

THE STEEPLE

The Church of the Nativity

January 4, 2012

The mission of the Episcopal Church of the Nativity, as part of the family of God, is to proclaim and spread the word and work of God through Jesus Christ our Lord, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, by Eucharistic worship and by ministry to the world.

Mary Anne Akin To Take Long-deserved Sabbatical

After 34 years of ordained ministry and in her 5th year at the Church of the Nativity, The Rev'd Mary Anne Akin, Associate Rector for Pastoral Care and Outreach will begin a 12-week sabbatical beginning January 23, 2012. Pastoral Care needs will be assisted by Deacon Jeannie Robison; and The Rev'd Rusty McCown will be assisting with preaching and teaching needs during her time away time. Please wish Mary Anne well and keep her and her husband Joe in your prayers during this time of renewal, rest, refreshment, and study.

Andy +

The following is the text of the Presiding Bishop's message:

Christmas Message 2011

See, your salvation comes – Isaiah 62:11

The great prophets before Jesus proclaimed a vision of a nation and a people redeemed. We continue to share that yearning – as the Christmas hymn puts it, “the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.” We’ve seen abundant hopes spring up in the past year across the Arab world and Eastern Europe, and in the global Occupy movement. Those voices seek a world of greater justice, communities in which decisions and the gifts of creation are more available to all. Our understanding of salvation is most profoundly about justice in community, and as Christians we believe that help and healing for all are grounded in the incarnate presence of God – among us and within us.

We look for salvation to the one who came among us in the most humble way, a helpless child born in a scandalous way to a poor peasant couple. The Incarnation, God with us, changed the world in ways that we insist are leading to the ultimate healing of all creation. “See, your salvation comes,” says the prophet in every age, yet it is not yet fully come upon us. We live in hope for its fullness. May hope be nourished within us, in each and every human being and community, for the journey toward God’s healed and holy future.

That proclamation of coming salvation is a part of Isaiah (Isa 62:6-12) that will be read in some congregations at Christmas, but if you don’t hear it, go and read the whole of it. Its centerpiece speaks of what that salvation looks like: *The Lord has sworn...I will not again give your grain to be food for your enemies, and foreigners shall not drink the wine for which you have labored; but those who garner it shall eat it and praise the Lord, and those who gather it shall drink it in my holy courts.* Isaiah 62:8-9

That is not a vision of pristine isolation, but a vision of comfort and healing to a people frequently at war, occupied, or exploited by superior forces. The fear of powerful others taking and using for themselves the produce of the poor is healed and transformed into a society in which the gifts God provides will be shared by all. For when salvation comes, that society will be called, ‘the Holy People, The Redeemed of the Lord’; and you shall be called, ‘Sought Out, A City Not Forsaken.’ Isaiah 62:12

Jesus comes among us to remind us of a world living together in peace, to reclaim and make real that vision of creation for all humanity and all God’s creatures. That world is put right as relationships between God and humanity are set right. The relationship between God and human being cannot be set right without equal healing of relationships between us mortals. See, your salvation comes! Will we welcome that healing?

The Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori
Presiding Bishop and Primate



CHURCH
OF THE
NATIVITY,
EPISCOPAL

Est. 1843

WORSHIP TIMES

(* Nursery available)

7:45 a.m.

Holy Eucharist
Rite I
(Bibb Chapel)

8:45 a.m.*

Holy Eucharist
Rite II and
Children’s Chapel

11:00 a.m.*

Holy Eucharist
Rite II

Church School
10:00 a.m.*

THURSDAY:

6:00 p.m.

Holy Eucharist
Rite II
(Bibb Chapel)

PARISH NEWS and EVENTS

The Rev'd Akin and Sabbatical Time

Dear People of Nativity,

In just three weeks my husband and I will leave for Sabbatical time. I cannot yet comprehend this reality. Perhaps as we head south it will begin to unfold in my mind and soul. In 2012, I will celebrate my 35th anniversary in the ordained ministry. There has never been the opportunity or the right circumstances for this “recommended” ministerial respite. I laughingly muse with friends that this may be more resurrection from the dead than Sabbath time! Nonetheless, it will be wonderful.

Our plans are very low-key; no international travel, no formal theme. We will stay in a small residence northwest of Tampa in the town of Hudson. Friends have offered us their future retirement home as headquarters for rest, travel, and study. We intend to be attentive to quiet, nature, ocean, stars, waterfowl, hiking, and day trips. My hope is to contemplate new directions in prayerfulness, especially the Spirituality of Aging. The words that spring to mind are “for the living of these days”. Certainly therein resides the God of grace and the God of glory. I want to spend hours with my poet’s pen and merge some concepts with my husband’s photography.

The author/poet/theologian Jan Richardson resides nearby and has agreed to meet with me for discussion and guidance. Another priest friend will serve as mentor and consultant. Thoughts of long-awaited reading moments and time for contemplation are the most important elements in these days for me. As the Book of Common Prayer Book offers us in its prayers on page 825, “... give us times of refreshment and peace; and grant that we may so use our leisure to rebuild our bodies and renew our minds, that our spirits may be opened to the goodness of your creation”.

Thank you for this gift of blessings and new wonder!

Faithfully,

Mary Anne Akin+

Nativity’s Medical Mission Team leaves February 4th for work in our companion villages. The team requests these items for distribution:

Children’s Vitamins Pre-natal Vitamins Adult Vitamins
Toothbrushes (NO paste!)
CVS and Walgreens Antifungal Creams
Eyeglasses (new and used)

*We will collect these on Sundays January 8th, 15th and 22nd.
Look for large clear plastic bins in Ridley Hall.*

The Mission Guild will meet at 10:00 AM on January 9, 2012 in the church library.

Our speaker is Jan Greene: she will tell us about her December trip to Israel. For additional information, call Mary Vann, 256-881-2927.



Tea and Information given by the Daughters of the King



You are cordially invited to an informational tea given by the Daughters of the King. This is an opportunity to explore what it means to be a Daughter and to follow their Rule of Prayer and Rule of Service.

Please join us on Sunday January 22, at 1 PM at the home of Pam Rogers at 2225 DeRussey Rd. SE

For information or reservation contact Mari Zimmerman 256-520-0881 or zimmerman@nehp.net

SUNDAY CHURCH SCHOOL resumes January 8, 10:00 a.m. * for all ages.

ADULTS

Seeker's Class (aka Adult Confirmation) will meet in Bibb Chapel

The Zimmerman Bible Class meets in Library with a study of Romans

Book Study Class will review lessons from *Love Wins* (author Bob Bell) meets Joffrion Hall 2 East

The Spirituality of One's Own Calling will meet in Ridley Hall

Where do you think your creativity comes from? Please join a series of class discussions with speakers with varied creative talents, musical and artistic abilities, writing skills and professional accomplishments as we discover the relation between what you do and your faith.

All Things Spiritual Class meets in Joffrion 2 West

A New Kind of Christianity: Ten Questions that are Transforming Faith by Brian McLaren

YOUTH

9th—12th Graders meet 3rd floor Joffrion Hall in EYC room

7th—8th Graders meet *beginning January 15th* 2nd floor Ridley Hall

5th—6th Graders (CLUB 56) meet 2nd floor Ridley Hall

CHILDREN

Nursery (ages 12 weeks—4 years) 1st floor Joffrion Hall

Godly Play (ages 3 and 4) Angle Land (downstairs Ridley Hall)

WoRM (ages kindergartners through 4th graders) Angle Lane (downstairs Ridley Hall)

Eucharist Instruction Class (1st graders) offered January only for 1st graders and their parents.

LOOKING FOR A WEEKDAY/EVENING STUDY GROUP?

Men's Wednesday Morning Bible Study

Wednesday 7:15 a.m. (Library)

The Good Book Women's Bible Study

Wednesday 1:00 p.m. (Library)

Reflections Bible Study (nursery available)

Thursday 9:15 a.m. (Joffrion 2 East)

Discerning the Voice of God: How to Recognize When God Speaks (author Prescella Shirer Nov 2006)

For information of any of Nativity's Christian Education programs please call 533-2455:

Lane Tutt, Adult Education

Liz Williams, Youth Christian Education

Elizabeth Foster, Children's Christian Education

CHOIRS

Wednesday

Nativity Choir (Adults) 7:00—9:00 p.m.

Music Skills 4:30—5:30 p.m.

Cherub & Treble Choir 5:00—6:00 p.m., including pizza dinner

Thursday

Music Skills 4:00—5:00 p.m.

Advanced Treble Choir 4:30—5:30 p.m.

For information of any of Nativity's Music programs please contact Suzanne Purtee, 256-533-2455

End of the Year Good News!

The Nativity Outreach Committee was able to contribute to every group we had designated in our 2011 budget. We are so grateful for the regular church pledges which allowed us to make these gifts. At the end of December we were also able to send \$1000 to St. James Episcopal Church, Louisa, VA that continues to experience damage from earthquake aftershocks; \$200 for a client's dentures at First Stop; an extra gift of \$400 to Gussie Moore, our former sexton's widow who cares for her granddaughter with kidney disease, and purchased 6 coats to complete the donations for the Oscar Mason Coat Project. We are looking ahead to this year's critical needs and beginning to plan for our involvement in Serving the City ... Stay tuned !!!

2012 Pledges by Dollar Range December 18, 2011

\$1,000 or <	99
\$1,001 - \$2,999.99	123
\$3,000 - \$4,999.99	70
\$5,000 - \$9,999.99	42
\$10,000 - \$14,999.99	9
\$15,000 - \$24,999.99	7
\$25,000 - \$39,999.99	3
\$40,000 or >	<u>1</u>
Total Number of Pledges	354
Total Dollar Amount of Pledges	\$1,140,776.32
Average Pledge	\$3,222.53

2012 Offering Envelopes are available in Ridley Hall. Please help save postage by getting your envelopes either on Sunday during office hours (M-Th 9-4; Fr 9-12:30.) If you have not requested preprinted, dated envelopes you can request them from Beverly Franklin, 256-533-2455.

Please Help Us Plan for 2012

If you have already pledged for 2012, thank you so very much! If you haven't quite gotten around to it, would you please consider pledging now before your Vestry goes to their Retreat in mid January? **It is so much easier to plan the budget for the year when we know how much money we will have coming in!** This is your church and the Vestry can only make a budget to support your church when we have your pledges. If you haven't gotten your pledge card in or have lost it, please call Beverly at 533-2455 and she will get one for you. If you've never pledged before and give to the plate instead, consider pledging this year so that we can count on your support for the improvements that are requested.

We have a 6.5% increase in budget requests for many worthy improvements including expanding outreach, wiring the church for audio/video, a new entrance to the parking lot since the current entrance belongs to First Presbyterian, and exciting additions including a Nativity "magazine" for newcomers. **Knowing that we can expect the income from your pledge will make the difference in what we plan for our church for this coming year.** Please send or call in your pledge today!

Blessings for the New Year,
Pat Goodson
2012 Sr. Warden

ALTAR FLOWERS 2012 DEDICATION FORM

If you are interested in dedicating **Altar flowers for a specific Sunday in 2012**, please complete and mail this form with your check made out to "Flower Guild" and mail to: Andrea Vandervoort, 434 Locust Ave. Huntsville, AL 35801. If you have questions, you may call Andrea at 539-2673. **Altar Flowers are \$40 or \$20 for shared dedications**

PLEASE PRINT ALL INFORMATION, THANK YOU.

Date desired _____

Your Name _____

Phone # _____ Would you share a dedication? _____

Do you wish to have your name listed in the bulletin? _____

All dedications read "To the glory of God and... *in loving memory of or in thanksgiving for or in celebration of...*"

Please be specific by underlining or circling your desired dedication above:

Name for this altar flower dedication: _____

The Episcopal Diocese of Alabama presents...

MUSIC CONFERENCE FOR CHILDREN



Workshop Leaders:
Suzanne Purtee, Anne Chelekis,
Donna Clark, and Jennifer Jonas

Who?	Area Young People in grades K-5th
What?	One-day workshop
Why?	Celebrate our Liturgical Musical Heritage and traditions with the playing of instruments, singing of the Psalms, and learning of a wonderful African gospel anthem.
Where?	St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Huntsville, Alabama
When?	January 28, 9:45 AM—2 PM
Cost:	\$10 per young person, maximum \$25 per family (w/lunch)

Please contact Ms. Suzanne Purtee for Registration Forms & more information.

Youth News

Happy New Year!

I hope everyone had a GREAT Christmas and New Year's! I spent Christmas in my hometown in south Georgia, made my way back up for Christmas Conference at Camp McDowell, and then had a few days to recover from all the travel and camp. :)

THIS SUNDAY we kick off Sunday School and EYC! Since confirmation will start meeting this month (NOT this Sunday - still meet in your regular class), the 7th & 8th grade class will move to the 7th & 8th grade room on the second floor of Ridley (by Club56).

EYC resumes this Sunday night - yay!!! Junior high (6-8) will meet from 5:00-6:00, dinner for all middle and high school at 6:00, and senior high (9-12) from 6:30-7:30. We will NOT meet on January 15 since it's a holiday weekend and I'll be on the confirmation trip.

BIG NEWS!!! We are going on a mission trip to NEW ORLEANS!!! We will be in New Orleans from July 21-July 27, 2012. I only have 8 spots open, so let me know if this is

something you want to do. The total cost for the trip is \$500 with a deposit of \$100 due by February 5. We will be doing a fundraiser or two to lower that cost (details to come later).

There are also a couple other things to know about this trip: In order to go, you must attend at least 8 youth events before the trip (Sunday School and/or EYC). You can bring a friend, but priority will be given to active members first. If you are a rising 9th grader through graduating senior, you are eligible to participate. I'll have a meeting soon to go over more details, I promise! I do encourage you to talk about this with your parent/youth if you are interested. IT'S GOING TO BE AWESOME!

Peace,
Liz

[NATIVITY YOUTH WEBSITE](http://www.nativityyouth.org), check it out to stay informed www.nativityyouth.org.

John Buyse would like to thank John Cline, Brad Hall, and Robert Mullins for their assistance in preparing and setting-up the tree in the Nave for Christmas. Also, thanks to the youth for placing the Chrismons this year. A job well done and enjoyed by all.

Nativity Banister Room Art Gallery presents new artwork



Janet Stewart Lindsay has a studio in her home in the Coldwater Community in southern Lincoln County. She works in several mediums, but her specialty is painting oil portraits of children or adults. She has studied portrait painting under Michael Shane Neal and Gordon Wetmore. One of her abstract paintings was recently chosen to hang in the Huntsville City Mayor's office. Contact and price list are located in red binder on table in The Banister Room.



EVENING WITH SR. MARY

Mark your calendars now for the January 10 annual visit of Sister Mary McGehee, O.S.B. of the Benedictine Sisters, Sacred Heart Monastery in Cullman. Sr. Mary is well known at the Church of Nativity and has visited with us many times. She always brings something to inspire, comfort, challenge and inform us along our spiritual journeys. Her topic this year is "The Welcoming Prayer." This prayer practice offers a way to deal, through the presence of the Holy Spirit, with feelings, emotions, thoughts, sensations and commentaries that arise in the mind and body. The evening begins with Centering Prayer at 5:30 PM followed by a light supper prepared by Sally Stockton. Sr. Mary will begin her presentation around 6:30 PM. The \$10 charge includes supper. Reservations for supper are required. Call the Church office by 5:00 PM Monday, January 9.

This evening is open to all. Centering Prayer experience is not required. Call Betty Giardini 256-539-0973 with questions.

CURSILLO COMMUNITY INVITES YOU TO ATTEND ONE OF THESE DATES:

March 8-11 April 12-15 June 7-10 September 6-9 October 11-14 (each pilgrim attends only one Cursillo weekend, not all five!) If you are interested in attending a Cursillo weekend and becoming part of the Cursillo community at Nativity, please contact Nativity's Cursillo lay rectors Debbie and David Collette for more information. The Nativity Cursillo Community will hold an informational event in January 2012 for those interested in learning more about this incredible experience.

Centering Prayer introductory retreat to be held

An Introduction to Centering Prayer retreat will be held at the Benedictine Sisters Retreat Center in Cullman, AL. January 20-22. This form of Christian prayer is rooted in the ancient Christian contemplative tradition and is intended to foster a deeper intimacy with Christ. Private rooms and the ability to maintain silence are required.

The cost for the weekend is \$195/person; lodging, meals, and linens are included. For registration information and other details, please contact the Benedictine Sisters Retreat Center at (256) 734-8302 or by e-mail at retreats@shmon.org.

Seekers Class 2012 will begin Sunday, January 8, 10:00 (Bibb Chapel)

Seekers' Class



Clergy and lay members of our parish will be leading these classes designed to include church history, our prayer book and hymnal, our worship practices and etiquette, (like when to kneel or bow or make the sign of the cross!) and our views about scripture and the sacraments. Classes will also describe the many varieties of ministry opportunities available in the parish. This class for those

seeking membership with The Church of Nativity and for those who want to refresh or to learn more about the Episcopal Church.

The Rt. Rev'd Kee Sloan the Bishop of Alabama, will be with us on Sunday, June 10 2012, to celebrate Confirmation and to receive other new members.

You may pre-register by contacting linda.wheeler@nativity-hsv.org or by calling her at 256-533-2455. Pre-registration is not required, you can register January 8.

These study books for Nativity classes are available in The Source Books and Gifts:

The Episcopal Handbook and Introduction to the Episcopal Church (J. B. Bernardin)

Love Wins (Rob Bell)

A New Kind of Christianity (Brian McLaren)

The Minor Prophets, Genesis to Revelation Series (Gene Tucker)

■ Women's Retreat Study Book: *How Can I Let God if I Don't Know I'm holding On?* (Linda Douty)

Hour of operation: Sundays 9:00 am—3:00 pm

Tuesday—Saturday 10:00 am—6:00 pm

INTERCESSION REQUESTS

We pray for those who are ill or recovering:

June Thomson, Donald Perry, Mary Owen, Martha Banks, Alice Heflin, Nativity's Tornado Family, Elsie Olsen, Robert Boerner, Eileen Sullivan, Gilda May, Ernie Limbo, Bill Marsh, Angel Colin, Julie Kirk, Leigh Wahl, Scott Shelton, Joy Gass, Emile Joffrion, John, Nancy Kelly.

We pray for those in Military & Peace Corps:

Kuwait: Spencer Colin; Afghanistan: Blake Lane; The Gambia, W Africa: Marisa Benzle

We give thanks for the birth of a child:

Rowan Landry born December 31; parents The Rev'd Brad and Mrs. Liz Landry

Reducing Air Pollution - Stewardship of Creation Tip for January 4, 2012

What we do inside our homes, regardless of where we live, can be polluting the air both inside and out.

If most people were asked to do a quick word association about air pollution, chances are strong words like "city" and "traffic" would be among the first to come to mind. However, while large cities with heavy traffic are certainly susceptible to air pollution, city dwellers and drivers aren't the lone culprits when it comes to causing air pollution.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, what we do inside our homes, regardless of where we live, can be polluting the air both indoors and out. To do your part, consider the following tips for reducing air pollution:

RECYCLE. One of the easiest ways to help reduce air pollution is to participate in your community's recycling program. Recycling helps reduce air pollution by reducing production emissions. Plus, recycling helps to conserve valuable and expensive energy.

INSPECT YOUR APPLIANCES REGULARLY. Inspecting heating and cooling systems (filters in particular) and keeping them properly maintained can help reduce the emissions of harmful gases into the air both inside and outside your home. Have a professional check your home comfort system in the spring and in the fall. If your system isn't operating efficiently, it could be costing

We give thanks for the birthdays of our children:

1/6	Michael Jones
1/8	Harry Foster
1/9	Tanner Ragland, Rylan Whitney
1/11	David Young, Matthew Brown
1/12	Nathaniel Pride
1/14	Parker Sanders
1/17	Charlie Flynn
1/18	Jackson Allen
1/19	Riley ragland
1/20	Aiden Copeland

We give thanks and welcome new members:

Sara O'Neal Vowell, Jackie Adams, Linda Landers, and Natalie Rushing

you significant amounts of energy dollars and negatively affecting air quality.

PROPER STORAGE AND DISPOSAL OF COMMON HOUSEHOLD ITEMS. Many items around the house can be very harmful to the environment if not disposed of properly. One easy thing you can do to help the environment is to make sure your paints, pesticides and solvents are stored in airtight containers. Also, be sure to safely dispose of all of the following products: old cleaners, waxes, paint, garden poisons, solvents, automotive fluids, old TV's, computers, or other hazardous chemicals. These items can be hazardous to the environment, animals and our families when they are stockpiled, abandoned or disposed of improperly.

You can drop off household hazardous waste on the first Saturday of each month from 8:00 a.m. to Noon at the Handle with Care Collection Center at the Huntsville Landfill, 4100 Leeman Ferry Road.

For special assistance, call 256-880-6054. The program is free of charge to all residents of Madison County, the City of Huntsville, and the City of Madison.

LOOK AT THINGS IN TERMS OF YOUR AND YOUR FAMILY'S HEALTH. Exposure to air pollution can aggravate asthma, lead to potential lung damage, cause coughing or shortness of breath and could result in premature death for people with existing heart or lung diseases. Since these issues affect over 50 million Americans, chances are air pollution is affecting someone you know and care about.

Helping the Church recognize our Bishops

There are several ways we can help recognize and honor our Bishops Henry Parsley and Kee Sloan in this period of transition. Ecclesiastical Gifts (i.e. church things!) are being made to recognize their leadership and Nativity would like to participate in these opportunities to honor both Bishops.

If you haven't already participated in these opportunities, please consider. Make your tax deductible checks payable to The Church of the Nativity, noted BISHOPS' GIFTS.

STEEPLE SCHEDULE

The Steeple is published each
1st and 3rd Wednesdays.

To submit events or articles,
you may bring them to Linda
Wheeler in the church office or
email:

linda.wheeler@nativity-hsv.org

The deadline for the next issue is
Monday noon, January 16.

CLERGY & STAFF

The Rev'd Dr. Andy Anderson
Rector

The Rev'd Mary Anne Akin
Associate

The Rev'd Brad Landry
Associate

The Rev'd Jeannie Robison
Deacon

Suzanne Purtee
Organist/Choirmaster

Lane Tutt
Adult Christian Formation

Liz Williams
Youth Christian Formation

Elizabeth Foster
Children's Formation

Cassie Chenoweth
Assistant Children's Formation

Audrey Clayton
Nursery Coordinator

John Buyse
Property Manager

Al Ford
Sexton

Sally Stockton
Kitchen Coordinator

Beverly Franklin
Bookkeeper/Business Mgr

Connie Gadomski
Worship & Ministry Assistant

Linda Wheeler
Assistant to the Rector
Communication/Publication Admin

Prentice White
Verger/Wedding Coordinator

Vestry
Bland Warren
Senior Warden

Pat Goodson
Junior Warden

Russ Alexander
Treasurer

Donna Joffrion
Clerk

AFTER HOURS EMERGENCY

A member of the clergy is
on call each week.

If you need assistance from a priest
outside office hours, the priest on
call will respond to your page.

The number to call *In Case of an
Emergency Only* is 256-533-7007.

All other calls should be directed to
church phone 256-533-2455
and follow the prompts to leave a
message for a priest to respond.

Church of the Nativity, Episcopal

208 Eustis Ave. SE Huntsville, AL 35801

256-533-2455 Fax: 256-533-2374

www.nativity-hsv.org

Nativity Holy Land trip itinerary for October 2012

Rector Andy Anderson and Academy Travel continue planning the trip to the Holy Land. Below is information to help you in making your decision to participate:

- Dates: October 7-22, 2012
- Cost: approximately \$3600 per person for Land Arrangements for 15 days, 14 nights
- Deposit: \$500 pp—fully refundable until airline tickets secured (Does not including international airfare from Huntsville)

Accommodation per person in twin room with private bathroom includes:

- Amman – 1 night Land Mark Hotel Petra - 2 nights (five star hotel)
- Dead Sea - 1 night Ein Gedi Kibbutz Tiberias - 5 nights Scotts Hotel
 - Jerusalem – 5 nights Notre Dame
- Three meals daily in Jordan; Two meals daily in Israel
- All entrances to the museums/sites as indicated in the itinerary.
 - Porterage fees and guiding fees
 - Basic Travel Insurance

Not Included: Cancellation Insurance – available through Academy Travel, Laundry, telephone calls and other items of a personal nature, Gratuity for guides and drivers. Single Room Supplement will be approximately \$1000.

If interested, please call the parish office front desk volunteer at 256-533-2455 or via e-mail to linda.wheeler@nativity-hsv.org to get on the list.