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Opening Address Highlights Transformation, Conflicts Within Anglican Communion

by Scott Lenoir

The Rt. Rev. Duncan M. Gray, III highlighted the council theme of transformation at the 181st Annual Council in Natchez during his Friday night address as well as frankly stating his position regarding the conflicts in the Anglican Communion.

Gray noted that transformation is about God's work as opposed to our plans, though allowing that human planning and God's work are "not necessarily antithetical to one another"

"Transformation begins to take place when we offer ourselves, our souls, our bodies, our dreams, our visions, our plans, to Almighty God. And as we make our offering we say, not 'here are our plans, bless them,' but rather, 'here are our lives, use them,'" said Gray.

Bishop Gray stated that the primary focus of his attention for the last 2½ years has been on the recovery of the Gulf Coast noting that all six destroyed churches have made significant progress in their rebuilding.

Gray said that the work of Lutheran Episcopal Services of Mississippi (LESM) continues to provide much needed services to people on the Coast who are still displaced.

The Rev. Christopher Powell, Rector of St. James' in Jackson is the chairman of the Board for LESM and the Rev. Diane Livingston heads Camp Coast Care along with many other lay people and clergy whose hands-on work continue the ground breaking relief effort



The Rt. Rev. Duncan M. Gray, III

begun in our diocese after Hurricane Katrina struck the coast.

"Volunteers continue to come to us from throughout the country...but sadly, the number of volunteers from this diocese has declined dramatically. Brothers and sisters, we still need you!" said Gray.

The Bishop also commended St. Paul's Corinth on its transition to parish status in the wake of a vacancy. "Their decision to move forward in this process speaks of their enduring vision, commitment and faith."

An academic venture was mentioned in the address which dovetails with the ongoing anti-racism training in diocese.

Under the coordination of Kathleen Jenkins Bond, Senior Warden at Trinity, Natchez, a research project has begun on the role of slavery in the Episcopal Church. Papers were delivered at a seminar at Trinity Church on Friday afternoon of the opening day of Council.

"This ongoing research will be a valuable resource for us in walking through our troubled past and into a new and redeemed future," said Gray.

Bishop Gray also commended the transforming efforts of the Honduras Medical Mission which observes its 28th year of work focusing on a new, more needy village. Also, the Panama Medical Mission continues its work with our companion diocese.

Bishop's Council Address, Continued on page 11

Alternatives To Violence Program Comes To Hinds County Detention Center

by Cathy Halford

There were approximately two and a half million people incarcerated in the United States according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, December, 2006. (Using your common sense, you must realize that this number has increased.) As of January 31, 2008, the Mississippi Department of Corrections has 22,335 men and women in total custody. Juveniles (ages 21.75 years of age and under) number 1,608. What is wrong with this picture? How can we change it?

The Diocesan Prison and Justice Committee has begun work on bringing Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) into the Hinds County Detention Center with the blessing of Chief Sheriff Malcolm McMillan, also a member of this committee. AVP began in 1975 in the New York State Prison system with the intention of helping probationers cope with the problems that had led to their delinquency. With origin and philosophy tied to the Religious Society of Friends, AVP teaches through experiential learning with a minimum of lecture. The 2½ weekend workshop consists of a series of structured experiences, or "exercises", which role play nonviolent behavior. Conflict resolution along with helping each participant to realize his/her birthright of peace and dignity can be used to build more constructive lives and healthier societies. AVP encourages each person that the transforming power to a new life lies within.

The AVP program consists of one basic 2½ day training for those who might be interested and an additional facilitator training weekend for those who want to move forward after the basic training. Four to six volunteers, who can be men and women, will act as facilitators and help conduct a weekend session in the prison community. As the number of weekends progress, those inmates who have participated and would like to become facilitators themselves may receive additional training and take part in a future weekend inside their facility.

*Alternates To Violence Program
Continued on page 10*

SALUS CRUCE
*salvation by
the cross*

Restructuring Report Submitted To Council

by Scott Lenoir

After a year and a half of work, a diocesan task force commissioned by Bishop Gray in the fall of 2006 presented a report to the 181st Annual Council recommending a new programmatic and administrative structure for the Diocese of Mississippi.

The Rev. Luther Ott, chairman of the Task Force for Programmatic and Administrative Structure for the Diocese of Mississippi, presented the complete report to council during its Saturday session.

The report was presented to the Bishop who will share it with the Executive Committee.

Bishop Gray said that after the financial challenges the diocese faced became apparent with events surrounding General Convention of 2003 and the destruction of Hurricane Katrina in 2005 the addition of a second bishop in the diocese was no longer an option.

These financial realities spurred Gray into looking for systematic alternatives to achieve the vision he had for the coming years and so the Task Force was commissioned and their "recommendations will become a part of our conversation over the next year," said Gray.

Ott stated that the Task Force worked hard to provide the Bishop with a plan which will make the diocese more responsible to the needs of its parishes and missions.

"Great care needs to be made in implementing the recommendations. The need for the bishop and staff to have a clear under-



*Restructuring task force chairman,
the Rev. Luther Ott,
addresses council.*

standing of their mission and vision is crucial," said Ott.

The plan is for the Executive Committee to, in Ott's words, "take their notepads to the parishes and missions and get a sense of what is needed in terms of diocesan support."

With that data in hand, the Executive Committee will determine how best to act on the recommendations presented in the task force report.

In response to the report, Bishop Gray commented that "some recommendations are subtle; some are dramatic, some require canonical action; others can be affected by the bishop alone; all point us toward organizing ourselves [toward creating a system] that will give structure to our diocesan vision of One Church in Mission— Inviting, Transforming, Reconciling."

The report includes three major changes in the systematic make-up of the diocese.

The first change regards the creation of a new position: Canon for Mission. This person will be the point person for mission resources for local congregations and will initiate and coordinate the missionary thrust of the diocese. According to the report, the Canon for Mission will "encourage, nurture, evaluate and recommend funding for all non-parochial ministry reporting to the Bishop and the Executive Council."

Restructuring Report, Continued on page 11

March 2008



Representatives from the newly designated Congregations for Children churches are pictured with their new certificates along with Carol Stewart, the bishop's assistant coordinating this initiative.

Congregations for Children Recognizes 12 Churches

During the 181st Council of the Diocese of Mississippi, Bishop Gray recognized 12 churches that have made the commitment to advocate for children in their communities and in our state. After a power point presentation by The Rev. Carol Stewart announcing the alarming statistics ranking Mississippi as 50th in child well-being nationally, a presentation was made by Bishop Gray to the 12 congregations who are stepping up to the plate for all children in our state. Those congregations are:

All Saints', Jackson; St. Alban's, Bovina; St. Andrew's, Jackson; St. Columb's, Ridgeland; Christ Church, Vicksburg; Holy Innocents, Como; St. Paul's, Meridian; St. John's, Ocean Springs; St. Stephen's, Columbia; Church of the Creator, Clinton; St. Peter's, Gulfport; Trinity, Hattiesburg.

To become a member of our Congregations for Children network, three actions must be agreed upon. First, learn about and advocate for at-risk children, second, become involved in a program for at-risk children in your community and third, hold a Children's Sabbath annually.

To learn more about this network, contact The Rev. Carol Stewart, Assistant to the Bishop for Outreach and Community Development. 601-948-5954 or cbstew@bellsouth.net

It's been so long since I've written in this space that it seems a re-introduction is in order, but...I'll skip it. Instead, I'll tell you that the most important event to happen in my life in the past two-and-a-half years was going home for Christmas-not to my own house, but to St. Peter's by-the-Sea, in Gulfport. The run-up to "homecoming" was hectic and just the thought of Christmas Eve back inside our beloved church seemed to promise an emotional scene. I went, armed with several handkerchiefs, fearing that I wouldn't be able to stem the flow of joyful tears.

Of course, numerous parishioners had been there in those final days, watching construction progress and priming ourselves for the big moment. When it came, however, I walked in and headed for my usual seat on the very back pew. No tears. Many of our Christmas decorations, packed away high at the top of the church, had survived and greeted us along with the usual live poinsettias. The pealing bell, admittedly, evoked a strangely eerie feeling, but other than that, it was as though nothing had happened and we'd never left our home on the beach.

For me, the biggest thrill came when I returned to the 10:30 serving rotation on Epiphany and processed up into the sanctuary for the first time as a Lay Eucharistic Minister once again.

Our church has been enlarged; we've added two new seating sections, some additional stained glass and a new, giant organ, but the original style and beauty have been retained. We are so very, very glad to be home again!

As I write this on Mardi Gras morning, I am following tradition: cooking red beans and rice and watching on television the New Orleans Rex parade where this year, a dear friend's first cousin is reigning as King of Carnival. While we along the Coast celebrate the final revelry of Carnival, many of you are planning a different tradition: the Shrove Tuesday pancake supper: All Saints, Tupelo, added a womanless beauty review to its celebration. Pancake suppers were also scheduled at Incarnation, West Point; Nativity, Greenwood; Mediator, Meridian; St. Timothy's, Southaven; and St. Paul's, Columbus, among many others. St. James, Jackson, celebrated with a children's carnival, a dinner and a parade, followed by the Liturgy of the Burning of the Palms in the Church backyard.

Carnival has now segued into Lent with numerous studies planned. St. Peter's by-the-Sea, Gulfport, is undertaking a study of The Last Week, Marcus Borg's and John Dominic Crossan's book about Jesus' last week in Jerusalem. Trinity, Vicksburg, planned a Lenten Fine Art series, followed each week by a gumbo luncheon. At Mediator, McComb, a study of the series, Living Faith, was planned. Grace, Canton, was holding weekly Lenten services at noon on Wednesdays, followed by a light lunch, highlighted by guest speakers. Communicants of St. Paul's, Columbus, were comforting and inspiring each other by writing their own book of meditations. Nativity, Greenwood, is participating in the Greenwood Ministerial Association's Lenten Series on Wednesdays during Lent. They'll also be serving Lenten lunches on Fridays with a time for worship included.

St. John's, Laurel, is also offering Centering Prayer on Monday afternoons and Thursday mornings. A five-part series on prayer is being conducted by Interim Rector, the Rev. Paul Stephens, using Sybil MacBeth's Praying in Color and Julia Cameron's The Artist's Way as resources and exploring creative ways to pray. St. John's, Ocean Springs' book discussion group is studying British religious writer Karen Armstrong's The Bible as a biography. The Lenten program is entitled "God in the Dark" and uses movie scenes to explore some of the most essential questions of human existence. St. John's is also exploring the possibility of a trip to Taize, France, to the ecumenical monastery in the first weeks of June.

Other things going on: All Saints, Tupelo's, Junior EYC had a bake sale in February as its major fundraiser for the year. All Saints, Grenada's, EYC plans a huge rummage sale to help finance their 2008 projects, including a probable trip to England. Trinity, Pass Christian's, annual St. Monica "Silver Tea" was held February 8. St. Matthew's, Kosciusko, is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year.

Notable Quotes...

"Lent is a time for 'letting go' and 'letting God' direct us along new paths, new journeys, that keep opening up that abundant life that is ours in Christ Jesus..." (St. Timothy's, Southaven). "Fast from judging others; feast on Christ dwelling in them. Fast from fear of illness; feast on the healing power of God. Fast from words that pollute; feast on speech that purifies. Fast from discontent; feast on gratitude. Fast from anger; feast on patience. Fast from pessimism; feast on optimism. Fast from negatives; feast on alternatives. Fast from bitterness; feast on forgiveness; fast from self-concern; feast on compassion. Fast from suspicion; feast on truth. Fast from gossip; feast on purposeful silence. Fast from problems that overwhelm; feast on prayer that sustains. Fast from worry; feast on faith." (St. Mark's, Gulfport)

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The Rev. Scott Lenoir
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Stations of Cross

by Suzanne Cox

Sometimes procrastination can be a good thing. In fact, maybe it isn't procrastination at all. Maybe it's doing things in God's time rather than in our time. One case in point is the way the grounds behind Saint Pierre's Episcopal Church in Gautier have developed over time.

With a good-sized area of uncleared land behind the church, there was talk for many years of creating a nature trail, and there were a few false starts, but that's about as far as it went. Then several years ago, one of the members, Bill McLaughlin, lost his older son, Brett, in a car accident, and his younger son, Kyle, wanted to honor his brother and earn his Eagle badge by building an outdoor chapel at Saint Pierre's. And so it began.

The outdoor chapel offers a quiet place for worship and contemplation surrounded by God's creation, and in time the long-ago hope of a nature trail resurfaced as a proposed prayer path. That idea planted the seed for an outdoor Stations of the Cross that would begin and end at the chapel.

With many hours of donated labor, the path began to take shape, and another member of the church offered his talents to make plaques marking the Stations along the path. Over a period of three weeks, Don Waddell crafted the fourteen stations out of treated lumber. He used chip carving to make the line drawings in a design inspired by some Stations he recalled seeing on the Internet, using paint to make the figures stand out - gold for the halos, red for the numbers, and black for the remaining lines. Each station took between two and three hours to complete.

The Stations were put in place shortly before Hurricane Katrina visited the Gulf Coast. Approximately thirty trees fell in the area around the chapel and prayer path during the storm, but not one tree to which a Station had been attached went down; all of the Stations came through the storm unscathed.

The area has since expanded to include a Memorial Garden as well. A stepping stone with the Episcopal shield marks the center of the garden, with stone benches on two sides and a brick wall of remembrance in back.

It's taken time for all of this to come into being, and while it's a wonderful area to pray and meditate - or just pause and enjoy God's gifts - through all the Church seasons, it seems to be particularly suited to walking the Stations during Lent. As we enter a season of penance, prayer, and growth, the grounds around us are gray and void of vegetation, the tree limbs above stripped of their leaves. Walking the Stations in these surroundings poignantly reflects the solemnity of Christ's journey to the cross.

Yet from these barren grounds, we'll soon see the rebirth of all that now lies dormant. Just as Jesus is raised from the grave on Easter morning, God's touch will be evident in the new life appearing all around us, creating a verdant sanctuary for our souls - all in God's time.



Woodcarver Don Waddell views number 11.



St. Pierre's Outdoor Chapel

Faithful Departed

by Catherine Johns

January, 2008

William Michael Vise, 63, communicant of St. Andrew's Cathedral, Jackson died August 28, 2007.

Isabella Glenn Phifer Pate, 89, died September 4, 2007. She was a communicant of St. Andrew's Cathedral.

George D. Craighead, 78, died September 9, 2007. He was a communicant of Mediator-Redeemer, McComb-Magnolia.

Bronson Stephen Bryant, 46, communicant of Trinity Church, Pass Christian died October 24, 2007.

Edverda "Eddy" Louise Henning, 71, communicant and former vestry member of St. Timothy's, Southaven died October 31, 2007.

Jessie Freeman Cowards, 78, communicant of St. Mark's, Jackson, died November 2, 2007.

John A. Cantrell, Jr., 58, died November 5, 2007. He was a communicant of Church of the Incarnation, West Point.

Holden Mast Clarke, 78, died November 20, 2007. He was a communicant of St. Andrew's Cathedral, Jackson.

Douglass Latimer Fontaine, 75, died December 2, 2007. He was a communicant and former warden of St. Pierre's, Gautier.

Gladys E. Paul, 90, died December 4, 2007. She was a communicant of St. George's, Clarksdale.

Alice Critz David, 79, communicant of Church of the Nativity, Greenwood, died December 4, 2007.

Rosemary Bell Hitt, 79, communicant of St. Andrew's Cathedral, died December 8, 2007.

John Maury McIntyre, Jr., 83, communicant of St. James', Greenville, died December 10, 2007.

Gladys Vickers, 70, communicant of St. Andrew's Cathedral, died December 18, 2007.

Margaret Elizabeth Roberts, 89, communicant of Church of the Nativity, Greenwood, died January 2, 2008.

Gordon Lee Smith, 90, died January 7, 2008. He was a communicant of Church of the Nativity, Greenwood.

Josephine Timberlake Nicholson, 87, communicant of St. Andrew's Cathedral, Jackson, died January 14, 2008

Gloria White Dudding, 82, communicant of Mediator-Redeemer, McComb-Magnolia, died January 15, 2008.

Inez Gilliam Lundy, communicant of St. George's, Clarksdale died January 21, 2008.

Medical Mission Leaves for Honduras Feb. 23

By Deborah Hanson, HMM Team Leader

The Honduras Medical Mission originated in 1982 with a men's Sunday School Class at St. John's Pascagoula. San Joaquin in Santa Barbara Department was visited on the second mission in 1983 and has been the focus of the HMM until this year. In addition to San Joaquin, Conception del Norte was served from 1998- 2006. This year, the annual Honduras Medical Mission has moved at the request of Bishop Lloyd Allen of Honduras. We will be serving the area of Omoa in Honduras from Feb 23 - Feb 29, 2008. Each team member pays their own expenses and is responsible for taking vacation time from work and in some cases closing their practice while they take this time to serve others. Please pray for the team members: for safety as we travel and work, for compassion as we care for the people of Honduras and each other and for a successful mission. Pray that we will see the face of Jesus in those we serve and that they will see Him in us. Your prayerful support is greatly appreciated. We look forward to bringing you a report of our mission upon our return. Take a look at our website to see information about Omoa and the mission. www.hondurasmedicalmission.net.

Medical Mission Roster

Cynthia Allen	Physician	St. Philip's, Jackson
Erin Brown	Nurse	Creator, Clinton
Wayne Brown	Support	Creator, Clinton
Jeanne Burke	Support	St. Philip's, Jackson
William Burke	Support	St. Philip's, Jackson
Cassie Cole	Sealant	St. James, Jackson
Debra Cole	Nurse	St James, Jackson
Burnice Curry	Support	Trinity, Hattiesburg
Sharon Dugger	Nurse	St. Peter's by the Lake, Brandon
Jason Dugger	Support	St. Peter's by the Lake, Brandon
Owen Evans, Jr.	Physician	St. James, Jackson
Joshua Hailey	Support	St. Alexis, Jackson
Lester Hailey	Pharmacist	St. Philip's, Jackson
Deborah Hanson	Team Leader	St. Phillip's, Jackson
Adelaide Henderson	Physician	St. Paul's, Columbus
Mark Herbert	Support	St. Philip's, Jackson
Matthew Herbert	Support	St. Phillip's, Jackson
Ray Holder	Dentist	
Courtney Leggett	Sealant	Mediator/Redeemer, Mcomb
George Leggett	Dentist	Mediator/Redeemer, Mcomb
David Lemburg	Clergy	Mediator/Redeemer, Mccomb
Troy McIntyre	Physician	Trinity, Hattiesburg
Gerald McWhorter	Support	St. Phillip's, Jackson
Walter Moore	Clergy	St. Peter's, Oxford
Holly Peebles	Physician	St. James, Jackson
Susie Phillips	Sealant	
Andy Shores	Veterinarian	St. Columb's, Ridgeland
Penny Sisson	Clergy	St. Peter's, Oxford
Edward Sisson	Support	St. Peter's, Oxford
William Strickland	Optometrist	St. Peter's, Oxford
Glen Stone	Optometrist	First United Methodist
Cheryl Wason	Nurse	St. Peter's, Oxford
Eustace Winn III	Dentist	St. James, Greenville

Events

*Nationally known
recovery speaker to visit
St. Peter's, Oxford*

St. Peter's, Oxford, welcomes Bo Cox for several presentations April 4-6. Readers of Forward Movement's *Forward Day by Day* will recognize Bo Cox as the man who penned numerous meditations for *Day by Day* while locked up in an Oklahoma prison. A longer work, the book *God is not in the Thesaurus: Stories from an Oklahoma Prison*, was also penned by Cox.

Bo Cox currently works as the Recreational Therapist at the Norman Alcohol and Drug Treatment Center where he is in charge of planning and implementing therapeutic recreational activities for over 50 inpatient substance abuse clients. He's also a senior at the University of Oklahoma, working toward his Bachelor's Degree in Human Relations.

Cox also spends some of his spare time traveling to schools, Episcopal churches and various civic organizations usually associated with the Episcopal Church where he speaks on a variety of subjects—from prison ministry to substance abuse.

Seventeen years of Cox's life, who is now 44, was spent behind bars after killing another young man in a drunken fight. A two-time college dropout, Cox was twenty-two years old when convicted. Previously an avid athlete and young scholar, Cox had been battling a serious substance abuse problem since he was fifteen.

"Although my case is extreme, one doesn't have to kill someone or go to prison for several years to realize the pain and frustration that come from making ineffective choices."

It was while Cox was incarcerated that he sobered up, started his college education and began writing. It was through his writing that he became involved with Forward Movement and known to Episcopalians nationwide.

For more information phone 662.234.1269 or log on to www.stpetersoxford.org.

Montana minister makes Mississippi home



The Rev. Maragret Ayres, who recently moved to Mississippi last year, was ordained to the priesthood Saturday, Feb. 1, 2008 (the Feast of St. Brigid) at St. James, Port Gibson and will continue serving as in that congregation.

Ayers was born in Montana; a cradle Episcopalian. She was active in Episcopal youth activities including Camp Marshall, Happening and Vocare. While attending Montana State University she became a layreader at St. James, Bozeman and was active in campus ministry.

She remained at St. James after graduating with a finance degree. She worked at Bridger Bowl Ski Area as the Ski School Administrative Assistant, Ski Instructor and later as the Ticket Office Assistant Manager. She worked seasonally as a sales associate and bookkeeper so she could return to the ski area.

At St. James, Bozeman served on the vestry three times, attended EFM, served on Christian Education and Campus Ministry committees, and attended and worked Cursillo. She served as a lay reader, Lay Eucharistic Visitor, Pastoral Care Assistant, Order of St. Luke's healing ministry team member, and volunteer hospital chaplain.

In the fall of 2004 she began seminary at the Episcopal Theological Seminary of the

Southwest, serving on committees involved with Hispanic Ministries and academic changes.

Ayers graduated May of 2007 and was called to St. James, Port Gibson. Margaret was ordained to the Diaconate June 18, 2007 at St. James, Bozeman, Montana.

We welcome Margaret to our diocese and pray for many fruitful years of parish ministry.

Anti-racism conference life changing event

by Debo Dykes

I once read of someone who had a friend who periodically lost her voice and had to speak in whispers. One day she called and whispered for fifteen minutes. It took a lot of energy for her to listen intently so that she could hear what her friend had to say.

This is what it was like to be at the anti-racism conference, "Seeing the Face of God in Each Other" during the first weekend of December 2007.

I think this is what it is like to be attentive to God. Listening attentively is essential for spiritual growth and reconciliation. The anti-racism conference offered the opportunity to open our minds and hearts to another's suffering.

The conference pulsed with awareness and compassion. And probably no quality more identifies a Christian than that of compassion.

Read through the gospel and you will find that Jesus consistently lived this quality and encouraged it in his disciples. Jesus repeatedly insisted that offering compassion to another was the same as extending it to Jesus himself.

The anti-racism conference was about God's compassion — God feeling our pain, our loss, and our suffering. The conference was so incredible and life changing. My only regret was that there were not 300 people attending instead of 30.

I am more aware and focused than ever on the great work which still lies ahead for us as Christians. As we pray each week, we can draw both inspiration and comfort from God, who is our example of how to hold the hurting ones of our world, be they black, white, Jewish, Muslim, or woman, in our hearts and offer them compassion and empowerment.



Anti-racism presenter Dr. Anita George with Bishop Green

St. Peter's Acolyte Master celebrates 40th Anniversary in Oxford



Former and current acolytes and clergy surround David Knight (second from the right, middle row) who has served forty years as Acolyte Master at St. Peter's

On Epiphany Evening, January 6th, the people of St. Peter's, Oxford, observed the annual induction of new acolytes and had a surprise celebration for David Knight on the occasion of his 40th anniversary as acolyte master. A brass and leather Gospel Book cover, candlelighter and bracket, and a framed calligraphy version of the acolytes' prayer were given to the church in thanksgiving for his ministry. Mr. Knight also received a scrapbook containing letters of congratulations and memories from former and current acolytes and clergy.



The Rev. Walton Jones was ordained to the priesthood January 23, 2008 at St. Paul's, Meridian. Jones, from Grenada, is a 2007 Sewanee grad and currently serves as curate at St. Paul's. He and his wife, Keri, live with their two dogs, Biscuits and Gravy. During off hours, Jones plays the keyboards and guitar professionally as well as "any other instrument you put in his hand" according to Gregg Proctor, rector at St. Paul's.

The Rev. Jane B. Bearden Brings Energy and Hope to the Mississippi Gulf Coast

by Carol Stewart

Jane Bearden made her way to Mississippi in February, 2007 and the Gulf Coast has been filled with her energy and hope ever since. Jane was sent to Mississippi from the Diocese of Massachusetts on a two year partnership agreement between our dioceses for the work of rebuilding after Katrina. Jane serves as the Associate Rector of the Church of the Redeemer in Biloxi and Priest in Residence from the Diocese of Massachusetts.

Massachusetts has committed not only funds to our diocese but their physical presence by virtue of Jane and the many many volunteers which she shepherds and hosts when they are on the Gulf Coast. Gift Cards, furniture and whatever is on the "needed" list finds its way in steady streams from New England to Mississippi and Louisiana. Jane's list of ideas never stops either!

Jane grew up in Louisiana and has strong family roots in Mississippi. She graduated from high school at All Saints Episcopal School in Vicksburg. When the devastation of Katrina pounded her home places, she had no choice but to respond. Her creative imagination began to run wild and together with a "Katrina Response" team from the Diocese of Massachusetts, she made her way "home". Funds continue to be raised for this work. The generosity of Episcopal Relief and Development, the Diocese of Massachusetts and the good people of

Redeemer, Biloxi have made this dream a reality.

Jane serves the parish in several capacities from youth ministry to Christian Education and pastoral care. Jane didn't waste any time in creating a vision for DeMiller Hall, the only remaining building on Redeemer's beach front property. Jane's vision poured into the congregation as they sought ways to use the facility, in addition to serving as their place of worship until the new church is built. Jane's involvement with many community organizations presented the perfect marriage between Redeemer and needed office space for the STEPS Coalition, the Inter-faith Disaster Task Force and the Mercy Community and Housing Development organization. These three organizations are at the heart of much significant recovery work and Redeemer is known as the place where this important ministry happens.

Jane is fearless and knows no strangers. She is the first female to serve Redeemer and everyone seems to welcome and appreciate all that she brings to the church and the Biloxi community.

We cannot thank the people from the Diocese of Massachusetts enough for their generosity. Their understanding of incarnational ministry is profound and Jane's love for Mississippi is obvious. Thank You Jane Bearden!!!!

Editor's note:

The article below appeared in the Battle Creek Enquirer, Battle Creek, Michigan on Nov. 15, 2007 and is reprinted here with permission. This article gives us an idea of what's being said outside of Mississippi about the Coast Recover effort.

Gulf Coast's continuing struggle to rebuild needs our support

By Dave Stubbs

"Please! When you return to your homes, tell Mississippi's story." This request was made by Diane Livingston, who is the site director at Camp Coast Care located in Long Beach, Miss.

OK, Diane. I'll try.

Camp Coast Care is part of a massive, ongoing effort made by many faith-based organizations. Their purpose is to help rebuild homes and lives in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. With dedicated and loving guidance of a small staff, the organization relies entirely on volunteer labor. Two years after the hurricane, leaders believe that it will be another eight to ten years before the job has been completed. Camp Coast Care has made a commitment to stay as long as it takes.

Thanks to the generosity of the people at St. Timothy Episcopal Church in Richland [Michigan] I recently had the opportunity to spend a week as a volunteer at Camp Coast Care. Our small party of five people was part of a group of approximately 60 people at the camp the week we were there. These volunteers were from California, Kentucky, South Carolina, Florida, Pennsylvania and Wyoming.

During the week that we were there, we were generally assigned to two homes that were in the process of being rebuilt. We hauled trash, laid ceramic tile, did wiring, plumbing, painting, roofing and other tasks. Both homes were about 10 miles inland from the Gulf Coast. For many of us, it was hard to imagine the ocean storming that far inland to a point where homes were almost completely submerged. We saw neighborhoods where many people were still living in trailers parked in the yard in front of their destroyed homes. Nearer to the sea gulf, we saw whole blocks where nothing was left except foun-

dations and piles of rubble. I had the opportunity to speak with a spirited lady who showed me water marks 5 feet up on her front room wall. Eurcerl (her name) told me that "I lost everything except my life." For most of us, it was hard to imagine what losing "everything" really means. Yet, she was like many of the people that we met. After speaking briefly about her loss, she quietly talked about how fortunate she is to still be there, and that "God has blessed me."

I know that there are many people right here in Battle Creek who need assistance and that it needs to come in a variety of ways. I am also aware that countless people are doing what they can to help. Churches, the Red Cross, Habitat for Humanity, SAFE Place, the Haven of Rest, and soup kitchens are just a few that come to mind. These people deserve all of the help and support we can give. So do the people of the Gulf Coast. They are also our neighbors. They are people on our own shores who are victims of a natural disaster of historic proportions and some feel that they have been forgotten.

Two years after the hurricane, the situation is certainly much improved. In many areas, there is scant evidence of any destruction. That is the good news. Yet, there is an enormous amount of work left to be done. We met several volunteers who were there for the third or fourth time! Some had taken their own vacation time to volunteer. It was an uplifting experience to be among them.

I intend to return to Camp Coast Care. Perhaps you or your organization would be interested in volunteering. If you would like to learn more about Camp Coast Care and how you might help, visit their Web site at www.camcoastcare.com or give them a call.

Dave Stubbs is a member of St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Battle Creek.

On the Other Side of the Barbed Wire

by Sally Fran Ross

Have you ever noticed that just when you have crossed one hurdle and lift your head to look ahead, there is another hurdle to challenge you? That's just what the New Year brings to The Storybook Project.

We bring books to inmates in the Mississippi prisons to select, read, record and send to their children. The unspoken emphasis has been on reading the books to the children. Just when our numbers are looking good in regard to how many books are read to children; just when we have met the technological challenge of bringing the recording of the readings to so many children; just when we think we can take a little breather; one of the inmates interrupts the pause from the moment. The "epiphany" came one December morning when "free-world" and inmate volunteers and I were doing organizing chores in the Storybook Library at Central Mississippi Correctional Facility. I was serious, but primarily occupied in my work, when I asked, "how many women here do you think can't read?" One of the inmates stopped working and spoke very seriously "...a lot more than you would think..." I knew the statistics, so I wasn't surprised at the answer. I was surprised at how cavalier I was when I asked the question. I was struck by how insensitive I had been to the women who could not participate in Storybook because they couldn't read.

One question multiplied into a lot more questions. Work on the library stopped. We asked each other questions... What does an illiterate woman do when she wants to send a book to her child or grandchild and she can't read? How does she explain to her children...or other inmates...why she isn't participating? What if the woman is ashamed of not being able to read? What if the shame prevents her from asking for help? Does Storybook have a responsibility to these women and children? Are we 'meddlin'? That morning all of us dabbled with possibilities without coming to any conclusions. Gradually we resumed our straightening-books work. Just before we finished, one of the inmates came to me privately and said, "I'm one of those women".

We don't have all the answers, but we are listening to the questions. I am sure that Storybook is alive because we are not complete; the program is not boxed and wrapped-up like a nice outreach project. We are looking ahead of where we are...just like the inmate who cannot read. Her courage to speak about her illiteracy bubbled forth like oil in a distant field, rich with potential.

The illiterate woman at CMCF will be released. She has children and grandchildren who need her to meet her challenges as a model for them as they meet their challenges. Their chances of being incarcerated themselves are increased just because of her incarceration. The words of this woman, in her courage is a sign of hope on one side of the fence. How can we respond from our side of the side of the barbed wire?

Coast Episcopal School Expands Toddler Program with help from Episcopal Relief and Development

Coast Episcopal School Breaks Ground for Toddler Building

by Carol Stewart

December 14, 2007 was a most exciting day for Coast Episcopal School. Toddlers and pre-schoolers as well as clergy and administrators wearing hard hats and swinging small shovels, broke ground for the new Toddler Building.

With funds from ERD, the toddler program will be able to expand its faculty and provide scholarships for children otherwise not able to attend the school. Additional funds for the building were provided by supporters of the school and a grant from the Gulf Coast Community Foundation.

On hand for the ceremony on the beautiful December morning were city officials, coast clergy, parents, teachers, administrators and lots of children. The Rev. Carol Stewart, Assistant to the Bishop for Economic and Community Development, as well as The Rev. Diane Livingston, ERD diocesan network representative, took part in the festivities.

The lack of affordable quality child care has been a serious issue facing the Coast since Katrina destroyed Mississippi's lower six counties. The stress this has placed on parents serves to complicate the rebuilding process. This ground breaking represents progress not only for the school, but also for Long Beach, Pass Christian, Harrison County and the entire Gulf Coast community.

The diocese and Episcopal Relief and Development are proud of the part they were able to play in making this celebration a reality.

COUNCIL 2008

Rubrixx "Soothe the Soul... with Rock' n' Roll" at Annual Council

by Debo Dykes

It was "the Rev." Bob Seger who once sang, "Still like that old time rock' n' roll... That kind of music just soothes the soul..." And "Soothe the Soul" was just what the Rubrixx did Saturday night at Annual Council!

While Charlie Deaton, Bryan Owen, Scott Lenoir, and Alston Johnson, rocked the house with good ole rock' n' roll music, hundreds burst onto the dance floor to reminisce about days of old. First on the dance floor were the women. Humm...reminds me of a story, "And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they (the women) went to the tomb." As Rubrixx rocked and the women danced, others joined in the celebration of the 181st Annual Council of the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi festivities. Who would have thought that four lil' ole' priests from Mississippi could transform Ms. Wilhemine Damon, 84 years old, from Meridian, into an "18 year old" who out-danced, out-lasted, and out-shined everyone on the dance floor. Keep on dancing Ms. Damon! And...keep on playing RUBRIXX!

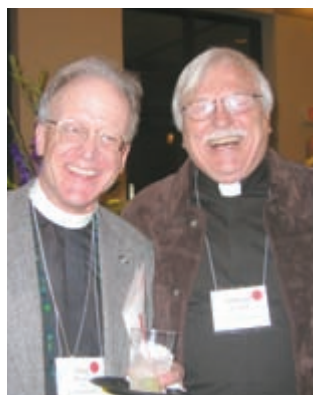
(To view photos from the 181st Annual Council go to [www.dioms.org / News & Events / Event Photos](http://www.dioms.org/News%20&%20Events/Event%20Photos). Or, type this link into the search bar on your computer.) http://www.dioms.org/photos/convention_photos_2008.html



Elected Deputies for General Convention are (l.tor.) Jack Conway (Alt), Anita George (Dep), Edward O'Connor (ClergyDep), David Johnson (ClergyDep), Greg Proctor (ClergyAlt), Bobbie Marascalco (Dep), Danny Meadors (Alt), Margaret McLarty (Alt), Ed Sisson (Dep), Kathryn McCormick (Dep), David Knight (ClergyAlt), Ruth Black (ClergyAlt), Ollie Rencher (ClergyAlt), Chp Davis (ClergyDep).



Newly Elected Diocesan Officers are: (l.tor.) John Carrier (Std.C), David Elliott (Sewanee Trustee), Paul Stephens (Ecc.Trial Ct.), Ann Whitaker (Ecc.Trial Ct.), William Ndisbabandi (Std.C), Maruie White (ExCom), Brian Ponder (ExCom), Chan Osborne de Anaya (Std.C), Taylor Moore (ExCom), Sberi Cox (ExCom), Emily Williams (ExCom), Roger Clapp (EccTrialCt.)




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COUNCIL 2008



 **Rubrixx** enjoyed rocking Council!
Thanks for the good time and all the good words.
Alston, Bryan, Charlie and Scott
For classic rock & blues, book the 'brixx for your next event.
Call the Rev. Scott Lenoir, 601-856-8234

Thank you to Jim Carrington and Debo Dykes for their photographs at Council.

Resolutions Adopted By The 181st Annual Council

RESOLUTION 2008-#1 - SUBSTITUTE RESOLUTION AFFIRMATION OF UNIQUENESS AND LORDSHIP OF JESUS CHRIST

Substitute Resolution Proposer: the Rev. Craig R. H. Gates
Whereas, the Diocese of Mississippi meeting together in the 181st Annual Council reaffirms the uniqueness and lordship of Jesus Christ by saying the ancient Creeds of the Christian Church both in their opening service and in the closing Eucharist, in the traditional Anglican way of uniting our voices in communal prayer; and we affirm this uniqueness and lordship of Jesus Christ each and every Sunday in our Church's celebration of the Eucharist and daily in the Offices of Morning and Evening Prayer; we therefore *Resolve* to remind each Episcopalian to be mindful of the power of these corporate affirmations of Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior and commend each member of the Church to carry the Good News of Jesus Christ's saving Grace to the world outside the door of our Churches.

Action: Adopted by Council on 1/26/08
Original resolution, as printed in the *MS Episcopalian*, was rejected by Council on 1/26/08, as the proposers of the original resolution accepted the substitute.

RESOLUTION 2008 -#3: EARTH STEWARDSHIP

Submitted by: The Rev. Carol Stewart and the Rev. Rose Mary Foncree
Be it resolved that the 181st Annual Council of the Diocese of Mississippi urges every vestry and mission committee to request that every sermon or homily on April 27, 2008 (the Sunday nearest Earth Day) incorporate specific recommendations to communicants to increase responsible stewardship of God's Creation and that the text of Bishop Gray's 2008 letter (see below) on Earth Stewardship be either read out loud as part of the sermon/homily or printed in full in the church bulletin or provided to the parish or mission in an appropriate manner on Sunday April 27, 2008.

Letter from Bishop Gray
Sept. 15, 2007

As your Bishop, I must at times bring important issues to the forefront within the diocese. The state of the world is now such that all of us in Mississippi need to reexamine the moral responsibility that we have to protect God's Earth. The Creation surrounding us is a constant reminder of God's Grace given to his people. Our actions must honor that grace. As Episcopal Bishop of Mississippi I joined my fellow bishops from the surrounding southeastern states in 2003 to urge our parishes and missions to take on the joyful, weighty responsibility of stewardship of the earth that sustains us all. In our joint letter, we urged congregations to educate their members on relevant environmental issues in each diocese. In Mississippi, we emphasized recycling, environmental education for children and adults, and education on water issues. The larger issue of climate change was not squarely addressed at the time and was not in the forefront of our message on environmental ministry. For me, this has changed. As Christians we are stewards of God's Creation and have a duty and obligation to take care of the earth and its living systems. We feed ourselves by planting in the soil, we drink the earth's fresh water and are baptized in it, and we breathe its air. This earth is a gift from God that sustains humanity and all of life. "Global warming" appears to be happening in our time though its possible causes generate disagreement. If real, its results include severe damage to our children's future, the health and future of our communities, and the health of generations yet unborn. Because the consequences could be so dire, and because human actions are demonstrated to be likely causes, we cannot afford to delay action. We Christians, like most Americans, consume material things and energy at a rate never before seen in human history. I hope you will agree that conservative use of energy, fuel, and water, along with the reduction of waste and pollution are all ways to honor God's Grace toward us. As your Bishop, I encourage you as an individual, parish, or mission, to recycle if you are not now doing so. I urge you to learn about and implement the actions outlined in the "Climate Change Top Ten". This list and other materials to help you understand climate change, and lists of recommended actions for individuals and for congregations will be made available at (www.dioms.org) the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi's website. I hope that you will make use of these resources as they are a solid source of reference on this topic. As your Bishop I ask senior and junior wardens and priests of every parish and mission in Mississippi to take action now. Identify someone in your congregation to coordinate recycling, energy conservation, and education of all your members in promoting care of the earth. In short, start an environmental ministry in your church now. Our churches must lead by example. I further encourage and expect all wardens and priests to support this environmental ministry as an essential part of our response to the gifts we enjoy from our Creator. Time is of the essence in caring for this rare and beautiful gift God has given us, this earth, our island home. Thank you for your time and action on this issue. I look forward to hearing about the progress of our individual parishes and missions in the very near future.

RESOLUTION 2008- # 6 - MISSISSIPPI GULF COAST

Proposer: Resolutions Committee
RESOLVED, that the 181st Annual Council of the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi affirm Bishop Gray's request for parishes and missions to renew their commitment to the process of building anew the Mississippi Gulf Coast and encourage all persons to endeavor to support with their time, talents, and treasure the transformation and restoration already begun.

RESOLUTION 2008 - #7 - AFFIRMING BISHOP GRAY'S CALL TO MISSION

Proposer: Resolutions Committee
RESOLVED, that the 181st Council of the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi affirm Bishop Gray's call to us in his address to this Council for a renewed commitment to transformative and life-changing mission as "We seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbor as ourselves" (BCP, p. 305) and that we actively work to discern how the Holy Spirit is calling us to meet the needs in our communities and to beacons of hope in the world.

COURTESY RESOLUTION - BLANCHE ALDRIDGE

Proposer: Resolutions Committee
Whereas, Blanche Aldridge has served her Lord faithfully for 100 years; and, Whereas, she has been to numerous Councils of this Church as a delegate from Calvary Church, Michigan City; and, Whereas, she was Bishop Gray's elementary school principal and (we can attest) schooled him well; be it therefore, **RESOLVED**, that this 181st Annual Council of the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi give thanks to God for Blanche Aldridge and wish her a very happy birthday, by standing to honor her.
Action: Resolution adopted by Council with a standing vote in her honor.

COURTESY RESOLUTION - TRINITY CHURCH, NATCHEZ

Proposer: Resolutions Committee
Whereas, we have come down the river again to the place of our birth; and, Whereas, we once again have had the great gifts of the 186 year old Trinity Church bestowed upon us; and, Whereas, we enumerate those gifts to be hospitality and graciousness, coupled with the wondrous quality of gourmet delights; and, Whereas, the Rev. Zabron "Chip" Davis has once again brought all of his talents to bear on providing his brothers and sisters a wonderful-if quite wet and cold-experience of this great river city as we walked, drove, but mostly bused around it; and, Whereas, Fr. Chip's talents would have been lonely indeed, if it were not for the added talents of the Rev. Brandt Dick, Pat Dickens, Ann Siddall, Anne McNeil, the vestry of Trinity and the many volunteers for the many, many tasks; and, Whereas, the womb of this diocese warms every heart and nourishes every soul in attendance, regardless of the temperatures and precipitation which God has brought; be it therefore, **RESOLVED**, that we unanimously affirm our undying debt and gratitude to Trinity and promise that as soon as we are invited, "We'll be coming down the river again;" and be it further **RESOLVED**, that we now take to our feet and show our brothers and sisters of Trinity our grateful thanksgiving for each and every one of them.
Action: Adopted by standing ovation of the 181st Annual Council of the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi.

2008 diocesan budget adopted by Council

Diocesan Treasurer, Ed Thurmond, asked Council to approve a \$2,607,973.00 budget during a Saturday business session. The motion to approve passed unanimously. The adopted budget is in the red by \$14,701.00, a deficit figure which was significantly reduced from earlier budget proposals. To view budget specifics for the Diocese of Mississippi, contact your clergy or members of your church delegation to see the narrative budget booklet printed in an easy to understand format, or contact the diocesan office.



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181st Annual Council Consent Agenda

1. Finance Resolutions:

RESOLUTION ON CHURCH SCHOOL MISSIONARY OFFERING

RESOLVED, that the 181st Annual Council of the Diocese of Mississippi recommends to the several parishes, missions, and mission stations of the Diocese that their 2008 Church School Missionary Offering be given to our companion Diocese of Panama.

RESOLUTION ON ACTS OF TRUSTEES OF THE DIOCESE

RESOLVED, that all the acts of the Trustees of the Diocese of Mississippi, a Mississippi corporation, done by them on behalf of said corporation during the year 2007 be, and the same are, hereby ratified, confirmed and approved.

RESOLUTION ON COUNCIL OFFERING

RESOLVED, that offering at the closing Eucharist of the 181st Annual Council be split between the Episcopal Relief and Development Fund and the 150th celebration of the University of the South.

2. Place of Meeting

RESOLUTION FOR 182nd ANNUAL COUNCIL

RESOLVED, that the 181st Annual Council of the Diocese of Mississippi accept the invitation from our communicants in Hattiesburg to host the 182nd Annual Council to be held February 6-8, 2009.

3. Necrology

RESOLUTION FOR THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED

WHEREAS, the 181st Annual Council of the Diocese of Mississippi remembers with respect its former members now departed, be it therefore

RESOLVED, that the names of all such members of Council who have departed this life since the date of the last Council be remembered in the closing Eucharist of this Council and that a page with a prayerful preface be set aside in their memory in the journal of this Council.

Nominations and Elections

Treasurer: Mr. Ed Thurmond, St. Mary's, Lexington; Delta
Trustee: Mr. Mike Strojny, St. Mark's, Gulfport; Coast
Sewanee Trustee: The Rev. David Elliott, St. Andrew's, Jackson; Central

Ecclesiastical Trial Court:

The Rev. Paul Stephens, St. John's, Laurel; Sowashee
The Rev. Ann Whitaker, Creator, Clinton; Central
Mr. Roger Clapp, St. Andrew's, Jackson; Central
Mrs. Maurie White, St. Peter's, Oxford; Northern

Executive Committee:

Ms. Sheri Cox, St. James, Jackson; Central
Mrs. Emily Williams, St. Columb's, Ridgeland; Central
The Rev. Taylor Moore, St. Peter's, Oxford; Northern
The Rev. Brian Ponder, Resurrection / MSU; Starkville

Standing Committee:

Mr. John Carrier, St. Paul's, Meridian; Sowashee
The Rev. Chan Osborn de Anaya, Christ, Vicksburg; Old River
The Rev. Dr. William Ndishabandi, All Saints/JSU, Jackson; Central - one year term

General Convention Deputies - Clergy

The Rev. Chip Davis, Trinity, Natchez; Old River
The Rev. Canon David Johnson, Diocesan Office, Jackson; Central
The Very Rev. Edward O'Connor, St. Andrew's, Jackson; Central
The Rev. Sylvia Czarnetzky, Chapel of the Cross, Madison; Central

General Convention Deputies - Lay

Dr. Anita George, Resurrection, Starkville; Tombigbee
Dr. Ed Sisson, St. Peter's, Oxford; Northern
Canon Kathryn McCormick, St. Andrew's, Jackson; Central
Mrs. Bobbie Marascalco, Holy Trinity, Vicksburg; Old River

General Convention Alternates - Clergy

The Rev. Dr. Ruth Black, St. Andrew's, Jackson; Central
The Rev. Ollie Rencher, Ole Miss/St. Peter's Oxford, Northern
The Rev. David Knight, St. Patrick's, Long Beach; Coast
The Rev. Greg Proctor, St. Paul's, Meridian; Sowashee

General Convention Alternates - Lay

Mrs. Margaret McLarty, St. Andrew's, Jackson; Central
Mr. Ed Thurmond, St. Mary's, Lexington; Delta
Mr. Danny Meadors, St. Patrick's, Long Beach; Coast
Mr. Jack Conway, St. Philip's, Jackson; Central

"I will not make peace with cynicism and despair." - Bishop's Council messages set forth future of our Church

By Debo Dykes

Two and a half years after hurricane Katrina hit the Mississippi Gulf Coast and changed hundreds of thousands of lives forever, the 181st Episcopal Diocese Annual Council reflected the changes that have occurred in the way the Episcopal Church of Mississippi has come to understand itself and the challenges it faces in the near and long term future.

In his closing Eucharist homily, The Rt. Rev. Duncan M. Gray, III said, "Change is doing something differently. Transformation is becoming something more. Change is substitution. Transformation is discovering our truest identity in Christ and being called out of falsehood into what is most true about what God has created in ourselves, in our church and in the larger world."

It has already become a part of our common oral history that during the weeks and months following Katrina, Episcopalians of every stripe and confession worked together to restore lives and congregations. That shared courageous and generous response has already begun to transform us, and that transformation continues.

In true Anglican spirit, the 181st Annual Council mixed together an impressive array of dynamic elements. There was an election of deputies, alternates, and committee members; the air was filled with green-FOR and orange-AGAINST placards vying for recognition and support of resolutions; there were impassioned discussions and calls for questions; there was a significant number of committee reports; there was joy over the birthing of a new parish and grieving over the passing of an old one; and young voices chanted noon day prayers against a background of rhythmic drumming created by youthful performers.

A strategic report from the Task Force for Programmatic and Administrative Structures was given that offered new direction for the future of the diocese which is detailed on page one of this paper.

Sometimes the best ending is promised in a good beginning. No one at this year's Annual Council would fail to recognize that we Mississippi Episcopalians have been living through difficult times. Challenges and hardships have come in many different forms: a category five hurricane that left so many wounded and desolate; issues of dissension in our world wide communion; and economic and property loss by the diocese.

The 181st Episcopal Diocese Annual Council could have begun in any number of ways to mirror the diverse issues that divide the Episcopal Church today. That would be understandable; however, Bishop Gray began Council by calling for a change in the way we envision, understand, and interpret the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion.

"I will not make peace with cynicism and despair. I will not live in Underland. I dare to believe that the empty souls, empty stomachs, and empty minds, of the people Christ died to save are of deeper importance to God than any particular ecclesiastical polity. I dare to imagine a deeper and more mysterious unity that when discovered, will transform our [spears] into plowshares and swords into pruning hooks. I'm on Aslan's side even if there isn't any Aslan to lead it. I'm going to live as much like a Narnian as I can even if there isn't any Narnia. I'm going to live like an Anglican - in respect and forbearance and comprehensiveness - even if there appears to be no Communion," said Gray referring to images in C.S. Lewis's *The Silver Chair* in the *Chronicles of Narnia* series.

Bishop Gray's clarity and commitment serves to focus our awareness on the unifying and transformative work initiated in the aftermath of hurricane Katrina. We are "One Church In Mission".

Create in me a clean heart, O God,

And renew a right spirit within me.

Cast me not away from your presence

And take not your holy Spirit from me.

Psalms 51

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Ring Around the Collar

Editor's Note: For many folks just the mention of "Lent" brings to mind six long weeks of giving up something they enjoy or taking on something they don't really want to do. There are those who observe Lent to the letter of the law, but not necessarily the spirit. A man of my acquaintance used to say that he was giving up watermelon for Lent. Yet, giving up, taking on or being wisby -washy is not what Lent should be about. The following essay by Fr. Chip Davis, rector of Trinity, Natchez addresses that.

Lives of grace - filled with Joy!

You bid your faithful people cleanse their hearts, and prepare with joy for the Paschal feast; that, fervent in prayer and in works of mercy, and renewed by your Word and Sacraments, they may come to the fullness of grace which you have prepared for those who love you. (Preface for Lent, BCP p.379)

First, as we come to the close of another Lent, we are reminded of the purpose of our Lenten observance: **so that we may come to the fullness of the Grace that God has prepared for us.**

Second, we are reminded of how this happens: **by our fervent prayer, our works of mercy, and the renewal which comes by our participation in God's Holy Word and Holy Sacraments.**

Ever wonder why there isn't much joy in the world these days? My hunch is that many good Christians have forgotten these two things and have fallen into the trap of being anxious about our **security**. The political pollsters tell us that the hottest political topic in this election season is security. Are we? If not, why? If we are, why? Did one do enough or did they not?

I believe the possibility exists that we Christians have forgotten that our security rests in one thing and one thing only: The mercy and grace of our God as revealed through the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. If the polls are correct in asserting that we believe that the safety of our bodies is the most important thing in creation then we've missed the point of Lent...maybe even the entirety of the Good News of Jesus Christ. Simply stated: If our focus is on ourselves, our souls and bodies, then we have forgotten the sacrifice we are called to and the assurances given to us in our baptism.

Like our Lord and Savior, we are called to be "risk takers" for God. The risks he took were the cause of his death. When we listen to those who promise us security or those who cause us anxiety about the lack of safety and measure the peace of our lives in response to their promises or warnings, we waste the gift and assurance of Jesus Christ we have been given!

May God grant us the peace that passes all understanding and the strength and courage to live our lives as Jesus lived his. May our inevitable fears not become the foundation of our lives. Rather may our Trust in Him be that which fills us with Joy!

Those Remembered at Council's Closing Eucharist

In Memoriam

Walter Reed Hillen, Jr
Mertis Renfrow Miles
William Harry Frazer, Jr.
Donald Edwin Walsh
George Edgar Donavan, Jr.
Virginia Hague Stephens
Angele Anne Kazar McClure
Charles M. Deaton, Sr.
James Money Vardaman
Thomas Hastings Greer, Sr.
Dana Clifton Moore, Jr.
Joan Hallock Turner
Mary Ella Battle Ethridge
Robert Harvey Henderson
James Lee Hopkins
Douglass Latimer Fontaine

Resurrection, Starkville
All Saints, Jackson
St. George's, Clarksdale
St. Paul's, Woodville
St. Andrew's, Jackson
Mediator-Redeemer, McComb-Magnolia
Holy Innocents', Como
Nativity, Greenwood
St. Andrew's, Jackson
Resurrection, Starkville
Calvary, Cleveland
All Saints', Grenada
All Saints', Jackson
Advent, Sumner
St. Mark's, Jackson
St. Pierre's, Gautier

January 10, 2007
January 21, 2007
March 17, 2007
April 14, 2007
April 14, 2007
April 20, 2007
May 2, 2007
June 6, 2007
August 4, 2007
August 25, 2007
September 20, 2007
October 3, 2007
October 7, 2007
October 7, 2007
October 16, 2007
December 2, 2007

Former Bishops of Mississippi

William Mercer Green
Hugh Miller Thompson
Theodore DuBose Bratton
William Mercer Green, II
Duncan M. Gray
John Maury Allin

February 13, 1887
November 18, 1902
June 26, 1944
November 12, 1942
June 25, 1966
March 6, 1998

Father of all, we pray to you for those we love, but see no longer: Grant them your peace; let light perpetual shine upon them; and in your loving wisdom and almighty power, work in them the good purpose of your perfect will; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Alternates To Violence Program

Continued from page 1

AVP is a "win-win-win" situation. Participants, whether in prison or in the community, win because they get the training they need to cope with violence, both their own and others. The AVP facilitators win because they have an opportunity to improve their leadership skills, get new insights about themselves, other people and a nonviolent life. Prison administrators and staff win by hosting a program that will improve the level of cooperative and nonviolent behavior in their institutions, making their jobs more rewarding. Communities win and community life is enhanced when their members learn new skills to cope with violence and build community.

Listen! Is that God calling you to become part of this ministry that empowers people to lead nonviolent lives through affirmation, respect for all, community building, cooperation, and trust?

If you are interested in learning more about Alternatives to Violence Project, please contact Cathy Halford (601-607-3096 or chalford48@yahoo.com).



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Janet C. Nail

There is a tide in the affairs of men, which, if taken in flood—will sweep you out to sea without a life raft!

It began in late June, when we got a phone call from my sister-in-law: my youngest brother was in the hospital with pneumonia. This was worrisome; Joe is like me, he's never sick. Three hours later, another call, this time in tears: a nurse had noticed some signs she didn't like and had had Joe moved to CCU. This is not good.

After a couple of weeks and two more hospital stays Joe was diagnosed with cardiomyopathy (that sent me to my dictionary, to be sure) and the doctor was sure that he could control it with medication-and, by the way, our other brother had gotten the same diagnosis.

In September, another phone call. Joe is back in the hospital, he can't breathe and his heart is acting up. Oh, and by the way, our brother David told us that his wife had just had surgery for a brain tumor.

Having been floored by all this, I was fortunately sitting down when the next blow came: David was in the hospital with pneumonia and congestive heart failure-and he had almost left it too late to go

What had we Stewarts done?

Whatever it was, it must have been big. The Sunday before Christmas I fell and broke my wrist. I must agree with my eldest son, though; I got off light compared to my brothers!

How does one cope when faced with such waves of bad news?

Well, I agree with Kathleen Norris; nothing helps but praying the Psalms.

Maybe it is my background in English literature. Maybe it is my childhood in an evangelical church. Whatever the reason, I love the Psalms. I love the music of them, the passion, the beauty of those glorious words.

"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help."

Being raised on King James, I resented the change in punctuation in other versions, until I read Robert Graves' book GOOD-BYE TO ALL THAT. As far back as his childhood scholars knew the verse ended in a question mark; but, he said, the beauty of that statement, as opposed to that question, kept him remembering the stately Elizabethan words in the trenches of the Great War.

So I say, as my hand flops uncontrollably when the brace is removed; as my brother is on a list for a heart transplant; as my youngest brother, a healthy marathoner, uses an inhaler to get him from his front door to his mailbox: I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help; my help cometh from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth."

No other part of the Bible speaks so personally to us. And no other part of the Bible is studied less, it seems!

But the A-V Center has help for you. I was moved to purchase a program, JOURNEY THROUGH THE PSALMS, that will help you to understand and to appreciate the Psalms.

Why should we study the Psalms?

As a "school of prayer," the psalms teach us that there are many different kinds of prayer and many different ways of praying to God. They express the entire range of human emotion-fear, praise, anger, joy, thanksgiving, and despair-experienced in the context of our relationship to God. Living with the psalms enables us to be honest as we faithfully bring our whole life before God.

The course is presented in eight sessions on DVD. Each session begins with a prayer, then a brief activity designed to focus participants' thoughts and attention on the central issue of the class. The video segment is typically 10 to 15 minutes in length, then students are offered another activity. Finally, there is group discussion, conclusion and closing prayer.

If you would like to use this resource for your young people or for your adults, call me at 662-746-5557 to request it. Or e-mail me at grandmastruck1994@yahoo.com. I think you will be glad you did.

Bishop's Council Address, Continued from page 1

The Bishop announced that a new relationship is developing with the church in Uganda. The Rt. Rev. Zebedee Masereka, will join Bishop Gray, who visits Uganda this fall, to explore ways that the Diocese of Mississippi can assist in Bishop's Masereka's efforts to help those with HIV/AIDS related ministries. Masereka's own Archbishop is one of the one of the most vocal critics of the Episcopal Church yet has given support to this new venture which, like many positive developments in the Church, goes unreported by the mainstream press.

One of the most powerful points Bishop Gray made during his address involved a ministry that is so integrated into our mission and ministry that its impact is often ignored: Cursillo.

"If your image of Cursillo is that of a silly weekend with roosters please listen. Without the Cursillo Movement... there would be no Happening and Vocare programs—experiences that have dramatically touched the lives of so many young people; without Cursillo there would be no Kairos...in our state prisons; without...Cursillo, there would be no Honduras Medical Mission; no Panama Medical Mission...no conference facilities at Gray Center, said Gray who emphasized his support by concluding, "I believe in this movement and I invite you to think again about its possibilities for your life and the life of your congregation."

Bishop Gray acknowledged that the church faces many challenges not the least of which are Katrina recovery and the issues within the Anglican Communion stemming from General Convention in 2003; however, Gray pledged to attend to more in-house work in 2008.

"Let me state that in the coming year there will be much more focus on the internal life of this diocese," said Gray.

The Bishop cited work with Gray Center, where he recently appointed himself as Chairman of the Board of Managers.

Gray said, "I take this action in order to work directly with Gray Center's leadership in focusing on some lingering problems that will impact this extraordinary ministry if not addressed by a partnership of bishop, board and staff."

The Bishop also remarked in detail on the task force report on the reorganization of the diocese's administration and program structures which was presented to Council. Details of that report are printed in a separate article in this edition of the Mississippi Episcopalian.

Bishop Gray concluded his address by frankly addressing the high level of frustration experienced by him and others regarding the "field day" the press, both secular and religious, are having with conflicts in the Anglican Communion, many of which are in the civil court system.

These conflicts have manifested themselves through the unauthorized visits of African Primates to the Episcopal Church in the United States, and particularly in the Diocese of Mississippi, in violation of the Windsor Accord and the Archbishop of Canterbury's request that such visits cease.

Noting that Anglican Communion is actually in the process of "becoming" a true communion, Gray said, "This slow process... will have its moments of clarity and seasons of great confusion and distress.... I am not sure I can tell you what the Anglican Communion will look like when this period of wrestling is and discernment is over. But I am sure that the fullness of this new thing will not be made clear until long after I have finished being your bishop."

In the meantime, Gray pledged his best to enable the transforming power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ through his leadership; although, he acknowledges the weariness that often overcomes him when "so much time and energy is spent engaged in imagined conspiracies on the left and the right."

"Let me suggest, as I have tried to do over all these years, that there are souls to feed with the good news of Jesus Christ; there are bodies to feed with bread; there are spirits to feed with hope. There really is time. The Lord would have us do nothing less."

For a complete copy of the transcript of the Bishop's Address, log on to www.dioms.org.

Restructing Report, Continued from page 1

"It needs to be emphasized that the Task Force envisions that the Canon for Mission will not interfere in the relationship between the Bishop and parishes or missions or in parish ministries and programs," said Ott.

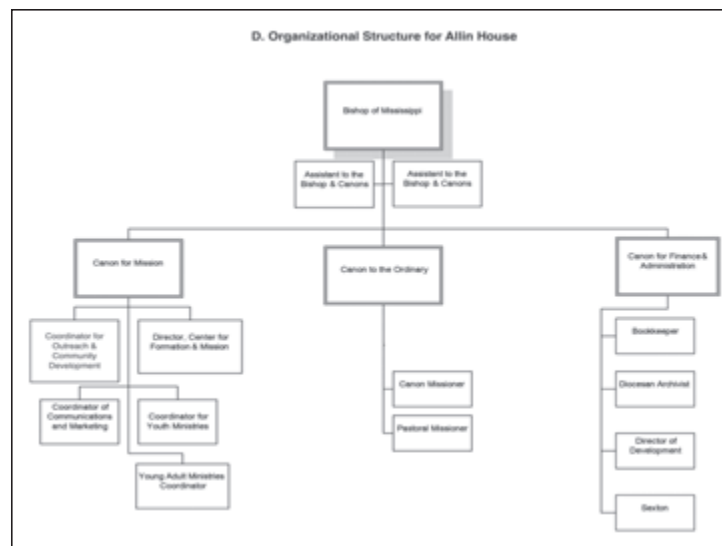
Bishop Gray spoke at council supporting the concept creating a third Canon for the diocese: "I am convinced that a Canon for Mission is precisely what is needed. He or she would provide for more direct involvement in our existing ministries than I have been able to do. Neglected areas such as stewardship, evangelism and education could again become vital resources for local congregations."

The second major change is the merger of three diocesan committees: the Standing Committee, Executive Committee and Trustees will be joined as the Executive Council with 12 members. The only exception to this is when particular business requires the council act in the name of the Standing Committee only.

According to Bishop Gray, "the handful of dioceses that have made such a change have found what has been given up in the checks and balances of the current structure, has been more than offset by extraordinary synergy and the capacity to move quickly and creatively with significant missionary initiatives."

The third major change recommended is that all committees and future ministry and mission initiatives will organize as either task forces or ministry teams. The work assigned will be finite in duration and given a limited time to function.

There are two groups currently existing that will remain operational under the recommendations of the task force: the Commission on Ministry and the Gray Center Board of Managers.



Besides Chairman Luther Ott, others serving on the Task Force for Programmatic and Administrative Structures were: Frances Christian, the Rev. Chuck Culpepper, the Rev. Bill Hanna, the Rev. Canon David Johnson, the Rev. Elizabeth Wheatley-Jones, the Rev. Canon Bill Livingston, Canon Kathryn McCormick, Margaret Mitchell, Alice Perry, the Rev. Ollie Rencher, the Rev. Dennis Ryan, the Rev. Brian Seage, Ed Sisson, Will Skelton.

"I am so indebted to the work of the Task Force," said Ott, "they did a great job and who the members are lends a lot of credibility to this report."

To see view the complete report from the Task Force log onto www.dioms.org.

BISHOP'S SCHEDULE & DIOCESAN EVENTS

MARCH

- 1
 • Standing Committee, Gray Center - 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
 • Planned Giving Conference, Saint James', Jackson - 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.
 • Commission on Ministry, Gray Center
- 2
 Bishop Gray visits:
 • St. Mark's, Gulfport - 9:30 a.m.
- 2-4
 • Presbyter POC, Gray Center
- 3
 • Gray Center Executive Committee, Gray Center - 2 p.m.
- 4
 • Trustees, Allin House - 2 p.m.
- 5
 • Deacons' Council, Allin House - 11 a.m.
- 6
 • Search Consultants, Allin House - 10:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
- 7
 • House of Bishops, Camp Allen, Texas
- 7-9
 • Seeds of Faith Conference, Mediator, Meridian
- 17-19
 • Sacred Stiches Conference, Gray Center

- 21-24
 • Allin House Closed - Easter Break
- 27-30
 • KAIROS
- 28-30
 • Holy Leisure Silent Retreat, Gray Center
- 30
 Bishop Gray visits:
 • Resurrection and Mississippi State University, Starkville - 5:30 p.m.

APRIL

- 2
 Bishop Gray visits:
 • St. Matthew's, Forrest - 6:30 p.m.
- 3
 • Camp Directors' Meeting, Camp Bratton Green
- 4-5
 • Friends of Gray Center, Gray Center
- 6
 Bishop Gray visits:
 • All Saints, Tupelo - 10:30 a.m.
 • St. Bernard, Okolona - 4 p.m.
- 7-9
 • Gathering of Leaders Conference, Gray Center
- 9
 • Dedication for St. Peter's by the Sea - 6 p.m.

- 10
 Bishop Gray visits:
 • Coast Episcopal School, Long Beach - 8 a.m.
- 10-12
 • Deacons Spring Conference, Gray Center
- 10-13
 • North American Association of Deacons, Gray Center
- 12
 • Daughters of the King, Chapel of the Cross, Madison
- 13
 Bishop Gray visits:
 • St. Peter's, Oxford - 11 a.m.
 • Calvary, Michigan City - 4 p.m.
- 19
 • Gray Center Board Meeting, Gray Center - 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.
- 20
 Bishop Gray visits:
 • St. James', Greenville - 10:30 a.m.
 • Redeemer, Greenville - 4 p.m.
- 24-27
 • Cursillo, Gray Center



Left to right: Pat "Killer" Speltz, media escort, Carolyn Carlson, Senior Editor of the Viking/Penguin Group, Bruce McMillian, Rector of Christ Church, Jan Karon, Candace Freeland, Jan's daughter, and Ann Day, Senior Publicist of the Viking/Penguin Group.

Jan Karon Debuts Novel

Bestselling author, Jan Karon recently chose to visit Holly Springs again to debut her latest novel *Home to Holly Springs*. Following an afternoon High tea and book signing at a local restaurant, Jan spoke to a full house at Christ Episcopal Church. An elegant reception was given in the parish hall following her hour-long reading and talk by Friends of the Library in Marshall County. Christ Church is the home parish of Father Timothy Kavanaugh, the main character of her Mitford series, and several other local points of interest figure into her latest book. Questions? Call Father McMillian at 662-252-6172.

The Gray Center

by Bill Horne, Executive Director

There is nothing as constant, predictable, and inevitable as change. And yet, most of us have a very hard time dealing with it. The winds of change blow again at Gray Center. We have begun a new year with a new Chairman of the Board and several new members of our board. It is an exciting time for all of us here.

I just returned from the annual conference of the association of Episcopal Camps and Conference Centers. As always I was exposed to more than I could absorb and left with feelings of both confidence and anxiety. Great confidence because we have much to be thankful for, much that my peers would give anything for: a 120-bed conference center, 770 acres, a full camp each summer, a positive bottom line in 2007 and, a bishop who would make the incredible commitment to sit as Chairman of our Board of Managers. And anxious because more centers are closing across the country and practically all of our centers are having to make threatening cuts in their operating expenses.

The ME has a new Editor and Chief and we welcome him. This wonderful publication, too, continues to change and morph. It has always been a staunch supporter of the ministries of the Gray Center and we expect no less from it in the coming months and years.

Yes, we did end the year with expenses less than revenues. It is a very encouraging fact. It speaks volumes about the dedication and hard work of the staff, both fulltime and part time, year round and seasonal. Our abilities to dramatically change the top line of our financials are limited and the only way left to effect the bottom line is to cut the dollars it cost to operate. The staff embraced this and pulled us through a year unlike any since the opening of the conference center.

Our Board of Managers met for the first time on January 18th and 19th with its new members, Wallace Pope, Rev. David Knight, and the Rev. Jennifer Deaton, along with its new chairman, The Rt. Rev. Duncan M. Gray, III. It heralds a new age for us and new energy to face challenges, known and unknown, and, of course, changes, anticipated and, inevitably, unplanned as well.

When it is all said and done, at Gray Center we live a life of great hope for God's work that we seek to do everyday. It would look like such folly if it were not so. Someone wrote that 'holy ground is anywhere holy work is done.' Come, step onto holy ground and enjoy the pleasures and the peace that is a part of the work we do here.

"Planned Giving: ensuring the future of our Church"

by Debo Dykes

The Center for Formation & Mission of The Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi, in cooperation with The Episcopal Church Foundation, will offer a one-day conference, "PLANNED GIVING: ensuring the future of our Church" on March 1st, from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm, at St. James Episcopal Church, Jackson, MS.

Andi Tilman, Assistant Director of Giving Services from The Episcopal Church Foundation, will present information that can help you and your church community be good stewards of God's bounty.

The conference will show you how to make a planned gift to the Episcopal congregation or ministry of your choice. It is open to all persons and will primarily benefit ordained and lay leaders of congregations interested in planned giving.

The work and information provided will give the tools and contacts necessary to get started. The cost for the one-day conference is \$50.00 which includes coffee, beverages, and lunch. For conference details, please contact The Rev. Kyle Seage at 601-948-5954, or kyleseage@dioms.org.

For registration information, please contact The Rev. Debo Dykes at 601-948-5954, or debo@dioms.org. You may also register online at www.dioms.org, News & Events, EVENTS.

