see and feel His love because that is our mission. Through us, desperation can be turned into hope.

The Rev. Deacon Cathy Halford is the Diocesan Representative for Episcopal Relief & Development.

Kairos Prison Ministry Seeking Volunteers

By Barbara McDonald

If you want to serve as God's hands and feet to work miracles and truly make a difference in this often crazy world, Kairos Prison Ministry is for you. Kairos takes place within prisons around the world and is based on the Cursillo model. As Leader of the Women's Kairos in April at the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility in Pearl, I am seeking volunteers with a servant heart - no experience needed!

This Kairos journey begins on the afternoon of Wednesday, April 7, and concludes Saturday afternoon, April 10. Team Training sessions will take place at Chapel of the Cross Episcopal Church, Madison, during March.

This is an incredible opportunity to make a difference in creating a more Christian environment within the prison and breaking the cycle of crime when inmates are released. Week after week, women inmates provide testimony of not reacting to being taunted when before Kairos they would have engaged in physical retaliation - evidence they are trying to be Christlike.

One of the many miracles I have witnessed occurred when I was a Table Leader. On the first night, one lady said she was not coming back because she was afraid she would kill another inmate who had been chosen for the weekend. We talked her into returning. God, in His Wisdom, put both ladies at my table and gave me the words and actions to help them communicate calmly. With the guidance of clergy and the mighty infiltration of the Holy Spirit, the two women came to understand each other and reconciled. Tears abounded as they walked arm in

arm to the podium to testify at the Closing Ceremony!

Statistics show that inmates who go through Kairos are much less likely to return to prison after being released. It is heartbreaking to see a lady with her daughter and granddaughter, all in prison on drug-related charges, seated next to each other. The grandmother most likely will never be released, but Kairos has helped her to be supportive of others and promote a less chaotic atmosphere with the compound. The daughter and granddaughter have the chance to break the cycle of crime because Kairos has taught them that when they are released they have a choice - they can follow Jesus and become productive citizens instead of returning to their old ways.

Kairos does not condone the crimes of those we encounter. In fact, we don't even ask why they are incarcerated. Our mission is to promote Christ's love, show that forgiveness can be theirs, and that they can become mighty women of God.

If you are interested in knowing more about Kairos or want to volunteer, visit: <http://www.kairos-mississippi.org/>, call me at 601.955.3836 or email bmcdonald@esfweb.com. While only ladies can go in the prison, men are welcomed for the cooking and praying team and may attend the Closing Ceremony.

Barbara McDonald is Kairos of MS Board member and a communicant of Chapel of the Cross, Madison.



Co-Captains of the 2010 Honduras Medical Mission, Frances Christian and Chris Scott of Chapel of the Cross, Madison gathered for a planning session with the HMM team at the Gray Center in January. The team departed for the trip on Feb 13th and will return on the 20th. To learn more about the mission and how you may help, log on to www.hondurasmedicalmission.net.

Duke Cain speaks at alcoholism seminar

St. Andrew's communicant Duke Cain will speak at the historic Calvary Episcopal Church in New York in May. Celebrating the legacy of the Rev. Samuel Shoemaker and the 75th Anniversary of Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.), Calvary Episcopal Church in New York City will stage a seminar on alcoholism May 7-9. The purpose of the seminar is to help people understand the alcoholic's spiritual journey of healing.

Co-founder of A.A., Bill W., credited Shoemaker (rector of Calvary in 1925-52) with giving the spiritual insights that helped him and Dr. Bob S. create the group's iconic Twelve Step program 75 years ago.

"Today's challenge is for the church to become, again, a body of people that takes personal change seriously," said the Rev. Gregory O. Brewer, rector of Calvary St. George's.

The May 7-9 "Healing the Healer" workshops at Calvary, 21st and Park Avenue South, will focus on helping clergy and others better understand the nature of alcoholism and how to minister more effectively to alcoholics and their families. "It is especially appropriate that this seminar will take place during A.A.'s 75th anniversary year," said Brewer.

Seminar leader is Keith Miller, widely-published faith author. Workshop leaders include Duke Cain, president of Recovery Ministries of the Episcopal Church, Jim Lane, who founded the New Canaan Society, the Rev. Gail Paige-Bowman, LCSW, and the Very Rev. Douglas Travis, dean of Seminary of the Southwest. William Nemeth, MD, is keynote speaker for the Saturday lunch. He will speak on "Chronic Pain and Addiction: Problems with Addictive Behaviors."

An open A.A. meeting with three speakers followed by a coffee hour will take place at Calvary on Friday evening. Registration for the Saturday keynote address and workshop program is only \$25.

The Saturday Workshop Topics include: How Does this Disease Affect Families and Significant Others? - What Can the Clergy Do to be Most Helpful? - What the Church Has to Learn from Alcoholics Anonymous - and, how all persons can use the 12 Steps in their life.

George Gallup and the Very Rev. Ward Ewing, dean of General Seminary in New York City, will be among those in attendance. The seminar weekend concludes with a Recovery Service at 11:15 Sunday morning in Calvary Church.

Details of the seminar can be found at www.calvarystgeorges.org

The Healing the Healers workshop is supported by grants from the New York Diocese and Trinity Church Wall Street.



Resolution 2010.3 Substitution

Thanksgiving For the Witness of Our Bishop at General Convention 2009

Resolved that the 183rd Annual Council of the Diocese of Mississippi express its thanks for the witness of our bishop whose votes at General Convention reaffirm our commitment to remain a part of the Anglican Communion and in full compliance with the Windsor Report.

Resolution 2010.4 Substitution

ECUMENICAL RELATIONSHIPS

Resolved that the 183rd Annual Council of the Diocese of Mississippi express its gratitude to our Bishop and the Committee on Ecumenical Officer for initiating actions of reconciliation with the many and diverse churches in our diocese and throughout the world and for continuing to strengthen the bonds of understanding and charity and to explore ways where we can cooperate in mission and ministry.

Resolved, that the 183rd Annual Council express its commitment to be guided by our Bishop's comments during his address on Friday night in which parishes and missions are directed to explore and put in place programs and projects which will benefit the churches especially in The Sudan, Uganda, Haiti, Panama, Honduras, the Virgin Islands.

Courtesy Resolution: Host Parishes

Whereas, we have come to Tupelo, the birthplace of Elvis the King, to worship and honor Christ the King; and

Whereas, we have accepted the hospitality of All Saints, Tupelo, and Council chairs Vicki Vance and David Sparks and the volunteers who have worked tirelessly [with and Lauren Wainwright's volunteers for the youth of the diocese;] and

Whereas, they have scheduled an early Sunday Eucharist for us to accommodate the Who Dat Nation among us so that Super Sunday can be experienced in full; and

Whereas, according to this morning's Daily Journal, "Residents of Tupelo and Lee County have historically been among the most generous within the most generous state" (p. 8A?), therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that this 183rd Council of the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi give a generous expression of thanks to all who have made this Council excellent and fun.

Courtesy Resolution: International Hug an Episcopalian Day, February 6-7, 2010

Whereas, today and tomorrow (Feb. 6-7, 2010) fall on the 3rd Annual International Hug an Episcopalian Day; and

Whereas, the 183rd Council of the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi has expressed its wish to encourage Bishop Gray and all Episcopalians to reach out to others; and

Whereas, we are people of gratitude to God and to our neighbors resounding with the sound of hunka hunka burning love; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that this 183rd Annual Council of the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi join others around the globe in celebrating these two days; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we begin the celebration right now among ourselves as we pass the peace:

The peace of the Lord be always with you

R: And also with you.

Greet one another in the peace of the Lord and with an appropriate hug.

FAITHFUL DEPARTED

Sue Hall Jacobson Barton, 84, Communicant of St. Pierre's, Gautier, member Daughters of the King and President of the Altar Guild, died November 4, 2009.

Elias Michael Kerby, 84, Communicant of St. Paul's, Columbus, died January 25, 2009

Arle Leah Kerby, 86, Communicant of St. Paul's, Columbus, died April 9, 2009

Raymond D. Barksdale Jr., 85, Communicant of St. Paul's, Columbus, died April 15, 2009

Thomas Carleton Billups IV, 94, Communicant of St. Paul's, Columbus, died April 19, 2009

Frederick Arthur Jones, 73, Communicant of St. Paul's, Columbus, died June 10, 2009

Edna Shirley Steward Miller, 74, Communicant of St. Paul's, Columbus, died July 21, 2009

Willis Newbell Puckett II, 79, Communicant of St. Paul's, Columbus, died October 4, 2009

Henry Fly, 94, Communicant of Christ Church, Bay St. Louis, died December 20, 2009.

Charles Cooke "Cookie" Speakes, 88, communicant of Grace, Rosedale, died on January 9, 2010.

Charles Henry Sullivan, 91, communicant of Trinity, Natchez, died on January 5, 2010.

Ben Bond (B. B.) Harrell, Jr. 90, communicant of St. Timothy's, Southaven, died on January 15, 2010.

Gary Robert Kimmel, 75, communicant of All Saints', Tupelo, died on January 20, 2010

Emily Baldwin Sistrunk Hodo, 62, communicant of St. James Jackson, died Jan. 21, 2010.

Doris Louise Dobrowski, 68, communicant of St. John's Pacagoula, member - Daughters of the King, died Jan. 22, 2010

Siegfried Steinberger, 87, communicant of St. Columb's, Ridgeland, died Feb. 1, 2010.



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Ralph E. (Trey) Sebrell, III announces the formation and opening of Sebrell Funeral Home, a full-service, locally owned and managed funeral business serving central Mississippi. Trey has over 20-years of experience in the funeral business. He is a cradle Episcopalian and a communicant of St. James' Church in Jackson.

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DIOCESAN CALENDAR

FEBRUARY

- 14
● Bishop Gray visits: St. Thomas', Diamondhead - 10:00 a.m.
- 17
● Ash Wednesday
● Bishop Gray visits: St. Andrew's Lower School, Jackson - 8:15 a.m.
● Bishop Gray visits: Trinity, Newton - 5:30 p.m.
- 19-21
● Jr. High Spring DOY, Camp Bratton Green, Canton
- 21
● Bishop Gray visits: Trinity, Natchez - 10:30 a.m.
● Bishop Gray at Trinity Day School, Natchez - 4:00 p.m.
- 23
● Mississippi Religious Leadership Conference Annual Banquet - 6:30 p.m.
- 24
● Bishop Gray visits: Holy Cross, Olive Branch - 7:00 p.m.
- 25
● Diocesan Trustees - 2:00 p.m., Allin House, Jackson
● Center for Formation & Mission Board - 4:00 p.m., St. Andrew's Cathedral, Jackson
- 26-27
● New Vestry Member Conference, Gray Center, Canton
- Journey In, Not Up with the Rt. Rev. Larry Maze, St. James', Jackson
- 28
● Bishop Gray visits: Christ Church & St. Mary's, Vicksburg - 10:30 a.m.

MARCH

- 2
● Deadline for submission to The Mississippi Episcopalian - 12:00 noon
- 3
● Methodist / Episcopal Ecumenical Service, Meridian
- 4
● Diocesan Executive Committee - 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., St. Andrew's Cathedral, Jackson
- 5-6
● Happening #71 Staff Training, St. Peter's by-the-Sea, Gulfport
● Stewardship Consultant Training, Gray Center, Canton
- 6
● Commission on Ministry, Gray Center, Canton
- 6
● Standing Committee - 9:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m., Gray Center, Canton
- 7
● Bishop Gray visits: St. Peter's by-the-Sea, Gulfport - 9:00 a.m.
- 9
● Fresh Start South - 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m., Trinity, Hattiesburg
- 10-14
● Cursillo #118, Gray Center, Canton
- 11
● Fresh Start North - 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m., All Saints', Tupelo
- Deacons' Council - 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m., Allin House, Jackson
- 14
● Bishop Gray visits: Chapel of the Cross, Madison - 8:45 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.

- Bishop Gray at Cursillo #118 closing service — 2:00 p.m., Gray Center, Canton
- 16
● Gray Center Executive Committee - 5:00 p.m., Allin House, Jackson
- 17
● Bishop Gray visits: St. Patrick's, Long Beach - 6:30 p.m.
- 18-24
● House of Bishops, Camp Allen, TX
- 19-21
● Sr. High Spring DOY, Camp Bratton Green, Canton
- 21-23
● Presbyter Post-Ordination Consultation, Gray Center, Canton
- 27
● Wardens' & Treasurers' Conference - 9:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., St. Andrew's Cathedral, Jackson
- 28
● Palm Sunday

APRIL

- 1
● Maundy Thursday
- 2
● Good Friday
- 2-5
● Allin House closed for Easter holidays
- 3
● Bishop Gray visits: St. Philip's, Jackson - 6:00 p.m.
- 4
● Easter Sunday

- 6
● Deadline for submission to The Mississippi Episcopalian - 12:00 noon
- 9-10
● ECW Spring Conference, Gray Center, Canton
- 10
● Gray Center Board of Managers - 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m., Gray Center, Canton
- 11
● Bishop Gray visits: St. Mark's, Gulfport - 9:30 a.m.
- 14
● Bishop Gray visits: St. Elizabeth's, Collins - 6:00 p.m.
- 21
● Bishop Gray visits: St. Alexis, Jackson - 6:30 p.m.
- 23-24
● Proffoff Intensive Journal(r) Retreat & Workshop, Gray Center, Canton
- 23-25
● Happening #71, St. Peter's by-the-Sea, Gulfport
- 24
● Diocesan Altar Guild, Chapel of the Cross, Madison
- 25
● Bishop Gray visits: St. Paul's, Columbus - 10:30 a.m.
- Bishop Gray visits: Episcopal Church at Ole Miss (ECOM), Oxford - 5:30 p.m.
- 29-May 1
● Deacons' Retreat, Gray Center, Canton



The Rev. Paul Stephen's, Rector of All Saint's Tupelo, welcomes everyone at the opening of the 183rd Annual Council.



Danny Meadors, second from left, presented twelve new Diocesan Licensed Worship Leaders to Bishop Gray for their installation at the opening service of Evening Prayer at the Annual Council in Tupelo.

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Ramsey's reflections hit home for many readers

By Scott Lenoir, Editor

Jackson cartoonist Marshall Ramsey has been entertaining and providing insightful views of Mississippi politics for fourteen years through his wit and art via the Jackson Clarion Ledger. The truth is that many of us wouldn't know how to begin the day without our Ramsey fix.

The 42 year old newly converted exercise enthusiast garnered two Nobel finalist nominations in 2002 and 2006. His work has appeared in USA Today, Newsweek, U.S. News and World Report, The New York Times and 450 other newspapers in the nation. He is currently syndicated by Creators Syndicate. Ramsey has also illustrated books and published two books himself which are compilations of his work over the years.

Ramsey, who is the cousin of financial author and teacher, Dave Ramsey, calls Mississippi the greatest state for politics and raising a family. He and his wife, Amy, have three boys and the family attends St. James' Episcopal Church in Jackson where Marshall has just completed his first term as a vestry member.

With a talent as unique and wonderful as Ramsey's, along with a career that matches, it was revealing to read a recent post the cartoonist uploaded to his widely read Clarion Ledger Blog in early January. The day's post gave some insight into the realities of his life and career that are particularly poignant for this day and time in which so many people are suffering from financial turmoil caused by the reeling U.S. economy.

"It was 1991 and I graduated with honors in business from University of Tennessee," said Ramsey, explaining that his father advised him that a degree in art wouldn't be as useful as a degree in business.

"The newspapers were not hiring, the economy was down, and I went down with it."

Ramsey landed at his hometown of Marietta, Georgia where he moved back in with his parents. He got a job as a janitor at a local school.

"I was glad to have a job, even though it wasn't what I wanted to do." But after about six months on the job, Ramsey describes his feelings this way: "I hated my job. I hated everything," and that included drawing." Ramsey never picked up a pencil after he started his work as a janitor. His attitude was terrible and that attitude lasted until he happened to attend his family's Presbyterian Church one Sunday where he heard a sermon about the Parable of the Talents.



Ramsey

After that service, Ramsey decided it was time to reread the Parable of the Talents for himself. "When it comes to religion, I am a very private man. But it was a powerful moment for me. I was the servant who was burying my talents instead of using them. It was a bolt of lightning. It was a wake-up call. I needed to get on the stick."

And with that epiphany, Ramsey began drawing again. He drew caricatures for teachers' spouses, T-Shirt graphics for the cross country team, cartoons sketched on chalk boards with

the words "Pulitzer Prize" written above them.

The lesson learned: "If I'm not drawing, things are not going to get better."

And the drawing continued and things got better. A friend at the school set him up on a date with his daughter. Eventually one of the teachers gave Ramsey a high recommendation saying to an editor that he was "a talented young man with a great attitude." A short time later, Ramsey began work at the Marietta Daily Journal. "And that is how my career was born.

"I fell on my face at Pope High School in Marietta, Georgia. Yet, I fell with style. And I learned how to get back up with grace. What seemed like the worst time of my life turned out to be my best. Why, you ask? Not because I learned how to wax a cafeteria floor or clean crap-covered toilet paper out of a stopped-up toilet. No, remember that girl I dated? She's my amazing wife and wonderful mother of my three boys. Sometimes your worst moments in life turn out to be the seeds of your finest ones."

Today, Ramsey has a new year's discipline of reading the Bible cover to cover. He begins



Marshall Ramsey works on a political cartoon from his desk at the Clarion Ledger.



Shelter from the Storm

each day by reading at least six pages. He reached Exodus on Martin Luther King Day.

Ramsey makes time for prayer and meditation after the reading and there is also exercise after prayers. Ramsey is a cancer survivor and he's committed to a healthier life style now. He runs and rides a bike, sometimes with his rector and friend, the Rev. Christopher Powell.

As to why Ramsey posted a piece on his blog back in January about the beginnings of his career: he said that part of the reason was that he saw an old friend who was going through similar troubles, but Ramsey also sees his own life changing. The economic downturn that plagues us all has hit the newspaper business in a big way. The scores of empty desks on the second floor of the Clarion Ledger is testament to the realities of job loss at the state's largest newspaper.

"I'm going through this again," said Ramsey. "My dream job is changing. I'm having to figure out how to reinvent myself and it's good to go back and look at my life. What saved me years ago can do it again," said Ramsey.

Ramsey says he's in the seed planting stage now. If we're lucky, Ramsey's plantings will yield the most fruit in Mississippi and we'll have the benefit of his talents for years to come.

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