Our 178th Annual Diocesan Convention  
February 19-21 in Montgomery

The Church of the Ascension in Montgomery will host our 178th Annual Diocesan Convention, which will be held at the Renaissance Marriott Hotel and Spa on February 19-21. The Very Rev. Samuel T. Lloyd III, dean of Washington National Cathedral, will be our keynote speaker. For more information about the convention, please visit our diocesan Web site, www.dioala.org, or contact Sarah Sartain at Carpenter House, ssartain@dioala.org or 205/715-2060 ext. 314.

Christian Formation Workshop, January 10

Everyone is cordially invited to Nuts and Bolts: A Christian Formation Tool Box on Saturday, January 10, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at St. Stephen’s in Birmingham. Our diocesan Department of Christian Formation and the Province IV Christian Formation Committee are hosting this year’s workshop, which was previously called All Under One Roof. You will be able to choose from a variety of informative sessions that will focus on programs and curricula for children, youth, and adults. For more information please see page 10.
Clergy News

The Rev. Sarah Gaede resigned as rector of St. Bartholomew’s in Florence in November.

The Rev. John Paul Thompson has accepted a call to serve a parish in the Diocese of Albany, New York.

The Rev. Polk Van Zandt has accepted a call to serve as rector of St. Paul’s in Murphysboro, Tennessee. Polk previously served as rector of St. Paul’s in Selma.

The Rev. Charles McKimmon, a retired priest of St. John’s in Decatur, died on October 25. May his soul and the souls of all the departed rest in peace.

The Advent Supports Community Kitchens

Members of the Cathedral Church of the Advent Outreach’s Long Term Planning Committee met with board members of Birmingham’s Community Kitchens on October 10. The group celebrated a gift from the Advent that will fund a total renovation of the kitchen used by the ministry at St. Andrew’s in Birmingham.

Excerpts from Sewanee’s 2008 Annual Report

Founded in 1857 and chartered in 1858 by Bishop Nicholas Hamner Cobbs of Alabama and other bishops of the Episcopal Church, the University of the South (or Sewanee as it is more popularly known) is home to both an outstanding liberal arts college and a seminary. Located atop the Cumberland Plateau between Nashville and Chattanooga, Tennessee, Sewanee’s 13,000-acre campus, the second largest campus in the United States, provides vast opportunities for research, recreation, and reflection. Within the traditionally strong curriculum of humanities, sciences, and graduate theological studies, Sewanee faculty members promote intellectual growth, critical thinking, and hands-on research.

The institution proudly acknowledges a long history of combining academic excellence with reverent concern for the world. Sewanee is the only university in the country with both a college and graduate seminary established by the Episcopal Church and in which the Episcopal Church gifts to seminaries through the One Percent Program, earmarked specifically for seminarian support, has steadily increased for the past three years: 235 percent Program, earmarked specifically for seminarian support, has steadily increased for the past three years: 235 percent of the $180-million goal by more than $25 million.

For the 2007-08 school year, 48 students from the Diocese of Alabama attended the College of Arts and Sciences, and Walter Broadfoot III, Catherine Hudson Collier, Judith Walton Comer, Keith Michael Cottis, James Lee McAdams, Richard Lawson III, Kip Laxson, H. Lee Lowery, Phillip Pruitt, and Richard Stryker III attended the School of Theology and the advanced degree program. Financial aid awarded to all the undergraduate students from the Diocese of Alabama for the school year totaled $1,129,335. Contributions from parishes and from parents, faculty, staff, and friends gave $3.6 million to the Sewanee Annual Fund, with 41 percent of college alumni and 32 percent of seminary alumni participating. Episcopal church gifts to seminaries through the One Percent Program, earmarked specifically for seminarian support, has steadily increased for the past three years: 235 percent of the $180-million goal by more than $25 million. More than 18,000 individuals and organizations supported the campaign goals to enhance significantly the endowment for scholarships, faculty support, service learning, and internships and to accomplish a wide range of facility construction and renovation projects. The many campaign highlights include the purchase and permanent protection of nearly 3,000 acres on the South Cumberland Plateau. The land, which contains portions of Lost Cove and Champion Cove adjacent to the 10,000-acre domain, is owned and managed by Sewanee for use as an outdoor academic laboratory and recreation. The parents of three Sewanee graduates created the Timothy Keith-Lucas Endowment to support Sewanee’s unique Island Ecology Program and to honor Dr. Keith-Lucas, the professor of psychology who founded it more than 20 years ago; the one-of-a-kind ecology program takes students each summer to St. Catherine’s Island, one of the Georgia Sea Islands, for an interdisciplinary look at island ecosystems.

In the 2007-2008 fiscal year, more than 7,400 alumni, parents, faculty, staff, and friends gave $3.6 million to the Sewanee Annual Fund, with 41 percent of college alumni and 32 percent of seminary alumni participating. Episcopal church gifts to seminaries through the One Percent Program, earmarked specifically for seminarian support, has steadily increased for the past three years: 235 percent of the $180-million goal by more than $25 million. More than 18,000 individuals and organizations supported the campaign goals to enhance significantly the endowment for scholarships, faculty support, service learning, and internships and to accomplish a wide range of facility construction and renovation projects. The many campaign highlights include the purchase and permanent protection of nearly 3,000 acres on the South Cumberland Plateau. The land, which contains portions of Lost Cove and Champion Cove adjacent to the 10,000-acre domain, is owned and managed by Sewanee for use as an outdoor academic laboratory and recreation. The parents of three Sewanee graduates created the Timothy Keith-Lucas Endowment to support Sewanee’s unique Island Ecology Program and to honor Dr. Keith-Lucas, the professor of psychology who founded it more than 20 years ago; the one-of-a-kind ecology program takes students each summer to St. Catherine’s Island, one of the Georgia Sea Islands, for an interdisciplinary look at island ecosystems.

For more information about the University of the South, please visit www.sewanee.edu or call toll-free 888/867.6884 or 800/289.4919.
Special Christmas Party for Special Campers

By Jen Manning, St. Thomas’ in Huntsville

Cook and me if we would be interested in having the youth members put on a Christmas party for the campers. We thought it sounded like a great idea, and a new tradition was born. Now more than 150 staff, campers, family members of campers, and caretakers from the campers’ group homes come to this very special get-together.

The staff arrives on Friday night and transforms Stough Lodge into a winter wonderland. We spend time in fellowship, drink lots of hot cocoa, and prepare presents and cards for the campers, who arrive on Saturday decked out in their best Christmas attire. They are so excited to be back at camp and among the people they love. We all have lunch together, sit around and tell stories from past camp sessions, and wait for Santa. Chris Allison, a former member of St. Thomas’ EYC, has been the go-to guy to play Santa Claus. It is a blessing to be able to see him interact with the campers—when he walks in the door, he is Santa. He brings stockings filled with goodies for the campers, including a Special Session Christmas party t-shirt (an adored possession). Each camper also receives a Christmas card signed by all of the members of the Special Session staff. After pictures with Santa are taken in front of the Christmas tree, it is time for us all to say good-bye. It is a sad moment since we all know we more than likely won’t meet again until next summer, but it is so wonderful to be able to spend the holidays together, even if just for an afternoon.

This special party for special campers really does encompass the true meaning of Christmas. It takes the love and joy shared at camp and pairs it with the spirit of Christmas. There is really no feeling to compare it to, and it is hard to express it in words.

For more information about the Special Sessions Christmas party please contact Jen at manning@emmanuelbme.org or 256/655-5460.

Thank You!

Thank you, members of the Diocese of Alabama! Your donations to Episcopal Relief and Development (ERD) have helped provide disaster relief, fight disease and hunger, and create economic opportunities. ERD coordinates with worldwide church and ecumenical partners to achieve the eight Millennium Development Goals, and about 92 percent of every donor dollar goes to programs.

If you are still looking for gift ideas, please consider placing an order from the ERD Gifts for Life catalog. It 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.
Love and Hate

Of course football rivalries are not really as important as they’re made out to be, and they certainly shouldn’t be the subject of a column in a diocesan paper. But hatred is. What I’m suggesting here is that some people simply enjoy hating. In college football, in politics, in race relations, in class warfare, in all manner of discrimination and prejudice, a lot of people seem to really enjoy hating, seem to really need to hate other people.

All of this is likely to be more complicated than I understand, but I think at least part of this is a basic sinful human need to feel better than somebody else. We are sometimes aware that we are sinful and inadequate, but we think we won’t have to do anything about it as long as we can find somebody else we can pretend we’re better than. So we say, “Well, I might be sinful, selfish, lazy, cowardly, and mean, but at least I’m not as bad as that guy. At least I’m not an Alabama fan. At least I’m not an Auburn fan. At least I’m not a liberal. At least I’m not a conservative. At least I’m not ________” (here you can choose from any of the hundreds of groups we can distinguish ourselves from based on nationality or occupation or race or choices made or circumstances inherited. We all know how to play this game—we’ve been doing it all our lives; we do it all the time.)

But what if we really believed that God loves us not because we’ve earned it, or because we deserve it, or because we’re good boys and girls, but because God is love, because God loves all of God’s children? What if we really believed, as we say in our Baptismal Covenant, that part of our commitment to God is to seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbors as ourselves, to strive for justice and peace, and to respect the dignity of every human being? I believe we would have to give up on the idea that we are better than any other person or group. We would have to let go of the sin of superiority and recognize that God loves the people we’re mad at and disgusted by, every bit as much as God loves us. We’d have to give up on hatred. Imagine if all the Christians in the world decided to stop hating—what a profoundly different world it would be. Then people would believe us when we tell them that the message of the Church is love.

I think the primary value of Christianity must be love. I’m afraid it’s hard to see sometimes, but that’s what we’re supposed to be about; the medium and the message of Christ is love. Love is the Summary of the Law: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” We are called to love, redeemed by love, and love will in God’s time bring us home, but still we choose to hate. I believe that love is more powerful than hate, but hate is more appealing. You and I as followers of Jesus Christ are not given permission to hate anyone, ever. It’s not good for us; hatred eats away at us and makes us less and less able to respond to love, which is the heart of the Good News.

By the time you read this it will be Advent, a season of anticipation. We anticipate celebrating the Incarnation of divine love in the birth of Jesus long ago and far away, we anticipate a fresh recognition of the Word still dwelling in love among us here and now, and we anticipate the love of Christ coming again. The Incarnation of God is an ongoing story of the love of God breaking through all of our petty bickering, all of our make-believe superiority, all of our efforts to separate and evaluate and label and judge, all of our hate. The Light of Christ comes into our darkness shining love into our deepest corners, revealing hatred to be sinful, a sickness of our souls. We cannot choose hate and say we love; we cannot choose love and know we hate. The Christmas message, the Christian message, is Love choosing us and us choosing love: then, now, and forever.

The Rt. Rev. John McKee Sloan

We cannot choose hate and say we love; we cannot choose love and know we hate.

A postlude on last month’s column on optimism serves as prelude to this month’s ramblings: I’m sending this to Norma, our Apostle editor, on the day that my beloved Mississippi State Bulldogs play the #1 Alabama Crimson Tide. I am hopeful, stranger things have happened, but it would take a miracle. Of course we are in Alabama on a smaller budget and with even less grace. For the most part it was sort of fun being a Bulldog in the land of Rebels, but from time to time, most notably at the end of the football season, it could get a little dicey. For the first couple of years we were there it looked as though we might be successful, but it would take a miracle. Of course we are in the miracle business . . . .

I graduated from Mississippi State in 1976 and became the Episcopal chaplain at the University of Mississippi in 1990. The rivalry between State and Ole Miss is sort of like the one between Auburn and Alabama on a smaller budget and with even less grace. For the most part it was sort of fun being a Bulldog in the land of Rebels, but from time to time, most notably at the end of the football season, it could get a little dicey. For the first couple of years we were there I went to the Egg Bowl, the big season-ending showdown between the cross-state rivals. At the end of one game, when Ole Miss had beaten State again, a friend of mine looked across the stadium at all those people wearing red and blue sneering and jeering at all of us wearing maroon and white, and with an odd smile on his face he said, “I just hate ‘em. I hate ‘em all.” I could only agree.

But when I thought about it and realized that hatred was a big part of the excitement of the game, a big part of the satisfaction in winning it, a big part of the heartbreak in losing it, it occurred to me that I was standing among thousands of people who had paid money to stand with me to enjoy hating people, our neighbors for the most part, who were wearing the wrong colors. And then I realized that hatred, hatred for those people and from those people, was not good for me.
From Dee Buzby,
ECW President

As this year comes to a close, I am so thankful for the blessings of the members of the ECW of our diocese throughout 2008. You have given so freely of your time, your talents, and your money. You organized fundraisers for your Inreach and Outreach projects; contributed to the Annual Contribution to support our ECW; attended convocation meetings; had fun at Women’s Weekend; raised funds for our ACTS2 Pledge; attended an ECW workshop at PLTE; contributed to CPC, our Scholarship Fund, and UTO; came together for a delightful Fall Conference—and this list does not nearly cover all the many blessings you have given to others. As Kay Meyers, our national president, said, “The ECW is alive!” You have surely proved it!! Thank you all, and I pray we can go forward into the new year with a feeling of joy, commitment to our ECW Mission, and great anticipation for what we can accomplish together.

I know you will agree with me that the 2009 ECW Calendar/Handbook designed by President Elect Gethryn Giles is beautiful, and we look forward to learning about “St. Anne, Grandmother of our Savior” during the year. Thank you, Gethryn! Please look through the calendar so you will know where to find all the information you need for your ECW. There are two loose pages in the president’s calendar to be returned that will provide needed information to the ECW Board. One is the Parish Information Sheet, and the other is the Parish Mission Activity Report. Please mark your calendar for all the upcoming events, keep it up to date, and enjoy St. Anne. Don’t forget, you will be able to view or download the calendar from our Web site, www.alabamaecw.org, in January.

This year has been amazing, and you have worked hard. I pray you will take a break from all the business of the holiday season to enjoy a time of reflection and meditation and to feel the presence of the Lord in your life. The Virgin Mary sings with such joy in the Magnificat, “My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Savior; for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant. From this day all generations will call me blessed; the Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name.” May you all feel blessed this Advent season and sing your own songs of praise.

Blessings to all.

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Publix Helps St. Stephen’s Feed the Hungry

By the Venerable Louise Thibodaux, Archdeacon

Some ideas are just too good not to pass along. That’s the way I felt when I heard the story of how parishioners at St. Stephen’s in Birmingham are taking advantage of a local shopping opportunity.

It happens that Publix has a store just down Overton Road from the church, and every Sunday and Monday the store offers a “mystery item” that is sold for a penny to anyone who spends $10 on groceries. So the outreach folks got permission from the store manager to put a labeled collection box at the front of the store. People who want to donate the mystery item (remember it only costs a penny!) can place it in the box as they leave. Later church members pick up donated items from the box and take them to Greater Birmingham Ministries and Grace Church in Woodlawn for their food pantries.

But it does not end there! This past spring Publix gave St. Stephen’s outreach committee a chance to add the buying power of vendor coupons to in-store specials. By spending $250 to buy as much food as possible, the committee was able to purchase 200 jars of spaghetti sauce, 200 packages of pasta, and 50 boxes of brownie mix—the retail value of these items would have been more than $900!

We would love to hear other stories where the generosity of grocery stores combined with the work of faithful parishioners is “feeding the flock.” If you know of something that is too good not to pass along, please send it my way at yellowboots@charter.net or the Venerable Louise Thibodaux, Carpenter House, 521 North 20th Street, Birmingham, AL 35203-2682.

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New DOK Chapter Instituted

The St. Catherine of Alexandria Daughters of the King (DOK) Chapter of St. Michael and All Angels’ in Anniston was instituted on Sunday, October 5. Diocesan President Andi Silberman presented the charter for six new members and three Daughters at Large to Chapter President Caroline Haberer. Bishop Sloan attended the presentation ceremony.
Think Summer!

Remember the fun you had at Camp McDowell last summer? The folks at Camp McDowell are already planning lots more fun activities for Summer Camp 2009 and can’t wait to share them with you. So start thinking summer!

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<th>2009 Camp McDowell Summer Schedule</th>
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You can download a Summer Camp application online now at www.campmcdowell.com or you can pick up one in your parish office in February. If you went to Summer Camp last year, you will receive one in the mail in early January. For more information please contact Summer Camp Coordinator Michael Goldsmith at michael@campmcdowell.com or 205/387-1806.

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**WINTER WEEKEND**

2009

A Retreat for 7th & 8th Grade Youth
At CAMP MCDOWELL
Jan. 16th-19th MLK WEEKEND

PROGRAM THEME:
“What is essential is invisible to the eye.”
Exploring our Faith through
The Little Prince

Applications are available at your parish or online at www.campmcdowell.com
go to “upcoming retreats and workshops” link
The cost is $105 and applications are due no later than January 12th.
Contact Michael Goldsmith if you have any questions:
michael@campmcdowell.com
205-387-1806
Thank You!!!

By Leslie Manning, Our Diocesan Youth Ministries Assistant

The staff of the Sawyerville Day Camp would like to thank the members of all of the churches and all the families who supported Sawyerville Day Camp this year. Many churches and individuals hosted supply drives and fundraisers, prepared meals for the staff and snacks for the campers, and made donations from their discretionary funds or youth or budgets. Some churches and organizations gave us most welcome grants through their outreach budgets, including the Advent in Birmingham, the ECW of the Advent in Birmingham, All Saints’ in Birmingham, Holy Trinity in Auburn, St. John’s in Montgomery, St. Luke’s in Birmingham, St. Mary’s on-the-Highlands in Birmingham, and St. Stephen’s in Birmingham. If the Sawyerville Day Camp is eligible for an outreach grant through your parish or organization, please contact me at lmanning@dioala.org or 205/715-2060 ext. 325.

Sawyerville Day Camp is:
* a project sponsored by our diocesan Youth Department and the Sawyerville Commission

The goals of the Sawyerville Day Camp are:
* to serve the Church through outreach
* to improve race relations
* to broaden the horizons of campers and counselors through camp activities and relationship building.

What does the Sawyerville project cost and who funds it?
The combined costs of the weeklong 2008 Sawyerville Day Camp and the weekend Sawyerville Leadership College totaled about $47,000. The Day Camp and the Leadership College are free for all campers and staff. This past summer 200 children attended camp and 80 children were on the waiting list; 70 staff shepherded the campers throughout the week while 14 others were on the staff waiting list. Our diocese and parishes throughout our diocese provide funding, and we also host fundraising activities throughout the year. Thanks to the generosity of our diocese, parishes, organizations, and individuals, the Sawyerville project has been able to thrive for 15 years!

How can you help?
* Support a camper’s week at the pool—$10
* Pay for lunches for 3 campers—$75
* Send 10 campers on the annual field trip—$120
* Sponsor a camper for one week—$110
* Sponsor a 2-day HIV/AIDS Awareness workshop for staff and campers—$200
* Sponsor a Drumming Workshop—$850
* Volunteer to be a prayer partner for the week
* Host a supply drive at your church or office to collect items given to the campers, including goggles, bathing suits, books, and pool towels.
* Request a presentation for your church to raise awareness about the Sawyerville Day Camp!

Thank you!!!

SAVE THE DATES!

2009 Sawyerville Day Camp Dates
July 10–19, 2009
July 21–23, 2009
“Mini-camp”
Location: Sunshine School, Newbern

Please Join Us for the 2009 Youth Pilgrimage to Taizé

Questions lie at the heart of the journey into life: How can I make my life have meaning? In a world of violence how can I seek inner and outer peace? What does it mean to practice simplicity? Is it possible to offer justice and reconciliation in the midst of division? Does God play an active role in my life? What is my voice in the world? How can I seek meaningful relationships? Does beauty serve a purpose in modern life?

For more than 60 years, the ecumenical brothers of Taizé have been seeking questions with young adults from around the world. Taizé is a community in France devoted to reconciliation, simplicity, and prayer. A man now known as Brother Roger started Taizé during World War II. During the war years Roger, who was compelled by a gospel call to be active without being violent, rescued many Jews from concentration camps, and he quickly became a target of the Gestapo. After the war he helped protect German POWs from angry postwar French citizens.

Brother Roger saw the need for Christ’s healing love and unity, and thus was born Taizé, the world’s only non-denominational monastic order. Brothers joined Roger in establishing the community, and they worked together to spread Christ’s love behind the Iron Curtain and into the poorest nations of the world. Over the past six decades hundreds of thousands of people have come to Taizé to experience the pattern of song, silence, and shared discussion offered by the brothers.

Our Youth Department has planned a pilgrimage to Taizé for high-school juniors and seniors (age 16 and older) and college students; young adults 30 years old or younger may also apply to come on the trip, but preference will be given to the students. We will leave Atlanta on May 23 and return on June 2. For more information or to request to participate in the pilgrimage, please contact Leslie Manning at lmanning@dioala.org or 205/715-2060 ext. 325. For more about Taizé, please visit www.taize.fr.

Come to Christmas Conference!

Calling all 9th and 12th graders to come to Camp McDowell for this year’s Christmas Conference, December 28–30! Our theme is “The Gift and the Giver,” and we’ll be talking about God’s amazing gift to us, Jesus Christ. We’re looking forward to enjoying this weekend with you!!

THE APOSTLE • DECEMBER 2008
The 2008 Bishops’ Conference on Shared Ministries

By the Rev. James E. Elliott Jr., Rector of Holy Comforter in Gadsden and Chair of Our Diocesan Ecumenical/Interfaith Commission

The 2008 Bishops’ Conference on Shared Ministry convened at the Ascension in Montgomery on Tuesday, November 18. The Rt. Rev. C. Christopher Epting, our Presiding Bishop’s Deputy for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations, was the keynoter. Four things characterized this year’s conference: the warmth of the hospitality of the Episcopal Church of the Ascension; all of the bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Episcopal Church, and the Roman Catholic Church who have jurisdiction in Alabama were present and actively participated; all of the ecumenical officers of these dioceses and synods were present as well; and there was good clear information and very honest sharing together. All of this was done in the context of prayer and hope.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America will lead the 2009 Bishops’ Conference on Shared Ministry. It will be held in Montgomery next fall.

Alleluia III Songbook
Now Available

At long last the new Alleluia III songbook of worship music has been released. The production of this book, which includes more best-loved songs, has been a labor of love for a number of dedicated Alabama Cursillo musicians. For more information please visit alleluiaiii.com.
The Growing Community of St Columba in the Cove

By Lynn Larson, the “Garden Manager” and a member of St. Columba

As you drive past the future home of the new St. Columba in the Cove church building site in Huntsville, you will see that groundbreaking has occurred. No, it’s not the start of construction for our new church—although that isn’t far off. It’s the Community Garden Project sponsored by the CARE Center and local churches and supported by our county commissioner, Jerry Craig.

The seed to take on this project was “planted” last year by our rector, the Rev. Rob Iler. We felt that this garden would perpetuate our diocesan Stewardship of Creation mission for wise and just environmental policies. It would also provide an opportunity for community service in the stewardship of the earth by our parish members.

The Care Center of Owens Cross Road’s garden has been a project for many years and has now found a permanent site at the St. Columba in the Cove property. A network of volunteers from 15 area churches support this ongoing garden ministry, and we want to contribute to this effort and continue the success of the project on our site. We are a small group of determined believers who bring life to the whole body. We will be encouraged by the power of God’s Spirit like a green, growing ring of a tree that brings life and growth to the whole congregation. This is a chance to join others as we grow one huge vegetable garden and share the bounty with our neighbors. The CARE Center distributes the harvest through their food pantry ministry and to the many people who work to keep the garden producing.

The garden work takes place on Thursdays between 5 and 7 pm., and local community members are encouraged to take part in the care and upkeep of the garden. It is of great importance for us to make our presence known for this worthwhile cause, so we sent out announcements for others to come pull the ever-present weeds, hoe between the garden rows, and help with the watering and caring for the plants. It’s a big garden, and lots of hands are needed to keep it healthy. Madison County’s Commissioner Craig arranged for the county crew to prepare the ground, fertilize the plants, assist with the cultivation, and plant a large pumpkin patch.

A grant from our diocese helped make the garden on our future home site possible. It is a great opportunity for outreach—a terrific way for people to see our church working in the community!

Alabama Boychoir Will Sing at the White House on December 17

By Frances Tucker

The Alabama Boychoir, conducted by Karen Nicolosi, will entertain guests of President and Mrs. George W. Bush at their annual Holiday Open House at the White House on December 17. “This will be the Alabama Boychoir’s third White House appearance, having been invited in 2003 and 2004,” notes Alabama Choir School founder and director Nicolosi. “The boys submitted an audition CD in July, and we learned of the invitation in November. The Boychoir is to perform for 90 minutes on the first floor of the White House as hundreds of guests from the embassies, the Pentagon, and other government offices tour the festive decorated rooms. When the young people finish their performance, they will take a guided through the White House.”

Nineteen boys will travel to Washington with the group including Jacob Cargile, Tommy Crabtree, Edward Demonbreun, Bennet Diano, Caleb Dimond, Brett Dunn, Garrison Grant, Bailey Herring, Spike Howard, Zach Ingram, Wil Jones, Ross Kizziah, Phillip Lollar, Andrew Parrish, Christopher Plowman, Samuel Pointon, Bryson Reed, James Urban, and Bradley Vaughn. Twenty-three staff and family members will accompany the choir. They will sing traditional carols along with two English carols set by Ralph Vaughan Williams, the French carol “Masters in this Hall,” and the Christmas spiritual “This Little Light of Mine.” The secular holiday selections include “It’s the Most Wonderful Time of the Year” and “Frosty the Snowman.”

The boys toured Hawaii last spring and sang a concert with the Montgomery Children’s Chorus in October. They performed in Demopolis for Christmas on the River on December 2 and will sing for the Rotary Club on the day they leave for Washington. The Alabama Choir School is a not-for-profit community corporation housed at Christ Church in Tuscaloosa. Karen Nicolosi serves as the artistic director, and Jason Beasley is the accompanist for the Alabama Choir School.

The Cathedral Music Series Presents the King’s Singers

The King’s Singers, an internationally acclaimed British vocal ensemble, will perform at the Cathedral Church of the Advent in Birmingham at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, February 21. Tickets are available through the Virginia Samford Theatre Box Office, Tuesday–Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; 205/251-1228. For more information please contact Music Associate Charles M. Kennedy at kennedy@cathedraladvent.com or 205/226-3305.
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 Broadfoot at 334/263-5529 or cbroadfoot@coascension.org.

“JESUS IS COMING—ARE YOU BUSY?”
December 13 at St. Stephen’s in Huntsville

Our diocesan Commission on Spirituality cordially invites everyone to this year’s Advent Quiet Day from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at St. Stephen’s in Huntsville. Bishop Sloan will lead participants in reflections 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.

NUTS AND BOLTS: A CHRISTIAN FORMATION TOOL BOX
January 10, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., at St. Stephen’s in Birmingham

Everyone is cordially invited to Nuts and Bolts: A Christian Formation Tool Box on Saturday, January 10, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at St. Stephen’s in Birmingham. Our diocesan Department of Christian Formation and the Province IV Christian Formation Committee are hosting this year’s workshop, which was previously called All Under One Roof. You will be able to choose from a variety of informative sessions that will focus on programs and curricula for children, youth, and adults.

The Children’s Track includes The Theology of I Wonder led by Kathy Graham and Sabrina Evans, How To Have a Successful Children’s Chapel led by Kathy Graham, and Helping Our Children Pray led by Sabrina Evans. The Youth Track includes Connecting with Youth, Connecting with Each Other As A Christian Community, and Connect: YOU . . . th all led by Cookie Cantwell. The Adult Track includes Adult Curriculum led by Jenny Beaumont, Nurturing the Nurturers led by Tracey Herzer, and Parenting led by Jenny Beaumont. Additional sessions include The Gift of Small Churches led by Tracey Herzer, Special Days—Intergenerational Classes That Delight led by Debbi Rodenhauser, Scope and Sequence led by Nita Tidwell, and Midweek Offerings led by Tracey Herzer. For more information please contact Sarah Sartain at ssartain@dioala.org or 205/715-2060 ext. 314.

VIDEO SIMULCAST OF 39TH TRINITY INSTITUTE
January 22–23 at St. Luke’s in Birmingham

St. Luke’s in Birmingham invites everyone to participate in the 39th Trinity Institute—Radical Abundance: A Theology of Sustainability via video Webcasts and interactive reflection groups. As we rethink how to grow, build, supply, consume, dispose, and recycle everything in our lives, we often fail at partnering with the marginalized and powerless and thus adversely affect them. Building sustainable communities goes hand-in-hand with thoughtful building of infrastructures and physical spaces. Is there a theological basis for living abundantly while striving for justice and sustainability?

The three-day Trinity Institute conference, held each year at Trinity Wall Street Episcopal Church in New York City, will explore sustainability through the lens of liberation theology, which views Jesus not only as redeemer but also liberator of the oppressed. It posits a vision of Christians working together toward social justice by considering all people, regardless of their social or economic status, as full partners in healing our planet and our communities. Only in striving for sustainable relationships, rather than accumulating and consuming more for ourselves, can we discover true abundance. Through keynote speeches and panel discussions by leading theologians and grassroots activists, the conference will consider radical ideas about sustainability, building, and well-being. Interactive reflection groups will enable you to share your own experiences and solutions with fellow attendees.

For more information please visit www.trinitywallstreet.org/institute. To make reservations to view the Webcast and participate in the interactive reflection groups, please contact St. Luke’s parish secretary at 205/802-6207 or Joyce Lanning at 205/870-0808. CEUs are available.

SIXTH ANNUAL CHURCH MUSIC CONFERENCE
January 30–31 at the University of Alabama School of Music

Everyone is cordially invited to the sixth annual church music conference at Moody Music Building on the University of Alabama campus in Tuscaloosa. This year’s conference, A Mendelssohn Year (1809–1847), features organist Dr. Gail Archer and includes workshops on sacred small organ repertoire, handbell techniques, organ and vocal masterclasses, liturgical dance, liturgical drama, commissioning new choral works, choral vocalizes for the older voice, and “How To Fix a Choir in 30 Minutes.” Dr. Archer will present an organ concert on Friday evening, and the University Singers along with a massed choir of members of local church choirs under the direction of Dr. John Ratledge will perform “Hymn of Praise” featuring the compositions of Felix Mendelssohn. For more information please contact Faythe Freese, associate professor of organ at the University of Alabama, at faythefreese@earthlink.net or visit www.music.ua.edu/organ/events.

Bishops’ Visitation Schedule

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

Sunday, December 21
10 a.m. Bishop Sloan, St. Mary’s, Jasper
10:15 a.m. Bishop Parsley, Trinity, Wetumpka

Christmas Eve, Wednesday, December 24
11 p.m. Bishop Parsley, Cathedral Church of the Advent

Sunday, January 4
10:30 a.m. Bishop Parsley, Holy Comforter, Gadsden
10:30 a.m. Bishop Sloan, Epiphany, Guntersville

Tuesday, January 6
7 p.m. Bishop Parsley, Epiphany, Talladega

Sunday, January 11
9:30 a.m. Bishop Sloan, St. Mary’s, Childersburg
10 a.m. Bishop Parsley, Holy Trinity, Auburn
6 p.m. Bishop Parsley, St. Dunstan’s, Auburn

Sunday, January 18
10 a.m. Bishop Parsley, St. Wilfred’s, Marion
10 a.m. Bishop Sloan, St. John’s Deaf, Birmingham

Sunday, January 25
10:30 a.m. Bishop Parsley, Holy Cross, Trussville
10:30 a.m. Bishop Sloan, Holy Cross—St. Christopher’s, Huntsville
What’s New/Noteworthy at the Episcopal Book Store

Kingdom, Grace, Judgment/Paradox, Outrage, and Vindication in the Parables of Jesus by Robert Farrar Capon

We now have in one paperback volume Robert Farrar Capon’s widely praised trilogy on Jesus’ parables. These studies offer a fresh, adventurous look at all of Jesus’ parables, which are treated according to their major themes. With the same authorial flair and daring insight that have earned him a wide readership, Capon, who is an Episcopal priest, admirably bridges the gap between the biblical world and our own, making clear the original meaning of the parables and their continuing relevance today. This trilogy would serve well anyone who preaches, teaches, or just loves to learn.

The Story of St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church, Birmingham, Alabama, 1973–2008 by Douglas M. Carpenter

The Rev. Doug Carpenter, who is the retired founding rector of St. Stephen’s, shares events, facts, stories, and more than a few holy moments starting in 1973 when St. Stephen’s held its first Sunday morning service. Many readers will find their own names or the names of many of their friends and family in the pages of this enjoyable and informative history. Since it would be impossible to tell the story of this strong, vibrant parish without interjecting important moments from the past 35 years of our diocesan church history, this book makes a great read for everyone in our diocesan family—and we suggest it as a fine Christmas gift. You can order it online at www.episco books.com.

The Jesse Tree Mural Featuring Jesse’s Dream designed by C. E. Visminas Company

This intriguing booklet is the skeleton for making a 17 by 46-inch mural that resembles a stained-glass window. It is designed to be a project shared by adults and children during Advent as an excellent church school endeavor or family activity. This particular tree is modeled on one of the earliest full-scale Jesse trees, the 12th-century window of Chartres Cathedral. At the bottom Jesse is asleep and from him grows a “family tree,” which eventually flowers into the Spirit-filled Jesus. Not only does the booklet help you create a beautiful keepsake, but it also tells the story of the Jesse Tree and how it is that from Adam and Eve to Jesus Christ Jesse dreamed of God’s plan for salvation.

Daily Prayer & Purpose Calendar 2009 by the Forward Movement

This spiral-bound calendar is both practical and inspirational. Each day of the year features a prayer, a quotation, or a piece of scripture and, if applicable, its liturgical significance. There is weekly space for jotting down notes and “things to do” plus a whole page at the end of each month for your prayer list. We think this is another great gift idea for any occasion.

The Yellow Leaves by Frederick Buechner

Written at the age of 80, this just published collection of works by Frederick Buechner proves that this beloved author still can delight and illuminate with the written word. In these essays, short stories, and poems, Buechner reflects on the moments of transcendence in the midst of his daily existence. In a myriad of commonplace events, Buechner reveals the divine and ever-amazing presence of God.

Mark Your Calendar

Christmas Conference (9th-12th graders) December 28-30
Diocesan Convention February 19-21 in Montgomery
EYC Convention (9th-12th graders) January 30-February 1
Happening Weekend (9th-12th graders) #54 March 6-8
Province IV Youth Event/PYE 2009 June 23-28
Sawyerville Day Camps July 10-19 and 21-23
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

December 4 Diocesan Youth Ministers Monthly Gathering from 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. at St. Stephen’s in Birmingham. For more information please contact Leslie Manning at lmanning@dioala.org or 205/715-2060 ext. 325.

December 5-7 New Creation—Renewed Creation: Living into the Promise of Advent presented by Dr. Wendy Wright at the Center for Spiritual Development at St. Mary’s Sewanee. For more information please visit www.StMarysSewanee.org or call 931/598-5342.

December 6 Contemplative Prayer Retreat and Workshop led by the Rev. Tom Ward from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Ascension in Montgomery. For more information please see the description on page 10; contact the Rev. Chip Broadfoot at cbroadfoot@coascension.org.

December 7-11 The New Birth of Christ for Today—Advent Retreat led by the Rev. Barbara Brown Taylor and J. Philip Newell 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.

December 12-14 Advent Centering Prayer Retreat presented by the Rev. Tom Ward at the Center for Spiritual Development at St. Mary’s Sewanee. For more information please visit www.StMarysSewanee.org or call 931/598-5342.

December 13 “Jesus Is Coming—Are You Busy?” Advent Quiet Day led by Bishop Sloan from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at St. Stephen’s in Huntsville. For more information please contact Sarah Sartain at ssartain@dioala.org or 205/715-2060 ext. 314.

December 19 Midday Musical Menu featuring Southern Harmony (Birmingham-Southern College Concert Choir alumni Kyle Bass, Tom Head, Daniel Potts, and Thomas Waters) singing excerpts from 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. at St. Stephen’s in Birmingham. For more information please see the description on page 10; contact Faythe Freese, associate professor of music, at ffreese@bhamcathedraladvent.com.

January 3 Centering Prayer Workshop presented by the Rev. Tom Ward at the Center for Spiritual Development at St. Mary’s Sewanee. For more information please visit www.StMarysSewanee.org or call 931/598-5342.

January 4-11 8-Day Intensive and Post-Intensive Centering Prayer Retreat presented by the Rev. Tom Ward at the Center for Spiritual Development at St. Mary’s Sewanee. For more information please visit www.StMarysSewanee.org or call 931/598-5342.

January 9-11 Vestry Conference with keynote speakers the Rt. Rev. James Dyer and Dr. Amelia Dyer 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.

January 10 Nuts and Bolts: A Christian Formation Toolbox (formerly All Under One Roof) workshop sponsored by our diocesan Department of Christian Formation and the Province IV Christian Formation Committee from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at St. Stephen’s in Birmingham. For more information please see the description on page 10; contact Sarah Sartain at ssartain@dioala.org or 205/715-2060 ext. 314.

January 15-18 Kanuga Knitting and Quilting Retreat 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.

January 16-19 Winter Weekend for 7th-8th graders at Camp McDowell. For more information please contact Youth Ministries Assistant Leslie Manning at lmanning@dioala.org or 205/715-2060 ext. 325.

January 25 Organ recital presented by Cathedral Organist Dr. Stephen G. Schaeffer in celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Grieb-Williams organ at 4 p.m. at the Advent in Birmingham. For more information please contact Music Associate Charles Kennedy at 205/226-3505 or kennedy@cathedraladvent.com.

January 30-31 Sixth Annual Church Music Conference at the University of Alabama School of Music. For more information please see the description on page 10; contact Faythe Freese, associate professor of organ at the university, at ffreese@earthlink.net, or visit www.music.ua.edu/organ/events.

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@episco books.com. You can also visit the bookstore online at www.episco books.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.
Serving Our Sisters and Brothers in Haiti

By the Rev. Deacon Dave Drachlis, Cochair of Our Companion Diocese Commission

Drinking water is now flowing to students at St. Marc’s School in Lilivois, there will soon be enough chairs for all the kindergarten students there, and more food is now available to residents of the village of Crochu. That is among the good news cochair Anne Kimzey and I want to report after spending a week in Haiti in November. We went to Port-au-Prince to attend the Haiti Connection Conference, a meeting that is held approximately every 18 months for Episcopal churches and other organizations involved in ministry with the Diocese of Haiti. Prior to the conference we spent three days with Father Fritz Valdema and his wife, Carmel. We visited St. Marc’s in Lilivois to inspect the hand pump recently installed on the well drilled there in October. The well was funded primarily with the proceeds from All Saints’ in Montgomery. We were sur-prised to find that the little Episcopal church had been completely destroyed by the storms and many homes had also experienced damage. Fortunately the open-air school survived and is being used as a temporary worship space.

When we met briefly with the Rt. Rev. Zach Duracin, Bishop of Haiti, he told us, “As the Bishop of Haiti, I thank you so much for the work that you are doing here. It is very important that you continue to be in partnership with us because as you have seen we have so many needs. Haiti has suffered so much, especially after the hurricanes. Through our partnership we can share what we are and what we have as Christians.” Pere Val, also sent greetings, his sincere thanks, and blessings to the people of our diocese on behalf of the people of his parish.

We are planning to send two medical teams to Haiti on weeklong mission trips. The first team is scheduled to leave January 17 and the second on February 7. If you are interested in participating in these missions or leading a parish-based mission, or for more information about Haiti, please contact me at dave@stthomas-hsv.org or visit our diocese Web site, www.dioala.org.

The members of Holy Apostles’ in Birmingham (Hoover) cordially invite everyone to 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 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 205/395-4636.

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.

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.

Majdi Ata Amro, who has been helping Dr. Sis Levin in her Peacebuilding Program, has brought olive-wood ornaments and crèches plus other items made by Bethlehem craftsmen to Birmingham from his shop in Bethlehem. To find out more about the items and where they are available, please contact Mary and Ray Wade at maryjwade@bham.rr.com or 205/335-8134.

The Nativity in Huntsville represents Alabama in the 19th Historic Episcopal Churches Engagement Calendar published by the National Episcopal Historians and Archivists. For more information please call 610/544-1886 or e-mail nehahqs@aol.com.

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 35226-2682; 205/715-2060 ext. 300; E-mail dservant@dioala.org.

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

The submission deadline for the January issue is December 1; the deadline for the February issue is January 2.