

THE STEEPLE



CHURCH
OF THE
NATIVITY,
EPISCOPAL

Est. 1843

The Church of the Nativity

July 5, 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.

A Letter from Bishop Sloan

June 27, 2012

Dear Friends in Christ,

I write this letter with great appreciation and affection, and with some difficulty. As I visit around the Diocese, I believe I see you for who you really are: kind, decent, loving and faithful servants of Jesus Christ. We don't all hold the same opinions or sing the same songs, but what's most important - our faith in almighty God through our Lord Jesus Christ - is what is most important to us all. The many things that hold us together are much stronger than the few things that threaten to tear us apart.

The 2012 General Convention will be July 5 – 12. The deputation from the Diocese of Alabama are four lay people (Earnest Edgar from Holy Trinity in Auburn, Virginia Hillhouse from St. Stephen's in Birmingham, Barbara Meyer from St. Thomas in Huntsville, and Marc Smith from St. Mark's in Birmingham) and four clergy (John Mark Ford from St. Catherine's in Chelsea, John Fritschner from Holy Trinity in Auburn, Evan Garner from St. John's in Decatur, and Susan Sloan from St. Stephen's in Huntsville) along with Bishop Parsley and myself. We will be posting videos and thoughts from our deputation on the Diocesan website (www.diaola.org) which will also provide links to the General Convention website.

There will be hundreds of resolutions considered, argues and voted on at the Convention. Some will be important but not interesting, others will be interesting but not important, some will be neither, and a few will be both. The most controversial issue will be about the blessing of same-gender relationships. This will likely be the subject of a number of editorials, headlines and opinion pieces, and what your friends are most likely to be asking about.

It might be helpful for me to tell you all where I am with this difficult issue. Some of you may know that I am appointed to be on the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music, which is the Commission that the previous General Convention assigned "to collect and develop theological and liturgical resources" for the blessing of same-gender relationships. The resolution to General Convention 2012 is the result of all that collecting and developing, and invites the General Convention to authorize for study and use materials gathered in a book called Liturgical Resources I: I Will Bless You and You Will Be a Blessing. In that book, there will be liturgy to bless the committed relationships of same-gender couples, a theological document considering how this could be God's will for our Church, a variety of educational materials, and some work on the canons of our church.

I will no doubt be an involved and animated discussion at Convention, with people on all sides and extremes presenting their points of view, while doing their best to refuse to admit that other people also have points of view that are worth considering. There will be committee meetings, open hearings, and discussions in the house of Deputies and the House of Bishops. Eventually it will come to a vote, and among the bishops it will surely be a roll call vote, so that each bishop will vote for or against after his or her name is called. And five minutes after that vote, it will be on the internet, so the whole world can know how each bishop voted. The Convention is a deliberative process, and I am committed to listening with an open mind and heart; I honestly do not know how I am going to vote - I have a lot of listening to do first. No matter how I vote, I am assuming that his resolution will be amended, and may very well pass.

One of the provisions in the resolution is that the liturgy for blessing same-gender unions is to be "under the direction of a bishop exercising ecclesiastical authority." This means that for a priest to perform such a service in Alabama, he or she will need to get my permission.

**SUMMER
WORSHIP
TIMES
SUNDAY**
(* Nursery available)

8:00 a.m. Rite I
Holy Eucharist

10:00 a.m.* Rite II
Holy Eucharist
Children's Chapel

WEDNESDAY
12:00 noon
Holy Eucharist &
Healing
(Bibb Chapel)

THURSDAY
6:00 p.m.
Holy Eucharist Rite II
(Bibb Chapel)

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This is a very complicated subject, with several different levels and layers. It is a theological issues, a question of Biblical interpretation, a matter of human rights, and a multitude of pastoral concerns. Those people with positions more liberal than mine are good, faithful, intelligent children of God for whom Jesus died as well. I think we have a lot of work to do, a lot of listening to do, before we come to one mind about this in the Episcopal Church.

When we get back from Indianapolis, I imagine I'll have a stack of letters and emails congratulating me on however I voted, from people that agree with me. I'll have another stack from people telling me that I've abandoned the faith and lost the Gospel, because they disagree. And there will be requests to offer the liturgy to bless same-gender unions, not as issues or discussions, but for Steve and George who love each, or Connie and Louise who've been together for 26 years.

We are not of one mind about different parts of this complicated issue, but I know for sure that it is wrong to further splinter or break apart the Church. I told the clergy at Clergy Conference that if this resolution passes, I will not give permission to bless same-gender unions at this time. It may be that this is right for some parts of the Church in some places and contexts, but I do not think it is the right thing for the Episcopal Church in Alabama to do now. I could be wrong, in how I vote, or in my intention to withhold permission, but I don't think I am. In all of this, I am seeking to be faithful to God and to do what is best for our Lord's Church and for all of God's children.

In the coming months, we will begin a process of listening and discerning, learning from each other and teaching each other. There is so much we need to study and discuss. We need to be willing to listen respectfully to people who offer a different point of view, without condemning or patronizing. I hope and pray that God will answer our prayer and "grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love." (BCP 833)

In the height of the civil rights movement, when the Episcopal Church was beginning our long process of considering the ordination of women and revising the Book of Common Prayer, Bishop Carpenter was asked if we would survive. It was after all, a tumultuous moment for our society and for our church, even more that the current moment. I'll close with his inspired answer for that time and this: "If it is God's will that there be an Episcopal Church in Alabama, then by God there will be!"

I am convinced that Almighty God is not done with us, and that we have not abandoned God. The work of the Church is still before us - to proclaim the Good News of the love of God in Jesus Christ, to reconcile God's children to each other and our Father in Heaven. We need to be about God's work.

In this, and in all the work of God's holy Church, I invite your prayers: for the bishops and the deputies at General Convention, for the Dioceses of Alabama, and for all the parishes and clergy.

God's Peace,

(original letter signed)

The Rt. Rev. John McKee Sloan
Bishop of the Episcopal Church in Alabama

[NATIVITY'S PRESENCE AT GENERAL CONVENTION July 5-12, Indianapolis, IN](#)

The Rev'd Dr. Andy Anderson and Rusty Stephenson will be attending the General Convention while serving as First Alternates to the House of Deputies. Father Anderson will occasionally update his blog and invites you to visit:

www.buildingthechurchwithin.blogspot.com

Additional ways to keep-up with Convention news:

The Diocese of Alabama Facebook page and Twitter account will also be updated from Indianapolis with reports, photos and videos throughout the convention.

Below are links to our accounts:

Episcopal Diocese of Alabama
Website (www.dioala.org)
Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/dioala>)
Twitter (@dioalanews)

Local Foods Dinner at Nativity



Be sure to **save the date** July 15th,
2012 5:00 - 7:00 PM

for the **community-wide**

Local Foods Dinner

sponsored by

the Greene Street Market



Come join us for a dinner/tasting in the courtyard of the Church of the Nativity, Episcopal. All the board members of the Greene Street Market at Nativity will prepare a dish made from locally sourced, fresh foods for you to enjoy. Local beers, water & lemonade will be available, too.

Join us & taste the difference buying local can make.

All proceeds will be donated to the Food Bank of North Alabama in support of the **Fresh Food Initiative**. This initiative provides vouchers – which can be used to double the value of SNAP (food stamps) benefits when used at a farmers market in Madison County.

This initiative also provides transportation support for public housing residents to and from those farmers markets.

This Fresh Food Initiative is a win-win-win for local farmers, the local economy, and families trying to eat healthy on a tightening budget.

The Fresh Food Initiative is a partnership with the **Food Bank of North Alabama, Huntsville Housing Authority, Madison County Farmers Market, and Greene Street Market.**

The Fresh Food Initiative is a partnership with the **Food Bank of North Alabama, Huntsville Housing Authority, Madison County Farmers Market, and The Greene Street Market at Nativity.**

Tickets for the dinner are \$15/person and are available.
Make checks payable to Greene Street Market at Nativity.

Mail checks (payable to GSM) to: Stephanie Sherman
415 Randolph Avenue Huntsville, AL 35801

For more information contact Stephanie Sherman 256 682 4837;
bandssherman@comcast.net or greenestreetmarket@gmail.com

Stephanie Sherman, Chair

Leedy Aboudonia, Chair

Nativity at Work

Beginning soon, Nativity Stewardship Ministry members Heather Stroud, Erin Elliot and Hallie Angelichio will be documenting the time and talent given by various parishioners through Nativity's multiple outreach and inreach programs. Through upcoming articles in the steeple, a new blog and various social media updates, we hope to keep you informed of the many ways in which Nativity is outwardly focused and inwardly strong. If you would like for us to report on specific people, events or topics, please email your suggestions to nativityatwork@gmail.com.



THE GREEN BOOK

Church of Nativity, Episcopal
2012—2013

Information Guide & Church Directory

It is close to that time of the year to publish the Church Directory known as The Green Book. If your address, phone number, email, etc. have changed since the last publication and if you have not contacted the church office please contact to update. We will publish email addresses for those who have not opted from publishing the information. Directory updates should be sent to linda.wheeler@nativity-hsv.org or to our front desk volunteers at 533-2455.



Organ Recital at Nativity

Friday, July 20, 7:30 p.m.

Suzanne Purtee & Mary Ruth Solem

Featuring works by
Maurice Durufle, César Franck, J.S. Bach,
Petr Eben, Max Reger, and more!

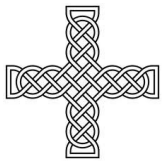
Nativity Summer Choir begins Sunday, July 8th



**All are welcome and invited to come once—or come each Sunday.
Rehearsal is at 9:10 in the Church**

Summer choir is a great way to see what it is like to sing the service (and make new friends!) You will be warmly welcomed. A simple anthem and the service music will be rehearsed for the 10:00 a.m.* Holy Eucharist service.

* nursery provided



Canterbury of Huntsville

An exciting new ministry for college students and young adult Episcopalians!

This group is dedicated to providing worship, service, and social opportunities specifically for college aged Episcopalians in Huntsville. We meet weekly at local restaurants for dinner and fellowship and monthly for larger events! **All are welcome!** Join our Facebook page or group: Huntsville Episcopal Campus and Young Adult Ministries. Contact Emily Collette at Emilycc@uab.edu or Rev'd Basye Holland-Shuey at basye@knology.net for more information.

Jonathan Daniels Annual Pilgrimage, Saturday, August 11, 11:00 a.m. in Hayneville at the Lowndes County Courthouse Square (Lafayette and Washington St.)

Mark your calendars now to attend and be ready to travel. Look for information in July 18th newsletter from Nativity's Reconciliation Ministry regarding transportation from Huntsville.

This year's homilist will be Carolyn Maull McKinstry, author of *While the World Watched: A Birmingham Bombing Survivor Comes of Age During the Civil Rights Movement*. A survivor of the civil rights struggle and eyewitness to the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church bombing, Carolyn Maull McKinstry, marched under Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and bravely faced Bull Connor's German shepherds and stinging fire hoses during the battle for equal rights. Now, one year before the fifth anniversary of the bombing, Carolyn will share her experience and insights during the pilgrimage that is sponsored by The Commission on Race Relations and the Diocese of Alabama.

Jonathan Daniels was an Episcopal seminarian who answered the call of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to help register African-American voters in Alabama. He was shot and killed on Aug. 20 1965, while shielding then 16-year-old Ruby Sales from a shotgun blast as she attempted to enter a store to buy something to drink. Daniels was added to the Episcopal Church Calendar of Saints and Martyrs in 1994 to be remembered each Aug. 14.

The pilgrimage begins at 11:00 a.m., on Saturday, Aug. 11, 2012 at the Courthouse Square in Hayneville. The procession will go to the old county jail where Daniels and Sales were among those detained for a week and then will move to the old Cash Grocery Store where Daniels was killed. The pilgrimage will end at the Courthouse where a service of Holy Communion will take place in the courtroom and McKinstry will speak.

A Nativity Jonathan Daniels Pilgrimage Youth Lock-in will take place on Friday, August 10 in or near Hayneville. On Saturday, they will go to the Courthouse Square for the Pilgrimage. Contact Liz Williams (256-533-2455 llwilliams@nativity-hsv.org) for registration information.

Bibb Chapel Celebration Service

On Sunday, July 15th the 8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist will be held in Bibb Chapel as we celebrate and give thanks for the completion of the recently renovated Chapel. The walls have been painted, the floors have been returned to their lustrous shine, the natural beauty has been enhanced.

INTERCESSION REQUESTS and THANKSGIVING

We pray for those who are ill or recovering:

Nancy Cummings, Bob Phillips, Tom Legan, Those affected by storms and western wildfires, Dot Kitchens, Elsie Olsen, Leigh Wahl, Bill Marsh, Joy Gass, Emile Joffrion, Eileen Sullivan, John, Nancy Kelly.

We pray for the departed:

Hal Harvey, parishioner

We pray for those in Military & Peace Corps:

Afghanistan: Lane Sampson-Jackson, Blake Lane,
The Gambia, W Africa: Marisa Benzle

We give thanks for birthdays of our children:

7/10 Alexander Allbee, Daniel Starnes, Emily Evans
7/12 McKenna Watson, Laura Elliott
7/14 Allison Taylor
7/15 Mary Ragland
7/16 Lisa Smith, Devon Parsons
7/17 Caroline Ayres
7/18 Emmeline Marsh
7/20 Reagen Huskey

FINANCIAL CORNER

2012 Pledges by Dollar Range
July 1, 2012

\$1,000 or <	133
\$1,001 - \$2,999.99	165
\$3,000 - \$4,999.99	82
\$5,000 - \$9,999.99	48
\$10,000 - \$14,999.99	10
\$15,000 - \$24,999.99	7
\$25,000 - \$39,999.99	3
\$40,000 or >	1

Total Number of Pledges	449
Total Dollar Amount of Pledges	\$1,328,481.32
Average Pledge	\$2,958.76

MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES

- We are in need of volunteer Intercessors to read the Prayers of the People for 8:45/8:00 a.m. Sunday worship services. A strong, clear speaking voice is needed. If you are interested, contact Connie in the church office (256-533-2455 cgadomski@nativity-hsv.org)
- Ushers are needed to help set the friendly tone our church is known for by greeting and assisting people as they arrive for services. If you would like more information:
 - For the 8:45/8:00 services contact Neal Machek nealmay@earthlink.com or 256-603-4260
 - For the 11:00/10:00 services contact Jeffrey Dortch jdortch@knology.net or 256-536-7612

Remaining Baptism Dates for 2012 are August 26 and November 4

For more information or to schedule a baptism, please call Connie in the church office 256-533-2455 or cgadomski@nativity-hsv.org. She will get the necessary paperwork for you to complete.

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, July 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 Minister

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

Pat Goodson

Senior Warden

Russ Alexander

Junior Warden

Frederick Lanier

Treasurer

Hannah Boon

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 message.

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