

# THE MISSISSIPPI EPISCOPALIAN

December, 2008 • Volume 133, Issue No. 12

## Five dioceses withdraw from TEC

*Bishop Duncan M. Gray III reflects on church conflict*

In recent months the Episcopal Church in this country has been faced with unique challenges that have taken us into uncharted ecclesiastical waters. Four bishops and majorities of delegates at five diocesan conventions have chosen to withdraw from the Episcopal Church and associate themselves with the Anglican Province of the Southern Cone (South America). The reasons given for such action have been theological, ethical, and ecclesiological in nature. Each of the four bishops has referenced their objection to the consecration of Bishop Robinson of New Hampshire. Two have also articulated their deep distress over the ordination of women and profound reservations about a female Presiding Bishop.

Our church's constitution and canons are clear about the process of creating and releasing dioceses to other jurisdictions. Only General Convention has such authority and the actions of these bishops and diocesan conventions have moved us into these heretofore uncharted seas. In the gatherings of our House of Bishops I have counseled patience and forbearance as we move forward into unknown territory. I believe that in these difficult moments we must take seriously both our constitutional structures and the pain and confusion that led some to take such precipitous action. Finding a way forward during these trying times requires wisdom, humility and a generous spirit.

Each of these actions were preceded by months, even years, of efforts at negotiation and compromise. In the end, these four bishops of the dioceses of San Joaquin, Pittsburgh, Fort Worth, Quincy, and the diocesan convention of Rio Grande decided to attempt an unprecedented ecclesiological action of realignment with the Anglican Province of the Southern Cone.

What is clear is that within each of these dioceses a sizeable minority of clergy and church members do not wish to leave the Episcopal Church and have petitioned the Presiding Bishop to reconstitute the church around those who have chosen to stay. Presiding Bishop Jefferts Schori has chosen to pursue this course of action. She has declared the four dioceses to be vacant of Episcopal leadership and has, or will soon, appoint interim bishops to reorganize the dioceses, reestablish their connection to the wider Episcopal Church and rebuild the congregations.

When taken, these actions have appeared to give some stability and a space for cooler heads to weigh various options. The relative calm that has been produced in the face of these dioceses to take such action (San Joaquin) has allowed an increasing number of individuals and congregations to reconsider their actions and look for ways to return to a formal relationship with the Episcopal Church.

We must take seriously the sorrow of some of our sisters and brothers who feel that they must leave the Episcopal Church. Their departure

diminishes us all. However, to leave as an individual for reasons of conscience is entirely different from a congregation or diocese, by majority vote, abandoning its historic ties to the Episcopal Church. The former action, with proper leave taking can be blessed by all; the later must be resisted.

By grace we in this diocese have been spared the deep conflict within parts of our church. By grace we have found a way to affirm that by our baptism into Christ Jesus we are one church called to a common mission.

I have shared with this diocese and our wider church family my reservations about various actions that our church has taken through the years since I have been your bishop. Regrettably, I have not been nearly so public about the good and faithful things we have done during this time. I believe that our church is broken- and will forever be so - because it is the broken Body of Christ. I believe that our church is imperfect- and will forever be so- because there is no perfection in this fallen world. Efforts to find or establish institutions where sin does not flourish are fruitless.

I also believe that our church, for all her obvious flaws, continues to be an instrument of God's grace, healing and hope. Rather than focus on its many imperfections I have chosen to live into her giftedness and promise.

*Four dioceses withdraw,*  
*Continued on page 4*



## Host parishes in high gear for 182nd Annual Council

The parishes of Ascension and Trinity churches in Hattiesburg are nearing the final days of preparation for the 182nd Annual Council for the Diocese of Mississippi.

Council convenes on Friday, February 6th at the Lake Terrace Convention Center which is near Highway 49 and I-59 in Hattiesburg. Registration begins at 2 p.m. on Friday at the Convention Center.

The opening service of Evening Prayer begins at 6:30 p.m. on Friday evening and clergy are asked to vest for this service. There will also be a pre-council viewing of the historic documentary *Traces of the Trade* at 1:30 pm at Church of the Ascension. See page 12 for details.

Remember to register: delegates, spouses, visitors, friends and exhibitors! Registration forms and other information are available on the diocesan website, [www.dioms.org](http://www.dioms.org).

## Presiding Bishop to visit Diocese

*By Scott Lenoir*

The Most Rev. Dr. Katharine Jefferts Schori will visit the Diocese of Mississippi in January and also will address a conference at Gray Center.

This will be Jefferts Schori's first official visit to Mississippi as Presiding Bishop; however, she visited the Coast to view damage from Hurricane Katrina in 2006. Jefferts Schori will attempt to visit all dioceses in the Episcopal Church in her first triennium as presiding bishop.

Jefferts Schori will arrive in Mississippi on January 8th and will meet with the General Convention deputation, clergy and spouses of the diocese as well as interested lay persons and clergy. She will also be visiting the Delta with a planned stop in Greenwood. She will visit sev-



*The Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori*

eral ministries in the Jackson area as well.

On January 12th, Jefferts Schori will address the Episcopal Camp and Conference Center (ECCC) Annual Conference held this year at Gray Center.

"We are delighted to have our Presiding Bishop visit us," said the Rt. Rev. Duncan M. Gray III, who is coordinating Jefferts Schori's itinerary, "and we look forward to having her meeting many lay people and clergy during her short stay with us prior to her speaking engagement at Gray Center."

Jefferts Schori's husband, Richard Schori, is also planning to be present for the visit.

Watch for details to be posted online in the coming weeks regarding the Presiding Bishop's visit, or you may contact Kathryn McCormick at the diocesan office.

## Bratton-Green Alumni Association approved by Board of Managers

*By Duncan Gray IV*

At its October meeting, the Gray Center Board of Managers approved the creation of the Camp Bratton-Green Alumni Association, a group dedicated to shaping and protecting Gray Center and Camp Bratton-Green.

Steve McDavid, who developed the idea of an Alumni Association and currently serves on the board of directors for the group, said "Camp Bratton-Green been around for over 60 years and thousands of folks from all walks of life have enjoyed their time at camp. Well, we finally pulled together and are starting an official alumni association for everyone who enjoyed the Camp."

The focus of the group is to reunite old campers while also bringing in new individuals who may have never experienced Bratton-Green as a youth. The group plans to continue many of the current projects, including the work weekends, which help maintain the existing infrastructure.

*Bratton-Green,*  
*Continued on page 5*

**SALUS CRUCE**  
*salvation by  
the cross*

## Notes & Quotes

by Maria Watson



I write this on the Saturday night preceding the First Sunday in Advent. I am so very ready to light that first candle, hear the first strains of Advent music; many of those hymns,

sometimes to the lesser-known tunes, are my favorites. After cooking Thanksgiving dinner for the first time since 2004, I am truly eager to move on to Christmas, but I cannot do that without first passing through Advent and all of its mystery and anticipation.

This year, at St. Peter's-by-the-Sea, Gulfport, we will be doing Centering Prayer on Mondays beginning at 5:30 p.m. Having been privileged to learn about Centering Prayer several years ago at Gray Center with the Rev. Tom Ward as leader, I can't begin to tell you how eager I am to enter that contemplative life again-and vow this time to maintain it throughout the year.

St. James', Jackson welcomed Advent with an Advent wine and cheese party hosted by its ECW December 4. Advent Lessons and Carols were on the schedule for Nativity, Greenville; Trinity, Natchez; and St. Thomas, Diamondhead, on December 7; and Holy Trinity, Vicksburg, November 30. St. Thomas', Diamondhead had a family Advent-wreath-making event just before the season began. At Trinity, Natchez, the women of the parish had an Advent Cajun Party with a potluck lunch December 8. On the First Sunday of Advent, All Saints', Tupelo, handed out packets of Advent Chains, a way of counting the days until Christmas and learning some of the many names for Jesus the Bible uses as we prepare for the celebration of his Incarnation and his coming again in glory. There are 24 names, it seems. Do you know them?

St. Nicholas (or the Bishop of Myra) is becoming a more and more popular figure in our diocese. Celebrating his feast in various ways this

year were St. Peter's-by-the-Sea, Gulfport with a potluck supper and "visit" December 3; Mediator, Meridian, with a breakfast Saturday, December 6; and Creator, Clinton, with a Quiet Day December 6.

Nativity, Greenwood, held an Advent Day of Reflection with the Rt. Rev. Larry Maze, former rector and retired bishop of Arkansas, as leader.

St. James, Jackson, raised almost \$10,000 for Lutheran Episcopal Services in Mississippi with its Let's Eat Shrimp for Mississippi fundraiser. Some 500 people attended.

St. Patrick's, Long Beach, has its Yarn Spinners busy making "Chemo Caps" for the oncology unit at Memorial Hospital in Gulfport.

The ECW of St. Thomas', Diamondhead, held a "Gourmet-to-Go" event Saturday, December 13, offering gourmet items for sale including everything from appetizers and sweets to casseroles and regional dishes.

Several parishes are planning trips to the Gustav/Ike-stricken areas of Louisiana to "pay it forward" by helping those affected by this year's most destructive storms recover and rebuild. Believe me, although we are off the national radar, storm-wise, we are nowhere near normal and readily recognize the needs of those who have followed us into devastation. Among crews going to Louisiana: JC's Carpenter Guys from St. Peter's-by-the-Sea (please don't ask who J.C. is!) who are taking their fully outfitted trailer and heading for Cameron Parish.

Christ Church, Bay St. Louis, where the Rev. Ted Dawson is interim rector, had a Celebration of Life honoring its octogenarian and nonagenarian members with a pre-Thanksgiving Feast in mid-November.

### NOTABLE QUOTES...

"The Church Year ends and begins with the theme of eschatology, the study of lasts things (from the Greek word 'eschatos' or 'last'), a puzzling and shadowy theological discipline that gives consideration to the coming of the Kingdom of God and the final meaning of all things." (Nativity, Greenwood)

"For years, we have talked about Advent as that season of waiting and watching and hoping

and looking. Advent, poor Advent that has to come against the hustle and bustle of Christmas shopping and parties and cards and travel. Advent, trying to teach us patience, trying to help us slow down, trying against a tsunami of secular pressure to carve out time and space for the Holy One. Advent comes into the life of St. Patrick's Church this year, and we are blessed to have a tangible example of what Advent is all about." (St. Patrick's, Long Beach, in anticipation, waiting and watching as its new church goes up on Cleveland Avenue.)

"As we reach out into the community, especially to our friends and neighbors, we might consider three basic ideas. First, people are not saved by being told what's wrong with them, but rather by what's right with God...Second, we cannot promise that faith is an insurance policy against difficulties in life. Being a Christian does not automatically resolve our hardships... Third, never underestimate the Holy Spirit. I have seen situations where people stepped out in faith and talked to someone else about Christ and the church, and it made a difference. They wanted to hear..." (St. Thomas', Diamondhead)

"...I walked to St. Thomas' Church to worship and to listen to its famed Boys' Choir. The voices of those boys as they processed sounded ethereal; and as I listened and as I looked at the incredible carved reredos and the Rose Window behind the high altar, I was awed. Awed not just because of the sheer magnificence of it all, but awed at the poignant human effort to climb to God, to offer a sacrifice of vision and talent and time and creativity in gratitude for God's gifts." (St. George's, Clarksdale)

You will read this about the time I am sending the few Christmas cards I send to friends and family with whom I communicate once a year. They know that I know that I have 12 days to send my greetings and that I don't start on them until the Second Day of Christmas. So, as you read this on the Third or Fourth or even the Fifth Day of Christmas, know that I wish you all a blessed Christmas season and the happiest of (secular) New Years.

## Faithful Departed

by Peggy Jones

**Charles Thomas (Bubba) Fowler, 87**, communicant of St. Peter's-by-the-Lake, Brandon, died April 22, 2008

**John Thomas Bell, 81**, communicant of Resurrection, Starkville, died July 31, 2008.

**Frederick Claiborne Craig, 78**, communicant of St. Andrew's Cathedral, Jackson, died September 30, 2008

**Faye Willoughby Aspinnall, 62**, communicant of Holy Innocents', Como, died October 8, 2008

**Louise Austin Lowe, 80**, communicant of St. Peter's-by-the-Lake, Brandon, died October 9, 2008

**Idera Gordon Spencer, 92**, communicant of St. Peter's-by-the-Lake, Brandon, died October 17, 2008

**Bernice O'Bannon Gatlin, 75**, communicant of St. Mark's, Jackson, died November 4, 2008

## A Date to Remember...

January 4-5, 2009

Permanent Staff Interviews at Camp Bratton-Green

Continually published for 132 years in the Diocese of Mississippi



## The Mississippi Episcopal

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The Rev. Scott Lenoir  
Editor

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*For those we Love Almighty God, we entrust all who are dear to us to thy never-failing care and love, for this life and the life to come, knowing that thou art doing for them better things than we can desire or pray for; through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Amen  
BCP pg. 831



10% over cost for weddings, fundraisers, and altar wine.

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## The Bishop's Journal

**November 1** – All Saints' Day. A rare free Saturday allows Kathy and me the opportunity to be with Tabitha at the Cross Country State Championships in Clinton.

**November 2** – On this All Saints' Sunday, I make my annual visitation to St. Philip's in Jackson. I teach an Advent class early, then baptize 2 and confirm 10 at the main All Saints' Services. An outside reception takes advantage of the beautiful weather.

Travel to Gray Center for the closing Eucharist of Cursillo #116. I continue to be impressed by the vibrancy of the Cursillo movement and its positive impact on the church.

**November 3** – Take the morning off, then return to Gray Center for a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Gray Center Board of Managers.

**November 4** – Election Day 2008. I vote early, then spend the rest of the day at the office. Staff meetings take up most of the morning. In the afternoon meet with the Rev. Bryan Owen and the Rev. Tom Slawson to discuss the revival of the Music and Liturgy Commission. Late afternoon session with Mr. John Lever.

**November 5** – Office in morning, then spend much of the mid day in conversation with Chuck Brlow and the Rev. Laura Gettys about the plans for the growing relationship with the Bishop Masereka Christian Foundation in Uganda.

Mid afternoon drive to Meridian for my annual visitation at the Church of the Mediator. In a marvelously festive mid-week service, I preach, celebrate, confirm 26, receive 3 and reaffirm one. Very nice reception follows. Much excitement and enthusiasm here.

Return to Jackson late.

**November 6** – Monthly breakfast with Canons McCormick and Johnson and the Chancellor. Afterwards I meet with the Rev. John Jenkins about All Saints' School matters.

Working lunch with Dean Edward O'Connor. Annual consultation with the Rev. Carol Stewart. Late afternoon planning session for the visit of the Presiding Bishop in January.

**November 7** – Travel to Memphis for personal business. Return to Jackson in the evening.

**November 8** – Up early to travel to Grenada where I attend the diocesan-wide fall meeting of the Daughters of the King. I blow a tire as I drive to All Saints' Church and must avail myself of the services of the All Saints' rector, the Rev. Lynn Barker and her jack-of-all-trades parishioner, Girault Jones, to care for my car during my time with the Daughters.

I preach and celebrate a morning Eucharist and at lunch briefly reflect on our new diocesan initiatives in Uganda and the Sudan.

I am deeply appreciative of the ministry of the Daughters of the King and have enjoyed my recent tenure as their chaplain.

Due to the efforts of the aforementioned saints, I drive home with a new tire.

**November 9** – Up early to drive to Pass Christian where I baptize one and confirm 4 at Trinity Church. This congregation is in deep discernment about how to proceed with their rebuilding program with financial resources requiring some adjustment to original plans.

At the pot luck luncheon after the service I have a good conversation with a new architect who is working with vestry and building committee of the church.

After lunch I visit with a member of the Trinity building committee for additional conversation.

Drive to New Orleans for a visit with Peter and Guilianna. Return to Jackson late after a very full day.

**November 10** – Day off. Golf through much of the day. Meet with the vestry of St. Philips, Jackson for supper and conversation as part of my annual visitation.

**November 11** – Staff meetings in the morning. All of the afternoon is spent with large number of people associated with Lutheran Episcopal Services of Mississippi discussing future directions of this unique ministry. Representatives from our major funding sources, Episcopal Relief and Development and Lutheran Disaster Relief joined the meeting. In addition, my Lutheran bishop counterpart, as well as state and regional representatives, were part of this very useful discussion.

**November 12** – Annual consultation with the Reverend Sylvia Czarnetsky. Conversation with David O'Steen sets in motion the new Music and Liturgy Commission. Telephone appointment with Episcopal Relief and Development over lunch.

Annual consultation with the Rev. Shannon Manning. Late afternoon appointment with Ms. Jennifer Pierce.

**November 13** – Spend all morning and lunch with clergy, staff and wardens of St. James', Jackson. Invited by their rector, Christopher Powell, I help them to reflect on the stresses and strains of the major building project now underway at St. James. We meet at Father Powell's home and the setting provides a wonderful venue for very good conversation.

Afternoon in the office.

**November 14** – Annual consultation with the Reverend Karl Shaffenburg. Appointment in afternoon with the Rev. Hunter Isaacs, then drive to Gray Center for meeting with the Board of the Episcopal Church Women. I greet the participants in the Fall ECW conference at dinner and return to Jackson in the evening.

**November 15** – Attend a required CPR and First Aid class mandated for foster parents. Afternoon spent at home working on a sermon.

**November 16** – Drive to Vicksburg for breakfast at the rectory with vestries from Christ Church and St. Mary's as well as those about to be confirmed and received at the combined morning worship. Good visit with some personal reflections on my experiences at Lambeth and Uganda.

At the Eucharist at Christ Church I baptize 2, confirm nine and reaffirm one. Lunch follows in the undercroft. Afterwards, I am given a tour of the newly renovated chapel. This is a wonderful space.

Return home. Call Canon Johnson to cancel my time with the post ordination group due to what appears to be the onset of the flu.

**November 17** – No strong flu symptoms, but I stay close to home nonetheless. Kathy has a major case of whatever was nibbling at me.

Meetings in the evening with foster parents and Catholic Charities staff.

**November 18** – Staff meetings and staff appointments through most of the day. Late afternoon planning session concerning Sudanese ministry.

**November 19** – Canons McCormick and Johnson and I meet at Gray Center for our quarterly long range planning. After our meeting I spend time with an aspirant for holy orders. Conference call on my way back to Jackson.

**November 20** – Monthly breakfast with my ecumenical bishop colleagues. Morning appointment with staff in Governor's office later in the morning. Spend much of the rest of the day with the Convocation deans.

Late afternoon appointment with Catholic Charities and DHS social workers in our home.

**November 21** – Spend the entire day at Gray Center participating in a conference on race and racial healing sponsored by the William Winter Institute on Racial Reconciliation. Take a break from the conference to have an extended telephone conversation with an aspirant for holy orders.

**November 22** – Back to Gray Center for meeting of the Gray Center Board of Managers. I feel very good about what has been done thus far this year. We have a better feel for the financial realities of Gray Center, and new procedure for personnel evaluation and accountability, an increasingly healthy change in ethos and efficiency in administration at Camp Bratton-Green and the launch of the Camp Bratton-Green Alumni Association.

There is still much to do to make full use of this tremendous resource, but we are making great strides.

Drive to Ocean Springs in the evening to prepare for tomorrow's visitation.

**November 23** – Annual visitation to St. John's, Ocean Springs. At the early service, I preach, celebrate, confirm 12, receive 2 and reaffirm one. Between services, I have a good visit with both 9:00 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. congregations. Am delighted to get the details of the new building project scheduled to begin early next year.

At the later service, I preach, celebrate and

lead the congregation in a renewal of baptismal vows. After a brief reception, I join the clergy and some vestry members for lunch.

Following lunch, I have an annual consultation with the Rev. Deacon Jim Lancaster.

Return home to Jackson in the evening.

**November 24** – Kathy and I are up very early to go to Baptist Hospital where our second grandchild, Sadie Alan Gray, is born at 7:32 a.m. Our lives are so full and our joy is overflowing!

**November 25** – Work at home in the morning, then spend the rest of the day helping with Sadie's big sister, Harper who comes for a stay at our house.

**November 26** – Office is closed. My family begins to arrive for our annual gathering at Gray Center.

Overnight with various family members, including Lloyd cousins and families, at Gray Center. Peter and Guilianna arrive from New Orleans late.

**November 27** – Annual Spivey/Miller family reunion at Lake Tithelo in Madison County. Kathy and I have responsibility for Harper today as her mama and baby sister return home from the hospital.

**November 28** – Family time at Gray Center.

**November 29** – Return from Gray Center as family leaves to return to their homes across the country.

**November 30** – Attend St. Andrew's as a member of the congregation. These rare moments without responsibility are extraordinarily meaningful to me.

Home in the afternoon.

### Correction

The Bishop's Journal entry for Oct. 5, 2008 should read that the Bishop traveled to Christ Church, Holly Springs for the church's 150th anniversary celebration.

## A Date to Remember...

February 27-28, 2009

Warden &  
New Vestry Member  
Conference  
Gray Center, Canton

## A-V Center News

by Janet C. Nail



Aren't New Year's resolutions fun? Every year I make the same promises: this year I will lose those stubborn ten pounds; I will read worth-while, educational books; I will not play computer

solitaire. You know the drill.

Unfortunately, I often list these things while sitting in my rocking chair, eating chocolate chip cookies and reading the latest Janet Evanovich. I may even be playing Spider Solitaire.

Alas, the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.

It often helps me to look for a hero, a person who models the behavior I want.

I choose THE OTHER WISE MAN.

This animated story of Artaban, the fourth wise man who sold all his possessions to buy three precious jewels—a sapphire, a ruby, and a pearl—to present to the Christ Child when he joins the other three wise men on the journey to Bethlehem.

He had good resolutions, too.

But Artaban had something more; he had a loving heart and an humble spirit.

He is sidetracked, much as I am. But he is sidetracked by the needs of others. He gives his time, his wealth and his love on his way to serve the Christ.

How he finally meets Christ will leave a lump in your throat and bring a tear to your eye.

Mark Twain once said that we are only interested in Jesus when he is in the manger or hanging on the cross. We aren't interested in His life in between.

If you would like a truly southern interpretation of that life, try THE COTTON PATCH GOSPEL. In this version, Jesus is a small-town boy in modern Georgia, whose parents are bewildered by their changeling son. All the stories are here, embellished with rollicking country-western music and drawing you into an understanding that the gospel is as relevant today as it was when the disciples, puzzled, but game followed Him on the road to Jerusalem.

A more traditional telling of the story is found in JESUS OF NAZARETH. The story is almost verbatim from the gospels of Matthew and Luke, and you cannot fail to be moved by the excellent acting. (Michael York as John the Baptist was my favorite; but then I could watch Michael York standing in front of a camera reading the Akron, Ohio, telephone directory!)

This program has guides for three different seasons: for Christmas, for Lent and Easter, and for Ordinary Time. You can use the parts appropriate for the season or you can use the entire program, emphasizing the different study guides.

Perhaps you are really dragged out after the December frenzy; perhaps you don't want to start studying anything that will require you to think yet. Is this the time for Popcorn Theology?

There are many ways to implement Popcorn Theology. You can gather at a hosts'

house on Friday or Saturday night and watch a movie, then discuss it during Sunday School. Or you can watch the movie in parts during Sunday School, discussing it in breaks. Alternatively, you can set a time, then for one or two weeks before the class, pass the video around so that people can watch it in their homes.

A new DVD in the A-V Center is MONSIEUR IBRAHIM. Set in a working class neighborhood in Paris, some time in the sixties, the film begins with young Moise Schmidt, a young Jewish boy who is growing up without a mother and whose father is distant because of his crippling depression. Moise, or Momo, spends his days with the prostitutes in the area, running errands and indulging in petty theft and shoplifting.

Among his targets is the grocery shop across the street from his apartment, owned by an elderly Muslim gentleman, Monsieur Ibrahim. Momo and M. Ibrahim become friends as the shopkeeper confronts him with his thefts and begins to spend time with him. Eventually, when Momo's father commits suicide, Monsieur Ibrahim adopts Momo and cares for him.

There are numerous topics of theological significance in this film!

For other titles appropriate for Popcorn Theology, call me at 662-746-5557; or email me at grandmastruck1994@yahoo.com. Or go to your local video store. Movies can be a rich source of religious discussion, even if there is no obvious religious content.

If you are interested in any of the titles, or if you want to discuss the concept of Popcorn Theology, just call or email.

## Four dioceses withdraw

Continued from page 1

**"...I am a bishop in the Episcopal Church and intend to remain so."**

I have said to you I am a bishop in the Episcopal Church and intend to remain so. I am a bishop of the Anglican Communion and intend to use my modest gifts to strengthen the fragile matrix of relationships that make up the Communion through the renewal of our existing diocesan global relationships (Honduras and Panama) and the institution of new ones in Uganda and the Sudan.

And I am a bishop of this diocese. My commitment to you is the same today as it was on the day I was consecrated- to be "one with the apostles in proclaiming Christ's resurrection" and "to guard the faith, unity and discipline of the church." I will do so with as much creativity, vision and energy as God has given me to share.

Pray brother and sisters for our church. Pray for healing, humility and a generous spirit. And pray that the pain our institutional life will not blind us to the call of our Risen Lord to find Him in both the beauty of worship and in the sorrow of the world. Pray that we might rest, not in the perfections of the church, but in the faithfulness of our Lord who dwells within and among God's so very imperfect people.



## An investment in our children The Gray Center and Camp Bratton-Green

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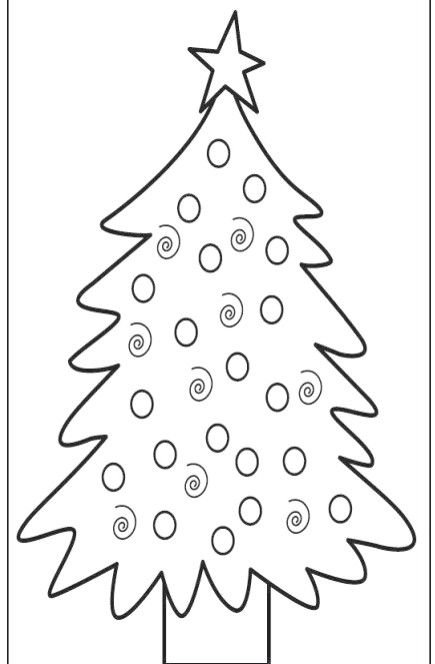
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*Merry  
Christmas*

## Thompson announces retirement from St. Andrew's Bookstore

By Dick Wilcox

The manager and lifeblood of St. Andrew's Bookstore for the past 27 years, Phyllis Thompson, will retire from full-time employment on February 28, 2009. The Bookstore at St. Andrew's Cathedral is the largest church-based store of its type in the state selling general gifts and reading merchandise along with specialty items unique to the Episcopal Church.

Bill Kientz, chairman of the bookstore's board of directors, announced Thompson's pending retirement. "Phyllis has put her personal touch on all aspects of the bookstore operations and we will miss the friendly smile and kind words that greet every browser and customer," Kientz said.

Thompson became store manager in July, 1981,

replacing Annwn Hawkins Myers, a St. Andrew's parishioner who later joined the priesthood. The rector of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church at that time was The Rev. Rod Murray and he opened the bookstore in 1963 as a sole proprietorship until it was incorporated and gained non-profit tax status early in 1965.

Thompson said the store's initial location was in a small upstairs room in the Sunday School area. When the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi moved offices to Congress Street, remodeling enabled the bookstore to have its frontage on Capitol Street across from the Governor's Mansion.

Kientz noted that a reception is in the planning stage to recognize Thompson's notable contributions to both a Jackson and statewide ministry of service and education.



Phyllis Thompson

### Bratton-Green

Continued from page 1

Past projects from work weekends include the new sidewalk and the new craft shack landing, the new sidewalk to the boat dock so that wheel chairs can be used to enjoy the fishing area, the new roofs on many of the cabins, and a cleaning of privet hedge and weeds. On the Conference Center side, members of the group helped create the new gazebo located atop the old grain silo.

Board Member Duncan Gray IV presented the plan to create the new support association and showed how the association's website could be used for a variety of purposes, including registering for events like summer camp, purchasing Bratton-Green souvenirs, and setting up membership with the organization, either sustaining or regular.

"There are two levels of membership in the alumni association," said Gray IV. "There are sustaining members who will pay \$10.00 a month for individual membership and \$15.00 a month for a family membership. Regular membership in the program is free."

Sustaining members will be eligible for discounts on t-shirts and other items, will have access to special overnight rates at Gray Center, and will be invited to other unique events that occur on the camp and conference side.

The alumni association will officially launch its first official meeting and party on New Year's Eve. Please call the Gray Center and make your reservations for this event. Also, those interested can go online at the NEW alumni association website and register for the event.

The new association will have a board of directors, which will operate under and in coordination with the Gray Center Board of Managers to keep the grounds in top shape.

The composition of the alumni board will be diversified in age and the each board member will be assigned a specific committee.

For more information about the Camp Bratton Green Alumni Association, log on to [www.dioms.org](http://www.dioms.org) and click on the Camp Bratton-Green link or e-mail the association at [alumni@graycenter.org](mailto:alumni@graycenter.org)



## Camp Bratton-Green Alumni Association New Year's Eve Party

This New Year's Eve come out and join friends and the new Camp Bratton-Green Alumni Association for a celebration to ring in the New Year at Gray Center. The event is open to anyone, and those interested in joining the Alumni Association will be able to sign up during the gathering.

The cost of the event is \$65 for a single individual and \$95 for a couple. There is no lodging cost for children who stay with parents, but there will be a meal cost of \$23 for each child. Included in the cost are New Year's Eve dinner, late evening hors d'oeuvres, lodging, midnight fireworks, and a New Year's Day brunch. **For meal purposes, please understand that registration and fee must be received by December 27 in order to attend the event.** Those interested may register on the Alumni Association website, linked through the Camp Bratton-Green website, <http://graycenter.dioms.org/camp/index.html>, or mail in the included registration form to:

Camp Bratton-Green Alumni Association  
PO Box 1113  
Oxford, MS 38655

For further information, contact the Alumni Association at [alumni@graycenter.org](mailto:alumni@graycenter.org)

### Camp Bratton-Green Alumni Association New Year's Eve Party

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Children and ages: \_\_\_\_\_

Lodging Preference: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Chalet or Lodge)

Individuals attending: \_\_\_\_\_ Single adult (\$65)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Couple (\$95)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Children's meals (\$23 per child)

Total: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to the Camp Bratton-Green Alumni Association. We look forward to seeing everyone out there.

## St. Nicholas Day Observed

By Kyle Dice Seage

A celebration of the Feast of St. Nicholas has been a regular part of the Advent season at St. Columb's for nearly 40 years, originating when the church was located in West Jackson. The liturgy, which takes place on the Sunday evening closest to December 6th, has evolved over the years and now includes a play written each year by the EYC which tells the story of St. Nicholas and his benevolent acts, but is set in contemporary culture.

The service begins with a regular liturgy of the word with the EYC play taking the place of the sermon. After more prayers, Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, played each year by a 2nd or 3rd grader with the best Sunday School attendance, blesses the candy canes that are traditionally given to all the children in attendance. Dressed in bishop's cope and mitre, the child, with assistance from the priest, reads more prayers, remembering sailors and children of whom Nicholas has special charge. Then all the children in the congregation come forward with an unwrapped gift for Toys for Tots and receive a candy cane and an apple as their gift from Nicholas. The "bishop" is attended by chaplains who collect the gifts on his behalf.

After a final blessing, the congregation leaves the church where all the children, who have taken their shoes off before the service and left them in the narthex in anticipation of a visit from St. Nicholas, come and find their shoes stuffed with candy. A party takes place afterward, the children share their candy (usually) and the toys are collected by the adults to be taken to the distribution site.

It's a grand celebration and the children as well as the adults of the parish look forward each year to the way the youth of the parish are able to tell the story of Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, now known to many as Santa Claus.



The St. Columb's Children's choir sing *Prepare a Way for the Lord!* under the direction of Gus Schreiber at the parish's annual Feast of Saint Nicholas festivities.



St. Nicholas, Chaplains, and assistants wait to process in the annual Feast of St. Nicholas at St. Coumb's, Ridgeland. Pictured are (l. to r.) Raegan Gourley, Emma Ducote, Bishop Nicholas (Liza Davini), Sydni Mabaffey, Katie Seage and Laurel Mabaffey.



St. Andrew's Bookstore volunteers help Barbara Ladner, second from left, prepare for one of the most successful December book signing events the store has done at the cathedral. We offer thanks for Barbara's long-time service as assistant manager of St. Andrew's Bookstore. Barbara plans to retire at the end of the year.

Photo/Lenoir

## Rabbi visits Calvary, Cleveland for January lecture series

By Julia Moore

Harry K. Danziger, Rabbi Emeritus of Temple Beth Israel, Memphis and Visiting Rabbi Temple Adath Israel, Cleveland, will be the guest speaker at Calvary Church, Cleveland on January 17 and 18.

Rabbi Danziger's topics will be: "If Messiah=X and Messiah=Y, How Can X Not Equal Y? Why Jews Don't 'Believe' in Jesus;" "Jews and the Bible: Not the Religion of the 'Old Testament,'" and "With Apologies to Winston Churchill: Two Peoples Separated by a Common Scripture."

Coffee and registration will be at 10:00 a.m. in the Rayner House with the lectures beginning at 10:30. Time will be allotted for questions. Lunch will be served on the premises. Adjournment will be at 2:00 p.m.

The series continues on Sunday with Rabbi Danziger as the guest preacher at the 10:00 a.m. celebration of the Holy Eucharist followed by time with the adults at 11:15. A luncheon in honor of Rabbi and Mrs. Danziger will conclude the weekend events.

A Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the University of Cincinnati and the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Rabbi Danziger is the immediate past president of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. He served as Chairman of the Board of the Metropolitan Interfaith Association of Memphis, as one of twelve members of a task force to create new Guiding Principles for North American Reform Judaism, as Co-Chairman of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, Memphis Roundtable, and has been a member of the faculty of Rhodes College since 1989. He is a frequent speaker and panelist in programs involving interfaith relations, community betterment, and presentations on Judaism. His services at Adath Israel draw a wide spectrum of Christians from throughout the Cleveland area.

Calvary, Cleveland invites your presence.



Rabbi Harry K. Danziger

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## “Annual Children’s Sabbath” events heighten awareness of perils facing Mississippi’s children

By Carol Borne Stewart

Regional and local congregational services were held throughout the diocese to hold up and pray for the dangerous circumstances facing large numbers of children in our state. Regional events planned by United Methodist, Roman Catholic and Episcopal congregations were held in Jackson and (as we go to press) in McComb.

Many Episcopal congregations held the Children’s Sabbath services within the context of their Sunday Eucharist emphasizing and remembering the perils facing our children through the use of scripture, prayers and sermons. In several churches, local children participated in the reading of scripture and the offering of prayers.

Below are some of the wonderful examples of this important ministry. Through our Congregations for Children initiative, Bishop Gray continues to invite our congregations into this network of awareness and action around the need of children in Mississippi. Please forward articles and pictures of other Children’s Sabbath events for future editions.



The Rev. Richard Middleton, rector of St. Mark’s, Jackson, and the congregation’s youth and children enjoyed a lively Children’s Sabbath.



Life size cut outs of children carried grim statistics on the status of children in Mississippi at the Children’s Sabbath event held Oct. 18, 2008 on the south lawn of the Capitol.

- Approximately 100,000 children (12.6%) are without health insurance in Mississippi.

The contrast between the fun and games and the statistics was startling yet emphasized the sad reality facing our state. Approximately 150 adults and children attended the Children’s Sabbath “Day of Fun”. We look forward to even more people participating in the fun next year.

### St. Andrew’s Jackson

Following the “Day of Fun” on the lawn of the capital, St. Andrew’s Cathedral held a Children’s Sabbath Eucharist at services, 8:45 am and 11:00 am on October 19, 2008. The youth read the prayers of the people and assisted The Rev. Carol Stewart deliver the sermon. They also assisted in the closing prayers before The Very Rev. Edward O’Connor gave the closing benediction.

The life-sized figures from the “Day of Fun” were in the processions carried by the Catechesis’ of the Good Shepherd levels 1-3 children. The healthy, happy children of St. Andrew’s Cathedral understood the fact that 1/3 of Mississippi’s children live in poverty and they did an outstanding job of educating the entire congregation about these facts.

### All Saints, Jackson

The Rev. Cathy Halford, Deacon at All Saints’, Jackson reports that the parish celebrated a Children’s Sabbath on November 9 with a special liturgy and guest speaker, Julie Propst. Julie helped make us more aware of the needs of children in our state by sharing stories of some of her many experiences. Also present were neighborhood children who are participants in All Saints’ Karate for Christ weekly class. Afterwards, a wonderful lunch was served and enjoyed by all, especially the children.

### St. Mark’s, Jackson

A special worship service was held October 26, 2008 to draw attention to the needs of children in our nation who suffer from poverty, violence & racism. The youth and children of the congregation were lectors, led the intercessory prayers, and were oblationers.

The Rev. Richard Middleton, III, Rector of St. Mark’s, delivered a children’s sermon from Luke 16:19-31, which was the subject of one of Dr. Martin Luther King’s last sermons about the rich man and Lazarus.

Afterward the sermon, a question and answer session was held. Many children were so full of enthusiasm they answered questions without being recognized leaving many in the congregation laughing. The children left no doubt as to whether they had heard the lesson.

A variety of children’s hymns were sung.

The church was decorated with images of all races of children and banners made by the children. Even the bulletin had a colorful cover of a world being held up by the hands of children of different races. The celebration ended with a reception.

Middleton says the church is in the process of exploring new efforts to help children in the community.

### Trinity Church, Hattiesburg

The Rev. Bill Stroop, Rector of Trinity Church reports that the parish had a Children’s Sabbath celebration on Saturday December 6. Four churches in Hattiesburg participated: Trinity



Children and adults enjoyed a magician and many dance troops during the Children’s Sabbath event held on the south lawn of the Capitol on Oct. 18

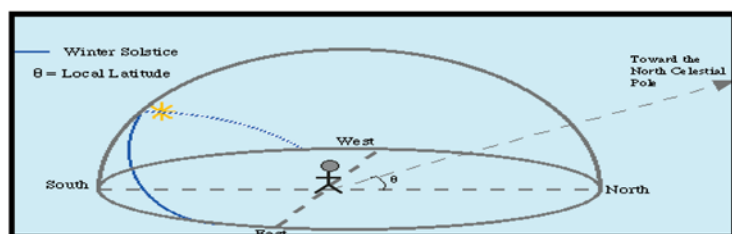
Episcopal, Sacred Heart Catholic, Court Street United Methodist, and Main Street United Methodist. Over 300 people participated in the service. The goal was to raise community awareness of children’s issues, and to promote some of the agencies in the area that provide children’s services. The Sabbath was a HUGE success.

### Central Mississippi

The local Episcopal, Roman Catholic and United Methodist churches held a “Day of Fun” on the south lawn of the state capitol on Saturday, October 18, 2008. The theme was “Stepping Out of Poverty.” Amidst the music, a magician, lots of children’s activities and inflatable jumping machines, life size figures of children, brightly colored, were placed throughout the grounds emphasizing the following statistics:

- 31% of Mississippi’s children live in poverty; a child in Mississippi is born into poverty every 37 minutes.
- If a child does not learn to read on grade level by the third grade, he/she is 10 times more likely to go to prison as a young adult.
- Mississippi has 11.3% infant mortality rate, the highest in the nation.
- A child in Mississippi dies before his/her first birthday every 19 hours
- Mississippi spends 1.8 times as much per prisoner as per public school pupil
- Over 50% of those enrolled in Medicaid are children

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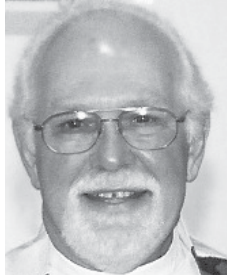
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# Ring Around the Collar

By Denny Allman



*It wasn't until I had been retired from the active parish ministry for a couple of years that I finally made peace with the "Christmas Season." I finally came to understand, at least for me, that there are two seasons, one sacred and one secular which run in parallel and that one has nothing to do with the other. Living with this dichotomy is difficult for everyone, particular us "Church season purists." The Rev. Lee Winter of Church of the Resurrection, Starkville has this take on that problem.*

Almost every year around this time we Episcopalians have the same discussion. It's like a tug of war between the Advent purists and the Christmas-season-trumps-everything-else parties. The "Advent purists" insist that we can't do, sing, or represent the coming "real" Christmas season until sundown Christmas Eve. (In fact, our Christmas season does run from sundown Christmas Eve through Epiphany - Jan. 6 - the twelve days of Christmas.) The Christmas-season-trumps-everything-else folks think that with Christmas decorations up everywhere and Christmas music (some of which started as wonderful carols) blasting from every store loudspeaker, it is Christmas season from at least Thanksgiving until Christmas Day afternoon. Musically, it gets expressed by "Why can't we sing Christmas carols in December?" vs. "Why are we singing carols now that Christmas is over?"

Wish I could solve that one. Neither Wal-Mart nor the General Convention folks have asked me what I think.

Personally, I think that to the extent that Christmas has been taken over by commercial interests, Christmas season has become identified with the shopping season. Makes sense for them. A lot of retail businesses end up in a profit or not status at the end of the year based on Christmas sales. We're not going to change that especially since most church traditions in our country operate on that schedule. We come across as "Scrooges" when we try to "correct" them.

Still, I really value keeping a good Advent. It is not a "mini-Lent", as I understand it. It is a season of preparation and hope. So, being a "Scrooge" about others having fun seems off the mark. Maybe it would help to think of keeping a good Advent — if only on the Sundays before Christmas day - as like the Biblical "salt" or "leaven." Maybe getting small children an Advent calendar is a good way to remind ourselves as well as teach our youngsters why we find such joy in all the craziness. At its heart, it is about preparing a way for the greatest gift of all.

I love the search for the "right" gift. Some of the greatest music ever has been written for the road to Bethlehem and what happened there. Cutting our own tree and having the kids put the ornaments they made on it has such good memories for me (our trees would never make it into Southern Living!) So, I'm definitely not of the "Bah! Humbug!" persuasion.

I am convinced, though, that the often bemoaned but little resisted commercialization of Christmas needs a strong counterweight. Advent provides that. While we journey, we can enjoy the time and place along the way but we keep our focus on the star in the east and follow it as our guide and beacon directing us to the holy destination that turns out to be a new beginning - a birth. Prepare the Way!

Glory to God in the Highest and Peace on earth!  
Lee

*Also this month, seeing as how we are bombarded by talk of federal bailouts and what the government can and cannot do for us, consider the following piece written recently by the Rev. Wayne Ray at St. John's, Ocean Springs regarding what we can do for ourselves in the way of Jesus' call to love one another.*

As the Coastal communities have been under the threat of severe storms frequently of late, it causes me to pause and think, "What am I (or we) about?" A little poem by Adam Lindsay Gordon (1833-70) says:  
"Life is mostly froth and bubble,  
Two things stand like stone;  
Kindness in another's trouble,  
Courage in our own."

Jesus teaches very plainly that life is not only or even especially to do with things that bring fame or renown, but it is the thoughtful act of recognizing and connecting with others...especially in times of struggle or need. These connections make life doable. If life is just about collecting the best toys, or climbing to the top of the human heap, or using others for personal gain — then the grave is more than just a quiet place, it is covered with the pall of meaninglessness as well. What really counts? Isn't it living with a loving, joyful, peaceful, patient, kind and good heart toward God and others? As you try to sum up your own most genuine moments in life, are they not the ones where you see in the eyes of your child or another some great joy or pleasure? Helping, giving, loving and sharing bring the fullest basket to the table. That's the message of Jesus. We can live by it.

I am especially proud of our church and youth group for their support of the flood victims in the upper mid-west. A group from St. John's traveled to Iowa to help with clean-up and to help folks rebuild. St. John's contributed \$2000 to help residents of southern Louisiana who were hit by Hurricane Gustav. Our church and our mission is to be strengthened in Christ so that we can go out to do what Jesus bids us do...help others. Our Stewardship programs this fall highlight those whom we are helping to help: the Lord is my Help, Samaritan Ministry, the Boys and Girls Club and others. Pain in life may be inevitable, but our ministry to others means that suffering is optional.

Fr. Wayne Ray



A legend says that Martin Luther began the tradition of decorating trees to celebrate Christmas. One Christmas Eve, about the year 1500, he was walking through snow-covered woods and was struck by the beauty of a group of small evergreens. Their branches, dusted with snow, shimmered in the moonlight. When he got home, he set up a little fir tree indoors so he could share this story with his children. He decorated it with candles, which he lighted in honor of Christ's birth.

Photo/Jim Carrington



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## LESM Has A New Ministry!

By Sandra L. Braasch

### FLOOD BUCKETS — Responding to needs, Rebuilding lives, and Restoring hope

What exactly is a flood bucket? It is a collection of cleaning supplies and safety equipment, all packed into a 5-gallon plastic bucket. Flood buckets are one way to mobilize congregational members, and others, to respond to immediate needs in the aftermath of a hurricane, a tropical storm, or a flood.

Our partners in disaster response, The Mississippi United Methodist Disaster Relief, United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) have a very efficient system of collecting and distributing flood buckets. On this note, Sandra Braasch, LESM Director of Disaster Preparedness and Response and C.J. Caufield, State Coordinator for the Mississippi United Methodist Disaster Relief have developed a partnership regarding the ministry of flood buckets.

C.J. said, "after working closely with LESM on a number of initiatives, responses, and recovery efforts, we felt that this flood bucket ministry was a natural partnership." Sandra added, "this partnership among Episcopalian, United Methodist, and Lutheran congregations will help build more capacity to serve the vulnerable population - the last, the least, and the lost in Mississippi."

All three Bishops from Mississippi: the Mississippi Conference of The United Methodist Church, the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi, and ELCA -Southeastern Synod, had this to say about this partnership.

Bishop Hope Morgan Ward of the Mississippi Conference of the United Methodist Church said, "Flood buckets are tangible signs of prayers, love and support. The simple, necessary things in the buckets are gifts that lift the hearts of those who face cleaning out, cleaning up and rebuilding. Thank you for joining the flood of compassion as you assemble flood buckets for someone who will receive the blessing."

Bishop Duncan M. Gray, III of the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi said, "Part of the definition of a sacrament is that it is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. Flood Buckets could be viewed in such a manner. It is my hope that this joint ministry will bless many lives and remind us of our common call to serve one another, especially in times of crisis."

Bishop H. Julian Gordy of the ELCA-Southeastern Synod said, "In collecting and assembling the simple articles that fill flood buckets, United Methodists, Episcopalians and Lutherans are not only sharing our resources with Mississippians recovering from disaster, but are also giving witness to the unity we share in Christ Jesus, who calls us together serve our neighbors."

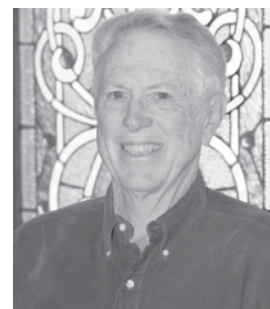
At the beginning of next year, there will be an annual drive throughout Mississippi for congregations to collect resources for and assemble the flood buckets. We will have more details for your congregation next month.



## Kairos #3 at YC FCC in early 2009

By Robert Hitt Neal

In the Spring of 2009, Nick Nichols of St. Mary's, Lexington will be the rector of Kairos #3 at the Yazoo City Federal Corrections Complex. Nick, the treasurer of Cursillo in Mississippi, urges those with an interest in prison ministry to read this article and call him to learn more about the amazing ministry of Kairos.



Nick Nichols to lead Kairos #3 at Yazoo City

The Kairos International Prison Ministry is a 30-plus year-old ministry headquartered in Winter Park, Florida that holds weekend prison retreats twice each year in medium and maximum security units in 32 states and ten foreign countries.

Thirty years of data show that Kairos graduates have a five times better chance of staying out of prison, once their sentences have been completed and they have been released into the free world. Prison administrators have testified to the fact that once Kairos has been introduced into a unit, security requirements dramatically lessen within a year, because the program is designed to change the environment on the inside by changing the hearts of the inmates therein.

As one former Mississippi Kairos Chairman put it, "We don't go into prison to get anyone out of prison; we go into prison to set them free - in Christ!"

The weekends are conducted with a manual so prison authorities are assured that the same format will be used each time, and they know what to expect from each weekend. The free-world volunteers return to the prison after the weekend even once a month for one year. Since many volunteers serve on almost every Kairos weekend, some of those people have been returning to MS prisons a couple of times a month for 15 years!

Kairos began in Mississippi in Unit 30 at the

Parchman Penitentiary in the fall of 1991, then moved to Unit 29, the "Throwaway Unit" as it was called by the inmates, in spring of 1994, returning every six months for another four-day retreat, except for two 18-month periods of renovation. In 1998, the Rankin County Central MS Correctional Facility Women's Unit began holding Kairos weekends, and in 1999, the first Kairos was held in the CMCF Men's Unit.

Less than eight months after Hurricane Katrina, the first Kairos was held at South MS Correctional Institution at Leakesville. Kairos Unit 32 # 1 was held at Parchman's most notorious unit the weekend before Thanksgiving in 2007, and on March 1-4 of 2008, Kairos # 1 was held in the Yazoo City Federal Correctional Complex. Over 3000 inmates have been through Kairos weekends in MS, and there are nearly 1000 Kairos free-world volunteers in the Magnolia State.

Mississippi also has a Kairos Outside (KO) organization, which is a ministry to the female family members of incarcerated people, and KO # 8 will be held at Grenada the second weekend in November, with Cary Shepherd of Columbus as the Leader. Only 5% of the men in prison in America had a positive father figure in the home, and 65% of the women in prison have admitted to a background of sexual abuse. KO was founded to try to counteract those numbers, as well as encourage families to stay together during incarceration: less than 10% of the men in prison have any appreciable contact with their families after the first two years.

Anyone who would like to get involved in Kairos Mississippi is invited to write MS Chairman Robert Hitt Neill at P.O. Box 6, Stoneville, MS 38776, or call 662-686-7789 or contact Nick Nichols at 662-834-2272.

## Camp Coast Care dedicates 21st home

By Scott Lenoir

In November, Camp Coast Care celebrated the construction and house blessing of its 21st home built by volunteers.

The home built belongs to 86 year old Delores Wilson who celebrates her 87th birthday in December.

Wilson is one of 412 individuals and families who have benefited from the efforts of Camp Coast Care which is a part of Lutheran Episcopal Services in Mississippi (LESM). In addition to new construction, the organization also repairs damaged houses, having completed 391 renovations to date.

A house blessing was officiated by the Rev. Barbara Hunter of Grace Lutheran church in Long Beach and several volunteers from across the nation as well as the Camp Coast Care staff attended the event.

"We've all heard enough to understand that the recovery work here was far from complete," said Steve Connet of Chicago. "This is my first trip down, but I hope to be back. I'm taking away a lot of great memories."

Newly appointed Camp Coast Care Director Jon Mark vanZutphen stated, "Today is the culmination of something wonderful. I wish we could do this every Friday."

If you are able to spend a few days helping out at Camp Camp Coast Care, call 228-234-5193 and ask for Volunteer Director Michael Magargel (email [mmagargel@lesm.org](mailto:mmagargel@lesm.org)).

Log on to [www.campcoastcare.com](http://www.campcoastcare.com) for complete information on this outstanding recovery ministry operated by LESM.

The mission is clear as revealed in Camp Coast Care's mission statement: "It's about hope, love and faith."

### Diocesan scholarships applications due March 1st

Each year thousands of dollars are awarded to students throughout the diocese through four separate scholarships administered by the Diocese Mississippi: the Misticos, Okolona, Warren and Capers Scholarships. Details of each scholarship may be found on the diocesan website.

The deadline for all applications is March 1, 2009. Applications may be downloaded at [www.dioms.org](http://www.dioms.org). Click on "Church Resources" on the left side of the index page and then on "Diocesan Scholarships" to print an application form.

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## Mediator-Meridian joins grass roots security group and meets their neighbors

By Steve Owen

After three break-ins within a year, enough was enough. The Church of the Mediator is fighting back-the way a church should fight-with grace and caring and a topflight Neighborhood Watch filled with newly discovered neighbors.

"Twice our bookstore has been broken into; its doors broken open and a little money and jewelry stolen," says Julia Claire Mitchell, bookstore manager. Then to add insult to injury, someone broke into our Sacristy. Nothing was taken, but a huge safe was moved out into the floor-an obvious attempt to open it had failed. Silver chalices were left untouched on the shelves. Even the communion wine had not been tampered with. However, the Sacristy's door was pried open, its seal popped and bolts ripped from their sockets.

This motivated Helen Tester, Rector, and Deacon Steve Owen, to take action. The major question was just how does a church 'fight' back against crime?

The answer came quickly. One street away from the church a viable Neighborhood Watch program was in place and going strong. The Church of the Mediator linked with the group and moved its epicenter to the Mediator's parish hall. Volunteers walked the neigh-

borhood to invite old and new members to come to the expanded Neighborhood Watch program at the new meeting place. .

On November 10, 2008, with chairs set for 40, an overflow crowd of 60 arrived. The chairman of the group, Al Willis, held a training session to teach participants what to watch out for. Then police officers shared insights about how citizens can help them fight crime. Many members of the earlier program expressed appreciation to the Church of the Mediator for showing concern for their neighborhood.

Better yet, the "fighting back" turned into a wonderful opportunity for the people of the Church of the Mediator to meet their neighbors. "Helen and I had been looking for some way to reach out to our neighborhood, but nothing seemed to work. We had invited the same neighbors to the opening of our new community playground a few years back, only to have one person show up," says Owen.

"It was a disappointment. I knew there was a way to connect; I just couldn't seem to see how. Then the break-ins occurred and we had sixty folks on our doorstep. We're fighting back the way churches can-with grace and joy-knowing we now have ways to help our neighbors, and they have a way to help us."



Church of the Mediator recently joined the Neighborhood Watch program after suffering several break-ins. Pictured are: Al Willis, Neighborhood Association President; the Rev. Helen Tester, Rector, Church of the Mediator; Eugene Lee, Neighborhood Association Vice-President; and the Rev. Steve Owen, Deacon, Church of the Mediator.

## Sabbath: An unreachable luxury?

(Licensed Lay Ministers Conference 2008)

By Debo Dykes

Many of us have thought of the term "Sabbath" to mean a defined length of time set aside from ordinary worldly pursuits. Yet, in a more general sense "Sabbath" need not refer to an entire day, but could be just a few minutes in which the mind is engaged in meditation, prayer or devotion. During the Licensed Lay Ministers Conference, Gay Yerger, Jane Watts, and Ellen Gabardi encouraged participants to recognize that such time is necessary to appreciate fully our capabilities as caring people of God.



Goldia Revies takes Sabbath time at lay minister's conference.

The Sabbath practices which Gay, Jane, and Ellen introduced during the conference are doable in our every day lives and it was suggested that picking one or two will definitely add a new dimension to one's day. In light of the continuing difficulties on our country, our Church, and the world, we could all use a little peace and Sabbath in our lives.

The Gray Center Chapel was transformed into a variety of "Sabbath" selections. Participants of the LLM conference were invited to choose a "Sabbath" station and immerse one's self in the experience of "rest". Among their options were rock polishing, sweeping, planting, ironing, painting, weaving, hammering, and labyrinth walking.

For those participants of the LLM conference, "Sabbath" no longer sounds like an incredible, or unreachable luxury. It is now a daily invitation to pause a moment or two, to resort our values, to treasure our relationships, to renew our bodies and spirits, and to be present with God. Thank you, Gay, Jane, and Ellen for the gift of "Sabbath".

## Children's book tackles issues of happiness and growth within the back drop of Delta agriculture

By Scott Lenoir

Charlie the Peanut is on a quest for happiness and contentment and is willing to travel wherever he needs to in order to achieve his goal.

That is the story line for Keath and Alyssa Killebrew's new children's book, Charlie the Peanut, which is available now at local independent bookstores. The Killebrews are communicants at St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Lexington and live on a farm outside of Tchula.

"I got the idea from Keath," says Alyssa, whose husband, Keath, had a dream during the middle of a peanut planting season about a peanut who traveled the fields of the Mississippi Delta looking for happiness.

Alyssa, a Licensed Professional Counselor working on a Ph.D. in clinical psychology, has worked with many families and children over the years and the couple became inspired to use Keath's dream as a basis for a story to help children cope with life.

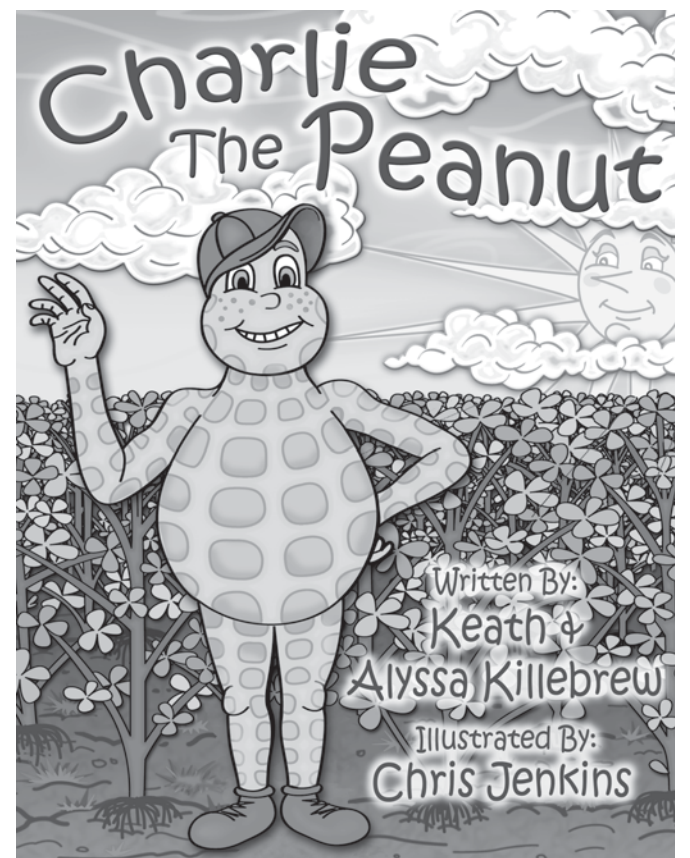
"Through my mental health practice I learned that it is important for children to learn to grow where they have been planted, and the story of Charlie the Peanut enforces that kind of attitude toward life," said Killebrew.

The authors live on a Delta plantation where their home overlooks miles of agricultural land that provides their livelihood from peanuts, cotton, soybeans, rice, corn and wheat.

The book teaches children about the different crops grown in the Delta as well illustrating a path to emotional stability.

Charlie the Peanut is illustrated by Chris Jenkins who is a graphic design student at Delta State University and a self taught musician and who now lives in Greenwood.

Charlie the Peanut is available at St. Andrew's Bookstore, McCormick Book Inn in Greenville and other local independent booksellers.



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## DIOCESAN CALENDAR

### DECEMBER 2008

21  
Bishop Gray visits:  
• St. Thomas', Diamondhead - 10:00 a.m.

24-26  
• Allin House Closed - Christmas Holiday

25  
• Christmas Day

27 - January 1  
• Winter Solstice, Camp Bratton-Green, Canton

### JANUARY 2009

1  
• Allin House Closed - New Year's Day

4  
Bishop Gray visits:  
• St. Christopher's, Jackson - 9:00 a.m.  
• Good Shepherd, Terry - 4:00 p.m.

4-5  
• Permanent Staff Interviews, Gray Center, Canton

4-7  
• Presbyter Discernment Committee

6  
• First Day of Epiphany  
• Deadline for submittal to The Mississippi Episcopalian

7  
• Tombigbee Convocation Pre-Council Meeting - 6:30 p.m., All Saints', Tupelo

8  
• General Convention Deputation - 10:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m., St. Andrew's Cathedral, Jackson

10-15  
• Episcopal Church Camp & Conference Center National Conference, Gray Center, Canton

10  
• Conversations with the Presiding Bishop Nativity, Greenwood - 2:30 p.m.-3:30 p.m.

11  
Bishop Gray visits:  
• Incarnation, West Point - 10:30 a.m.

11  
• Conversations with the Presiding Bishop St. Philips', Jackson - 2:30 p.m.-3:30 p.m.

12  
• Coast Convocation Pre-Council Meeting - 6:00 p.m., St. Mark's, Gulfport

13  
• Central Convocation Pre-Council Meeting - 6:30 p.m., St. Philip's, Jackson

14  
• Sowashee Convocation Pre-Council Meeting - 6:30 p.m., Ascension, Hattiesburg

15  
• Mississippi Religious Leaders' Conference - 12:00 noon  
• Northern Convocation Pre-Council Meeting - 6:30 p.m., St. Peter's, Oxford

18  
Bishop Gray visits:  
• Nativity, Greenwood - 10:00 a.m.  
• Grace, Carrollton - 4:00 p.m.

19  
• Allin House Closed - Observance of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

20  
• Delta Convocation Pre-Council Meeting - 6:00 p.m., St. Stephen's, Indianola

21  
• Fresh Start - 10:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., St. Andrew's Cathedral, Jackson

22  
• Old River Convocation Pre-Council Meeting - 6:30 p.m., Holy Trinity, Vicksburg

22-24  
• EFM Mentor Training - Basic and Formation, Gray Center, Canton

23-24  
• Gray Center Board, Gray Center, Canton

25  
Bishop Gray visits:  
• Redeemer, Brookhaven - 10:30 a.m.  
• St. James', Port Gibson - 5:00 p.m.

### FEBRUARY 2009

1  
Bishop Gray visits:  
• St. Alban's, Bovina - 10:00 a.m.

6-8  
• 182nd Annual Council, Lake Terrace Convention Center, Hattiesburg

9-10  
• Allin House Closed

13-14  
• Healthy Congregations, St. Andrew's Cathedral, Jackson

18-20  
• Center for Formation & Mission - Trinity Institute: Theology of Sustainability, Gray Center, Canton

20-21  
• Center for Formation & Mission - Praying in Color: Prayers for Lent, Big House, Gray Center, Canton

20-22  
• Jr. High DOY, Camp Bratton Green, Canton

25  
• Ash Wednesday, Lent begins

Bishop Gray visits:  
• St. Andrew's Lower School, Jackson - 8:15 a.m.

27-28  
• Center for Formation & Mission - Warden & New Vestry Members' Conference, Gray Center, Canton

## Deployment Report

Mississippi Episcopalian  
December 2008

### APPROACHING ORDINATIONS

*The Reverend Annie Cumberland*, as priest, St. Andrew's Cathedral, Jackson, time tbd, Sunday, February 1, 2009

*The Reverend Peter Gray*, as priest, St. Anna's Church, New Orleans, 10:00 a.m., Saturday, December 13, 2008

*The Reverend Catherine Rickett*, as priest, St. Stephen's Church, Columbia, 5:00 p.m., Sunday, December 14, 2008

### Additional Changes

*The Reverend Arthur Toro*, being received, from the Diocese of Thika, Anglican Church of Kenya

*The Reverend Brian Ponder*, resigned, Chaplain, Mississippi State University and Assistant Rector, Church of the Resurrection, Starkville, to become Assistant Rector, Grace-St. Luke's, Memphis

*The Reverend Jane Bearden*, announced resignation, as priest on staff at Church of the Redeemer, Biloxi, to become Rector, Trinity Church, Haverhill, Massachusetts

### IN SEARCH PROCESSES

Vicar, St. John's, Aberdeen  
Rector, Christ Church, Bay St. Louis  
Rector, St. George's, Clarksdale  
Rector, Calvary, Cleveland  
Rector, St. Paul's, Corinth  
Rector, St. James', Greenville  
Rector, St. Peter's-by-the-Sea, Gulfport  
Chaplain, University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg  
Associate Rector, St. John's, Ocean Springs  
Chaplain, University of Mississippi, Oxford  
Rector, St. Timothy's, Southaven  
Chaplain, Mississippi State University, Starkville  
Rector, Advent, Sumner  
Rector, All Saints', Tupelo

### SENIOR SEMINARIANS

*Jody Burnett* (Trinity, Hattiesburg), Virginia Theological Seminary  
*Carol Mead* (St. Peter's, Brandon), Berkeley Divinity School at Yale  
*Judy Morris* (St. Timothy's, Southaven), The School of Theology, Sewanee

## A Date to Remember...

February 6th, 1:30 p.m.

View Traces of the Trade  
at Ascension Church, Hattiesburg.



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## Traces of the Trade: A Story from the Deep North to be viewed as pre-Council activity

By Scott Lenoir

It is believed by many that the tragic and sin-filled story of slavery in the United States has been exhausted, but film maker Katrina Browne offers us a detailed and powerful documentary of her own family's participation in the slave trade that began, not in the deep South, but in Rhode Island prior to the Revolutionary War.

Browne discovered that slavery was a strong commercial cornerstone for New England, a fact that has been largely ignored by historians, and that her family led all other competitors in the business of trafficking human beings.

The DeWolf family business amassed a huge fortune with assets that included a fleet of 47 ships over the generations. By the end of his life one of Browne's ancestors, James DeWolf, was an United States Senator and believed to be the second wealthiest man in the nation.

Bearing in mind the 2006 General Convention's passing of Resolution A123, the Diocese of Mississippi will have an opportunity to view Traces of the Trade on Friday February 6th beginning at 1:30 p.m. at the Church of the Ascension in Hattiesburg.

"This documentary is dove-tailed with Resolution A123 that specifically asks us to go back and look at our involvement in slavery as a Church. Katrina Browne as given us one model, through this film, of fulfilling that call," said Dr. Anita George, Chair of the diocesan Racial Reconciliation Committee and the Chair of the national church committee as well.

In Browne's documentary, we follow nine of her family members as they retrace the steps of their ances-

tors' slave business taking them from Rhode Island, to Ghana, to Cuba and back. This Triangle Trade made the DeWolf family the largest slave-trading family in U.S. history.

The viewing of Traces of the Trade follows up on lectures given at last year's Annual Council which came from a research project coordinated by Kathleen Jenkins Bond of Trinity Church in Natchez. The ongoing research project focuses on the role of slavery in the Episcopal Church.

Traces of the Trade is open to all for viewing at Ascension. If you have questions, please call the Diocesan office at 601-948-5954.



Photo/Amishadai Sackitey

Photo/Laura Wulf

DeWolf family members and Gbanaian Beatrice Manu at a river ceremony in Ghana where captured Africans were brought for a last bath.



DeWolf descendants walking to Narragansett Bay, Bristol, RI.

*"A far-reaching personal documentary examination of the slave trade... The implications of the film are devastating."*

Stephen Holden, *The New York Times*



Photo/Jim Carrington

While the primary focus of Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Jesus, the blessing of Christmas memories runs a close second for many of us. It is during the Christmas Season that the past tumbles easily into the present aided by icons, both sacred and cultural, all of which can move us into experiencing what we call the Christmas Spirit.

A treasured family ornament, evergreen trees standing in rows waiting for a buyer, St. Nicholas, lighted displays of Mary, Joseph, and Jesus all have the power at unexpected moments to stop us in our mundane tracks and soften the rough edges of our lives. For those times we give thanks.

From the staff writers, proofers, and photographers who help bring The Mississippi Episcopalian into your home each month, and from all on the diocesan staff, we wish you a joyful Christmas with blessed memories and thankful hearts.

And a big thank you to all who have shared your stories with the paper throughout the year.

*God bless you and Merry Christmas!*

Scott, Maria, Janet, Denny, Debo, Carol, Carolyn, Duncan, John, Kathryn, David, Patrick, Kyle, Jim, Jud, Dale, Peggy, Emily, Liley, and Duke



Photo/Jud Meadors

