At Camp McDowell we show the way the world could be through worship, learning, rest, and play in the beauty of God’s Backyard.

Executive Director
McDowell Camp and Conference Center
Episcopal Diocese of Alabama

The Episcopal Diocese of Alabama announces the national search for Executive Director of the McDowell Camp and Conference Center (Camp McDowell), one of the largest Episcopal facilities of its kind in the United States.

The successful candidate will succeed The Rev. Mark Johnston, whose 26-year tenure has been marked by keen vision, steady growth, sound business practices, and a 21st century approach to programming.

Generations of families have made lifelong memories in what they affectionately describe as “God’s Backyard,” a unique setting that has evolved from a summer camp for children to a thriving year-round center of education, outreach, environmental study, and farm culture. Camp McDowell is a popular destination for retreats and reunions for people of all faiths and traditions.

While every individual’s love for Camp McDowell is personal, a common theme prevails: a shared belief in the value of living the way the world could be, a world God is calling us to become. There has never been a more important time in modern history to make that outcome a reality.
Serving as Camp McDowell’s fourth Executive Director in 70 years, the energetic and dedicated individual who succeeds Johnston will have an exciting opportunity to set the future course and work with committed partners to continue its dynamic trajectory.

A Classic Natural Environment Built to Meet the 21st Century

Through worship, learning, rest, and play in an extraordinarily beautiful setting, Camp McDowell celebrates the care of creation, the gift of inclusion, and the joy of creativity and play. McDowell is nestled on the southernmost border of The William B. Bankhead National Forest, which is one of Alabama’s four national forests and covers more than 181,000 acres. Many of Camp’s trails share land with the National Forest, which is home to Alabama’s only National Wild and Scenic River, the Sipsey Fork.

Easily accessible by interstate highways and just one hour northwest of the Birmingham-Shuttlesworth International Airport, Camp McDowell is situated on 1,140 acres of lush forest and fields with miles of trails winding through picturesque sandstone canyons with waterfalls.

Established in 1947, the Camp and Conference Center have grown exponentially to encompass a year-round calendar of parish retreats, Diocesan and educational programs, spiritual retreats, conferences, and special events as well as the extremely popular residential summer camp for children. As careful stewards of God’s backyard, our geothermal and solar efficiencies, as well as dedicated recycling and composting, reflect Camp’s commitment to minimize its carbon footprint with a goal of zero waste.

The Camp McDowell ministry budget exceeds $4.2 million and generates almost all operating income from fees. The primary revenue sources are the Conference Center (45%), the Environmental Center (26%), Summer Camp (11%), and the Farm School (7%). Rates are among the lowest in the Episcopal Church in keeping with Camp’s mission to enable as many people as possible to afford the joys of experiencing Camp McDowell.

The Opportunity

The Executive Director will oversee and build on facilities and programs that are well established, highly respected, and enthusiastically supported by donors as well as the Diocese. The staff, numbering more than 100, includes both year-round and seasonal employees.

The Executive Director’s direct reports include the chief financial officer, the operations director, the camp nurse, and staff members who head educational programming, summer camps and retreats, the Alabama Folk School, and marketing and business development. This link will display the McDowell Camp and Conference Center Organization Chart.
Facilities and Programs at Camp McDowell

Camp McDowell welcomes more than 400 groups throughout the year, including family reunions, retreats, educational workshops, weddings, and gatherings of all kinds. On a typical weekend, Camp hosts more than a half dozen different groups of guests. Facilities include two chapels, three dining halls, 13 lodges, numerous meeting spaces, individual and dormitory-style cabins, a dance and performance facility, two pools, and extensive recreational facilities. The largest single meeting and dining hall accommodates 800 theatre-style or 500 seated dining guests.

The 780-bed Camp and Conference Center, with ensuite and private baths, includes its newest addition, Bethany Village. Bethany is a $10 million eco-friendly complex serving people of all ages and physical abilities and featuring a production teaching farm, pottery studio, blacksmith shop, and other facilities. Bethany Village is also home to Sloan Lake, fully accessible housing, and a zero-entry pool.

Our year-round calendar of programs includes:

Summer Camp on Clear Creek: A traditional residential summer camp that nurtures spiritual, social, and creative growth for children ages 5-17. Each session features a unique program theme designed by a priest from the Diocese that encourages learning through Holy Scripture, the traditional teachings of the Church, and personal and contemporary issues with themes ranging from the environment to discipleship.

Summer Camp facilitates a wide range of outdoor recreational activities on the banks of beautiful Clear Creek. No one is denied the opportunity to come to Camp McDowell due to inadequate finances and there is a generous scholarship program. (https://campmcdowell.com/summer-camps-retreats/clear-creek-camp)
**Bethany Village:** The $10 million addition of Bethany at Camp McDowell in 2015 reflects an expansion of our mission and ministries by increasing the capacity for group reservations by 85% and adding 332 beds to the Camp and Conference Center. Named for the place where Jesus’ friends lived, Bethany was an ambitious and highly successful undertaking fueled by the primary goal to do more of what Camp McDowell has already done well: show the way the world could be, a world God is calling us to become.

Bethany’s new, fully accessible complex serves more children, youth, and adults with disabilities than ever before. This includes Special Session: week-long camps for adults with intellectual and/or physical disabilities, and Bethany’s Kids: inclusion camps for 9-12 year-olds with and without disabilities. Bethany also celebrates the arts by providing a permanent platform for teaching, learning, and performing. ([https://campmcdowell.com/summer-camps-retreats/bethany-village](https://campmcdowell.com/summer-camps-retreats/bethany-village))

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**McDowell Environmental Center:** Founded in 1994, the MEC has been connecting people to their environment, teaching respect for the Earth and its beings, and promoting a commitment to lifelong learning ever since. The Environmental Center has a national reputation for excellence and is one of the largest residential environmental education program in the Southeast. There are 20 teachers on staff, all of whom have college degrees, a passion for the outdoors, and training in Camp McDowell’s student-focused approach to education. The instructor/student ratio is 1:12.

Student-centered and inquiry-based, educational programs feature forest and water ecology, earth science, canoeing, map and compass skills, and numerous other topics. Popular features include the high ropes course, access to sandstone canyons, meadows, forests, and streams. ([http://mcdowellpec.com/](http://mcdowellpec.com/))
Magnolia Nature Preschool: Established in 2016 to promote kindergarten-readiness in a nature-focused setting for families in the Camp community, the preschool also partners with Head Start to provide free programming for qualifying families in the surrounding area. (https://campmcdowell.com/educational-programs/magnolia-nature-school)

Alabama Folk School: Started in 2007, the Alabama Folk School at Camp McDowell offers multi-day workshops celebrating, among others, musicians, quilters, singers, songwriters, boat builders, and artists in contemporary media and arts. Currently there are up to 14 programs a year, more than doubling the number when the AFS was first opened. Small class sizes enable students to fully engage with their instructors in meaningful ways. (http://www.alfolkschool.com/)

McDowell Farm School: Dedicated to inspiring curiosity, teaching problem-solving, and empowering community connections through sustainable agriculture, the residential McDowell Farm School was established in 2014 to mirror the success of the Environmental School. The Farm School is a national frontrunner in our approach to school programs, workshops and retreats, and features a 40-acre working farm. Facilities include two barns, a greenhouse, a large chicken coop, and more than four acres cultivated in crop production, all utilizing sustainable practices. (http://mcdowellfarmschool.com/)
**Conference Center:** Led by a four-person staff with extensive experience in tailoring events to meet the needs of church, education, and community groups alike, the McDowell Conference Center features 13 lodges and 150 ensuite rooms. Popular facilities range from the fully restored 19th century Scott House, which can accommodate up to 24 guests, to Miller Commons, Parsley Commons and Stough Lodge, all of which feature comfortable hotel-style rooms, meeting spaces, and dining facilities for groups of various sizes. ([https://campmcdowell.com/conference-center](https://campmcdowell.com/conference-center))

**Governance Overview: The Episcopal Diocese of Alabama**

The McDowell Camp and Conference Center is an operating division of the [Episcopal Diocese of Alabama](http://dioala.org/). The Diocese owns the Camp and considers the Camp’s primary mission to be service to or on behalf of the Diocese. The Diocese is governed by the Diocesan Convention, which meets annually, and the Diocesan Council that serves as “the convention between conventions.” The Council, whose members are elected by the Diocesan Convention, meets monthly and acts as the corporation’s board of directors.

The Episcopal Diocese of Alabama was established in 1830, comprising the entire State of Alabama. The Alabama State Legislature chartered the Diocese as a non-profit corporation in 1864. Since the election of the Rt. Rev. Nicholas H. Cobb as the first Bishop of Alabama, there have been 11 elected bishops with Bishop Sloan elected in 2008 as Suffragan and in 2011 as Diocesan. In 1971, the Diocese of Alabama was divided into two dioceses: The Diocese of Alabama comprising the 48 northern and central counties of the state and the 21 southern counties together with the panhandle of Florida being formed into the Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast.
Baptized membership in the Diocese is 31,000 with 22,000 Communicants. Average Sunday attendance per congregation is 106. There are 87 congregations, three college ministry chapels, one worshipping community, plus regular Sunday worship in St. Francis Chapel at Camp. The Diocesan offices are located in downtown Birmingham, Alabama, adjacent to the Cathedral Church of the Advent.

The Department of Camp McDowell, an advisory and decision-making body for the Camp and Conference Center, is appointed by the Bishop and reports to the Council. All decisions by the Department are subject to review by the Council and certain decisions are reserved for the Council, acting on the advice of the Department.

The Bishop, The Rt. Rev. Kee Sloan, is responsible for all aspects of the Diocese, including Camp McDowell, and acts as the corporation CEO. The Executive Director of Camp McDowell serves on Bishop Sloan’s staff and is an employee of the Diocese rather than of Camp McDowell.

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**Our Neighborhood**

Camp McDowell is situated on the border of Walker and Winston Counties in northwest Alabama. We are approximately 15 miles northwest of the picturesque city of Jasper, which has a population of 14,000+. Our mailing address is Nauvoo, and our campus is about 10 miles east of the town. Camp McDowell is zoned for the Winston County School System, which is located in Double Springs.

Executive Director: Challenges and Opportunities

• Set the future vision and direction for Camp McDowell by working creatively, collaboratively, and strategically with the Diocese of Alabama, Diocesan staff, the Department of Camp McDowell, Camp staff, parishes and other stakeholders.

• Maintaining constant, focused, and transparent oversight of the Camp’s budget and financial operations by using widely accepted fiscal control practices, building needed reserves, and balancing costs to participants in terms of affordability and access.

• Develop a strategic approach and provide astute oversight of marketing all aspects of the Camp to assure consistent revenue and steady use of the facilities, including weekday usage of lodges.

• Develop programs and traditions that support our staff community (including about 25 residing on the property and another 25 living nearby) such as assigning housing, providing professional growth opportunities, maintaining competitive compensation, and ensuring a healthy and rewarding work and living environment.

• Develop a plan to oversee the maintenance, quality and use of all physical assets, including buildings, kitchens, chapels, lakes and creeks, recreation areas, trails, woods and fields.

Grow and build close relationships with groups and individuals both within and outside the Diocese needed to maintain and expand current programs and develop new ministries.

Desired Attributes and Qualifications

The Search Committee seeks a visionary leader with a strong spiritual perspective who has a proven commitment to living the way the world could be, in keeping with the mission and vision of Camp McDowell. The Executive Director has traditionally provided sacramental and pastoral functions for the Camp.

Principal functions include carrying out policies and practices as established by the Bishop, Diocesan Council, and the Department of Camp McDowell. The Executive Director leads in establishing and implementing the vision, mission, and strategic planning for Camp and supervising all day-to-day operations.

Among the desired attributes:
• Superior management, administrative, and communication skills;
• Ability to observe and evaluate all aspects of Camp operations;
• Ability to work independently yet collaboratively in decision-making with multiple constituencies;
• Proven fundraising experience and prior success in identifying, engaging, and nurturing donors while overseeing all fundraising efforts;
• Excellent leadership and interpersonal skills;
• Ability to work with diverse populations and people of all ages;
• Prior experience in an educational setting;
• Experience in managing a camp and/or conference center and supervising staff in cooperation with Diocesan ministries in developing and hosting programs and meetings;
• Ability to lead pastorally and sacramentally.
Search Process and Timeline

The Search Committee will begin the review of candidates’ resumes and application materials on December 4, 2017, and will continue to accept applications and nominations until the position is filled.

Nominations, inquiries, and applications to include letter of interest that reflects on the desired attributes, resume, and contact information for five references (who will not be contacted without permission) may be submitted electronically in confidence to: McDowellExec@dioala.org. Materials should be addressed to the Search Committee, in care of John Hicks, the Search Coordinator, who is serving the Hiring Committee.

Confidential discussions about this opportunity may be arranged by contacting John Hicks: hicks3130@gmail.com.

The Episcopal Diocese of Alabama

From 1990 to 2000, the Diocese of Alabama grew by almost 25% to a baptized membership of over 35,000 members. This growth trend is expected to continue well into the 21st century as new urban parishes are being planned at a rate of one new parish every three years.

The Diocesan leadership takes a collaborative stance in decision-making. The Diocesan Council functions similarly to the way a vestry functions in relationship to the rector of a parish. The Council deliberates, consults, guides, and acts to assist the Bishop in the nurture and extension of Christ’s Church. Leadership seeks input from those who are affected by decisions and intentionally works toward consensus.

The Diocese vigorously supports local parishes in outreach ministry. At the same time, the Diocese has sought to address the underlying problems of hunger, unemployment, and racism. Through its Department of Outreach and Mission Parish Based Outreach, grants are available to fund ministries to the poor, to prisoners, to abused children and women, and to urban ecumenical agencies in Birmingham, Montgomery, and Huntsville.
A major focus of formation and renewal within the Diocese of Alabama is the lay-led Cursillo Movement. With the full support and encouragement of its Bishops, this program for spiritual renewal has reached into almost every parish. Small groups meet weekly for mutual support and there are monthly gatherings on citywide or convocational levels for continued growth and sharing among participants. Kairos, an ecumenical weekend program for spiritual renewal in prisons, has been a direct outreach of the Diocesan Cursillo movement. In recent years, Kairos Outside, a program for spouses and families of those incarcerated, has also been initiated.

Other important Diocesan ministries include:

**The Department of Christian Formation:** The department is comprised of 16 members who are chosen by the Bishop to serve as a voice for Christian educators in the diocese. The department provides parishes with opportunities for training, community building and resource guidance utilizing the skills of trained consultants. One of the Department’s most popular courses is Ministering to Millennials, which enables parishes to understand the Millennial generation and better incorporate them into the life of the parish.

**Sawyerville Day Camp & Yellowhammer Learning Project:** Since 1993, Sawyerville Day Camp has offered free summer programming for children and youth in Greensboro, Alabama, in the heart of the Black Belt. The goals are to broaden the horizons of campers and staff, to share Christ’s love, and to improve race relations. The Yellowhammer Learning Program, an academic extension of Sawyerville Day Camp, helps close the achievement gap and prevent summer learning loss by hosting a multi-week summer learning programs where students can strengthen their literacy and math skills.

**Youth Ministries:** The Diocesan youth ministry program is designed to enhance the faith formation of our youth by broadening their spiritual development through weekend retreats and opportunities for camp and service learning during the summer. The Diocese also provides enrichment for youth workers and volunteers by offering opportunities for networking, professional development, spiritual formation, and resources for Diocesan Youth Ministers (DYM) through regular meetings as well as coaching and consulting for individual parishes.

**Youth Department:** Eleven high school students (grades 9-12) are elected by their peers to represent the Episcopal Youth Community in the Diocese. The Youth Department is a Diocesan department comprised of the 11 elected students as well as adult advisors and a Chaplain. The Department sponsors diverse events throughout the year and has a seat, voice, and vote at the monthly Diocesan Council meetings.