The Gathering

Christ

Our 178th Annual
Diocesan Convention
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By the Rev. Michael R. Rich with contributions from our diocesan staff, convention photos by the Rev. D. Rean D. A.ve D. Rachiis, Jennifer M. Connell, Emily Stuart Thomas, Libby Weatherly, and the Rev. Pat Wingo

The Rev. John Coleman and members of the Ascension in Montgomery graciously hosted our 178th Annual Diocesan Convention, February 19–21. Parishioners warmly welcomed delegates at the M arriot R Ennls H otel and Spa, where the business meetings and workshops were held, as well as at their historic church for the opening Festival Eucharist. The parish celebrated its 100th anniversary last year.

Speaking specifically for this year’s convention focused on the “Gathering Christ” who longs to reconcile all things and gather us into one. “The phrase comes from a retreat given by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Rev. R. Rowan D. W. Williams, at last summer’s Lambeth Conference,” notes the Rev. H. Henry Nett Parley, Jr., Bishop of Alabama.

Speaking specifically to the ministry of bishops and more broadly of the whole Church, the archbishop said, “Each believer is called to be a place where God’s Son is revealed. In bishops, what is distinctive is that aspect of God’s Son that is revealed in the Gathering Christ—the Christ upon whom all reality converges, comes together . . . We seek for God’s Son to be revealed as the hope of humanity; that is, for God’s Son to be revealed as the body of all God’s children, past, present, and future, called into a particular kind of fellowship. That is the mission of the Church, to draw together the scattered children into one family.”

In his address to our diocesan convention, Bishop Parsley emphasized that reconciliation does not merely occur but is brought about by action. “God calls us to be people who look forward and make things happen. The risen Christ means for us to be living instruments of reconciling love in worship, in mission, in community, always struggling to gather God’s people all around one Table.” As Episcopalians, we believe that “we have been given the gift of holding together things and people who tend to pull apart.” (Please see Bishop Parsley’s Address on page 3.)

A message of reconciliation ran through the sermons and addresses at the convention. In his sermon on Thursday night, the Rev. Samuel T. Lloyd III, Dean of the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., reminded us that we are individually members of the Body of Christ, we all belong to the Gathering Christ, and we need each other if we’re going to know the whole truth. In his keynote address on Friday, Dean Lloyd took us on a mental tour of the world’s many hot spots and centers of reconciliation, and he spoke about the faithful people who are instruments of Christ’s love. “Reconciliation is not a strategy or an approach,” he explained. “It is a spirituality.”

The Rt. Rev. Kee Sloan, our Bishop Suffragan, told the delegates the secret and hidden power behind the “Three Words That Are Not Comfortably Said in the Episcopal Church”: Evangelism, Stewardship, and Change. Bishop Sloan made it clear that these three words need to be said more often. (Please see Bishop Sloan’s Address on page 5.)

One of the highlights of the convention was the recognition of two congregations as the newest parishes of our diocese. The delegates voted overwhelmingly to raise to parish level both Trinity in Clanton, a formerly dormant parish that has grown as a worshiping community in recent years, and St. Catherines in Chelsea, a congregation plant that began holding services in 2007 and has seen rapid growth.

The Rev. Jeremy Lucas and his wife, Penny, made a surprise “visit” to convention via a live audiovisual Internet link from Windhoek, Namibia, where they are serving as missionaries. Tears were shed on both ends of that link as the delegates sang the Doxology in thanks for Jeremy and Penny’s work in theological training and AIDS education.

In a report on our continuing Companion Diocesan relationship with Haiti, the delegates were asked to support two areas of diocesan-wide emphasis in 2009. The first is for parishes to field—by themselves or with a partner parish—one medical mission a year; if several parishes commit to do this, our diocese could have an almost monthly medical presence in Haiti. The second area of emphasis is to complete the water project at the school and church in Thomazeau; if each of our 92 parishes and worshiping congregations raised just $366 this year (a little more than $1 a day per congregation), we could finish the project, which will provide safe drinking water for students and parishioners, irrigation water for a community garden to help feed the hungry, electricity for the school, and construction jobs for villagers.

The delegates adopted a 2009 budget of $2,787,720, which reflects a stable budget as compared with 2008. In rare news reflecting the current economic distress, it was reported that payment on parish covenants dropped by 3 percent in 2008. Despite that, our diocese ended the year with a surplus of almost $5,000.

Delegates were pleased with a report that our diocesan Pooled Investment Fund declined in market value by only about 15 percent in 2008, compared with a drop of more than twice that in most major stock indexes. The Pooled Investment Fund manages holdings from more than 50 parishes and diocesan entities. Fund managers avoided greater losses by moving most holdings out of stocks into more stable investments. “We are tasting the bitter fruit of greed and irresponsibility on the part of leaders in the financial arena, coupled with our national overdependence on debt and a shocking lack of proper oversight of our banks,” noted Bishop Parsley. “We should be ashamed and contritely.”

As a gesture of goodwill toward the convention’s hosting city, delegates brought nonperishable food items to share with people in Montgomery who are experiencing economic distress. Thanks to the generosity of individuals and parishes, the Rev. Louie Skipper, chaplain of the Montgomery Episcopal Campus Ministries, and college students delivered 1,775 pounds of food to the area food bank. (Please see Food Bank Thanks Our Diocese on page 11.)

In other action the delegates voted to ask Bishop Parsley and Bishop Sloan to name a task force to work on streamlining our annual convention in order to cut costs and reduce the financial burden on delegates and parishes. They also voted to encourage parishes to recognize the lifesaving work of Episcopal Relief and Development on one Sunday in Lent. (Please see Resolutions Passed on page 8.)

Bishop Parsley announced the appointment of the Rev. Deacon Dave Drachlis as our diocesan Communications Coordinator. This position, based at Carpenter House, is funded through our ACTS 2 campaign funds. Dave is a former NASA communications officer.

Before the convention ended, the delegates accepted an invitation from Trinity in Florence to host our 2010 diocesan convention in the Shoals area.
The parish has just celebrated a joyous Centennial in 2008, and after a difficult time of conflict several years ago, it has emerged stronger than ever with a new unity and abundant spirit. Clergy and people of the Ascension, we salute you and thank God for you.

We come together in perilous and uncertain times in our world. I heard someone say last fall that he had experienced stresses on our parish budgets and our shared diocesan budget. We salute gratefully those parishes that are faithful to our 10 and 15-percent shared diocesan budget. We have experienced stresses on many of our neighbors, and it may very well signal that we are moving into a new era of frugality and having less.

Such times should cause us to look deeply at ourselves and remember what really matters. In the presence of the living God the importance of the S&P 500 pales in comparison to the gifts of faith and Christian virtue, which never lose value. We may live in leaner times, but we must not let them affect the abundance of our souls. Nor let them cause our commitment to God’s mission to falter. Fear worship at the altar of a false god and turns us inward. The true God of abundance would turn us outward, asking how to be generous and compassionate, seeking whom and how we can help. The darkness of our human sin calls us to be ever more a beacon of hope.

In the midst of it all we have experienced stresses on our parish budgets and our shared diocesan budget. We salute gratefully those parishes that are faithful to our 10 and 15-percent guidelines, and if we are to meet our corporate commitments, we must all be as generous as possible in our giving at the diocesan level. May the generosity of our spirit unequivocally eclipse the neediness of the economy.

Your diocese is strong, nonetheless, and pressing forward in our shared ministry. In this convention we rejoice to have two congregations petitioning for parish status, St. Catherine’s Church in Chelsea—our newest church plant, and Trinity Church in C lanton. These are wonderful signs of vitality. The marvelous new Chapel of St. Francis at Camp McDowell will soon be completed, and we will dedicate it on a great day of diocesan celebration on Saturday, May 2. I pray that all of you will be there. We are moving forward with the other goals of the ACTS 2 Campaign, thanks to your generous gifts. Great things are happening in our youth ministry, in the campus ministries of our diocese, in outreach and service, in healthy renewal ministries, and at Camp McDowell, which had its best-attended year in recent history in 2008.

Our convention theme focuses on “the Gathering Christ” who longs to reconcile all things and gather us into one. The phrase comes from a retreat address by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Rev. Rowan D. Williams, at last summer’s Lambeth Conference. Speaking specifically to the ministry of bishops and more broadly of the whole Church, he said, “Each believer is called to be a place where God’s Son is revealed. In bishops, what is distinctive is that aspect of God’s Son that is revealed in the gathering Christ—Christ upon whom all reality converges, comes together . . . . We seek for God’s Son to be revealed as the hope of humanity; that is, for God’s Son to be
revealed as the body of all God's children, past, present, and future, called into a particular kind of fellowship...That is the mission of the Church, to draw together the scattered children into one family.

Eloquently expressed, that is our mission—to be a community of reconciling love where all people can learn and live their true communion in God. “God was in Christ, Paul writes, reconciling the world to himself and giving us the ministry of reconciliation.” This is our birthright. It is what we are for.

But it isn’t easy, is it? We human beings are difficult to reconcile and bring together. The centrifugal forces of sin and self-centeredness pull us apart—Israel from Palestinian, Sunni from Shiite, liberal from conservative, even in some places today sadly, Anglican from Anglican. The politics of polarization have played havoc of late in our society. An insidious individualism that makes us think that “I can always have my way” is eroding our sense of community. Sin would always separate us. Grace will always bring us together. We fly apart like sparks from a fire. But the gathering Christ never gives up. He “stretched out his loving arms on the hard wood of the cross that all might come within the reach of his saving embrace.” The cross is where all the world is reconciled. There God suffered with and for us, accomplish once and for all the victory of love over the separation and death of sin. The cost of peace is always a cross.

Reconciliation does not mean that we all become the same, but that our human alienation is overcome by the love of God. Christ means for there to be “one flock, one shepherd,” embracing all the diversity of humanity in the Spirit’s communion and fellowship. God will not stop the march of eternity until we all have yet to go on the journey. Nevertheless the Spirit of unity embracing great diversity was palpable and strong at Lambeth, and we came away, most of us, with a firm resolve to hold together as a communion, forbearing with one another in love for the sake of the Gospel.

This is an inestimably important aspect of our Anglican heritage that we need to reclaim today. We have been given the gift of holding together things and people who tend to pull apart. We need one another across our great human diversity. As Paul wrote to the divided Corinthians, “the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you.” In the Church as in the human body all parts are needed and essential. Ours is not a unity based on doctrinal confessions beyond that of the catholic creeds and the Prayer Book. It is one of unity in Christ alone, in worship and prayer, and in the koinonia of the Holy Spirit. We are the Church of the reconciliation. This does not mean anything goes. But it does mean everything belongs. All around one Table.

The work of reconciliation is the purpose of our Race Relations Committee and especially its stories project, called “Past Imperfect and Present Hope: Liberating Our Racial History,” which invites us to look at our Church’s involvement in the tragedy of slavery and its long aftermath of prejudice and division in American society. The formula still holds true: truth plus forgiveness equals reconciliation. I urge us to participate in the stories project and our ongoing efforts in antiracism training.

Things like this are the message we need to present more vigorously to the world around us in our time. It is my hope that our new communications effort made possible by ACTS 2 will help us do so. I am pleased to announce that the Rev. Dr. Tom Duda and Dr. Christine D. Hathaway will join us as our director of communications on March 1 to help lead us forward in getting our message out both among ourselves and to the larger community. He is years of experience at NASA should serve him well working for the Church! We are also changing the format of our diocesan paper this year, reducing it to six issues that will be in more depth and better readability and using our Web site and e-mail more effectively.

Our companion diocese relationship with Haiti is about the work of the Gathering Christ who is the Light of the World. Our mission trips and your parish efforts to raise money and support for the schools, nutrition programs, medical missions, and water projects with Pere Valdema and Carmen are making a real difference in the Croix des Bouquets area of Haiti. There is no place of greater need in the Western hemisphere, and we are part of a courageous Church there engaged in the repair of a land torn by the sin of slavery and economic exploitation. In serving with them we ourselves are being transformed.
**Bishop Sloan's Address**

I want you all to know that I know that I'm a lucky man. I am blessed, and I'm grateful.

I am blessed to be married to Miss Tina, the best friend I've ever had, and we're blessed to have two wonderful children, McKee and Mary Nell. And that alone would have been enough.

I was blessed as a child to be part of a family that went to church and Sunday School every Sunday, blessed to be given the opportunity to tell you that we figured out that we're probably never going to do much about Evangelism as we have not done those things which we ought to have done. (Hey, there's a quote.)

Evangelism is at the heart of our mission together: to share our faith across our state and across denominational, racial, and religious lines to build understanding and speak together about some of the moral issues facing the people of our state. One of its current goals is to strive to eliminate the state grocery tax in our state. We are one of only two states in the Union that still has a tax on all groceries, and its elimination will greatly help the poor and low-income persons among us.

Finally, the reconciling work of Christ extends to the earth and its living creatures as well. If we love God we must love the creation he has made. "It's not easy being green," as Kermit the Frog said, but it is an essential part of our mission. Let us take this to heart across our diocese observing our Stewardship of Creation Sunday, April 26th, doing energy audits of our church facilities, making sacrifices to reduce our carbon footprints, and challenging our members to adopt more environmentally-responsible lifestyles. Let the Episcopal Church be known as a visionary leader in addressing the crisis of climate change and in stewarding the Earth as God's beloved creation.

I have heard it said that there are three kinds of people: those who watch things happen, those who make things happen, and those who wonder what happened! Which are you and your parish? In a rapidly changing world such as ours it is easy to be among those who long for the good old days and wonder what happened. God calls us to be people who look forward and make things happen. To do so we must be humble, generous, and morally courageous. And always we must realize that we cannot do it on our own. It is God's work. We are only earthen vessels. So we must trust absolutely in the power of God that comes from beyond ourselves... that, through us, our gracious Lord may continue to "draw together the scattered children into one family."

As Norman MacLean concludes in his magnificent story _A River Runs Through It_ remembering the people he has loved and their stories of beauty and sadness and hope: Eventually, all things merge into the river and its living creatures as well. If we love God we must love the creation he has made. "It's not easy being green," as Kermit the Frog said, but it is an essential part of our mission. Let us take this to heart across our diocese observing our Stewardship of Creation Sunday, April 26th, doing energy audits of our church facilities, making sacrifices to reduce our carbon footprints, and challenging our members to adopt more environmentally-responsible lifestyles. Let the Episcopal Church be known as a visionary leader in addressing the crisis of climate change and in stewarding the Earth as God's beloved creation.

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be difficult for us to put together the Guest List: all of God's children, especially those in our neighborhoods. We can invite our Lord's guests and prepare an event that will encourage them to accept our hospitality: a social event, a worship event, an event involving education or entertainment or raising money to reach out and help those less fortunate than we. Remember: we're not trying to trick people into joining our parishes, although of course we hope some of them will find a church home with us, and we're not trying to get them to write us a check, although of course our clergy have been carefully trained to never turn a check away except under extremely dubious circumstances. We're trying to invite our friends and neighbors to come to our house, to our Lord's house, and share with them some of why we love it so much.

The First Uncomfortable Word of the Episcopal Church is Evangelism, and the second is like unto it: Stewardship. It's like unto Evangelism in that it is burdened with a sense of dread and an idea that we ought to be doing more than we are going to be willing to do. But Stewardship is different in that it has a season in the Church year, Stewardship Time, and there are some people among us who understand that it's a critically important part of our response to generosity of God and absolutely essential to our life together as an institution dedicated to the mission of the Gospel.

Actually we, the Diocese of Alabama, are among the leaders in the Episcopal Church when it comes to Stewardship, so we're better off than most. And yet and still ... I've already confessed that I'm not real keen on budget meetings. I don't enjoy them, but they are a part of our life together and part of my job. I've been sitting in on budget meetings in parishes and dioceses for a long time. What makes most of them so unpleasant is that they all seem to follow the same pattern with largely the same result. First we make an educated guess about how much money is going to be available for us to spend. It has to be an educated guess because no matter what, some people have not turned their pledges in when we have the meeting, no matter how many times we've invited and prompted and encouraged them to do so before the deadline, or how lovingly we have threatened them after the deadline is passed; or some parishes haven't sent in their covenant form, no matter how affectionately we have encouraged, invited, reminded, and threatened them. After we agree on a number that represents our guess about how much money is available, we label that the Income, and then we begin to talk about how we'll spend it, that's the Expenses. First we consider the Non-Discretionary Spending: what we'll give to the diocese, what we'll give to the General Convention, utilities, insurance, "hard costs." Then we're ready to talk about Compensation. This usually makes at least one person at the table uncomfortable because he or her paycheck depends on this moment.

And then almost without fail we begin to be concerned that the amount of money we guess we have available to spend, after we subtract the Non-Discretionary Spending and the Compensation, is not going to be enough for all the things we say we would like to do. At that point we can either go back reconsider Compensation, or we can increase the Income, or we can reduce the other part of the Expenses: the programs and ministries. What makes budget meetings so difficult and painful is that almost inevitably we choose to reduce programs and ministries that we love and value, things that are important to us, and the work we have been given to do, cutting a little here, trimming a little there, sometimes not funding this or that at all.

Just once before I retire or die, I'd like to go to a budget meeting and realize that we have more money to spend than we need. Just once I'd like to increase the Income. Every budget meeting that I've ever been to seems to just barely miss it a little bit on the side of Not Quite Enough. If we're just going to barely miss it, could we miss it by A Little Too Much? Or, since it's my fantasy: A Lot Too Much? Can you picture what it would be like in a vestry meeting, in your parish budget meeting, if you come around the table and realize that after all the bills are paid and everything you thought you want to do is fully funded, and then you have the happy figure of figuring out what we can do with 10,000 extra dollars? What if we could do with a little extra money? What if it were $50,000, or $100,000? What if we all gave enough of the tremendous generosity of God's people if we had too much money? Surely it must be more faithful on our part to increase the Income instead of automatically reducing the Expenses. A budget meeting like that even I would enjoy.

The Third Uncomfortable Word in the Episcopal Church is not really like those first two, it's not really a Church word at all. I'm talking about Change. We choose to Evangelize or not, and we want to Evangelize. We choose to do Stewardship or not, and what approach, what idea we will use to do that. But Change is beyond our control, something that many of us would never willingly choose in any form.

Yesterday Bishop Parsley said that there are three kinds of people: those who work to make things happen, and those who watch things happen, and those who wonder what happened. I don't know this for sure but I bet you a nickel that you know somebody who worked pretty hard to make sure that nothing at all happened. I believe I have been one of those people from time to time.

Change is inevitable, constant, and uncompromising. It's a simple fact of life for the world. Our choice as a Church is whether or not we will remain part of the ever-changing world our Lord came to redeem.

In 1988 I was the rector of All Saints' Episcopal Church in Grenada, Mississippi. Miss Ethel George turned 100 years old while I was there, and I went to talk to her about the plans the parish had to celebrate her birth and her life. She lived in a big old house on Main Street, where she had grown up and lived her whole life. I sat and listened to her tell stories about how the world had changed while she watched, about 100 years on Main Street. She remembered some men at church when she was a kid who had fought in the Civil War. She remembered the first electric light bulb in Grenada, at the Town Hall; the first telephone, at a friend's house; and the first television, at a store downtown. She told me the story of how she heard a report that two young men in North Carolina had invented a flying machine. Her father thought that indoor plumbing was an unnecessary extravagance, and she was angry at him for years that he wouldn't let her ride in one of those newfangled automobiles. He said they were dangerous and foul-smelling, an expensive passing fad. He might be forgiven for that as he had made his living selling and trading horses and mules.

Before Mr. Ford began selling his Model T's in bulk, Miss Ethel's father had been making a living selling and trading horses and mules. According to evaluations from participants, the 178th Annual Diocesan Convention was highly effective in meeting their spiritual growth needs, facilitating fellowship with participants, and meeting new people. The meeting facility was attractive, comfortable, and easily accessible, and there was variety in the schedule, from business sessions to recreation, including Friday evening's gala at the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts. The theme of the convention, "The Gathering Christ," guided the total process and was very timely for facilitating discussion on contemporary issues. Bishop Sloan advised us to "breathe in—breathe out—move on."
and blacksmiths had been. And he continued to sell horses and mules. Proud, stubborn and shortsighted, he died with very little money.

Miss Ethel didn’t get out much by the time I got there. Some of it had to do with her knees and hips. I think, although she very rarely missed worship on Sunday morning, played bridge every Wednesday afternoon, and got her hair done every Thursday. I think the world had just changed so much that she hardly recognized it anymore.

Now the world is changing more quickly than ever it did in her lifetime. The world continues to spin whether we approve or agree or like it or not; society evolves, technology develops, and history is updated. But the mission of the Church, the great gift we have to share with all people everywhere, remains the same to show and tell the love of God in Jesus Christ. It’s not enough for us to be content to be left behind. It’s not enough for us to look for new ways to sell mules. For us the question must be, “How can we continue to offer the Gospel to the world today in an engaging and inviting way?”

We love and reverence our traditions and customs, as well we should. But we can also be bound by them, trapped by them, if “The Way We’ve Always Done It” becomes our trusted creed. And just between you and me, we haven’t always done it that way. We’ve always been changing.

We have to remember, in a changing world, that our mission comes first. If we are to offer God’s love and redeeming grace to people desperately need it, we may have to reconsider and re-imagine how we are going about it.

Now I’m almost ready to close, but first I actually do have a couple of quotes. In his inaugural address in 1994, Nelson Mandela said: “Our greatest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our greatest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, ‘Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, and fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God.”

There is no limit to what people of goodwill can do, given strength, courage and imagination by the power of the Holy Spirit of God. There is no limit to what people can do, by the power of the Spirit. How dare we claim that we can’t do something that we think we ought to be doing in God’s service. We are the children of God. We are a community of believers who have received the love of God, witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Who are we to say we can’t invite our friends and neighbors to God’s altar to share God’s grace and love? It’s absurd to pretend we can’t put enough money together in our various budgets to do the work we believe we are called to do. It’s silly to think that we are unable to adapt to the changing world because it conflicts with “The Way It’s Always Been Done.” Who are we to say what is possible or beyond the reach of the children of God?

The other quote comes from St. James Buffett, A merican singer and song writer, novelist, and I would suggest philosopher. The name of the song is “Breathe In, Breathe Out,” written by Jimmy Buffett after Hurricane Katrina. The other quote comes out of “The Way It’s Always Been Done.” Who are we to say what is possible or beyond the reach of the children of God?

I bought a cheap watch from the crazy man floating down Canal.
It doesn’t use numbers or moving hands,
It always just says “Now.”
Now you may be thinking that I was had.
But this watch is never wrong.
And if I had trouble the warranty said:
Breathe in, breathe out, move on.
And it rained;
It was nothing really new.
And it blew;
Seen all that before.
And it poured.
The earth began to strain.
Pontchartrain leaking through the door,
tides at war.
According to my watch, the time is now.
The past is dead and gone.
Don’t try to shake it, just nod your head;

Breathe in, breathe out, move on.
Don’t try to explain it, just bow your head;
Breathe in, breathe out, move on.

We are blessed, you and I, and we are grateful. Whether we were born into this part of our Lord’s Church or whether we found it later, it has touched us, nurtured our faith, comforted us when we’ve been scared or lonely or discouraged, infuriated us from time to time, and invited us to come more and more deeply into the faith that has been passed down from generation to generation for two millennia. We are blessed, and part of our being grateful is to take our place in the long parade of saints who carry the Church.

Now it’s our turn to pass along the faith we have received to our friends and neighbors, to our children and to their children. Now it’s our privilege to share the Good News. Now it’s our responsibility to make sure that the next generation comes up going to Sunday School and church, in healthy parishes with well-prepared leaders and well-kept facilities, that we have youth groups and an Episcopal summer camp, college ministries and other programs to teach them about the love of God for all of God’s children.

Now it’s our turn, now it’s us. “Our greatest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our greatest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.”

“According to my watch, the time is now. Don’t try to explain it, just bow your head. Breathe in, breathe out, move on.”

We are the children of God, witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Now it’s our turn, now it’s us. Now.

Thanks be to God.

The Rt. Rev. John M. McKee Sloan

A Reflection from PJ Grass, a Member of Our Diocesan Department of Youth

The 178th Big People Convention started for me at 4 p.m. on Thursday evening, February 19. I was scheduled to read one of the lessons at the opening Festival Eucharist. Having not attended the first business session, I made my way directly to the Church of the Ascension from Guntersville. After a pleasant time stretching my legs walking around the beautiful grounds, I found myself a good hour and a half early before the service was to start. This put me in a somewhat awkward position. I had been to this church before. Almost a year before, I was elected to the Youth Department. Yet that was a weekend event that was mostly contained in the youth building, Joshua House.

So I sat outside my car and waited for the rest of the party to show up. And I waited. Then I waited some more. Finally a parishioner of the church pulled up beside me and asked me inside. Sir, I may have forgotten your name, but you have my gratitude forever. When I got in I was welcomed, given refreshments, and the grand tour.

This ladies and gentlemen was the problem. I am not what you would call a planner. I prefer to... wing it. Carpe Diem. Seize the Day. This works well for me though – I am best on my toes. The inherent problem with this approach to life is not that you lose track of things, but when you have time to sit down and look around, things become a tad darker. So with another hour before the service began, I found that I can develop stage fright. Who knew? Certainly not I! The minutes stretched into hours, the hours into ages. I was worrying myself sick. What if I skipped a word? Or worse, skipped an entire line of the reading!

Fortunately as people started showing up, I ran into a few familiar faces. The Great Rev. Garner (he hates that name) told me not to worry. “No one is looking for you to mess up,” he assured me. I felt a tad better, and when I read I missed not syllable. After that things were A-OK.

The next morning, Saunders McElroy and I led the morning worship. We danced, we sang, we laughed – we were good. It was told that convention was long boring sessions and serious people. Praise the Lord that was wrong! I met some of the most entertaining people. I learned a good deal about how things look on the inside of our great diocese.

The time was wonderful. For me Big People Convention was a time of learning and excitement. I want to thank the people of the Ascension for hosting, the attendees for making it so smooth, and to all of you for giving the Youth of our diocese a vote and say in how things are done.
RESOLUTION #1: THE 2009 PROPOSED PROGRAM AND BUDGET

RESOLVED that the 2009 Proposed Program and Budget, as developed by the Diocesan Council, be and hereby is adopted as the Program and Budget of the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Alabama for the calendar year 2009.

SUMMARY

2009 BUDGET EXPENSES AND THE 2009 PROPOSED PROGRAM AND BUDGET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPERATING CASH RESERVES</th>
<th>2009 BUDGET</th>
<th>2009 ACTUAL</th>
<th>2009 BUDGET</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 January</td>
<td>$166,109</td>
<td>$181,680</td>
<td>$191,071</td>
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ANTICIPATED RECEIPTS

Prior Year Covenants
Current Year Covenants
Short Term Investments
Designated Fund Transfers
Miscellaneous Income
Grants

Total Receipts

DISBURSEMENTS

Support of the Episcopal
15% Lay & Ordained Leadership Development
15% Department of Stewardship
15% The People & Their Ministries
15% Mission and Outreach
15% Parish Development/Evangelism
15% Communications
15% Ministry in Higher Education
15% Camp and Conference Center
15% Administration/Carpenter House

Total Disbursements

Supplies (Debits)

End of Year Cash Reserves

1. The Convention adopted a budget authorizing expenditures of $2,729,556. However, Diocesan Council amended the budget during the year. The amended budget is reported here.

2. The Diocese received $105,079 in restricted covenants. Those funds were directed to the Perkins Fund and used to support ministries and programs within the diocese. Because certain areas of the operating budget received significant amounts from the Perkins Fund, the disbursements in this report are lower than projected in the operating budget. This should not be taken to mean that ministries and programs were reduced. It simply means the funds to support these programs were drawn from the Perkins Fund. The disbursement amount reported should be added to the additional funds available through the Perkins Fund to determine the full spending in that area of the budget.

3. The surplus is transferred into the Cash Reserve to adequately fund the budget for 2009 as provided in the following Resolutions 11.

4. Prior year adjustments which are not reflected in this report may cause this figure to differ from the figures calculated by adding and subtracting the sub-totals in this column. The actual figures from the Balance sheet is reported here in the "ACTUAL" column. Prior year adjustments are included in all reports.

5. Camp McDowell operations are funded primarily from fees income generated by the Camp. See Resolution #2 for detailed information on the Camp operating budget. Because the Camp is an integral part of the overall diocesan operation, the Executive Director's compensation and the meeting expenses of the Diocese, which go to the Camp operation, are funded directly from diocesan funds.

6. Designated Fund Transfers include $40,000 from Houston #4 for Sawyville, $10,000 from Perkins for youth mission, $10,000 from Edmonton for land purchase, $17,000 from Sawyville Project.

Resolutions Passed

The lay and clergy delegates passed the following resolutions.

#1 THE 2009 PROPOSED PROGRAM AND BUDGET

Please see Resolution #1 text, summary, and pie chart at left.

#2 CAMP MCDOWELL BUDGET 2009

To see the approved budget, please visit our diocesan website, www.dioala.org, or contact the Rev. Mark W. Johnston, Executive Director, Camp McDowell, 105 DeLong Road, Nauvoo, AL 35578; 205/387-1806; www.campmcdowell.com.

#3 TO ESTABLISH ONE SUNDAY IN LENT AS EPISCOPAL RELIEF AND DEVELOPMENT SUNDAY

Be it resolved that the Diocese of Alabama dedicate one Sunday in Lent as Episcopal Relief and Development Sunday and that parishes and individuals be encouraged to support Episcopal Relief and Development's lifesaving work through prayer and a special offering that will help heal a hurting world;

Be it further resolved that the Diocese of Alabama submit this resolution to be considered and adopted by Province IV; and

Be it further resolved that the Diocese of Alabama submit this resolution to the 76th General Convention of the Episcopal Church, meeting in Anaheim, California, July 2009.

#5 TRINITY CHURCH IN CLANTON

Be it resolved that the convention joyfully accept the petition of Trinity Episcopal Church, Clanton, Alabama, for recognition as a parish in the Episcopal Diocese of Alabama and hereby recognizes it as a parish of the Diocese of Alabama.
#6 ST. CATHERINE’S CHURCH IN CHELSEA

Be it resolved that the convention joyfully accept the petition of St. Catherine’s Episcopal Church, Chelsea, Alabama, for recognition as a parish in the Episcopal Diocese of Alabama and hereby recognizes it as a parish of the Diocese of Alabama.

#7 THE BISHOP’S ADDRESS

Be it resolved that we, the 178th Convention of the Diocese of Alabama, do hereby celebrate and give thanks, for the generous abundance of God’s grace even in the midst of the world’s current difficult economic circumstances and we do recommit ourselves to engage in “loyal stewardship” of God’s creation with generosity and compassion; and

Be it further resolved that as citizens of the State of Alabama, we join and support our bishop by working with the Alabama Faith Council and others in calling for the elimination of state sales taxes on groceries in order to alleviate some of the burden on those among us who are in need; and

Be it further resolved that we applaud the bishop’s decision to hire the Rev. Deacon Dave Drachlis as the new communications officer of the diocese; and

Be it further resolved that we recognize and embrace the call of our Lord Jesus Christ to be a community of reconciling love in the Body of Christ, knit together in one communion and fellowship in spite of tensions and disagreements. In the sure and certain power of the Spirit, we must pray the prayer of Christ, learn the mind of Christ, and do the deeds of Christ, so that, through us, our gracious Lord may continue to draw together His people we love and with whom we work, not giving them sufficient consideration until and unless they do something we don’t particularly like; and

W heres it is abundantly obvious to all who have worked with her through the years, as well as to those who call or visit the Episcopal Enclave also known as Carpenter House, that she very rarely does anything we don’t particularly like; and

W heres we have testimony to her sparkling personality and gentle loving soul from Bishops Stough, M. Miller, Parsley, Soto, Andrus and lastly Sloan (these last two having been entrusted into her care for training and polishing), and all of whose service to our Lord has been and is still greatly aided and often made possible by her cheerful help, wise guidance, and indispensable support; and

W heres this testimony has doubtless been quietly echoed by hundreds of priests and thousands of laypeople from M entone to Selma and from Smith Station to Florence, who have joined us in loving her; and

W heres she has not only done all this for us but also at the same time gracefully and lovingly been the wife of Reggie, a pastor in another part of our Lord’s One Holy and Catholic Church, and the mother of Faith and Charity, their beautiful and talented daughters.

Therefore be it resolved, that this 178th Convention of the Diocese of Alabama take a moment to give thanks to God Almighty for blessing us with Denise and as a sign of our love and gratitude that this resolution be passed by acclamation and this Convention stand and applaud our friend and God’s Servant, Ethel Denise Servant.

#8 RECOGNIZING DENISE SERVANT ON THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF HER SERVICE

W heres it is regrettable and lamentable but yet also an inevitable and undeniable fact of the human condition that we very often take for granted the people we love and with whom we work; not giving them sufficient consideration until and unless they do something we don’t particularly like; and

W heres Mrs. Ethel Denise Servant has served the Episcopal Diocese of Alabama for a full quarter of a century, beginning her many toils and the occasional tribulation among us in the month of February of the Year of Our Lord Nineteen Hundred and Eighty-Four; and

W heres it is abundantly obvious to all who have worked with her through the years, as well as to those who call or visit the Episcopal Enclave also known as Carpenter House, that she very rarely does anything we don’t particularly like; and

W heres we have testimony to her sparkling personality and gentle loving soul from Bishops Stough, M. Miller, Parsley, Soto, Andrus and lastly Sloan (these last two having been entrusted into her care for training and polishing), and all of whose service to our Lord has been and is still greatly aided and often made possible by her cheerful help, wise guidance, and indispensable support; and

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#9 THANKING THE CHANCELLOR FOR HER SERVICE

Be it resolved that the 178th Convention of the Diocese of Alabama express appreciation for the service M abeth Porter has rendered in her role as Chancellor of the Diocese of Alabama for the past three years, both as parliamentarian at the diocesan convention and with legal matters regarding the diocese.

#10 THANKING THE SECRETARY FOR HIS SERVICE

Be it resolved that the 178th Convention of the Diocese of Alabama express thanks and appreciation for the three years of service the Rev. Tim Hoff has given in his role as Chancellor of the Diocese of Alabama.

#11 HONORING JILL HOOGSTRA FOR HER WORK AT EPISCOPAL PLACE

W heres Jill Hoogstra retired in 2008 after 25 years of faithful and dedicated service as Director of Episcopal Place, beginning her work in 1983 at this independent living facility for low-income senior citizens and people with disabilities; and

W heres her vision and tireless efforts have brought comfort and dignity to the many residents touched by her patience in time of stress, her compassion in times of sorrow, and her joy in times of celebration; and

W heres under her watchful tenure as director, Phase II of the facility was completed and now comprises 141 apartments, and her legacy continues to build relationships between Church and community;

Therefore be it resolved that the 178th Convention of the Diocese of Alabama extend thanks and appreciation for her many years of service.

#12 THANKING ASSISTANT CELLOR MEADE WHITTAKER FOR HIS SERVICE

Be it resolved that the 178th Convention of the Diocese of Alabama express thanks and appreciation to Maibeth Porter has rendered in her role as Chancellor of the Diocese of Alabama for the past three years, both as parliamentarian at the diocesan convention and with legal matters regarding the diocese.

#13 THANKING ASSISTANT CELLOR JAMES HUGHLEY JR. FOR HIS SERVICE

Be it resolved that the 178th Convention of the Diocese of Alabama express thanks and appreciation to James Hughley Jr. for his three years of service as Assistant Chancellor of the Diocese and particularly with the election and ordination of Bishop Sloan.

#14 GREETING OUR COMPANION DIOCESE OF HAITI AND ITS BISHOP

Be it resolved that the 178th Convention of the Diocese of Alabama extend warm greetings to Bishop Zache Duracyn and the Diocese of Haiti, as the Diocese of Haiti and the Diocese of Alabama begin the third year of their journey together as companion dioceses.

For the past three years mission teams have gone to Haiti to work with the residents there, bringing essentials and medical care to those residents who live in poverty and unsafe conditions. In doing so we have gained an understanding of our relationship as the Body of Christ and an appreciation for the difficulties they face and a shared sense of our identity as brothers and sisters in Christ.

#15 ASKING FOR CHANGES IN THE FORMAT AND SCHEDULING OF THE DIOCESAN CONVENTION

Be it resolved that the Convention and Courtesy Committee petition the bishops to constitute a task force to study and address the issue of streamlining our annual Convention in order to extend the voice of the Church to those prohibited from attending because of financial constraints and work obligations; and

Be it further resolved that a report and recommendations be made to the diocesan convention in 2010.

#16 IN RECOGNITION OF OUR GUEST PREACHER

Be it resolved that the 178th Convention of the Diocese of Alabama extend welcome to our guest preacher, the Very Rev. Samuel T. Lloyd, ninth dean of the National Cathedral in his return to the land of sweet tea and grits; and

Be it further resolved that this convention expresses gratitude for Dean Lloyd’s presence with us, the message of reconciliation and unity he expressed in the convention’s theme, “The Gathering Christ,” reminds us that we are the physical life of Christ moving in the world.
The Gathering Christ—
Looking Back on Our 178th Annual Diocesan Convention

Convention photos by the Rev. Deacon Dave Drachlis, Jennifer McConnell, Emily Stuart Thomas, Libby Weatherly, and the Rev. Pat Wingo.
Food Bank Thanks Our Diocese

By the Rev. Dave Drachlis, Diocesan Communications Coordinator

The Montgomery Area Food Bank thanked Alabama Episcopalians throughout our diocese for their help in fighting hunger in South Central Alabama. “We thank all of you ... for your gift of 1,775 pounds of food,” E. Parke Hinman III, the executive director of the Montgomery Area Food Bank, wrote in a letter addressed to the 178th Convention of the Diocese of Alabama. The nearly one ton of food, which literally filled the back of a pickup truck and an attached trailer, was collected during our convention in Montgomery, thanks to the generosity of delegates and their parishes from across our diocese. Delegates had been asked—in response to the ongoing nationwide economic crisis—to bring canned goods and other nonperishable food items to be shared with those in Montgomery who were experiencing economic distress.

The Montgomery Area Food Bank fights hunger and poverty by distributing food and other donated products through nearly 700 nonprofit member agencies serving 25 counties. “Food drives are an integral part of food bank operations, and we truly appreciate the effort that went into organizing this drive,” Hinman emphasized. “As you probably know, the fight against hunger is ongoing, but it is a much more manageable task in a supportive community like ours. Thank you for being partners in our mission. This very nice donation will be a big help.”

Students with the Montgomery Episcopal Campus Ministries, led by their chaplain, the Rev. Louie Skipper, orchestrated the ingathering, loaded the truck and trailer, and transported the staples to the food bank. Additional food delivered late in the convention was donated to the Greater Birmingham Ministries, an ecumenical and interfaith organization that provides a faith-based response to poverty by meeting people’s emergency needs while also pursuing social and economic justice for all people.
#17 AN INVITATION TO THE 179TH ANNUAL DIOCESAN CONVENTION
Whereas Trinity Episcopal Church, 410 North Pine Street, having been a parish since 1836, celebrates 173 years of active ministry in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ in Florence, Alabama; and
Whereas Trinity Church remains faithful in her mission to glorify God and bring others to Christ through piety, study, and action, and demonstrates this by continuing to be an active part of the community doing the work of Christ through our worship and outreach ministries; and
Whereas Trinity Church delights in sharing her gifts of the Spirit, her hospitality, and her love of the Lord with all by welcoming the Diocese of Alabama to our historic city and the Shoals, located on the beautiful banks of the Tennessee River;

#18 WELCOMING ANTHONY GUILLEN, PROGRAM OFFICER FOR LATINO/HISPANIC MINISTRY WITH THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH CENTER
Be it resolved that the Diocese of Alabama welcome the presence and participation of Anthony Guillen, who serves as the Program Officer for the Latino/Hispanic Ministry based at the Episcopal Church Center in New York; and
Be it further resolved that the Diocese of Alabama pledge to work with Mr. Guillen in furthering the ministry among Latinos and Hispanics within our diocese.

#19 EXPRESSING GRATITUDE TO THE HOSTS OF OUR 178TH ANNUAL DIOCESAN CONVENTION
Whereas the Church of the Ascension in Montgomery, Alabama, has been a most gracious host parish for the 178th Convention of the Diocese of Alabama; and
Whereas Co-Chairs Pat Franklin and John Wilson did an outstanding job of coordinating the events of the Convention at the Church of the Ascension, the Renaissance Hotel, and the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts; and
Whereas the clergy of the Church of the Ascension, the Rev. John Coleman, Rector, and the Rev. Chip Broadfoot, Curate, and their hardworking staff orchestrated an uplifting and memorable Festival Eucharist; and
Whereas Choir Director Becky Taylor and the choir provided beautiful music for worship;
Therefore be it resolved that the 178th Convention of the Diocese of Alabama express deep gratitude for the gracious hospitality provided by the members of the Church of the Ascension as they embark on their second century of existence as a parish.

New Clergy Introduced at Diocesan Convention

East Alabama Convocation: The Rev. Matthew Grunfeld and the Rev. John Fritschner (Dean)

Black Belt Convocation: The Rev. Frank Roth and the Rev. David Meginniss (Dean)

Birmingham Convocation: The Rev. Christopher G. Irata, the Rev. Marc Burnette (Dean), and the Rev. Jamie M. Adams

Tennessee Valley Convocation: The Rev. Tim Murphy, the Rev. Susan Sloan (Dean), and the Rev. David Basinger


People Elected to Serve
The lay and clergy delegates elected the following people to serve our diocese.

DIOCESAN COUNCIL MEMBERS
Northern District: The Rev. Rob Iler
Middle District: The Rev. Stephen Hood
Southern District: The Rev. J. D. Barnes

STANDING COMMITTEE
3-Year Term: The Rev. Alison Carmody (replacing the Rev. Polk Van Zandt)
4-Year Term: The Rev. Liston Garfield
4-Year Term: Dianne Moyer (Lay Order)
President: The Rev. Susan Sloan (elected by the Standing Committee)

ECCLESIASTICAL COURT
Ed Allen
M artha Jane Patton
The Rev. Sara-Scott Wingo
Welcome spring! With March coming in like a lion, let us pray it goes out like a lamb and this spring will be one of the most glorious.

The ECW Board gathered at Camp McDowell in January for the annual retreat, and we enjoyed our time of fellowship and work. We were pleased that Bishop Sloan and Tina joined us for dinner at the most hospitable home of Mark and Maggie Johnston. The Board members made plans for the coming year, and 2009 will be a busy one. We were sorry that due to accepting a full-time job, Lisa Parrish had to resign as Montgomery Convocation Coordinator. Lisa was a delight to work with, and we wish her well. We are pleased that Lisa Taylor, also of the Ascension in Montgomery, has taken over this position. Welcome Lisa!

One of the greatest joys of being the president of our diocesan ECW is that I have the opportunity to visit the women of the convocations at their spring and fall meetings. We have had several meetings already this spring, and I look forward to visiting the other convocations soon. Please check with your coordinator for information on your spring meeting. Hope to see you there.

I know many of you enjoyed the diocesan convention as much as I did, and it was good to see so many familiar faces, another of the joys of being the ECW Diocesan President. Many thanks to Lisa Gruner for the delightful video presentation she designed for the ECW R eport and to all the ECWs that sent pictures to be included. I just wish we had time to show them all! Don’t forget to take photos throughout the year of your ECW activities, send them to our Web site (www.alabamaecw.org), and include them in an article for The Alabama Episcopalian. We like to see what you are doing and this is a good way of sharing new ideas.

We are pleased to report that we have raised more than $45,000 toward our ACTS 2 ECW Pledge to help with the cost of the sacristy at the new Chapel of St. Francis at Camp McDowell. If you have not been to camp lately, you are in for a treat. The chapel is beautiful and the sacristy will be very accommodating to all who visit it. Thank you to all who have contributed, and I ask that we all continue supporting this project and help raise the remaining $20,000. Every donation counts!

If you would like to meet other women from our Province IV, send several days at beautiful Kanuga conference center in western North Carolina near Hendersonville, hear a great speaker, learn about the ECW and the upcoming Triennial, and enjoy great fellowship, come join several Board members at the Province IV ECW Conference June 1-3. For more information please visit www.kanuga.org or get in touch with one of the ECW Board members.

In the month of March, we learn that St. Anne is known as a Healer, and people believe that the waters in St. Anne’s well in Buxton, England, have curative powers. As part of the blessing of the well each June, a “flower mosaic” is created. The festival draws a great number of people from all over England. The month of April tells us that St. Anne was also a Teacher and possibly taught the young Jesus basic religious instruction.

I pray that you will all take time to participate in any services your parish offers during Holy Week and that Easter will fill your hearts with Alleluias. Have a blessed Easter.

Brenda Mayhall, our diocesan Church Periodical Club (CPC) chair, reminds us that May 3 is CPC Sunday. A portion of the CPC donations made in our diocese are given to Alabama seminarians to assist them in purchasing books, and the remainder is forwarded to the National CPC, which helps distribute the printed word across the globe. Mary Ann Drake Fargo, wife of a member of the Wells Fargo Express firm, founded the CPC in 1888. She and her friends in the Church of the Holy Communion in New York sent bundles of books and periodicals westward to missionaries and pioneers via stagecoach. Since then, CPC, an affiliated and growing mission organization of the Episcopal Church, has served the ministry of our Lord through the printed word, supplying reading, study, reference, teaching, and devotional materials free to those who cannot otherwise obtain them. Wherever the Church is at work—at home or abroad, in the inner city or seminary or distant mission outpost—CPC books, periodicals, and other reading matter are there as well.

The following comment from an Alabama seminarian sums up what CPC is all about: “Thank you very much for the kind gift from the Church Periodical Club and the ECW. I am very thankful that you and your organization support and encourage those of us in seminary. Blessings to you and the CPC for your kindness and generosity.” Your continued support of CPC and your prayers for its mission are a direct response to Christ’s call that has spread the Word of our Lord throughout the world.

If you would like more information about CPC, please contact your parish’s ECW president or Brenda Mayhall (bmayhall@hospicemc.org).

From Dee Buzby, ECW President

Upcoming ECW Events and Deadlines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 30</td>
<td>Deadline for ECW College Scholarship applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 3</td>
<td>Church Periodical Club (CPC) Sunday</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 15</td>
<td>United Thank Offering (UTO) Spring Ingathering</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 15-17</td>
<td>“Celebrating Grandmothers” Women’s Weekend at Camp McDowell</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 1-3</td>
<td>Province IV ECW Conference at Kanuga</td>
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For details and additional events, please see the ECW Calendar Handbook and visit www.alabamaecw.org. Also, please update your Convocation Coordinator and the ECW Diocesan Board when ECW leaders change at your parish.

New DOK Chapter at Grace in Anniston

By Diane Phillips, Grace in Anniston

The St. Anne Chapter of the Daughters of the King (DOK) was instituted at Grace Church in Anniston last summer. Diocesan DOK President Andi Silberman and Past President Jane Van Gal assisted the Rev. Robert T. J. Childers during the service. The members of the new chapter include Betty Carr, Judy Draper, Linda McAllister, Diane Phillips, Carol Sok, Jeannie Stanko, and Jane Wood. Lillian Prather, who was a member of the DOK when she lived in Texas, was reinstated.

We were surprised when we looked at our charter and learned that a DOK chapter had been instituted at our church on May 14, 1914! No one currently at Grace Church knew about the previous chapter, and we were even more surprised when we found out that it was also named for St. Anne. We are pleased to know that we have chosen the same path as the women of our parish did almost a century ago.

Judy Draper, Linda McAllister, the Rev. R. T. J. Childers, Betty Carr, Carol Sok, Diane Phillips, Jeannie Stanko, and Jane Wood

Compiled by Fiona Watts, Publicity Chair
Think Summer Camp!

You can register for Summer Camp online at www.campmcdowell.com, and applications will be available at your parish after the diocesan convention in mid-February. Be sure to complete and send in your application soon—camp sessions fill up fast! For more information please contact Summer Camp Coordinator Michael Goldsmith at michael@campmcdowell.com or 205/387-1806.

2009 Camp McDowell Summer Schedule

| May 29-31 | Primary I (entering 1st and 2nd graders and a parent) the Rev. Stephen Hoof, director |
| June 2-5 | Elementary I (entering 3rd and 4th graders) the Rev. Chip Broadfoot, director |
| June 8-17 | Senior Camp (entering 10th-12th graders) the Rev. Rob Iler, director |
| June 22-27 | Junior High I (entering 6th and 7th graders) the Rev. Mark Wald, director |
| June 30-July 5 | Special Session Camp |
| July 6-13 | Sophomore Camp (entering 8th and 9th graders) the Rev. Richard Lawson, director |
| July 15-20 | Middler Camp (entering 5th and 6th graders) the Rev. Marc Burnette, director |
| July 23-30 | Junior High II (entering 7th and 8th graders) the Rev. Thomas Joiner, director |
| August 1-5 | Elementary II (entering 3rd-5th graders) the Rev. R. Paul Kendricks, director |
| August 7-9 | Primary II (entering 1st and 2nd graders and a parent) the Rev. Rich Webster, director |

Environmental Center Offers FREE Workshops

By Margaret Wade Johnston, Director

We have two wonderful FREE workshops lined up for Summer 2009! Legacy, Partners in Environmental Education is generously sponsoring both of them. “Growing Roots” is new and has very limited enrollment.

McDowell Environmental Center (MEC) is an AMSTI affiliate. Third-year AMSTI schoolteachers can receive credit for attending one of the MEC teacher workshops. If you have any questions, please contact me at Maggie@campmcdowell.com or 205/387-1806.

GROWING ROOTS, JUNE 8-10

Have you ever dreamed of an opportunity to slow down and connect with Nature? Even more importantly, have you wished you knew how to connect your own child with Nature?

We hear so much today about Nature Deficient Disorder in children, but in actuality most of us are suffering from this in one way or another. We rarely take long walks in the woods or linger by a stream to watch wildlife. Few people today are comfortable enough in the woods to even consider taking their own family on a nature adventure.

Legacy, Partners in Environmental Education and MCDowell Environmental Center are offering the perfect solution to this conundrum this summer: the Growing Roots: Connecting Educators and Children to Nature workshop at Camp McDowell near the Bankhead National Forest. All expenses, including two nights’ lodging and meals, will be covered for participants.

The workshop will allow a limited number of educators to bring their own child or grandchild on a once-in-a-lifetime adventure that will include hikes to learn edible and medicinal plants as well as geology lessons and fossil digs at the Minkin Paleozoic Tractway. Participants will combine nature and art in pottery, and learn about invertebrates and fish that live in Alabama’s waters by wading and swimming in beautiful Clear Creek.

All of this adventure and learning is set against the backdrop of the beauty of Camp McDowell’s 1,100 acres of forests, sandstone canyons, streams, and waterfalls. What an amazing three days you will share with your child!

LIVING STREAMS, JUNE 17-19

Have you ever longed for a hands-on way to teach your students about the waters around us and the creatures that make Alabama’s creeks, streams, and rivers their home? Come join us for this year’s Living Stream Teacher Workshop.

Legacy, Partners in Environmental Education, the MCDowell Environmental Center, and Alabama Water Watch are partnering to offer this amazing workshop. All expenses, including two nights’ lodging and meals, will be covered for participants.

The workshop will certify educators in the Living Streams curriculum developed by the scientists of Alabama Water Watch at Auburn University. You will wade in beautiful Clear Creek and learn about the invertebrates and fish that live in our local Alabama waters. You will explore the sandstone canyon walls and search for salamanders. You will be introduced to the beauty of Alabama’s waterways and some of the current environmental concerns about them. Come join the fun and get reconnected to Nature.

Camp McDowell Music CD Available in May

The staff of Camp McDowell is completing their first-ever music CD—and they need your help! Live recordings have been made of campers singing favorite Camp McDowell songs, and the CD will be available in May.

You can help cover the production costs by pre-ordering copies. Please send your order and payment ($20 per CD) to Michael Goldsmith, Camp MCDowell, 105 DeLong Rd, Nauvoo, AL 35578. Proceeds from the sale of the CD will benefit the Camp MCDowell Scholarship Fund. Thank you!
EYC Convention—A Smooth Success!

By Grant Thompson, Diocesan Youth Department Tennessee Valley Advisor

The music has died down, and the endless snacks have disappeared . . . EYC Convention '09 at St. John's in Decatur has come and gone. With the Rev. Richard Lawson's stirring program "Got Community," an electrifying and thoughtful game of "Stump the Bishop" with Bishop Parsley, and the blues magic of Microwave Dave on Saturday night, it is easy to say this year's annual installment was nothing short of a smooth success!

Not only was the event a celebration of youth ministry with more than 75 youth delegates and their adult advisors, but the convention was also productive for the business of the Church. During the Saturday afternoon business session, a new 11-member Youth Department was elected to one-year terms of service to our diocese. These young people will help plan and carry out youth events across our diocese including Christmas and Spring Break conferences at Camp McDowell, and they will also represent youth interests at monthly Diocesan Council meetings and the annual Diocesan Convention. Two young people from each district (Tennessee Valley, Birmingham, and Montgomery) are elected by their district peer delegates, and five at-large representatives are elected by the entire convention.

Also during the business session was the recipient of the youth offering for the convention. Each youth group was asked to bring an offering from their home EYC group to contribute to the convention gift. After prayer and discernment, the convention decided to split the nearly $800 offering between St. Andrew's Place in Birmingham and the Decatur-Morgan County Community Free Health Clinic. The nonprofit St. Andrew's Place organization provides permanent residence, ensuring basic necessities, care, socialization, training, and maintenance skills for adults with mental retardation. The Free Clinic, a tenant of the Episcopal Center on the campus of the University of Alabama in Birmingham and the Decatur-Morgan County Community Free Health Clinic, provides free basic healthcare for the working poor in the area. The convention visited the Free Clinic on Saturday morning as part of the program on serving the needs of the community.

Calling All 8th and 9th-Graders to Paint Birmingham—June 1-6

Young People Painting Birmingham

Summer is fast approaching, and that means parents and youth are planning every available minute. Before all of you 8th and 9th-graders completely book your summer away, remember that there is a great opportunity for you to get real mission experience right in your own backyard!

For the fifth year in a row, our diocese and the Joe Rush Program of Urban Ministries will team up for Young People Painting Birmingham (YPPB). This week-long event is a great opportunity for young people to step outside their areas of comfort, get their hands dirty, and have a faith-building and fellow-enriching experience. It is also an excellent way for the youth of our diocese to see a little more of the world than they are used to and gain a much-needed perspective on the importance of serving others.

Last year our biggest group ever participated, and more than 40 youth had experiences that they will never forget serving the people of our community. Throughout the week, they worked on scraping, painting, and fixing up four houses—and as they worked together, cooked together, played together, and worshiped together, they formed new friendships and strengthened old ones. The program staff found themselves blessed to have the opportunity to show our youth new ways of understanding faith, love, and service.

For more information and to get a registration form, please talk with your youth minister or visit our diocesan youth page at www.dioala.org. All forms are due by May 20.

Upcoming Youth Events!

- April 17-19: Servants in Faith and Technology (SIFAT) in Lineville for 9th through 12th-graders sponsored by the Ascension in Montgomery
- April 24-25: Youth Ministry Sabbath retreat at Camp McDowell
- June 1-6: Young People Painting Birmingham (YPPB) for rising 8th and 9th-graders
- June 23-29: Province IV Youth Event in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, for 9th through 12th-graders
- June 28-July 5: Special Session at Camp McDowell
- July 10-19 and 21-23: Sawyer's Door Day Camps

For more information on any and all of these events please contact Leslie Manning at lmanning@dioala.org or 205/715.2060 ext. 325. To sign up for our monthly newsletter please e-mail lmanning@dioala.org or sign up on our diocesan Web site homepage, www.dioala.org.
An Easter Message from the Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori, Presiding Bishop

The light returns and the days lengthen, even if it remains startlingly dark as we rise these days—daylight savings time is not always a blessing so early in the year! Christians, however, look for light even in the midst of darkness, for we know that darkness will not overcome it. The rising of the Son brings light into lives filled with grief, agony, and despair. Are you searching for the light of new life?

Easter recollects us and reorients us toward God’s eternal light of truth and peace and love. The resurrection is the ultimate proclamation that nothing can separate us from that light, not despair or destruction or death. We see hints of that resurrection all around us once our eyes have learned to look, and we continue to hope for its fullness, for the blessing of a light so encompassing that there can be no darkness or separation. Lent has been a willingness to experience the darkness of our current separation and tune our yearning for that light. Carry that yearning into Eastertide and beyond that we and the world around us may know the blessing of the light of Christ.

Mensaje Pascual S. E. Rvma. Katharine Jefferts Schori, Obispa Presidenta

La luz va aumentando y los días se van alargando, aunque cuando nos levantamos todavía continúa bastante oscuro: la hora de verano no trae tantas bendiciones tan temprano en el año. Sin embargo, los cristianos buscan la luz aún en medio de la oscuridad, porque sabemos que las tinieblas no prevalecerán contra ella. La resurrección del Hijo trae luz a las vidas llenas de pesares, agonía y desconsuelo. ¿Está buscando la luz de una nueva vida?

La Pascua nos hace meditar y nos reorienta hacia la luz eterna de Dios, luz de verdad y paz y amor. La resurrección es la proclamación superlativa de que nada puede separarnos de esta luz: ni el desconsuelo ni la destrucción ni la muerte. Veremos señales de esta resurrección en torno nuestro después que nuestros ojos han aprendido a ver, y continuamos en esperanza hasta su plenitud, por la bendición de una luz tan plena que no hay lugar para la oscuridad o separación. La Cuaresma ha sido la disposición de experimentar la oscuridad de nuestra actual separación y sintonizar este deseo hacia esta luz. Continúe con este deseo durante la estación pascual y más allá para que el mundo que nos rodea pueda conocer la bendición de la luz de Cristo.

Guess Who’s Turning 175!

The members of Trinity in Demopolis, the third-oldest parish in our diocese, cordially invite everyone to help them celebrate their 175th anniversary this year. The festivities will be centered around the weekend of Trinity Sunday, June 7.

Trinity sits in the center of Alabama’s famous Black Belt, which is known for its fertile soil (the soil is white when dry but turns black when it is wet). The Black Belt provides much more than just rich soil though—it offers a state of mind and a unique culture that is both antebellum and modern. The mission of Trinity Parish is to share the joy of God’s love with our community, our brothers and sisters in Christ.

For more about Trinity Church and the 175th anniversary events, please visit www.trinitydemopolis.com or contact the parish at 401 North Main Avenue, Demopolis, AL 36732-2019 or 334/289-3363.

Clergy News

The Rev. Matt Doss, will begin serving as rector of St. Thomas’ in Huntsville on April 12. Matt previously served as rector of St. Luke’s in Scottsboro.

The Rev. Charles Youngson, will begin serving as rector of St. Thomas’ in Birmingham on April 13. Charles previously served as associate rector of All Saints’ in Birmingham.

The Rev. Bill Bozeman, a former priest of our diocese, died on February 9.

The Rev. Deacon Newton “Newt” Jackson, a retired deacon of our diocese, died on February 22.

Bishops’ Visitation Schedule

Sunday, April 5
9:30 a.m. Bishop Sloan, St. Luke’s, Scottsboro
10 a.m. Bishop Parsley, Ascension, Birmingham

Holy Saturday, April 11
7 p.m. Bishop Parsley, St. Andrew’s, Birmingham
7 p.m. Bishop Sloan, Grace Church, Birmingham

Easter Sunday, April 12
10 a.m. Bishop Parsley, St. Paul’s, Selma
10 a.m. Bishop Sloan, St. Peter’s, Talladega

Sunday, April 19
9 and 11 a.m. Bishop Parsley, Christ Church, Tuscaloosa
10 a.m. Bishop Sloan, St. Mary’s on-the-Highlands, Birmingham

Sunday, April 26
10:30 a.m. Bishop Parsley, Holy Apostles’, Birmingham
10:30 a.m. Bishop Sloan, St. John’s, Montgomery

Wednesday, April 29
6 p.m. Bishop Parsley, St. Mark’s, Birmingham

Sunday, May 3
9 and 11 a.m. Bishop Parsley, Advent, Birmingham
10:30 a.m. Bishop Sloan, St. John’s, Decatur

Sunday, May 10
10:30 a.m. Bishop Sloan, St. Joseph’s, M entone

Sunday, May 17
10 a.m. Bishop Parsley, Nativity, Huntsville
10:30 a.m. Bishop Sloan, St. Luke’s, Birmingham

Thursday, May 21
6 p.m. Bishop Sloan, St. Matthias’, Tuscaloosa

Sunday, May 24
8:45 and 11 a.m. Bishop Parsley, All Saints’, Birmingham
10:15 a.m. Bishop Sloan, Ascension, M ontgomery

Sunday, May 31
11 a.m. Bishop Sloan, St. Andrew’s, Tuskegee
Celebration of Life Benefits Alzheimer’s Day Care Center

Trinity in Florence recently served as the host church for the Celebration of Life benefit to raise funds for the Westminster Interfaith Caring Center, which will provide quality day care for people with Alzheimer’s, dementia, and related disorders. The evening event was a tremendous success with more than $50,000 netted. Guests enjoyed the parish’s spacious grounds and lovely gardens, where they feasted on a variety of appetizers, punch, and wines followed by a gourmet dinner in the parish hall. Renowned cooks from Trinity and neighboring Presbyterian and Methodist churches prepared and donated the special dishes for the meal, and Carl Casaday of Trinity outdid himself in decorating with dozens of floating butterfly balloon sculptures. Some guests lingered after dinner to visit in the parish hall, while others made their way to the silent and live auctions in Mullen Hall.

Father Andy Keyse and his wife, Beth, were warm, gracious, lively participants at the auctions, and the next day the Shoals was buzzing with compliments about the event and Trinity’s hospitality. We heard many comments about “the Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Methodists having a wedding” at Trinity that night! The close relationship continues among the churches. First Presbyterian in Florence is receiving support and assistance from the other congregations for its community soup kitchen to provide hot meals for the needy.

More than $100,000 additional funds have been raised for the day care center, which is housed at Brandon Ministries. Most of the service agencies in the Shoals are housed at Brandon, which was founded by the Methodist Church. Bo and Dr. Tom Osborne, who is a deacon at Trinity, serve on the board of the Family Success Center at Brandon. In 2008 Tom received a UTO (United Thank Offering) grant for $23,000 for a project at the center that Martha Jo Daniel of Trinity has been supporting with her time and energy.

The Alzheimer’s Day Care Center, the first in northwest Alabama, is expected to open this spring. Father Milt Glor and Betty McCutchen, a member of Trinity, are serving on the center’s board. Staff and students from the University of North Alabama are assisting with designs and meal planning, and Habitat for Humanity and others are doing the necessary renovations. The center will provide an invaluable resource for interns in nursing, social work, counseling, etc., from area colleges. After two years of planning and hard work, the dream of quality day care for our frail loved ones and respite for caregivers is becoming a reality.

Christian Educators Gather for Annual Conference

Nearly 100 Christian educators from across the country gathered at the 2009 National Association for Episcopal Christian Education Directors (NAECED) annual Tapestry Conference to worship, share resources, and discuss upcoming General Convention resolutions. This year’s theme, “Marked as Christ’s Own,” highlighted the group’s commitment to lifting up the Baptismal Covenant as the central mission and ministry of the Church.

NAECED is the largest professional organization in the Episcopal Church. Members from the Diocese of Alabama who attended this year’s conference include Sabrina Evans of St. John’s in Montgomery, Katherine Gould of Christ Church in Tuscaloosa, and Kathy Graham of St. Stephen’s in Birmingham. Participants enjoyed soul-nourishing workshops that were much-needed at this time in our budget-challenged ministry. The sessions focused on a variety of issues including how to address the needs of youth, how to provide meaningful worship for autistic children, and how to choose curriculum as well as pastoral care, financial management, and vocation.

Bead for Life

Few of us, if any, can imagine the tragedies women who are living in the extreme poverty of Uganda have had to endure. Violence, HIV, and hunger had taken over their community until a chance encounter between a Ugandan woman sitting near her mud home and Bead for Life founders offered hope. Dazzled by the woman’s handmade jewelry, the visitors realized that her talents could help provide income for women and their communities.

Since 2004 Bead for Life has provided sustainable income for Ugandan women and their families by selling their beautiful jewelry, which is handmade from recycled paper. All of the profits go back to these women who are HIV+ mothers, refugees from wars, former prostitutes, and other impoverished people. Before joining Bead for Life, most of the members struggled to get by on less than $1 a day. Now the average “beader” makes $2,000 dollars a year if not more, and many of them start small businesses later. I am pleased to report that St. Stephen’s has raised more than $1,000 to help these women through the Bead for Life program.
SPIRITUALITY AND GARDENING
April 25, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Grace Church in Mt. Meigs

Anna Smith, a member of our diocesan Commission on Spirituality, recalls that some time ago June Mays contacted her as a member of the commission and said that she would like to present a retreat on the spirituality of gardening. She knew about the beautiful garden at Grace Church in Mt. Meigs and suggested that it would be an ideal location for the retreat. The rector, David Peeples, has been very helpful with local arrangements and is enthusiastic about hosting the retreat at the parish. “It is a bit ironic that I might even say that I have a ‘black thumb’, but I’m glad to be working on this project, and who knows... maybe some hidden talent for gardening will emerge!”

Presenters: June Mays, Elizabeth Nettles, and Jim Meigs

The theme for this year’s event is Renewed by the Spirit: Transform Us Within. The excellent faculty for the retreat will include Cliff Petty, a native of Eufaula and Auburn University graduate; Deanna Light, Steve Petrunak, and Paul Tate. New to the faculty this year will be Cliff Petty, a native of Eufaula and Auburn University graduate; Deanna Light, Steve Petrunak, and Paul Tate. For more information please contact Alisa Isbrook, D. rector of D. vaultment, P.R., and M. marketing, at 334/ 395-8222 or G. alisa.isbrook@hcesal.com.

INTEGRITY CHAPTER MEETINGS
April 26 at 5 p.m. at Epiphany in Leeds with speaker Patricia Todd, a member of the Alabama State House of Representatives. The meeting will be held at St. Alban’s Episcopal Church in Brandon, Mississippi, and will be hosted by the Rev. Deacon Mary V andagriff at 205/381-0175. For directions to Epiphany Church in Brandon, Mississippi, visit www.integrityusa.org/alabama.

INTENDING THE SPIRIT MOVE YOU!” CREATIVITY CELEBRATION
May 30 and 31 at St. Andrew’s in Birmingham

In celebration of God the Holy Spirit, St. Andrew’s in Birmingham will hold its annual Creativity Celebration on Pentecost weekend, May 30–31. This year’s theme is “Let the Spirit Move You!” and the two-day event will include a variety of expressions of our creativity from performances and open mikes to workshops and exhibitions. From 5 to 8 p.m. on Saturday you can enjoy a gala fundraiser, C. coffeehouse O pen M ikes, and several music performances as well as a Silent Auction with art, antiques, and other items.

The parish has called on local artists to donate a painting on a piece of slate from St. Andrew’s roof, and proceeds from those sales will help reduce the parish’s capital debt. Featured artists include M. and Belzer, Tom Dameron, Judy Rogers, Susan Shermaker, Lowell Vann, Dorothy West, and M. arlyn W. lson. For more information please contact Barbara Sloans at followtheblack @ aol.com or 205/616-2537.

18TH ANNUAL HIV/AIDS RETREAT SPONSORED BY PROVINCE IV
June 5–7 at the Kanuga Conference Center in Hendersonville, N. Carolina

This year’s retreat will draw from John 3:16 with a particular emphasis on “whosoever” as a mandate for inclusion in the circle of love and friendship. It will provide a safe place to discuss the powerful feelings of fear, isolation, grief, anger, prejudice, and stigma that sometimes accompany the HIV/AIDS journey. The Rev. Edwin C. Sanders II, Senior Servant at Metropolitan Interdenominational Church in Nashville, will serve as the retreat leader, and the Rev. Charlie Deaton, rector of St. Peter’s-by-the-Lake Episcopal Church in Brandon, Mississippi, will provide the music leadership. Some scholarships are available to cover the cost of meals and accommodations. For more information please contact Alan Wohlhart at 205/648-0452, or call 828/692-9136, e-mail info@kanuga.org, or visit www.kanuga.org.

FOUNDATION FOR LITURGICAL MUSIC (FLM) CONFERENCE
June 25–27 at alternating locations.

The Foundation for Liturgical Music (FLM), a nonprofit ecumenical organization, has been bringing top-notch liturgical musicians to the Birmingham area for the past 12 years to serve as faculty for their M. M. S. conferences. The purpose of the annual conferences is to help improve the quality of music for liturgy by bringing together music educators, church musicians, and others involved in liturgical planning. Youth are also welcome and encouraged to attend.

The theme for this year’s event is Renewed by the Spirit: Transform Us Within. The excellent faculty for the M. M. S. conferences will include renowned liturgical artists John Angotti, D. ion Clay, Kate Cuddy, Bobby Fisher, Sarah Hart, Deanna Light, Steve Petrunak, and Paul Tate. New to the faculty this year will be Cliff Petty, a native of Eufaula and nationally published composer and recording artist for World Library Publications.

The artists present a free concert open to the public on Friday, June 26, at 7 p.m. A love offering will be taken up to benefit the FLM Scholarship Fund. For more information please visit www.foundationforliturgicalmusic.org or contact Nancy Brown at 205/995-0527.
John M. W. Iller, a Minnesota seminary professor, says, “Humility or poverty of spirit, is not a matter of thinking low thoughts about ourselves. . . . It is simply a matter of knowing ourselves as we really are.” That’s just the sort of humility demonstrated in John Keith’s new book, Complete Humanity in Jesus. John explores both theologically and autobiographically his own concept of his humanity in the context of the human nature of Jesus Christ. Understanding our own emerging humanity helps us understand and appreciate the humanity of Jesus, while at the same time, understanding the humanity of Jesus helps us understand and appreciate our own humanity.

John approaches his subject from four directions, our humanity as revealed in others, humanity in our history, our humanity in nature, and our humanity within ourselves. Each section is followed by little autobiographical remembrances, which are both humorous and startlingly honest. He explores the tension in which humanity struggles between law and determination on one hand and freedom on the other, always looking to the life and teachings of Christ for illustration. "In a way, Jesus 'un-codified' the law. . . . The radical change in his new commandment comes by imitating Jesus who embodies the law rather than in discovering different interpretations or new commandments for particular situations" (page 64). "Jesus is our prototype illuminating the interplay between divine freedom and power with human freedom and potency. . . . This I am unable to accept the theory of creationism because it compromises human freedom and potency revealed in Jesus' humanity" (page 100). At times, John admits the model Jesus presents causes him even more tension. "The incidents when Jesus seemed to defy the limitations of his humanity in the so-called nature miracles are for me very problematical and confusing" (page 102). Yet, in his humility, John recognizes that it is not for us to reduce everything to something we can readily explain. "If the idolatry of the former generations was expressed in making divine images in wood and stone, our temptation is manifested by making idols in our minds and attempting to capture God in ideas and rational propositions" (pages 106-107).

If I have one bone to pick with the book, it is that I wish the autobiographical stories were woven into the theological reflections rather than tucked onto the end of each section. I am a lover of stories, and I would have liked to come to them more often in the text. But perhaps John believed it would make his discourses seem too much like sermons. In spite of this mild criticism, however, I found the book both insightful and thought provoking. Phyllis Tickle in her workshop at the recent Parish Leadership Training Event (PLTE) in Birmingham, said our society struggles with ethical issues because "we don't know what it means to be human" anymore. If that's true, John Keith has given us an excellent place to start figuring it out.”

"We begin to understand our humanity as we are able to love and be loved by other people and see our human relationships in comparison to the perfect love of Jesus” (page 141).
Artwork Enhances Stations of the Cross

By Liz Edge, St. Stephen’s in Birmingham

I had never walked the Stations of the Cross until I was a pilgrim at Cursillo #160 in October 2007. Later I learned that people in many churches walk the Stations of the Cross during Cursillo weekends. I love doing that at my parish, but as a visual person I missed seeing the beautiful banners we had at Camp McDowell. I approached Amy Passley, our lay rector for Cursillo, about the possibility of creating some banners, and she directed me to our rector, Rev. Russell Kendrick. He was wonderfully supportive and suggested that the project might benefit from other artists’ participation. I talked with a few other creative church members, and before long we had an excited group of contributing artists!

I gave each artist the reading for his or her chosen Station to use as inspiration for the unique depictions of the cross. Everything else—the materials, images, style, and medium—was left up to the individual artist. To unify the collection, I painted all of the large canvas backgrounds and mounted each 16 by 20-inch piece of artwork, adding the Roman numeral for the Station at the top and a brief description below.

We hung the banners in the nave at St. Stephen’s for the first time for the Ash Wednesday services. They will remain hanging through Lent, and they will be officially blessed on Palm Sunday. I was particularly excited and touched to know that people would be walking the Stations with the new banners at St. Stephen’s on March 12 at the same time that I was on staff at Cursillo at Camp McDowell and would be reading for the walking of the Stations.

It was a privilege to be able to work with such gifted and creative people and a blessing to be part of this project. To me, the beauty and variety in the artwork is such a wonderful representation of the body of Christ: “Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ, we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us” (Romans 12:4-6).

Hilary Amaro, Charles Elliott, Carolyn Franklin, Frank Holden, Lucy Hollis, Nan Jacobs, Billie James, Lin Musgrove, Elizabeth and Brian Savage, Michael Swann, Liz Edge, and her husband, Drew, created the 14 pieces of art. You can see all of the completed banners and read the artists’ personal comments on our diocesan Web site, www.dioala.org, and on St. Stephen’s Web site, www.ssechurch.org.

You Are Invited

The Dedication of The Chapel of St. Francis of Assisi at Camp McDowell

Saturday, May 2
11 a.m. Dedication Service
Followed by a BBQ Picnic Lunch and Entertainment

Please join people from around our diocese to celebrate the completion of this beautiful new worship space and meeting facility. Parish choirs will provide special music at the dedication service. Children are asked to bring cut flowers and join the opening procession.

Please bring lawn chairs and/or a blanket to sit on for the barbecue picnic lunch. The members of the Yahoo and Flying Jenny bands, who are part of the Alabama Folk School at Camp McDowell, will entertain us with bluegrass and country music.

You can find directions to Camp McDowell, 105 DeLong Road, Nauvoo, AL 35578, online at www.campmcdowell.com; or contact the camp office at 205/387-1806 or 205/221-3454 (fax). You can register online at www.dioala.org, or contact Georganne Perrine at gperrine@dioala.org, or at 205/715-2060 ext. 318 or 205/715-2066 (fax) for a registration form.

Bishop Parsley Dedicates Garden of Peace Mosaics at St. Michael’s

When Bishop Parsley visited St. Michael’s in Fayette on February 22 for confirmation, reception, and baptism, he also dedicated the mosaics portraying the life of Jesus on the wall of the parish’s Garden of Peace. Rhys Marie Greene, a member of the parish and a very talented artist, created the colorful 20 by 30-inch panels in honor of the 25th anniversary of the Rev. Timothy Hoff’s ordination. She also created the mosaic depicting the Trinity on the opposite side of the garden wall.

You are invited to join people from around our diocese to celebrate the completion of this beautiful new worship space and meeting facility. Parish choirs will provide special music at the dedication service. Children are asked to bring cut flowers and join the opening procession.

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