Bishop Gray, III, hugs a live oak dedicated in his honor at Southaven.

Bishops throughout the Episcopal Church attended the ordination-consecration, including the presiding bishop, the Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori, who was the chief consecrator. Also in attendance was the Bishop of the Diocese of Los Angeles, the Rt. Rev. Jon Bruno, who was a co-consecrator at the service. Bruno was a formative influence to Seage as an adolescent growing up in the church in southern California. Other co-consecrators were the Bishop Gray, III; the Bishop Shannon Johnston, Virginia; and Bishop Alfred Clark “Chip” Marble, former Bishop of Mississippi.

The Rt. Rev. Greg Rickel, Bishop of the Diocese of Olympia in Washington and a seminary classmate of Seage, preached at the service. Rickel wove a theme of Seage’s life-long love of surfing together in a captivating homily on why the ministry of bishops continues to exist in the Church.

Seage was elected as bishop coadjutor during his tenure as rector at St. Columb’s in Ridgeland, Mississippi, where he served since 2005. He was also the dean of the Central Convocation of the Diocese of Mississippi, where he helped coordinate and enable the ministry of Episcopal clergy in central Mississippi.

He holds an undergraduate degree from Pepperdine University and a master’s of divinity from the Episcopal Theological Seminary of the Southwest. He has been a priest since 1998.

From 1997-98, Seage served as curate at St. John’s, Ocean Springs, and then as rector of St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Diamondhead from 1998-2005, growing both attendance and programming in the parish. A successful building program was completed and average Sunday attendance doubled during his ministry at St. Thomas.

Seage was called to St. Columb’s in Ridgeland in 2005. St. Columb’s attendance and programming grew under his leadership and a large building project was completed as well.

Before entering the priesthood, Seage served as director of youth ministry for St. Patrick’s Episcopal Church in his native Thousand Oaks, California. In this large, program-size church he managed a team of volunteers to support both the junior high and senior high youth groups, assisted with chapel at St. Patrick’s Day School, and coordinated the congregation’s Habitat for Humanity program.

In the Diocese of Mississippi, Seage served as a Fresh Start facilitator and was on the diocese’s Executive Committee from 2006 through 2009. He was also a member of the diocesan Restructure Task Force. Seage has been a camp director at Camp Bratton-Green every summer since 2006 and will continue that ministry during his episcopacy. He also served on the Gray Center board of managers. While at St. Thomas, he served on the board of trustees for Coast Episcopal School.

Brian and his wife, Kyle, who is rector at St. Philip’s in Jackson, are parents to two daughters, Katie and Betsy.

Seage told the crowd gathered from throughout the Diocese of Mississippi and the nation, “Thank you to so many, especially to those who have traveled so far to attend, especially family and friends from Thousand Oaks, California. To be called to this office by the people of the Diocese of Mississippi on behalf of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is humbling beyond words. The people of this diocese have ministered to my family and me in so many amazing ways. It is an honor to join with the faithful of this diocese in this new relationship.”

The Rt. Rev. Brian Seage and his family, the Rev. Kyle Seage, and daughters, Katie and Betsy, are greeted by members of the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi and visitors from throughout the national church after Seage’s ordination-consecration.

The Rev. Scott Lenoir is the editor of the Mississippi Episcopalian.
August 12 – Staff meetings throughout the morning. Lunch with the Rev. Neddie Winters of Mississippi.

Afternoon in office.

August 13 – Breakfast with Canons Cormick, Johnson, Bishop Coadjutor-elect Seage, and Chancellor Granville Tate. Several conference calls during the day while in office.

In the evening, I traveled to St. Alexix in Jackson for a visitation. I preach, celebrate and confirm eight. Conformations come from the widest possible social and financial status – a profoundly moving moment for me.

Dinner with the congregation afterwards.

August 14 – Morning at home reading and writing. Drive to Hattiesburg for lunch and conversation with the Rev. Marian Fortner. Later in the afternoon, I drop by for a visit with the Rev. Kathleen Potts.

Home to Jackson in the evening.

August 15 – Drive to Gray Center for a meeting with Grae Dickson, the Center’s executive director. In the afternoon, I have an extended session with Laurence Wainwright-Maks.

Afterwards, I drive to the Coast in order to be a part of the visitation in Passacquilla with the family of the Rev. Deacon James Henry LeBardt, who died earlier this week.

Overnight in Gulfport.

August 16 – Drive to the Church of the Redeemer in Biloxi, where I officiate and celebrate at the funeral of the Rev. Deacon James Henry LeBardt. Internment follows in Gautier Cemetery. James Henry’s witness and his approach of his impending death touched so many of us.

“May he go from strength to strength in the life of perfect service.”

Return home to Jackson in the late afternoon.

August 17 – This week begins Kathy’s and my celebration of forty years of marriage. Since none of us know what tomorrow may bring, we decided to make this anniversary celebration very special.

We fly out early on Sunday to New York City, where we will spend our week-long celebration.

August 18–21 – Fortieth Wedding Anniversary Celebration in New York.

August 22 – Return to Jackson after a very special fortieth anniversary week in New York. Good to sleep in our own bed.

August 23 – Drive to Gray Center to join with the participants at the Spiritual Renewal Weekend. The ministry of this weekend has expanded beyond this diocese and the Episcopal Church in wonderful ways. Our leader for the weekend is the Rev. Dent Davidson, Associate for Arts and Liturgy in the Diocese of Chicago.

August 24 – Celebrate the closing Eucharist of the Spiritual Renewal Weekend – a very powerful moment for many who were here for the entire retreat.

Drive to Indianapolis where I celebrate, preach and officiate at the Celebration of New Ministry with the congregation of St. Stephen’s and their new priest-in-charge, the Rev. Giulianna Gray. Very special time for us all.

Return to Jackson in the evening.

August 25 – Up early to fly to Seattle, Washington, where I will participate in one of the most exciting and hope-filled movements in our church today. The “Gathering of Leaders” is the product of the vision of Bishop Claude Payne (retired, Texas) to bring young, proven ordained and laity leaders together for three days of peer teaching and learning around best practices in ministry, mutual support and networking, significant worship and conversations with bishops other than their own. The synergy in this gathering is wonderful and gives me deep hope for our church’s future.

Gathering of Leaders is a movement to which I have committed a serious portion of my future post-retirement time.

August 26 – Gathering of Leaders in Seattle.

August 27 – After a final presentation to the participants at the Gathering of Leaders, I board a plane and return very late to Jackson.

August 28 – Back in the office. Conference call with the board of the College for Bishops. Morning session with the Rev. Chuck Culpepper, then meet with the Diocesan Executive Committee through much of the day.

Afternoon appointment with the Rev. Deacon Cathy Hallford.

August 29 – In office throughout the day. Morning appointment with the Rev. Hunter Isaacs and his wife, Cindy.

August 30 – Free time most of the day. In the evening Kathy and I provide dinner for the Sudanese community following their Dinka worship at St. Andrew’s Cathedral. It is a wonderful moment as we count the many blessings and grace-filled gifts that have flowed from our association with these very special immigrants.

It grieves me deeply as Governor Bryant has decided to end the Catholic Charities program that rescued and resettled many other children from the Sudan civil war two decades earlier.

August 31 – Attend St. Andrew’s Cathedral on this Labor Day weekend. We are there, among other reasons, to bid God-speed to Bul Mahi and his family as he begins a Rotary International Fellowship study in England over the next 2 years. Bul is another of the many Sudanese who have made a wonderful transition to their new country.

September 1 – Labor Day visit with Peter, Giulianna, Joseph and Francesca. Special time.

September 2 – Staff meetings through the morning. Annual consultation with the Rev. Deacon Lynn Phillips-Gaines in the afternoon. I also have a good visit with the Rev. William Ndishashandi reflecting on his recent sabatical.

September 3 – Breakfast at the Marriott with my ecumenical bishop colleagues. Later meet with Cathedral staff to brainstorm ideas to further conversations around racial healing.

In office through the rest of the day dealing with a variety of matters.

September 4 – Along with bishop-elect Seage and United Methodist and Roman Catholic colleagues, I meet with Governor Bryant to discuss his decision to terminate the Unaccompanied Refugee Program run by Catholic Charities and overseen by Mississippi’s Department of Human Services. This is a very personal issue for me. In addition to successfully resettling children from war-torn countries, legally and under the strictest guidelines for thirty-four years, this program rescued and resettled, in 2000, a very vulnerable nine year old orphan from Sudan; that child, Tabitha Awur Agany, came into our home as a foster child, blessing us with her grace and kindness. She and her husband now bless us with grandchildren from Alexandria, Virginia.

Later in the morning, I have an annual consultation with Patricia Cantrell Harris. At lunch, I meet with the ecumenical group discussing possibilities of a prayer breakfast for legislators early in the 2015 session.

Late afternoon meeting with the wardens of St. Mark’s in Jackson.

In the early evening, Kathy and I leave for Oxford for a full weekend in north Mississippi.

September 5 – Time with family and work on our “retirement home” in Oxford.

ORDINARY CONCERNS

Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation

The Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi, 118 N. Congress, Jackson, MS 39201

Published monthly.

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The Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi

Ordinary of the Year

The Bishop’s Journal

Continued on page 5
Notes from around the diocese:

St. Paul’s/Corinth is preparing for the Low Country Shrimp Boil on Sunday, October 19th, at Krazy K Ranch in Michie, TN. It will be an opportunity for fun and fellowship, as well as a fundraiser for St. Paul’s. Participants will enjoy live music with an open mike and a meal that includes shrimp, sausage, corn-on-the-cob, new potatoes, beverages and desserts. Tickets are $15 for adults and $6 for children under 12.

This year’s Fall Festival at All Saints’ Jackson is on the calendar for Saturday, October 18th.

St. Columb’s/Ridgeland has scheduled their eleventh annual drawdown for Saturday, October 25th. It’s a great party for an even greater cause. Once again, 20% of the proceeds will be contributed to IONA House.

Owl Roost: The Civil War Letters of Samuel and Caroline Townsend will be dedicated by Rebecca Drake on Saturday, October 25th, at St. Alban’s/Bovina. The books will be donated to the church. The central characters in the book are Samuel and Caroline Townsend, charter members of St. Alban’s, and their daughters, Matilda and Louisa. The dedication service will feature three talented readers presenting letters that have not been read by anyone other than family members in 150 years. Also performing for the event will be the Lewis Family Singers from Bolton. A reception and booking signing will follow the dedication.

St. Stephen’s/Columbia is gearing up for their annual fundraiser, Gourmet to Go! This year in addition to pre-orders, dinners to go, and note cards, they’re adding a raffle for a pair of tickets to the Saints’ Falcons game plus hotel accommodations.

Another Fall Festival will take place at Redeemer/Biloxi on Saturday, October 18th. There’ll be games, a silent auction, and food.

St. John’s/ Laurel has a wine-tasting and silent auction in the works. The event has been set for Saturday, November 1st.

Kindermusik at St. Paul’s/ Meridian offers music and movement classes for babies, toddlers, big kids, and families. These classes nurture young children’s development and a lifetime love of music.

St. Peter’s/Oxford is making their parking lot available to board members of the Damascus Endowment at Camp Bratton Green. Parking spaces will be sold for the first four Ole Miss football games in the church parking lot with the proceeds going to fund scholarships at the special summer sessions at Camp Bratton Green.

The 33rd Annual Goat Roast and Bluegrass Mass at St. Philip’s/Jackson will take place on Sunday, October 12th. The Vernon Brothers will lead the musical celebration at the service and entertain afterward in the Hollow.

A certified cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) instructor will be conducting an Infant/Child First Aid class at St. Philip’s on Sunday, October 20th. The class is free of charge, and participants will be provided with an instructional booklet to take home following the course.

Grace Church/Canton will have over 90 arts and crafts booths set up on their east lawn Thursday, October 9th, for the flea market. Volunteers are needed to begin preparations on Wednesday and to open the church to the public on Thursday.

For the last few months of 2014, the outreach committee of St. Mark’s/ Gulfport will focus their efforts on the homeless population in south Mississippi. They will be asking for donations of sweaters and coats for folks who could really use a gently worn, warm coat.

St. Peter’s/Oxford will be hosting More than a Meal on Tuesday, October 21st, at the Stone Center. Volunteers are needed to greet, serve food, visit guests, and provide the meal to community neighbors in need. Donations of full-size toiletry items are requested as well.

The Tutwiler Quilt Show is set for Saturday, October 25th, at St. Peter’s. Also at St. Peter’s, the annual ECU greenery sale is in progress. Profits are donated to outreach projects.

The Bluegrass Mass and parish picnic at All Saints’ Tupelo is set for Sunday, October 12th, at Veteran’s Park. Hamburgers, hot dogs, and all the trimmings are on the menu for $5 per person or $15 per family.

Trunk or Treat, hosted by All Saints’ Tupelo, First United Methodist Church, and First Presbyterian Church will happen on Friday, October 31st, from 5:30 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. They are seeking volunteers to decorate their cars, pass out candy, and help with games and food – and lots of individually wrapped candies.

Christ Church/Church Hill, the oldest congregation in the diocese, will be hosting a service at 5:00 p.m. followed by a pot-luck dinner on the grounds on Sunday, October 12th. This congregation began in the early 1800s and the present building was constructed in the 1850s.

There will be a Lay Ministry Workshop on Saturday, October 18th, at St. Elizabeth’s/ Collins. The theme is Reading with Meaning, focusing on reading scripture out loud. Lay readers and worship leaders want to attend this session. Registration is $25 at the door.

Creator Clinton has received the anonymous gift of a spinet piano. Located in the nave, it will add a new dimension to hymns and anthems that are better suited to the piano.

Pumpkin carving, snacks, hot chocolate for the kids, and mulled wine for the adults are on the agenda. St. James’/Greenville. This family night out is set for Sunday, October 25th.

Trinity/Hattiesburg is collecting new or gently used books in English and Spanish. The books are for the benefit of their sister church, Cristo Redentor, which is starting a daycare.

The members of All Saints’ Grenada will gather for a parish play day at Bull Bottom Farms on Sunday, October 19th.

Booths are available for artists, crafters, and folks who just have “stuff” to sell at the Fall Bazaar taking place at St. Peter’s by-the-Sea/Gulfport on Saturday, October 25th. There will also be baked goods and casseroles available.

St. Paul’s/Columbus is partnering with First Methodist and Annunciation for their second Fall Festival on Sunday, October 26th. They’ll have a Trunk or Treat and cake walk along with other activities.

Quotes this month:

The Rev. Ann Benton Fraser, St. Paul’s/Corinth: “As Christians, we have a mission to shape our public sphere in ways that reflect the kingdom of God. The mark of a community made strong by Christian values is not one where the Ten Commandments are found on the public square, but where its citizens strive for justice and peace for every person. Respect the dignity of every human being. Honor the dream of God.”

The Rev. Walton Jones, Trinity/Natchez: “Getting involved is more important than you might think. It’s through the giving of ourselves, our time, and our blessings that we become deeply connected to a community of faith. As the Church gathers we are strengthened for service, we are supported when we’re in need, and above all: Christ is made present.”

The Rev. William Nishibhandi, All Saints/Jackson: “Our stewardship concerns our responsibility to live wholly for God, and a willingness to be accountable for his creation.”

The Very Rev. Lee Winter, Resurrection/Starkville: “Disciples are stewards of the gospel, of their relationships, and their material/financial resources. We love God with all our heart, mind, and soul and our neighbors as ourselves. We can give without loving, but we cannot love without giving.”

The Rev. Carol Mead, St. Peter’s by-the-Lake/Brandon: “While doctrinal matters are important, correct doctrine rarely draws a person to investigate the Christian faith. People will be drawn to seek God through Christianity when they see us practicing what we preach, when they see us not only calling ourselves Christians, but also living as Christ lived.”

A date to remember:

Friday, October 31st at 12 noon

Early deadline for The Mississippi Episcopalian
Presiding Bishop announces she will not stand for reelection

[Episcopal Church Office of Public Affairs press release]

The following message is from Episcopal Church Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori:

To all the people of God in The Episcopal Church:

It is a great joy and privilege to serve as your Presiding Bishop. I have been blessed to be able to meet and build relationships with people around the globe – in every diocese in this Church, most of the provinces of the Anglican Communion, our full communion partners (ELCA, Moravian Church, Old Catholics of the Union of Utrecht), as well as civic leaders and leaders of other denominations and faith traditions. That relational work is fundamental to the reconciliation we seek in Christ. As bridges are built, more and more people can begin to cross the divides between us, and God’s dream begins to take flesh in a more just and peaceful world.

Together, we have navigated a season of extraordinary change in recent years. Our Christian values have been challenged and we are becoming clearer and more confident about the faith we share. Today we are far more cognizant of the diversity of this multinational and multicultural Church, and the great blessing of the diverse peoples and cultures we represent. Our life as a Church is enriched by the many gifts God has given us in people and contexts around the world. Together we are striving to live out the Five Marks of Mission, we are exploring new and creative ways of engaging the societies around us with the good news of the gospel among all sorts and conditions of people, and wholeheartedly devoted to God’s vision of a healed and restored Creation.

I have spent many months in discernment about how I am being called to serve God’s people and God’s creation in this season. I have resisted the assumption by some that presiding bishops can only be elected to serve one term, knowing the depth of relational work and learning that is involved in this ministry. There is a tradeoff between the learning curve and the ability to lead more effectively as a result of developed relationships both within and beyond this Church. At the same time, I recognize that standing for election as Presiding Bishop carries the implicit expectation that one is ready to serve a full term. I do not at present believe I should serve beyond this Church. At the same time, I recognize that standing for election as Presiding Bishop carries the implicit expectation that one is ready to serve a full term. I do not at present believe I should serve a full term. The election will take place during the 78th meeting of General Convention June 25-July 3, 2015 in Salt Lake City. The current draft of the convention schedule shows the election taking place on June 27.

I believe I can best serve this Church by opening the door for other bishops to more freely discern their own vocation to this ministry. I also believe that I can offer this Church stronger and clearer leadership in the coming year as we move toward that election and a whole-hearted engagement with necessary structural reforms. I will continue to engage us in becoming a more fully diverse Church, spreading the gospel among all sorts and conditions of people, and wholeheartedly devoted to God’s vision of a healed and restored Creation.

I will continue in discernment about the ministry I may be called to in the coming years, but my present focus is and will remain on being the vigorous and faithful leader I believe I am called to be.

God has called us all to be instruments of shalom, and we have miles to go before we live in that world of justice and peace. We are marching upward to Zion, the beautiful city of God. Siyahamba!

The Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori
Presiding Bishop and Primate
The Episcopal Church

ENS Editors’ Note:

There are no terms limits on the service of a presiding bishop. Jefferts Schori, who turned 60 earlier this year, could have served an additional nine years, had she been nominated and elected.

A presiding bishop is subject to the church’s mandatory clergy retirement age of 72. According to Canon 1.2.2, if a presiding bishop will turn 72 before the end of the nine-year term, then he or she must resign at the General Convention nearest to that birthday.

Presiding bishops serve a nine-year term. The General Convention in 1994 reduced the term from 12 years (via Resolution A130). Twenty-fifth Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold, Jefferts Schori’s predecessor, was the first to serve a nine-year term.

Jefferts Schori was elected in 2006 by the House of Bishops during a meeting of General Convention in Columbus, Ohio, and her election was confirmed by the House of Deputies on the same day. She was invested as the 26th presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church on Nov. 4, 2006.

Nominations for the 27th presiding bishop are due to the Joint Nominating Committee for the Election of the Presiding Bishop by Sept. 30. The election will take place during the 78th meeting of General Convention June 25-July 3, 2015 in Salt Lake City. The current draft of the convention schedule shows the election taking place on June 27.
Alabama bishop pens book

By Janet C. Nail

Overheard at a Vocare, a young woman commenting thoughtfully on the spiritual director: “If Kee Sloan were the priest at my church, they would have to lock the doors to keep me out.”

True that! And he’s one of the greatest storytellers I have ever heard—and I have heard the best.

Now he has written a book.

Reading JABBOK (Peake Road, 2014) is like sitting with him and listening to his stories.

Young Buddy Hinton, eight years old, is a typical kid in Mississippi in the early sixties. He is wandering in the woods, playing in the mud in the creek (people felt safer then), when he encounters the man who will be the major influence in his life.

It doesn’t seem like a propitious meeting: Jake is dispatching a wounded doe with his hunting knife, and Buddy is outraged, not understanding why the suffering doe has to die. But Jake holds him as he cries, then send him home.

A couple of more encounters and Buddy winds up spending the night in Jake’s home-made shack hidden in the woods. This time he really meets Jake and begins to hear his story. Fisherman, ex-convict, former tent preacher, Jake is like no one he has ever met.

Yet this elderly black man becomes his mentor, his spiritual advisor (though neither has ever heard of such a thing), the man who answers all his questions honestly.

Jake also seems to recognize and validate those qualities that Buddy is reluctant to acknowledge: his gentleness, his kindness, his reluctance to join in the worst of the mean behavior of the boys in his neighborhood. His explanation is that he sees this kindness in Buddy that means he can trust him, and he sees it because of his experience in assessing the characters of the men at Parchman.

Buddy’s friend asks him to join him in doing something extremely dangerous and stupid. Buddy refuses, and his friend taunts him, “What’s the matter? Are you afraid?” Buddy’s simple answer is, “Yes.” After the friend is killed during the act, Buddy confronts his friend’s older brother at the funeral. The older brother admits that he had lied to his brother and told him that he himself had done this often; now he was consumed with guilt. Buddy tells him that he would not tell their parents, but he urges the brother to talk to his parents, but he doesn’t understand why God would allow this to happen.

As always, he takes the question to Jake. They wrestle with it for a while, then Jake suggests some role playing. They pretend they are present at the Creation. Both of them enter into the fantasy, enjoying the incredible new world. Then they “observe” God’s creating of man in His own image. Here, Jake interjects his belief that the

The Bishop’s Journal

Continued from page 2

September 6 – Drive to Southaven for a weekend of celebration with the congregation of St. Timothy’s on the completion of their expansion and renovation of the facilities.

Golf game with the Rev. Patrick Sanders and members of the congregation in the morning. Wonderful time even though rain washed out the last few holes.

I was given a tour of the facility later in the afternoon. The centerpiece of this work is the Mary Chapel, a beautiful place of intimate worship.

Dinner in the evening with the entire congregation and many friends.

Overnight with Patrick and Jennifer Sanders and family.

September 7 – At the parish Eucharist at St. Timothy’s, I preach, celebrate, confirm twenty-two, receive three, and reaffirm six. At the conclusion of the service, we dedicate and bless the new facilities. What a joyous occasion!

Lunch with the vestry follows. Very good and hope-filled conversation.

Say my goodbyes, then drive to Greenwood for a brief visit with Peter, Giuliana and the children. Return home to Jackson in the evening.

September 8 – Kathy and I drive to New Orleans where I am exploring some post-retirement options. We spend the night with old friends, Henry and Mary Beth Hudson.

Bishop Morris Thompson and wife, Rebecca, join us at the Hudson’s for dinner.

September 9 – Conversations about post-retirement options during the day in New Orleans. Kathy and I return to Jackson in the evening.

September 10 – In the office all day. Morning appointment with the Rev. Stanford Adams. Phone call appointments, including a conversation with Bishop Dan Martins, whom I have asked to provide delegated pastoral oversight to Trinity Church, Yazoo City.

Lunch with Mr. Chuck Barlow and afternoon appointment with the Rev. Lynn Barker.

September 11 – In-office all day. Morning appointment with Mr. Jim Carstensen concerning the future of the Mississippi Religious Leadership Conference. Two conference calls in the afternoon concerning a wide variety of matters.

September 12 – Drive to Gray Center to lead two separate retreats. “A Day Apart” is an opportunity to spend some time in quiet prayer and meditation in this beautiful place. We conclude midafternoon.

After a brief fishing break, Ms. Linda Nelson and I welcome an unexpectedly large group of participants to a silent retreat focusing on the transitions in our lives. Overnight at Gray Center.

September 13 – Transitions Retreat at Gray Center with Ms. Linda Nelson.

September 14 – Our retreat concludes with the Eucharist in the Big House at Gray Center. This quiet time has been helpful to me as I think and pray through the transitions now taking place in my life.

September 15 – Spend most of the day playing in the Bob and Cecil Brunson Charity Golf Tournament sponsored by the American Cancer Society. This annual event was played at the Jackson Country Club. Ms. Barbara Brunson is my host.

September 16 – In the office throughout the day. Staff meetings take up all of the morning. Catching up on other matters in the afternoon.

September 17 – Morning appointment with Ms. Haley Allin. Midafternoon, Kathy and I drive to Greenwood, where we join with Francesca Ruth Gray and her family to celebrate her first birthday!

Return home to Jackson in the evening.

September 18 – Drive to Meridian for the funeral of the Rev. Osborne Moyer at the Church of the Mediator. At the funeral, I preach and officiate. Osborne was one of the formative influences in my adolescence, though I never recognized his influence on me until much later in my life. “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

On my drive to Meridian, I receive word that the Rev. Clifton McInnis has died. “May he go from strength to strength in the life of perfect service.”

The Mississippi Episcopalian                              5

November 14-15 at Gray Center

Bishop Curry of North Carolina will speak at the ECW Fall Conference. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to join us.

“The Rt. Rev. Michael Curry is one of the greatest preachers the Church today. In demand throughout the Anglican Communion, Bishop Curry uses his gift of storytelling that is combined with his wonderful sense of humor and infused with a great passion for the boundless love of Jesus to transform a passive audience into a congregation of Crazy Christians (the title of his recent book).

Michael Curry is a personal friend and valued colleague, and I am delighted that he will be with us this fall. This will be an extraordinary moment for the Episcopal Church Women and this diocese. I will be there to renew my soul. I would invite those throughout this diocese to do the same. You will not be disappointed.” Rt. Rev. Duncan Gray, III.

Schedule: 6 p.m. Friday, November 14, to 1 p.m. Saturday, November 15.

Cost: $120/135 (double/single) $45 (day only). Please register by Nov. 3. Late registrations will be accepted if there is space. Visit graycenter.org or contact Caelin at caelin@graycenter.org or 601-397-4273.
CONSECRATION MEMORIES

Editor's note: Thank you to photographer Jim Carrington for all the beautiful photos of Bishop Seage’s receptions and consecration. There are more than 400 images loaded on the diocesan website, www.dioms.org. Please log on and take a look!

Soon-to-be-bishop Brian visits with Rebecca Thompson, Bishop Bill Franklin (Western New York) and Bishop Morris Thompson (Louisiana) at the Natchez Trace Crafts Center the night before Seage's consecration.

Bishop Gray, Jr., the Rev. Deacon Frank Spencer, and former diocesan Bishop Chip Marble visit on Friday night.

Bishops Marble, Seage, and Gray

Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori prepares to consecrate the Very Rev. Brian Seage as bishop coadjutor. Other co-consecrators pictured are (l. to r.) the Rt. Rev. Shannon Johnston, Bishop of Virginia; the Rt. Rev. Duncan M. Gray, III, Bishop of Mississippi; the Rt. Rev. Jon Bruno, Bishop of Los Angeles; and the Rt. Rev. Alfred Clark Marble, Jr., former Bishop of Mississippi. Jim Carrington/Photo

Presiding Bishop Katharine answers questions at a luncheon held at St. James’ on the Friday before the consecration.

Brian Seage celebrates first Eucharist as bishop coadjutor.

The Seages pause for a family photo after the consecration.

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The Mississippi Episcopalian October 2014
Baptisms are always joyful occasions and recently Good Shepherd/Terry had four. Pictured are the newly baptized and their families: (from left to right) Scarlett Christine Blount with parents Will and Rachel Blount and brother Hayden; the Rev. Canon Chuck Culpepper; triplets Mason, Katie and Michael McFarland with parents Nell and Mike McFarland, brother Aaron Abbott, sister Anna Marie, and grandmother Kathy Hardy. The celebration continued with a reception in the parish hall.

St. Paul’s/Woodville celebrated its 191 year anniversary with a homecoming on Sunday, October 5th. The event was held the church’s newly renovated parish hall and also marked the 5th anniversary of the Rev. Mary Ann Heine as vicar.

The Very Rev. Bruce McMillian, left, and the Rev. Milton Winter, right, bless the dogs of Leo and Gus Smith at Christ Church/Holly Springs during the church’s St. Francis Day observance.

Reggie, a three-legged dog found abandoned and shot near Gray Center, receives a blessing from his owner/rescuer, the Rev. Sylvia Czarnetzki on St. Francis Day. After only a month he has developed that grateful and loving demeanor that rescues adopt.

Sam Saia (St. James/Jackson) reads the first lesson at the consecration.

Choir members from throughout the diocese sang at the ordination-consecration.

The Very Rev. Bruce McMillian, left, and the Rev. Milton Winter, right, bless the dogs of Leo and Gus Smith at Christ Church/Holly Springs during the church’s St. Francis Day observance.

Elizabeth Smith/Photo
Reflections from the Road

As I prepare to step aside as your bishop and look with great delight as the personality of the episcopacy of Brian Seage begins to evermore fully emerge, I find myself reflecting on the enormous changes that have taken place in this church (and culture) since I first began discerning a call to serve God as an ordained minister in and through this Episcopal Church.

I went off to seminary in 1971 at the ripe old age of 21. In 1971 John Maury Allin was my bishop and Archie Manning was a rookie quarterback for the New Orleans Saints.

In 1971 the church in Mississippi was trying to grasp the reality of women serving on vestries — a change made only three years before.

Women serving as delegates and to Diocesan Council had become a reality only two years before.

In 1971 the three women who were in my seminary class I thought to be quixotic dreamers. The church would never ordain women, I mused to myself, and if she did, they would never be accepted in Mississippi!

In 1971 the Episcopal Church had refused to acknowledge that gay and lesbian persons had any legitimate status in the church. Indeed, excommunication of openly gay men and women was an option exercised by some clergy.

In 1971 the location of Diocesan Council had to be carefully chosen for some of our communities were openly hostile to a fully integrated gathering.

In 1971 the hurricane we were still rebuilding from was named Camille, and we were all saying our prayers from the 1928 Book of Common Prayer.

If all of that seems too far removed to be reality for some, I find it important to remember that when I was elected Bishop in 2000, 9/11, Bishop Gene Robinson, Hurricane Katrina, Barack Obama, Katharine Jefforts Shori, and Facebook were not on anybody’s radar screen.

These have been extraordinary times full of much change and confusion that accompany any such significant change. But through these forty-three plus years, you and I have gathered together, week after week, to be nurtured in word and sacrament to find the Risen Lord in the midst of a community of faith. We have done so, seeking understanding of God’s purpose and seeking strength to face both personal and cultural challenges so we could more faithfully serve God and God’s people in ways that are pleasing to our Lord.

And the church has managed to negotiate these extraordinary changes because we have never lost sight of what is foundational in our faith — a dynamic, transformational relationship with the living Lord that is nurtured around a common altar and propels us into the world as servants.

With all of the above as backdrop, it is pretty clear that the change of bishops in the Diocese of Mississippi is a relatively minor matter!

"New occasions teach new duties," the old hymn reminds us. I am excited to see what new challenges will bring out the best in you and your new bishop in years to come.

As I said before, "I ain’t dead yet," but I sure am enjoying this last ride.

Faithfully,

+Duncan

Christ is Counting on You

By Elizabeth Bush

At the end of Cursillo, the priest states to each participant, "Christ is counting on you," and then the participant replies, "I am on Him." This is just another way to confirm what we say during our baptismal vows, "I will, with God’s help.”

Cursillo is a weekend designed to empower its participants to be leaders. Many Cursillistas become involved in serving as a lay worship leader, lay Eucharistic visitor, EFM mentor, usher, choir member, or on outreach efforts like Bridges out of Poverty, just to name a few ministries. Cursillistas are energized after their weekend and return to their home church more committed to follow the baptismal covenant: Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?

Serving Christ within your church is just one aspect of how Christ is counting on you. The Cursillo community can also use your time and talents.

Secretariat: The governing body of Cursillo. For more information on this board, contact Dave Benway, chairman, or Julie Goforth, vice chair.

Servant Community: A group of people who help with the behind the scenes of Cursillo. For more about this group, contact Ken Ruckstuhl, servant chairman.

Ultreya Rectors: Organize Ultreya meetings at your church. For more information about being an Ultreya rector, contact Dave Benway or Julie Goforth or any current Ultreya rector.

Staffing a weekend: You must turn in a staff application to be eligible to serve on a weekend staff. If you are unsure if your staff application is on file, contact Elizabeth Bush.

Sponsoring: Sponsoring people to attend a Cursillo weekend.

(Emails for all the people listed above can be found on the Cursillo diocese website, Cursillo.dioms.org, along with staff applications, sponsor and participant forms.)

Four people who have stepped up to God’s call are our next two lay rectors and their head cha cha’s. Greg Cooper, lay rector, and Webb Morgan, head cha cha, will be the leaders of Cursillo 128 May 14-17 at Gray Center.

Katharine Surkin, lay rector, and Alison Duncan, head cha cha, will be the leaders of Cursillo 129 September 24-27 at Gray Center.
Mediator answers bishop’s call

By Anne Dowdle

The happiness radiating from the faces of 55 Haitian children who will begin classes in their own schoolhouse this month is unforgettable.

Over the four years it took to coordinate, fundraise and construct the five-room building, Episcopalian Robert Covington of Meridian filed away many indelible memories of these children. Drenched schoolhouse this month is unforgettable.

October 2014
By Anne Dowdle

OUTREACH

Watkins, assistant to the rector for ministry, would go and look at the Haiti Partnership and see if there was a ministry for our church.

In the aftermath of Haiti’s devastating earthquake in 2010, the Episcopal Church of the Mediator in Meridian felt challenged by Bishop Gray’s call to “rebuild OUR church,” recalled Covington. (The Episcopal Diocese of Haiti is the largest diocese in the Episcopal Church.)

After several successful fundraisers, the Re. Dr. Helen Tester asked if Covington, along with Katy Watkins, assistant to the rector for ministry, would go and look at the Haiti Partnership and see if there was a ministry for our church.

With money in hand from parishioners and friends within the community designated for any urgent needs they encountered there, they arrived in a chaotic Port-au-Prince in 2011. The Trinity Cathedral in this capital city was destroyed, but many were already helping to raise it again.

Rev. Dr. Kesner Ajax, who directs the Bishop Thrapp Institute, coordinates the Haiti Partnership and serves as the priest at Ascension Episcopal Church in Beraud, is a small agrarian village. Although there was no earthquake damage, poverty reigned.

The teachers, who made $60/month then, had not been paid in three months. The Mediator’s emergency purse paid the salaries of these teachers.

Covington and Watkins then discovered that school is not free for Haitian children; families must pay $60 each year. Thus, the Mediator, some 1,350 miles away, came up with the scholarship dollars so that all children who want to attend in grades 1 – 8 can come and learn.

Since then, the Mediator has raised $30,000 and joined hands with St. Thomas Episcopal Church in McLean, VA, which gifted another $20,000 to fund building the schoolhouse.

Covington noted that the Mediator sponsored a number of fundraising events including, a drawdown event by the men of the church. The youth also collected and rolled coins, sold bracelets and sponsored a “Heavenly Holiday Haiti” bake sale. Additional contributions poured in from individuals as well as other churches in the Mississippi Diocese.

Since that time, Covington and fellow parishioner Robert Glazar have returned to Haiti twice. While there, they worked with the children at Vacation Church Camp, along with parishioners from the St. Thomas Church, who sponsors the camp.

The Mediator has sent new clothes to the children, many of which were made by the church women as well as its sister church (Haven’s Chapel United Methodist Church, Meridian) and also purchased 24 bench desks to help furnish the school. The Virginia church is certainly doing their share to make this dream come true, too, added Covington.

He also said that he can now see the progress that is being made in Haiti. There is a great reduction in litter plus new construction. Even new paint on buildings makes a big difference. The people also look so much better compared to his initial visit to the country. “They were shell-shocked then and now they look normal again.”

The children have become familiar with the visiting Americans. “They enjoy the time we spend with them,” explains Covington. “It’s not like they ask for anything; they just ask us to pray for them.”

Most Haitian children speak French or Haitian Creole, so translators are needed for communication.

“What is so special,” said Covington, “is when the kids take your hands and look you in the eye and say ‘next year,’” meaning that they hope to see us “next year” at church camp.

Both the Mediator and St. James Churches are proud of their accomplishments because this mission is not about charity; it’s about human investment.

ABOUT HAITI:

Haiti, unfortunately, ranks as the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere.

Coffee and sugar cane are the leading crops.

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ABOUT HAITI:

• Haiti, unfortunately, ranks as the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere.

• Four-fifths of the 10 million-plus population in Haiti live in the shambles of absolute poverty.

• Another statistic: Three fifths of the Haitians are unemployed or under-employed.

• Haiti is the only nation in the world that was founded after a hard-fought, but successful, slave revolt. The Haitians were willing to do almost anything, including working hard and sending their meager profits to France, in order to obtain their freedom.

• Even though it declared its independence from France in 1801, Haiti was not officially recognized by France until 1825.

• This small West Indies country occupies the western one-third of the Island of Hispaniola with the Dominican Republic situated on the eastern side of the island.

• Approximately two-thirds of Haiti is mountainous while two-thirds of its people work in agriculture. (Coffee and sugar cane are the leading crops.)
Mark’s Gospel and the Baptized Believer
Oct 31-Nov 1 with The Rev. Dr. Katherine Grieb

Learn about Mark’s Gospel with one of the leading and beloved seminary professors in the field today. The Gospel of Mark is the earliest narrative we have about Jesus Christ. It reflects the excitement and commitment of early followers of Jesus who were determined to be his disciples despite their doubts and fears. Mark’s Gospel is strikingly realistic about both the dangers and delights of discipleship. For this reason, it is ideally suited for deepening the formation of disciples of Jesus today, those who would like to understand their baptismal character and to set up or enhance disciplines of prayer, meditation, works of love, and other expressions of the cost of discipleship. Mark teaches us that following Jesus is an opportunity not to be missed!

Schedule: 6 p.m. Friday, October 31 to 4 p.m. Saturday, November 1. Cost: $125/$140 (double/single room). Please register by Oct. 20, late registrations will be accepted if there is space. For more information, visit graycenter.org or contact Caelin at caelin@graycenter.org or 601-397-4273.

Clergy Continuing Education: Proclaiming the Good News According to Mark
October 29-31 with The Rev. Dr. Katherine Grieb

The Rev. Dr. Katherine Grieb is the Meade Professor of Biblical Interpretation at Virginia Theological Seminary. We are thrilled to bring you this extremely knowledgeable, compelling, gifted and insightful professor for our Clergy Continuing Education series. Her treatment of Mark will be timely as we move into year B of the lectionary cycle.

Recent scholarship on the composition of Mark’s Gospel suggests that its most striking features may reflect the oral culture from which it came. Preachers and storytellers of Mark’s Gospel today, in an age when social media are retrieving many of these oral features, will do well to pay attention to the structure and style of this amazing Gospel. Our work together is designed to prepare you, as proclaimers of Mark’s Gospel for the coming lectionary year beginning in Advent, and to assist you in preparing your congregations to hear Mark’s message about Jesus Christ, which is both fresh and challenging. Following this workshop/retreat, it is expected that you will be excited about possibilities for proclaiming Mark’s Gospel and about renewing and deepening discipleship within your parishes.

CEU’s earned at this event: 10. Schedule: 6 p.m. Wednesday, October 29 to 1 p.m. Friday, October 31. Cost: $205 for a single room. Contact Cannon Johnson for scholarship information. Please Register by Oct. 20, late registrations will be accepted if there is space. For more information visit graycenter.org or contact Caelin at caelin@graycenter.org or 601-397-4273.

A date to remember:
Friday, October 31st at 12 noon
Early deadline for The Mississippi Episcopalian
### EVENTS

#### DIOCESAN CALENDAR

**OCTOBER**
- 8: Diocesan Trustees Meeting — Allin House — 2:00 p.m.
- 9: Standing Committee Meeting — Allin House — 11:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
- 11: Retirement Celebration for Bishop Duncan and Kathy Gray — St. Peter’s, Oxford — 3:00 – 5:00 p.m.
- 12: Bishop Coadjutor Seage visits St. Paul’s, Columbus — 10:30 a.m.
- 12: Bishop Gray visits Epiphany, Tunica — 11:00 a.m.
- 15: Finance Committee Conference Call — 11:00 a.m.
- 18: Retirement Celebration for Bishop Duncan and Kathy Gray — Gray Center — 4:00 – 7:30 p.m.
- 19: Bishop Gray visits Christ Church & St. Mary’s, Vicksburg — 10:30 a.m.
- 19: Bishop Coadjutor Seage visits Mediator, Meridian — 10:30 a.m.
- 20-23: Clergy Conference — Gray Center
- 23: Annual Racial Reconciliation Celebration Banquet — Jackson Convention Complex — 7:00 p.m.
- 24-26: 175th St. Andrew’s Celebration
- 25: Fourth Day Workshop — Jackson Area
- 26: Bishop Gray & Bishop Coadjutor Seage at St. Andrew’s for 175th Celebration
- 31: Deadline for 31-Nov

**EVENTS**

- 24-26: Proclaiming the Good News According to Mark: Telling the Gospel Story (with The Rev. Dr. Katherine Grieb) — Gray Center
- 29-31: Mark’s Gospel and the Baptized Believer: The Cost of Discipleship & the Opportunity of a Lifetime (with The Rev. Dr. Katherine Grieb) — Gray Center

**NOVEMBER**
- 1: Bishop Gray visits All Saints’, Jackson — 6:30 p.m.
- 2: Bishop Coadjutor Seage visits St. Paul’s, Corinth — 9:30 a.m.
- 2: Bishop Gray visits St. John’s, Laurel — 10:30 a.m.
- 2: Bishop Gray visits St. Francis’, Philadelphia for 50th Anniversary
- 5: Bishop Gray visits St. Patrick’s, Long Beach — 6:00 p.m.
- 6: General Convention Deputies Meeting — St. Andrew’s — 7:00 p.m.
- 6: Bishop Coadjutor Seage visits St. Paul’s, Corinth — 9:30 a.m.
- 7: Bishop Gray visits Grace Church, Rosedale — 8:00 a.m.
- 7: Bishop Gray visits Grace Church, Rosedale — 8:00 a.m.
- 9: Bishop Gray visits St. Alban’s, Bovina — 10:30 a.m.
- 11: Finance Committee Meeting — Allin House — 11:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
- 12: Mississippi Episcopal AIDS Committee Meeting — Allin House — 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
- 12: Missions Committee Meeting — Allin House — 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
- 14-15: ECW Fall Conference with Bishop Michael Curry of the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina
- 14-16: Happening #80 Reunion — St. John’s, Laurel
- 14: Bishop Gray visits St. Patrick’s, Long Beach — 10:30 a.m.
- 14-16: Happening #80 — Trinity, Hattiesburg
- 15: Bishop Coadjutor Seage visits St. Mary’s, Bolton — 4:00 p.m.
- 15: Bishop Gray visits St. Thomas’, Diamondhead — 10:00 a.m.
- 16: Bishop Gray visits St. Thomas’, Diamondhead — 10:00 a.m.
- 16: Bishop Coadjutor Seage visits St. Mary’s, Bolton — 4:00 p.m.
- 16: Bishop Coadjutor Seage visits St. Thomas’, Diamondhead — 10:00 a.m.
- 16: Bishop Gray visits St. John’s, Leland — 11:00 a.m.
- 17: Bishop Gray visits Trinity, Hattiesburg — 10:00 a.m.
- 18: Bishop Gray visits Epiphany, Tunica — 11:00 a.m.
- 18: Bishop Coadjutor Seage visits St. Paul’s, Columbus — 10:30 a.m.
- 19: Bishop Gray visits Advent, Sumner — 10:00 a.m.
- 19: Bishop Coadjutor Seage visits St. Paul’s, Columbus — 10:30 a.m.
- 19: Bishop Coadjutor Seage visits St. Mary’s, Bolton — 4:00 p.m.
- 20-23: Clergy Conference — Gray Center
- 20-23: Allin House closed for Thanksgiving
- 23: Bishop Coadjutor Seage visits St. Pierre’s, Gautier — 10:30 a.m.
- 23: Annual Racial Reconciliation Celebration Banquet — Jackson Convention Complex — 7:00 p.m.
- 24: Bishop Gray visits All Saints’, Jackson — 6:30 p.m.
- 24-26: 175th St. Andrew’s Celebration
- 25: Fourth Day Workshop — Jackson Area
- 26: Bishop Gray & Bishop Coadjutor Seage at St. Andrew’s for 175th Celebration
- 28: Deacons’ Council Meeting — Allin House — 11:00 a.m.
- 29-31: Mark’s Gospel and the Baptized Believer: The Cost of Discipleship & the Opportunity of a Lifetime (with The Rev. Dr. Katherine Grieb) — Gray Center
- 31: Deadline for 31-Nov

**DECEMBER**
- 2: Fresh Start — Trinity, Hattiesburg — 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
- 2: Deadline for The Mississippi Episcopalian
- 3: Bishop Gray visits St. Stephen’s, Columbia — 6:00 p.m.
- 4: Fresh Start — All Saints’, Grenada — 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
- 4-7: Knitting & Needlework in Advent — Gray Center
- 5: Bishop Gray visits Grace Church, Rosedale — 8:00 a.m.
- 5: Bishop Gray visits Calvary, Cleveland — 10:30 a.m.
- 7: Bishop Coadjutor Seage visits St. John’s, Ocean Springs — 8:30 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.
- 9: Convocational Deans’ Meeting — Allin House — 11:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
- 9: Standing Committee Meeting — Allin House — 11:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
- 10: Finance Committee Meeting — St. Andrew’s — 11:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
- 13: Day on the Diaconate — Grace Church, Canton
- 14: Bishop Gray visits St. Patrick’s, Long Beach — 10:30 a.m.
- 14-16: Presbyter POC — Gray Center
- 16: Executive Committee Meeting — St. Andrew’s — 11:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
- 22-23: Allin House closed for Christmas
- 27: January 1: Winter Solstice — Gray Center
- 31: Allin House closes at noon for New Year’s Eve

### FAITHFUL DEPARTED

- Wanda P. Dlugach, 73, communicant of St. Timothy’s, Southaven, died August 4, 2014.
- Bob Buffin, 84, communicant of St. Timothy’s, Southaven, died August 25, 2014.
- Lowell Fincher, 61, communicant of St. Timothy’s, Southaven, died September 1, 2014.
- The Rev. C. Osborne Moyer, 97, retired priest, died in Meridian, September 14, 2014.
- Verma Lewis Topps, 80, communicant of Redeemer, Greenville, died September 25, 2014.

### Deployment Report

**For The Diocese of Mississippi**

**October, 2014**

**Ordinations**
- The Rt. Reverend Brian R. Seage, to be Bishop Coadjutor, Diocese of Mississippi, September 27, 2014
- The Reverend Laurence Wainwright-Maks, Ordained Deacon, to be Chaplain and Curate, Mississippi State University and Church of the Resurrection, Starkville, October 1, 2014

**New Calls/Appointments**
- The Reverend Ben Robertson, to be Rector, Chapel of the Cross, Madison

**In Transition**
- St. John’s, Aberdeen — St. Mary’s, Lexington
- St. Luke’s, Brandon — Mediator-Reeder, McComb-Magnolia
- St. Thomas’, Diamondhead — Trinity, Pass Christian
- Redeemer, Greenville — St. Francis’, Philadelphia
- St. Paul’s, Hollandale — St. Columb’s, Ridgeland
- St. Mark’s, Jackson — Incarnation, West Point
- St. John’s, Leland

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- St. Mark’s, Jackson — Incarnation, West Point
- St. John’s, Leland
Bishop Gray’s last annual visit to Southaven includes blessing of new space

By Patrick Sanders

The day before Bishop Gray’s final “official” visit with the people of God at St. Timothy’s/Southaven we were rained out on the fourteenth hole. A shame that we will never know who would’ve played the best that day, but we found grace in the fact that we would be able to dry off, re-caffeinate, clean up, and get to the church early.

I knew the place would be alive as it was being joyfully and hurriedly prepared for the unveiling of our renewed, renovated, and ready-to-be-bishop-blessed buildings. I wanted the bishop to see that—a church alive. I worried for just a moment, as Bishop Gray followed me in a downpour to my house, how the rain might be disrupting the 331 pounds of smoking pork that had been rubbed and injected with what can only be described as homemade holiness. But my faith in MOST, the Men Of St. Timothy’s, took over and that particular anxiety subsided and I was able to navigate a slippery, winding Pleasant Hill Road and get us home.

Home was alive too! Skye, our nine-year-old, finds pride in knowing the bishop and felt like Santa’s cousin was comin’ to town and Asher, our two-year-old, was confused and worried a little, I’m sure, how this strange man would impact the reliable flow of Daniel Tiger’s Neighborhood and the scooter-track running through and around the kitchen. Jennifer, my wife and mother of our soon-to-be three children, normally over-prepared and a gifted host was scrambling to get our home “bishop ready.” “I’ve been decorating a church, our second home” she said. “The house has had to work properly. Kimberly, mother of two, vestry member, and cheerleader for children, was some-what subsided and I was able to navigate a slippery, winding Pleasant Hill Road and get us home.

Just after the Mary Chapel was completed on Pentecost, communicants of St. Timothy’s gathered for a dressed-in-red Holy Spirit photo. Bishop Gray later confessed that the back roads had him turned around and he had to recalibrate his inner GPS to drive us north on Getwell Road to St. Tim’s, me in the passenger seat of his Buick holding a ridiculously awkwardly shaped and sized pan of coleslaw. You could almost hear the church breathing from a block away. It was alive. The Mary Chapel, Sunday school rooms, youth loft, and nursery make statements about their commitment to the raising up of children of God. The sacristy is a testament to the centrality of divine worship in their church. The Upper Room, the library, two kitchens, and a new parish hall are renewed pledges to systemic hospitality, not to mention an administrative wing that will allow us to systemize and achieve the new standard of inclusivity and invitation these statements are setting.

Some were even gasping as they laid eyes for the first time on these holy, holy, holy walls and imagined what might happen within them and, more importantly, spill out from them. Overdressed in his Sunday best, Bishop Gray blessed us and the work we had finished. “We will” become “we did.” But we still have so much to accomplish in the name of our Lord who gave us the strength, the patience, the resolve, and the resources to get this far. Take us farther, Lord Christ. Take us home.

The Rev. Patrick Sanders is the rector of St. Timothy’s.