The Episcopal Diocese of Alabama • Advent • November-December 2010 / Vol. 95, No. 6

- First Krik? Krak! Lunch Served in Crochu, Haiti
- 180th Annual Diocesan Convention, February 11-12 at St. Luke’s in Birmingham
- Bishops To Ordain Two Priests, December 7 at the Cathedral Church of the Advent
The issue features outreach ministries supported by Episcopalians in Alabama who are seeking to spread the love of Christ in the world. In February 2009, a mission team of clergy spouses met with nurse Carmel Valdema in Haiti to discuss ways to help relieve the widespread hunger and poverty in the village of the six-church Episcopal parish Carmel’s husband, Father Fritz Valdema (“Pere Val”), serves. They determined that raising funds for a school lunch program would give the children and adults of our diocese a specific project that would connect them directly with the children and adults of Haiti.

They named the project “Krik? Krak!” from the Creole words traditionally used in telling folk tales in Haiti. Adults call out “Krik!” when they are ready to tell a story, which often teaches a life lesson or gives moral instruction, and the children eagerly say “Krak!” in response. One Krik? Krak! story retells the Haitian proverb “An empty sack can’t stand up.” That story appropriately reminds us that people can’t get much work done on an empty stomach. Thanks to the generosity of the people of our diocese over the past year, enough money was contributed to the project for Maggie Johnston, Becky Parsley, and Susan Warren, accompanied by the Rev. Michael Rich, to go to Haiti in October and help serve the first hot lunch to children in Crochu. You can read their firsthand stories and see photos from their trip, as well as reflections from Jeanne Randall and Libby Porter about participating in medical missions to Haiti, on pages 12-16.

Children and adults across our diocese are continuing to raise funds for the ongoing Krik? Krak! program as well as other missions projects to help meet the needs of our sisters and brothers in Haiti. Please see “Celebrating a Birthday with Gifts for Others,” “Soup’s On in Birmingham To Serve People in Haiti,” and “Cutting Hairs” on page 16.

Medical mission teams from St. Thomas’ and the Nativity in Huntsville met South American Mission Society (SAMS) missionaries Mike and Kim Miller and learned about their La Esperanza de Jesús (the Hope of Jesus Children’s Home) ministry a few years ago on their annual trips to Delicas del Norte in Honduras. A recent grant from our Department of Mission and Outreach is now supporting Mike and Kim’s ministry. Please see page 17 to read more about the ministry and Cindy Atkin’s firsthand story, “Rescuing the Children.”

Closer to home, parishes across our diocese are joining in the grassroots “Beans and Rice” food-sharing ministry that started at Trinity in Clanton in 2006. During the next 12 months, Trinity in Clanton, Holy Spirit in Albertville, Christ Church in Albertville, Grace Church and St. Michael and All Angels’ in Anniston, St. Catherine’s in Chelsea, St. Philip’s in Fort Payne, and Epiphany in Talladega will distribute an estimated 40 tons of food to hungry people in communities around our state. Please see page 19 for more about this ministry and how you can help.

Our Commission on Spirituality is offering Advent Quiet Day on December 4 at the Epiphany in Leeds. You are invited to honor the pregnant pause of Advent with this day devoted to opening our hearts to receive Christ, the Light of Light. You are welcome to bring others with you to this special event, which will include quiet reflection, journaling, chanting, and Holy Eucharist.

Author, retreat leader, and spiritual companion Mary Bea Sullivan will guide the participants in pondering the theme “Come Light of Light.” Mary Bea facilitates retreats and workshops for individuals, faith and monastic communities, and businesses throughout the Southeast.

By the Grace of God
Bishop of Alabama
and
The Rt. Rev. John McKee Sloan
Bishop Suffragan of Alabama
Will Ordain
Geoffrey Parker Evans
Bradley Jackson Landry

to the Sacred Order of Priests in Christ’s One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church
on December 7, 2010 at 5:30 p.m.
at the Cathedral Church of the Advent

Your prayers and presence are requested.

The Festal Color is Red Reception Following
There is little more distasteful to me than the use of religion to create division and hatred. We have witnessed this lately in religious extremism at home and abroad. We have seen it in horrific terrorist violence, in threats to burn Korans, in the tragic “bullying” of sexual minorities, and in political rhetoric that represents the kind of cheap moralism that seeks to polarize people and demonize other viewpoints. Some of the division in our own Church in recent years, we must admit, has not been particularly exemplary either. Such behavior by people of faith causes too many people to see religion as bad news, not good.

Jonathan Sacks has bravely written, “When religion is embraced as bad news, not good news. People are taught to hate, but not enough to learn to love. The old saying is true and worth remembering that it is possible to have just enough religion to learn to hate, but not enough to learn to love. God means religion to be a life-giving force in human experience, to humble us and bring us together like nothing else. But we can distort it, for our own purposes, into a force that hurts and drives us apart.

How we envision God has enormous impact on our religious attitudes. Baylor University has recently published a populist study of how Americans image God, entitled America’s Four Gods: What We Say About God and What That Says About Us. In summary the study found that 21 percent of us see God as “critical,” 24 percent as “distant,” 28 percent as “authoritative,” and 22 percent as “benevolent.” The study emphasizes that each of these images of God affect not only how we see religion but also how we see the world and its issues.

Each of these images has its nuances. But it is revealing, and not a little disturbing, that only 22 percent of those surveyed image God as primarily benevolent. To my mind this is the aspect of God that the deep current of the Bible makes most vivid and apparent. God is merciful, of infinite compassion, and long-suffering. The Old Testament speaks most often of God’s hesed, which we translate into English as loving-kindness. It is a beautiful word conveying the truth that God’s purpose is to bless, and God’s will is peace.

In the Gospels, Jesus the good shepherd seeks and saves the lost and least . . . forgives sinners and teaches his disciples the way of love . . . prays for his church to be one . . . stretches out his loving arms on the cross to reconcile all people to God and one another. . . . This is the Gospel message, and it is always good news.

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Hello, friends.

A few weeks ago I went to a conference for writers. I enjoy writing, a friend of mine helped coordinate the weekend and wrangled me an invitation, and one of the speakers was Stephen Lawhead, one of my favorite writers—so I took a few days off to go. (I bet you didn’t even miss me.)

About 80 people were there: novelists, poets, bloggers, nonfiction writers, and several members of the clergy from several denominations. As we got to know each other, I heard several of the younger people at the conference introduce themselves as “spiritual but not religious” or “faithful but not church-oriented.”

My friend knows I’m a bishop, but I asked her not to make a big deal of it—I was there, after all, pretending to be a writer. Still, a few people asked me what my day job is, and I told them—and the word got out. I’m quite proud to be a bishop in the Episcopal Church, but it does require some explanation, and it certainly changes the way people act toward you.

On the last morning one of the young women in my small group, a poet from Maryland, came up to talk to me.

She was sheepish and hesitant, but she really wanted to tell me that she was concerned that she’d said something that might have seemed harsh about the Church being anticipated and irrelevant. She had written in one of our writing assignments that the Church she grew up in was her father’s Oldsmobile—and that he could have it! Then she explained to our little group that she’d grown up in the Episcopal Church, as if that explained it all. She said that later she was horrified to learn that one of the people in her group is a bishop in that same Episcopal Church, and now she wanted to apologize.

I told her that I hadn’t taken offense and that I grew up an Episcopalian too. I told her I know full well that we can be stodgy and stiff and that our emphasis on maintaining traditions can be an impediment to embracing new ideas. I also told her that all of those traditions link us to the saints and teachings of the Church throughout the centuries—and that it’s important to have such good strong healthy roots.

When she turned to walk away, not entirely satisfied with how the conversation had gone, I stopped her. I told her that it is the job of the Church to make the love of God real and accessible to God’s children, to share the Good News of the love of God in Jesus Christ so that it’s inviting and compelling, and to invite people to live their lives in the faith, hope, and joy that God wants to give us—and I told her that it sounded to me that in her life we have failed. She was stunned. I was a little surprised myself—but I think it’s true.

This, I think, is our great challenge: to “hold fast to that which is good,” as St. Paul wrote, while at the same time committing ourselves to “sing to the Lord a new song,” as the writer of the Psalms encouraged God’s faithful people.

We have failed her and many others like her, and we have failed our Lord Jesus Christ. We have been far too interested in defining and maintaining the status quo; we have allowed positions and issues and resolutions and debates to hijack the mission of the Church, arguing esoteric theological points and obscure liturgical practices as if they were much more important than they really are and forgetting that our principal mission is inviting people into love, calling them and us to turn away from self-absorption into forgiveness and reconciliation. We have spent far too much time and energy trying to keep things the way they were at some point in the nostalgic past and far too little time listening to how the world around us is able and eager to receive the Gift we have to give.

It is a new day, and the world is changing rapidly. If our response to the world around us is to circle up the wagons and preach only to ourselves, we really are her father’s Oldsmobile. And my young friend from Maryland will have nothing to do with us because we will have convinced her and many, many others like her that we have nothing to do with them. I’m certainly not suggesting that we should abandon our traditions—I’m grateful that we are so well rooted and grounded in the proven teachings and practices of our Church. But I wonder if it is sufficient, or truly faithful, for us to cast the work of the Church in the past tense only without considering how we can embrace and invite the world around us today and prepare to preach the Gospel in the days and years to come. This, I think, is our great challenge: to “hold fast to that which is good,” as St. Paul wrote, while at the same time committing ourselves to “sing to the Lord a new song,” as the writer of the Psalms encouraged God’s faithful people.

It seems to me that the world around us can be a dark and lonely place—and that you and I are called now more than ever to shine the Light of Christ and invite God’s people to find their home in God’s grace-filled, loving community, the ancient and future Church.

The Rt. Rev. John McKee Sloan

Church Leaders Call for Discussion of The Anglican Covenant

Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori, House of Deputies President Bonnie Anderson, and Executive Council member Rosalie Simmonds Ballentine are calling on all Episcopal congregations to engage in discussion of the proposed Anglican Covenant at some time during the next two years. The Episcopal Church leaders suggested in their September 3rd letter that congregations consider organizing a discussion group on the covenant during Advent or Lent or at another time before General Convention in 2012.

“In order for General Convention to reflect the mind of the whole church, the bishops and deputies who participate in General Convention need to know the thoughtful and faithful reactions of the many and varied faith communities represented in this church,” the leaders said. A covenant first was proposed in 2004 as a way for the Anglican Communion to maintain unity amid differing viewpoints, especially on issues of human sexuality and biblical interpretation. The Executive Council, at its June 2010 meeting, approved and commended the Anglican Covenant study guide, which can be downloaded in English and Spanish at http://generalconvention.org/ec. (The text of the proposed Anglican Covenant is available online at www.anglicancommunion.org/commission/covenant/index.cfm.)

The study guide suggests questions to consider, such as: In what ways does the covenant strengthen the corporate life of the Episcopal Church and the common life of the Anglican Communion; and what are the positive and negative consequences of signing on to and living into the covenant? The church leaders noted in their letter that if congregations engaged in this discussion and submitted their comments in the coming church year, it would enable the Executive Council Task Force “to reflect the church’s initial response to the final draft of the Anglican Covenant, and to be included in Executive Council’s Blue Book Report to the 77th General Convention.” The Blue Book—which includes reports and proposed resolutions—is published several months before each General Convention.
Dear People of God,

Throughout our meeting in Phoenix, Arizona, we have reflected on the immigration crisis facing our host state, the United States, and all nations globally. A number of us visited the United States-Mexico border and saw firsthand the many troubling and complex issues that face migrants, immigrants, the border patrol, local ranchers, and Christian communities seeking to minister to all of these groups. We are also mindful that similar border issues confront other nations represented in the Episcopal Church, especially countries in Europe, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Colombia, and Ecuador.

Holy Scripture teaches us that all human beings are made in the image of God and that Jesus Christ gave his life for all people. Furthermore, both the Old and New Testaments declare the importance of hospitality to resident alien and strangers, a hospitality that rests on our common humanity. All human beings are therefore deserving of dignity and respect, as we affirm in our Baptismal Covenant (Book of Common Prayer, page 305). So our gracious welcome of immigrants, documented or undocumented, is a reflection of God’s grace poured out on us and on all.

In this light:

(1) Ours is a migratory world in which many people move across borders to escape poverty, hunger, injustice and violence. We categorically reject efforts to criminalize undocumented migrants and immigrants, and deplore the separation of families and the unnecessary incarceration of undocumented workers. Since, as we are convinced, it is natural to seek gainful employment to sustain oneself and one’s family, we cannot agree that the efforts of undocumented workers to feed and shelter their households through honest labor are criminal.

(2) We profess that inhuman policies directed against undocumented persons (raids, separation of families, denial of health services) are intolerable on religious and humanitarian grounds, and as is attested by the consensus of a wide range of religious bodies on this matter.

(3) We call on the government of the United States and all governments to create fair and humane immigration policies that honor the dignity of people on all sides of this issue. In the United States, we seek a reasonable path to citizenship for undocumented workers; a plan to reunite families; and a viable system for receiving temporary or seasonal guest-workers, with clearly identified points of entry. These measures would free the United States border patrol to concentrate its efforts on the apprehension of drug traffickers, terrorists, and other criminals, and on ordinary people who are simply seeking a better life for themselves and their children.

(4) We acknowledge the duty of governments to protect their people, including the securing of borders. The church has always respected this duty, which is grounded in government’s God-given duty to protect innocent people and punish wrongdoers (Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-17).

(5) We recognize that racism and bigotry impact debates over migration and immigration. The Episcopal Church is committed to the eradication of all forms of racism, and decries the use of racial profiling in the arrest of persons suspected of being undocumented.

(6) We confess our own complicit sinfulness as people who benefit from the labor of undocumented workers without recognizing our responsibility to them. We passively tolerate an economic and political system that accepts this labor from millions of undocumented workers, and which has received approximately $520 billion in social security revenue from them—revenue from which they will never benefit. Yet at the same time we treat them as a threat.

(7) We do not discount the concerns of our fellow citizens regarding the danger uncontrolled immigration poses to our safety and economic well-being. We insist, however, that these concerns be approached within the broader context of a national commitment and covenant to inclusion and fellowship across all lines for the sake of the common good.

(8) We take seriously our commitment to and responsibility for our fellow citizens, as we strive to face the spiritual, moral and economic challenges of life in all sixteen nations represented in The Episcopal Church.

So [Christ] came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God (Ephesians 2:17-19).

God’s grace be with us all.

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Episcopal Church Women Awards 24 Scholarships

By Beth Ensey, Scholarship Committee Chair

Twenty-four students will benefit from the work of our diocesan Episcopal Church Women (ECW) this year at colleges all over the United States. Our ECW Scholarship Committee chose these young people to receive scholarships based on each applicant's church activities, merit, and financial need as well as the completeness of the application, comments from his or her priest, and community and school service participation.

Over the last decade or more, our ECW has awarded more than $100,000 in scholarships to students in our diocese. The ECW College Scholarship Program was initiated about 110 years ago with a request from Bishop Richard Hooker Wilmer to John Ward Nobel, the builder of St. Michael and All Angels’ Church in Anniston, asking for help to enable daughters of diocesan clergymen to attend the Noble Institute. Since that time, other funds have been established in recognition of other people who have taken to heart the education of young people in our diocese. In addition to Bishop Wilmer, the donors whose dedication and vision continue to inspire us include Edith Buell Wilson, Isla Hall Hilderbrand, Elizabeth Blair Pannell, Sarah Sterret Porter, Bishop Onell Soto, and the members of St. John’s Church in Ensley.

In recent years, these named funds have been augmented significantly by the ECW General Scholarship Fund, which is derived from the diocesan and parish ECW budgets, memorials, alms, and other gifts.

For more information about making a contribution to or applying for a scholarship, please visit our diocesan ECW Web site, www.alabamecw.org, or contact your parish’s ECW president.
Women from all over our diocese gathered in Anniston on October 7 and 8 for our 121st ECW Fall Conference, hosted by the Cheaha Convocation and St. Michael and All Angels’ parish. Our guest speaker, the Rev. Margaret Rose, codirector of mission for the Episcopal Church, spoke on the theme “Serving Others in Christ” and led the participants in examining their mission and ministry in our diocese, state, nation, and the world.

The ECW of Grace Church in the Woodlawn area of Birmingham is hosting its 9th Annual St. Nicholas Day Bazaar on December 11 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. The event includes items created by unique craftspeople and artisan vendors as well as a bake sale, silent auction, and raffle—and maybe even a visit from St. Nicholas himself! One vendor described her experience at Grace Church last year as “an all-day Christmas party.” In the spirit of St Nicholas, who gave his money to the poor, the funds gathered from the bazaar support the ECW’s various outreach projects. For more information please contact Grace Episcopal Church, 5712 First Avenue North, Birmingham, AL 35212; 205/595-4636; www.gracechurchwoodlawn.org.

The Rev. Margaret Rose speaking at the Fall Conference held at St. Michael and All Angels’ in Anniston

ECW Diocesan President Cathryn Gales leading the business meeting

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Good News for the Poor

By Judy Quick, Our Diocesan Representative

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; he has anointed me to preach Good News to the poor” (Luke 4:18).

Episcopal Relief & Development

Healing a hurting world

Immediately after Jesus was tempted by Satan in the wilderness, he traveled to his hometown of Nazareth and began his ministry by quoting Isaiah in the synagogue. His very first message was to show his profound love by serving the poor, the disadvantaged, and the marginalized.

We too can show Christ’s amazing love as we share our abundance with the poor through generously giving our time, talents, and treasures. One specific way is to honor your loved ones with a gift that makes a real difference in the lives of families living in extreme poverty around the world. The Gifts for Life Catalog from Episcopal Relief & Development provides a host of opportunities for you to help lift others from poverty to prosperity, from adversity to advantage, from sickness to strength, and from hunger to hope.

High-Impact gifts can build wells for clean water and sanitation, provide entire communities relief when disaster strikes, and offer micro-loans to launch small businesses.

Smaller gifts can buy a fish farm, honeybees, fruit trees, or a cow, chicken, or goat to feed families and provide ongoing income.

Nets for Life® provides training with the mosquito nets to protect families from deadly malaria. Other programs offer HIV/AIDS education and support.

More than 90 percent of every donor dollar goes directly to Episcopal Relief & Development programs, making it one of the best investments we can make for our good fortune. In addition, Charity Navigator has given Episcopal Relief & Development a four-star rating, the highest possible, and Episcopal Relief & Development meets all 20 standards for Better Business Bureau Charity Accountability and is a seal holder.

If you would like more information or a presentation on the work of Episcopal Relief & Development, please contact me at jgquick@bellsouth.net or 205/669-6862; also visit www.er-d.org. You can order your Gifts for Life Catalog online at www.er-d.org or by calling 800/334-7626, ext 5129 or contacting me at jgquick@bellsouth.net, 205/669.6862.

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Counting Down to Summer 2011 at Camp McDowell!

By Susanna Whitsett, Summer Camp Coordinator

It is not too early to note that Summer Camp at Camp McDowell is coming! The sessions are all set—so mark your calendar and make your plans! Camp McDowell wants and needs YOU to make it 2011 the best summer yet! Here are the 2011 schedule and photos from last summer to whet your appetite—bon appetit!

To see more photos from each session of Summer Camp 2009, please visit Camp McDowell’s Web site, www.campmcdowell.com.

2011 Summer Camp Sessions at Camp McDowell

May 27-29  Primary 1 Camp for entering 1st and 2nd graders
June 1-4  Elementary 1 Camp for entering 3rd and 4th graders
June 6-15  Senior Camp for entering 10th-12th graders
June 20-25  Junior High 1 Camp for entering 6th and 7th graders
June 30-July 5  Special Session Camp
July 6-13  Sophomore Camp for entering 8th and 9th graders
July 15-20  Middler Camp for entering 5th and 6th graders
July 22-29  Junior High 2 Camp for entering 7th and 8th graders
July 31-August 4  Elementary 2 Camp for entering 4th and 5th graders
August 5-7  Primary 2 Camp for entering 1st-3rd graders

2011 Summer Staff: One of the Toughest Jobs You’ll Ever Love

Question: What do you call a job that is essentially 24/7 and requires endless energy, patience, understanding, enthusiasm, humor, and faith; a job that allows you to work with children, youth, and adults in the camp setting and can provide you with practical work experience and life lessons that will last a lifetime?

Answer: A position on the Camp McDowell Summer Staff!

This fall and winter, applications will be accepted for one of the toughest jobs you will ever love as a member of the 2011 Camp McDowell Summer Staff. Approximately 25 college and adult staff members will be selected to serve as leaders to almost 1,500 children and youth in the context of Christian community. The potential impact of a summer staff person is enormous and can give to that staff member a tremendous work and life experience that can inform you about future jobs both within and outside of the Church. During summer camp, the staff focuses on four primary areas: Worship, Camper/Community Life, Program, and Music & Activities.

Potential applicants, who must be at least one year out of high school, are invited to prayerfully consider these responsibilities before applying. Those selected will be notified in mid-February, and staff training begins with a weekend session on April 1-3. For more information please contact Susanna Whitsett, Summer Camp Coordinator, at susanna@campmcdowell.com.

Reconnecting with Friends of Camp McDowell

Camp McDowell was founded in 1948, and since that time it has welcomed thousands of campers and helped them rest, learn, worship, play, and grow. In 62 years we have made many friends and encouraged many more friendships. We'd like to reconnect with you!

Do you have a great camp story to tell? We'd love to hear it. Would you be interested in joining a Camp McDowell Alumni Association and participating in a camp reunion? If so, please e-mail Danielle Dunbar at danielle@campmcdowell.com.
Thank You, Summer Campers!

By Memily Colvin

For several years campers have been asked to bring new or gently-used books with them to Summer Camp at Camp McDowell, and the books are given to children in the Black Belt area of our state. The amazing response this year resulted in the largest number of books donated yet!

During the first few sessions of Summer Camp, the campers brought 500-plus books. We combined those with books collected at parishes around our diocese and gave a total of 1,200 books to the children attending Sawyerville Day Camp. This special camp, which is staffed and supported by people throughout our diocese, is held annually in Greensboro in Hale County and provides two weeklong sessions filled with activities and fun for children in the area (please visit www.sawyervilleworkproject.org for more information).

Camps brought an additional 1,802 books with them during the remaining summer sessions at Camp McDowell. We took these books to South Highlands Middle School in Union Springs in Bullock County, where they are being shared by classroom teachers and given to students who would not otherwise have books at home. The school’s librarian, Kathy Capps, was so very appreciative of our donation, and it was a joy to see the students happily opening the boxes.

What a wonderful way the young people who come to Camp McDowell Summer Camp are making such a positive difference in the lives of others in our state!

If you would like to hold a book drive in your parish or help with the Summer Camp McDowell Book Collection, please contact me at memily.colvin@gmail.com. Thanks so much!!!

Have an Amazing Adventure With Your Child!

By Maggie Wade Johnston

Have you ever wished you knew enough about camping and nature to take your child or grandchild out for an adventure in the woods? You love the natural world, but you just don’t feel secure in camping out? We are offering two opportunities during the summer of 2011 for you to learn together with your child or children under the watchful eye of the experienced staff of the Camp McDowell Environmental Center.

June 5-7 is the Growing Roots Family Camp Extreme. You will learn to set up and sleep in a tent, cook over a campfire, point out constellations in the night sky, and even sing a few old favorite camp songs. We will camp out on Camp McDowell property, swim at Tiller's Beach on Clear Creek, canoe, hike, and experience good old-fashioned fun without television or technology. (We hope you’ll leave your iPhone at home for this one!) On the second evening, we might stay in Scott House, an old log cabin, to taste another bit of the past.

July 22-24 is Growing Roots Family Camp with an Irish Touch! This session will include nature studies focusing on our animal neighbors who live among us, the edible and medicinal plants that grow here in Alabama, and how to create nature crafts. We will also swim at Tiller’s Beach on Clear Creek, canoe, and hike, and we’ll have the option of joining and observing Irish crafts, dancing, and other activities that are part of the Alabama Folk School Irish weekend.

For more information or to register for these make-lots-of-wonderful-memories adventures, please contact me at maggie@campmcdowell.com or 205/387-1806 or visit www.campmcdowell.com/folkschool.

Have Fun Sampling the Arts!

By Danielle Dunbar, Camp McDowell Staff Member

We invite everyone to come have fun at Camp McDowell sampling the arts at the Alabama Folk School. For more information about the upcoming sessions listed below, please contact me at danielle@campmcdowell.com or 205/387-1806 or visit www.campmcdowell.com/folkschool.

January 21-23
3rd Annual Sample the Arts Weekend, choose up to 4 classes
Drawing taught by Dori DeCamillis
Fused Glass Jewelry taught by Linda Munoz
Spring Pole Lathe Turning—Historic Woodturning taught by Randal Jones
Pottery taught by Sandra Heaven
Nature Studies—Edible and Medicinal Plants, Hiking, and More taught by Dave Holloway
Spiritual Writing

April 4-7
Gee’s Bend Quilters taught by Mary Ann and China Pettway
Illustrated Discovery Journal in Pencil and Watercolor taught by Marilynn Brandenberger
Intermediate/Advanced Banjo taught by Alan Munde
Beginning Banjo taught by Herb Trotman
Intermediate/Advanced Mandolin taught by Roland White
Beginning Mandolin taught by Jason Bailey
Where Are They Now?

Compiled by Leslie Manning, Our Diocesan Youth Ministries Coordinator

Recently I polled a few of our most active young people in our diocese to find out what they are up to now. The Church helped raise them up, and now look at the good work they are engaged in!

We hope to continue to highlight a few former Youth Department and other active young people from around our diocese in the coming months to see how they’ve grown. Please send names and suggestions to me at lmanning@dioala.org. Thanks to everyone who contributed to this issue!

**William Blackerby**

I got interested in poverty issues in Alabama thanks to the week I spent in Hale County with the Sawyerville Day Camp each year for seven summers. As graduation from Sewanee began to loom over my thoughts toward the end of my junior year, I accepted an internship with Greater Birmingham Ministries (GBM) in the summer of 2008, where I got to see firsthand how systemic poverty affects people in their daily lives. After graduation and part of a summer spent at Camp McDowell, I accepted a position as the Faith in Community Organizer at GBM, where I get to work with people of all colors and creeds on a variety of issues and projects, including constitutional reform, public-school improvement, public-transportation advocacy, and nonpartisan voter engagement. Sawyerville and the Church have shaped my values and led me to this line of work, and I couldn’t be more grateful.

**Sarah Chaplin**

I am currently working under the job title “roadie” for a nonprofit organization called Invisible Children spreading awareness about Africa’s longest running war and the devastation it has caused in northern Uganda. I’ve been traveling the Pacific Northwest for the past two months with Taylor, Meagan, Stuy, and my two Ugandan teammates Robert and James. We show films at high schools, universities, and churches advocating to end this war and raising funds to rebuild schools in Uganda. You can find out more about this organization and its work at www.invisiblechildren.com.

**Andrew Cotton**

I graduated in May from the University of the South with a B.A. in English. Immediately after graduation I moved to Baton Rouge and taught English Language Arts (ELA) during summer school through a program called the Louisiana Teaching Fellows. When summer school ended, I began teaching ELA Enrichment for 6th, 7th, and 8th-grade students at a wonderful charter school by the name of Glen Oaks Middle School. The year is going great, the students are wonderful, and teaching literature to young and eager minds is amazing!

**Claire DeBow**

I graduated from Sewanee in May with a degree in English, and I’m currently interning with the Episcopal Service Corps in New Orleans as the coordinator of Trinity Episcopal Church’s Mobile Loaves and Fishes ministry. Every day we fill our food truck with hearty lunches and distribute them around the city. We feed everyone from our underprivileged neighbors to volunteers rebuilding homes.

**Jenny Phillips**

From the moment I started working at Sawyerville Day Camp in rural Alabama, I knew I was meant to teach children with the same zest for life and strong community. After graduating from Rhodes College, I joined Teach for America in the Mississippi Delta and began a two-year commitment of teaching 2nd grade. After this year I will move back to the Black Belt to serve the community that started me on this journey.
Fabulous District Days!

By: Katie Grass, Tennessee Valley Youth Department Representative

On Sunday, October 24, the Youth Department (YD) put on three different District Days throughout our diocese. The purpose of these events was to provide fellowship for youth groups from all over our diocese at accessible venues and help promote upcoming diocesan-wide youth events. This year the Youth Department thought it would be fun to host these in the form of “Fall Festivals.” Montgomery District held theirs at Blount Cultural Park at the Alabama Shakespeare grounds, Birmingham District’s was at Overton Park, and Tennessee Valley’s was at Delano Park in Decatur.

I helped organize and coordinate the event at Delano Park, and all the YD members had a specific job to make sure the day ran smoothly. Some painted faces, some helped with the pumpkin painting and carving contests, and others did recreational events such as kick ball with a giant exercise ball. All of the kids, from fifth grade up to seniors in high school, came dressed up in their Halloween costumes and socialized with old and new friends.

We used District Days to help inform the youth of the upcoming events the YD puts on—Christmas Conference (please see story and photo below) and Spring Break Conference (both held at Wonderful, Wonderful Camp McDowell) and also EYC Convention. For the middle-schoo! students we have Winter Weekend (please see story below) and Fall Fling sponsored by Camp McDowell.

All-in-all, all three District Days went fabulously well! More than 200 people participated!!

For more information about upcoming YD events visit www.dioala.org and follow the links to the Youth pages.

Register Now for CCC!

By Betsy Cobb, Youth Department Member from St. Luke’s in Birmingham

It’s first come, first served for the December 28-30 Christmas Conference at Camp McDowell (CCC)—so register online at www.dioala.org/ministries/youth today! CCC is three fun-filled days of laughing, playing, learning, and praying at Wonderful, Wonderful Camp McDowell. All 9th through 12th graders are invited to this event. BRING YOUR FRIENDS!

This is by far the largest annual youth event that the Youth Department sponsors. Better yet . . . Fran McKendree will be our musician and program coordinator. He’s awesome—so that’s another reason to come! To find out more about this talented musician and retreat leader from North Carolina check out his Web site, www.franmckendree.com.

The program topic is “The Journey: Navigating Mountains and Valleys.” Sometimes we can have mountaintop experiences of faith and feel incredibly close to God, but how do we connect with God in our everyday lives? We will focus on our relationships with God through our individual journeys and as a community of believers. ALSO! There will be lots of skits, indoor and outdoor activities, high ropes course, games, hiking, small groups, singing, and of course our annual tacky Christmas sweater dinner! For more information please contact Leslie Manning at lmanning@dioala.org or 205/715-2060 ext 325.

I Feel Good!
The Gift of Knowing God’s Goodness and Greatness

Winter Weekend, January 14-17 at Camp McDowell

Calling all 7th and 8th graders to Camp McDowell for the annual Winter Weekend! This three-night retreat will focus on how good it feels to know some things about God’s goodness and greatness and just how good God made us. You will be staying in the lower camp cabins and have all the “campy” activities you would expect including hiking, arts and crafts, games, and singing. Oh—don’t forget the Talent Show! Come prepared to show your “good works and talents” to others! Our worship and community time will be lifted up during group services, prayers, and lots of singing. EYC groups are welcome!

Registration forms will be available on the Camp McDowell Web site, www.campmcdowell.com. For more information please contact Susanna Whitsett at susanna@campmcdowell.com or 205/387-1806.
Serving Our Sisters and Brothers in Haiti

Serving the First Krik? Krak! Lunch to Schoolchildren in Crochu

The road to Crochu is no road at all. A series of rocks and ruts, more like a dried riverbed that dwindles into a trail up the mountain.

Over that bone-jarring road pass a remarkable number of people. On the way down from Crochu, rural Haitians walk to markets or hitchhike into Port-au-Prince looking for work, looking for hope. On the way up come missionaries laden with medicine and schoolbooks, bringing supplies and bringing hope.

Crochu is not a town but rather a district of about 8,000 people spread thinly over a mountainous area north of Port-au-Prince, and the school and church sit about 2,000 feet above sea level, accessible only by foot, horseback, or donkey. The latest group from Alabama to visit Crochu was a team of clergy spouses: Becky Parsley, Maggie Johnston, and Susan Warren. I accompanied them on their mid-October visit, and the Rev. Fritz Valdema (Pere Val), his wife, Carmel, and members of their church staff joined us on our mission to inaugurate a new hot lunch program at St. Alban’s School in Crochu and scout new mission possibilities.

The team represented the Krik? Krak! program, which has raised more than $30,000 for the children of St. Alban’s. The program will fund a new kitchen at the school, plus one hot meal per week for students and staff during the school year.

Construction work on the kitchen has only just begun, so the first meal was prepared by local women in huge pots over open fires. Becky, Susan, Maggie, and Carmel helped the women serve the schoolchildren their first long-anticipated hot, nutritious, deliciously filling meal of rice, black bean soup, and a sauce made with dried fish, tomatoes, and herbs. On that day, the team served more than 150 children, along with construction workers, cooks, and school staff. “It was quite moving to see even the four and five-year-old children finishing their huge plates of food,” says Becky.

“The children cannot concentrate more than three hours at a time because they are hungry,” notes the school’s principal, Carmecel Petit-Frere. “Thank you for this gift of food, and may God continue to bless you.”

While they were in Crochu, the team watched workers break ground on the new kitchen and witnessed the beginnings of a new church, new classrooms, and a new latrine. The church and school construction is supported by a United Thank Offering grant.

A 2008 hurricane leveled the previous church building, and for the past two years services have been held outside or in the open-sided shed that serves as the school building. The only enclosed building, the old church rectory, provides limited storage space and doubles as a dormitory for teachers. The new kitchen will include space to store food and school supplies.

As Hurricane Thomas prepared to bear down on the already devastated country of Haiti in early November, the Rev. Joseph Murrenz Constant and the Rev. Dr. Rosemari Gaughan Sullivan, Episcopal Church Special Coordinators for Haiti, issued a call for prayer:

Our prayers and thoughts are with the people of Haiti, and we ask the Episcopal Church to join us in our prayers. Although the earthquake was nearly 10 months ago, thousands, if not millions, of people are still living in tents. The winds and rains of Hurricane Thomas have the potential of destroying what little shelter the people have, along with the danger of landslides and mudslides.

The hurricane has now passed, leaving the people of Haiti to deal with the devastating effects of flooding, property damage, and deaths of loved ones. The country is also currently dealing with a deadly outbreak of cholera. Please continue to pray for our sisters and brothers in need.

A prayer on the occasion of a disaster, from General Convention 2009

Compassionate God, whose Son Jesus wept at the grave of his friend Lazarus; Draw near to us in this time of sorrow and anguish, comfort those who mourn, strengthen those who are weary, encourage those in despair, and lead us all to fullness of life; through the same Jesus Christ, our Savior and Redeemer, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen

Please Pray for the People of Haiti

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by hand with hammers into pea-sized pebbles. Water for the mix is carried in buckets atop the heads of women who stream back and forth up the mountain path. All the workers come from Crochu, giving the local economy needed support.

In a meeting with local leaders and the visiting team, Pere Val explained that there are no jobs here in Crochu. “There is only farm work and the animals. There is the market, but it takes a long time to grow enough to sell.” While earlier teams from our diocese have visited Crochu, this was a first for members of the spouses group team. “I felt pure joy to finally be in Crochu,” emphasizes Susan. “I loved the freedom the children have to roam the mountain freely and safely, and I loved the natural beauty surrounding the people of Crochu. If they had food and jobs, it would be paradise!”

The group stayed overnight in Crochu, sleeping on the floor of the Free Nazarene mission church during the last day of that church’s two-week revival session. They went to sleep after a night of memorable singing and Creole prayers.

Back down the mountain, the team had a joyful reunion with Edith Duracin, the wife of Haiti’s bishop, the Rt. Rev. Jean Zache Duracin. “Seeing Edith once again after so much has transpired in Haiti was quite moving,” says Becky Parsley. “As spouses of bishops, Edith and I have been friends for a number of years, and I was eager to see her face to face after her earthquake injury and surgeries to see how she was faring.” Edith Duracin thankfully reported that she has recovered fully from the serious foot injury she suffered during the January earthquake.

That meeting took place at the Diocesan Center for Relief and Development in Port-au-Prince, where about 250 people still live in tents in the courtyard and on the grounds of the diocesan offices. There the team also met with the diocesan director of medical and educational missions, the Rev. Frantz Cole, and the Haiti recovery consultant from Episcopal Relief & Development, Tammi Mott. Both Frantz and Tammi agreed that programs such as Krik? Krak! are the most effective redevelopment efforts in Haiti. “Partnerships on the ground are better than working through large development agencies,” Frantz notes.

Episcopal Relief & Development’s efforts have been concentrating on housing and employment issues in the earthquake-ravaged areas in the capital and especially in nearby Leogane, where many Episcopal churches and medical facilities were destroyed. “It is important to listen to the local needs,” Tammi emphasizes. “The needs are different in each place.”

That was one goal of the team throughout the trip, to listen to needs in Pere Val’s parish of six churches, six schools, and more than 3,000 parishioners. Pere Val recently purchased agricultural land in Crochu and discussed with team members the possibility of financing small-scale farm projects. Frantz told the team about the need for vegetable seed for a diocesan nursery.

Plans are currently under way for future missions from our diocese to Haiti. A medical mission from Holy Trinity in Auburn was scheduled to go in November, and team members from this mid-October trip already are working to encourage future visits.

“If it is possible to join a mission team, it is a life-changing experience,” notes Becky. “Certainly not everyone can physically make the trip, but we can be with our Haitian brothers and sisters in other ways, through prayers and gifts. I believe that we are called to reach out to take the hands of our neighbors in need, and their need is now.”
The Widow’s Mite Is an Orange in Haiti!

By Maggie Wade Johnston

We went to Haiti to give a gift of school lunches to the children in Crochu, Haiti. But the dearest gift was given to us . . . a precious treasure, a fresh-picked orange from the hands of a small young girl of about six. Read on to see the magic of that gift.

Food is a treasured commodity in Haiti. There is not enough to go around. Thus the reason a group of clergy spouses chose to start the Krik? Krak! program. Over the past year or so, parishes, organizations, and children around our diocese have helped us collect enough funds to begin feeding more than 200 schoolchildren and their teachers one hot, delicious school lunch per week of rice, beans, and a spicy fish sauce. A kitchen and storage facility are being constructed in which to prepare the meals, and mothers from Crochu are hired to cook.

In mid-October Becky Parsley, Susan Warren, the Rev. Michael Rich, and I went to Haiti and climbed the mountain to Crochu to help serve the first school lunch to the waiting children and men. All of our backpacks and camping gear was loaded on the backs of small, thin donkeys or carried up by the waiting children and men. Becky and Carmel were brave enough to board a donkey. The rest of us decided to keep our feet on the ground, and off we went to climb the mountain.

The trail climbed through dense undergrowth with occasional beautiful flowering shrubs and banana, coconut, and orange trees scattered here and there. Most of this fruit ends up at the village market instead of in the mouths of the children—which takes me back to my story of the orange!

When we were walking down a small trail leading from one part of the village to the school, two small girls about six years old came running toward us with something rolled up in their tattered shirts. They stood to the side of the footpath, and as I passed by one of them shyly handed me a small orange. . . . The little girl’s orange was one of the most cherished gifts I have ever received.

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Later that day came the moment the Krik? Krak! team had been waiting for! The lunch of rice, beans and sauce prepared by the loving hands of Crochu mothers was ready. The dishes and flatware purchased by your generous donations were filled to the brim and distributed to the excited, hungry-eyed children. The first group of students to be fed was the kindergarteners. Each child sat patiently watching their bowl until everyone in the class had theirs, bowed their head, and the teacher said a blessing—then they cleaned their bowls, leaving not one grain of rice. Any rice that did accidentally drop on the dirt floor was instantly scooped up by the waiting chickens mingling close by.

There was enough food to share with the construction crew building the new kitchen, the teachers, and all of us. It was truly like the loaves and fishes—just when you would wonder if there was going to be enough to go around, the huge pot seemed to have just a little bit more. It was one of the best meals I have ever eaten because it was so long in coming.

Krik! Krak! is a Haitian phrase used to initiate a storytelling session. An elder will yell out, “Krik!” meaning, “Anyone ready to hear a story?” Others will shout back, “Krak!”

There are so many other Krik? Krak! stories to tell and share some of our experiences, please contact me at maggie@campmcowell.com or 205/522-1500, or contact Becky Parsley at theparsleys@bellsouth.net or 205/595-1926.
A Reflection by Jeannie Randall

How do I begin to reflect on my recent trip to Haiti? Why does it appear that not even God cares about this patch of His garden? Riding through Port-au-Prince before leaving for or to return to the United States, I couldn’t help but think that it looked just like the pictures I had seen while watching CNN night after night after the January 12th earthquake. Nothing appeared changed. Crumbled buildings, tent after tent, rubble in the street—where is the aid? The Sunday after I got home, I was asked to give a report during church at St. Thomas’. I had gotten up early that morning to reflect on what I could say about a country where devastation, disease, poverty, and filth are the prevalent scenes. I wasn’t sure how could I communicate the good I felt that was being done when I could not understand why so many of God’s children, not just in Haiti, but in such a large part of our planet live in abject poverty. The sadness I felt in Haiti was almost overwhelming. Our mission and probably most missions are just drops in a bucket of seemingly never-ending need.

But then I realized that what we at St. Thomas’ are doing and what our diocese is doing is answering God’s call by tending just one patch of the Garden, Haiti. Pere Val and Carmel, two of the hardest working people I have ever known, are caretakers for a piece of creation that is burdened with so much need. Pere Val with his six churches and schools and Carmel with her 600 children in her nutrition programs work tirelessly every day not only to ease the suffering, but also to build better bodies and minds that one day will be able to help build a better Haiti.

With the help of our diocese and the parishes in it, Pere Val and Carmel can make a small part of Creation blossom and thrive.

A Reflection by Libby Potter

I was surprised at the words that came out of my mouth when I talked to Jeannie Randall about a trip to Haiti. I spent the better part of an afternoon trying to explain them to my husband, Andrew, and still I couldn’t understand them myself. Now I can.

Halfway through the trip, Andrew texted, “I have found it interesting to see how people react when I tell them where you are. Some are instantly full of admiration. Some seem to recoil, as if in fear or horror. And a few, somewhat unexpectedly, share their own experiences and images.”

I knew Haiti to be a hot place full of desperately poor people where you couldn’t drink the water or eat the food and where “government” was a euphemism for “failed state.” The major difference now was that a natural disaster had overtaken the social and political ones. I’ve been one of those people who reacted to “Haiti” with fear and horror. Everyone admires (but doesn’t necessarily want to be) a missionary—I fit in that category, too.

Now I have stories and images. My job was to take pictures of the children at the Lespwa Timoun nutrition center and give the prints to their parents. I have kids. I know how to do that—except that I didn’t.

In my world, when a kid faces a camera, he mugs, she preens, or they grin and give. On the first day at Lespwa Timoun, after an eternity spent trying to coax a beautiful young girl to smile, the interpreter, who had been struggling as well, finally said, “Haiti is not a country that teaches its children to smile.”

Haitian children, like their parents, are made serious by the misery of hunger, fever, and fear. They cry in pain, never in tantrum. They see each other die for lack of the simplest things, like clean water. They are patient and solemn beyond their years. The older they get, the wiser. But watch as a thrilled mother is handed a photograph of her child, something she’s never had before. Videotape children, and let them see and hear themselves. Hand them paper and a crayon and take a picture of their artwork—they turn into curious, absorbed, lively kids before your eyes.
Celebrating a Birthday with Gifts for Others

For her 8th birthday party, Caroline Ferry asked her friends not to bring presents for her—but instead to bring donations for Krik? Krak!, the clergy spouses’ school lunch ministry in Crochu, Haiti. Caroline and her parents, Daniel and Ashley Ferry, are members of Christ Church in Tuscaloosa.

Cutting “Hairs” Benefits Haiti

On September 12, the members of Holy Cross in Trussville held a “hair raising” to benefit Haiti. The memorable, fun afternoon included a parish-wide picnic and auction along with the featured “Haircut for Haiti” event. The vestry announced a goal of raising $500, and the Rev. Aaron Raulerson, rector of the parish, upped the ante by offering to let someone “buzz” his head if an additional $500 was raised. The final count was one buzzed head and more than $2,000 going to help meet needs in Haiti.

Soup’s On in Birmingham To Serve People in Haiti

By CJ Ross, a Member of St. Francis of Assisi’s in Indian Springs

St. Francis of Assisi in Indian Springs recently hosted the parish’s fourth annual soup bar to raise funds for Haiti medical missions. They offered both take-out and eat-in meals that included chicken tortilla, roasted butternut squash, or Italian wedding soup, salad, bread from Continental Bakery, and homemade desserts. The food must have been yummy because it yielded more than $2,000 for the parish’s planned mission trip in February. Geri Aston, LeeAnn Ramey, and I will be part of that team.

What makes this event especially fun is that it not only involves people in our parish but also the surrounding community. More importantly, together we are serving our sisters and brothers in need in Haiti.

Junior Warden Dawn Armstrong-Allen “buzzing” the Rev. Aaron Raulerson’s head
Saving Children’s Lives in Honduras

Diocesan Grant Helps Children’s Home
By Judy Quick, Chair, Department of Mission and Outreach

The Department of Mission and Outreach has awarded a Global Mission Grant to Individuals to Mike and Kim Miller, SAMS (South American Mission Society) Missionaries to Honduras and their ministry, La Esperanza de Jesús (the Hope of Jesus Children’s Home).

“La Esperanza de Jesús exists to provide protection and daily care for vulnerable children in Honduras by offering them a safe home with Christian values, a loving family environment, and improved educational opportunities,” explain Mike and Kim. “We aspire to raise healthy boys and girls in the love of God and the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ, empowering them to become competent young leaders in their communities.”

Parishioners from St. Thomas’ and the Nativity in Huntsville discovered the La Esperanza de Jesús a few years ago during one of their annual short-term medical missions. Mike and Kim have purchased 4 acres in El Venado (also known as La Esperanza), where they have completed two buildings, have one under construction, and a fourth site ready for construction. The facility has its own well, but it will need another well once the dining hall, a residence for the Millers, and the chapel are completed.

The Rt. Rev. Lloyd Allen, Bishop of Honduras, has provided an additional 40 acres to raise cattle and grow coffee and other crops. To sustain the operation of the children’s home, the Millers intend to fund 30 percent of the operating expenses from the coffee farm and grow as much food as possible for their own needs on their land. The remaining funds will come from grants and donations. The Millers estimate that $250 per month will provide food, clothing, shelter, and medical and dental care for each child. They welcome short-term work teams as they grow their orphanage and develop their farm. For more about the children’s home, please visit www.hopeofjesus.org.

The new Global Mission Grant to Individuals is available for individuals of any age who are directly involved in sharing God’s love with people in need outside the United States. For more information please contact Judy Quick at jgquick@bellsouth.net or 205/669-6862.

Rescuing the Children
By Cindy Atkins, of St. Thomas’ in Huntsville

After participating for 17 years in medical missions to Delicias del Norte, I know to expect the heat, hard work, poverty, difficulty with transportation, lack of clean water, and language barriers. So I was prepared for this to be just another trip to Honduras—I was wrong. This time I experienced something I could not have expected, something I will never forget.

The trip began ordinarily enough on a Thursday, Matt McDonald from the Nativity and Jeannie Randall and me from St. Thomas’, the mission trip’s advance team, arrived at the hot, crowded airport in San Pedro Sula. We had brought about 200 pounds of vitamins, analgesics, and antacids with us packed in suitcases, and thankfully we got through customs without a problem. Eleana Mayorquin, from Bishop Lloyd Allen’s office, met us and took us to our hotel. All very predictable and uneventful—so far.

We went on to the Farmacia Suman where over the years we had arranged for supplies and medications valued in excess of $11,000 to be delivered to the diocesan offices on Friday. Then it was off to find the dental supplies and medical supplies we needed to treat as many as 500 families. And for the first time we made arrangements for follow-up visits with a physician and nurse. Nothing extraordinary yet—just the usual hurry-up-and-wait of Honduras.

On Saturday, the main team arrived—Virginia Fowler, Tony Mason, and the Rev. Matt Doss from St. Thomas’ and Mary Wyngrowski from St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in Madison, Dick, Ginny, Claire, and Dixon McKay from Christ Church in Raleigh joined us directly from their visit with missionaries Mike and Kim Miller, who are working through their ministry La Esperanza de Jesús to provide a better life for the children who have been housed in Nueva Esperanza, the state orphanage in San Pedro Sula. Everything was still going as expected.

Mike Miller picked up Matt Doss and me at our hotel one day and took us to La Esperanza de Jesús for a firsthand look at the ministry. Both Mike and Kim are extraordinarily dedicated, hardworking, knowledgeable, spiritual people who are making a difference in many children’s lives. That was obvious and to be expected—what wasn’t quite so apparent was why they were so passionate about their ministry. That became painfully obvious when we encountered the unexpected during our visit to the state orphanage.

The first unexpected encounter was the 12-foot wall topped with rolls of barbed wire that surrounded the orphanage. The unexpected soon became the unimaginable once we entered the building. Two upstairs rooms housed the young boys—one room filled with wall-to-wall bunk beds, and the other totally devoid of everything except some 30 boys ranging in age from 2 to 8 years old. These little guys wrapped their arms around our legs and held on like they were drowning (I imagined they were drowning in despair). I took photo after photo of many of them, but there were several boys so severely disabled that I just could not bear to expose them to the permanent, relentless eye of a camera.

The two rooms that housed all the girls were very similar except for a few toys here and there. The girls were very much into entertaining us with handstands and hopping and skipping. Once again we got and gave lots of hugs—and they cried when we left, wailing long after the door closed behind us.

Next we went to the two rooms that housed the babies. Each room held 15 small baby beds, and each held up to three babies, a few of them less than a week old. There I saw some of the most profoundly disabled children I’ve ever seen, children who regardless of their chronological age will remain infants forever. I went from bed to bed speaking in a calm voice that belied the feelings churning inside me, patting each child, knowing that some of them did not even know I was there. But some did, and they looked up at me in bewilderment. Some
cringed and pulled away, but one little boy grabbed my hand—and would not let go.

I didn’t think we could see anything worse. I was wrong—it was in the next two rooms. The door to those rooms was locked, and screens and bars covered the two windows. The Nueva Esperanza officials didn’t let us inside—we could only hear the 40 boys, age 8 to 13, and see the fingers they were able to reach out through the small holes in the screens. They pounded on the door, windows, and walls—and they screamed and yelled and cried. I suppose we all have a mental image of hell . . . this is mine.

Now I understand why Mike and Kim Miller and Bishop Allen are so passionately committed to rescuing these children from the state orphanage, and they need lots of help to do it. Over the years that we at St. Thomas’ have been helping the people of Honduras, we have seen what improvements are possible with dedication, hard work, and support. I am grateful that financial help is on the way to La Esperanza de Jesús through the recent grant from our diocese (please see the story on page 17), and I encourage everyone to continue to support Mike and Kim and their lifesaving ministry.

Please visit www.hopeofjesus.org for more about ways you can help.

St. Thomas’ Lobsterfest Supports Local and International Projects

Submitted by Selina Mason

St. Thomas’ in Huntsville recently hosted its 17th annual Lobsterfest, and as always 100 percent of the proceeds benefited local and international charities including medical missions to Honduras and Haiti, Habitat homes, and the First Stop Homeless Assistance Program.

The medical missions in Honduras provide the most basic care for the villagers of Delicias del Norte, a small community outside the large manufacturing city of San Pedro Sula. North American doctors, nurses, and dentists are accompanied by parishioners and friends who staff the clinic, pharmacy, and dental clinic. On occasion the medical staff is supplemented by employing local professionals, and depending on the participants the mission may also provide other services including a veterinary clinic. The mission has from time to time included 12 to 40 gringo participants who fund their own travel expenses including airfare, food, and lodging, an estimated $1,500 for each person. In addition the drugs, vitamins, and supplies the mission team uses plus the logistics and other costs run about $25,000 to 30,000 per year. (Please see “Rescuing the Children” on page 17.)

While Delicias del Norte serves as the base for the annual mission trip, the team usually visits another rural location that is coordinated through the Diocese of Honduras. During the five-day trip in 2010, the mission team cared for a total of about 1,600 patients including about 200 people in the mountain village of Bambu. Many of the patients walked several hours to get to the clinic from more remote villages, and the team devoted one afternoon to making “house calls” for those too old or frail to make the journey.

Over the last several years the mission team has seen an increasing need to address high blood pressure, epilepsy, pregnancy, diabetes, and other conditions that call for more regular monitoring than an annual visit. In addition, children (the majority of the patient load during the annual mission week) get sick throughout the year. So this year the mission team began a relationship with a Home Health agency and a local doctor in San Pedro Sula, and in coordination with the San Lucas parish in Delicias del Norte, St. Thomas’ medical mission now supports a twice monthly clinic attended by a doctor.

Clergy News

The Rev. John Bagby has accepted a call to serve as priest-in-charge of the Church of the Messiah in Heflin.

The Rev. Anna Brawley began serving as rector of St. Bartholomew’s in Florence in October. Anna came to our diocese from the Diocese of Chicago.

The Rev. Deb Braden, associate rector of St. Mary’s on-the-Highlands, died on September 25.

The Rev. Corky Carlisle has accepted a call to serve as interim rector of St. John’s in Decatur.

The Rev. Anna Russell Friedman began serving as deacon-in-charge of St. Paul’s in Carlowville in November. Anna Russell and her husband, Chris, came to our diocese from the Diocese of Tennessee.

The Rev. Lesley Hay has begun serving as the rector of St. Joseph’s on-the-Mountain in Mentone. Lesley came to our diocese from the Diocese of Connecticut.

The Rev. Margaret “Maggie” Hanson Taylor is retiring as the founding rector of the Holy Apostles’ in Hoover effective January 10. Maggie planted the new parish in 1994.
and a nurse and supplied by a local pharmacy. So far 20 to 40 patients visit the clinic every other Tuesday.

The relationships formed over the 17-year history of our medical missions are a significant part of this outreach ministry. Our teams are now treating the children of those children we first met in the 1990s, and at least one of those children is in dental school, inspired by her experiences with St. Thomas’ mission clinic. About six years ago we participated in bringing electricity to Delicias del Norte, and we have also helped improve the quality of the village’s water supply. Overall we have helped improve public health substantially. In recent years we have also been working with the Rev. Fritz Valdema to serve the people in his six-church parish in Haiti; please see “Meeting Medical Needs” on page 15.

Funds from Lobsterfest have helped build 19 Habitat homes in the Madison County area. In 1995 a group of southeast Huntsville churches joined together to build a house in Huntsville. Since then St. Thomas’ has teamed with an ecumenical group of churches (called “the gang of churches” by Madison County Habitat for Humanity) to build 18 more.

For several years St. Thomas’ has been the largest supporter of the First Stop Homeless Assistance Program notes Lawrence Sisterman, the organization’s spokesman. Last year St. Thomas’ gifts were “extremely timely,” he adds. Grant delays had forced the organization to consider staff layoffs or temporarily shutting down the program until they received St. Thomas’ donation of $20,000 plus noncash help from members of our congregation.

The First Stop Homeless Assistance Program is unique in that it provides services to the street homeless where they live—under the bridges in tents or makeshift shelters. The staff and volunteers monitor and assist these clients with life-sustaining support of food, clothing, blankets, showers, restrooms, lockers, mailing addresses, and most of all one-on-one personal help obtaining benefits, medical and mental healthcare, and ultimately permanent housing. In this calendar year alone, the First Stop staff members have placed 32 people in apartments with not one person going back to the streets. “With dedicated staff, we are making a difference,” Lawrence emphasizes.

On September 17, members of eight parishes gathered at Holy Spirit in Alabaster for a “Beans and Rice Celebration.” The Rev. Deacon Steve Shanks, our diocesan Jubilee Ministries coordinator, secured a grant that funded the gathering. In addition to the beans-and-rice dinner that was provided, each attending parish received 100 pounds of rice and 50 pounds of pinto beans as well as a large plastic tub to use in bagging the food for their parish ministry. The conversation that evening centered on various aspects of the grassroots Beans and Rice food-sharing ministry that started at Trinity in Clanton and is quickly spreading throughout our diocese.

In the fall of 2006, a member of the vestry of our parish commented that “Trinity should be known for something other than just being another church in Clanton.” A few days later when I was talking with my brother John, who served as pastor of the Prairie Grove First Presbyterian Church close to Fayetteville, Arkansas, he mentioned that the people of that parish had been operating a Beans and Rice ministry for 30 years. One Saturday morning a month they distributed uncooked beans and rice and sometimes other food items to anyone in need with no questions asked. With a Parish Outreach Grant from our diocesan Department of Mission and Outreach to help cover start-up expenses, Trinity in Clanton started a similar ministry.

By the summer of 2010, Holy Spirit in Alabaster, Christ Church in Albertville, Grace Church in Anniston, St. Catherine’s in Chelsea, St. Philip’s in Fort Payne, and Epiphany in Talladega had also started Beans and Rice ministries. Since the September gathering, St. Michael and All Angels’ in Anniston has joined in, and St. Francis of Assisi in Indian Springs is exploring the possibility of beginning one. We estimate that this cluster of food-sharing ministries will distribute more than 40 tons of food during the next 12 months.

The Beans and Rice ministry is very simple and doable by every parish of any size. At Trinity we place a signboard on the street in front of the church one week before the food-sharing day, and we promise free uncooked beans and rice to every family who comes—no questions asked and no names taken. From the beginning that has been our promise, and after four years we are now offering between 12 and 15 pounds of food per household as a monthly supplement.

For more information about the Beans and Rice food-sharing ministries in our diocese, please contact me at bp3king@bellsouth.net. For more information about Parish Outreach Grants, please contact Judy Quick at jsgwick@bellsouth.net or 205/669-6882.
Ascension Hosts Hispanic Ministries Events
Submitted by Dr. Pamela H. Long

On October 30 members of the Ascension in Montgomery hosted an Interfaith Conference on Hispanic Ministries. Representatives from the Episcopal, Baptist, and Roman Catholic communities participated in the conference, which included a prayer service. Professionals from the legal, healthcare, social services, and insurance sectors also attended and provided information on services available to the Hispanic residents of the Montgomery area.

The Latino members of the parish celebrated Dia de los Muertos (the Day of the Dead) with a Mass for the Faithful Departed on October 31. Members of the congregation built a traditional ofrenda (altar) with pan de muertos (bread), candles, cempasucitl (chrysanthemums) and other flowers, photos, and other traditional symbols.

Father Hernan Afanador served as the celebrant for the worship service, and the communicants enjoyed tamales, chocolate, and other traditional foods at the reception that followed.

The members of Ascension also recently hosted an interdenominational prayer and praise service. More than 100 Latino Christians from the Montgomery area participated in the service and enjoyed the food and fellowship at the informal gathering afterward.

For more information about the Latino congregation at Ascension, please e-mail pamela.h.long@gmail.com. For more about Hispanic ministries in our diocese, please contact the Rev. Dr. Hernan Afanador at hernan_afanador@yahoo.com or 205/381-4885.

Episcopal Place Celebrates Anniversary By Hosting a Fundraiser
By Kris Mueller

On October 14 Episcopal Place, a nonprofit housing community in Birmingham, celebrated its 30th anniversary with a special event at The Club that raised more than $17,000. Bishop Parsley was the special guest at the Episcopal Place Bishop’s Dinner, which drew 230 people for cocktails, dinner, a special program, and dancing to music by the Charles Giambrone Band. The special program featured comments by Bishop Parsley on the importance of Episcopal Place in serving elderly and disabled adults and a video on the mission and services of the facility.

The event sponsors included Paul and Louise Thibodaux, Brice (the builder for Episcopal Place), Business Electronics, Omega Bank Card Services, Pam Ausley Remax Southern Homes, Regions, St. Martin’s in the Pines, St. Vincent’s Health System, SPM Property Management, and BREC Development. Keehn Berry served as honorary chair of the host committee, and Terry Chapman served as event chair. Bob Vardaman, of Bob Vardaman Events Management, designed the decorations.

Episcopal Place provides affordable housing and support services to seniors and disabled adults who live on restricted incomes. The facility was built 30 years ago as a partnership between the Episcopal Church and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, which provides rent subsidies for residents. Proceeds from the event will help fund Episcopal Place’s Supportive Services Program in providing transportation, subsidized noon meals and housekeeping, pastoral care and worship services, and resident activities, to the 146 residents of the community home.

Calvary in Oneonta Celebrates 8th Birthday
Story and photo by Joan M. Sanderson

We celebrated the 8th birthday of our parish on September 19 with a recital featuring organist Samuel “Sam” Burke Jr. performing on our newly acquired Hinners/Zimmer/Hand pipe organ. Sam, who is a member of our parish, has served as organist or organist/choir director for churches in Alabama and North Carolina and is currently the organist at Grace Church in Cullman.

The members of our parish express our deepest gratitude to the members of the Chapel of the Cross in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, for the generous gift of the organ (which had rendered faithful musical service in their historic 1843 chapel for many decades) and to the members and friends of Calvary Church who donated their time and talents in assisting in fitting it for service at Calvary. Sam was delighted to consult (and generally assist as needed) in bringing the pipe organ from Chapel Hill to Oneonta. Gregory Hand of Lynchburg, Virginia, was commissioned to move and adapt the organ to its present home, employing skillful mechanical redesign as necessary and excellence in voicing of the pipes (including the addition of fine antique ppework from historic builders Casavant, Voteler and Roosevelt). The result is a cohesive instrument that sounds truly “at home” in Calvary.

Josephine Rouse, Ph.D., our organist and director of music, coordinated the event. Members of the parish’s ECW and Hospitality Committee sponsored a reception following the recital.

Celebrating St. Matthew’s Day

Members of St. Matthew’s-in-the-Pines in Seale celebrated St. Matthew’s Day with a potluck lunch and at the home of parishioners Jill Tigner and Mike Venable.
The Red Door Arts Series Draws People to St. Andrew’s

The Rev. Marc Burnette that the event be revived, and the parish celebrated a Creativity Sunday service on Pentecost. On the Friday before, a number of talented members and friends performed in a Coffeeshouse Open-Mic night in the parish hall.

Barbara helped form a Creativity Committee including parishioners Elin Glenn, Janet Simpson-Templin, Jason Templin, Ann Mitchell, Jeff Evans, and Roger Conville. With guidance from Father Burnette, they expanded the creative offerings to an entire weekend. From 2007 to 2009, the Pentecost weekends included poetry readings, a collage bookmaking class, an art display of parishioners’ works, a hootenanny guitar sing-along, a coffeeshouse music presentation, a rock band performance, and a book signing by St. Andrew’s member Karyn Zweifel. A gala in 2009 featured a silent auction

The Rev. Wilton Bunch thinks the aspect of hospitality to outsiders is one of the best things about the Red Door Arts events. “More than 90 people attended the harpsichord concert, and only about 20 of those were our own parishioners. In our location, this is my idea of evangelism!”

Rev. Marc Burnette is dedicating a harpsichord that he donated to the church to Dr. Marvin Yeomans Whiting. A harpsichord he donated received top billing at a concert of Telemann, Bach, Simpson, Purcell, Handel and Andrea Gabrieli, and it got a thorough workout from three different performers,” he wrote.

The October 24 event featured a concert of not only harpsichord but also viola, violin, flute, and vocal music. Sine Nomine Consort of Early Music, a recorder and ancient music ensemble led by Steve Calvert, joined the performance. During the concert the harpsichord given to the church by Dr. Marvin Yeomans Whiting was dedicated, and the event honored him. A member of St. Andrew’s, Whiting served as the archivist for the Birmingham Public Library for 20 years, has authored numerous historical books and articles, and assisted in the founding of the Birmingham History Center.

The concert series is a new component this year of an arts group at the parish that got its start in 1993. Its roots trace to three “Creativity Sunday” services conceived by then-rector the Rev. Francis Walter. He, along with parishioner Barbara Sloan and other artistic members of St. Andrew’s, developed a “Eucharist of God’s Creative Spirit” in November 1992. They invited three well-known Birmingham artists to transform the nave with their works. Tracie Noles-Ross and other painters created huge canvases that reflected stories from the Bible involving creation. Musicians, dancers, and storytellers from the congregation enhanced the service with their special gifts, and the creative tools of all parishioners were placed near the altar and blessed. The day was cherished by many and was repeated for the next two years. Folk artist Chris Clark draped the nave with wondrous quilts in 1993, and in 1994 a coffeehouse performance was added the Saturday before the Sunday event.

The Red Door arts group suspended the Creativity Sunday events when several key artistic parishioners left the parish. In 2006 Barbara suggested to then-rector the
**Upcoming Events, Workshops, and Retreats**

**ADVENT-EPHANONY POVERTY AWARENESS PROGRAM**

*Thursday, December 2-January 27, 10:30 a.m. to noon at St. Mark’s in Birmingham*

Everyone is invited to participate in “Just Neighbors—An Interactive Poverty Awareness Program” on Thursday mornings in December and January. This dynamic program will let you walk in the shoes of the poor, experience their frustrations, and learn how to help. You will gain a better understanding or what it feels like to be poor in the midst of plenty and the everyday struggles of low-income families, the tough choices they have to make: Shoes or food? Rent or medicine? You will explore trying to live on $2,050 a year, the federal poverty level for a family of four. You’ll also see the harsh realities of being a minimum-wage worker (working 40 hours a week for 52 weeks a year at minimum wage earns $15,080 before taxes). You will gain a better understanding of the root causes of poverty in America today and why working families are still living in poverty—and the “Things You Can Do” materials will give you tips on ways you can help make a positive difference. [For more information please call 205/322-8449 or e-mail the Rev. Deacon Carolyn Foster at carolynfoster@bellsouth.net.](mailto:carolynfoster@bellsouth.net)*

**8TH ANNUAL CHURCH MUSIC CONFERENCE AND ORGAN SCHOLARSHIP COMPETITION**

*January 20-22 at the University of Alabama campus in Tuscaloosa*

This year’s 8th annual conference includes a concert by Pamela Decker on Saturday at 4:30 p.m. The scholarship competition will be held on Thursday morning, and the workshops on Friday and Saturday will focus on organ and vocal masterclasses, hymnody, choral reading, sacred instrumental repertoire, children’s choirs, Celtic worship, organ repertoire, and church music and music education. [For more information please contact Dr. Faythe Freese at faythefreese@earthlink.net or 205/348-3329.](mailto:faythefreese@earthlink.net)

**NUTS & BOLTS TRAINING EVENT**

*January 29 from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at St. Stephen’s in Birmingham*

Save the date! Everyone interested in children’s, youth, and adult ministries is encouraged to attend this year’s “Nuts & Bolts” training event sponsored by our diocesan Department of Christian Formation. [For more information please contact Sarah Sartain at ssartain@dioala.org or 205/715-2060 ext 314.](mailto:ssartain@dioala.org)

**RETREATS AT ST. MARY’S SEWANEE**

St. Mary’s Sewanee Center for Spiritual Development welcomes everyone to attend the following retreats. [For more information please call 300/728-1639, e-mail stmaryssewanee@bellsouth.net, or visit www.stmaryssewanee.org; also visit the specific Web site listed for each retreat. December 10-12 “Advent Centering Prayer Retreat” presented by the Rev. Tom Ward](https://www.stmaryssewanee.org/programs/Dec10.html)

In his recent book, *Slavery by Another Name*, Douglas Blackmon documents the treatment of blacks in Alabama. He writes that even in the early part of the 20th century the following was taking place: “Under laws enacted specifically to intimidate blacks, tens of thousands of African Americans were arbitrarily arrested, hit with outrageous fines, and charged for the costs of their own arrests. With no means to pay these ostensible “debts,” prisoners were sold as forced laborers to coal mines, lumber camps, brickyards, railroads, quarries, and farm plantations. Thousands of other African Americans were simply seized by Southern landowners and compelled into years of involuntary servitude.”

Blackmon describes this convict leasing system in Alabama in great detail, giving the names of prominent people and companies. Alabama maintained this system until 1928, long after other states had abolished it, and Blackmon shows that this behavior of whites toward blacks continued in some areas of our state as late as the beginning of World War II.

But what about our polite and gracious Episcopal parishes? Bertram Perry Sr., son of a former rector of St. Mark’s in Birmingham, remembers discussions of diocesan gatherings at the Church of the Advent about 70 years ago. If a meal was served, a curtain divided off part of the parish hall, and black Episcopalians ate behind the curtain so they would not be eating in the same area as whites. Hardly any thought was given to this, and for the most part we acquiesced to this custom—it was seen as the norm even by the most progressive of our citizens.

What was going on in less polite and less gracious places? And what things were going on among Episcopalians that we can celebrate? Are there stories of quiet resistance to segregation or of efforts to overcome its effects?

Our 2009 annual diocesan convention directed the Commission on Race Relations to develop resources for both parish and diocesan use to document the role our diocese played both in acquiescing to discrimination and efforts undertaken to repair and rectify the same. The commission has also been directed to help us in responding to the guidance of the Holy Spirit so that our future responses toward discrimination and abuse will lead us to greater peace and harmony.

Our commission is seeking personal stories and will be glad to receive anything you would like to share. Please send your stories to the co-chairs of the commission: the Rev. Deacon Tom Osborne at tosborne@usa.net and the Rev. Deacon Carolyn Foster at carolynfoster@bellsouth.net.

**Bishops’ Visitation Schedule**

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**Our Commission on Race Relations is Seeking Personal Stories**

*Submitted by the Rev. Doug Carpenter*

For more information call 205/322-8449 or e-mail the Rev. Deacon Carolyn Foster at carolynfoster@bellsouth.net.
Generous Justice: How God’s Grace Makes Us Just by Timothy Keller

Timothy Keller, the author of the bestseller The Reason for God and nationally renowned pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City, offers his most provocative and illuminating message yet in this new book. Many people think that the Bible is one of the greatest hindrances to doing justice: isn’t it full of regressive views? Didn’t it condone slavery? Why look to the Bible for guidance on how to have a more just society? But Keller sees it another way, and in Generous Justice he explores a life of justice empowered by an experience of grace—a generous, gracious justice. This book is for both believers who find the Bible a trustworthy guide as well as those who suspect that Christianity is a regressive influence in the world. Keller uses contemporary language that speaks to many thousands of people, and he provides a new understanding of modern justice and human rights.

The Messiah: An Illustrated Biography by Jacques Duquesne

Few stories have captured the world’s imagination as much as the biblical account of the life of Jesus Christ. This exquisitely produced book, replete with images from throughout the history of art accompanied by insightful text, sheds new light on key events in the life of Christ and helps the reader understand their significance in the context of the ancient world as well as today.

The bookstore is open Monday through Thursday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sunday from 9:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. For information about these and other books, or to have us research and special order a particular book, please contact the Episcopal Book Store, 2015 Sixth Avenue North, Birmingham, AL 35203; 205/323-2959; chinfo@episcobooks.com; or visit the bookstore online at www.episcobooks.com.
Christmas Cards Help Bring Children to Camp

By Danielle Dunbar

This year we awarded more than $100,000 in Camp McDowell Scholarships to help bring children, who otherwise would not be able to attend, to Camp McDowell. This is almost 40 percent more than the total scholarships we gave in 2009. The number of children attending our excellent camp sessions has increased even during the economic downturn, and not surprisingly scholarship requests have increased dramatically. The amount of financial assistance for summer camp alone increased from $26,000 in 2009 to $44,000 in 2010!

We sincerely thank everyone who has made a gift to our scholarship fund in the past. You made it possible for hundreds of children to attend summer camp as well as our residential environmental center, Special Session, and other events in 2010. Former campers will tell you that Camp McDowell is a supportive Christian community where young people learn to be themselves and where they develop an abiding respect for the integrity and individuality of all living things. We believe the opportunity to experience the joy of God's love and to witness the beauty and wonder of God's creation should be available to all. That is why it is so important that we work together to ensure that all of God's children can come to Camp McDowell.

Please consider making a contribution today in the form of a Christmas card. We will send one of our beautiful cards to each person you would like to honor, informing them that a gift has been given in their name to the Camp McDowell Scholarship Fund. For more information please contact me at 205/387-1806 or danielle@campmcdowell.com, or visit www.campmcdowell.com.

Joy to the World!

By Leslie Manning, Our Youth Ministries Coordinator

This year we invite you to give the gift of Sawyerville for Christmas! A very special Christmas card is available to help raise awareness of the Sawyerville Day Camp, and for a donation of $10 we will send a Sawyerville Christmas Card to the recipients you choose. What a wonderful way to tell your family and friends about this very special camp—and give the gift of swimming, laughter, singing, arts and crafts, and Christ-centered relationships to children in the Black Belt area of our state!

Sawyerville Day Camp is a weeklong Christian summer day camp sponsored by our diocese in Hale County. Campers come to Sawyerville without charge, and there is no staff fee! In 2010 we began offering full two sessions each summer, and we are excited about continuing to make this dream a reality again in 2011. High-school and college students plus adults from all over our diocese and Hale County serve on staff. Our goals are to serve God through the Church in outreach, to improve race relations in Alabama, and to broaden the horizons of both the campers and the staff members.

Thank you and blessings this holiday season!

To purchase Sawyerville Christmas Cards please visit www.sawyervilleproject.org and follow the Christmas Cards link at the top of the page.

The Alabama Episcopalian

The Alabama Episcopalian is published six times a year (January/February, March/April, May/June, July/August, September/October, and November/December). For the most current news about recent and upcoming events, please visit our diocesan Web site, www.dioala.org.

Please send stories and photographs (color, if available) to Editor Norma McKittrick at apostledit@aol.com or 2156 Kent Way, Birmingham, AL 35226; the submission deadline for each issue is the 1st of the month prior to publication. Postmaster, parishes, and individuals, please send all address changes or additions to Circulation Secretary Denise Servant at dservant@dioala.org or Carpenter House, 521 North 20th Street, Birmingham, AL 35203–2682.

Keep up with the latest news from around our diocese between issues of The Alabama Episcopalian on our diocesan Web site, www.dioala.org. If you are not already receiving our “Web Site Update,” you can sign up to receive a weekly e-mail containing headlines with links to the latest news, photos, and videos about and from around our diocese. Simply send an e-mail with your name and e-mail address to ddrachlis@dioala.org and put “Headlines” on the subject line. You can “opt out” anytime.