Five Priests To Be Ordained

Bishop Parsley and Bishop Sloan will ordain Robyn Elizabeth Arnold, Walter Marion “Chip” Broadfoot, Judith Walton Comer, Thomas Roland Joyner, and James Lee “Jamie” McAdams as priests of our diocese on Tuesday, December 16, at the Cathedral Church of the Advent in Birmingham. Everyone is cordially invited to the service, which will begin at 5:30 p.m. followed by a reception. Robyn will serve as a priest in the Diocese of California, Chip at the Ascension in Montgomery, Judith at St. Philip’s in Fort Payne, Jamie at St. Stephen’s in Birmingham, and Thomas at the Holy Comforter in Montgomery.

Bishop Sloan Will Lead Advent Quiet Day

Our diocesan Commission on Spirituality invites you to join people from around our diocese at St. Stephen’s in Huntsville on Saturday, December 13, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., for this year’s Advent Quiet Day. Bishop Sloan will lead us in reflecting on the theme “Jesus Is Coming—Are You Busy?” For more information please contact Sarah Sartain at ssartain@dioala.org or 205/715-2060 ext. 314.

Chapel of St. Francis Nears Completion

“Our schedule, on budget, and beautiful—the Chapel of St. Francis is almost complete!” announces the Rev. Mark Johnston, Vicar and Executive Director of Camp McDowell. Please mark your calendar and plan to come help celebrate the dedication of this wonderful new worship and meeting facility on May 2, 2009. Also, please consider purchasing bricks or pavers in honor or memory of family members or friends for landscaping the grounds. Please see the full story on page 5.
Doug Carpenter Tells the Story of St. Stephen’s in Birmingham


Wonderful, heart-tugging stories fill the pages of the story of St. Stephen’s, “which once upon a time grew from a tiny seed and now ‘the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.’” In the Prologue Doug remembers George Prather, one of the early members of St. Stephen’s who was baptized with water from a Dixie Cup at University Hospital a few days after he was run over by a freight train. Marilyn McGuire Pearce, one of St. Stephen’s original trustees, saw George as a one of God’s children and realized that if he had moved into her neighborhood she would have asked him to come to St. Stephen’s. “Why not have the same concern for a hobo drifter?” she had asked herself. Marilyn visited George in the hospital and inspired others not only to befriend him but also to grow to love him.

“In the last conversation with George that I remember,” Doug writes, “he thought back over his life: an unhappy childhood, a few months in the army, time in a Mississippi jail where he swallowed the metal coil from a notebook to emphasize his need for medical attention, endless years of hopping on and off freight trains. Then he closed his eyes so I might not notice he was crying. He mumbled the word ‘friends,’ and I remember having a mental picture of Mims Cooper, then a teenage, relighting George’s pipe for him on a number of occasions. . . . His final words were spoken through tears, ‘And these last few years have been the best of my life.’

At the last George had friends who cared deeply about him. . . . What they and so many others have gracefully done for ‘the least of these’ confirms the presence of Jesus in our midst and defines the authenticity of the parish.”

For more information or to get a copy of the book, please contact Doug at 3037 Overton Drive, Birmingham, AL 35223; 205/967–7436; carpenter.doug@att.net.

Mission in Namibia Update

To find out the latest from Jeremy and Penny Lucas about their mission work in Namibia, please visit their blog, missiontonamibia.blogspot.com, or hook up to Skype to see a Webcast. “With WiFi, high-speed Internet, and a Webcam, you can have a real live missionary broadcast directly to you or your parish,” notes Jeremy. You can also contact Jeremy and Penny at missiontonamibia@gmail.com and jluca71@gmail.com.

Clergy News

The Rev. Dexter Bender began serving as interim rector of St. Thomas’ in Huntsville on October 12.

Maintaining the Financial Security of Our Diocese

By the Rev. Rob Morpeth, Deputy for Finance and Administration

The Department of Finance and the Trustees of the Pooled Investment Fund (Consolidated Trust and Designated Funds of the Diocese) always closely monitor events in the financial markets and finance industry. In response to recent developments, our diocese has restructured our investments and shifted certain funds.

Perhaps the most significant change came in July when the trustees, responding to advice from Tim Callahan of Monroe Vos Consulting, shifted the asset allocation in our diocesan investment portfolio in favor of fixed income instruments (bonds and treasuries). Currently 70 percent of our diocesan portfolio, which includes funds deposited by parishes and the Alabama Episcopal Foundation for investment, is assigned to investment in bonds and treasuries, which effectively removed these funds from the losses recently experienced in the stock (equity) markets. Overall the timing of this shift has proven to be most fortunate; however the trustees are quick to point out that their strategy generally does not include attempts to “time” the markets. Their strategy remains to invest for the long haul, meaning that funds are left in the markets and allowed to recover from losses over time rather than through attempts to sell and buy at critical moments.

While the decision in July to shift the asset allocation certainly appears to have been a good decision, the trustees realize that they now face another critical decision related to reinvesting funds in stocks. Knowing the moment when the markets are at their lowest point and therefore offer the chance to pur-

chase stocks at reduced prices is difficult at best. Monroe Vos Consulting and the Trust Company of Sterne, Agee and Leach are assisting the trustees in making these financial decisions.

In addition to the alteration of the asset allocation, our diocesan Department of Finance acted early to shift deposits that our diocese maintained in two banks to bring the remaining balances more in line with FDIC insurance limits (recently those limits have been lifted, but we took action well before the limits were changed). Our Department of Finance shifted funds from contributions to our diocesan ACTS2 Campaign into U.S. Treasuries timed to mature as the funds would be needed. The department also called for funds currently held in several maturing certificates of deposit to be deposited instead in a money market account collateralized by U.S. Treasuries. In the later case the shift did not result in a significant loss in the earnings generated by the funds. In the case of the ACTS2 funds however, some loss of earnings was accepted in favor of securing the funds. Our Department of Finance and the trustees continue to consult by phone and e-mail, and the two groups will meet again in November.

You can find information about our diocesan investment portfolio on our diocesan Web site, www.dioala.org; click on “Finance” in the left-hand column. This pooled investment fund is open to all parishes. For additional information please contact Rob Morpeth at rmorpeth@dioala.org or 205/715–2060 ext. 311.
The Apostle

Mission Team Provides Hands-on Hurricane Relief

The Rev. Bill King (priest in charge of Trinity in Clanton), the Rev. Bill Winters (rector of Epiphany in Guntersville), Patrick Turner (of Trinity in Clanton), Phil Croft and his daughter Elizabeth (of All Saints’ in Birmingham), and David French (of St. James’ in Alexander City) spent a week in Haiti in mid-October working with Father Fritz Valdema and his wife, Carmel, to provide hands-on relief to hurricane survivors in five villages outside the capital city of Port au Prince. The mission team’s top priority was helping ease the suffering brought about by the four storms that devastated Haiti in September. They used donations from individuals and parishes across our diocese to purchase and distribute a ton of rice, beans, and cooking oil in the village of Gorman, which had been flooded by 40 inches of rain. They also bought a second ton of food staples that was to be delivered to the remote mountain village of Crochu before the end of October.

Team leader Bill King reports that the storms and flooding had made the road conditions “atrocious” and traveling extremely difficult. The main street in Gorman was still flooded and riddled with potholes when the team with there, and the floodwaters that continued to run alongside the church made the grounds one huge mudhole.

Team member Patrick Turner installed electric lights at heavily damaged St. Sacrament Church in Fond au Prince. The mission team’s top priority was helping survivors in five villages outside the capital city of Port au Prince. The mission team’s top priority was helping survivors in five villages outside the capital city of Port au Prince. “If they get a heavy rain again, we’ve said that they need to evacuate the school building there because the ceiling at some point is going to come down,” notes Bill. The ceiling, which also serves as the buildings exterior roof, is made of concrete, which has cracked and is sagging. If it collapsed with the children inside the result would be catastrophic, Bill warns. Team member Phil Croft, who is a civil engineer, is working on design recommendations for a replacement roof/ceiling.

Bill Winters, Elizabeth Croft, and Erin Goldsmith, who is a nurse, helped with a mobile nutrition clinic in the village of Thomazeau. Carmel Valdema, who is a public health nurse, uses the mobile clinics to evaluate, immunize, and provide nutrition supplements and vitamins to significantly malnourished children and nutrition education to their parents and also to identify and arrange medical care for critically malnourished children.

In addition to their hurricane relief efforts, the mission team used funds contributed to our diocese to hire Haitian construction workers to help them pave the schoolyard at St. Simeon Church in Croix des Bouquets. David French helped speed the effort by using a power saw and special blades brought from home to cut concrete blocks to the appropriate size. In all the team carried with them more than 600 pounds of supplies including the tools, school supplies, vitamins, and laptop computers for students. Team members were also present when a drilling company, hired with contributions from a parish in our diocese, dug a well at the school in Lifvois.

Beyond the hard work and amid the extreme poverty of the poorest nation in the Western hemisphere, our team members found our sisters and brothers in Haiti to be a people of joy, hope, patience and love. “They live day to day, but they still have so much hope,” emphasizes Erin Goldsmith, who was making her first trip to Haiti.

Father Valdema expressed his appreciation to the team and to the people of our diocese via an Internet call: “The people at Gorman were very happy to receive food from the people of your diocese, especially from the special team you sent this week” he said. “Transmit for me to everybody in your diocese their thanks for the gift. We thank everyone who contributed to pave the field at the school,” he continued. “Thank you for everything. I’ll continue to pray for you that God will continue to bless you.”

Our diocese is planning to send two medical teams on weeklong mission trips to Haiti early next year to help deal with the expected long-term, storm-related health issues. The first team is scheduled to leave January 17 and the second on February 7 (the second team will likely spend two days camping in the village of Crochu, an impoverished, remote village in the mountains above Port au Prince accessible only on foot or by horseback). The teams will be small, ideally consisting of two doctors, two or three nurses, and two or three laypersons. If you are interested in participating in these missions or leading a parish-based mission, or for more information about Haiti, please contact the Rev. Deacon Dave Drachlis at dave@stthomas-hsv.org or visit our diocesan Web site, www.dioala.org.
Jesus regarded the five loaves and two fish as the doughnut.

I retrieved the newsletter from the trash and read the haiku again, this time paying attention to the power of words: “gulch,” “rumors,” and “afraid.” The person sitting by the mountain stream might just as easily have written he was by a creek bed, listening to the glory of God’s Creation as the winds blew and the thunder rumbled and knowing that the rains would bring a rush of water to fill the creek by which he sat. But instead he looked for the hole in the doughnut; instead of enjoying the moment, he looked for doom. If he’d written a pleasant little poem about serenity and balance, it would not have been published. It’s as if we are yearning for dread and doom, as if we can hardly wait for something to be wrong so we’ll have something to talk about.

When I’ve had enough of listening to the news, I listen to sports talk radio. The Crimson Tide is undefeated and ranked #2 in the nation, but all I hear on the radio is how Auburn has come onto hard times. You’d think there would be a little time to congratulate the Alabama players and coaches, but there’s just endless speculation about the Auburn coaches and What’s Gone Wrong. Are we just addicted to negativity?

Now this may not be a surprise to any of you, but just in case you don’t know: I am an optimist. There—I said it: unabashedly, without shame or remorse, I am openly and proudly an optimist. I prefer to look for the good, to assume the best, to give thanks for what we have. Not only that, but I am an idealist; I’ve even been accused of being a bleeding-heart do-gooder. Of course I might have thought Jesus had been out in the sun too long if I’d been there when He told the disciples that they were going to feed 5,000 people with a couple of dried fish and some bread, but on the whole I have to say that I am an optimist because that’s how I choose to look at things. I would rather focus on the solution instead of the problem, rather be grateful for the full half of the glass than be distracted by the empty half, rather trust in the goodness of Creation and of God’s children than live in suspicious dread.

I’m not sure about this, and I could be wrong, but I think that my choosing to be an optimist has something to do with how I choose to be faithful. Other people will make other choices, and I’m not saying that pessimists are unfaithful or unchristian, but my determination to be optimistic helps me rely on my faith and on the grace of God. I get a lot of mail and a lot of e-mail. People send me their thoughts, their opinions, their hopes, their fears. We live in fearful times, with the Church in controversy, the economy on a roller coaster, and politicians yammering at us in increasingly strident tones. I’m not such a Pollyanna that I don’t think there’s anything bad out there, I just believe that our faith in God is our most powerful tool against fear and despair, and that God’s grace trumps all other cards.

I believe that we Christians have been entrusted with the glad Good News of the love of God in Jesus Christ our Redeemer and that we are stewards of the Gospel, not to hide and protect it but to proclaim it joyfully and faithfully. I believe it is our assurance of the love of God in the Gospel of Christ that gives us hope and makes our lives worth living when calamity or disaster does come. We are witnesses to the Resurrection of our Lord, and we are called to live in hope, not in fear. Sisters and brothers, please allow me to suggest that our faith does not call us to huddle in a gulch listening to rumors of doom and fearing a flood that may or may not come. If a flood comes, as happens from time to time, I trust we have enough sense to move up the creek bed so we’re not washed away and enough faith to know that the waters will recede, as they always have and always will. In faith and in hope, we put ourselves, our families, our Church, and our nation in the hands of God.
The Rev. Deacon Carolyn J. Foster, the Rev. Deacon Tom Osborne, Martha Jane Patton, Bertram Perry, Alice Bowsher, Jeannie Robison, and I represented our diocese at our Church-wide Day of Repentance and Reconciliation observance in Philadelphia on October 3-4. Appropriately held during the year that marks the 200th anniversary of the abolishment of slavery, the event was planned in response to Resolution A123, which was passed at the 2006 General Convention of the Episcopal Church and called on the Episcopal Church to apologize for its “complicity in and the injury done by the institution of slavery and its aftermath.”

The two-day event featured presentations on our Church’s involvement in slavery and the actions dioceses are taking to acknowledge and express regret for supporting slavery and years of “de jure and de facto segregation and discrimination.” It concluded with a solemn, emotional service of repentance at historic St. Thomas’ African Episcopal Church, which was founded in 1792 by the Rev. Absalom Jones, a former slave. Seventeen Episcopal bishops joined our presiding bishop, the Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori, in leading the service, which opened with a “Litany of Offense and Apology” punctuated by the sounding of a gong and the congregation singing responsively “Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy.”

Byron Rushing, a member of the Massachusetts state legislature, outlined the economic effects of slavery and racial discrimination that still reverberate today. He emphasized that remorse requires truth and that to be truthful about slavery and its aftermath we must confront the horror of slavery, the economic effects of slavery, and the shame of slavery.

North and the South owned slaves or benefited from the economic system that depended on slavery. After slavery’s official abolition, the Church continued to discriminate against people of African descent. Delegates from African American parishes were not seated at diocesan conventions, and African American clergy were discriminated against in their deployment.

The Rev. Dr. Harold T. Lewis, rector of Calvary Episcopal Church in Pittsburgh and author of Yet with a Steady Beat: The African American Struggle for Recognition in the Episcopal Church, explained that the history of the Episcopal Church in the United States is inextricably entwined with the institution of slavery. Until the Civil War dioceses and clergy in both the North and the South owned slaves or benefited from the economic system that depended on slavery. After slavery’s official abolition, the Church continued to discriminate against people of African descent. Delegates from African American parishes were not seated at diocesan conventions, and African American clergy were discriminated against in their deployment.

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For more information about the Day of Repentance and Reconciliation and to read Presiding Bishop Jefferts Schori’s homily please visit www.episcopalchurch.org.
Chapel of St. Francis Nears Completion

By the Rev. Mark Johnston, Vicar and Executive Director

On schedule, on budget, and beautiful—the Chapel of St. Francis at Camp McDowell is almost complete. By the new year it will be ready for use.

If you have spent much time in our Chapel of the Ascension in the lower camp, you know it is a place where it is common to see tears. The powerful sensation of the Holy Spirit and the sense of the goodness of God brings tears to my eyes almost every time I am part of worship in that space. I wondered if the new chapel would feel the same. The answer is YES! Almost everyone I take on a tour must wipe tears from their eyes as they gaze around the structure even in its unfinished state. The Chapel of St. Francis is all we hoped, planned, and prayed it would be. Rest assured that the Chapel of the Ascension will continue to be used often and will continue to feel the same.

Father & Son Weekend at Camp McDowell

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

One of my greatest joys has been directing the annual Father & Son Weekend at Camp McDowell. This year, our 3rd annual weekend included nearly 60 fathers and sons—and one grandfather and grandson!—from 16 different parishes, which is about twice the number we had last year. We are planning to have our 4th annual weekend at the end of September 2009.

When I said the Chapel of St. Francis would be complete by the first of the year, I am speaking only of “partial” completion, and we will finish it as funds allow. We still need to complete the landscaping as well as the downstairs space. We also need to purchase chairs.

I am grateful to all of you who have purchased bricks and pavers to assist in completing the walkways and landscaping. You can still purchase bricks or pavers and have them engraved in honor of, in thanksgiving for, and in memory of people you love. For more information please call Michael Goldsmith at Camp McDowell, 205/387-1806, or visit www.campmcdowell.com.

The Chapel of St. Francis will be dedicated on Saturday, May 2. Please plan to attend!

Send a Child to Camp by Buying a Christmas Card

By the Rev. Mark Johnston, Executive Director, and Michael Goldsmith, Director of Program and Development

The main reason this weekend is such a joy for me is simple—we spend time with our sons and grandsons and with one another. I worry that our parish schedules are so busy at times that we miss on simply spending time together and getting to know each other. I also worry that our family schedules are so busy that the same thing is true of our homes.

So we make the schedule for Father & Son Weekend relaxed. It does include most camp activities (such as hiking and canoeing) and a little bit of program, and I always include about an hour conversation among the men about the joys and challenges of being a parent. I always remind them that God is ever present and loving, and that our priests are there for us too whenever we need a conversation and spiritual guidance. The weekend ends with the Sunday Eucharist followed by an intense but fun kickball game for all ages and abilities. But more than anything else, we simply enjoy one another’s company, and that—by the way—is why I consider Camp McDowell to be such an incredible resource for our diocese.

Our theme for the overall weekend this year was the prayer of General Thanksgiving found on page 836 of the Book of Common Prayer. We prayed each day with our children. This prayer describes the kind of gratitude and presence that is always possible by the grace of God, and our annual weekend is a small attempt to start living it.

Accept, O Lord, our thanks and praise for all that you have done for us. We thank you for the splendor of the whole creation, for the beauty of this world, for the wonder of life, and for the mystery of love.

We thank you for the blessing of family and friends, and for the loving care which surrounds us on every side.

We thank you for setting us at tasks which demand our best efforts, and for leading us to accomplishments which satisfy and delight us.

We thank you also for those disappointments and failures that lead us to acknowledge our dependence on you alone.

Above all, we thank you for your Son Jesus Christ; for the truth of his Word and the example of his life; for his steadfast obedience, by which he overcame temptation; for his dying, through which he overcame death; and for his rising to life again, in which we are raised to the life of your kingdom.

Grant us the gift of your Spirit, that we may know him and make him known; and through him, at all times and in all places, may give thanks to you in all things. Amen.

We are once again giving our friends the opportunity to contribute to the Camp McDowell Scholarship Fund, which helps make it possible for more than 470 underprivileged children to come to Summer Camp, the McDowell Environmental Center, “Special Session” for campers with special needs, and our camp for children infected with the HIV/AIDS virus. These children need the opportunity to experience God’s grace in a safe and beautiful environment, and they have come to depend on the continuing support of their brothers and sisters in Christ.

As we look toward the celebration of the birth of Jesus, we are reminded of the special needs of our children. What more appropriate Christmas gift could there be than to help send a child to “Wonderful, Wonderful Camp McDowell” Camp McDowell will send a beautiful Christmas card to people you would like to honor telling them that a gift has been given in their name to the Camp McDowell Scholarship Fund. If you would like a list of people you have sent a card to in the past, please contact Michael Goldsmith at Michael@campmcdowell.com or 205/387-1806. Thank you!
THE DONKEYS‘ TALES BY ADELE COLVIN AND PEYTON CARMICHAEL

Adele Bibb Colvin, a native of Birmingham and an active member of St. Luke’s ECW and Church in Birmingham, served as ECW Board devotional chairman this past year. Adele is also the author of The Donkeys’ Tales, which is beautifully illustrated by another talented woman in our diocese, Peyton Hamilton Carmichael, who attends St. Mary’s on-the-Highlands in Birmingham.

The idea for this book came to Adele as she was reading her Bible. “It struck me that the Scriptures mention a donkey as part of two events in Jesus’ life: the donkey present at the time of his birth and the donkey He rode into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday,” recalls Adele. “What if those two donkeys were related?” The answer to that question is this book, which retells selected events from the life of Christ through the point of view of Adele’s grandson who asked, “What kind of diapers did Jesus wear?”

The book, which is in its second publishing, is reviewed in the gift and book section of Episcopal Life and is available at the Episcopal Book Store (please see page 11). The sequel, The Donkey’s Easter Tale, will be released in February 2009.

DAUGHTERS OF THE KING

The Mary Magdalene Chapter of the Daughters of the King of St. Philip’s Church in Fort Payne received its charter on September 28. Four new members (Patti Pair, Judith Comer, Becky Guinn, and Lauren Everett) and a daughter at large (Suzie Barker) were received into the new chapter. Diocesan President Andi Silberman presented the Daughters for admission, and Bishop Sloan administered their vows.

“BLESSED IS SHE WHO BELIEVES”—FALL CONFERENCE REVISITED

By Lynn Edge

Guest speaker Dr. Jo Bailey Wells led more than 120 women on a believer’s journey from the Annunciation to the recent ordination of women as priests in Sudan during the ECW Fall Conference at St. Stephen’s in Birmingham on October 9-10. In her first talk Dr. Wells discussed the message given to Mary by the Angel Gabriel and challenged us to imagine what Mary’s life was like before and after the angel’s visit. She asked us to consider Mary’s reactions in terms of what our own might have been.

In her second talk Dr. Wells presented the stories of six women who had been deacons in the Sudanese Diocese of Renk and who were sought out by the Rt. Rev. Daniel Deng Bul to make the courageous decision to become the first women priests in Renk. Even though all of them had been leaders in the Mothers’ Union, each woman came to this place in her life in a different way. When Dr. Wells visited them not long after their ordinations, they all had questions for her since she was ordained in the first wave of women priests in the Church of England. Dr. Wells explained the special challenges faced by these women who serve in a part of the world where women often aren’t respected and where war can occur suddenly and violently.

In addition to hearing Dr. Wells, those attending the conference, led by ECW President Dee Buzby, had the opportunity to hear reports from ECW groups across our diocese. Sharing Sessions helped everyone hear new ideas for fellowship and fundraising.

BLESSED. That is the only word I can find to describe the Annual ECW Fall Conference held at St. Stephen’s in Birmingham on October 9-10. Blessed for the warm hospitality of St. Stephen’s, St. John’s Deaf Church, and the Birmingham Convocation. Blessed to hear such an inspiring and entertaining speaker. Blessed to have national officers join us. Blessed to hear about the work of the ECWs in our diocese. Blessed to have so many women attending and the loving fellowship that the women of this diocese give to all. It was a joy.

The women of St. Stephen’s welcomed us to their “church in the trees” with such warm hospitality, and the women of St. John’s Deaf Church treated us to a wonderful Wine and Cheese Party filled with fellowship and delicious goodies. Our speaker, the Rev. Dr. Jo Bailey Wells, gave three inspiring and delightful talks on our theme for this year, “Blessed Is She Who Believes.” Jo spoke about the Virgin Mary, and Elizabeth, as well as six ordained women she worked with in the Sudan. She was contagious in her enthusiasm as she spoke to us, and I felt the women who were present responded to her with such warmth and appreciation. If you ever have an opportunity to hear Jo, I encourage you to do so.

We were very honored and pleased to have Kay Meyer, National President of the Episcopal Church Women, and Marcie Cherau, National Board Representative from Province IV, join us for our conference. Kay assured us that the ECW is alive and well and doing great work, and Marcie brought news of Province IV including events planned for 2009. They enjoyed meeting the women of our diocese and hearing all that you do for your parishes and for others. For all of you not able to attend, I really wish you all could have been able to meet these two special women who are also fine examples of our theme and who are a blessing to us. For those who did attend, you blessed us with your participation, your fellowship, and your making the 119th Fall Conference a priority in your ECW.

There are so many people to thank. Birmingham Convocation Coordinator Liz Ersey, the ECW Presidents who organized the conference, and the members of the ECWs who worked for months to give to all of us an enjoyable conference. The women and staff of St. Stephen’s for hosting the conference. The women of St. John’s Deaf Church for hosting the Wine and Cheese Party; and the women of Grace Church in Woodlawn (Birmingham) and Holy Cross in Trussville for assisting them. The women of St. Thomas’ in Birmingham for handling registration and name tags. The women of St. Mark’s in Birmingham for the Goody Bags. The women of the Advent, St. Luke’s, and St. Mary’s on-the-Highlands in Birmingham for preparing the delicious dinner. The women of Epiphany in Leeds, St. Alban’s in Hoover, St. Andrew’s in Birmingham, St. Francis of Assisi in Indian Springs, St. Michael’s in Birmingham, Trinity in Bessemer, and St. Andrew’s in Montevallo for providing cookies and snacks. The women of All Saints’ and Ascension in Birmingham for the delicious lunches. Janet Roberts and of St. Stephen’s for designing and making the beautiful heart decorations given to all the attendees and Martha Black of St. Stephen’s for organizing all the food. Thank you also to the Rev. Russell Kendrick, rector of St. Stephen’s, who welcomed us, and a special thank you to Bishop Miller, the Rev. Alison Carmody, and the Rev. Deacon Katy Smith who celebrated the Memorial Eucharist. To all the women of the Birmingham Convocation, we thank you. A job well done!

May we all continue to be blessed as we go into this Advent season. When you have a moment, I invite you to read Luke’s account of the Annunciation, and because we are all blessed with God’s gift of faith, say to our Lord, “Let it be with me according to your word.” Blessings to you all.
To kick off this year's youth events, the Youth Department (YD) held its second annual District Days, fun-filled afternoons where youth groups and their leaders from all over our diocese were invited to meet, greet, and become informed about upcoming activities. These gatherings took place in the Birmingham, Montgomery, and Tennessee Valley districts on Sunday, September 21. We served more than 100 people from 19 churches that beautiful Sunday afternoon. These gatherings were incredible. Kudos to the youth of our diocese for making these great times possible!

All three events were designed to help introduce what the YD is all about and provide information about the upcoming Christmas Conference, EYC Convention, and Spring Break Conference. We showed a video put together by the YD to explain and give life to the events that will be offered to the youth of our diocese this year. The video included short infomercials about New Beginnings, Happenings, the Pilgrimage to Taizé, and much more.

If you want to know more about what’s coming up for young people in grades 6 through 12, please check out the Youth page on our diocesan Web site (www.dioala.org) or contact Leslie Manning at lmanning@dioala.org or 205/715-2060 ext. 325. We hope to see you soon! All are welcome . . . and with 93 parishes in our diocese, we expect a big crowd at every event!

Our Youth Department is planning a pilgrimage to Taizé from May 23 to June 2 for high-school juniors and seniors and college students. Taizé is a community in France devoted to reconciliation, simplicity, and prayer. A man now known as Brother Roger started the community during World War II, and over the past 60 years hundreds of thousands of people have come to Taizé to experience the pattern of song, silence, and shared discussion offered by the brothers. For more information please contact Leslie Manning at lmanning@dioala.org or 205/715-2060 ext. 325.

We invite all 9th and 12th graders to come to Camp McDowell for this year’s Christmas Conference, December 28-30. Our theme for the session is “The Gift and the Giver,” and we’ll be talking about God’s amazing gift to us, Jesus Christ. We’ll reflect on the wonderful Christmas holidays and enjoy the cool weather at camp.

Our Youth Department Representatives are organizing this conference. The Rev. Marc Burnette will serve as our program director and John Talbert as our lay chaplain. They are eager to experience this weekend with you!
Learning More about Mission Work in Namibia

By Lindsey Mullen, a Member of Canterbury Chapel in Tuscaloosa

After studying abroad in South Africa for six weeks this summer, I was able to take a trip to Windhoek, Namibia, to spend some time with Jeremy and Penny Lucas, two missionaries from our diocese. Jeremy is working to set up a three-year clergy-training program to help meet the severe need for clergy in the Anglican Church of Southern Africa. Penny, who is a registered nurse, plans to work with HIV/AIDS ministries in Namibia. In the week I spent as their guest in Windhoek, I gathered footage to make a short film that illuminates the work that the Jeremy and Penny will be doing in the next few years.

The Lucases’ home and lifestyle are probably not what you imagine when you think of missionaries in a country like Namibia. They live in a spacious house next door to the cathedral where Jeremy works. They have running water and electricity, a television, and a microwave. During the time I was there, I heard at least three people ask them when they would be hiring domestic help and how they were getting by without a housekeeper.

I was surprised to learn that in many ways life in Africa is similar to life in the United States, and the role of missionaries and aid that we send to help the people who live there is very different than it has been in the past. During their time in Namibia, Jeremy and Penny will be working to bridge the gaping cultural and economic chasms that divide the country’s population. Just as our community is quick to overlook the disparity of wealth in our own state, those who are privileged in Namibia often cannot see the poverty in their own land. The Lucases have an opportunity to gently remind the members of their parish that the marginalized are everywhere. Interestingly, the time that I spent in Namibia reminded me to keep my eyes open for the neglected people in my own community.

I’d like to thank Canterbury Chapel, Christ Church in Tuscaloosa, and Trinity Church in Florence for helping make my visit to Namibia possible. If you’re interested in viewing the film that I made while in Namibia or in hosting a screening of the film at your parish, please e-mail me at ljmullen@bama.ua.edu. You can keep up with Jeremy and Penny via their blog, missiontonamibia.blogspot.com.

Diane Gray Joins God’s Joyful Fools

By Yvonne Willie, a Member of the Advent in Birmingham

Diane Gray made her lifetime vow of profession on October 4, the Feast Day of St. Francis of Assisi, when God’s Joyful Fools, the Alabama Fellowship of the Third Order of the Society of St Francis, met at Trinity House in Crestwood (Birmingham). About 20 people attended the liturgy and reception that followed.

Fellowship Convener Marla Asson officiated at the profession and renewal of vows. The Rev. Roy Wells, parish associate at St. Andrew’s in Birmingham, celebrated Holy Eucharist assisted by the Rev. Deacon Adele Stockham of Grace Church in Woodlawn (Birmingham). Diane Gray’s sister, Debbie Gray, also of Grace Church, served as cantor.

This day represented a significant milestone for Diane as she marked the end of four years of intensive study. From now on she will continue to put into practice her vow to follow St. Francis. Like all others who have professed, Diane will live an “ordinary life” while continuing a spiritual life of daily prayer, service, and study toward the aim of brotherhood and peacemaking. Our aim as a Society is to make our Lord known and loved everywhere, to spread the spirit of brotherhood, and to live simply. When asked what attracted her to St. Francis, Diane replied, “I have always felt drawn to St Francis because of his love for creation, especially the animals. After four years of studying his life and attempting to live a Franciscan rule myself, I am much more impressed with his mystical qualities, his attempts to follow Jesus so literally in his daily living that toward the end of his life God marked him with the Stigmata.”

The Third Order of the Society of St Francis is a religious order that traces its roots back to the time of St. Francis himself. The Brothers and Sisters of the First Order of St. Francis live a community life under vows and express their dedication to Christ by outward service to others. The Sisters of the Second Order live under vows and maintain a life of prayer within the enclosure of their community. To accommodate the huge numbers of lay men and women who wished to follow him as closely as their secular responsibilities would allow, Francis wrote a rule of life for a Third Order, and these rules were probably approved by Pope Innocent III. The Brothers and Sisters of the Third Order are vowed to lifelong commitment to Christ and bear witness to the Gospel life in their homes and in the occupations to which they believe God has called them. Those of us who are members of the Third Order chapter in Alabama call ourselves God’s Joyful Fools.

If you would like more information about our group, please write to Marla Asson, 16004 Michelle Drive, Huntsville, AL 35803. You can contact the Third Order Secretary of the Society of St Francis at P.O. Box 399, Mt. Sinai, NY 11766.
THE SPIRITUALITY OF HENRI NOUWEN
November 21-22 at St. Stephen’s in Birmingham

Our diocesan Commission on Spirituality cordially invites everyone to a workshop on The Spirituality of Henri Nouwen led by well-known lecturer and group leader on spiritual growth Joseph “Joe” B. Howell, Ph.D., a member of Grace Church and a practicing clinical psychologist in Aniston. When Joe was a student at Yale Divinity School in the 1970s, he studied under Henri Nouwen, who became his friend and mentor. Having studied Nouwen’s teachings as well as knowing him personally, Joe presents a unique insight into this gifted Christian writer and teacher. Joe will provide a look into the psycho-spiritual dynamics of Henri Nouwen, focusing on self-esteem, rejection, grief, individuation, woundedness, intimacy, healing, and wholeness. By exploring selected writings, the participants will have the opportunity to look into their own psychological and theological frame of reference within the holy container of being the beloved of Christ, a concept that Henri Nouwen embraced. For more information please contact Lark Howell at 256/238-1560 or jblhowell@bellsouth.net or Sarah Sartain at ssartain@dioala.org or 205/715-2060 ext. 314.

CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER RETREAT AND WORKSHOP
December 6 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Ascension in Montgomery

The Ascension in Montgomery invites everyone who is seeking a deeper relationship with God through the power of silence and prayer to come to a Contemplative Prayer Retreat and Workshop on December 6. The Rev. Tom Ward, a representative of Contemplative Outreach of Middle Tennessee and a presenter from St. Mary’s Retreat Center in Sewanee, will lead two sessions on Centering Prayer. He will focus his teaching on the “inner” dimension of the Church as he meets the participants where they are spiritually and teaches them the practice of Centering Prayer. The underlying goal of the retreat and workshop is to help parishes and other communities learn how to develop supportive prayer groups. For more information please contact the Rev. Chip Bradfoots at 334/263-5529 or chipbell@co.ascension.org.

Bishops’ Visitation Schedule

Sunday, November 2
10:30 a.m. Bishop Sloan, All Saints’, Montgomery

Sunday, November 9
10:30 a.m. Bishop Miller, Epiphany, Leeds
11 a.m. Bishop Sloan, Advent, Birmingham

Sunday, November 16
9 a.m. Bishop Miller, Good Shepherd, Montgomery
9 & 11:15 a.m. Bishop Sloan, St. Stephen’s, Birmingham

Wednesday, November 19
6 p.m. Bishop Sloan, Christ Church, Albertville
6 p.m. Bishop Miller, Holy Cross, Uniontown/ St. Michael’s, Faunsdale

Sunday, November 30
10:30 a.m. Bishop Sloan, St. Thomas’, Birmingham
10:45 a.m. Bishop Parsley, St. Francis’, Indian Springs

Sunday, December 7
10:30 a.m. Bishop Parsley, St. Luke’s, Birmingham
10:30 a.m. Bishop Sloan, Grace, Mt. Meigs
10:30 a.m. Bishop Miller, Emmanuel, Opelika

Saturday, December 13
6 p.m. Bishop Sloan, Iglesia Episcopal de la Gracia, Birmingham

Sunday, December 14
10:30 a.m. Bishop Parsley, Grace, Anniston
10:30 a.m. Bishop Sloan, Holy Spirit, Alabaster
What’s New/Noteworthy at the Episcopal Book Store

As we approach the Advent and Christmas seasons, what better time to shop at the Episcopal Book Store? Here you will find items that make perfect gifts as well as books, devotionals, calendars, and wreaths to help you prepare to celebrate the coming of our Savior. If you can’t get to the bookstore, you can always shop online at www.episcobooks.com or call 205/323-2959 to place an order.

The First Christmas by DR Publishing
To describe this pop-up book for little readers as “hands on” is an understatement. As the pop-up illustrations tell the Nativity story, young readers or listeners can collect the different figures to make their own stand-up scene. The book includes a special pocket to store the figures and props so the children can re-create the scene whenever they want. What a wonderful way to share the story of the birth of Jesus with your children or grandchildren.

Daily Reflections for Advent and Christmas—Waiting in Joyful Hope 2008-09 by Bishop Robert Morneau
This little book features a reflection, a meditation, and a prayer written by Bishop Morneau and based on the daily Mass for each day in the weeks of Advent. Small enough to easily fit into a pocket or purse, it provides a perfect guide for busy people to enrich their spiritual life.

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus edited by Nancy Guthrie
This special volume draws from the works and sermons of classic theologians, including Whitefield, Luther, Spurgeon, and Augustine, as well as from leading contemporary communicators, including John Piper, J. Ligon Duncan, and Joni Eareckson Tada, to beckon you and your family into the wonder of Jesus’ incarnation and birth. With its high view of Scripture and a focus on the gift of Jesus, this lovely book is sure to ready your heart and mind for a fresh experience of “Immanuel, God with us” this and future Advent seasons.

The Donkeys’ Tales by Adele Bibb Colvin and illustrated by Peyton Hamilton Carmichael
Many of you will be delighted to know that Adele Colvin’s book for children is back in print in hardback. Adele, a longtime member of St. Luke’s in Birmingham, has written a tale as told by an older donkey to her child, the young donkey finds himself with the greatest responsibility of all: caring for the grown Jesus into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. With beautiful illustrations and a lovely narrative, this book is an excellent way of capturing young imaginations and retelling the story of Jesus.

Mark Your Calendar

Christmas Conference (9th-12th graders) December 28-30
College Conference November 7-9
Dioecesan Convention February 19-21 in Montgomery
EYC Convention (9th-12th graders) January 30-February 1
Fall Fling (for 5th-6th graders) November 14-16
Happening Weekends (9th-12th graders) #53 November 7-9, #54 March 6-8
Province IV Youth Event/PYE 2009 June 23-28
Sawyerville Day Camp June
Spring Break Conference (9th-12th graders) March 14-18
Taizé Pilgrimage (ages 16-30) May 23-June 2
Winter Weekend (for 7th-8th graders) January 16-19
Youth Ministry Sabbath Retreat (all Youth leaders) April 24-25

November 7-9 “Living Wovely in the Household of God,” College Conference sponsored by our diocese and Province IV at Camp McDowell. For more information please contact the Rev. Michael Rich at rrich@stmarkstar.com or 205/435-9271.

November 7-9 Daughters of the King (DOK) Fall Assembly led by Bishop Sloan at Camp McDowell. For more information and a registration form please visit www.dokalabahama.org.

November 9-12 Latino/Hispanic Ministries Conference at the Kanuga Conference Center in Hendersonville, North Carolina. For more information please call 828/692-9136, e-mail info@kanuga.org, or visit www.kanuga.org.

November 14-16 Fall Fling for 5th-6th graders at Camp McDowell. For more information please contact Youth Ministries Assistant Leslie Manning at lmanning@dioala.org or 205/715-2060 ext. 325.

November 14-16 The Journey of the Beloved: Healing Our Identity in God presented by Dr. Michael Hrynuk at the Center for Spiritual Development at St. Mary’s Sewanee (Tennessee). For more information please visit www.StMarysSewanee.org or call 931/598-5342.

November 15-17 Lansing Lee Conference with Marcus Borg and Dom Crossan at the Kanuga Conference Center in Hendersonville, North Carolina. For more information please call 828/692-9136, e-mail info@kanuga.org, or visit www.kanuga.org.

November 15-21 A Glimpse of the Kingdom—Icon Writing with Teresa Harrison at the Kanuga Conference Center in Hendersonville, North Carolina. For more information please call 828/692-9136, e-mail info@kanuga.org, or visit www.kanuga.org.

November 16-18 Centering Prayer as an 11th Step Practice presented by Roberta Oster and Becky Hannah at the Center for Spiritual Development at St. Mary’s Sewanee (Tennessee). For more information please visit www.StMarysSewanee.org or call 931/598-5342.

Cornwell Scribe Works Calligraphy
The beautifully illustrated, matted texts in this collection speak to a variety of occasions from house blessings to weddings and other special personal moments. The texts feature inspirational and encouraging scripture passages as well as quotations from noted thinkers.

Jewelry by Rebecca Harrison Designs Inc.
Rebecca Harrison took inspiration from the home decor kneelers in her home church, St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Fayetteville, Arkansas, for this collection of charms, pendants, and bracelets in sterling silver. “I wanted my jewelry to be a beautiful way to take blessings, grace, and a bit of Sunday’s reverence into your everyday life,” she explains. Rebecca donates 20 percent of the sales to community outreach programs sponsored by St. Paul’s.

For more 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 11:30 a.m. The bookstore will also be open Saturdays, December 6, 13, and 20, from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. and until 5 p.m. on Tuesday evening, December 16, before the ordination service at the Cathedral Church of the Advent.
Holy Cross School Launches Celebration
*By Gail Alsobrook, Director of Development, Public Relations, and Marketing*

Holy Cross Day, September 12, provided a delightful opportunity to launch the yearlong 10th anniversary celebration of Holy Cross Episcopal School in Montgomery. Bishop Sloan led the students, staff, and guests in the Litany of Prayers for the school and our founders at the opening service in the Chapel of the Annunciation, and later he served as the celebrant for the Eucharist in the Great Hall. Continuing a popular tradition, we released environmentally friendly balloons with the school’s name and address hand-printed by one of the students. This year one of our balloons made it all the way to Gardendale—some 93 miles from our campus! We received a sweet phone call from the lady who found it thanking us for the lovely tradition.

**The members of Holy Apostles’ in Birmingham (Hoover) cordially invite everyone to three special upcoming events. A candlelight Taizé service at 6 p.m. on November 6 with the musicians and choir under the direction of Shaun Pezant. The parish’s annual dinner/auction fundraiser on Saturday, November 8, at the Elks Lodge in Pelham; the auction begins at 6:30 with silent bids and continues after dinner when larger items will be auctioned live. A Jazzy Christmas celebration at 2 p.m. on December 14 featuring well-known jazz musicians and the choir under the direction of Shaun Pezant; everyone is asked to bring a toy or donation to benefit local charities. For more information about these events please contact Bill Davis at billdavis2ii@att.net or the parish office at 205/988-8000.**

Grace Church in Woodlawn (Birmingham) will host the parish’s 6th Annual St. Nicholas Day Bazaar from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Saturday, December 6. This one-stop Christmas shopping event will feature arts and crafts vendors, a bake sale, lunch, and a silent auction. Proceeds will help fund the ECW’s outreach programs and the parish’s capital campaign to replace pews in the nave. For more information e-mail Bethe Ensey at bensey@earthlink.net or call the parish office at 205/595-4636.

The members of the ECW of St. Andrew’s in Montevallo are hosting their annual Christmas Bazaar from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, December 6. For more information please call the parish office at 205/665-1667.

Pondering what to give your family and friends for Christmas? The Episcopal Relief and Development (ERD) Gifts for Life catalog offers you a way to make your gifts felt and also sow the seeds of transformation. Your gift of bees, chickens, cows, ducks, fish, and other wildlife or trees, clean water, food, mosquito netting, healthcare supplies, and even micro credit loans will empower individuals, restore communities, and save lives around the world. You can order gifts online at www.er-d.org or by calling 800/334-7626 ext. 5129. For more information or to schedule a program about ERD for your parish, please contact Judy Quick at jgquick@bellsouth.net or 205/669-6862.

Sunday, October 12, marked a red-letter day for Trinity in Wetumpka as the members of the parish broke ground for a new 300-seat nave and sanctuary. Trinity, which was founded in 1947 in a “one-room schoolhouse” type building on Austin Lane in West Wetumpka, moved to its current location at 5375 U.S. Highway 231 in 1970. Admiral Henry Crommelin, Captain Quentin Crommelin, and their families generously donated the land, and a family from the parish purchased and donated a building owned by the old Cantelou-Law Cotton Gin to serve as the worship space. In the late 1990s the congregation built a much-needed educational wing, and now we have begun building a much-needed new worship space.

A huge crowd of Trinity members attended the groundbreaking. The youngest was one-year-old Isabella Taylor, and the oldest was longtime parishioner Ealon Lambert, who is 89 years old. Warren Marshall and Wade Holman of Marshall Design-Build, the contractor for the project; David Mullen, architect for the building; Mac Hall, a member of our Diocesan Council; and Jerry Willis, Mayor Elect of Wetumpka also participated in the memorable event. Building committee chair Warren Jones, fundraising chairs Phyllis Kennedy and Beau Dunn, Ealon Lambert, Trinity youth representative Brett Young, and Trinity children Tucker Ayers, Sydney Lee, Hanna Beumer, Tanner Caton, Ava Claire Mattox, J. P. Lee, and Caroline Gregory turned over the first shovelfuls of dirt.

**Trinity in Wetumpka Breaks Ground**
*By the Reverend Ben Alford, Rector*

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**MAILING ADDRESSES AND DEADLINES**

Postmaster, parishes, and individuals, please send all address changes to Circulation Secretary Denise Servant, Carpenter House, 521 North 20th Street, Birmingham, AL 35203-2682; 205/715-2060 ext. 300; E-mail dservant@dioala.org.

Please send all submissions to Editor Norma McKiernick (205/979-2680). Please e-mail text and photos to Apostleedit@aol.com or mail them to 2156 Kent Way, Birmingham, AL 35226.

The submission deadline for the December issue is November 1; the deadline for the January issue is December 1.