

THE MISSISSIPPI EPISCOPALIAN

February, 2009 • Volume 134, Issue No. 2

Gray's address speaks of reconciliation as a way of life for church mission



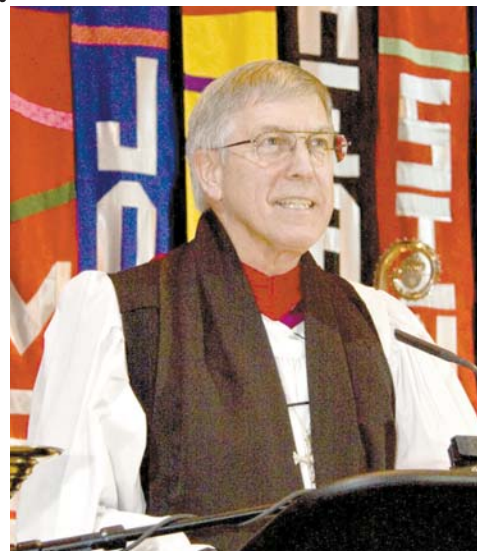
By Scott Lenoir

The 182nd Annual Council opened Friday night in Hattiesburg with a direct and frank assessment of the position of the Diocese of Mississippi by the Rt. Rev. Duncan M. Gray III who cast all of his remarks in the context of reconciliation as being God's primary mission.

In the wake of the economic collapse which began to hit strongly in the fourth quarter of 2008, Gray's opening address to council detailed the painful losses suffered financially by the diocese which began the budget process for 2009 at a \$500,000 deficit.

Approximately 30% of diocesan income is derived from endowments and the investments fueling endowment income have dropped significantly during the market downturn forcing a re-evaluation of revenue projections.

The Finance Committee cut the budget down to 2.4 million dollars, adopting an \$8,000 deficit. The Budget was passed by Council.



Bishop Gray III addresses 182nd Annual Council

ALL SAINTS, VICKSBURG LEASED

However all was not bleak news as Gray noted significant progress at Gray Center which ended up the year in the black. Also, the Bishop reported that All Saints Episcopal School in Vicksburg, which closed its doors in 2006, will be used as a training center for AmeriCorp volunteers.

Bishop Gray stated that "after months of difficult and tedious negotiations with the federal government, I, as chairman of All Saints Board, signed a lease with AmeriCorps."

Gray said that part of the All Saints campus will serve as the sole training center in the south for young AmeriCorps volunteers. Over 200 persons will be trained in disaster response of all types including hurricane, forest fires, and earthquakes. Occupancy will be taking place early in the summer and will help pay down the substantial debt.

The Bishop credited the Rev. John Jenkins, Lee Davis Thames, Kathryn McCormick and Diocesan Chancellor Granville Tate with bringing AmeriCorps to the All Saints campus. According to the Bishop, Chancellor Tate especially "...has spent hundreds of hours negotiating with private developers, and most recently, in the most byzantine of all worlds- the federal government."

BUILDING NEWS

Bishop Gray noted the significant progress made in the most difficult of times by two churches on the Coast: St. Mark's and St. Peter's by the Sea,

Gray's opening address, Continued on page 10

Bishop's sabbatical begins in April

By Scott Lenoir

Sabbatical: a leave usually granted every seven years for rest, study and travel — and that's exactly what Bishop Gray III intends to do with his sabbatical that begins April 1, 2009.

"The first half of my sabbatical will be time for rest, some of the time on retreat, both formal and informal," said Gray who has obtained a reading list from a seminary professor on the mission of church.

Also, much to the dismay of those who suffer from the Bishop's uncanny golf skills, Gray will spend a week at a camp and conference center in southwest Florida to attend the Ben Sutton Golf School.

"I'll also be spending some time at Gray Center. I've had a hankering to get on one of those mowers and just ride around Gray Center cutting grass," said Gray.

Another important piece of the Bishop's sabbatical is not traveling too much. "For the first half of the sabbatical Kathy is still in school. Tabitha is still going to school. I don't want to go too many places. I want this time to be a re-knitting together of my family. I can be there for supper and I can be there for breakfast."

The second half of the sabbatical will be devoted to more family travel. The Grays have planned a cruise and will sail up the coast of New England. The entire family will also spend some time at the beach in Destin.

Gray's sabbatical will be interrupted by General Convention in July, but he plans to take a few days traveling back home from Anaheim, California. During the Bishop's absence, the Standing Committee and the President of the Standing Committee, the Rev. Bill Livingston, will be on call in the event issues arise which need Episcopal oversight.

Three Bishops announce 2009 Legislative Agenda at a legislative breakfast on January 27, 2009

By Carol Borne Stewart
Bishop Duncan M. Gray III of the Episcopal Diocese of MS, Bishop Hope Morgan Ward of the MS area of the United Methodist Church and Bishop Joseph Latino of the Jackson Diocese of the Roman Catholic Church announced their 2009 Legislative Agenda on January 27, 2009 at a legislative breakfast held at Galloway Memorial United Methodist in Jackson. Addressing a room filled with over 50 Episcopal, Methodist and Catholic state senators and house members, the three bishops expressed their moral and theological positions on seven areas critical to the health and well-being of Mississippi's children.

Legislative Breakfast Continued on page 4



Bishop Gray III at the Legislative Breakfast on Jan. 27, 2009 with (L-R) Senator David Blount, St. Andrew's, Jackson; the Hon. Mike Chaney, State Insurance Commissioner, Christ Church, Vicksburg; and Representative Cecil Brown, St. James', Jackson.

Bishop Ezekiel guest of honor at 182nd Annual Council

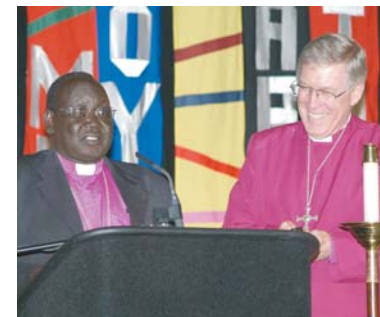
By Scott Lenoir

The Rt. Rev. Ezekiel Diing Ajang Malang, of Sudan, was a guest of honor at the 182nd Annual Council that convened in Hattiesburg February 6-8th.

Bishop Gray III wishes to establish a relationship with Bishop Ezekiel in the Sudanese Episcopal Church's effort to form the Diocese of Twic (pronounced 'twich') East. This missionary relationship will compliment and add to the existing ministry the Diocese of Mississippi has with the Sudanese people taking refuge in the diocese.

Bishop Ezekiel was consecrated Assistant Bishop of the Diocese of Bor in southern Sudan in 2004. Because of the rapid growth of the Diocese of Bor, the Anglican Archbishop of Sudan asked Bishop Ezekiel to lead an effort to establish a new diocese in the neighboring region of Twic.

Bishop Ezekiel, Continued on page 4



Bishop Gray stands with Sudanese Bishop Ezekiel Diing at the 182nd Annual Council in Hattiesburg.

Notes & Quotes

by Maria Watson



The hiatus January always provides for this column is a time to refresh and regroup, but not to make New Year's resolutions. I learned long ago that if I didn't

break 'em. Instead, I make plans, which are easier to rearrange without feeling guilty, which I rarely do, incidentally. As I read through your newsletters, I found an interesting note in the one from **Calvary, Cleveland**. "For those of you who may be unfamiliar with House Blessings, it is an Epiphany tradition for the church to take note of "new" dwellings and bless both the house and her inhabitants." Just last week, we had the privilege and honor of joining a fellow St. Peter's by-the-Sea, Gulfport, parishioner, Stanley Hastings, in the blessing of his post-Katrina restored home on Gulfport's West side, just a block off the Beach.

Stanley's house is old, dating back to the early 19-teens. Like my own house of similar vintage, it had withstood many severe storms, but like most everything else south of the tracks, it was heavily damaged in 2005 by you-know-who. Stanley, however, is a librarian and a student of history and was able to save an incredible number of his possessions. He was remarkably fortunate to be able to preserve many antique family portraits. A grant from the Mississippi Department of Archives and History helped in his rebuilding the house, thereby maintaining a relatively small portion of Gulfport's history and a very large part of his own life.

Now is rather an "off" time to be looking at your newsletters and trying to figure out what will be of interest to others when everyone reads this column in late February. Today is February 1. We here on the Coast are about to plunge headlong into Carnival. **St. John's, Ocean Springs**, expects to have a walking group in the parade there. **St.**

Peter's, Gulfport Young Adults are planning to catch the night parade on Mardi Gras somewhere along the route, which comes very near our church. **St. James, Jackson**, is also getting into the Carnival spirit with the Krewe of St. James Shrove Tuesday celebration, featuring a children's carnival, dinner with wonderful Louisiana dishes on the menu and a parade followed by the Liturgy of the Burning of the Palms to be used as ashes the next day.

The newsletters I have are mostly concerned with annual parish meetings, vestry elections and Annual Council. Some, however, speak of events further in the future and some of new developments within your parishes. **St. Matthew's, Kosciusko**, is already planning for its 50th anniversary celebration May 3, when the Rt. Rev. Duncan M. Gray Jr., retired Bishop of Mississippi, will celebrate and confirm. **St. Patrick's, Long Beach**, is forming a community dulcimer group with the goal of playing for nursing homes, schools, etc. Its first field trip is February 28 to the Southern Strings Dulcimer Festival in Hattiesburg. Speaking of music, **Incarnation, West Point**, recently dedicated a new Ahlborn-Galanti 2200 organ with the customary guest recital by noted organist Dr. Paul Lee of Laurel, followed by a reception.

St. John's, Ocean Springs, is moving around as it embarks on its capital improvements work and prepares to demolish the old parish hall to make way for a new one which, they hope, will be ready for occupancy by Christmas 2009. **Trinity, Natchez**, is thrilled to have its stained glass altar window back in place after its restoration by Pearl River Glass Studio in Jackson. A new light box has been installed behind the window, permitting better illumination. This window has been attributed to John LaFarge, a major painter and stained glass artist who was a contemporary of Louis Comfort Tiffany and worked with the semi-translucent opalescent stained glass for which Tiffany is widely known. Although there is no documentation to confirm the LaFarge connection to Trinity's window, the cartoon (pattern) for drawing the shapes making up the figure of Jesus

appears identical to the figure of Jesus in one of five known LaFarge windows installed in 1886 at Trinity Episcopal Church, Buffalo, New York.

At the beginning of the year, **Holy Cross, Olive Branch**, held a special candlelight service in the style of and with the music of Taizé. This service style comes from the ecumenical, monastic community in Southern France that is dedicated to an authentic Christ-centered communal life. Taizé music reflects the meditative style of this community and emphasizes simple phrases, usually from Psalms or other Scripture, repeated and sometimes sung in canon (a musical form that closely resembles the round). The repetition is intended to aid meditation and prayer.

The Young Adults of **St. Peter's, Gulfport**, will spend the last day of February landscaping the yard around Ms. Sarah Caldwell's new home. Parish volunteers built the home for the more-than-50-year nursery attendant (who has probably put up with more than half of our life-long parishioners at one time or another). The garden plan was drawn by St. Peter's own landscapist, Joanne Palmer.

On Saturday, March 7, from 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m., St. Peter's will sponsor a conference on "The Healing Power of Dreams," led by Mississippi's own dream counselor extraordinaire, Karen Mori Bonner of Jackson, a licensed therapist. An invitation to members of all Coast Convocation parishes, as well as to the general public, is being issued. Registration fee is \$15. Participants should bring a brown bag lunch or plan to have lunch on their own before returning to the conference.

Just a week later, on Saturday, March 14, **St. Thomas, Diamondhead**, is having its annual Lenten Quiet Day with Nancy Kokalas as leader. Born and reared in Washington, D.C., Nancy was exposed to an international "melting pot." After 25 years of studying healing ministries, she has developed a passion for freeing God's people from the pain of the past. The Quiet Day will feature several short talks by Nancy, followed by private and quiet time to reflect on scripture and points made in her presentations, as well as time for meeting with her. Bag lunch; drinks provided.

Details: 228-255-2568.

St. Paul's, Columbus, will have Noonday Prayers with guest speakers, followed by ECW-sponsored soup and salad lunches on Lenten Wednesdays. **St. Peter's, Gulfport**, will have Wednesday Lenten soup suppers, followed by a program. On Mondays, Centering Prayer, so welcome during Advent, will again be offered in the late afternoon at St. Peter's.

NOTABLE QUOTES...

"January brings about new beginnings and resolutions. A new year presents us with opportunity and challenge. With God's help, we can meet them all." (Creator, Clinton).

"Love, indeed, is the source of all good things; it is an impregnable defense-and the way that leads to heaven. He who walks in love can neither go astray nor be afraid: love guides him, protects him and brings him to his journey's end. My brothers, Christ made love the stairway that would enable all Christians to climb to heaven..." (St. Paul's, Columbus)

"After each of creation's days, God looks at all he has done and pronounces it 'Good.' This pronouncement includes God's human creation, male and female, created in God's image. Only then do we hear the second narrative, the one about the garden and the tempting tree from which the man and woman eat, then to discover the burden of sin and shame, and then to lose their idyllic garden home. This story...is not God's last word about us. The Word made flesh, Jesus, the saving Word, is the definitive Word on that subject, undoing the effects of that day in the garden..." (Nativity, Greenwood.)

Finally...some "kid theology" all from Grace Canton: "Dear God, Please put another holiday between Christmas and Easter. There is nothing good in there." "Dear God, Is it true my father won't get into Heaven if he uses his golf words in the house?" "Dear God, I think orange went with purple until I saw the sunset you made on Tuesday night."

Continually published for 132 years in the Diocese of Mississippi



The Mississippi Episcopalian

Official news organ of the Bishop and the Diocese of Mississippi
118 N. Congress Street - P.O. Box 23107
Jackson, Mississippi 39225-3107

The Rt. Rev. Duncan M. Gray III
Ninth Bishop of Mississippi

The Rev. Scott Lenoir
Editor

The Mississippi Episcopalian (USPS 024755) is published monthly by the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi, 118 N. Congress St., Jackson, MS 39201. Periodical postage paid at Jackson, MS. POSTMASTER: Send change of address to the Mississippi Episcopalian, P.O. Box 23107, Jackson, MS 39225-3107. In giving changes of address send the old address as well as the new. We cannot be responsible for the return of manuscripts or photographs.

Heavenly Father, we remember before you
those who suffer want and anxiety from lack of
work. Guide the people of this land so to use our
public and private wealth that all may find
suitable and fulfilling employment, and receive
just payment for their labor; through Jesus
Christ our Lord.

Amen

BCP pg. 824



MADISON CELLARS

(601) 856-0931
Madison, MS

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

The Bishop's Journal

January 1 – At home with family.

January 2 – In office during the morning. Respond to invitation and provide the invocation for campaign kickoff for mayoral candidate. Afternoon spent with my father as we cheer Ole Miss to victory in the Cotton Bowl.

January 3 – Work on sermon and correspondence in morning. Afternoon with family.

January 4 – Visitation to St. Christopher's Church of the Ascension in Jackson. Wonderful music and spirit continues in this place. I preach and celebrate and spend good visiting time with the congregation at a brunch following the service.

Afternoon visitation with the congregation of Good Shepherd, Terry. I preach, celebrate and confirm one in the midst of very large crowd. Many visitors from a residential facility with which the congregation of Good Shepherd is closely tied. Dinner afterwards. Long and good discussion follows with members of the congregation about hopes and challenges for our church.

January 5 – Working at home in preparation for the visit of our Presiding Bishop.

January 6 – Staff meetings in the morning. Budget session with Canon McCormick trying to make ends meet for 2009 budget. Conference call midday with staff of Episcopal Relief and Development. Appointment with an aspirant for holy orders. Annual consultation with the Rev. Harriet Simmons.

January 7 – At Gray Center listening to reflections by Diocesan Discernment Committee on their interviews with prospective seminarians. Conference call at midday with Executive Committee to get final approval of 2009 budget. After two months of struggle and cuts, we are still looking at a very slight deficit for 2009. Afternoon in the office.

January 8 – Meet with Linda Nelson in the morning to prepare for meeting of the Deputies and Alternates to General Convention. Later, deputies and alternates meet to begin work on this summer's General Convention. Mid afternoon the Presiding Bishop, the Most Reverend Katharine Jefferts Schori joins us for the meeting to share her thinking about General Convention and to listen to the stories of each member of our deputation as they discuss their hopes for our church. Press conference with the Presiding Bishop at the Cathedral following the deputies meeting.

In the evening diocesan clergy and spouses gather with Bishop Katharine for dinner at the Mississippi Crafts Center.

January 9 – Breakfast with the Presiding Bishop and diocesan staff. Drive to Marshall Elementary School for a serious and candid conversation with public school teachers and advocates about the challenges facing our schools in Mississippi

and the role of the Episcopal Church in addressing these challenges.

Lunch at the Stewpot Ministry in west Jackson where Bishop Katharine is given an overview of the wide variety of ministries carried on by Stewpot.

Afternoon at St. Andrew's School where the Presiding Bishop preaches at an Epiphany service and facilitates a discussion with students, faculty, staff and parents about the nature and role of an Episcopal School.

Evening at the home of the Rev. and Mrs. Christopher Powell with elected diocesan leadership and spouses.

January 10 – Travel with Bishop Katharine and staff to the Delta in order to give her a broader view of Mississippi. Stop in Lexington for a brief tour of the Church, then drive to Greenwood with Mr. Phillip Barbour who gives a wonderful commentary on everything that we are seeing.

Morning session with Mr. Fred Carl, CEO and founder of Viking, to hear his story and vision for Greenwood. Lunch with clergy and spouses. Very large crowd at an open forum at Church of the Nativity, Greenwood. Very good question and answer session with people from throughout North Mississippi.

Return home where Kathy and I host the Presiding Bishop and her husband, Richard Schori, with a small and informal family gathering.

January 11 – St. Andrew's Cathedral in the morning with the Presiding Bishop. Open forum with overflow crowd prior to the late service. Bishop Katharine preaches, celebrates and baptizes three at the Cathedral. Lunch with a former Presiding Bishop's spouse, Ms. Ann Allin and her family. Afternoon forum and conversation at St. Philip's Jackson.

After the forum, I drive the Presiding Bishop and her husband to Gray Center where she will participate in the annual meeting of the executive directors of the Episcopal Camp and Conference Centers.

I visit with the participants of the conference, welcome them to Gray Center, then return to Jackson.

January 12 – Day off. Two visits to doctor and dentist.

January 13 – In office all day.

Staff meetings in the morning. Conference call with those planning the "Traces of the Trade" showing at Annual Council. Annual Consultation with the Rev. Sam Godfrey in the afternoon.

January 14 – Morning session with Chuck Barlow and the Rev. Laura Gettys (via phone) to confirm plans for the next Mississippi trip to Uganda. Morning appointments with Mike Huseh from LESM and the Rev. Michael Nation.

January 15 – Morning at home working on sermon. Noon meeting with the Mississippi Religious Leadership Conference. Early after-

noon session with the Rev. John Jenkins and Canon McCormick re All Saints' School. Leave for Gray Center where I preach at the closing Eucharist for the Episcopal Camp and Conference Center gathering of executive directors. Dinner with participants at Gray Center. Home to Jackson in evening.

January 16 – Morning appointment with aspirant for holy orders. Annual consultation with Deacon James Henry LeBatard. In afternoon annual consultation with the Rev. Bryan Owen. Late afternoon visit with a young aspirant for holy orders.

January 17 – Leave for Greenwood in the morning for weekend visit. Have lunch with men's group of the Church of the Nativity at a hunting lodge outside of Greenwood. Later make a hospital visit to a long time parishioner. Evening dinner with the vestry and spouses of Nativity overnight in the beautiful Alluvian Hotel.

January 18 – Breakfast with the new confirmands. Lead the adult class at Nativity in a discussion of our new initiatives in Uganda and the Sudan and the Presiding Bishop's visit last week.

At the parish Eucharist, I preach, celebrate, confirm seven and receive one. During the reception that follows I am able to briefly view the major expansion of the parish house now taking place.

Lunch with the rector, the Rev. Matt Rowe and others.

Afternoon appointment with an old friend, then drive to Carrollton for annual visitation to Grace Church. I preach, celebrate and confirm 2 in this historic church. Spend time afterwards reflecting with members of congregation about the Presiding Bishop's visit last week.

Return to Jackson late.

January 19 – Drive to Oxford with our foster daughter, Tabitha. She and I tour the Ole Miss campus and visit with one of her old friends during the day. Late afternoon I participate with members of St. Peter's and Second Missionary Baptist Church in the traditional march to celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. After warming ourselves with hot chocolate, I participate, along with old friend and former Second Baptist pastor, the Rev. Leroy Wadlington, in a joint Second Baptist/St. Peter's worship service. Combined choirs, youth speakers, award presentations and two sermons by Pastor Wadlington and me make for a wonderful moment. Enthusiasm in these two churches for their role in racial healing is very heartening.

Tabitha and I return to Jackson very late.

January 20 – I made a decision to close the office so that staff could watch the historic inauguration. I watched the proceedings with my parents, both of whom in their own ways helped make possible this day.

January 21 – Spend major portion of the day with participants in the Fresh Start program, our program for ordained persons in the first two years of a new cure.

Leave in the afternoon for the coast where I meet with representatives from congregations in Gulfport, Biloxi and Long Beach to discuss loan

financing prospects until their beach front property sells. Good beginning as we face the ongoing challenges of recovery in the midst of a major economic downturn.

Return to Jackson very late.

January 22 – Morning appointment with school officials in Ridgeland to discuss linking students to our rebuilding program at Mission on the Bay in Bay St. Louis.

In the afternoon I meet individually with those discerning a call to the ordained ministry in Mississippi who have recently interviewed with the Commission on Ministry. It is at these meetings each January that I make my final decisions as to who will be going to seminary in the fall.

January 23 – Morning spent at home working on my address to Diocesan Council. Afternoon appointments with the Rev. Molly Wade, Marcie Skelton and Kelly Butler.

In the afternoon, I drive to Gray Center for an overnight strategic planning session with the Gray Center Board of Managers.

January 24 – Gray Center Board of Managers meeting most of the day. Home late in the afternoon.

January 25 – Drive to Brookhaven for annual visitation to the Church of the Redeemer. I preach, celebrate and confirm seven. Wonderful luncheon follows with good time for visiting. Very good spirit here. Good conversation with the Rev. Gene Bennett and the parish wardens. Father Bennett and I then take communion to two members of the congregation.

Later in the afternoon, I drive to Port Gibson where I first meet with the Mission Committee before gathering with the entire congregation for a late afternoon Eucharist with renewal of baptismal vows. Supper follows in the parish house. Very good time with a very warm congregation.

Return home to Jackson late.

January 26 – Day off. Work some on my address to Diocesan Council.

January 27 – Have breakfast with Bishops Latino (Roman Catholic) and Ward (United Methodist) at Galloway Methodist Church with Episcopal, United Methodist and Roman Catholic state legislators and other elected officials to discuss the legislative priorities for our ecumenical Congregations for Children program. Press conference follows.

Staff meetings in the morning. Afternoon conversation with the Rev. Annie Cumberland.

January 28 – Spend most of the day at home working on my address to the 182nd Annual Diocesan Council next weekend in Hattiesburg.

January 29 – At home working on Council matters.

January 30 – Participate in Second Annual Christian Unity Prayer Service at St. Joseph's Catholic School. Reception followed in the library. In office throughout the afternoon.

Three resolutions were passed by the 182nd Annual Council

RESOLUTION 2009-1 RESOLUTION ON SUPPORT FOR THOSE STUDYING FOR ORDAINED MINISTRY

Resolved: That the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi at its Convention meeting on February 6th to 8th memorialize the 76th General Convention of the Episcopal Church and its Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance to provide funding in the coming triennium in the amount of \$100,000 in year one, \$150,000 in year two and \$200,000 in year three for the purpose of providing needs-based scholarships for Episcopal Seminarians. And be it further

Resolved: That said funds be administered and distributed to needy seminarians through the existing Scholarship Program of the Society for the Increase of the Ministry (SIM), said Society having an established record of 151 years of

experience in administering scholarship grants to Episcopal seminarians. And be it further

Resolved: That the General Convention direct SIM to report annually to the Executive Council on this work and its effectiveness in meeting the needs of the future ordained leaders of this Church and that the Executive Council, in turn, provide a full report to 77th General Convention.

RESOLUTION 2009-2 RESOLUTION TO ESTABLISH THE FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT AS EPISCOPAL RELIEF & DEVELOPMENT SUNDAY

Be it Resolved, that the Diocese of Mississippi dedicate the first Sunday in Lent as Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday and that congregations and individuals be encouraged to sup-

port Episcopal Relief & Development's life-saving work through prayer and a special offering that will help heal a hurting world.

Be it further Resolved, that the Diocese of Mississippi submit the following resolution to be considered and adopted by Province IV.

Be it further Resolved, that the Diocese of Mississippi submit the following resolution to the 76th General Convention of The Episcopal Church, meeting in Anaheim, California, July 2009:

Resolved, the House of Bishops concurring, this 76th General Convention of The Episcopal Church dedicate the first Sunday in Lent as Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday and that congregations and individuals be encouraged to support Episcopal Relief & Development's life-saving work through prayer and a special offering that will help heal a hurting world.

RESOLUTION 2009-3 RESOLUTION ON A RESPONSE TO THE ATTACKS BY THE "LORD'S RESISTANCE ARMY" IN THE SUDAN

Be it resolved that in response to recent attacks by the so-called Lord's Resistance Army on Christians in southern Sudan, communicants of the Diocese of Mississippi express our deep outrage over these atrocities.

Be it further resolved that we endeavor to learn more about the crisis brought about by the "Lord's Resistance Army" and support the Episcopalians of southern Sudan by making our concern known to our elected officials.

Be it further resolved that we pray frequently for the people of central and eastern Africa who are or have been victims of the LRA and for all victims of genocide around the world, including those who continue to die in the Darfur region of Sudan.

Legislative Breakfast

Continued from page 1

The seven areas they would like addressed during this legislative session are as follows:

- 1) Education -
 - ❖ Pilot Pre-K Funding
 - MAEP Funding Full-Funding of Education
 - Funding for At-Risk Children
- 2) Childcare
 - ❖ Mississippi Low-Income Children Initiative Legislation (TANF)
 - ❖ Legislate Grants for Adequate Childcare
- 3) Foster Care
 - ❖ Monitor Compliance with Olivia Y. vs. Barbour
- 4) Healthcare
 - ❖ SCHIP
- 5) Juvenile Justice
 - ❖ Mississippi Youth Justice Project - Cradle to Prison Pipeline
- 6) Fair Taxation
 - ❖ Cigarette Tax Increase to Fund Children's Healthcare
- 7) Immigration Issues Facing Children

For more information on becoming a member of the Congregations for Children Network, please contact: The Rev. Carol Borne Stewart cbstew@bellsouth.net



Five new parishes joined Congregations for Children at Annual Council: pictured are Dorothy Byrd from Redeemer, Biloxi; Richard Middleton, St. Mark's Jackson; Lynda Gilmore, St. Thomas, Diamondhead; David Knight, St. Patrick's, Long Beach and Katy Watkins, Church of the Mediator, Meridian.

Bishop Ezekiel

Continued from page 1

This new diocese, "will need considerable infrastructure before being formally received as a diocese in the Province of Sudan," stated the Rt. Rev. Duncan Gray III. It is from the Diocese of Bor and the region of Twic that so many of our Jackson Sudanese come.

Bishop Ezekiel, 54, arrived in Jackson on Saturday, January 31 with his wife, Rebecca, and their 5 month old son, Telaar. The Bishop visited with many of the Sudanese refugees during his time in Mississippi. Also, Bishop Gray baptized Telaar in the Chapel of St. Andrew's Cathedral on Thursday, Feb. 6. (See picture on page 12)

Telaar's Christian name is Paul and Bishop Gray referred to him during the Closing Eucharist of the 182nd Annual Council as being the outward and visible sign of the connection Mississippi now has with the emerging Diocese of Twic East.

Sudan is the largest country in Africa, approximating the size of Europe, with a population of 40 million people, 500 ethnic and tribal divisions and 50 distinct languages. The country has been embroiled in a long running civil war grounded in the political, economic and social domination of the non-Muslim, non-Arab Southern Sudanese people, many of whom have sought sanctuary in African refugee camps for years in order to survive the civil war.

A date to remember

Tuesday March 3rd: deadline for March issue of
The Mississippi Episcopalian



Beemon Drugs
Maywood Mart, Jackson
601-366-9431

Montessori school teaching on grounds of Chapel of the Cross Madison

By Scott Lenoir

Last summer the vestry of Chapel of the Cross in Madison invited a Montessori school to operate on their grounds. The Montessori Children's House at Chapel of the Cross is a member of the American Montessori Society and is located in the old parish rectory on the grounds of the Chapel.

The Chapel of the Cross leadership was familiar with the Montessori method as the parish has a growing Catechesis of the Good Shepherd program which is an outgrowth of Montessori education.

Sharon Errickson is the director of the Montessori Children's House and one of the two lead teachers. There are two assistant teachers and 28 children are enrolled at the school. The ages of the children are between 3 and 6 years old and are divided into two classes composed of younger and older students.

Errickson, who has a business background, became familiar with Montessori education when her family moved to Jackson in 1998. She became

a certified Montessori teacher in 2002 and taught at the school housed at St. James' in Jackson until space issues forced the school to look for another home. Errickson stated that they now have room for 40 children.

Regarding pedagogy, Errickson said, "Our primary goal in the Montessori program is help the child reach his or her full potential in all areas of life, not just to teach the child numbers and letters, but how to deal with relationships with other children and adults."

Errickson notes that there is a lot of hands on activity and that the each class is made up of a mixed age group. Older children are encouraged to help the younger ones and the classes stay together with the same teacher for all the years they are at the school.

Regarding building relationship and problem solving, Errickson said the staff does not immediately step in and resolve problems between children. "We are there to give support and assistance, but we want them to learn to work out their disputes in a manner where they really have

the words to resolve the conflict."

All of that takes training in what Errickson calls "peace education".

"I think it's very important for these children to leave here knowing how to read and knowing addition and subtraction and the numbers and the continents. What is more important for me is peace education and having children learn how to communicate with each other and adults at a young age," said Errickson.

"In my life I've noticed that you could be the smartest, smartest, smartest, but if you don't have any social skills, you're not going to go too far. I want these children to know that we're not all alike, but that we get along. One of my things is that we're all friends at Montessori Children's House."



Montessori lead teacher Denise Whissel works with 3 year old Kelly on her numbers

Errickson said that the school is taking applications for the 2009-10 school year.

To learn more about the Montessori method, log on to the American Montessori Society website: www.amshq.org.

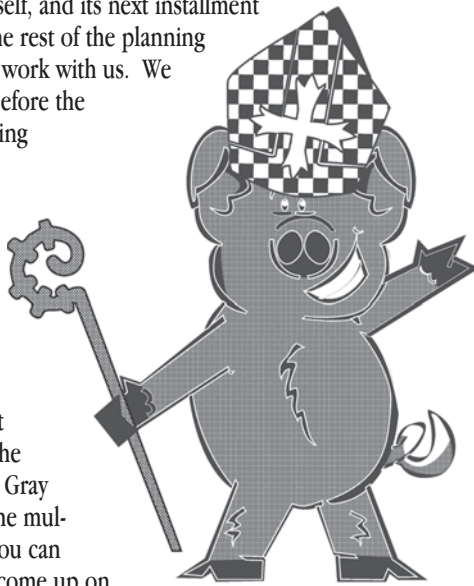
Bishop's Barbeque organizers need you!

By Jamie Dickson

With the Bishop's Barbeque slowly reviving itself, and its next installment approaching this Memorial Day Weekend, I (and the rest of the planning committee) would like to ask you pointedly to not work with us. We don't want you to work on anything BBQ-related before the weekend itself; we don't want you to work on finding items for the Silent Auction; we don't want you to work in the kitchen or serving lines. We *need* you to help us.

The Apostle Paul writes at length about the different ways to serve the Church. "There are a variety of gifts," he says in one of his letters to the young church in Corinth, "but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord." And, if I may paraphrase, there are different ways to help, but there is only one Gray Center. The Barbeque is one of the cornerstone fundraisers for Gray Center and its many ministries-Camp Caritas and the multiple summer sessions at Bratton-Green. Any way you can help will be appreciated. Even if all you can do is come up on Memorial Day weekend, buy a meal ticket, and enjoy the fellowship of others in one of the Diocese's most holy places, we will welcome. However, if you can help in any of the ways indicated in the Wish List published in this and subsequent editions of Mississippi Episcopalian, then we will welcome that too.

If you are able to help us, it might be tiring. It might not. You might spend a few hours in the hot early-summer sun. You might not. Regardless of how you are able to help us, I can guarantee that it will be fulfilling, nourishing, and just possibly, a whole lot of fun.



BISHOP'S BBQ 2009 WISH LIST

The Bishop's BBQ Steering Committee is seeking volunteers to donate the below items/services in order to make Bishop's BBQ 2009 the best ever!

Please contact bbbq@stalexisjackson.org if you or a group from your congregation are able to help. Thank you!

- Items for the Silent Auction
- Large Tent for Food Service
- Patriotic Decorations such as bunting
- Volunteers to help in the following areas:
 - Food/Beverage Service
 - Clean-Up Crew
 - Set-Up Crew

**BE SURE TO MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR
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COUNCIL NEWS



Head Lay Worship Leader Danny Meadors (center) presented nine newly commissioned Licensed Lay Worship Leaders at the opening service of the 182nd Annual Council.



Ed Thurmond (left) was re-elected Treasurer of the Diocese. Newly Elected to the Executive Committee (l. to r.) are: the Rev. Margaret Ayres, St. James', Port Gibson; Edwin Grabam, St. Andrew's Cathedral; the Rev. Helen Tester, Mediator, Meridian; the Rev. Lee Winter, Resurrection, Starkville, and Hilda Povall, Calvary, Cleveland.



Clergy elected to Ecclesiastical Trial Court were from l. to r. the Rev'ds Chip Davis, Trinity, Natchez and Julia Moore, Calvary, Cleveland; also elected (not pictured) was Hal Miller, St. James, Jackson. Elected to the Standing Committee were John Anderson, St. Andrew's Cathedral; and the Rev. Kyle Seage, All Saints', Inverness.



Pictured are second year students of the Deacon's School Dennis Wilson, St. Peter's by the Lake, Brandon; Pam Rhea, St. Paul's, Columbus; and Scott Williams, St. Peter's by the Sea, Gulfport.



The Rev. Cathy Halford, All Saints', Jackson is newly ordained to the diaconate.



Newly ordained priests attending council were the Rev'ds Billie Abraham, St. Alban's, Bovina; Margaret Ayres, St. James, Port Gibson; Jeremy Blauvelt, Trinity, Pass Christian; Annie Cumberland, St. Andrew's Cathedral; and Catherine Rickett, St. Stephen's, Columbus and St. Elizabeth's, Collins.



New Postulants to the Deacon School are (l. to r.) Deborah Hanson, St. Philip's, Jackson; Lynn Phillips Gaines, Resurrection, Starkville; Josie Williams, St. Alban's, Bovina; and Patricia Cantrell, Incarnation, West Point.

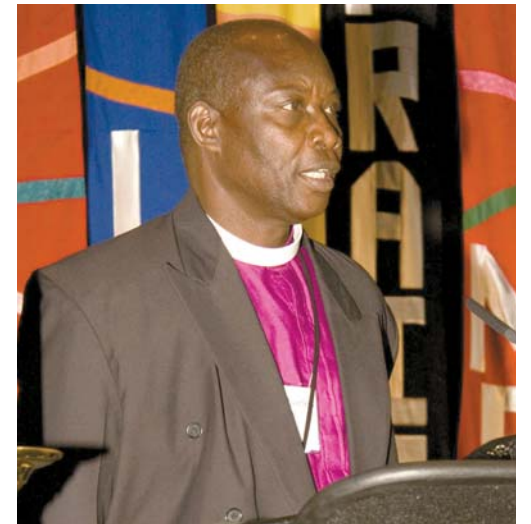
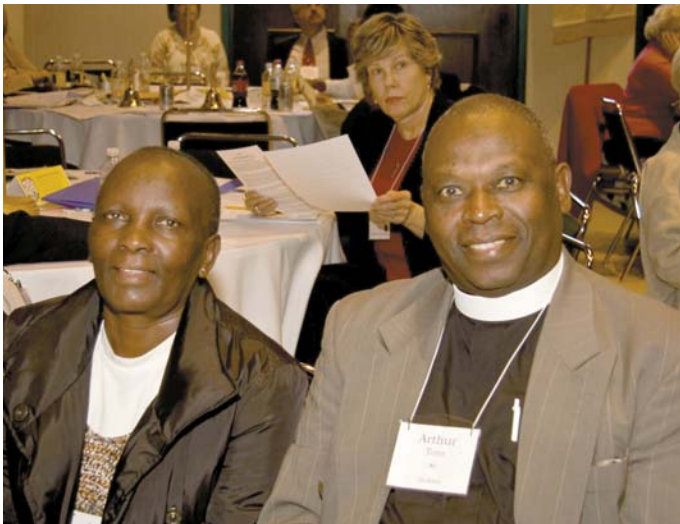


Taking a break from their studies at seminary to attend Annual Council were first year students Seth Wally, Virginia Seminary; Clelie McCandless, Watson Lamb, and Don Chancellor all of whom attend Sewanee.



Newly arrived clergy to the diocese are the Rev'ds Jason Shelby, St. Columb's, Ridgeland and Arthur Toro, Christ the Savior, Jackson.

182nd Annual Council



Ring Around the Collar

By Denny Allman



Hope appears many times in Scripture. References to it occupy more than an entire column in my concordance. As both a noun and a verb it connotes expectation. If we hope (verb) or have hope (noun) we expect that something, usually good, will happen. In Scripture hope usually refers to God or to what God can or will do. In one of the intercessory prayers in the Daily Office we pray "In you, Lord, is our hope. And we shall never hope in vain." Hope is used as both a noun and a verb. I believe that however it is used, hope is an active word. It is not a word that just lies there. There is some activity required. If we hope that our life will change we cannot lie back and expect God to change it. We have to do something to help ourselves. Anything without our activity becomes "wishing". If we truly hope we tell God what we want then begin whatever activity is necessary on our part.

Lent is not one of those seasons that immediately comes to mind when we think of hope. However, the Rev. Melanie Lemburg of Mediator-Redeemer in McComb/Magnolia sees glimpses of hope in this season which is upon us.

These past few days, I have been offered many glimpses of hope. I have been dazzled by hope in the shining face of a young child at the altar rail waiting eagerly to receive communion. I have tasted hope in the air between young couples preparing to be married. I have been plunged into a sea of hope as I watch the enormous crowds gathered to witness the inauguration of our 44th president.

It almost seems strange to me to be so focused on hope, even as I begin to make preparations for our parish's observance of the season of Lent - a time associated with penitence and fasting. But I realize that even the penitence and the fasting are under-girded by hope.

We fast and make our confession asking God to strip away our disappointments, our cynicism, our failures, our sins, and relieved of these burdens, we are left with room for hope. We enter into the wilderness for forty days with Jesus knowing that we will come through it to experience and celebrate the very foundation of our hope: the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Even the bleak words of Ash Wednesday - "Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return" - are not words of despair but words of hope, reminding us that this body, this life is only a small part of who we are, a small part of our existence. They remind us of the hope that we can find in knowing and understanding and living like we belong to God; we have come from God, and we will return to God.

May God grant us glimpses of hope in this season of our penitence, buds of color and new life in the last throes of our winter, and may we remember that we are people made of both the dust of the earth and the stardust of eternal hope.

A Bit of History

Comments on today's economic crisis echo Bishops Bratton and Green

By John Fontaine

Both Bishop Theodore Dubose Bratton and Bishop William Mercer Green II showed extraordinary wisdom and courage in their comments on the economic distress and political turmoil that came with the depression of the thirties.

Bishop Bratton: "Ordered society, particularly during the past quarter century, has been rapidly painting its own picture in the tragically gruesome outlines of greed, of lust, of contempt of human values, of gloating over money power, of rebellion against God, of exaltation of self. Not to recognize the moral and social chaos of our own making which besets us is to be incapable of conceiving the state of sin in which we have been living, and of perceiving the call for radical repentance needful for its redemption."

Bishop Green was equally outspoken. In 1934 he declared: "...the epoch of high competitive individualism is closing...the Church cannot be complacent in the face of the social problems that confront us. The Church may not be dogmatic when economic policies are discussed. On the other hand, it cannot observe the rule of discrete silence or of cold indifference...when faced by the facts that millions of people of our country are denied the common necessities of life; that one third of our population is below the poverty level and that there is widespread want in a land that is abundantly productive. These make evident the lamentable inadequacy of existing economic systems.

Looking back at them now, the most audacious words were spoken by Bishop Bratton in praise of President Roosevelt when friends, neighbors, and upright church members reviled the man. "Our great Christian President, vividly conscious that his duties to his nation can only truly be fulfilled through fulfillment of his duties to God...Mr. Roosevelt has uncovered, with simple boldness, the sores which have been poisoning our body politic; the deterrents to the achieving of that first purpose of government; the honest prosperity and contentment of its citizens."



Mike Flannes, Head Verger for the 182nd Annual Council, listens to a report during Saturday's business session.



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P.B. visit provides occasion to begin education conversation within diocese

By Scott Lenoir

During her first official visit to the Diocese of Mississippi, Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori and Bishop Gray III spent part of one day visiting with Episcopalians involved in public and parochial education.

"This piece of the P.B.'s visit is a catalyst for the diocese to continue its work toward achieving more effective ministry in the area of education," said Bishop Gray.

The forum on public education was convened at Marshall Elementary School in southwest Jackson on Friday morning, January 9th. It was attended by Episcopalians representing non-profit organizations such as The William Winter Institute, Parents for Public Schools, The Barksdale Reading Institute, Operation Shoestring, The Walker Foundation and The Parents' Campaign. Teachers, a state senator and one former legislator attended as well.

During the afternoon, the Presiding Bishop and Bishop Gray visited St. Andrew's Episcopal Day School in Ridgeland where there was a prayer service followed by conversations with students and faculty about St. Andrew's and its Episcopal identity and mission.

Jefferts Schori listened to all group members speak of their experience and ideas to promote church involvement in education. At the public school forum she listened with interest about the disparity between the two systems of education that was pointedly described at the Marshall Elementary School Forum.

MARSHALL ELEMENTARY FORUM

Kelly Butler, a communicant and newly elected vestry member of St. Andrew's Cathedral, works with the Barksdale Reading Institute and voiced strong concerns about the church's involvement with parochial education which she believes has a negative effect on the public schools.

"It's one thing to say that we have a segregated school system here, but as long as the corporate church gives it's imprimatur to an elite day school and doesn't somehow make some decisions that at least counter balances what is happening in the public schools then we are guilty of elitism. It is so counter intuitive to the Gospels, it baffles me," said Butler.

Butler acknowledged the quality of education at St. Andrew's and the fact that the parochial schools are here to stay, adding "if we are not going to close them then we need to make sure that the decisions made around those [schools] create more equity than they are currently delivering."

It was at this point that the Presiding Bishop questioned the group about what Butler stated.

"Are you telling me that those schools are serving primarily white children and there's not any intentional work to integrate those schools, or to help them serve the broad section of the community?"

The group responded in a variety of ways regarding the systems of parochial and private education in Mississippi, as well as about St. Andrew's in particular. Robert Langford, a communicant at St. Andrew's and the Director of

Operation Shoestring said that he thought St. Andrew's School was getting too much focus in the discussion. He said that the problem of education in Mississippi affects hundreds of thousands of children and St. Andrew's is a small part of the parochial system.

Jefferts Schori shared that her children attended an Episcopal School in Oakland, California while she was in seminary. The school was begun to provide an opportunity for all ages and classes of people to receive an education and one person in the group stated the St. Andrew's began in the same way.

PAROCHIAL OR INDEPENDENT?

Also of note is the problem of defining the nature of a parochial school. For the Rev. Chip Davis, Trinity Episcopal Day School in Natchez is a parochial school and linked to the Episcopal Church regardless of how independent the school operates on a day to day basis. "Choosing to have the word 'Episcopal' in the name of the school means the school is within the church," said Davis, rector of Trinity, Natchez.

Davis's position, and others who agree with him, is not accepted by other Episcopal schools. At least in the Diocese of Mississippi, the definition of what is a parochial school is not clear. St. Andrew's Episcopal School, according to Dr. George Penick, Head of School, considers itself an independent school and not a parochial school.

Currently The Diocese of Mississippi has five schools registered with the National Association of Episcopal Schools (NAES): St Paul's Episcopal School in Columbus; Coast Episcopal School in Long Beach; Trinity Episcopal Day School in Natchez; St. John's Episcopal School in Ocean Springs; and St. Andrew's Episcopal School in Ridgeland. There may be other schools associated with the church which are members of NAES.

ST. ANDREW'S EPISCOPAL SCHOOL VISIT

Friday afternoon the Presiding Bishop visited St. Andrew's Episcopal School in Ridgeland. The Presiding Bishop attended a worship service based on a format of Morning Prayer with all students and faculty attending. After the service, Jefferts Schori had a conversation with a group of faculty and students who discussed what it means to be a school associated with the Episcopal Church especially in light of problems articulated at the public school forum.

After hearing about the work at St. Andrew's, Bishop Katharine stated that the school is a good model for diversity within the church.

Dr. George Penick renewed his commitment to exploring what it means to be a school within the Episcopal tradition.



Bishop Gray and Presiding Bishop Jefferts Schori listen to Episcopalians involved in public education at a forum held at Marshall Elementary School in Jackson.

"In order for the relationship to be strong, it must be understood, it must be clearly articulated, and it must be diligently pursued," said Penick.

Currently St. Andrew's student body is composed of 20% minority students. In the upcoming fiscal year, over one million dollars will be spent on financial aid totaling 7.5% of the school budget. Also, there is a two million dollar endowment in place for gifted, financially-needy students.

Penick noted that the school receives no funding from the diocese, from any Episcopal church, or from the national church.

Addressing concerns raised at the public school forum regarding St. Andrew's Episcopal School having a negative impact on the public school system Penick said, "If the path is to improve public education, I don't think tearing down the Episcopal schools is a path to that. I think there are much more constructive ways that the Episcopal Church can be in dialog and conversation providing energy and resources and leadership to make improvements happen in the public schools [rather] than through attacking St. Andrew's."

After the meeting with the Presiding Bishop, Penick stated, "I've said all along, even before I took the job, that the future of St. Andrew's isn't about only the education of the twelve hundred students that are here, but about having an impact on the community of Jackson."

Currently St. Andrew's Episcopal School is involved in a program with Jim Hill High School, a Jackson Public School. Students from Jim Hill and St. Andrew's exchange visits to promote friendship and a better understanding between the two student bodies.

Also, St. Andrew's students participate in an after school tutoring program at McWillie Elementary School which is also a part of the Jackson Public School System.

St. Andrew's School Chaplain, the Rev. Jenifer Deaton said, "Currently on this campus, the focal point of how our Episcopal tradition is

made visible to the public is our chapel services."

Part of Deaton's job at St. Andrew's is to organize worship services. She said that last year, her first as chaplain, she was shy in asking students of other faiths to serve as readers or acolytes, but discovered that students of all faiths wanted to be a part of the chapel service.

"This year ... we tried to do things within the service to accommodate the other celebrations and traditions that are going on. The joy on the student's faces as they hear their tradition ... is deeply meaningful," said Deaton.

Regarding the conversation with the wider community and St. Andrew's School particularly, Deaton noted that the school values diversity and inclusivity and she looks forward to conversing with those Episcopalians who work within the public school.

"For us to be able to back up what we say about who we are... talking about a 'we' that is more than some elite group... we haven't had [a chance] to say to the public about why a little Hindu girl is reading the prayers in chapel and it's okay for her to do that. This is why it's okay for us to let the Jewish students read a prayer of mourning for their friend who died," said Deaton, who also has a child in the Jackson Public School system.

Deaton believes the opportunity to have this conversation with the wider community will be beneficial for the parochial school system and public school system and Penick agrees.

"St. Andrew's School is not the enemy. If St. Andrew's School went away tomorrow I don't think it would improve the public schools any. So the question is not public verses private, but how do we work together towards the common good," said Penick.

EDUCATION FORUM TO BE CALLED

As a result of the meetings held during Jefferts Schori's visit, Episcopalians involved in public and parochial or independent school ministries, will be invited to attend a diocesan education forum in the fall.

"Our schools are increasingly re-segregated, for multiple and complex reasons; nonetheless, the challenges for the most vulnerable in our culture, our children, demand the attention of the people of God," said Gray in his opening address to the 182nd Annual Council.

Gray stated that the purpose for the fall education forum will be for people on each side of the education systems to listen to each other and seek ways to work together to educate the children of Mississippi.

"We Episcopalians, with our heritage of parochial schools cannot ignore the challenges of public education and must always ask how we are helping or exacerbating the plight of 'the least of these.' I am no longer content to let this excess be ignored. Our failure to provide quality education for all our children is the greatest moral scandal of our time," said Gray.



Dr. George Penick



Chaplain Jennifer Deaton

Editor's Note: The column below by the Presiding Bishop is reprinted from the February edition of Epsicopal Life.

Chance to engage

Mississippi Episcopalians willing to discuss the tough questions

By Katharine Jefferts Schori, February 03, 2009

[Episcopal Life] I want to share with you some of the challenges and joys I experienced in a recent visit to the Diocese of Mississippi. Mississippi's Gulf Coast still is recovering from the massive storms of August 2005. Churches are beginning to rebuild, but housing still lags far behind the need. Episcopal Relief and Development has been assisting in the efforts, which have been led by Lutheran Episcopal Services in Mississippi. That joint work stands as a witness to what is possible when we work together with partners.

Mississippi routinely ranks at the bottom of most measures of social well-being in the United States — poorest, highest child death rates, least formal education, most children living in poverty and so on. The west-central part of the state adjoining the Mississippi River, called the Delta, has even worse statistics. We toured the Delta and saw signs of poverty — decrepit housing, working age men idle at mid-day and very little evidence of social services, job possibilities or reasons to move or stay there.

The Delta has some of the richest farmland in the country and a distinguished and complex history of vibrant communities and cultural vitality, as well as segregation and racial violence. There was once significant wealth and employment here, but the mechanization of farm production has meant the continued loss of jobs. We found several hopeful signs as we visited the town of Greenwood. It once had three synagogues, and it still has a vigorous Episcopal church. A good part of the town clearly is decayed, but the central downtown is experiencing a renaissance, in large part due to the efforts of Episcopalians.

It is the home of Viking Range Corp., begun by Fred Carl, an Episcopalian who chose to site his business in his native community. Thanks to Viking, employment is increasing (1,500 people out of an area population of 20,000), some destination tourism has begun, there are increased educational opportunities (a small independent middle and high school, as well as a cooking school), and the community as a whole is reviving as businesses once again open in the downtown. The vision of a small group of people is producing transformation and bringing resurrection.

I was privileged to be part of some provocative conversations about the educational challenges in Mississippi, which has about half a million children of school age. Ninety percent attend public schools with the remainder divided between private schools and home schooling. While Jackson's population is 46 percent African-American, the schools are effective-

ly segregated once again, with public schools there more than 98 percent black.

We met for one discussion at an elementary school in Jackson that is a participant in a powerfully effective reading program. Jim Barksdale, the inventor of Netscape and an Episcopalian, endowed a program at the University of Mississippi to improve reading in the public schools. The program provides coaches for teachers as well as an effective curriculum. We witnessed a demonstration by four kindergartners, who are reading quite competently less than halfway through their first school year. That's an achievement seldom met in wealthier public schools elsewhere.

The discussion that followed had to do with both the racial imbalances and the need for more effective public investment in education. All of the participants in this discussion were Episcopalians, working in various creative and prophetic ways to raise consciousness, challenge politicians and mobilize voters. The most challenging question had to do with the role of the church in education, especially as a provider of "elite" education. How does the great work of Episcopal schools affect poorer public schools, and where does justice call us as a church to work together to reduce the inequities and produce an equitable education for all students?

I came away from this visit with a deepened understanding of the systemic nature of poverty in this part of the world and profoundly encouraged by Mississippi Episcopalians' ability and willingness to have exceedingly challenging conversations about the continuing legacy of racism. The last is a gift they can offer to the whole church.

I was further impressed by the commitment of the respective bishops of the Episcopal Church, the Methodist Church and the Roman Catholic Church in Mississippi to call the people of that state to action on issues affecting children. What a powerful witness — another reminder that when the needs of others are our focus, we can enthusiastically work together with those who differ from us.

Our nation stands at the beginning of a deeply hope-filled season. It is a profound opportunity for us as a church to engage our racist history, to repent of it and to work to amend our common life. Amendment of life means transforming that legacy into a community of hope, equality and justice for all. Our nation's founders called it "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." We call it the reign of God.

— The Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori is presiding bishop and primate of the Episcopal Church.

Gray's opening address

Continued from page 1

Gulfport who have finished rebuilding their facilities. Gray dedicated both churches in 2008 and is scheduled to dedicate St. Patrick's, Long Beach next August.

Trinity Church Pass Christian has begun its reconstruction while plans are still in process for Christ Church, Bay St. Louis and Redeemer, Biloxi.

In addition to Coast churches, major building projects have been completed or are in process by 12 other congregations throughout the diocese. "It is one sign of the vitality of our church, even in these difficult times," said Gray.

RACIAL RECONCILIATION

Bishop Gray gave thanks for the continuing willingness to speak about race relations in the diocese and noted that Presiding Bishop Jefferts Schori was impressed with our capacity for serious, non-politically correct exchanges.

According to Gray, "...we have been given a capacity to talk, and struggle and argue and be remarkably honest with one another in conversations about race."

The Bishop said that he and other religious leaders recently signed a commitment to work for the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission for our state in conjunction with the William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation.

This effort is patterned after a similar project in North Carolina, and South Africa. Gray said, "...this would be another occasion for us to tell the personal stories of our past, and in so doing, find the healing grace that comes when we give dignity to the experiences of all."

Gray also called for an education forum for Episcopalians in the public, parochial, or independent school ministry. (See a detailed article about Education on page 9 of this paper.)

DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN MISSION

One of the most significant pieces of Gray's address Friday night was his announcement of forming a Task Force "to help me think through a process whose goal will be the most comprehensive financial campaign for the funding of missions since our own Bishop Allin launched the Venture in Mission Campaign in the 1970s."

Gray is laying claim to the formal name of the Episcopal Church by dubbing the new initiative The Campaign for Domestic and Foreign Mission. The hope is to begin the work in 2 years. Gray cited the growing relation with Sudanese Episcopalians, our developing ties to Uganda, and the ongoing mission we have in Panama and Honduras as well as mission work here in Mississippi as examples of ministries which could be fueled by such a campaign.

"We were created to be a missionary community both at home and abroad, despite our current amnesia; it is who we were created to be. The challenge of the current moment is to recover, reclaim and rebuild our deepest identity," said Gray, referring to the legal name of The Episcopal Church as "The Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society."

*Read the full text of
Bishop Gray's Opening
Address to the 182nd
Annual Council on the
diocesan website,
www.dioms.org*



Emily Everett is the Assistant to the Canons and Prime Minister of All Things Power Point for the 182nd Annual Council.

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DIOCESAN CALENDAR

FEBRUARY

14-21

• Honduras Medical Mission, San Joaquin, Honduras

18-20

• Center for Formation & Mission - Trinity Institute: Theology of Sustainability, 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.

26

• Lenten Quiet Day with Bishop Gray - 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., Gray Center, Canton

27-28

• Wardens' & New Vestry Members' Conferences, Gray Center, Canton

MARCH

1

• Bishop Gray visits: All Saints', Tupelo - 9:30 a.m. with Celebration of New Ministry for the Rev. Paul Stephens
• Bishop Gray visits: Calvary, Michigan City - 4:00 p.m.

3

• Deadline for submittal to The Mississippi Episcopalian
• Fresh Start - 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m., St. John's, Laurel
• Covenant of Common Life Celebration Dinner & Service - 6:00 p.m. Galloway United Methodist Church, Jackson / 7:30 p.m. St. Andrew's Cathedral, Jackson

4

• Executive Committee - 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., St. Andrew's Cathedral, Jackson

5

• Fresh Start - 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m., St. Peter's, Oxford
• Lenten Quiet Day with Bishop Gray - 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., Gray Center, Canton

6-7

• Commission on Ministry, Gray Center, Canton

7

• Standing Committee - 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., Gray Center, Canton

8

• Bishop Gray visits: Trinity, Natchez - 10:30 a.m.

8-10

• Presbyter Post-Ordination Consultation, Gray Center, Canton

10

• Diocesan Trustees - 2:00 p.m., Allin House, Jackson

11

• Deacons' Council - 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m., Allin House, Jackson
• Tombigbee Convocation Confirmation Service - 6:30 p.m., St. Paul's, Columbus

12

• Lenten Quiet Day with Bishop Gray - 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., Gray Center, Canton

12-19

• House of Bishops, Kanuga, NC

13-14

• Racial Reconciliation Training: Seeing the Face of God in Each Other, St. Andrew's Cathedral, Jackson

14

• Gray Center Board - 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m., Gray Center, Canton

16-25

• Center for Formation & Mission - "Lent in the Holy Land" pilgrimage

19

• Mississippi Religious Leadership Conference - 12:00 noon

19-22

• North American Association for the Diaconate's Annual Conference for Diaconal Formation Directors and Archdeacons, Gray Center, Canton

22

• Bishop Gray visits: St. Paul's, Meridian - 10:30 a.m.
• Bishop Gray visits: St. Mary's, Enterprise - 5:00 p.m.

27-29

• Sr. High DOY, Camp Bratton Green, Canton

27-28

• Friends of Gray Center, Gray Center, Canton
• Arts Alive, Downtown Jackson

29

• Bishop Gray visits: St. Clements', Vaiden - 10:30 a.m.

31 - April 2

• College for Bishops

APRIL

1-July 31

• Bishop Gray on Sabbatical Leave

4

• Camp Directors' Meeting, Gray Center, Canton

5

• Palm Sunday

6-8

• Center for Formation & Mission - Knitting, Needles & Yoga Conference, Big House, Gray Center, Canton

7

• Deadline for submittal to *The Mississippi Episcopalian*

9

• Maundy Thursday

10

• Good Friday

10-13

• Allin House Closed - Easter Holiday

12

• Easter Day

17-19

• Vocare / Cornerstone, Camp Bratton Green, Canton

21-23

• Province IV Chaplains to the Retired Conference, Gray Center

24-26

• Happening #69, St. John's, Laurel

29 - May 3

• Cursillo #117, Gray Center, Canton

30

• Finance Committee - 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m., St. Andrew's Cathedral, Jackson

McLarty receives St. George Medal

By Scott Lenoir

Veteran scoutmaster and long-time communicant of St. Andrew's Cathedral, Bill McLarty, was awarded the St. George Medal for his role in supporting the Boy Scouts of America.

The Very Rev. Edward O'Conner, Dean of St. Andrew's Cathedral, presented the certificate and medal to McLarty during a worship service where both Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori and Bishop Gray III were in attendance.

The award was approved by the vestry of St. Andrew's and the certificate was signed by both Jefferts Schori and Gray III.

The St. George Award is the adult religious award given through the Episcopal Church for clergy or laity who are honored for their work in promoting scouting. The award is not one which is earned by work alone, but only given through nomination, usually done anonymously.

"The thing that is most touching to me about this me is that it is from the two organizations I love the most: the church and Boy Scouts of America," said McLarty.



Bill McLarty

McLarty was honored primarily in recognition of his work with Troop 1, where he served as scoutmaster or assistant scoutmaster for the last ten years. McLarty stepped down from that position in September of 2008 and now serves as the Charter Organization Representative. He is an active worker for the Andrew Jackson Council.

Troop 1 is the oldest Scout Troop in Mississippi first chartered by St. Andrew's Church in 1916. The troop is now jointly sponsored by St. Andrew's and St. James' in Jackson. There are currently 55 boys registered in Troop 1 ranging in age from 11 to 17.

"I have referred to Troop 1 as St. Andrew's oldest outreach ministry," said McLarty.

McLarty, who works with Trustmark Bank in Jackson, has seen many boys achieve the top rank of Eagle Scout over the years, including his own two sons. McLarty himself was an Eagle, as well as his father, which makes his sons third generation Eagles: a rare achievement in scouting.

Faithful Departed

by Peggy Jones

Fran Lassiter, 77, communicant of Trinity, Hattiesburg, died May 22, 2008.

Helen Crain, 97, communicant of Trinity, Hattiesburg, died August 5, 2008.

Becky "Bear" Luke, 56, communicant of St. Paul's, Meridian, died October 31, 2008.

Susan Rawls Quint, 90, communicant of Trinity, Hattiesburg, died September 8, 2008.

Carol Gray Rawls, 60, communicant of Trinity, Hattiesburg, died October 12, 2008.

Stanly C. Beers, 96, communicant of Trinity, Yazoo City, died December 15, 2008.

Fred Walthall Klyce, 89, communicant of Holy Innocents', Como, died Dec. 29, 2008.

Norma Jean Ogden, 98, communicant of Grace, Carrollton, died January 4, 2009.

Dorothy Mary Reeves, 74, communicant of Mediator, Meridian, died January 5, 2009.

Janice Harris Trim, 61, communicant of St. Timothy's, Southaven, died January 22, 2009.



Vested clergy wait to process for the opening service of the 182nd Annual Council.

Historic covenant to be signed between two Mississippi denominations

By Scott Lenoir

The Mississippi Conference of the United Methodist Church and the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi enter into an historic ecumenical relationship on the Feast of John and Charles Wesley, March 3, 2009.

The event will begin at Galloway Methodist Church at 6 p.m. with a dinner and then a liturgical procession will take place from Galloway to St. Andrew's Cathedral where both Bishops will share Holy Eucharist with the two congregations.

Bishop Duncan Gray III and Bishop Hope Morgan Ward will sign *A Covenant of Common Life* at the service to mark the beginning of the two churches sharing a closer mission and ministry.

Bishop Gray said that the covenant is a local outgrowth of a decades-long ecumenical national study between the two denominations to seek ways to connect in areas of worship and

common ministry. The existing close relationship between the Methodist, Roman Catholic and Episcopal bishops in Mississippi for the last thirty years also facilitated the covenant's formation.

In 2005, the United Methodist Church approved a scholarly agreement called "Joint Interim Eucharistic Sharing." The agreement was later approved by the General Convention of the Episcopal Church in 2006 and is the foundation of the newly formed Mississippi covenant.

The covenant was first proposed to Bishop Gray by Diocesan Ecumenical Officer, the Rev. Michael Nations. Nations based his idea on similar agreements being forged in the country that were consistent with the Joint Interim Eucharistic Sharing guidelines. Bishops Gray and Ward were taken with the proposal and representatives from both churches refined the covenant based on Nation's initial draft.

Both bishops hope that all Episcopal churches and United Methodist churches who share congregations in the same town will reach out to each other and form partnerships by the end of 2009.

The first two churches to enter into the covenant are St. Andrew's Episcopal Cathedral and Galloway United Methodist Church in Jackson.

The Very Rev. Edward O'Connor, Dean of St. Andrew's Cathedral believes the covenant at its basis seeks to carry on the Christian work of reconciliation between the two denominations as well as to the community at large.

"I see this very outward, visible and growing relationship as an opportunity to live into our common mission. Galloway and St. Andrew's both have long and excellent histories of providing for the least of these in our community. We believe that these historic churches can

and should unite to have a stronger voice in the ongoing social and economic issues that face us. Ultimately we are committed to reconciling all people to unity with God and each other in Christ," said O'Connor.

One of the gifts that this covenant brings for Bishop Ward is an appreciation of feast days which are not observed by the Methodist Church.

"March 3rd [the Feast Day of John and Charles Wesley] has suddenly become a very important day in my life," said Ward.

Also included in the covenant is a proclamation which looks forward to the day when the two churches are brought into full communion with each other.

To see the full text of the Covenant of Common life log on to the diocesan website: www.dioms.org.

Cursillo in Mississippi updating database

By Tom Welch

More pilgrims attended a Cursillo weekend in 2008 than in recent years. Bishop Gray also served on one of the weekend staff teams and the Cursillo Secretariat hopes more clergy will follow his example of service.

Thank you to everyone who has kept Cursillo in their prayers. We are in the process of rebuilding our data base contact list for our newsletters. To all those who have attended a weekend, please provide your address so that we may keep in contact with you.

Send an email to: Shaula-Cursillo@comcast.net. If you are interested in learning more about Cursillo, serving on staff or are interested in attending the weekend yourself, please contact us at our web site:

www.chapelofthecross.org/Cursillo/CursilloHome.html.

Or write us at: Cursillo in Christianity, PO Box 16834, Jackson, MS 39236



Please keep Robert Pooley and Barbara Hammer in your prayers as they prepare to lead Cursillo #117 at Gray Conference Center April 30-May 3. Future weekends are also on our web site.

SPIRITUAL REFRESHMENT AND BEYOND is a seminar being hosted by the Episcopal Cursillo Community and open to all interested persons, whether they have attended a Cursillo or not. It will be held at St. Philip's on Old Canton Road in Jackson on May 30th from 9am to 3pm. Featured Speakers will include the National President-Elect

for Cursillo, our own Robin Dow and the Chairman for Mississippi Methodist Cursillo. Come and be a part of this larger-than-life community of faith. More information is on the web site referenced above.

The Cursillo Secretariat is excited about the year ahead.

Tom Welch is the Chairman of the Mississippi Cursillo Secretariat



Episcopalians attending the Mississippi Truth Project state meeting at Central United Methodist Church on Farrish St. in Jackson on January 31, 2009 are (L-R) The Rev. Bill Hanna, All Saints, Jackson, Dr. Anita George, Resurrection, Starkville, Ms. Dorothy Triplett, St. Andrew's, Jackson and The Rt. Rev. Duncan M. Gray, Jr. Participants signed a preliminary "Letter of Intent" showing support for the possible formation of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Mississippi.



Bishop Gray III and Bishop Ezekiel prepare to begin the opening service the 182 Annual Council with An Order of Worship for the Evening which included The Renewal of Baptismal Vows.



Bishop Ezekiel Diing with wife, Rebecca, and their newly baptized son, Telaar. Telaar, whose Christian name is Paul, was baptized February 5 by Bishop Gray in the chapel at St. Andrew's Cathedral.