Diocesan Convention To Reconcve
To Elect a Bishop Suffragan

The 176th Convention of the Diocese of Alabama will reconvene in special session at the Cathedral Church of the Advent in Birmingham on Sunday, September 30, at 3:30 p.m. to elect a bishop suffragan. Delegate registration will begin in Clingman Commons at 2 p.m.

The nominating committee chaired by Judge Bernard Harwood has recommended four priests to be placed in nomination at the convention session, and our diocesan Standing Committee has received two additional nominees by petition. (The nominations by petition replace nominations from the floor of the convention due to the requirement that complete background checks on nominees be done prior to an election.) All six nominees will participate in a Question-and-Answer Walkabout session at St. Luke's in Birmingham on Saturday, September 8, with registration beginning at noon (please see page 16). The nominees will meet for 30-minute question sessions with clergy, delegates, and others wishing to attend. Everyone is invited to attend this open information program. For more about the nominees please see pages 6 through 11; for more information about the election process please visit www.dioala.org.

$6.18 million Pledged to ACTS 2 Campaign

With an overwhelming response from the great people of our diocese, we are proud to announce an ACTS 2 Campaign total to date of $6.18 million pledged from our parishes and households. We are most grateful for the generous participation of so many people throughout our diocese including our children, who filled their ACTS 2 mite boxes to provide the funds for the altar in the new chapel at Camp McDowell. Special thanks go to the members of our Campaign Cabinet for their leadership, to all of our Parish Point Persons who organized individual parish efforts, and to our clergy and lay leaders for their support.

One of the ACTS 2 Campaign goals is to give every person an opportunity to contribute, and it is not too late for you to make a pledge or gift. Due to cost increases in the chapel construction and land values, we need additional gifts to fully realize all of the goals. You can download a pledge card from www.acts2campaign.org or call our diocesan office, 205/715-2060 ext. 318; additional mite boxes are also available. We give thanks to God for the generous stewardship of God's people who answered this call to grow and strengthen our shared ministry.

Diaconate Informational Meeting

If you are interested in serving as a “permanent” deacon in our diocese, please come to the diaconate informational meeting on Saturday, October 13, from 10 a.m. to noon at All Saints’ in Birmingham. For more information please contact the Venerable Rev. Louise Thibodaux, our diocesan archdeacon, at 205/715-2060 ext. 325 or lthibodaux@dioala.org.

Bishop Parsley Leads Sesquicentennial Parade

Bishop Parsley and Becky helped kick off the University of the South’s 150th Anniversary celebration on July 4 at a service at the Church of the Good Shepherd on Lookout Mountain followed by a parade in Sewanee. The Rt. Rev. Nicholas Hamner Cobbs, the 1st Bishop of Alabama, joined other Southern bishops as well as priests and lay leaders at a meeting on Lookout Mountain on July 4, 1857, to found the university. Sewanee invites everyone to join the faculty, students, alumni, and friends of Sewanee in celebrating the university’s 150 years of distinguished history with 10 months of special events that will end with the May 2008 commencement. For a schedule of events please visit www.sewanee.edu or call Sewanee at 931/598-1000.
Building a Nutrition Clinic and Health Center in Haiti

Late last year when the members of our Companion Diocese Commission visited Haiti, the permanent home for Lespwa Timoun (Hope for Children), a nutrition clinic and health center in Croix des Bouquets, was an empty field of dreams. Today, thanks to donations from our diocese, construction has begun on the $300,000 facility, which will include program offices, examining rooms, an inpatient facility for sick/severely malnourished children and their mothers, and facilities to make, process, and store nutrition supplements and medications. Father Fritz Valdema’s wife, Carmel, currently operates the nutrition program out of the church.

Helping build this facility is just one of many ways we have to live into our companion diocesan relationship with our brothers and sisters in Haiti. We are planning two mission trips in the near future: a construction team to build classroom furniture for schools in Croix des Bouquets October 13-21 and a mission team February 2-10. If you have carpentry skills and would like to join the construction team, please contact the Rev. Deacon Dave Drachlis at dave@stthomas-hsv.org, Anne Kimzey at hanahanford@yahoo.com, or the Rev. Bill King at Carpenter House, 205/715-2060 ext. 317. If you would like to make a donation to help cover the cost of materials and stipends for Haitian construction workers, please make your check to the Diocese of Alabama and send it to the Rev. Bill King, Carpenter House, 521 North 20th Street, Birmingham, AL 35203-2682.

Kimzey at hanahanford@yahoo.com, or the Rev. Bill King at Carpenter House, 205/715-2060 ext. 317. If you would like to make a donation to help cover the cost of materials and stipends for Haitian construction workers, please make your check to the Diocese of Alabama and send it to the Rev. Bill King, Carpenter House, 521 North 20th Street, Birmingham, AL 35203-2682.

Clergy News

The Rev. Richard Cobbs IV, a retired priest from the Diocese of Southwest Florida, began serving as interim rector of Trinity in Demopolis in July.

The Rev. Deacon Dave Drachlis began serving with Anne Kimzey as cochair of our Companion Diocese Commission in July.

The Rev. Jeff Garner began serving as rector of St. Simon Peter’s in Pell City on August 1. Jeff previously served as rector of St. Philip’s in Fort Payne.

The Rev. Kerry Holder and Peter Joffrion were married in June. Kerry, who lives in Huntsville, is a nonparochial priest of our diocese.

The Rev. Marianne Stephens and Vernon Kroll were married on July 14. Marianne serves as rector of St. John’s Deaf in Birmingham.

Elsie Gribbin, the widow of the Rev. Dr. R. Emmet Gribbin Jr., died on July 30 in Tuscaloosa.

Bishops’ Conference on Shared Ministries Scheduled for October 23 in Montgomery

The annual Lutheran-Anglican-Roman Catholic Bishops’ Conference on Shared Ministries will be held at St. Bede Catholic Church in Montgomery on Tuesday, October 23. The day will begin with registration at 9:30 a.m. and end at 2:30 p.m. Keynote speaker Archbishop Edwin O’Brien, the head of the Catholic military ordinariate for the United States and a former naval chaplain, is keenly aware of the difficulties of military chaplains in these times from both Catholic and Protestant perspectives. His insights will give participants a vivid description of what it means to experience ministry and ecumenical cooperation “in the trenches.”

For more information please contact the Rev. James Elliott Jr., rector of Holy Comforter in Gadsden, at jim156@bellsouth.net, or the Rev. Bill King at 205/715-2060 ext. 317 or bking@dioala.org.
In Everything Give Thanks

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

These recent months have been and continue to be especially life-giving times in our diocese. In these late-summer ramblings I wish to heed St. Paul’s words “in everything give thanks” (I Thessalonians 5:18, KJV). This is an essential reminder that gratitude is at the heart of our faith as God’s people.

Let me say first that I am very grateful for the generosity of our diocese in bringing our ACTS 2 Campaign to a total of more than $61.18 million in pledges and gifts to date. This is a wonderful expression of Christian commitment that will enable us to accomplish the six mission goals of the campaign. Many people have done much to make ACTS 2 so effective, especially Felix Drennen III, our excellent cabinet, and our generous donors. We salute them. Thanks be to God indeed.

Our Bishop Suffragan Nominating Committee has presented four gifted priests as nominees for this important ministry. The committee had the difficult task of selecting from an exceptionally strong group of clergy. Two more gifted priests have been nominated by petition as invited by our process. We are most grateful to all who allowed themselves to be considered. Helpful information is provided in this issue about each nominee, and I urge you to read it most carefully. (Please see pages 6 through 11.)

I invite all of you to attend the interview day with the nominees on September 8 at St. Luke’s in Birmingham beginning at noon, and to keep your election in your constant prayers through September 30. (Please see page 16 for details.)

Many of you have heard the news that the Rev. Bill King will retire from his ministry as our Deputy for Ministry Development and Clergy Deployment at the end of October. Bill has been an extraordinarily faithful and effective deputy and valued colleague. Under his leadership we have planted new parishes, supported many parish search processes and clergy deployments, developed our fine diaconate program, and strengthened our outreach ministries in significant ways. He will be missed at Carpenter House, but he will continue his pastoral ministry in some new ways in retirement. I plan to take time to reflect on our ministry needs as we prepare to seek Bill’s successor. During the next two months let us show Bill our thanks for his ministry among us.

Your bishops will be in New Orleans in September for our interim meeting. The Archbishop of Canterbury will join us for two days of conversation and a special public service in support of New Orleans. The bishops will be engaging in recovery ministries and visiting churches hard hit by Hurricane Katrina in Mississippi and Louisiana. Our commitment is to bring $10,000 from each of our dioceses to contribute to relief efforts—your special gifts for this are welcome. Please keep our meeting in your prayers that the unity and mission of the Church will be strengthened.

Camp McDowell has had a most successful summer. Mark Johnston tells me that we will probably have more summer campers at McDowell this year than all but one other Episcopal camp. Becky and I led the first camp, Primary I, and had a terrific time. The summer staff is especially excellent this year, and even Senior Session had a waiting list. Special Camp for persons with disabilities was packed with youth staff and campers. Thanks to all who make camp such an extraordinary place for Christian formation and community.

In the fall we will begin planting our newest Episcopal church in Chelsea. Our missioner will be the Rev. John Mark Ford. As a layman John Mark was a leader in beginning the Church of the Holy Apostles’ in Hoover (Birmingham). We invite you to tell your friends about our new Chelsea parish and let us know if you wish to help us in this exciting endeavor to spread the Gospel and extend the ministry of the Episcopal Church. Your parish covenant giving makes this new church possible—and we are grateful.

Finally if you have not yet read the study document “Communion Matters” by the Theology Committee of the House of Bishops, I encourage you to do so (go to www.collegeforbishops.org and click on “Resources” on the lefthand side of the home page). It is a helpful reflection on the life of the Anglican Communion, especially in recent days, and on some of the cherished aspects of our heritage as Episcopalians. There will be one more open forum for discussing this document at Grace Church in Mt. Meigs on September 4 at 6:30 p.m. If you have any thoughts to send my way before the September meeting of the House of Bishops, I urge you to do so. The more I know your responses and hopes the better I can be as your bishop in the councils of the Church.

I wish you grace and blessing for the new beginnings of the fall. Remember and live Paul’s admonition and never fail to give thanks in all circumstances for God is always working in our lives, come what may, and life is grace.

Be well. Rejoice often. Serve others.

Your servant in Christ,

Henry

The Diocese of Alabama has received two UTO grants! We’re told that not many dioceses receive more than one grant, so we feel particularly blessed. The first grant is $6,400 to Jubilee Community Center Inc. in Montgomery to enhance a youth enrichment program serving at-risk inner-city African American children providing stipends for teachers in dance, music, and drama, and a certified secondary teacher. The second is $7,500 to Safeplace Inc. in Florence for P.E.A.C.E. Project (Prevention, Education, and Counseling Extension) to update and expand the curriculum for a school-based violence prevention program serving a six county area, adding units to educate 3rd graders about bullying and 11th graders about healthy relationships.

Many of you have expressed an interest in purchasing a “Celebrate Sisters” T-shirt like the ones we had at Women’s Weekend. You can download an order form at www.alabamaecw.org or contact Cathy Blackney at cathycooks35601@yahoo.com. Buy one for your sister, daughter, reunion buddy, or best friend for a birthday or Christmas! The deadline for orders is September 24, and the T-shirts can be picked up at Fall Conference on October 11-12 in Auburn.

The ECW of St. James’ in Alex City hosted the Spring meeting for our East Alabama Convocation on Saturday, June 2. The meeting began with Holy Eucharist, and the Rev. Roger D. Allen, the new rector of St. James’, presented the program. Roger suffered through the aftermath of Katrina as priest in charge of the Chapel of the Holy Comforter in New Orleans and as a homeowner in the Gentilly community. His presentation and photographs were very informative and powerful, and his clear, concise documentation of the events cleared up a lot of media misinformation during and after the hurricane. Roger and the people of his former parish have indeed walked the walk and are continuing to do so.

From the ECW President

Alleen Cater, alleenc@bellsouth.net

The women of our diocese are engaged in many important ministries—individually, parish-wide, and diocesan-wide. Thanks be to God for all that they do! Please thank the women in your parish for their hard work and remember scholarships, UTO, and CPC in your gifts of thanks and memorials.

This month I call your attention to the following:

* The annual announcement of awards to college students from the Scholarship Committee (please see page 5).
* The grants announced by UTO.
* A successful Women’s Weekend at Camp McDowell in May.
* Plans for a delightful Fall Conference in Auburn, October 11-12, featuring the Rev. Dr. Julia Gatta, Associate Professor of Pastoral Theology at Sewanee, speaking on Julian of Norwich. Rumor has it that the music planned for the Thursday evening Compline will surpass David Megginson’s guitar arrangement last year in Tuscaloosa. Ah, the rivalry that knows no bounds!

Please check our Web site, www.alabamaecw.org, for more information about these and other items of interest.

Blessings!

After the program the ECW served a wonderful lunch, and the women of the East Alabama Convocation continued with the business of the Fall Conference, which will be held in Auburn on October 11-12. Women from St. Andrew’s, St. Barnabas’, St. James’, and Holy Trinity attended the meeting.

Upcoming ECW Events and Deadlines

**September 15**  Deadline for the Memorial Roll

**September 24**  Deadline to order “Celebrate Sisters” T-shirt

**October 11-12**  118th Annual ECW Fall Conference in Auburn

Please update your convocation coordinator and the ECW board when ECW leaders change at your parish. You can complete an online form at www.alabamaecw.org/2007ParishECWInfoSheet.pdf. For details and additional events please see the ECW Calendar/Handbook and visit www.alabamaecw.org.
Since the early 1900s when Bishop Richard Hooker Wilmer established the first scholarship fund to enable the daughters of diocesan clergy to further their education, our diocesan ECW has granted more than $100,000 to aspiring students in our diocese. Thanks to the addition of other named funds and the growth of the ECW General Scholarship Fund, the ECW continues to assist male and female students throughout our diocese achieve their educational goals. The ECW awards these scholarships on the criteria of need, church/community involvement, and an academic commitment. Each scholarship recipient is a communicant of the Diocese of Alabama and is endorsed by his or her parish priest.

The ECW is proud to announce scholarship awards for 2007-08 to 20 students who represent parishes throughout our diocese. We commend these students for all they have accomplished, and we send our blessings with them as they continue their educational and spiritual journeys.

The ECW gratefully acknowledges all the contributions and honorariums that have helped establish these scholarships and the continuation of the ECW tradition of giving back to the men and women of our Church. If you or your parish would like to contribute to the ECW Scholarship Fund, please send your contribution to ECW, Diocese of Alabama, 521 North 20th Street, Birmingham, AL 35203-2611.
Meet the Nominees for Bishop Suffragan

During our diocesan convention in February, Bishop Parsley called for and the delegates approved the election of a bishop suffragan. The election is scheduled for September 30, at the Cathedral Church of the Advent in Birmingham, with the consecration of our new diocesan bishop suffragan on January 12.

You are cordially invited to meet the nominees for bishop suffragan at a Question-and-Answer Walkabout at St. Luke’s in Birmingham on September 8 (please see page 16 for details). The convention delegates will gather at the Advent in Birmingham the afternoon of September 30 to vote. For more information about the election process please visit www.dioala.org.

At this time, we need strong bishops seeking and serving Christ in all whom they meet. Steady and full of mercy, they focus themselves and their flock on Christ and Christ’s mission. They are involved in, but not captured by, the changing controversies of the day. They are liberating forces of God’s grace, eager to forge reconciliation and communion.

2. Describe how you deal with those who have differing or opposing theological positions. What boundaries do you set? How do you respond to conflict?

We all need to be fed at Christ’s table. Being Christ’s table, there is room for all. Communion occurs when all, receiving the Body, become one Body.

Differing or opposing theological viewpoints do nothing to damage our oneness in Christ. Unity resides not in like-mindedness, but in common worship of God. The Church has always lived with differing conclusions about the questions of the day; these remind us that no one has all truth—that we need each other to discern the fullness of God’s truth.

Humility and tolerance allow the Church to flourish, not in spite of but because of our differences. When we are healthy, differences let us cross-pollinate; when unhealthy, they divide us. Our cruel divisions are nails in the flesh of Jesus—but even this points toward resurrection: God will reconcile the hurting Church.

As I participate in Christ’s work of reconciliation, I choose to be self-defined and connected to those who differ from me. When conflict comes, I engage it. I offer it to God in my prayers, and then I face it. It is always clear that we are a “we,” and together we will discern the mind of Christ. A bishop’s ability to model balance between self-definition and connection to others builds stability into a diocese.

Conflict can be death-pain or it can be the pain of new birth. God gives us freedom to choose which we will have it be. We can be good stewards of conflict, offering it to God. When we do, conflict precedes new, adventurous life in the Kingdom.

Nominees from the Nominating Committee

On July 14, the nominating committee, chaired by Judge Bernard Harwood of Tuscaloosa, announced their slate of nominees: the Rev. William Marc Burnette, the Rev. Alicia Schuster-Weltner, the Rev. John McKee Sloan, and the Rev. Patrick James Wingo. The committee invited the four nominees to review and present revised responses to three of the original questions asked of all nominees at the beginning of the nomination process. Please see each nominee’s responses (limited to a total of 900 words) and biographical information below.

1. In the Book of Common Prayer during the Ordination of a Bishop, the candidate is asked if he or she will guard the faith, unity, and discipline of the Church. How do you understand such a charge, and most specifically in this time in the history of our Church?

A bishop’s special duty and privilege is to guard the faith, unity, and discipline of the Church. God desires that each generation grow in new ways while being connected to all who have come before, so that there remains “one Body and one Spirit . . . one God and Father of all.” Bishops are the connective tissue of the Body of Christ.

Grounded in the constant love of God, bishops must be so formed in Christ that Christ’s love becomes the absolute bedrock of their leadership. There is always change as we “grow into the full measure of the stature of Christ.” Bishops are called into deep participation in this ongoing conversion. The extremes both of rigidity and latitude are the fruits of fear, whereas flexibility is the fruit of love, allowing us to adapt to the community’s current needs without losing sight of God’s guidance from the beginning.

Some aspects of our community are unchanging: the Sacraments are gifts from God that fold us into a single family around a single font and table, and the Nicene Creed is the sufficient statement of faith for the Church. Far from putting God in a box, the Creed expresses the unbounded, infinite nature of the Holy Trinity.

Holy Scripture reveals that we are created in God’s image. When reconciled by Jesus Christ, we grow more into the likeness of our Lord. We, though diverse, are unified in Christ. The Church’s work is to live into this unity. Bishops must foster in their people the solidarity and limber flexibility that are hallmarks of communion, allowing us to be different from one another (which we are) while worshipping God as one people (which we are).

The discipline of the Church frees us to do God’s work in orderly, compassionate ways, keeping us effective in our efforts to live and spread the Gospel. Careful, deliberate, well-communicated action allows us best to be Christ’s hands and feet in the world.

William Marc Burnette

- Born on December 10, 1967.
- Married to Jennifer Louise Roth; they have two children.
- Ordained to the priesthood in 1999.
- Earned BA and MFA at University of Alabama and MDiv at The General Seminary.
- Canonical Status: Diocese of Alabama.
- Previous Clergy Position: Assistant Rector of Trinity Church in Florence.

Almighty God, who by Your Son, directed the Apostles to feed Your flock; lead, we pray you, the minds and hearts of those who shall choose a Bishop Suffragan for the Diocese of Alabama; provide for us a bishop who will faithfully preach God’s holy Word, administer the sacraments of the Church, and equip your people for ministry; through Your Son Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.
3. Why are you open to the call to be a bishop? What special gifts would you bring to this diocese?

I am open to the call to be a bishop because I wish to be faithful to God, to those who nominated me and to all whom God might call me to serve.

I would bring a clear vision for communal life in Christ and energy for living into reconciliation. I am gifted as a deep listener and as a guide for group conversation, large and small, young and old. I have much experience teaching, one of my chief joys. Pastoral by nature, I stand ready to offer pastoral care to clergy, their families, and parishes in this diocese.

I was raised up for ordination in a campus ministry setting and have worked with campus ministries since ordained. I would bring my experience with lay training and multicultural ministry to the ACTS 2 initiatives. I enjoy training laity in stewardship, leadership, conflict resolution, and spirituality. I am grateful for relationships with members of the African Anglican community in our diocese. These deepen my pleasure in inhabiting God’s

diverse Kingdom and encourage my faith that bridge-building is possible when all are committed to Christ.

The Spirit’s movement is the adventure of exodus with people released from all that hinders their growth into the image of Christ. Bishops, like Moses, lead the people by following where God leads the way.

I know this diocese well. I am connected to it and across it in deep, pastoral relationships. I see its fire of love. As God fans that flame of love through the bishop suffragan, this diocese will thrive and flourish.

1. In the Book of Common Prayer during the Ordination of a Bishop, the candidate is asked if he or she will guard the faith, unity, and discipline of the Church. How do you understand such a charge, and most specifically in this time in the history of our Church?

“Guarding the faith, unity, and discipline of the Church” is central to the role of bishop and a role that a bishop is best able to fulfill and symbolize in our Church. I understand that charge as absolute, meaning that striving to fulfill that very difficult call would be a constant of my ministry were I to become a bishop. I view the ordination services of the Book of Common Prayer as the standard for the life and ministry of the ordained, as difficult as living up to those standards often is. I am aware that the difficulties that our Church has endured and is enduring these last few years are not new, but that they are happening in a new environment. This environment presents a unique challenge to this charge to guard our faith, unity, and discipline.

Electronic communication is a wonderful gift, but it has also changed the way people receive and process information. In the age of the Internet, the role of the bishop as unifier is both more important and takes more intentional work to maintain. Being able to live into that role requires personal integrity and constant renewal, as well as a willingness to embrace and use new technologies and forums for the building up of the Church.

2. Describe how you deal with those who have differing or opposing theological positions. What boundaries do you set? How do you respond to conflict?

I believe I am known as a person who can listen and who values people for who they are, whether they agree with me on issues or not. It has been an ongoing work of my priesthood to be willing to struggle along with people instead of pitting one against the other because of differing viewpoints. This is not always easy; conflict rarely is. I have encountered much of it in the Church, but I have also seen how engaging it—instead of running from it—can, in the end, be useful and productive for all “sides.” I still believe that respectful, honest conversation can be holy and life-giving, no matter how much we disagree.

I am known for my willingness to offer hospitality to many different viewpoints while being clear about my own. I am open to the continuity of revelation and to the idea that Jesus reveals himself through the Holy Spirit in ways we might never have imagined. I am committed to the ongoing discernment of what is faithful and what is distracting from our central mission of bringing people to Christ and helping to equip them for ministry. I have been able to find common ground with people by uniting us around the evangelical mission imperatives of the Gospel and our common experience of having our lives transformed by the call of God.

3. Why are you open to the call to be a bishop? What special gifts would you bring to this diocese?

I love exercising my priestly ministry at the diocesan level as a canon. I work well in large systems and with varieties of people, and I am energized by new tasks and challenges. I believe I have particular gifts for leadership that can be put to most effective use in the bishop’s role because of the deepened sacramental connection with the life of the parishes and people of a diocese. The work I do now has provided me the opportunity to learn and lead from the perspective of the bishop’s office. Discernment also is an ongoing activity for me in my ordained life, and I strive to be faithful to hearing what God might be willing to have me do next!

The development of ordained leadership for the Church in the coming years is of particular importance to me. Supervising the discernment process for priests in our diocese has shown me the incredible opportunity and obligation the Church has at the start to raise up healthy, faithful people to be ordained. Implementing the Fresh Start program in our diocese has shown me the ongoing importance and rewards of paying proactive attention to clergy and congregational health, as well as how this must be led from the diocesan level.

In viewing your profile and your Web site, I was and remain interested to see that many of the areas you are currently seeking to develop are in areas in which I have a particular interest and experience. Evangelism has been a focus of my work both as Canon for Congregational Development and before I came to work directly for the Bishop of Atlanta. When I cochaired the Congregational Growth Commission, we were able to implement the Alleluia Fund for Mission.

We also developed a comprehensive plan for transforming the culture of our diocese, with the support of our bishop and our congregations, from maintenance to mission. This includes a comprehensive evangelism strategy that includes both starting new parishes—including intentionally multicultural ones, and it also offers new ways to equip and market even our smallest parishes for faithful growth.

I have also worked with the bishop and our partners at the Episcopal Media Center to completely revamp our communications strategies, including new print publications, new electronic newsletters, and the resulting “Digital Faith Community,” which hosts not just our own diocesan Web site but also the sites of most of our parishes. I have been privileged to work with a team of incredibly dedicated Christian education directors and youth/young adult leaders who inspire my own commitment to learning and ministry development.

The clear success of your ACTS 2 campaign points to a strong unity in the Diocese of Alabama around mission, which I find especially appealing. I would be blessed to engage with you in it.

Alicia Dawn Schuster-Weltner
• Born on January 8, 1962.
• Married to Philip Weltner; they have one child.
• Ordained to the priesthood in 1995.
• Earned BA at Mt. Holyoke College and MDiv at the University of the South.
• Canonical Status: Diocese of Atlanta.
• Current Position: Canon for Congregational Development.
• Previous Clergy Positions: Associate Rector of St. Martin in the Fields in Atlanta; Priest in Charge of Holy Trinity in Decatur, Georgia; and Associate Rector of St. Michael and All Angels’ in Stone Mountain, Georgia.
John McKee "Kee" Sloan
• Born on November 13, 1955.
• Married to Tina Marie Brown; they have two children.
• Ordained to the priesthood in 1982.
• Earned BA at Mississippi State University and MDiv at the University of the South.
• Canonical Status: Diocese of Alabama.
• Current Position: Rector of St. Thomas’ in Huntsville.
• Previous Clergy Positions: Chaplain of the University of Mississippi in Oxford, Mississippi; Rector of All Saints’ in Grenada, Mississippi; Vicar of Incarnation in West Point, Mississippi; and Curate of Holy Cross in Olive Branch, Mississippi.

1. In the Book of Common Prayer during the Ordination of a Bishop, the candidate is asked if he or she will guard the faith, unity, and discipline of the Church. How do you understand such a charge, and most specifically in this time in the history of our Church?

One of the great strengths of our Church is that each person is given the opportunity and the obligation to understand our faith in the light of Scripture, tradition, and reason, as a framework to form and inform our relationships with our Lord. It’s the bishop’s role to guard and maintain that framework, to guide us when we’re going astray, and to look for truth in ideas and practices that are under consideration.

We’re always in danger of confusing what we’re pointing at and what we’re pointing with; we have to be careful that we don’t worship the sacraments, the buildings, or the Bible instead of finding God’s grace in them. The bishop should help us focus on what’s most important: the unconditional love of God we know and celebrate in Jesus Christ.

I hope all of our bishops take seriously the charge to guard the unity of the Church. Anglicanism was conceived in controversy and nurtured in compromise—our nature is finding the middle ground between extremes, not choosing one faction over another. The disappointment of our present situation isn’t that we’re not of one mind on the issues, but that people have been so willing to demonize those with whom they disagree. Part of what has made the current controversy so painful is that some on either side have ignored or abused the rules when it’s convenient to their position and have insisted that the rules be followed to the letter when that furthers their cause. For all of our flexibility and diversity, we rely heavily on laws and rules to provide a structure into which we can all fit. Our bishops bear much of the responsibility for interpreting and enforcing these rules; they need to be sure the rules are applied fairly and consistently.

I’m concerned about the tone of our conversation in the Episcopal Church, about the level of acrimony we’re tolerating. We sing “They’ll know we are Christians by our love”; I can’t help but wonder what they’ll know when what we show the world is spiteful bickering. It’s the love of God that brings and keeps us together; the way our Lord’s followers interact should reflect that love.

2. Describe how you deal with those who have differing or opposing theological positions. What boundaries do you set? How do you respond to conflict?

It must be very reassuring to say “I know I’m right,” but I think there’s great grace in being able to say “I could be wrong.” If I could be wrong, that means you could be right, and that means I need to listen to what you have to say, even if—especially if—I disagree with you. Listening is part of treating people with dignity and respect, part of loving God’s children. None of us will ever know all there is to know about the Eternal Mystery of God; we ought to share what we believe with honesty and respect, rather than assuming that someone with a different idea is automatically wrong.

There’s great power in laughter to heal and build community, diffuse tensions, draw us out from the fortresses we build, and heal wounds. I’m pretty serious about laughter, especially the great joy in being able to laugh at ourselves. Happily there is no shortage of material to work with here for any of us.

I’m usually open to criticism and encourage people to share their opinions with me. When people are angry I try not to be angry in response or to become defensive because then all I can do is defend myself. I try not to reduce the argument to a personal level. I want to remember in the heat of the moment, and to remind others, that this moment will pass and that we will still be sisters and brothers tomorrow.

3. Why are you open to the call to be a bishop? What special gifts would you bring to this diocese?

I’m discerning with your help whether this is something God is calling me to do. I’ve been a parish priest since 1981—it’s the only career I’ve ever had or wanted. But now I believe I have gifts and talents to bring to this position, and it may be that being a bishop suffragan is the best way for me to offer my service to our Lord and the Church.

I think my best strength is that I really believe what we say we believe. I believe in the ideals Jesus taught: that we should love God with all hearts and minds and souls and strengths and love our neighbors as well as we love ourselves, as well as Jesus loves us. I believe in the healing power of forgiveness—of forgiving others as well as ourselves and of being forgiven. I’m committed to the Church’s ministry of reconciliation, and I believe that the followers of Jesus are called to serve all of God’s children through the Church. I’m guided by my faith and have a healthy spirituality and prayer life.

I have a good bit of experience in the Church in different situations and ministries. I do well as a part of a team. I value listening and care about all sorts of people. I enjoy preaching and preach well. I’m nowhere near fluent, but I speak some Spanish, assuming some patience from the people listening. I build consensus naturally, but I’m not afraid to make a decision when necessary.

Part of the Gospel is that Christians ought to live in joy. I believe appropriate fun can be outward and visible signs of the inward and spiritual grace of the joy of a community celebrating the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Patrick James Wingo
• Born on April 2, 1960.
• Married to Sara-Scott Nelson; they have three children.
• Ordained to the priesthood in 1992.
• Earned BS at the University of Alabama and MDiv at the Episcopal Theology School of the Southwest.
• Canonical Status: Diocese of Alabama.
• Current Position: Rector of St. Thomas’ in Birmingham.
• Previous Clergy Position: Rector of Resurrection in Gadsden.

1. In the Book of Common Prayer during the Ordination of a Bishop, the candidate is asked if he or she will guard the faith, unity, and discipline of the Church. How do you understand such a charge, and most specifically in this time in the history of our Church?

In our current situation, it seems to me that in guarding the faith, unity, and discipline of the Church, bishops must remember that they are humbly caring for a
sacred trust that is a gift from God. This gift, as is pointed out in a statement in the Preface to the Ordination Rites, is for “the nurture of (God’s) people and the proclamation of his Gospel everywhere.” In other words, the way bishops “stand their post” cannot be legalistic but must be relational and evangelistic. The answer given by the bishop-elect when asked the question on page 518 is: “I will, for the love of God.” To me, this says that faith, unity, and discipline are ultimately about drawing people deeper into the love of Christ, and not about developing more rigid layers of rules and regulations.

Not long after General Convention 2003, we held at St. Thomas’ several open-discussion forums during our Christian Formation time. My sense of these forums was that the things we heard were as important as the things we said. I believe part of our bishops’ leadership role, especially in light of our current situation, is to model for the Church examples of good listening and to help those whom they serve listen to one another in new ways.

2. Describe how you deal with those who have differing or opposing theological positions. What boundaries do you set? How do you respond to conflict?

I feel a certain amount of satisfaction that the people of St. Thomas’ parish represent a variety of theological positions and ideas. We have worked to foster an atmosphere in which each person is free to have his or her own views, while at the same time emphasizing that what unites us as a community is Christ and His mission to the world. I like to teach Confirmation and Christian Formation classes that the origin of the word “worship” has its roots in the word “worthy.” We worship what is worthy to us, what we most value, and so our worship of God together is the most important act we do as a Christian community. We value our relationship with God in Christ, with one another, and our ministry in His name. If these are our core values, then we can have a certain amount of tolerance for differences of theological opinion, and we can show deep respect for each other as human beings.

While I like to encourage people to explore their faith in a variety of ways, I also remind them that we are specifically a Christian community. We have Scripture, the Creeds, and the Baptismal Covenant, and 2,000 years of a wide variety of Christian experience as boundaries to guide and inform us.

Early in my life in the Church I learned that the Church is a place where all the passions, fears, and anger of the world are just as prevalent as anywhere else. I have tried to handle conflict by making sure that everyone has the opportunity to be heard, by asking that everyone involved be honest about feelings and events, by showing respect for each person’s position, and by encouraging other lay and clergy leaders to join in the discussion.

3. Why are you open to the call to be a bishop? What special gifts would you bring to this diocese?

I am open to the call to be a bishop for many reasons. The first is most real to me but also the most difficult to describe. I feel as if God is “tilling the soil” of my heart to make it ready for new growth. I cannot say what this new growth might produce, but I can sense that it is happening.

I am also open to this call because people whose opinions I value and trust have encouraged me. These friends and colleagues believe that I have the gifts to lead and to do the work that is required of the office. I have received good feedback on my preaching, and I enjoy teaching. I try to manage conflict respectfully; I believe that decisions should be made, for the most part, collegially and through listening. I have a sense of humor and try not to take myself too seriously. I also believe that I have the gift of encouragement, always seeking to help people and groups to be hopeful and to look for Christ in their midst.

In addition, I am drawn to this process because of the job description. All aspects of the job description for bishop-suffragan identity work that I have done in the past. This work has been stimulating and energizing to me. It is work about which I am passionate because it is essential to the mission of the Church. This is especially true in a Church in which the majority of the parishes are small, into which many people are attracted by campus ministry, which relies on its laity to form the backbone of its work, and in which its clergy work extremely hard.

Perhaps most of all, I can offer our diocese my passion for the life and work of the Church. Ever since I was a child at All Saints’ in Homewood, I have been captivated by Jesus Christ and the way we as Episcopalians worship God. I believe the Episcopal Church, for all our trials, is still one of the best secrets in Christendom, and it is a secret that more people need to know about. To paraphrase Terry Holmes in his book What Is Anglicanism, the Episcopal Church is at its best when “our liturgy, our poetry, our music, and our life can create a world of wonder in which it is very easy to fall in love with God.” My vision for the Diocese of Alabama is that we can continue to be that kind of Church, creating an environment that makes it easy for all people to fall in love with God and become disciples of Jesus.

Nominees by Petition

Our diocesan Standing Committee has announced the names of the two nominees by petition: the Rev. Robert T. J. Childers and the Rev. William Andrew Waldo. The Standing Committee asked these two nominees to respond to the same three questions asked of all the nominees at the beginning of the nomination process. Please see each nominee’s responses (limited to a total of 900 words) and biographical information below.

Robert T. J. Childers

- Born on October 14, 1954.
- Married to Terri Elizabeth Kahlmus; they have two children.
- Ordained to the priesthood in 1991.
- Earned his BA at Vanderbilt University, JD at the University of Alabama, and MDiv at The General Seminary.
- Canonical Status: The Diocese of Alabama.
- Previous Clergy Positions: Rector of St. Joseph’s on-the-Mountain in Mentone; Assistant Rector of Christ Church in Tuscaloosa

1. In the Book of Common Prayer during the Ordination of a Bishop, the candidate is asked if he or she will guard the faith, unity, and discipline of the Church. How do you understand such a charge, and most specifically in this time in the history of our Church?

How I understand and would guard the “faith, unity and discipline of the Church” must be guided by my love of God. We only love God as much as we know God. We know God through scripture, prayer, and worship. It is imperative that a bishop be a person who reads, studies, meditates on, and prays with scripture. A bishop’s teaching, preaching, and conversations should be informed by his/her faith, which must be informed by his/her love and knowledge of God.

Clearly unity is important to Christ and to his Father as evidenced by his words at the Last Supper. Yet what constitutes unity in the Church must have boundaries. The head of the Church is Christ, so the unity of the Church must be within the context of who we know and understand Christ to be as he has been revealed to his body, the Church.

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Clearly unity is important to Christ and to his Father as evidenced by his words at the Last Supper. Yet what constitutes unity in the Church must have boundaries. The head of the Church is Christ, so the unity of the Church must be within the context of who we know and understand Christ to be as he has been revealed to his body, the Church.
Though unity at all costs would ignore the boundaries of our Christian faith, I believe we must be willing to take risks to maintain our Church's unity. Such risks involve reaching out and listening to groups and individuals with whom we disagree. We also must be willing to ask ourselves hard questions. As we prayerfully listen to the Holy Spirit, we would also need to keep the words of Isaiah 43:19 before us, “I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.” We should never be so certain that we are right that we ignore or dismiss a “new thing” that God might be doing in our midst.

Even so there does come a point when decisions must be made after risks have been taken and open arms have been extended. If the price of unity becomes the compromise and sacrifice of the faith, then a bishop must exercise discipline. Often we think of discipline as punishment only, but the primary definition of the word is to “instruct, educate, or train.” This makes the teaching aspect of the office of the bishop that much more important. Especially at this time in the life of the Church, both in our diocese and in the larger Church, the instruction and building up of the body, including the clergy, is very much needed.

2. Describe how you deal with those who have differing or opposing theological positions. What boundaries do you set? How do you respond to conflict?

I respond to conflict by attempting to place the conflict within the framework and boundaries of what we have in common: love for and worship of God. For example when we experienced some conflict in our vestry several years ago, I suggested that we conduct our meetings within the context of the Eucharist. We now open our meetings with prayer; a bible study is then led by a vestry member, and vestry business is conducted as “prayers of the people.” After the confession and peace, we participate in communion from the reserved sacrament. Rather than my communicating each vestry member, we pass the elements around the table and communicate each other saying, “Christ is in you.”

The change in format and the words of communication have transformed our meetings. I believe that this change in our vestry meetings has made each of us more keenly aware of Christ’s presence in our midst, and we are therefore all the more eager to search for Christ in other venues.

The framework and boundary of common worship helped to transform and renew our vestry meetings. I am convinced that if we can worship and break bread together, we can see Christ in the midst of our conflicts and disagreements and hopefully be led to more Christ-like resolutions. Moreover we can be empowered and encouraged to be Christ to those around us, particularly those with whom we may disagree. Obviously we can’t always stop what we are doing in the midst of an argument to celebrate the Eucharist. We can, however, pause before we respond out of anger or frustration, prayerfully telling ourselves that Christ is in the person before us.

3. Why are you open to the call to be a bishop? What special gifts would you bring to this diocese?

I am a product of this diocese. Who I am as a priest is because God has formed and continues to form me as a Christian and child of God in and through this diocese. Through the office of bishop, I would like to be able to give back to the place that has shaped me.

I feel especially called to the office of bishop suffragan as it has been defined by the diocese. I am drawn to its particular focus centering on smaller parishes, clergy care, and campus ministries and believe God has enabled me to develop skills in these areas through my work both in parish ministry and service in the diocese. My service to the diocese through Cursillo, Happening, Youth Department events, Camp McDowell, as a diocesan stewardship consultant, the Commission on Ministry, and even as a Deputee to General Convention has prepared me to serve in this position.

A bishop is called to be both a pastor and a shepherd. I have grown up in Alabama and served my entire ministry here. I know and love this diocese, most especially the people of the diocese. I believe this knowledge and love would help me to be a good and faithful shepherd and pastor to and for this diocese.

The Rev. William Andrew Waldo

• Born on July 17, 1953.
• Married to Mary Ellen Halverson; they have three children.
• Ordained to the priesthood in 1989.
• Earned his BA in music at Whittier College, master’s in music at the New England Conservatory of Music, and MDiv at the University of the South.
• Canonical Status: The Diocese of Minnesota.
• Current Position: Rector of Trinity Church in Excelsior, Minnesota.
• Previous Clergy Positions: Rector of St. Mark’s in LaGrange, Georgia; Assistant Rector of Grace Church in Manchester, New Hampshire.

1. In the Book of Common Prayer during the Ordination of a Bishop, the candidate is asked if he or she will guard the faith, unity, and discipline of the Church. How do you understand such a charge, and most specifically in this time in the history of our Church?

I have heard the question asked, “What would be lost if the Episcopal Church were to vanish off the face of the earth?” Answers have ranged from “loss of freedom of intellectual inquiry” to “loss of our beautiful liturgy” and “Celtic roots,” and “loss of openness to diverse people,” or loss of our “broad, contextual approach to the interpretation of scripture.” None of these answers have seemed sufficient because however valuable these things are to us, substantive examples of each exist in other Christian traditions.

Our understanding of what constitutes authority in the Episcopal Church is however unique. We speak of the interrelationship of scripture, tradition, and reason as authoritative in a way unlike other traditions. Fully expressed, this approach to authority unifies us, and bishops are uniquely called to ensure, nurture, and protect it, especially in times of conflict.

I have a long history of initiating dialogue among my ordained colleagues and lay leaders alike—left, right, and center—from this perspective on Anglican authority—in debates on human sexuality, on questions of scriptural interpretation, “open Eucharist,” liturgical practices, or mission. This approach has been my discipline as rector and in the counsels and common life of the diocese. In so doing, I have earned and kept the respect of people on all sides of various issues, even when I have made my own point of view explicit. They trust me to listen.

2. Describe how you deal with those who have differing or opposing theological positions. What boundaries do you set? How do you respond to conflict?

During my years as an Education for Ministry mentor, I have had countless opportunities to help people listen to others, speak their own truths, and find common ground on which to stand when agreement has been elusive. In recent national tensions over human sexuality and biblical interpretation, I have sustained an atmosphere of mutual respect within my parish community. We sadly did lose perhaps 8 families out of 180 after General Convention 2003. We have not however suffered major membership loss over these issues, even though we are located in a fairly conservative suburban community. Disagreements have never reached levels destructive to the larger parish community. We have even gained new members during this time.

Though not all in our congregation agree about the Church’s general direction, all have found their views honored and respected. The larger Church’s conflicts have not caused our mission and ministry to suffer; they have challenged us to be disciplined about how we live together in community.

I keep my door persistently open to those who disagree with me, finding it most fruitful however to focus my energies on those willing to invest in reconciliation. Some of my most-valued and longest-lasting relationships in parish and diocesan life have been with people with whom I have at some point been in significant,
sometimes profound, disagreement but who valued rec-

onciliation. Further, identifying opportunities for those 

with different theological perspectives to work side-by-

side in ministry has built positive relationships and 

friendships in my parish where they did not exist before.

3. Why are you open to the call to be a bishop? 

What special gifts would you bring to this dio-

cese?

I am a product of the Diocese of Alabama and have 

felt called for many years to return some of the blessings 

I received there. My love for the people of Alabama runs 

deep. My sabbatical project in 2001 was to interview 

retired railroaders throughout Central Alabama about 

their work. Hardly just about railroads, my project was 

primarily about stories—stories of ordinary and some-

times extraordinary people. It was about tensions, rela-

tionships, and redemption around the years of the civil 

rights movement. Remote places in Central Alabama 

where these men lived became “thin places” for me, holy 

ground where heaven and earth come near to each 

other.

I have other thin places to discover in Alabama and 

more stories to take in. My openness to the call to be a 

Bishop Suffragan of Alabama is rooted in my passionate 

interest in and care for the people and places of Alabama, 

in my desire to serve Christ among them.

Gifts? I am persistent and non judgmental in relation-

ships, especially conflicted ones, and I am joyful to my 

bones. I love humor. I need (and get) a good and regular 

dose of laughter. I’m willing to challenge but recognize 

that respect from others means earning trust first. I carry 

“The Church” lightly, and can be playful about her, 

while loving her from the depths of my being. I am pas-

sionate, but flexible.

I have experience in urban, suburban, and small-town 

parishes. I have cultivated relationships with several rural 

clergy and congregations in Minnesota, especially Native 

American clergy; yet I serve in a suburb near a large 

urban area. The stories and ministries of the diverse peo-

ple of God feed and inspire me.

Integrating the gifts of children and youth into the 

full life of my congregation has been a particular mark of 

my ministry. Not merely the future of the Church, they 

are its present, Christ-bearers from whom we have much 

to learn even as we teach them. Camp McDowell has 

long been an incubator of Spirit-filled children and 

youth. Supporting and nurturing this “best camp in the 

Church” would be a natural extension of my gift for 

integrating children and youth into the life of the 

Church.

Above all, I thrive in vibrancy, and the Diocese of 

Alabama is nothing if not vibrant. The Holy Spirit’s pres-

ence in the lives of her people is palpable. To be a leader 

and participant in that diocesan community of the Holy 

Spirit would be, in every sense, awesome.

We Have Painted the Town!

By Susan Oakes, Young People Painting Birmingham Coordinator

A team of 30 teenagers and 6 youth leaders served as 

the hands and feet of Jesus by scraping, priming, and 

painting the exterior of three homes during Young 

People Painting Birmingham in June. This weeklong 

service project for 8th and 9th-graders proved to be a 

phenomenal experience for all of us. We learned 

about God’s grace and how to both receive it and 

share it with others through old and new friendships, 

working together, and serving others. It was a great 

way for us to begin our summer, and we hope to take 

another group again next year.

Hallelujah Housing

Expanding its partnership with the Diocese of Mississippi, Episcopal Relief and Development (ERD) is sup-

porting Hallelujah Housing, a program building affordable homes along the Mississippi Gulf Coast. The diocese 

and ERD have entered a joint partnership with Enterprise Corporation of the Delta/Hope Community Credit 

Union and the Unity Homes Project to construct homes for Gulf Coast families who lost their property in the 

aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. The storm destroyed about 65,000 homes, and about 30,000 families are still 

living in FEMA trailers. Affordable housing will be constructed in the coastal Mississippi counties of Hancock, 

Harrison, and Jackson. The Hallelujah Housing program will help Mississippians return to their homes and 

allow people who have never owned property in the region to become first-time homebuyers.
Croquet Tournament Benefits Scholarship Fund

By Emily Rodgers

On Sunday, April 29, folks from around our diocese gathered at Camp McDowell for a Croquet Tournament to benefit the Camp McDowell Scholarship Fund. After a delicious lunch of fried chicken, homemade pimento cheese, fresh strawberries, and chips, the players took to the fields. Paul Gustav Roess, a member of St. Mary’s-on-the-Highlands, took first place, and Mrs. Bob Devenish presented him with the coveted “McDowell Cup.” Henry Homer Chase Rodgers came in second place, followed by Emily Rodgers in third. The “McDowell Cup” will be displayed in the parish hall at St. Mary’s, and Paul will defend his title at next year’s tournament. This year’s tournament raised more than $3,000 to provide financial assistance for deserving campers to attend the Special Session, the HIV/AIDS Camp, the McDowell Environment Center, and the Summer Camp program.

Nina Barr Honored for Her Faithful Service

For the past 25 years, Nina Barr has faithfully served as a trustee representing our diocese on the Kennedy-Douglass Trust, which was established with a gift from the estate of the Rev. Hiram Kennedy Douglass. For her faithful commitment in helping ensure that the ideals and intent for the trust were perpetuated, the board of trustees honored Nina with a resolution presented to her on May 19.

Fishing Adventures Scheduled

The Alabama Sierra Club is hosting two fishing adventures on Clear Creek at Camp McDowell. The retreat on August 24-26 will include lots of time to just fish and relax as well as sessions on determining and affecting stream health, fish identification, fishing equipment selection and demonstration, and your fishing license. The expedition scheduled to be led by experienced fisherman the Rev. Mark Johnston on September 28-30 will include sessions on endangered fish and how we can provide protection for biodiversity in Alabama’s waterways.

Save This Date!

Make plans now to come to the 2nd Annual Father/Son Retreat at Camp McDowell on September 29-30. The Rev. Richard Lawson, rector of St. John’s in Decatur, will lead this year’s weekend event. Applications will be available soon at your parish office, or you can download one at www.campmcdowell.com.

Folk School Announces Classes

The Alabama Folk School at Camp McDowell is gearing up for the opening classes this fall (please see the list below). For more information about these and future classes or to suggest a new class, please visit www.campmcdowell.com/folkschool or contact Director Megan Huston at 205/387-1806 or folkschool@campmcdowell.com.

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Thomas Goldsmith on the field of Nine Wickets

Mrs. Bob Devenish awards Paul Gustav Roess the coveted “McDowell Cup”
Returning to Namibia

By the Rev. Jeremy Lucas, Rector of St. Timothy’s in Athens

Many of you may remember praying for the Anglican Diocese of Namibia in the mid to late 1980s when our two dioceses had a companion relationship. The Rev. Bill Yon and his wife, Lib, served as missionaries to Namibia during that time, training clergy and building a diocesan retreat center. Bill and Lib played a key role in training what became known as Etameko Eleven, a group of priests who have been the backbone of the diocese for almost 20 years. But time moves on, and now those 11 priests are retiring—and the diocese needs a new generation of ordained leadership and a new strategic plan for future development.

Toward the end of 2006 the new Bishop of Namibia, the Rt. Rev. Nathaniel Nakwatumbah, sent word to Bill Yon that he was interested in planning the next incarnation of clergy training and strategic planning and asked if he would be willing to help. This request came through the grants program at Trinity Church Wall Street, and Bill was invited to gather a team and submit a proposal. In February 2007 Bill received approval to make an exploratory visit to Namibia to gather information and assess the talents, gifts, and needs of the diocese. In June my wife, Penny—who is an experienced registered nurse, and I spent three weeks with Bill and two priests from the Diocese of Manchester, England, in Namibia. We worked with the Rev. Deacon Lukas Katenda, from the Diocese of Namibia, conducting interviews, reviewing programs, and generally trying to understand the situation. We are now working on a detailed, long-term proposal for Trinity Church to seed a training program.

To get a sense of the challenges the diocese faces, consider this: the Diocese of Namibia has about 175,000 communicants served by about 35 ordained priests; our diocese has about 34,000 communicants served by about 100 priests. With God’s help we hope to play a role in establishing a self-sustaining clergy training program that will provide for the future growth of the Diocese of Namibia. For more information about the diocese or the clergy training program please contact the Rev. Bill Yon at nanjedi@aol.com or me at jlucas71@gmail.com or 256/232-3541.

Montgomery Convocation Team Assists in Katrina Recovery

By Mission Coordinator Nelson Smith

Volunteers from the Montgomery Convocation participated in Hurricane Katrina recovery efforts from April 29 through May 5 as part of the Episcopal-Lutheran Camp Coast Care mission. Parishioners from All Saints’ and Holy Comforter in Montgomery and from St. Michael and All Angels’ in Millbrook teamed up with other “missionaries” from around the country to sand, mud, rewire, insulate, and drywall homes being constructed or repaired as well as to do vital domestic chores at Camp Coast Care and prepare meals. Individuals and churches from our convocation also generously provided financial support and materials for the mission work, and Holy Cross Episcopal School came through with large, much-needed donations of bottled water, snacks, insect repellant, sunscreen, and gift cards.

Even though our task was to assist in the physical repair and reconstruction of homes and other facilities, our mission was also to reach out and touch the hurricane victims, whose lives continue to need repair and reconstruction in their own right. Our team learned two things on this mission trip: in community we can do significant good, and in community we touch others and they touch us in wondrous ways. The effects of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita on the people of the Gulf Coast will be with us for years to come—and as we are their neighbors and they are our “extended family,” we in Montgomery and the rest of our diocese need to be there with them for the duration of their ordeal. For more information please visit www.campcoastcare.com or write to Camp Coast Care, 5065 Espy Avenue, Long Beach, MS 36950.

Calvary in Oneonta Celebrates Fundraiser and Anniversary

By Al Clanton

On Friday, June 22, the men of Calvary Episcopal rose early to start cooking more than 2,000 pounds of Boston butts. Some of the men stayed on the parish grounds overnight to tend to the cooking, and the women of the church arrived early the next morning with breakfast for the hungry men as well as home-baked items for the bake sale. All day Saturday there was a beehive of activity as parishioners continued to cook, people from the community arrived to pick up prepared food and purchase baked goods and handmade wooden necklaces. The day was filled with fellowship accent by bluegrass music by local musicians.

This annual event raises funds for the purchase of the property and existing church building. After weeks of planning and two days of hard work, we celebrated the most successful fundraiser in the history of Calvary—and we’re looking forward to celebrating our fifth anniversary of being the first Episcopal Church in Blount County on September 9.
Upcoming Retreats, Conferences, and Special Events

ALL UNDER ONE ROOF—FORMING FAMILIES IN THE FAITH
August 25 from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at St. Stephen’s in Birmingham

Our diocesan Department of Christian Formation cordially invites everyone to this daylong workshop from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. featuring the Rev. Dick Hardel, of the Youth and Family Institute. The workshop will include sessions on Faith Talk in the Home, God Talk with Your Children, Intergenerational Events, Discovering a Child’s Spiritual Gifts, and Wellness Ministry. For more information please download a brochure at www.dioala.org or contact Sarah Sartain at ssartain@dioala.org or 205/715-2060 ext. 314.

“BREAD FOR THE JOURNEY—STORY AS SACRAMENT” WORKSHOP
August 26 from 2 to 5 p.m. at St. Luke’s in Birmingham

The Rev. Dr. John Claypool used to say that on our Christian journey we are beggars sharing with other beggars where to find bread. Stories are one way we give each other that vital information—the hope, courage, and sustenance we need for our spirit to survive. At this workshop renowned storyteller and actress Dolores Hydock will help participants understand how we learn to hear the voice of a nurturing God in both holy and ordinary stories, and she will fill the afternoon’s “breadbasket” with stories of humor, compassion, and wonder. The Rev. Richmond Webster and the Rev. Rebecca DeBow will guide large and small-group discussions on the power of stories to convey the comforting, timeless truth that in our spiritual journey we are never alone. For more information please contact St. Luke’s at 205/871-3583 or info@stlukes.com.

“RECONCILIATION AT THE ROUNDTABLE: GOD’S CALL IN THE 21ST CENTURY” CONFERENCE
September 10-12 at the Tutu Education Center at The General Theological Seminary

Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori will give keynote addresses at this inaugural conference at the new Tutu Education Center. For more information please e-mail Director of Communication Bruce Parker at bparker@gts.edu or visit www.gts.edu.

RECOVERY MINISTRIES ANNUAL RETREAT
October 5-7 at Camp McDowell

Our Diocesan Department of Recovery Ministries cordially invites everyone to this year’s retreat led by Steve Moore. For more information and registration forms please contact Sarah Sartain at ssartain@dioala.org or 205/715-2060 ext. 314.

CREATIVE MODELS OF SACRAMENTAL LEADERSHIP IN THE SMALL CHURCH CONFERENCE
October 7-10 at Kaunga Conference Center in Hendersonville, North Carolina

This conference will focus on different models of sacramental leadership in churches with an average Sunday attendance of 70 people or less. The presenters will include the Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori (Presiding Bishop and Primate of the Episcopal Church), the Most Rev. David Moxon (Co-Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of the Waikato, Archbishop of the Anglican Dioceses of New Zealand, and Co-Primate of the Anglican Church of Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia), the Right Rev. Frank Neff Powell (Bishop of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia), the Rev. Stephen M. Kelsey (Missioner/Superintendent of the Greater Hartford Regional Ministry), and the Rev. Mary Jane Oakland (of the Diocese of Iowa). For more information please contact the Rev. Suzanne Watson at swatson@episcopalchurch.org, 800/334-7626 ext. 6185, or 212/716-6185.

“WATERSHEDS AND WARMING” WORKSHOP
October 11 at the Junior League Building in Birmingham

“Care of Creation” Retreat
October 12-14 at Camp McDowell

Our Diocesan Stewardship of Creation Task Force has received a $6,500 grant from World Wildlife Fund for providing programs on “Watersheds and Warming.” The Task Force will host an all-day workshop in Birmingham on Thursday, October 11, for the Task Force Liaisons, interested clergy and parishioners, faith leaders of other denominations, and watershed and community leaders in the priority Alabama watersheds. In addition the Task Force will host a Care of Creation Retreat at Camp McDowell on October 12-14, with featured speakers Don Elder, River Network; Dr. Bill Deutsch, Alabama Water Watch; and Maggie Johnston and the Camp McDowell Environmental Camp Staff. Participants will receive a six-week “Watersheds and Warming” education program for teaching in their local parish. The retreat programs will focus on watershed impacts of global warming, and our measurable response. For more information about either of these events, please contact Michael Churchman at mjchurchman@hotmail.com or Eleanor DeBene at eleanor@present.org.

“THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU ODD”
November 9-11 at St. Mary’s Sewanee—A Center for Spiritual Development

Bishop Parsley will lead this retreat, which will focus on Flannery O’Connor’s stories and the encounters with grace revealed in her writings. “Their honesty about our human nature, their humor, and their startling rendering of the work of the Holy Spirit make them an evocative centerpiece for reflection,” he notes. Worship and Bible study will enrich the retreat time. For more information please contact St. Mary’s Sewanee at 800/728-1659 or StMarysSewanee@bellsouth.net, or visit www.StMarysSewanee.org.

DREAM WORKSHOP
November 16-17 at St. Luke’s in Birmingham

Our diocesan Commission on Spirituality invites everyone to mark your calendar and save this weekend to attend a Dream Workshop led by the Rev. Bob Haden, director of the Haden Institute.
What’s New/Noteworthy at the Episcopal Book Store

Celtic Twilight 7: Sacred Spirit (CD)

This collection weaves a Celtic knot of sacred music from antiquity to the present in a special homage to Hildegard von Bingen. The central feature of the Celtic worldview is the intimate relationship of humans with the natural world, and a very similar worldview infuses the music of 12th-century Germanic visionary composer Hildegard von Bingen. Like the Celts, Hildegard believed that the natural world is a Divine creation, filled with Divine beauty and Divine energy, and this is the theme of her songs. These original songs and interpretations (“Kyrie,” “Caritas,” and “Viridissima”) are rendered in forms of sonic poetry that appeal to the sacred inside the individual. Similar titles from “Viridissima”) are rendered in forms of sonic poetry that appeal to the sacred inside the individual. Similar titles from

Digging In: Tending to Life in Your Own Backyard by Robert Benson

Benson artfully portrays the wonder of a garden and the things that grow there—plants, children, relationships, home, and faith. A feast for gardeners who mow over seed catalogs, this book also appeals to general readers who simply enjoy the beauty of the outdoors as well as armchair gardeners who won’t pull a weed but will watch an hour of gardening shows on television.

Meditation for Healing & Relaxation (CD) by Joe Howell

Dr. Joe Howell, a member of Grace Church in Anniston, is a clinical psychologist who embraces both the science of psychology and the wisdom of spirituality. With a doctorate in psychology from the University of Virginia, a master’s in religion from Yale Divinity School, and training as a fellow in clinical psychology in the Department of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, Howell has combined his schools of thought in treating patients of all ages. His guided meditation has proven powerful in combating cancer, stress-related disorders, autoimmune systems diseases, connective tissue disease, heart and circulatory problems, and physical injury as well as psychological illness. Meditation for Healing & Relaxation offers listeners an experience of ultimate tranquility.

Tokens of Trust: An Introduction to Christian Belief by Rowan Williams

Using the Nicene and Apostles’ Creed, Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams guides readers through the central elements of Christian faith. What does it mean to believe in God? Can God possibly be almighty in the midst of so much evil and disaster? How am I to understand the meaning of Jesus Christ’s ministry and resurrection? To what purpose is the Church called? And what does it really mean to follow Christ in today’s broken world? Tying together the answers to all of these questions and addressing perplexities such as the possibility of miracles and how to read the Bible, Williams demonstrates that each of the basic tenets of Christian faith flows from one fundamental belief: God is completely worthy of our trust.

Wilmer Hall by Richard Barrow

Richard Barrow tells the story of Wilmer Hall from the perspective of a boy named Randy who lived in a south Alabama orphanage from age 9 to 17 during the 1950s. Like most other boys who grew up during the 1950s, Randy experienced adventure, friendship, humor, suspense, young love, tragedy and eventually success on the route to adulthood. Wilmer Hall depicts the challenges of growing up without the guidance of parents and a normal community. In addition to being abandoned at a young age, Randy and his older brother are separated, and he must make life-altering decisions based on his own thoughts and judgments. Despite suffering defects and making errors, he confronts the ghosts in his life and achieves a sense of victory. The process he returns not once but twice to the orphanage, even though it seems to be the last place he would ever visit again.

For information about these and other books or to have a staff member research and special order a particular book, please contact the Episcopal Book Store, 2015 Sixth Avenue North, Birmingham, AL 35203; 205/323-2959; e-mail: ebsinfo@episcobooks.com. You can also visit the bookstore online at www.episcobooks.com. The bookstore is open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sunday from 9:30 to 1 p.m.
Linking the Kingdom of God with Healing

By the Rev. Richard Lawson, Rector of St. John’s in Decatur

Chapter nine of Luke’s Gospel records that Jesus links the proclamation of the Kingdom of God with healing—He had been proclaiming the Kingdom and healing the sick, and he calls the 12 apostles to imitate him. This passage is crucial in understanding the Church’s mission, and specifically the mission of St. John’s in Decatur. St. John’s owns a building (on our property) called the Episcopal Center that houses two nonprofit organizations: the Community Free Clinic of Decatur/Morgan County, which provides healthcare for the working poor, and Parents and Children Together (PACT).

One of the signs that our nation’s healthcare system is in crisis is the fact that the working poor cannot afford healthcare; for example, a waitress or employee on minimum wage—working a full-time job—cannot afford health insurance. This raises serious questions about economic justice—how is it possible that so many people work full-time and yet cannot afford basic needs? The delegates of this year’s annual diocesan convention considered these issues before they passed a resolution in support of a living wage.

The staff and volunteers of the Episcopal Center includes St. John’s member Trudy Grisham (third person from the left in the first row of people who are standing); Trudy serves as the president of Decatur General Foundation, which oversees the clinic.

Our worshiping community, the Church, is inseparable from social justice and outreach. When our outreach or on justice issues is well done, our proclamation of the Kingdom is more intelligible and even practical. This is, in part, what the Baptismal Covenant intends by asking the Church if she will proclaim the good news both in word and deed.

The staff and volunteers of the Episcopal Book Store and 55th Place will hold a used book sale from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, October 6, at the Bluff Park Village Shopping Center (at the top of Tyler Road; the shopping center is a shuttle stop for the Bluff Park Art Show on this same Saturday). Books of all kinds collected from Birmingham-area churches will be sold at rock-bottom prices, and all of the proceeds will be used for renovations and improvements at 55th Place and the bookstore.