CALLED TO BE EARTH STEWARDS:

“And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to till it and keep it.”

*Genesis 2:15*
Stewardship of Creation
Task Force Takes the Lead

By the Rev. Deacon Gerri Aston

Stewardship is a word much used in the Church. While most of us know that it means taking good care of valuable resources that have been entrusted to us, we sometimes emotionally react to the word as a euphemism for being coerced by guilt to give away our money or something of value that is ours. We often feel this way in spite of the fact that our scriptures and liturgy teach us week in and week out that nothing is ours, that it all belongs to God and has been entrusted to us for good management (stewardship).

In 2003, Bishop Henry Parzley along with then-Bishop Suffragan Marc Andrus established our Task Force for the Stewardship of Creation to provide a vehicle for our diocese to focus attention and action on better management of the incredibly beautiful and diverse corner of creation entrusted to us in central and north Alabama. The task force’s mission is to educate the people of our diocese, advocate for wise and just environmental policy, and provide opportunities for service in the stewardship of the Earth.

Our task force is a work group that connects with parishes through liaisons. Our goal is to have liaisons in every parish and for those liaisons to organize a parish Care of Creation Committee whose members will use the information and resources provided by the task force to implement education or action. Many of the activities that can be promoted will not only take good care of the piece of God’s world entrusted to us, but they will also save parishes as well as families money.

Our diocesan Task Force for the Stewardship of Creation is a national leader within the Episcopal Church and for faith groups in their care of God’s earth. When we received a letter written by the bishops of Province IV calling for dioceses to appreciate and care for the natural treasures found in our Southeastern states, our task force produced a photo CD that included a narration of the letter. We also produced a curriculum for adult Christian Education classes based on the bishops’ letter, its scriptural basis, and specific ways to respond. We distributed the CDs to all of the dioceses of Province IV as well as all the parishes in our diocese.

A former task force chair, Eleanor DelBene and current member Michael Churchman recently went to Washington, D.C., to participate at the national level in dialogues on the care of creation. Eleanor was invited to represent the Interfaith Environmental Initiative of Alabama (IEIA, www.interfaithenvironmental.org) at the White House Forum on Clean Energy and Public Health, where health advocates and community leaders from around the country met with Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) administrator Lisa P. Jackson and Health and Human Services (HHS) secretary Kathleen Sebelius.

Michael was asked to testify before the congressional subcommittee for water resources and the environment about the impacts of toxic coal ash delivered to a landfill in Perry County. This was the final hearing in a review of the coal ash spill at the TVA coal-fired power plant near Knoxville, the largest environmental disaster in U.S. history. Michael was invited by an Alabama congressman to represent environmental interests from our state (visit www.aacolline.org to read about his testimony).

With the support of grants from the World Wildlife Fund, our task force developed a curriculum for adult Christian education titled “Watersheds and Warming,” which connects water issues with climate change and our faith call to conserve and care for this precious life-sustaining resource. God gave us fresh drinking water as the Earth was being formed along with a natural process for recycling it; this is the same water we drink and bathe in every day—there are no refills. You can find this curriculum as well as other resources developed by our task force, including a simple energy audit for parishes, on our Web site, www.stewardsforcreation.org.

For more information please contact the current members of our diocesan Task Force for the Stewardship of Creation. Like other diocesan groups, our task force leadership and membership will change at our upcoming diocesan convention; the new leaders and members will be posted on our diocesan Web site, www.dioala.org.

2009-2010 Task Force

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Stewardship of Creation Task Force members, parish liaisons, and other participants at a “Watersheds and Warming” teacher training retreat at Camp McDowell: (front row) Michelle Bende (Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast), Sam Robertson (St. Mark’s in Prattville), Joyce Lanning (St. Luke’s in Birmingham), Laura Catherine Conville (St. Andrew’s in Birmingham), Jason Glasgow (St. Matthew’s in Madison), (middle row) Freya Neely (Nativity in Huntsville), Meg Stubbs (St. Alban’s in Hoover), Carl Badgley (Trinity in Winchester, Tennessee), Trudie Geisman (St. Matthew’s in Madison), Alfred Medall (St. Matthew’s in Madison), Kathy Quinn (St. Mark’s in Prattville), (back row) Tal Clanton (Nativity in Huntsville), Brad Dethero (Trinity in Florence), the Rev. Scott James (Trinity in Winchester, Tennessee), Carolyn Price (St. John’s in Decatur), the Rev. Deacon Gerri Aston (St. Andrew’s in Birmingham), and Susan and Ernie Thomas (Nativity in Huntsville); photo by Loh Needy

Visit Our Diocesan Web Site
For the most current news about our diocese please visit www.dioala.org.

The Alabama Episcopalian
January-February 2010
Consider the Lilies

This is our first vocation as human beings, according to the Bible—to care for creation as God’s stewards on earth. All the great religious traditions of the world echo this belief. As the great Lakota Chief Seattle boldly put it, “The earth was not made for man; man was made for the earth.”

But this has not been the prevailing viewpoint of modern human history. We have looked at the world anthropocentrically, as made primarily for us. Christianity has at times been used to promote such a view, with Genesis’ word “dominion” interpreted to mean that we are to harness and use the gifts of creation entirely for human well-being. There is some element of truth here, of course. Genesis says that the garden was filled with good things for humanity to consume and enjoy. But the real meaning of “having dominion” is to serve, to work for the good of the whole.

This is not just an invitation to environmental responsibility. It is really an invitation to joy. For only as we share with God the beauty of the world he has made and steward it properly can we fully experience the joy of being human.

Jesus clearly taught us this in the way he lived as the Lord who came “not to be served, but to serve.”

In our time we must learn to think ecologically—about creation’s interdependence and the needs of nature as a whole, not just our needs. Some of the most poignant photographs of recent years have to be those of the polar bears in the melting Arctic regions, showing bears stranded on broken ice shelves, unable to find food for themselves and their young. We cannot just chalk this up to random “natural selection” or the survival of the fittest. It is a failure of our stewardship of the Earth.

It could easily be so with the Cahaba lily after all. A dam, a few chemical dumps, careless waste disposal could so easily destroy the unique environment that makes this lily flourish in only a few places in the world. What a loss that would be for God’s creation and for human joy and delight. It is well to remember that creation is both resilient and terribly fragile. It is within our power to destroy and diminish the gifts of the Earth by our human exploitation and neglect.

All of this is a wake-up call to our responsibility to find new ways to sustain life that protect all living things along with the human community. It is not a matter of economic well-being versus the environment. As both the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Prince of Wales have recently said, “the economy is a wholly owned subsidiary of the environment.” Good environmental stewardship is good economic policy. We have the ingenuity and resources to do both, if we have the will.

Answering this wake-up call means that we must again see all life as God’s gift, not just our possession. It means we must renew our commitment to live not as consumers but as stewards and be responsible for conserving resources in our daily lives and businesses. It means that we must be willing to sacrifice our individual needs for the good of the whole. It means that we must be actively involved in the shaping of public policy in order to reduce the release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere and preserve habitat and the ancient ecosystems that make the Earth flourish.

Consider the lilies. This is not just an invitation to environmental responsibility. It is really an invitation to joy. For only as we share with God the beauty of the world he has made and steward it properly can we fully experience the joy of being human. It is this for which we are made in God’s image. As the Prayer Book says, “the earth is the Lord’s and he made it. O come, let us adore him.”

May these reflections find their way into New Year’s resolutions for us all, beginning with me.

Your servant in Christ,

This Fragile Earth

Sewance is justly famous for its fog, but last week I was there on a cold clear day, and I thought a little bit of the Morgan's Steep view would be just right before I headed home. But I was disappointed: I couldn't see as far as I remembered seeing; I couldn't see all the way to the horizon. Realizing that my eyes are now 30 years older, I put on my glasses, but it still just wasn't as clear as it used to be. It may be that I’ve romanticized the memories, that it was never much clearer, but I don’t think so. I think the fact is that the air is drier than it used to be.

This is not the opinion of a scientist trying to sell a book or a program or urge Congress to allocate money for research; this is not the findings of a survey trying to justify the existence of an organization or attempting to drum up support for a candidate. It is, however, the observation of someone who is hoping to stir people into action. This is not my area of expertise, but with my own eyes I can see that we're making a mess. The air is not as clean as it used to be, not as clean as it should be—and neither is the water. . . . We need to do a better job as stewards of God’s creation. Even if it costs us a little time, maybe even some money, it’s worth our careful attention and best efforts. It’s our responsibility to God.

The Rt. Rev. John McKee Sloan

Spearheading Recycling Initiatives

By the Rev. Allison Sandlin Liles, Associate Priest of Holy Trinity in Auburn

Parishioners and clergy alike at Holy Trinity in Auburn take seriously God's call in the beginning for man and woman to be good stewards of the environment. We are told in the book of Genesis that God made Adam and Eve to have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and every living thing that moves upon the earth. I believe that the word "dominion" means that we as human beings have sovereignty over and responsibility for the well-being of God's creation. We are called to cultivate and care for the Earth in the way that God does, that is with love and wisdom.

We established a Stewardship of Creation Task Force at Holy Trinity two years ago to educate the members of our parish about this responsibility, advocate for wise and just environmental policy, and provide opportunities for service in the stewards of the Earth. And what a success it has been! Since its inception the task force has begun a successful recycling program at Holy Trinity, provided weekly Tips of the Week in the parish's weekly newsletter, adorned every light switch in the church with a "Please turn me off" sign (created with recycled materials, of course!), and switched to recycled paper for all parish bulletins and mailings. And those are just the everyday changes! After searching for the perfect reusable shopping bag for months, parishioner Lesley Foote discovered Baggu Bags, which fold into a small pouch, while she was visiting the Boston Children's Museum. Lesley contacted Baggu and purchased 300 bags for Holy Trinity. Parishioner Mary Olsen and George Littleton also shared their creativity and skill by creating a beautiful design for the bags and printing them. Members of the Auburn community now see the Holy Trinity Stewardship of Creation logo every time they grocery shop!

Last April marked the parish's second Earth Week celebration, and we dedicated two Sundays and the days inbetween to this most important subject. Our hymns, prayers, readings, and sermons all reflected our call as Christians to care for the creation God entrusted to us. Sunday school classes for children and adults addressed this issue as well as EYC activities for our youth. In 2008 we collected compact fluorescent bulbs during Earth Week to replace incandescent ones around the church, and last year we held a Croc Shoes collection. Soles United, established by Crocs Inc., recycles wornout Crocs by making them into new footwear. These new shoes are then distributed to organizations all over the world to make sure the shoes reach those who need them most. We were delighted to support such a worthwhile program.

For more information on Holy Trinity's Stewardship of Creation Task Force or to see what we are up to next, please visit www.holytrinitychurch.info/Stewardship%20Campaign.html.
Hosting a Rain Barrel-Making Workshop
By the Rev. Deacon Gerri Aston, a Member of St. Andrew’s in Birmingham

On the Care of Creation Sunday last April, the parishioners of St. Andrew’s in Birmingham not only used the prayers and hymns suggested by Bishop Parsley, but they also hosted an entrance procession that included an owl and a snake from Ruffner Mountain Wildlife Rescue Center as well as a tree that had been donated to be planted after the service on the lawn in front of St. Joseph’s House adjacent to the church. The whole congregation helped fill in the soil around the tree, a lovely crab apple in full bloom. The day before this joyful springtime celebration, the parish had hosted a rain barrel-making workshop, and the first barrel had been installed at St. Joseph’s House. Thus the watering of this lovely tree for its first critical year of growth would be ensured since it would be watered with collected rainwater.

Michael Churchman, a member of our diocesan Task Force for the Stewardship of Creation and the executive director of the Alabama Environmental Council, provided the instruction and tools for the rain barrel-making workshop. The parish had procured empty 55-gallon food-grade barrels from the Birmingham Coca-Cola bottling plant and also supplied all of the fittings needed to make them into rain barrels. The participants paid $35 for each barrel they wanted to take home.

The workshop was loads of fun. Making each barrel required teamwork, which created a bonding experience for the participants. Michael was a great instructor, and there was a lot of laughter as we all worked together to fit the barrels with the spigots, screened openings, and overflow hoses. While everything worked in the end, most of us were unskilled with power tools, which made for a few interesting moments.

It is amazing how quickly a rain barrel fills up. Even a short thundershower can fill a 55-gallon barrel! While rain barrels with their limited capacity are not a solution for storm-water runoff or reducing the use of drinking water for landscape irrigation, they do help. They also provide a reminder that addressing both of these issues is an important way to care for God’s creation.

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Processing and distributing pure drinking water requires a great deal of energy. So when we use drinking water for purposes that do not require treated water or squander it by letting it run down the drain, we not only are wasting water, but we are wasting energy as well.

Rainwater is designed by God to soak into the ground to the water table or slowly find its way through vegetation to streams and then rivers to the sea. Because so much of our world has replaced vegetation with the hard surfaces of roofs and pavement, rainwater has become a storm-water problem requiring storm sewers and treatment plants that use energy. Any bit of rainwater that can be collected for landscape use or allowed to soak slowly into the ground saves energy. We hope to find a place on the St. Andrew’s campus to build a rain garden this coming spring so that some of the rain that falls on our roofs and pavement can be captured to soak slowly into the earth.

The crab apple tree is thriving in its new home. The blooms will adorn our Easter season and the fruit will feed the urban wildlife—and we may even get a few jars of jelly!

If you would like Michael Churchman to lead a rain barrel-making workshop at your parish, please contact him at mjchurchman@gmail.com.

Wading In To Help
Clean Up Shades Creek
By Joyce Lanning, a Member of St. Luke’s in Birmingham

Last September a dozen vigorous souls from St. Luke’s Stewardship of Creation Committee, Senior Youths, and Scout Troop 86 joined with five dozen more from across the community to pick up trash from Shades Creek and South Lakeshore Drive, which runs along the creek. Our group had the area from the armory to Mountain Brook High School, and we found more trash than our black bags could handle.

In all, the various teams cleaned for two hours or more in about five different areas, collecting two truckloads of trash. One group found the front and back bumpers of a car, and one of our scouts located two hubcaps, which were kept as trophies. The Rev. Steve DeGweck didn’t try to haul out the dumpster he found, and that’s a good thing because it has defied all plans to remove it for some years! However he did come back with so much other trash that we had to find extra bags for it. We were amazed at the number of plastic bags caught in trees and shrubs at high-water marks, but we found fewer cans and bottles than we had expected.

This was the 11th year that the Friends of Shades Creek has held a cleanup—and hopefully St. Luke’s will be helping from now on. A good time was had by all!
Theological Reflection Leads to Action

By Freya Neely with photos by Loch Neely, Members of the Nativity in Huntsville

My feelings about the stewardship of creation come from my belief in God as Creator of our world and also in response to Jesus’ answer to the question about which is the greatest commandment: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this, Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these” (Mark 12:30-31). So if we truly put God first, then we will care about the effects of our actions on other people and the world we share. Therefore for me concern for the environment and concern about changing climate and the conditions in the world we will be leaving for the next generations are moral, ethical, and faith issues.

“We write you to address our joyful, weighty responsibility to take seriously our stewardship of God’s creation,” the bishops of Province IV wrote in the Care of Creation Pastoral Letter they sent to all of us in the dioceses and parishes of this area in 2003. “In this letter we will speak to the theology of Earth stewardship, the imminent Earth crisis that demands our attention as stewards of the Earth, and a specific call to engage in environmental education in our dioceses and parishes.” The bishops reminded us that the Bible begins with the creation stories and that the theme of care for all creation is also found in Leviticus 25, which records God telling the Hebrew people to “give the earth its Sabbaths.” In the New Testament, references in Luke 12:6 and Romans 8 lead us to understand that our fate, our lives, are caught up with all the other lives with which we share creation. (You can read this wonderful letter online at www.stewardsforcreation.org, click on “Education Materials” and then “Pastoral Letter.”)

The theme of caring for creation is repeated over and over in the Book of Common Prayer. Eucharistic Prayer C celebrates God’s creation and calls us to respond to God’s call to return to God’s will. In the Prayers of the People Form 1 we pray, “For the good earth which God has given us, and for the wisdom and will to conserve it.” In our Collects, Prayers and Thanksgivings, Catechism and Propers, we are instructed to honor God’s creation, be good stewards, and give thanks for God’s graciousness to us in creation. So stewardship of creation is not a new concept for our Church—it has been right here in our Prayer Book for many years.

In recent years people of faith all over the world have been joining hands in efforts to address the issues challenging the health of God’s creation and economic and environmental justice. We are blessed in our diocese to have a Task Force for the Stewardship of Creation “to educate the people of the diocese, advocate for wise and just environmental policy, and provide opportunities for service in the stewardship of the Earth.” Similar groups exist in other dioceses and provinces of the Episcopal Church, and many secular groups also are addressing environmental concerns.

When I was researching environmental issues, I had no trouble finding things we all need to think about. I know most of us just don’t want to have to worry about all this stuff, and there are disagreements over just what is a problem and what is not, or if it is a problem how bad it is. And I certainly have found disagreements about solutions. I’ve picked a few things to bring up here to perhaps raise your awareness about some environmental concerns, and you can decide for yourself if they are issues of concern for you. Just as we are in different places on our spiritual journeys, we’re also in different places on our “environmental awareness journeys,” and we’ll likely take notice of and be willing to take action on different things.

**Raising Awareness About Some of the Current Environmental Concerns**

**Water, Water, Water.** I keep hearing those-in-the-know say that future wars won’t be fought over oil but rather water. We are blessed in Alabama to have about 77,000 miles of rivers and streams. Our state’s diverse waterways rank us fifth in the nation in plant and animal diversity and first in freshwater species diversity—unfortunately we rank fourth in the number of species at risk for extinction. Obviously we need to protect our waterways and defend our right to have clean and healthy water in Alabama today and for generations to come.

**Plastics.** One of the things I’ve been concerned about for some time is the possible damage certain plastics can do to our health and the environment—and even more importantly to the health of our children and grandchildren. Many scientists and consumer advocates question the safety of plastics use, and they are concerned that we are trading health for convenience. The reasons to avoid plastics include that they are made from petroleum, a nonrenewable resource; the production of plastics releases toxic chemicals into the environment; and chemicals can migrate from many plastics into food, water, air, and our children’s bodies!

**Consumerism and Disproportionate Use of Resources.** Many people of faith are concerned about the effect of consumerism and the disproportionate use of the world’s resources by the “developed” nations.
Collins, the first female leader of a space shuttle, stated that (from outer space) she could see with her own eyes widespread environmental destruction, and she warned that greater care was needed to protect our home. “The atmosphere almost looks like an eggshell on an egg, it’s so very thin,” she emphasized. “We know that we don’t have much air—we need to protect what we have.” James Hansen, a renowned climate scientist with NASA’s Goddard Institute for Space Science, adds that, “We are already guaranteed two more degrees of warming, but we dare not go above that.” The question to us is: what kind of world are we going to choose, a world that is two degrees hotter than normal—or one that is three or five degrees hotter, the results of which are unimaginable.

### Offering Some Suggestions and Choices for Action

**I. Become informed.**

Many books, magazine articles, news stories, and information on Web sites report that the car we drive and the appliances we purchase have the greatest impact on the environment. So become informed and make wise choices when making those purchases. See “Informative Web Sites” on page 9.

**II. Use less resources every day.**

If enough of us doing the following 10 things, we will make a positive impact on the environment and we will save money at the same time!

1. Turn the water off while brushing your teeth or shaving.
2. Fill a milk jug with stones or water and place it in your toilet tank to displace water.
3. Time your showers and limit them to 10 minutes or less.
4. Fix toilet and faucet leaks immediately.
5. Don’t waste water by using your toilet as a trash can.
6. Keep a container near your sinks and showers or tubs, and catch the “warm-up” water while you are waiting for cold water to get hot. Use the “warm-up” water for your indoor and outdoor plants.
7. Turn off the lights when you leave a room, and turn off and unplug electronic appliances when you’re not using them.
8. When using your air conditioner, set your thermostat no lower than 78 degrees. You increase your cost by 5 percent for every degree lower than 78.
9. Don’t idle your car unnecessarily because an idling car engine is a major source of pollution. If you need to clean frost off your windshield and/or let your car engine warm up in freezing temperatures, be mindful that the air pollution you will be creating. Wait until you’re ready to leave the house before you start your car. And if you have to wait at a train crossing or in lines, turn off the engine.
10. Partially dry clothes in your dryer, and then hang them to finish drying. This not only saves electricity and money, but it also saves wear and tear on your clothes and dryer.

**III. Consider using your car less.**

I have a friend who lives completely off the grid except for driving to and from work when she has to, and I have a relative, who is a well-respected writer in Knoxville, who doesn’t drive unless it’s absolutely necessary—he either rides his bike or takes the bus most places.

**IV. Reduce your consumerism.**

Many people I know are cutting back on the number of products they buy by being innovative about meeting their clothing and household needs and gift-giving. Instead of a usual gift, consider giving a donation to Episcopal Relief and Development, the Nature Conservancy, the Cousteau Society, Heifer International, or other charities or organizations that are good stewards of resources.

**V. Tell your elected officials about your concerns.**

In order to take the care of creation to the next level, our local, state, and national elected officials need to be committed to environmental awareness and statutory changes to protect the citizens of Alabama and our environment. Send a postcard, letter, or e-mail; make a phone call; or visit your officials to tell them about your concerns and suggestions for ways we can work together to conserve and preserve our precious natural resources. Our elected officials will see your personal contact as representative of many other people who share your views.

**VI. For more tips and helpful resources please see the stories on pages 2-5 and 8-13 of this issue.**

I hope these thoughts raise your awareness or give you some new information so together we can all be better stewards of creation and leave a better world for future generations. May we honor God’s creation and each other and live out our true values as we respond to Jesus’ words to us to love the Lord our God with all our heart and all our soul and all our mind and all our strength and love our neighbor as we love ourselves.

Our nation represents about 5 percent of the world’s population, but we use one-third of the world’s paper, 25 percent of the oil, 23 percent of the coal, 27 percent of the aluminum, and 19 percent of the copper. Per person we use twice as much fossil fuel as the average resident of Great Britain and two and a half times as much as the average American discards nearly a ton of trash per year, two to three times as much as the typical Western European throws away. But don’t panic—just see the “Suggestions and Choices for Action” (at right) for ways you can reduce your consumerism and the amount of resources you and your family use.

**Climate Change.** Of course the elephant sitting in the room with us is CLIMATE CHANGE. Eileen
Raising Environmental Awareness

By Cammie Sanders, a Member of St. Catherine’s in Chelsea

One of the things that drew me to St. Catherine’s in Chelsea was the enthusiasm for the environment that I saw in our rector, the Rev. John Mark Ford. Soon after joining the parish, I found myself in the position of Environmental Liaison. I like to think of St. Catherine’s current building as a mini-church. Blessed with pews and an organ (essential items for a cradle Episcopalian), we rent an old building from the community church across the street. Our parish hall and children’s classrooms are in the basement (if a child is upset in the nursery, everyone knows it). We are working on an expansion into a portable building since we need more room. It is not the Vatican, but it is all that is needed at this time—and we are thankful to have it.

In our short time as a parish, St. Catherine’s has taken several steps toward becoming good stewards of God’s creation. Right now we are focusing on the little things that can be done such as recycling church bulletins and investing in low-flow toilets. We have taught our diocesan Care of Creation “Watersheds and Warming” adult Sunday school series, and we have discussed the addition of rain barrels to our building (but with all of the rain lately we have switched our focus to the construction of an ark!).

We are blessed with a lot of children at St. Catherine’s, and we believe that they should be environmentally aware as well. Our first Bible school two years ago had an environmental theme, and the kids learned a lot. It is important that when we teach love and how to take care of each other, we also teach our kids to love and take care of God’s creation too. A multigenerational (not as meditative as the adult version) rendition of the cosmic walk resulted in wonderful questions and thought-provoking discussion with the children. One night in late December I had a moment of reflection where I realized what a true testament it is to be a part of our parish—out of the corner of my eye I saw my nine-year-old take off a piece of her Advent chain and slip it into our family’s recycling bin.

In a small church everybody has to do everything. It is nearly impossible to attend church and not participate on various committees, teach Sunday school, or write articles for The Alabama Episcopalian. It is, however, easy to start a recycling program with a single trash can, work the “Watersheds and Warming” curriculum into the Sunday school schedule, and plan the construction of an environmentally sound facility when it is time for us to build. Our church’s motto “making it up as we go” really takes a lot of pressure off! For now we are doing what we can with what we have, not taking any more than needed, and setting our sights on the future.

Our parishioners were excited to learn how blessed Alabama is with biological diversity. In fact the Nature Conservancy ranks Alabama first among the states for freshwater diversity. The Cahaba River alone contains 135 species of fish, compared to 99 species that exist in the entire state of California. It was wonderful to learn that Alabama ranks first on some positive lists and that we rank among the top ten states for the number and diversity of reptiles and amphibians. Our state is also home to a large number of mammals and birds, and birdwatchers come here annually from around the country to see bird migrations, which contributes to our state’s economy.

This year Harvey will teach additional classes building on what we learned last year. As Bishop Parsley emphasized in the introduction to the “Watersheds and Warming” curriculum, “The more we know about the Earth and the environment, the more we will love and care for them.”

Training Others and Teaching Care of Creation

By Freya Neely, a Member of the Nativity in Huntsville

In November 2008 the Nativity in Huntsville hosted a workshop to train adult Christian educators to teach the “Watersheds and Warming” curriculum, which was developed by our diocesan Task Force for Stewardship of Creation. The course is designed to raise awareness of the abundant natural riches we have in our diocese, especially our water resources and the creatures that live in and depend on those waters.

Tad Clanton, a member of our parish’s Stewardship of Creation Ministry team, served as the trainer for the participants, who included members of our parish and other area churches. Tad had attended the Train the Trainers event held by our diocesan task force and then generously gave of his time to “teach the teachers.” So of course our parish’s Stewardship of Creation Ministry followed through by offering the “Watersheds and Warming” classes, and the members of our parish seemed to love it. Harvey Cotton, who is a member of Nativity and the COO of the Huntsville/Madison County Botanical Garden, taught the sessions. We adapted the original curriculum to meet the congregation’s needs by doing five sessions instead of six and slightly modifying the format. Since several other wonderful Sunday school classes were being taught at the same time, we would have been happy if 20 people attended, but much to our delight 35 attended the first Sunday and attendance peaked at 53! There was so much interest that we added two additional sessions because people wanted more!

Our parishioners were excited to learn how blessed Alabama is with biological diversity. In fact the Nature Conservancy ranks Alabama first among the states for freshwater diversity. The Cahaba River alone contains 135 species of fish, compared to 99 species that exist in the entire state of California. It was wonderful to learn that Alabama ranks first on some positive lists and that we rank among the top ten states for the number and diversity of reptiles and amphibians. Our state is also home to a large number of mammals and birds, and birdwatchers come here annually from around the country to see bird migrations, which contributes to our state’s economy.

This year Harvey will teach additional classes building on what we learned last year. As Bishop Parsley emphasized in the introduction to the “Watersheds and Warming” curriculum, “The more we know about the Earth and the environment, the more we will love and care for them.”
How To Green Your Parish

By Michael Churchman, a Member of All Saints' in Birmingham and Director of the Alabama Environmental Council

In today's popular culture, it is hard to look in any direction and not see a group that is trying to be more sustainable and improve their image by being “green.” The Green Guide to Living, Greening Your Business, Green Building Standards . . . it’s everywhere. And for a good reason! Green is good in many regards: Green will ensure a more sustainable footprint for the future, in a different way green can be the money saved, and in our context, God’s Word instructs us to be good stewards of “this fragile Earth, our island home.”

A quick Internet search for greening your parish will yield more than 3.5 million results. Assuming that you are overwhelmed with that, I hope this article can be a resource for how you can go about greening your local church. Our diocesan Task Force for the Stewardship of Creation has a wide network of parish liaisons who are willing to help as well.

The first step is to gather a group of three or four people who are highly motivated to create a Creation Care Committee in your parish. These people then must seek approval from the rector and parish leadership to form the committee. The number of committee members can vary, but their commitment should be to meet on an ongoing basis.

A quick Internet search for greening your parish will yield more than 3.5 million results. Assuming that you are overwhelmed with that, I hope this article can be a resource for how you can go about greening your local church.

Second, the newly formed committee should discuss their mission and goals, which will guide the group’s actions and serve as a basis for communication to the members of your parish about projects. The committee members also need to discern any actions that have already taken place, give recognition for accomplishments, and establish a baseline. Then the group should design an annual plan along the way to help them—and the members of your parish—appreciate and celebrate your accomplishments as well as identify areas that are not being addressed or have not been identified yet. You will also find opportunities for growth with some projects leading to additional actions to even further meet the committee’s established goals.

For more information please visit the Web sites listed below and also read about what other parishes are doing in this issue of The Alabama Episcopalian. Our diocesan Task Force for the Stewardship of Creation will be displaying and discussing additional resources at our upcoming diocesan convention.

INFORMATIVE WEB SITES

www.stewardsforcreation.org
This is our diocesan Task Force for the Stewardship of Creation Web site, where you will find an “Energy Audit” and other resources, including the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Energy Guide for Congregations and a link to EarthMinistry’s guide to Greening Congregations.

www.earth911.com
Here you will find actionable local information on recycling and product stewardship that will empower you to act locally, live responsibly, and contribute to sustainability.

www.myecomax.com
This educational initiative shows that sustainable living is not just about lessening our impact on the environment, but it is also about saving money on energy bills and creating a healthier home and lifestyle.

www.cahabariversociety.org
The Cahaba River Society is reaching out to faith communities for the care of creation. The society is part of a growing movement in our region to bring together people from faith communities, environmental groups, civic groups, and the development profession to collaborate for watershed and drinking water conservation, with a connection to energy use and calming climate change.

www.interfaithenvironmental.org
The Interfaith Environmental Initiative of Alabama, a community-based network, is connecting members of faith, science, education, environmental, business, government, and the arts sectors to learn together and encourage and inspire informed choices for the care of creation.

www.aeconline.org/rainbarrel
This Web site offers a printable flyer about how to build your own rain barrel for less than $30.

Did You Know?

Contributed by Michael Churchman

Here are some thought-provoking statistics about how our actions are impacting our environment.

* In five minutes a hot-water faucet uses as much energy as a 60-watt bulb uses in 14 hours.
* Replacing just 10 percent of existing home water fixtures with devices just 20 percent more efficient would save 128 billion gallons a year—enough to provide water for 3.5 million people.
* The amount of electricity used for residential water heating in the United States totals more than 104 billion kilowatts, while the amount used for all residential lighting (indoor and outdoor) totals only 101 billion kilowatts.
* Recycling saves 95 percent of the energy required to make aluminum cans from virgin ore.
* Manufacturers produce more than 15 million tons of polystyrene (aka Styrofoam) each year, but less than 1 percent of it is recycled.
* Only about 80 of the 460 municipalities and 26 of the 67 counties in Alabama provide recycling opportunities, and some of those are very limited in scope.
* Estimates report that each person living in Alabama produces 9.9 pounds of waste each day. The national average is 4.5 pounds.
* In 1991 a goal was set to decrease waste going into landfills in Alabama by 25 percent, yet the waste stream in our state has increased by 57 percent.
Taking Care of Creation at Our Diocesan Conventions

By Brad Dethero, the Rev. Deacon Gerri Aston, Freya Neely, and Charlie Scribner, Members of Our Diocesan Task Force for the Stewardship of Creation

For the past several months the members of our Task Force for the Stewardship of Creation have been working hard to ensure that the care of creation is an integral part of our 179th Annual Diocesan Convention, which will be held at the Shoals Convention Center in Florence on February 11-13. Florence is situated on the banks of the Tennessee River, a major river system that, along with the Mobile River, has been identified by the World Wildlife Fund as one of 19 places worldwide for their focus on conservation and protection. These major water resources are also part of the basis for “Watersheds and Warming,” the curriculum compiled and published by our task force for parish education. Bishop Parsley and our diocese in general have been very supportive of the development of this curriculum and its message about our role in caring for God’s handiwork.

We are excited to have helped plan our upcoming convention at a center whose facilities overlook the Tennessee River, a treasure for aquatic wildlife, commerce, recreation, and drinking water for many north Alabama residents. We have been coordinating our environmental initiatives with Phoebe Saye and her hospitality staff at the Marriott Shoals Hotel. They have been very receptive to requests for information and special touches to meet our goals and commitments to the care of creation. These efforts with the Marriott were first put into place by Sarah Sartain at Carpenter House in the early stages of planning and site selection. It is wonderful that many of our interests for care of creation issues surrounding our diocesan convention do not have to be ushered in by a specific task force, but they are already part of standard operating procedures for our diocesan administration. This is clearly a testimony to the commitment to the care of creation at our highest diocesan level.

Our plans include emphasis on using nondisposable items for refreshment stands and coordinating recycling receptacles and awareness/training of convention center staff with regard to our goals. A number of recycling containers will be placed about the convention hall and gathering areas for convenience. The Marriott staff will empty these containers routinely into larger receptacles for collection by the City of Florence Solid Waste and Recycling Department. The city regularly collects and recycles most of the waste materials that will be generated at convention including cardboard, paper, plastic, and aluminum. (For more information on Florence’s recycling program please visit www.florenceal.org/Public_Works/Street_Sanitation/Recycle/index.html.

Thanks to the tireless efforts of the members of our diocesan Task Force for the Stewardship of Creation, our diocesan leadership, and your cooperation, we have been able to significantly reduce waste and recycle the rest at our diocesan conventions. In the past five years our diocese literally has kept tons of waste from the landfills of Alabama!

While plastic is a commonly recycled material, we will endeavor to minimize any use of disposable plastic items (plates, cups, utensils, and drink bottles) because of multiple negative impacts disposable plastic products, particularly bottled water, have on the environment. During refreshment breaks, water will be served in glasses from pitchers, coffee will be served in nondisposable cups, and soft drinks will likely be provided in aluminum cans. Convention participants will be made aware of these efforts and initiatives by appropriate signage as well as announcements made by the leaders of our convention.

Our task force will have an exhibit this year as we have had at every convention since 2004. We hope you will come by and visit the exhibit and share with us what your parish is doing for the care of creation. If your parish does not have anyone serving as a liaison to our task force, you may want to come to convention with the name of someone willing to serve in that capacity. Liaisons are the contact persons for distributing information from our task force to parishes.

At past conventions our diocesan Task Force for the Stewardship of Creation has presented or sponsored workshops to help educate the delegates and guests about conservation, environmental justice, and making rain barrels. This year we will be displaying “Food for Thought” posters throughout the convention site to help raise awareness and give practical information about care of creation issues.

We have been working diligently to make our diocesan conventions greener each year. We first tackled recycling in a major way in 2005, but for several years prior to 2005 the Rev. Mark Johnston loaded whatever materials happened to be collected into the back of his pickup truck and hauled them to a recycling center. As will happen in Florence this year, several of the communities where conventions have been held have local recycling and will pick up the recyclables at the convention site. When this is not available, members of our task force carry the recyclables to the closest recycling center.

The past few years we have been working more closely with our diocesan convention coordinator, the host parish committees, and the management and staff of the convention sites to reduce the quantity of recyclables and volume of waste materials. For example, we now use recyclable paper containers for lunches to eliminate the use of Styrofoam/polystyrene containers and coffee cups (in accordance with our diocesan policy). We also use china coffee cups and water stations with glass or recyclable cups instead of plastic water bottles. In 2007 the Sheraton at the civic center in Birmingham made a real effort to work with us, and after the convention the management said that ours was their first “green” convention, and it came just as their corporate headquarters was instituting new “green” policies.

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Landscaping with Native Species

By the Rev. Mark Johnston, Executive Director of Camp McDowell

Jack Johnston, who lives in North Georgia, is a friend of Camp McDowell. A naturalist and botanist, he discovered Camp McDowell when he was searching for the rare silky camellia, Stewartsia makedoaehron. This wild camellia is very rare, and Camp McDowell’s canyons are one of the few places in the world with some large and healthy populations.

Did you know that Alabama is one of the most biologically diverse places in the world? We have more aquatic species of animals than any other state and are near the top in total biodiversity. Camp McDowell sits in the middle of an area that supports an incredible number and variety of different plants and animals.

Jack has been harvesting seed from some of our rare species for several years. In November he returned to plant silky camellias around the new Chapel of St. Francis as part of our landscaping plan. Hopefully all of the 28 plants will prosper and give all of us the chance to see and enjoy this beautiful flowering shrub.

The landscaping plan is a gift from Carol Keydoszus of Chilton County. The plantings in her plan include only native species, which makes sense for several reasons. These species will be easy to tend because they grow naturally here. They will also add an educational component by allowing everyone to learn about and recognize them. In addition, many non-native species are invasive, and planting only native species allows us to protect the integrity of our native biodiversity. Thanks to Jack and other volunteers, the site around the chapel will become more and more beautiful.

Helpful Hints for the Care for God’s Creation

By the Rev. Jayne Pool with Additional Information from Michael Churchman

A lifestyle of caring for God’s creation is easy. Simply remember the three Rs: Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle.

**REDUCE**

We are all familiar with the many ways to reduce: turning off lights, carpooling, fixing water leaks, and turning the thermostat down or up depending on the season. Here are a few others to consider:

* When you are cooking, remove and return items from and to the refrigerator all at once because each time the refrigerator is opened, even for a moment, it takes three minutes to restore it to its proper temperature.

* Reduce the number of purchased plastic bags (“baggies”) you use by using ceramic, glass, or stainless-steel containers with lids instead. These containers last for years! If do not wish to invest in such items, just save, clean, and use jars from jelly, mustard, pickles, and other foods. You’ll be following two creation-caring principles at the same time: reducing and reusing!

**REUSE**

This step engages our minds and taps into our creativity plus it saves you money and often helps with home organization! One example is reusing plastic pharmacy prescription bottles.

Clean and remove the labels from prescription bottles, and reuse them:

* for storing nuts and bolts in the toolbox
* as travel containers for shampoo, conditioner, and other essentials
* be sure to tighten the lid
* for holding paper clips, rubber bands, and other small desk items
* for holding small portions of spices and seasonings when you are going to spend a week at a beach house
* holding your watch, rings, and other jewelry when you are working out, swimming, or at the swimming pool.

These are but a few of the tasks for which these handy containers can be used beyond their original purpose. The same is true for many items that are regularly discarded without a second thought. Next time before you toss an item into the trash, ponder what further function it could serve—the possibilities are endless!

**RECYCLE**

Please always remember this foundational element of caring for God’s world.

* Recycle whatever you are able.

* Advocate for recycling efforts in your parish, at your workplace, in your clubs, at social gatherings, with friends, and whenever else possible.

People may tease you and call you a tree-hugger, but you are tending God’s world. You are doing your part to offer your grandchildren and others the life-sustaining and wondrous environment that you received as a gift from the Creator.

Another R—Rejoice!

Maybe as Christians we should add another R to the three principles of caring for God’s Creation: Rejoice! As we do the little things that make a big difference, it is, as it has been said, “meet and right” that we rejoice in the gift of Creation with which God has blessed us. Such joy inspires us to continue our efforts and shields us from despair by reminding us that only with God’s help can these actions find fruition.

As you reduce, reuse, and recycle, therefore do not forget to rejoice!
Exploring the Doxology, the Creation Story, and Stewardship of Creation

By Candice Frazer, Director of Family Ministries at St. Paul’s in Selma

Vacation Bible School at St. Paul’s last summer was a time of reflection, joy, and learning. We explored the Doxology in terms of the Creation Story and our Christian responsibility toward the stewardship of the Earth. We divided the doxology into four parts and attributed the theme of each line to each of four days. We wore specific colors to reflect the theme of the day, and even our snacks contributed to our intentional lessons.

Praise God from whom all blessings flow . . .

We began in the beginning . . . “the spirit of God was moving over the waters.” Our first day was splashtastic! The children explored the image of water described in the first line of the Doxology and related that image to the words used in the Creation story. One of our activities involved counting the number of times water or a related word appeared in the first chapter of Genesis. We discussed the significance of water and how it cleanses us. We also talked about how 75 percent of the world is covered in water and what that might mean as to the importance of water and how we are called to care for the water. In the kitchen we decorated reusable water bottles with Stewardship of Creation themes and explored the three Rs: “Reduce, Recycle, and Reuse!” At arts and crafts we used watercolors to paint pictures of the Earth. Our science project was a great lesson in how animals of prey ingest poison through the food supply of all these things: “have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” The children made air-popped popcorn in the kitchen and “bird seed” for a snack. They made kites in arts and crafts and played balloon games. For their science experiment, they blasted caps skyward and then scurried around to clean up after themselves. And we took great big breaths of fresh air and talked about what it might feel like if we didn’t have clean air to breathe.

Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost . . .

“... and let the dry land appear.” The Earth and all that is in it are ours to care for and protect. On our second day we explored the importance of air as our home and our responsibilities to her and the beasts that roam about her. In our study of the first chapter of Genesis, we discussed all the references to land and land creatures found in the text, and again we asked the question as to the significance of these images. The children were quick to point out that the things God created were “good” and “very good.” Several of the volunteers noticed that the children were much more aware of the need to pick up trash and put it in either the recyclables or the trash can depending on what the trash was. For arts and crafts, children used quick-crete to make stepping stones with pebbles and other goodies from Mother Nature as decoration. In the kitchen they made their own edible “dirt” complete with gummy worms and drank from their reusable water bottles.

Our science project was a great lesson in how animals of prey ingest poison through the food supply as smaller animals eat toxins that humans have discarded in the Earth. We used poker chips and divided the children into several groups. The largest group was the “rodent” group. They scurried around “devouring” the red and black poker chips. Black poker chips were fine, but the red ones represented the poison. The children did not know that the red ones were poisonous and collected those along with the black. As there were so many “rodents,” the effect was minimal. The next group was the “snakes,” and they had to tag the “rodents” and collect all their “food”—the amount of red chips was becoming more concentrated. After all the “rodents” were tagged, the final and smallest group, the three “mongooses,” tagged all the “snakes” and collected their “food”—each “mongoose” ended up with a significant number of red chips. Then we explained the game, and the children easily understand how animals became poisoned through harsh chemicals used in a variety of rural and urban settings.

Praise him above ye heavenly host . . .

You have probably figured out that our study of Genesis was not exactly in order. On day three we were all about “air.” We identified all the references to air and creatures of the air in our study of Genesis 1, and we began to explore how God had put us in charge of the darkness.” We beamed sunlight through prisms and made the colors dance on the old bricks of our church. And we talked about how not only the light, but all of creation was a gift from God meant to be enjoyed, celebrated, and taken care of.

Amen.

If you would like more information on our “Doxology” VBS please contact me at family@stpauls Selma.org.
Hands-On Learning at Our Unique Outdoor Classroom

By Maggie Wade Johnston, Director of the McDowell Environmental Center

One of the most common questions I am asked when showing guests around McDowell Environmental Center (MEC) is, “This is great! But where is the Environmental Center?”

“You are standing in the middle of it!” I reply. “Camp McDowell is blessed with a 1,100-acre classroom, and that is our Environmental Center.”

Yep, our 18 college-degreeed naturalists always teach their classes outdoors. Occasionally storms run us inside for a while, but most of the time when it’s wet we wear raingear, and when it’s cold we bundle up in layers of clothes plus hats and gloves. The sky is our ceiling. The trees and sandstone canyons are our walls. Our “graphics” are waterfalls and streams that you can reach out and touch—and they will really get you wet. Who do we teach in our diocese’s year-round, outside-in-all-kinds-of-weather classroom? Our students are adults and children from across the Southeast. Schoolchildren from inner-city and other public as well as private schools come with their teachers and chaperones to learn about their connections to nature and the world in which we live. The MEC is an extension of their classrooms. Most stay three days or more in our camp cabins, and they eat meals at Eppes Dining Hall. From the list of the more than 20 classes the MEC offers, the schoolteachers choose classes that correlate to what they are teaching in their own classrooms. Our class topics range from Pond and Stream Studies, Geology, and Forestry to Native Americans and the Earth.

Recently I was going down an escalator in Birmingham when I heard a young girl on the up side yell out, “Maggie!” and give me a big grin. Another day I was standing in line at the Birmingham-Jefferson Civic Center waiting for a play to start when I heard the same outcry, but this time it was followed by little arms thrown around my waist. I had to explain to the bewildered parents that I wasn’t a stranger—I was the director of the MEC and their children had met me when they came to Camp McDowell with their school groups.

MEC staff members

As members of our diocese we know what a trip to Camp McDowell can mean to us: the reverence we feel here, the incredible spirituality of this chosen place, the kinship we feel with our Camp family. I think it is important that we who love Camp McDowell from the Episcopal Church perspective realize that, since the MEC has been around for about 17 years, there is now a whole generation of people who love Camp McDowell from a different perspective. Many members of our diocesan family have experienced both sides of Camp McDowell by coming to MEC as a child and as a teacher or chaperone.

Everywhere I go now (especially if I am wearing a Camp McDowell t-shirt!) I meet people from all walks of life who stop to tell me about the wonderful experience they or their children had at Camp McDowell. I feel very blessed to be playing a part in teaching respect for the Earth that God gave us and on which we all depend. I also feel very blessed to be a part of the Camp McDowell family. It is a Wonderful Wonderful place to call home.

If you would like to learn more about the McDowell Environmental Center please contact me at Maggie@campmcdowell.com or 205/387-1806. I would be happy to come to your church or school to make a presentation about the wonderful things you can experience in our unique outdoor classroom and help you plan a trip with your students. Also please see the list of upcoming special summer workshops at right and check out our Web site, www.campmcdowell.com/cmec—it gives lots more information.

Special MEC Summer Workshops

Living Streams: the Ecology of the Cahaba River
June 6-8 and 10-12

These two three-day workshops will give classroom teachers, other educators, and everyone interested in learning about the amazing Cahaba River the opportunity to be trained in the “Living Streams” curriculum by Dr. Bill Deutsch, of the Alabama Water Watch. The new Living River Environmental Center site on the Cahaba River near Montevallo will serve as the base camp. You will wade, float, paddle, and otherwise be immersed in hands-on study of the shoals, pools, and bottomland hardwood forests of the Cahaba River, and at the end of the workshop you will receive certification in Project WET.

Growing Roots Workshops
June 21-23 and July 14-16

The staffs of the McDowell Environmental Center and the Alabama Folk School at Camp McDowell partner in presenting these two workshops designed to give educators an opportunity to learn together with their own child or grandchild about the wonders of nature. You will have fun wading in streams and discovering aquatic wildlife, exploring the unique geology of Alabama through fossils, making mosaics using natural resources, learning about the edible and medicinal plants that grow in our state, gaining a better understanding of climate change, getting to know the forest at night on a hike without lights, and swimming and tubing in Clear Creek.

The Alabama Episcopalian • January/February 2010
The following nominations were received as of January 19.

DIOCESAN COUNCIL (3-year term)
Clergy Order
NORTHERN DISTRICT

The Rev. Joan M. Henrick
Church of the Holy Comforter in Gadsden
Rector
- Former member of the Commission on Spirituality
- Canterbury (England) Scholar
- Missionary to Romania (short-term assignment)
- Cursillo Spiritual Director

MIDDLE DISTRICT

The Rev. Aaron Maulerson
Holy Cross in Trussville
Rector
- Diocesan Flu Prevention Working Group member
- Former Sawyerville Commission cochair
- Former Black Belt Ministries coordinator

SOUTHERN DISTRICT

The Rev. Evan D. Garner
St. John’s Church in Montgomery
Associate Rector
- Youth Department Chaplain

Lay Order
No nominees

STANDING COMMITTEE (4-year term)
AT LARGE
Clergy Order

The Rev. Bill Blackerby
Birmingham Episcopal Campus Ministry
Chaplain
- Department of Ministry to Higher Education member
- Standing Committee member and former president
- Province IV Coordinator for Campus Ministry

The Rev. Steve Gruman
St. Matthew’s in Madison
Rector
- Seminary of the Southwest, Masters of Divinity 1990
- Former Parish Development and Evangelism Department member
- Camp McDowell summer camp director
- Cursillo Spiritual Director
- Kairos Spiritual Director

Mr. Bill Gamble
St. Paul’s in Selma
- Vestry member multiple terms; senior warden for two terms
- Sunday school teacher
- Choir member
- Convention delegate
- Lay rector for Cursillo
- Music director for Cursillo
- Judge on the Diocesan Ecclesiastical Court
- Former Department of Camp McDowell chair
- Served on the first committee on the Diaconate

Jon Meacham To Keynote Diocesan Convention

Clergy and lay delegates from throughout our diocese will gather at the Marriott Shoals Hotel and Conference Center in Florence on February 11-13 for our 179th Annual Diocesan Convention. Trinity Church in Florence is hosting this year’s convention.

“The theme of our convention will be One Hope in God’s Call to Us,” focusing on the gifts we have to offer as Episcopalians to the world around us,” says Bishop Parsley.

“This is an especially appropriate theme as together we seek to respond to the overwhelming earthquake tragedy experienced by our brothers and sisters in our companion diocese of Haiti,” notes the Rev. Deacon Dave Drachlis, our Companion Diocese Commission cochair. (For more about our diocese’s efforts to help our friends in Haiti, please see page 24 and visit our diocesan Web site, http://www.dioala.org.)

“Our honored guest will be Jon Meacham, a Pulitzer Prize-winning author and editor of Newsweek,” adds Bishop Parsley.

“He is a dedicated layperson in the Episcopal Church and eloquent in speaking of the role of religion in our society and of our Episcopal identity.”

Jon, who was born in Chattanooga in 1969, attended St. Nicholas’ and the McCallie Schools before entering the University of the South in Sewanee, where he graduated summa cum laude with a degree in English Literature. He was named salutatorian of his class and elected to Phi Beta Kappa. Jon began his distinguished career at The Chattanooga Times. He joined the staff of Newsweek as a writer in January 1995, became national affairs editor in June of that year, was named managing editor in November 1998, and was appointed editor in October 2006. In addition to his award-winning book American Lion: Andrew Jackson in the White House, Jon wrote New York Times bestsellers American Gospel: God, the Founding Fathers, and the Making of a Nation and Franklin and Winston: An Intimate Portrait of an Epic Friendship. In 2001 he edited Voices in Our Blood: America’s Best on the Civil Rights Movement, a collection of nonfiction about the midcentury struggle against Jim Crow.

Jon and his wife, who is a former director of the Harlem Day Charter School and currently serves as a programs officer with the New York City Fund for Public Schools, live in New York City with their three young children. Jon is a communicant of historic St. Thomas’ Church Fifth Avenue, where he has served on the vestry. He currently serves on the vestry of Trinity Church Wall Street, the Leadership Council of the Harvard Divinity School, and the Board of Trustees of the Church Centre. Previously he served on the Board of Trustees and the Board of Regents of the University of the South. He received an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree from the Berkeley Divinity School at Yale University in 2005 and holds three other honorary doctorates. Jon will speak during the Saturday morning session of convention.

Convention registration opens at 1:30 p.m. Thursday, and the opening business session will begin at 3 p.m. The Festival Eucharist will begin at 6 p.m. at the First United Methodist Church in downtown Florence. Bishop Sloan will preach at the service.

The convention continues on Friday with Caucus Elections in Districts at 8 a.m. followed by Morning Prayer and Bible Study at 8:45 a.m., Business Session II at 9:30 a.m., Resolution Committees at 10:45 a.m., Noonday Prayer at 12:15 p.m., and lunch. Business Session III will begin at 1 p.m. followed by Workshops at 2 p.m. and Business Session IV at 4 p.m. The Saturday morning meeting begins with At Large Elections at 8:30 a.m. and includes Jon Meacham’s presentation. The convention will adjourn about 12:30 p.m. after Noonday Prayer.

During this year’s gathering the delegates will consider a number of resolutions, elect representatives to our Diocesan Council and Standing Committee, elect Judges to the Ecclesiastical Court, and adopt an operating budget for our diocese. The delegates will also have the opportunity to participate in a variety of workshops. For additional information about this year’s convention, please visit our diocesan Web site, http://www.dioala.org.
Barbara Gaston
St. Mark’s in Prattville
* Director of Christian Formation
* Vestry member
* Worship Committee chair
* Sesquicentennial Celebration Committee member
* Autauga County Historical Society president

R. Marcus Givhan
All Saints’ in Birmingham
* Attorney with Johnston, Barton, Proctor and Rose
* Counsel for All Saints’ and St. Martin’s in the Pines
* Adult Formation leader
* Vestry member
* Commission for Evangelism and Outreach member
* Cursillo staff member

John D. Humber
Christ Church in Tuscaloosa
* Vestry member, senior warden for two terms, treasurer for three terms
* Christ Church Family Trust and Christ Church Foundation member
* Department of Finance member
* Lay Eucharistic Minister
* Member of various parish committees
* Department of Planned Giving member

JUDGE TO THE ECCLESIASTICAL COURT (3-year-term)
AT LARGE ELECTION

Clergy Order  Lay Order
No nominees  No nominees

2010 Diocesan Budget Highlights

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

Diocesan departments and ministries trimmed spending during 2009 to avoid ending the year with a deficit. In addition, parishes honored their pledges to the diocese passing along increased income toward the end of the year. Finally, while the diocese was authorized to withdraw an additional $50,000 from invested funds to underwrite ongoing mission and ministry, it was necessary to withdraw only $23,543 to complete the year.

With this experience in mind but aware of the importance of the ministries and program of the diocese, the Diocesan Council is proposing a budget that expends $106,000 less than in 2009. The proportions of the budget for Parish Development, The People and Their Ministries, and Leadership Development remain constant as compared with 2009, while the proportion dedicated to Evangelism and Outreach increased slightly;

A reassignment of staff positions within the budget resulted in an increase in the proportion for the support of the Episcopate and a comparable reduction in the Administrative portion. The 2010 budget includes the deletion of one position on the Carpenter House staff and a shift to part-time for one chaplaincy. The proposed budget includes a 2 percent increase for the administrative support personnel and the Youth Ministries Coordinator. Compensation for the bishops and senior staff, chaplains, and the executive director of Camp McDowell is unchanged from 2009.

The budget benefited from a decision by the Diocesan Council to move the diocesan medical benefits group to plans offered through the Episcopal Medical Trust of the Church Pension Fund. This move resulted in increased options for members of the group and a premium increase of 5 percent (the first in four years) rather than the 25 percent increase announced by the former provider. Further, the premiums will remain the same in 2011.

As in recent years the diocese received in 2009 $234,000 from parishes as contributions to the Perkins Fund. These funds are designated for ministries and programs within the Diocese of Alabama. Notes on Resolution 1 indicate the use of these funds in 2009 to support mission and ministry in the areas of Leadership Development, Parish Development and Evangelism, and Communications.
## Summer Camp Schedule

It's not too early to think Summer Camp at Wonderful, Wonderful Camp McDowell! Online Registration is open at [www.campmcdowell.com](http://www.campmcdowell.com), and you can also download applications.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Director</th>
<th>Location</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 28-30</td>
<td>Primary I (entering 1st and 2nd graders with a parent)</td>
<td>Director: The Rev. Chip Broadfoot, Ascension in Montgomery</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 2-5</td>
<td>Elementary I (entering 3rd and 4th graders)</td>
<td>Director: The Rev. Stephen Hood, Ascension in Birmingham</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 8-17</td>
<td>Senior Camp (entering 10th through 12th graders)</td>
<td>Director: The Rev. Rob Iler, St. Columba in the Cove in Huntsville</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 22-27</td>
<td>Junior High I (entering 6th and 7th graders)</td>
<td>Director: The Rev. Rebecca DeBow, St. Luke's in Birmingham</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 30-July 5</td>
<td>Special Session</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 2-5</td>
<td>Sophomore Camp (entering 8th and 9th graders)</td>
<td>Director: The Rev. Thomas Joyner, Holy Trinity in Auburn</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 16-21</td>
<td>Middler Camp (entering 5th and 6th graders)</td>
<td>Director: The Rev. Andy Keyse, Trinity in Florence</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 23-30</td>
<td>Junior High II (entering 7th and 8th graders)</td>
<td>Director: The Rev. Mark Waldo, St. Michael and All Angels’ in Millbrook</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 1-5</td>
<td>Elementary II (entering 4th and 5th graders)</td>
<td>Director: The Rev. Richard Lawson, St. John’s in Decatur</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 6-8</td>
<td>Primary II (entering 1st, 2nd, and 3rd graders with a parent)</td>
<td>Director: The Rev. Rich Webster, St. Luke’s in Birmingham</td>
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### Sawyerville Set To Serve More Children

*By Leslie Manning, Our Diocesan Youth Ministries Coordinator*

I am pleased to announce the DATES and some DETAILS for the 2010 Sawyerville Day Camps!

Drum roll, please . . . This year we are holding TWO FULL sessions—June 25-July 3 and July 9-17. Hooray!

We will need about 60 staff members for each session. The dates for the first session conflict with Special Session (another important ministry you can help staff), but you will still be able to help staff the second Sawyerville session. If you are not helping with Special Session, you will be able to staff both Sawyerville sessions if you'd like assuming there are enough staff positions open. To volunteer to serve on the staff, you must be at least 16 years old. You can apply to be on staff online at the Youth page of our diocesan Web site, [www.dioala.org](http://www.dioala.org).

Different campers will attend each session, and each session will have an Upper and a Lower Camp (the community let us know that having both an Upper and a Lower Camp at the same time is extremely helpful for the families!). For more information please visit our Sawyerville Web site, [www.sawyervilleworkproject.org](http://www.sawyervilleworkproject.org).

Mark your calendars now. Hope to see you there!

### Save These Dates!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 5-7</td>
<td>Happening #56 for 10th-12th graders at St. Luke’s in Birmingham</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 12-14</td>
<td>Spring Break Conference for 9th-12th graders at Camp McDowell</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 16-18</td>
<td>EYC Convention for 9th-12th graders at St. Thomas’ in Birmingham</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 1-6</td>
<td>Young People Painting Birmingham for rising 7th and 9th graders</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 25-July 3</td>
<td>Sawyerville Day Camp Session 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 28-July 5</td>
<td>Special Session Summer Camp</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 9-17</td>
<td>Sawyerville Day Camp Session 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 24-Aug. 7</td>
<td>Province IV Youth Pilgrimage to the Holy Lands</td>
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### Don’t Miss Spring Break Conference!

Calling all 9th-12th graders to join in the fun at Camp McDowell March 12-14 at this year’s Spring Break Conference. Help us spread the word about this incredible event, which will feature music by Fran McKendree, program sessions on the topic of “Doubt” led by the Rev. Rebecca DeBow, and worship led by the Rev. Mark Waldo Jr. Our Youth Department has also planned a Dino Safari-themed dinner, a Saturday Night Fever dance party, hiking, canoeing, singing, and lots of playing and laughing at wonderful, wonderful Camp McDowell! Please register online by visiting the youth page of our diocesan Web site, [www.dioala.org](http://www.dioala.org).
Christmas Conference at Camp McDowell (CCC)

By Leslie Manning, Our Diocesan Youth Ministries Coordinator; Photos by RJ Garcia, a Member of the Youth Department

“We will just get the Youth group to do it.”

That’s every youth director’s least favorite sentence. Sure, the youth group will move 350 chairs before tomorrow’s service. Sure the youth group will be here at 7 a.m. on a Saturday morning to clean out the gutters. That’s just what every 10th-grade student wants to do on Saturday morning—and the last thing a youth minister wants to ask of their youth, right? It’s like herding cats to get a youth group to move chairs, rake leaves, or set up for a dinner. But who can say no to the sweet ECW chair?! Of COURSE we will do it, and we will do it joyfully!!

The amazing thing is that the youth can do it and a whole lot more. They can do far more than move furniture and basic yardwork. I am keenly aware of this because of the nature of my work and the close proximity I have to youth in powerful leadership positions. I have the unique opportunity to work with a group of 11 high-school age youth who are elected annually by their peers. This group, the Youth Department or YD for short, is responsible for furthering the development of youth ministry in our diocese, implementing diocesan-wide youth events that are open to both large and small parishes alike, and representing the youth of our diocese at both Diocesan Council and our annual diocesan convention. Doing these things gives them a real taste of what lay leadership is like within the Episcopal Church. This small group of dedicated students meets once a month, on a Saturday, for several hours, as any other department would to plan, pray, prepare, and perhaps act a little silly from time to time.

During Christmas I got to see this group in action when the YD put on our annual Christmas Conference at Camp McDowell (CCC), which is open to all 9th through 12th-grade youth in our diocese. This year’s event brought in about 165 people. The YD decided that the overarching program theme at the 2009-2010 events would focus on faith: what faith is, what happens when we doubt our faith, and how we sustain our faith in God.

Certainly our faith in God, the things both seen and unseen, would lead us to believe that our young people are teaching us right here and right now. I celebrate that our diocese is a faith-filled place that encourages and empowers our young people today. It was amazing to watch the YD members glean wisdom from some of our finest youth ministers, collaborate with former summer camp counselors, and learn even deeper into the program topic in an intimate setting. The program staff did a wonderful job setting up that time and space.

But the program staff members were not the only ones doing some heavy lifting for the conference. The YD members ran the event with the support and guidance (as needed) from their adult advisors and other staff members. It was wonderful to watch high-school students collaborate with former summer camp counselors, and it was amazing to watch the YD members glean wisdom from some of our finest youth ministers.

But, in the end, the YD did it. The YD members facilitated the discussion on non-negotiables, expectations, and our community covenant. The YD members taught icebreakers, made announcements, led prayers and taught blessings before meals, organized camp-wide activities, and invited them to take that next step. At CCC this didn’t stop with the members of the Youth Department—they put out the invitation, but then other high-school students showed up in droves! Some students came to Camp McDowell for the first time ever, and others came to their first YD event. They showed up and trusted the community to care and love them. They showed up and shared of themselves and asked questions about their faith.

If we put our faith in the youth of tomorrow instead of today it seems to me that we are saying that our young people don’t have much to offer us in this moment. Certainly our faith in God, the things both seen and unseen, would lead us to believe that our young people are teaching us right here and right now. I celebrate that our diocese is a faith-filled place that encourages and empowers our young people today.
The Alabama Episcopalian

Blessings to you for a wonderful 2010!

Heflin for hosting the fall convocation meeting in Athens, St. Luke’s in Scottsboro, and Messiah in Trussville, St. Paul’s in Greensboro, St. Timothy’s especially the food is the best. Thanks to Holy Cross program, service (Morning Prayer or Eucharist), and make sure that everything is ready and that the president. The host parishes always work hard to enjoy the “perks” of serving as our diocesan ECW last fall five of our convocations had ECW Extreme Poverty and Hunger.

Christian Concern meets MDG #1—Eradicate month to more than 350 families. The Center for is distributed on the first three Wednesdays of each County. St. Michael’s in Fayette has been very which is a joint effort of several churches in Fayette is the Center for Christian Concern food bank,

Basket project meets MDG #5—Improve Maternal they distributed more than 100 baskets. The Moses’ Basket project. Using referrals from the Jackson County Health Department, the members of the ECW prepare baskets for newborn babies, including a Mom’s Care Package. During 2009 including a Mom’s Care Package. During Advent parishioners and friends of the parish are asked to write a meditation on the Bible readings for one of the days of Lent. The meditations are due in mid-January, and the booklet is printed and distributed before Ash Wednesday.

The ECW theme for 2010, “Serving Others in Christ: Mission and Ministries in the Diocese of Alabama,” is directed toward the eight United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). At the 2006 General Convention, the Episcopal Church made supporting the MDGs the number one mission priority, and this year’s ECW calendar depicts how parishes in our diocese are meeting these goals.

The calendar for January was dedicated to the women of St. Luke’s in Scottsboro and their Moses’ Basket project. Using referrals from the Jackson County Health Department, the members of the ECW prepare baskets for newborn babies, including a Mom’s Care Package. During 2009 they distributed more than 100 baskets. The Moses’ Basket project meets MDG #5—Improve Maternal Health.

The featured outreach program for February is the Center for Christian Concern food bank, which is a joint effort of several churches in Fayette County. St. Michael’s in Fayette has been very active in this project since it began in 1991. Food is distributed on the first three Wednesdays of each month to more than 350 families. The Center for Christian Concern meets MDG #1—Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger.

Last fall five of our convocations had ECW meetings. Attending these events is one of the most enjoyable “perks” of serving as our diocesan ECW president. The host parishes always work hard to make sure that everything is ready and that the program, service (Morning Prayer or Eucharist), and especially the food is the best. Thanks to Holy Cross in Trussville, St. Paul’s in Greensboro, St. Timothy’s in Athens, St. Luke’s in Scottsboro, and Messiah in Heflin for hosting the fall convocation meeting in their area.

Blessings to you for a wonderful 2010!

Roscoe Johnson and the Johnson family have graciously given a beautiful stained-glass window for Holy Comforter in Gadsden in memory of Corella Rawls Johnson and in honor of all Episcopal Church Women. Corella, who died on February 21, 2006, was very involved in church activities all of her life, but her most meaningful ministry was serving on the ECW Diocesan Board during her final years. Being a woman of many talents, she was an amateur artist, and the placement of two icons that she completed shortly before her death added a beautiful touch to her funeral. Corella was both a Mary and a Martha, a deeply spiritual person

ECW Scholarships Help Students Achieve Goals

After Alonso Reyes’s father died, he came to live with his aunt and uncle, Freddie and Magalay Reyes, and became a member of Grace Church and the parish family in Birmingham. He began helping with the parish’s children’s ministry and also served as an acolyte. When Sandi Carpenter, a member of Grace Church, read an article about our ECW Scholarship program in The Apostle last year, she realized this was an opportunity to help one of her parish’s young members achieve his dream of attending nursing school. In 2008 Alonso Reyes received a $1,000 ECW scholarship, and this spring he will finish his general requirements at Lawson State Community College and apply to nursing school for this fall.

The ECW scholarship fund was established before 1900 with a request from Bishop Richard Hooker Wilmer to John Ward Noble, the builder of St. Michael and All Angels’ in Anniston, asking for his help in making it possible for daughters of our diocesan clergy to attend Noble Institute. Since that time the scholarship program has grown to support all students of our diocese, and named scholarships have been added including ones established in honor of Edith Buell, Isla Hall Hilderbrand, Elizabeth Blair Pannell, Sarah Sterret Porter, Bishop Onell Soto, and St. John’s in Ensley. Other funds for the scholarships are supported by parish ECW budgets, memorials, donations, and gifts from people who recognize that the education of our students is the future of our Church. You can help the ECW provide scholarships for more students by making a contribution to the ECW of the Diocese of Alabama, 521 North 20th Street, Birmingham, AL 35203-2611; please note on your check that your contribution is for the ECW Scholarship Fund.

The ECW is now accepting applications for the 2010-11 school year. To be eligible a student must be a communicant of the Diocese of Alabama, but he or she can plan to attend or be attending a college or university outside our diocese. All scholarships are based on need (40%), church involvement and activities (40%), and merit (20%).

You can download an application and Church Involvement Survey from our ECW Web site, www.alabamacew.org, or request the forms from me, Bethe Ensey, 4651 Round Forest Drive, Birmingham, AL 35213. Each application must be accompanied by your high-school or college transcript, your photograph, documentation demonstrating your family’s need (Form 1040), and a church involvement survey about you completed by your parish priest, college chaplain, or senior warden under certain circumstances.

Applications must be completed and postmarked by April 30. Incomplete or late applications will not be considered.
Lobsterfest Benefits Habitat

On Saturday, November 7, Grace Church in Anniston held its 13th annual Lobsterfest to benefit the local Habitat for Humanity chapter. More than 75 parishioners volunteered to man the lobster pots and other duty stations to serve more than 1,000 lobsters. Complete with children’s games, pony rides, live music, arts and crafts, and ECW Bake Sale, Lobsterfest has become Grace’s signature community event.

Over the years, Grace has raised more than $100,000 for Habitat, with this year’s total exceeding $9,500. As one Habitat board member emphasized, “I do not know what we would have done this year without Lobsterfest since our corporate giving is significantly lower.”

The members of Grace Church are happy to share their experiences and resources (like their new super-hot propane burners that were ordered from Louisiana) with other parishes. Just call the parish office at 256/236-4457.

Calvary Church Retires Their Mortgage

Submitted by Sam Burke, a Member of Calvary in Oneonta

On December 22, Calvary Church in Oneonta made the final payment on its mortgage to Dr. Smith and Dr. Wilson of Medical Family Physicians for the parish’s building and grounds. Calvary was founded in February 2002, and the congregation started meeting in the doctors’ former office building. We held our first service on September 9 with an overflow crowd of members and visitors. The Rev. Bill King served as our first priest in charge and conducted our worship services for our first two years. The Rev. Grady Richardson is serving as our current priest in charge.

The churches of our diocese’s Mountain Convocation have provided much-welcome help in getting our new parish established. The men of Christ Church in Albertville gave much sweat equity working alongside members of our parish in renovating the building’s former waiting room into our new nave, and we added a new entrance in 2009.

We are most grateful for the support of our diocese, other parishes in our area, and the people of Oneonta.

Christ Church Starts Young Singers Choir

By Frances Tucker, of the Alabama Choir School

The Alabama Choir School at Christ Church in Tuscaloosa has started a new class for first and second graders. “The new group will focus on matching pitch, reading music, and learning healthy singing habits,” explains Karen Nicolosi, founder and artistic director of the choir school. “I think arts education is important because it is a way to tap into each child’s talents. Every child is a little package of talents—musician, painter, sculptor, writer. We try to develop children’s musical ability.”

The Young Singers Choir will meet after school on Monday afternoons from February to the first week of May. In addition to learning to read music and a little about music theory, they will be exposed to music history and music appreciation through the wide variety of pieces they learn to sing. In May the new group will participate in the annual Alabama Choir School spring concert at Moody Concert Hall on the University of Alabama campus.

Founded in 1985, the Alabama Choir School is made up of six different choirs, numbering almost 200 young people. The groups perform locally in concerts twice a year, in the area schools, and for special events. The more advanced singers travel on tours around the country and abroad.

For more information about the Young Singers Choir of the Alabama Choir School, please contact Karen Nicolosi at 205/758-0927 or Frances Tucker at 205/553-4254 or frantuck@charter.net.
Three Priests Ordained

From a story by Our Diocesan Staff with photos by the Rev. Deacon Dave Drachlis

Bishop Parsley and Bishop Sloan ordained John (Jack) Thomas Alvey Jr., Catherine Hudson Collier, and Eric Arthur Stelle to the Sacred Order of Priests in the Episcopal Diocese of Alabama at the Cathedral Church of the Advent in Birmingham on December 15. Jack and Eric are currently serving at All Saints’ in Birmingham, and Catherine is currently serving at Christ Church in Tuscaloosa.

The Rev. Liston A. Garfield, rector of St. Andrew’s and Chaplain at Tuskegee University, preached the sermon. Nancy Terrell, a member of our diocesan Standing Committee, and Virginia Hillhouse, a member of our diocesan Commission on Ministry, read the Old and New Testament lessons. The Rev. Deacon Geraldine (Gerri) Aston served as Deacon/Gospeler, and the Rev. Pat Wingo, our Deputy for Ministry Development and Clergy Deployment, was the Litanist.

Advent Students Raise Money for School Lunches in Haiti

Students at the Advent Episcopal Day School in Birmingham raised more than $1,600 in November to help provide hot lunches for students at a school in Haiti where the children often go hungry because of extreme poverty. Sixth-grade students Daniel McMahon, Robert Denniston, Slavin Mu, and Alex Daugherty headed the fundraising project, a two-day bake sale in downtown Birmingham. The proceeds were presented to Bishop Parsley’s wife, Becky, and the Rev. Canon Joseph Warren’s wife, Susan.

The clergy spouses of our diocese undertook the school lunch program as part of our diocese’s companion relationship with the Episcopal Diocese of Haiti. As soon as earthquake-recovery efforts in Haiti allow, the program will begin providing at least one hot meal a week to students and their teachers at St. Alban’s School, which is in the poor, remote mountain village of Crochu.

A number of parishes and individuals throughout our diocese have also contributed to the program. The cost of each meal is approximately $1, and there are more than 300 students enrolled at St. Alban’s. If you would like to contribute to this ministry, please send a check payable to the Diocese of Alabama, with “Crochu School Lunches” noted in the memo line.

55th Place Celebrates Anniversary

Submitted by Frank Romanowicz of Grace Church in Birmingham with photos by Rhonda Johnston of St. Andrew’s in Birmingham

55th Place, a thrift store operated by an all-volunteer organization, recently celebrated its 20th anniversary with a luncheon reception at the store. All of the merchandise is donated, and all of the profits are donated to Birmingham-area agencies to provide services to the underserved. Betty Quattlebaum and Marge Campbell are among the group that established the store. Jim Killebrew, currently serving as the president of the volunteer organization. The store is at 5 55th Place in Birmingham; for more information please call 205/591-4631.
Canterbury House Is Burned To Make Way for a New Campus Ministry Center

From a story by Our Diocesan Staff with photos by the Rev. Deacon Dave Drachlis

In a training exercise, firefighters from the Montevallo and Brierfield Fire Departments burned Canterbury House, our diocesan student center at the University of Montevallo, to the ground on January 16 to make way for construction of a new campus ministry center. The 1940s house, which sat next door to St. Andrew’s in Montevallo, housed four students and served as a campus ministry center during the past three decades. The Rev. John Wesley, rector of St. Andrew’s, notes that the new facility will house up to six students and have enhanced meeting space.

Montevallo Deputy Fire Marshall Brandon Broadhead explains that the Episcopal Church’s donation of the house allowed firefighters who have not yet been in a house fire to experience the heat and smoke of a real structure fire in a controlled environment. Broadhead emphasizes that firefighters rarely get an opportunity like this.

Many area residents gathered to watch the training exercise. One woman, who had raised her children in the home before it was converted into a student center, said that watching it burn made her “a little sad,” but she was glad that it was providing an important service.

Most of the windows in the house were removed prior to the fire and donated to local artist Christy Falligant, who uses old windows to create new pieces of art. She will donate proceeds from the sale of the new pieces to support the work of the Crisis Center Inc. in Birmingham.

March 7 Is ERD Sunday

By Judy Quick, Our Diocesan ERD Representative

This year Bishop Parsley has appointed the third Sunday in Lent, March 7, as Episcopal Relief and Development (ERD) Sunday. We are all asked to offer our contributions to the poor and suffering on this day.

During Lent you may want to use Healing Ourselves and a Hurting World, a devotional guide by Sister Claire Joy of the Community of the Holy Spirit in New York. Sister Claire Joy reminds us that we, as individuals, need healing and forgiveness, especially in these difficult economic times. Her spiritual insights and artistic gifts will inspire, encourage, and challenge each of us during these 40 days of reflection.

If you would like Lenten Devotional Guides for your parish or more information or a presentation on the work of ERD, contact please contact me at jgquick@bellsouth.net or 205/669-6862. You may also want to visit www.er-d.org.

Trinity in Clanton Hosts DOK Retreat

Story and photo submitted by the Rev. Bill King

The Daughters of the King (DOK) chapters of St. Andrew’s in Montevallo, St. Paul’s in Selma, and Trinity in Clanton met on December 19 at Trinity for their Advent Retreat. Dr. Yokanda Seawright, our diocesan DOK president (seated in the center of the front row of the photo) attended the retreat, and the Rev. Ian Elliott, a retired priest of our diocese, provided the mid-morning spiritual reflection.
17TH ANNUAL CONTEMPLATIVE CONFERENCE
February 27-28 at St. Stephen’s in Birmingham

Contemplative Outreach Birmingham is hosting its 17th Annual Contemplative Conference, which will feature Dr. Elizabeth Anne Stewart speaking on the theme “Mysticism and Encounters with the Beloved.” Dr. Stewart, who preaches, teaches, and offers spiritual guidance throughout the Chicago area, will examine the classic mystical path of Dark Night, Illumination, and Union demonstrating that the mystical path is open to all and that it has its place in contemporary life. For more information or to register please contact Diana Tschache at 205/991-6964 or tschache@bellsouth.net.

DEEPENING SPIRITUALITY THROUGH MUSIC AND EXPRESSIVE ARTS
March 5-7 at Camp McDowell

Ruth Skaggs, a music psychotherapist and registered expressive arts therapist who lives in Daphne, will lead this weekend retreat for women. Our intellectual faculties are sometimes an obstacle to deep communion with God. This workshop will explore how the multiple languages of music and other expressive arts allow us to see, perceive, and receive in different ways, clearing the mental debris in the pathway to God and opening us to the inflowing of divine presence, hence to infinite possibilities. This retreat will be devoted to offering many possibilities for deepening our relationship with God amidst the beauty of nature. Participants should bring a floor mat (for music experiences), a journaling book, and walking shoes. For more information or to register please contact Ruth Skaggs, 104 Seville Circle, Daphne, AL 36526; 251/626-3648; rhbkggs@netscape.com.

"THE RESURRECTION: ANCIENT AND MODERN"
March 26-27 at Shades Valley Lutheran Church in Birmingham

Dr. Bernard Brandon Scott, a well-known author and very popular presenter, will be the featured speaker at this 16th in the Mid-South Lecture Series offered by SPAFER, a nonprofit, all-volunteer forum for exploring religion. Dr. Scott will give three presentations: Proclaiming Jesus Alive—The Story in Mark’s Gospel (Saturday, 9-10:30 a.m.), Resurrection Images in Film: Modern Resurrection Stories (Saturday, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.). For more information please contact SPAFER at 205/252-9573 or www.spaferr.org.

YOUTH MINISTRY SABBATH RETREAT
April 29-May 1 at Camp McDowell

Back by popular demand, our newly annual Youth Ministry Sabbath retreat, designed for all youth ministers—both volunteer and paid—in our diocese, will be held at Camp McDowell again this spring. The retreat will include an optional “nuts and bolts” workshop on Youth Ministry in the afternoon, but beginning at sundown there will be no more work! Come rest, recreate, and renew your souls. The Rev. Dixon Kinser, the associate rector for Youth and Young Adult Formation at St. Bartholomew’s in Nashville, will be our retreat leader. For more information please contact Leslie Manning at 205/715-2060 ext. 325 or lmanning@dioala.org.

ST. JOHN’S IS SEEKING A YOUTH DIRECTOR

St. John’s in Montgomery is currently searching for a Director of Youth Ministries. As part of a program staff team, this person will develop and administer Christian formation programs for youth in the 7th-12th grades, integrating that youth work with other areas of parish ministry. He or she will focus on building relationships within the youth and wider parish communities and deepening the spiritual lives of teenagers. For a complete position description, including contact details, please visit the parish Web site, www.stjohnsmontgomery.org.

INTRODUCTION TO CENTERING PRAYER WORKSHOP
February 13, 9 a.m., at St. Michael and All Angels’ in Anniston

The Daughters of the King is sponsoring this introductory Centering Prayer session. For more information and to register for the workshop please contact Charlotte Mullis at 256/237-3083 or charlottemullis@bellsouth.net. For more information about Centering Prayer please visit www.centeringprayer.org.

DIOCESAN ALTAR GUILD FESTIVAL
February 20, 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., at St. Stephen’s in Birmingham

Our Diocesan Altar Guild will host this festival, which will feature a morning workshop on “Altar Guild, the Rector’s Discretionary Fun (Liturgical Diversity)” led by Lynn Hendricks, a member of All Saints’ in Birmingham and the treasurer of the National Altar Guild Association. This fun, interactive program will explore the many options priests have with regard to space, decoration, and liturgy and how we of the altar guild comply. What is essential? What is optional? You may be surprised! After lunch the Rev. John (Jack) Alvey Jr. will present a workshop on “Engaging the Eucharist,” followed by the celebration of Holy Communion. For more information please contact Lynn Hendricks at 205/822-6202 or lhend@ mindspring.com.

Bishops’ Visitation Schedule

February 14, Sunday
10 a.m.  Bishop Sloan, St. Barnabas’, Roanoke
10:30 a.m. Bishop Sloan, Christ Church, Fairfield

February 21, Sunday
10 a.m.  Bishop Sloan, St. Philip’s, Ft. Payne
10 a.m. Bishop Sloan, St. Mark’s, Birmingham

February 28, Sunday
10 a.m.  Bishop Sloan, Holy Comforter, Montgomery
10 a.m. Bishop Sloan, St. Michael’s, Fayette

March 7, Sunday
10 a.m.  Bishop Sloan, St. Barnabas’, Roanoke
10:30 a.m. Bishop Sloan, Christ Church, Fairfield

March 14, Sunday
10 a.m.  Bishop Sloan, St. Stephen’s, Huntsville
10:30 a.m. Bishop Sloan, Holy Comforter, Gadsden
4 p.m.  Bishop Sloan, Holy Cross/ St. Christopher’s, Huntsville

March 28, Palm Sunday
10 a.m.  Bishop Sloan, Ascension, Birmingham
10:30 a.m. Bishop Sloan, Resurrection, Rainbow City

April 3, Holy Saturday
7 p.m.  Bishop Sloan, Grace, Birmingham
7 p.m. Bishop Sloan, St. Andrew’s, Birmingham

April 4, Easter Sunday
10 a.m. Bishop Sloan, St. Paul’s, Selma

April 11, Sunday
9:30 a.m. Bishop Sloan, St. Bartholomew’s, Florence
10 a.m. Bishop Sloan, St. Mary’s-on-the-Highlands, Birmingham

April 14, Wednesday
7 p.m.  Bishop Sloan, St. Andrew’s, Montevallo

April 18, Sunday
9 and 11 a.m. Bishop Sloan, Christ Church, Tuscaloosa
11 a.m. Bishop Sloan, St. Andrew’s, Tuskegee

The Rev. Rev. David Brickman Powell began serving as the rector of St. Paul’s in Selma on January 1. David’s wife, the Rev. Elizabeth (Betsy) Jennings Powell, is serving as the associate rector of the parish. David previously served as rector of St. John’s in Pensacola, and Betsy served as rector of St. Augustine of Canterbury in Navarre.

Clergy News

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The Alabama Episcopalian  •  January/February 2010

What’s New/Noteworthy at the Episcopal Bookstore

**The Faith We Confess** by Gerald Bray

The Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion are one of the three historic “formularies” (constitutional documents) of the Church of England along with the Book of Common Prayer and the Ordinal. In these volumes they gave the Church its distinctive identity at the time of the Reformation, an identity that has had a formative influence on worldwide Anglicanism.

The English formularies have played an exceptionally important role in shaping the Anglican Communion, and they continue to serve as reference points whenever it is necessary to think in terms of a common Anglican tradition.

In the confusion caused by recent developments, it is encouraging that as many parts of the Anglican Communion some have returned to these sources to satisfy a genuine hunger for both Anglican tradition and sound Christian doctrine. Gerald Bray wrote this book to meet this growing demand.

**Trust in An Age of Arrogance** by FitzSimons Allison

God is in the dock. Shall we convict or forgive him? Shall we replace the God of Scripture with another of our choosing, mock and deride him, or ignore him? Shall we replace revelation with the chaos of speculation? We perceive ourselves, rather than God, as the center of the world, and this universal condition leads to conflict with others and with God.

Maintaining our center causes cheating, hiring, litigation, divorce, wars, genocide, and human misery. Western civilization is giving up trust in the promise of God’s mercy, justice, and forgiveness and replacing it with trust in the goodness of man.

Jesus warned us to beware of the teaching of the Sadducees and Pharisees. The Sadducees, who denied the hope of eternal life, are a rough equivalent of our modern-day secularists with their religious trust that this world is all there is. Replacing God with trust in flawed human nature is a mark of arrogance that even pagans would have characterized as hubris evoking divine wrath.

Hence the Pharisee’s yearn for self-righteousness is a natural condition of us all. Even when cleansed, it reappears in every tradition rendering forgiveness and transformation a promise only for those who think they have earned and deserve it. Such a distortion of God’s Word is congenial to our self-as-center, but it robs us sinners of the justice and mercy of a loving God.

Following Jesus’ warning, we have the opportunity to wipe away the Sadducee arrogance and the Pharisee self-righteousness and discover anew the supreme power and joy of the Christian faith.

**The True Measure of a Man** by Richard Simmons III

Taken from a series of talks given to large groups, The True Measure of a Man offers an inspirational examination of today’s young man, who, in his search for identity, frequently questions the meaning of life. The book is a very personal account of Simmons’ own journey of faith and is a call to his readers to join him on a similar expedition.

**Bread and Wine**

Many readers will find that this collection, a sequel to Watch for the Light: Reading for Advent and Christmas, is the one book they return to year after year, forgoing their usual custom of buying a new Lenten devotional each spring. Six separate sections (Invitation, Temptation, Passion, Crucifixion, Resurrection, and New Life) guide readers through the essential elements of spiritual preparation and feature writings from some of Christendom’s most celebrated masters. Classic thinkers including Martin Luther and John Donne share space with 20th-century theologians including C.S. Lewis, G.K. Chesterton, and Dorothy Day.

This book also contains a generous sampling from contemporary writers including Philip Yancey, John Updike, Frederick Buechner, Madeleine L’Engle, Henri Nouwen, and Brennan Manning.

**The Easterville Miracle** by Melody Carlson

Just as a little boy named Sam and an old man named Henry remind the town of Easterville, bestselling author Melody Carlson reminds us as well that the true meaning of Easter is not Easter bonnets, baskets, colored eggs, candy, or decorations. It is the glorious story of a cross on a hill and an empty tomb—and the wonderful news of forgiveness that the Easter story brings us.

**Diocesan Convention** February 11–13 in the Shoals area

Cursillo Weekends

#171 March 11–14, #172 April 15–18, #173 June 10–13, #174 September 16–19, #175 October 14–17

EYC Convention (9th-12th graders) April 16–18

Happening (10th-12th graders) March 5–7

Spring Break Conference (9th-12th graders) March 12–14

Youth Ministers Gatherings February 18, March 25, and May 13

Youth Ministers Retreat April 29–May 1

February 13 Introduction to Centering Prayer Workshop hosted by the Daughters of the King at 9 p.m. at St. Michael and All Angels’ in Anniston. For more information and to register please contact Charlotte Mullis at 256/237-5083 or charlottemullis@bellsouth.net.

February 14 Envelope presented as a special offering by the adult choir and the St. Cecilia Singers at 5:30 p.m. at Christ Church in Tuscaloosa.

February 20 Diocesan Altar Guild Festival from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at St. Stephen’s in Birmingham. For more information please see the description on page 22 or contact Lynn Hendricks at 205/822-6202 or lyhend@mindspring.com.

February 27–28 17th Annual Contemplative Conference offered by Contemplative Outreach Birmingham at St. Stephen’s in Birmingham. For more information or to register please contact Diana Tischke at 205/991-6864 or dtischke@bellsouth.net.

February 28–March 3 “Nonviolence: A Faithful Response” Bowen Conference by Sis and Jerry Levin at 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.

March 5 Deepening Spirituality Through Music and Expressive Arts—A Weekend Retreat for Women led by Ruth Skaggs at Camp McDowell. For more information or to register please contact Ruth Skaggs, 205/389-6851.

March 7 Evensong for Lent sung by the Cathedral Choir at 4 p.m. at the Advent in Birmingham. For more information please contact Muscogee Associates Charles M. Kennedy at 205/226-3505 or kennedy@ catalnedavent.com.

March 12–14 “The Resurrection of Jesus Christ” retreat led by the Rev. Dr. Christopher Bryan at St. Mary’s Sewanee Center for Spiritual Development in Sewanee, Tennessee. For more information please visit www.smyresurvey.org/programs/Dec30.shtml. e-mail smyresurvey@info@bellsouth.net, or contact Jean Hartings at jeanhartings@ comcast.net or 615/585-4287.

March 13 12th Annual Parish Leadership Training Event with keynoted the Rev. Melissa Skelton at St. Stephen’s in Birmingham. For more information please see the description on page 22 or contact Sarah Sarian at ssarian@diola.org or 205/715-2600 ext. 314.

March 21 Organ Recital by British concert organist Gillian Weir at 4 p.m. at the Advent in Birmingham. For more information please contact Muscogee Associates Charles M. Kennedy at 205/226-3505 or kennedy@ catalnedavent.com.

March 23–April 47 Grief Recovery Group meetings focusing on the loss of a loved one led by the Rev. Canon Joe Warren, Pastoral Care Minister at the Advent, and facilitators at the home of Laurie and Frank Jones. For more information and to reserve a place in the group please call 205/967-7401 or e-mail ljones99@bellsouth.net.

March 26–27 “The Resurrection: Ancient and Modern,” the 16th in the Mad-South Lecture Series offered by SPAFER, featuring three presentations by Dr. Bernard Brandon Scott at Shoals Valley Lutheran Church in Birmingham. For more information please contact SPAFER at 205/252-9573 or www.pagets.org.

**The Tale of Three Trees** by Angela Elwell Hunt

Featuring the wonderful illustrations of Tim Jonke, this bestselling children’s book tells the Easter story from a new and unusual point of view that will deeply touch children as they understand, perhaps for the first time, the significance of Christ’s life and his atoning sacrifice on the cross. This retold folktale about three trees that grow up to be Jesus’ manger, boat, and cross is a must-read to any child.

**Find Your Way Home** by Becca Stevens

This little book begins with a brief introduction by Becca Stevens, the author of Sawntary and founder of the remarkably successful Magdalene, a Nashville home for women overcoming drug abuse, prostitution, and incarceration. She describes the book as an open letter written to friends and strangers, inviting them to keep love alive and offer it to others. In the spirit of the Rule of Benedict, the book articulates 24 principles that guide the Magdalene community in its effort to live graciously together. Each principle is a tiny chapter, exploring themes like coming together, showing hospitality, losing gracefully, and loving without judgment. Each principle is followed by a woman’s personal recollection of life before Magdalene, her experience with the community, and sometimes advice or encouragement. Paradoxically, it is the particularity of these musings that evokes universality and brings the book alive. Even if readers do not share the history of abuse and extraordinary difficulties these women face, the rules and anecdotes speak to familiar feelings of loss, the relief of love, and the comfort of finding home.

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 Bookstore, 2015 Sixth Avenue North, Birmingham, AL 35205; 205/323-2955; e-mail ebinfo@episcopbooks.com. You can also visit the bookstore online at www.episcopbooks.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.
Helping Our Friends in Haiti
Haiti Diocese Is Caring for 23,000 Quake Survivors

Our diocese and the Diocese of Haiti are entering the fourth year of a companion relationship focused with the Parish of St. Simeon in Croix des Bouquets and Father Fritz Valdema. We have established a Haiti Earthquake Fund; if you would like to contribute please send a check payable to the Diocese of Alabama and designated “Haiti Earthquake Relief” in the memo line to Carpenter House, 521 20th Street North, Birmingham, AL 35203, or send it through your parish. You can also write the check to Episcopal Relief and Development (ERD) designated “Haiti Earthquake Relief” and send it to Carpenter House to be forwarded; our companion diocese relationship and ERD’s work are complementary. We are working with representatives of ERD and the Diocese of Haiti to begin sending medical teams as soon as it is appropriate. Meanwhile we are providing emergency relief funds.

Shortly after 5 p.m. on Tuesday, January 12, Fritz was driving toward the airport in Port au Prince to pick up his brother, who was flying in from Chicago. Across the city Carmel was at the motor vehicle department when the earth began to shake. She remembers being thrown about by the violent quake. “I wanted to get out of the door,” she recalls, “but I couldn’t.” She fell, stood up, and fell again—her mind couldn’t grasp what was happening. Her son Donald, who had been waiting in the car with other family members, rushed toward the door just as his mother emerged. Buildings all around them were collapsing, and people were on their knees in the street crying, “Jesus save me!” They thought it was the end of the world.

When Carmel looked back, the building she had been in was completely collapsed. “It was very bad,” she said with an understatement that betrayed the full emotion of the experience. She and Fritz and their family, including Fritz’s brother, who he managed to find amid the turmoil outside the airport, are all safe. Most of Fritz’s church staff and Carmel’s medical staff survived too, but many have lost everything, including family members.

Returning to Croix des Bouquets they discovered that their home was intact but many around them were not. Fearing additional damage from the aftershocks, most people have been living outside in their yards or refugee camps in parks and open areas. Since the quake Fritz has been checking on the people he serves, trying to help ease suffering, and surveying the damage to the six churches he serves in communities outside the city.

Transfiguration Church at Gorman “is completely gone,” but the well and water system survived, and safe drinking water is being distributed to those in need. At St. Simeon Church in Croix des Bouquets, the school, rectory, and church building system survived, and safe drinking water is being distributed to those in need. At Transfiguration Church at Gorman “is completely gone,” but the well and water ease suffering, and surveying the damage to the six churches he serves in communities around them were not. Fearing additional damage from the aftershocks, most people have collapsed.

Construction was under way at the Lespwa Timoun nutrition clinic site in Croix des Bouquets when the earthquake struck. Masons had just completed the walls of the clinic building and were working on the security fence. Only one part of the fence remains standing, and some walls of the clinic are damaged. Our diocese has been supporting the clinic construction, and St. Mary’s-on-the-Highlands in Birmingham sent a team to Haiti in 2009 to help construct the foundation. Carmel and her staff have been operating a daily medical clinic at a temporary Lespwa Timoun facility to treat the injured and the ill. A friend of the Valdemas, Anglican Bishop Tommy (TJ) Johnston, delivered much-needed medical supplies from a group in South Carolina a few days after the earthquake, and a physician from the United States who was en route to Hôpital Albert Schweitzer in Deschapelles made a second delivery to Carmel.

In a widely circulated letter to Episcopal Relief and Development President Robert Radtke, Bishop Zache Duracin wrote, “I am writing to you from the tent city we have set up behind the rubble of College St. Pierre, our marvelous senior secondary school that is no more.” He reported that approximately 3,000 people have gathered there, and the Diocese of Haiti has set up at least 21 refugee camps that are caring for more than 23,000 people. “Please tell our partners, the people of the Episcopal Church, the people of the United States, and indeed the people of the world that we are immensely grateful for their prayers, their support, and their generosity. This a desperate time in Haiti; we have lost so much. But we still have the most important asset, the people of God, and we are working continuously to take care of them.”

Please keep our friends in Haiti in your prayers as they struggle to recover from the earthquake. For more about the conditions in Haiti and our diocese’s recovery efforts, visit http://www.dioala.org.