Hands-On Learning at
Camp McDowell Environmental Center

“Remembrance, Repentance, and Reconciliation”—
The 13th Annual Jonathan Daniels Pilgrimage
Third Class of Deacons Ordained

By Diocesan Staff; Photo by the Rev. Deacon Dave Drachlis

Bishop Parsley and Bishop Sloan ordained 13 women and men to the Sacred Order of Deacons on Saturday, October 1, during a service at the Cathedral Church of the Advent in Birmingham. The new permanent deacons, who come from parishes throughout our diocese, are Marla Asson from St. Stephen’s in Huntsville, David Barfield from Holy Comforter in Gadsden, Kim Beckett from St. Michael and All Angels’ in Anniston, Marti Holmes from St. Stephen’s in Birmingham, Kelley Hudlow from Canterbury Chapel in Tuscaloosa, Jerry Jacobs from Grace Church in Cullman, Judy Lee from Holy Apostles’ in Hoover, Judy Quick from St. Andrew’s in Montevallo, Jeannie Robison from Nativity in Huntsville, Cindy Roff from Canterbury Chapel in Tuscaloosa, C.J. Van Slyke from St. Francis’ in Indian Springs Village, David Whetstone from Grace Church in Anniston, and Norbert Wilson from St. Dunstan’s in Auburn.

They comprised the third class of deacons to be ordained since the permanent diaconate was instituted in our diocese in 1999. The first class of deacons was ordained in November 2002, and the second class in October 2004. Previously deaconesses were ordained in our diocese, beginning in 1885.

Saturday’s ordination increased the number of deacons actively serving parishes in our diocese to thirty-one. They provide a leadership role in a variety of ministry areas including disaster relief, prison ministry, mission work in Honduras and Haiti, race relations, ministries to the homeless and the hungry, Jubilee Ministries, and other outreach ministries.

“The diaconate is about servant ministry,” Bishop Parsley explains. “Deacons are called and ordained to be servants in a special way, by helping the Church extend the ministry of Christ to those in need. Deacons lead and empower the people of God in reaching out, so that, in the words of the Ordinal, Christ’s people may know that ‘in helping the helpless they are serving Christ himself’... They make a healing connection between the Church and the needs of the world.”

Permanent deacons, who are non-stipendiary, have a role both in the liturgy of the Word and the liturgy of the table during Eucharist, and they also have special ministries both within and outside their parish. Their formal preparation included a two-year Deacon’s School for Ministry program, which consisted of monthly Saturday sessions, three weekend sessions each year at Camp McDowell, and an extensive theological and scriptural reading program. They also explored a variety of community ministries during their formation. Completion of the four-year Education for Ministry curriculum of the School of Theology at the University of the South in Sewanee is also required before ordination.

Deacon Asson will serve at Holy Cross-St. Christopher’s in Huntsville, Deacon Barfield will remain and serve at Holy Comforter in Gadsden, Deacon Beckett will serve at the Church of the Resurrection in Gadsden, Deacon Holmes will serve at Grace Church in Woodlawn, Deacon Hudlow will serve at St. Michael’s Church in Fayette, Deacon Jacob will remain and serve at at Grace Church in Cullman, Deacon Lee will serve at St. Francis’ Church in Indian Springs, Deacon Quick will remain and serve at St. Andrew’s in Montevallo, Deacon Robison will remain and serve at the Nativity in Huntsville, Deacon Roff will remain and serve at Canterbury Chapel in Tuscaloosa, Deacon Van Slyke will serve at Trinity Church in Clanton, Deacon Whetstone will remain and serve at Grace Church in Anniston, and Deacon Wilson will remain and serve at St. Dunstan’s in Auburn.

Vision Statement of the Vocation and Ministry of Deacons of the Episcopal Diocese of Alabama

A deacon is a baptized person called and empowered by God and the Church to be a model of Christ’s servant ministry for all people. As agents of God’s compassion and reconciling grace, deacons are missionaries to the world and messengers to the Church of the world’s needs, hopes, and concerns. In the Church, deacons call forth, empower, and inspire the baptized to respond to these needs. The role of the deacon in liturgy mirrors the role of the deacon in the Church and world. Deacons are living symbols of Christ’s presence as they embody Christ’s servant ministry and point to the presence of Christ in those they serve.
Eucharistic Lives

Each time we celebrate the Holy Eucharist, we remember the stories of the feeding of the crowds. They are eucharistic stories, and our lives are meant to be eucharistic lives. As Jesus took the loaves, blessed, broke, and gave them, so are we to do with our lives.

This is the heart of faith. Our friends in AA have a saying, “I can’t. But God can. I think I’ll let him.” The power of God’s grace becomes manifest through such self-surrender. It happens when we are up against the most vexing personal situations and, equally, when we are called upon to address vast social problems that seem impossible. We do not have what it takes, but God does.

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Retirement Celebration
To Honor the Parsleys on October 28

A special dinner event celebrating our ministry as a diocese and Bishop and Becky Parsley’s life and ministry among us for the past 15 years will be held at The Club in Birmingham on Friday evening, October 28. As part of the celebration, Catesby Jones is compiling a book of brief stories, memories, anecdotes, and photographs; if you wish to share something, please send it to Catesby Jones, P.O. Box 1014, Selma AL 36702.

For more information about the celebration or to make a reservation, please visit http://dioala.org/gofa.html or call Denise Servant at 205/715-2060 ext. 300.
Hello, friends:

Thank you all very much for your kindness to me and my family throughout the process of electing our next bishop, and thank you for your confidence in me and your trust in God to work through me as we begin a new season of service in this part of God’s one holy Church.

As the weeks and months before the election wore on, different people who wanted me to be elected would tell me about it; I’m assuming those good folks who wanted us to elect one of the other nominees told somebody else. One of the people who were hoping I’d be elected told me she was comfortable that I wouldn’t want to change anything. I didn’t think much about it until another person told me he was hoping I’d be elected so we could do things differently.

Just before the election somebody told me that his concern was that I am too liberal. I told him I’d heard that before, but I’m not really sure what that means, so he told me some of what he and I probably don’t agree about. Then I got an e-mail from someone who’d talked to someone who was out there saying that I am too conservative. Actually I’ve heard that before—I’m not sure what that means either, except that I disagree with somebody about something.

In 30 years of serving the Episcopal Church in ordained ministry, I’ve encouraged people to be honest with me, to tell me what they think . . . and some folks have. I have at one point or another been told that I am too liberal, not liberal enough, too conservative. and not conservative enough. Maybe I am; I might be any one of those things at any one moment on any one issue, but surely I can’t be all of those things at once, all the time. I think the real truth of it is that as Episcopalians, and as Americans, we are encouraged to think for ourselves, which means that we will inevitably disagree from time to time. Sometimes when we disagree it is convenient to choose up sides and label who’s on my team and who’s on yours. Then we have not only a disagreement but also a competition, with winners and losers; we can make almost anything competitive.

One of the most formative parts of my life has been working with summer camps for people with disabilities. The campers come with labels firmly attached: Down’s Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, Epileptic, Intellectual Disability, Spinal Bifida, and on and on.

From a distance, these labels not only identify but also define these people—it’s only when you get a little closer that you can see that they’re really people. Labels are only helpful to a point; beyond that, they make it hard to see the person behind them.

So which label should you stick on me: Am I a conservative or a liberal? From what I hear, the answer must be yes—too liberal, not liberal enough, too conservative, and not conservative enough. I think I’d rather you didn’t stick a label on me at all, and I’ll try to not to label you right back. I hope that as the years go by we can get close enough to each other to see that we’re all really people, children of the same Father in heaven.

I’ve heard Bishop Parsley say several times that he is “radically moderate,” which I think is an apt description of him. I think my grandfather used to tell us to be “moderate in all things, including moderation.” Perhaps unlike my radical friend Henry, I can only be moderately moderate—trying to find the middle ground most of the time, hoping to bring together people who have the freedom to disagree so that we can talk to each other without attaching labels or calling names or tearing apart the Church we love so that together we can join together to serve God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

There are labels that I would like to be identified by, though. You can label me a follower of Jesus Christ, a child of God, a bishop in God’s church, a Mississippi State fan (I’m writing this on the first day of the college football season), a Southerner, a man in love with his wife, and a proud father.

Rather than “telling each other apart,” we need to find a way to tell us together.

For those of you who read the last paragraph first, just to see if the column would be worth reading, here’s what I really want to say: I am convinced that we have to get away from handling different ideas or opinions in our Church as competitions, choosing up teams and applying big sloppy labels so we can tell each other apart, with the people who are bound and determined to win at all costs, even if winning means destroying the Church, serving as team captains. Rather than “telling each other apart,” we need to find a way to tell us together.

The Rt. Rev. John McKee Sloan
A Heartfelt Thank-You

By Alleen Cater, Transition Committee Chair

In the spring of 2010, a few months after Bishop Parsley announced his plans to retire at the end of 2011, our diocesan Standing Committee appointed the members of the Search Committee and the Transition Committee. The task for the Search Committee was obvious, and there has been widespread concurrence on the high quality of their work, to put it mildly. The task of the Transition Committee was perhaps not quite so clear: We are responsible for orchestrating the events in the process of electing and seating our next bishop. Those events should go smoothly. They should be well done and satisfying.

As Chair of the Transition Committee, I have seen a remarkable outpouring of enthusiasm from every person and group that has been asked to help. It has been a pleasure to watch people, some meeting for the first time, as they put their heads and hands together and joyfully make things happen. I want to acknowledge their efforts in staging the first two events and planning the events to come in October and January.

The staff and members of St. Luke’s in Birmingham rolled out the red carpet in June, welcoming delegates and visitors to a Saturday afternoon walkabout with the four bishop candidates. They anticipated every need and answered each one promptly and graciously. The Rev. Chris Girata, who is an outstanding event planner, assembled a group of devoted helpers from the parish. The breathtakingly beautiful flowers were “refreshed” for the occasion by the family of the late Virginia Bissell Spencer.

At the beginning of the walkabout weekend, each of the four candidates was presented with a welcome basket artfully arranged by Marilyn Atkins on behalf of the parish. The breathtakingly beautiful flowers were “refreshed” for the occasion by the family of the late Virginia Bissell Spencer.

As Chair of the Transition Committee, I have seen a remarkable outpouring of enthusiasm from every person and group that has been asked to help. It has been a pleasure to watch people, some meeting for the first time, as they put their heads and hands together and joyfully make things happen. I want to acknowledge their efforts in staging the first two events and planning the events to come in October and January.

The Cursillo community provided the refreshments for the reception at the Cathedral Church of the Advent following the election in July: Stephanie Sewell, Hill Sewell, Betty Simmons, Johnny Tyson, Phyllis Bennington, Bing Edwards, Bo Berry, Margaret Muselman, Libba Vaughn, John Paul Muselman, Caitlin Ambrose, Sue Roberts, and (not pictured) Jennifer Boylan, Rusty Boylan, and Sharon Benefield; photo by Bo Berry

Canon Joe Gibbes and Brad Horne, who worked hard to balance the needs of Sarah Sartain and the Carpenters, were the very best of an Alabama summer. Did everyone notice that the cathedral bells rang as Bishop-Elect Sloan spoke from the chancel? The outstanding choir graciously sang on the summer Saturday afternoon after a 10-day singing tour along the east coast.

Many, many thanks to those already mentioned as well as to Jenny Blackmon, Bunny Edwards, the Rev. Evan Garner, the Rev. Canon Heidi Kinner, Susan Koonce, Anne Mitchell, Anthony Joseph, Melissa Strange, Fiona Watts, the Rev. Eric Stelle, the Rev. Ben Alford, Catesby Jones, the Rev. Deacon Ken Lewis, the Rev. Eric Liles, the Rev. Margaret Scalise, Steve Smith, Linda Kennedy, the Rev. Deacon Dave Drachlis, the Rev. Michael Rich, Steven Speaks, Nancy Terrell, the Rev. Huey Gardner, Nancy Whitson, Diane Weatherford, Dan Miller, Marilyn McCravy, Evelyn McGhee, Joanna Brooks, Audrey Vander Yacht, Susie Caffey, Jo Anne Gaede, Ceil Prosch, Ann Johnson, John Douglass, Susan Logan, Helen Camp, Betsy Simmons, Jennifer and Rusty Boylan, Peggy Miller, Hartzel, and many, many others worked behind the scenes, in particular the Rev. Chris Girata, who is an outstanding event planner, assembled a group of devoted helpers from the parish. The breathtakingly beautiful flowers were “refreshed” for the occasion by the family of the late Virginia Bissell Spencer.

At the beginning of the walkabout weekend, each of the four candidates was presented with a welcome basket artfully arranged by Marilyn Atkins on behalf of our diocesan ECW and the parish ECWs of St. Luke’s in Birmingham, St. Mary’s on-the-Highlands in Birmingham, St. Peter’s in Talladega, St. Simon Peter in Pell City, St. Michael and All Angels’ in Anniston, and the Epiphany in Guntersville. Imprinted reusable tote bags contained the weekend schedule, information on various diocesan ministries, and homemade goodies donated by various individuals, all of which made an impression of fine hospitality toward the nominees and their spouses. On the evening prior to the walkabout, members of the Transition Committee and the Search Committee took the candidates to a relaxing dinner at various restaurants around town.

The Cathedral Church of the Advent hosted the election in July. This event, as well as the walkabout at St. Luke’s, included countless details that needed to happen smoothly. All went like clockwork thanks to a large group of great helpers, starting with the Rev. Canon Joe Gibbes and Brad Horne, who worked hard to balance the needs of Sarah Sartain and the Carpenters. The Cursillo community provided the best refreshments ever. Eddie Finn, George Newton and Melanie Rodgers provided music while the refreshments were served. Sybil Sylvester, assisted by Margot Shaw, arranged the showstopping flowers in Clingman Commons; the hydrangeas and other native flowers were the very best of an Alabama summer. Did everyone notice that the cathedral bells rang as Bishop-Elect Sloan spoke from the chancel? The outstanding choir graciously sang on the summer Saturday afternoon after a 10-day singing tour along the east coast.

Word, the Honorable J. Scott Vowell, Maibeth Porter, Esq., Rep. Joe Hubbard, Sally Sinclair, Carleton Ambrose, Keeth and Bob Berry, Phyllis Bennington, Bing Edwards, John Paul and Margaret Muselman, Sue Roberts, Hill and Stephanie Sewell, Libba Vaughan, Sharon Benefit, Nancy Bromberg, Stan Atkins, Deborah Barrett, Bob and Martha Black, Charles Booth, Anne Burke, Fran Cade, Candice and Steve Frazer, Pat Goodwin, Marilyn Greely, Mary Hanson, Alli and Chris Hartley, Derrick Hill, Robin Hinkle, Lyle Hohnek, John Kennedy, Trey Kennedy, Walker Kennedy, Kate Kiefer, Kim McAdams, Bentley Manning, Kate Nakamura and Joseph Kenyon, Jean Nelson, Virginia Rahils, Lillie Skelton, Paul Thibodaux, Charles Kennedy, Livy and James Abele, Katy and David Smith, Cornelia and Tom Hefflin, Cassandra and A.J. Joseph, the Rev. Rich Webster, the staff of St. Luke’s, the Very Rev. Frank Limehouse, the staff of the Cathedral Church of the Advent, and last but certainly not least, the Rev. Alison Carmody. My sincerest apologies to anyone whose name has not been noted. I know many others worked behind the scenes, in particular the cookie bakers and sandwich cutters who even took leftover bread to the elephants at the zoo.

On October 28, we will celebrate Bishop Parsley’s dedication to our diocese over the last 15 years. During the first weekend in January 2012, we will host several events and many out-of-town guests who will come for the investiture of Bishop Sloan. Some of these events are well along in the planning stage. We will need volunteers. If you are interested, please contact me at alleen@hellsouth.net.

Our invaluable national consultant, Judy Stark, sees such events at dioceses all around the country. She has praised our work and has taken notes to pass along to others. Gospel Hospitality is alive and well in our diocese. Thanks be to God!
EPISCOPAL CHURCH WOMEN

Compiled by Lynn Edge Reeves, Publicity Chair

Note: No photo available for Sean Arnold of St. Mark’s in Prattville, Amanda Claytor of St. Matthew’s in Madison, or Blake Taylor of All Saints’ in Montgomery.

Lydia Allison
St. Thomas’ in Huntsville

Lee Auman
Epiphany in Guntersville

Allie Broadfoot
Ascension in Montgomery

Cooper Chesebro
St. Stephen’s in Birmingham

Elizabeth Cobb
St. Luke’s in Birmingham

Tatiana Cookingham
St. Matthew’s in Madison

Kristen Garfield
St. Andrew’s in Tuskegee

Allison Hallman
Christ Church in Tuscaloosa

Jonathan Hennessy
St. Simon Peter in Pell City

Julia Horn
St. Stephen’s in Birmingham

Isabelle Leavitt
St. John’s in Decatur

Owen O’Neal
Christ Church in Tuscaloosa

James Rhodes
St. John’s in Forkland

William Snoddy
Ascension in Birmingham

Rachel Vaughn
St. Matthew’s in Madison

Heather Whaley
Trinity in Florence

Rob Whaley
St. Dunstan’s in Auburn

Thomas Wilkinson
St. Michael and All Angel’s in Anniston
ECW Scholarship Committee Awards 21 Scholarships

The Episcopal Church Women (ECW) Scholarship Committee awarded 2011-12 scholarships to 21 students who represent 17 churches throughout our diocese. The committee chose these young people based on each applicant’s church activities, merit, and financial need as well as the completeness of the application, comments from her or his priest, and community and school service participation.

Amanda Claytor received the Edith Buell Scholarship, which is awarded on the basis of merit to an outstanding young woman of our diocese who is in need for her college education; Amanda is a graduate student at the Seminary of the Southwest. Kristen Garfield received the Bishop Wilmer Scholarship, which is awarded on the basis of merit to an outstanding child of a priest in our diocese; Kristen is attending Auburn University. Both Jonathan Hennessy and William Snoddy received the Elizabeth Blair Donnell Scholarship, which is awarded in accordance with guidelines set by the ECW; Jonathan is attending UAB, and William is attending Auburn University.

Students receiving ECW Scholarships include Lydia Allison, who is attending Auburn University; Sean Arnold, who is attending the University of Alabama; Lee Auman, who is attending Snead State Community College; Allie Broadfoot, who is attending Auburn University; Cooper Chesbro, who is attending Auburn University; Elizabeth Cobb, who is attending Auburn University; Tatiana Cookingham, who is attending the University of Alabama; Allison Hallman, who is a graduate student at UAB; Julia Horn, who is attending Warren Wilson College; Isabelle Leavitt, who is attending Savannah College of Art and Design; Owen O’Neal, who is attending Stanford University; James Rhodes, who is attending the University of Mississippi; Blake Taylor, who is attending Syracuse University; Heather Whaley, who is attending the University of Alabama, Rob Whaley who is attending Auburn University; Thomas Wilkinson, who is attending Gadsden State Community College; and Rachel Vaughn, who is attending Auburn University.

For more information about making a contribution to or applying for a scholarship, please visit our diocesan ECW Web site, www.alabamaeccw.org, or contact your parish’s ECW president.

From Cethryn S. Giles, ECW President

Recently I read a story in The Ragamuffin Gospel, by Brennan Manning, about a man who had a headache that never went away. When he asked his doctor what could be causing the constant pain, his doctor asked how much liquor he drank. “I never touch the filthy stuff,” the man replied. When the doctor asked if he smoked, the man replied, “I’ve never in my life touched tobacco.” When the doctor asked if he “ran around” at night, the man replied, “Of course not. I’m in bed by 10 o’clock.” After hearing the man’s replies, the doctor told him that the cause of his constant headache was simply that he had his “halo on too tight.”

Perhaps we all need to sit down and think about how tight we are wearing our halos. Do we merely go from week to week doing the same things over and over, or do we sometimes try to branch out? Are we willing, like the disciples, to make some changes in our routines and reach out to others?

My answer to this is to take a look at the activities of the Episcopal Church Women in our diocese. During my two years as President of our ECW Diocesan Board, I have seen many examples of the willingness of the women of our diocese to make some changes in their outreach activities and begin to serve in new ways.

Of course, in doing so, they also have continued to serve in the traditional ways they have done for many years. We continue to give ECW Scholarships; distribute Church Periodical Club money to our seminarians; provide food, clothing and school supplies to the needy; and help with parish health clinics. Recently we have added such things as helping with tornado relief, looking for new ways to ask for UTO (United Thank Offering) grant money, sending missionaries to work in other countries, and supporting the clergy spouses in their Krik? Krik! efforts.

In my opinion, most of the women in our diocese have tilted halos. They are willing to be what might be considered “ragamuffins” for Christ. I urge each of you to continue to look for new and innovative ways to serve in our parishes and communities.

Sharing God’s Creation and a Ministry of Hospitality

By Cathy Robertson, Camp McDowell Conference Center Staff

I have always thought of Camp McDowell as the “heart” of our diocese and that it is the greatest evangelism tool we have. After living and working here for five months, I am now sure of it—everyone who comes here absolutely loves Camp McDowell!

What is there not to love? I had no idea how many “outside” groups support our camp. It is a joy to watch them learn by accident how fabulous the Episcopal Church is.

In the past few months we have hosted hospital therapy groups; college leadership training groups; youth retreats for Baptists, Presbyterians, and nondenominational groups; folk school groups; choirs; environmentalists; prison ministries; family reunions; and many others. We are blessed to be able to share God’s creation and a ministry of hospitality with so many people.

In the Stough Dining Hall, we now serve “farm to table” menu items with wonderful produce grown locally and purchased at the Jasper Farmers’ Market. Our guests rave over the fresh selections of vegetables and healthy options we offer!

I want to thank Melissa Strange, of St. Mary’s-on-the-Highlands in Birmingham, and Valerie Chittom, of St. Paul’s in Selma, for the time they spent and items they donated to help us give Stough Lodge a much-needed facelift. The Friends of Camp McDowell have given generously for this cause, and we would greatly appreciate additional gifts of new or gently used items, including rugs, lamps, end tables, and artwork. If you have any items you think would enhance our decor, we would be happy to accept them as a tax-deductible donation.

While the Camp McDowell Conference Center books a year in advance, sometimes we have room for a few more guests. If you are thinking about arranging an event, please contact us. You can call me or reservations manager Paula Byrd at 205/387-1806 between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. or e-mail us at guestservices@campmcdowell.com or paula@campmcdowell.com.
For and About Youth

Youth Department Plans 2011-12 Events

By Susan Oakes, Interim Youth Ministries Coordinator

Our diocesan Youth Department (YD), a group of 11 peer-elected youth, 6 advisors, a chaplain, and a diocesan staff member, plan and facilitate several youth events each year. The group gathered for a planning retreat at St. Stephen’s in Birmingham in August to develop ideas for program themes and leaders for this year’s events.

We are currently planning the festivities for our annual District Day event, scheduled for Sunday, October 30. We hope all the youth in all the EYC groups in every parish in our diocese will come to their district gathering to enjoy games, hear an overview of the events the Youth Department will be hosting this year, and participate in a time of worship.

Please save the dates for these YD events:

October 30—District Day at a location near you
December 28-30—Christmas Conference at Camp McDowell
March 23-25—Rites of Sprung at Camp McDowell

We’re looking forward to seeing you soon at District Day! For more information please check with your parish youth leaders, visit our diocesan Web site (www.dioala.org), or contact me at soakes@dioala.org or 205/715-2060 ext. 325.

Thank You, Thank You, Campers!

By Memily Colvin, a Member of the Sawyerville Day Camp Commission

Once again, summer campers at Camp McDowell were very generous and provided almost 1,000 books for children who live in the Black Belt area of our state! I can now include EVERYONE who attends an event at Camp McDowell a “camper” because the Alabama Folk School, parish retreats, and Youth Department events include book collections in their registration forms.

This summer individuals, including Lilly Taylor who collected 2,203 books, and members of parishes, who collected more than 800 books, helped provide books for campers at Sawyerville Day Camp in Hale County and the library of South Highlands Middle School in Union Springs (Bullock County), Alabama.

We began collecting books in 2006, and since then we have delivered 8,000 books to the Sawyerville Day Camp in Union Springs (Bullock County), Alabama. That is pretty amazing!

Thank you, thank you, campers!!! And thank you Camp McDowell!!!

Don’t Miss Your Chance!

By Danielle Dunbar, Director of the Alabama Folk School

This past summer, the Alabama Folk School at Camp McDowell offered two sessions of classes in Mosaics, Hand Weaving (Twining), T-Shirt Memory Quilts, Celtic Flute and Whistles, and Celtic Guitar Accompaniment. As always, the participants shared stories about our creative journeys, learned new skills, and took time away from busy lives to renew themselves in the beauty of Camp McDowell and the enthusiasm of new friendships.

Don’t miss your chance this fall to be a part of this special community at Camp McDowell! Choose one of the following sessions, and come join us at “Wonderful, Wonderful” Camp McDowell.

October 23(24)–28 Pottery Week and the 14th Annual Watercolor Workshop

Enjoy a week of pottery from hand building to glazing; Artist Scott Bennett, of Red Dot Gallery in Birmingham, will get you all fired up about working with clay!

Join many returning watercolor students for the 14th Annual Watercolor Workshop. Please contact Tora Johnson at toradave@earthlink.net for more information.

November 4–8 Old Time Music and Crafts

The classes include:

Intermediate/Advanced Fiddle led by James Bryan
Intermediate Fiddle led by Mick Kinney
Old-time Guitar led by Jim Holland
Old-time Banjo led by Hillary Dulan
Old-time Mandolin led by Carl Jones
Lace-Weave Chair Caning led by Gwen Chafin
Timber Frame Construction led by Stephen Morrison
White Oak Basketry led by Bill and Mary Ann Smith
Simple Life Skills—Making Soap, Raising Chickens, Beekeeping, and More led by Laura Spencer
Harmonica Clinic led by Luke Richardson

Please visit our Web site, www.campmcdowell.com/folkschool/schedule, to learn more about the teachers and classes we will be offering in 2011 and 2012. If there’s a class you would like us to offer, please fill out an online survey to help us meet your wishes! For more information please contact me at danielle@campmcdowell.com or 205/387-1806.
From the Mountains to the Gulf—Making the Connections

By Maggie Wade Johnston, Environmental Center Director

Life is all about making connections. Whether you are searching for a job or seeking spiritual guidance, making good connections is vital.

At the McDowell Environmental Center, we believe Mother Nature is the ultimate connecter! For many people, especially children, who have disconnected from the outside world by choosing television, computers, and technology over the woods, these “connections” can be difficult to make and even harder to get excited about. Richard Louv, in his bestseller Last Child in the Woods, refers to this as the “Nature Deficit Disorder.”

In June, Camp McDowell partnered with the Gulf of Mexico Alliance (GOMA), Legacy—Partners in Environmental Education (www.getthetag.com), the Environmental Education Association of Alabama, Jacksonville State University Field Schools, Dauphin Island Sea Lab, and Alabama Water Watch to present an amazing teacher workshop called “Mountains to the Gulf.” A group of 20 teachers from across Alabama met at Camp McDowell and traveled the state for a week with three of the Southeast’s top professors—Dr. Jim Lacefield, author of Lost Worlds in Alabama Rocks; Dr. Bill Deutsch, founder of Alabama Water Watch; and Dr. George Cline, a herpetologist from Jacksonville State University. These experts guided the teachers through all of the ecoregions of our state, with stops along the way at Little River Canyon, Cheaha State Park, Wetumpka Impact Crater, and Dauphin Island Sea Lab. Along the route, we asked probing questions and delved into the mind of each of the three professors who traveled with us.

Geology forms the foundation on which all else lies, so understanding what lies beneath the surface is important. As teachers better comprehend the connections between creation and their own lives, they are more qualified to convey ecological information to their students. The group hiked into the canyons of Camp McDowell and stopped at road cuts and even parking lots to study the rock structure uncovered when Mother Earth’s forces (or earth-moving equipment) reveal the beauty below. Many zip-top bags of fossils and rocks later, the teachers began to piece together the giant puzzle of what has happened in the distant past in the region that we now call Alabama.

Another crucial element in our ecology is the water we often take for granted. Along our route from the mountains to the Gulf, we stopped at numerous streams and rivers to test the water quality, look for tiny invertebrates living there, and study maps to see the water’s own route to the Gulf. As you can imagine, the watersheds of Alabama are intimately connected to the geological features beneath them.

As a final component to the ecological connections, we examined the flora and fauna that live in our state. We began the week with an Alabama Neighbors program led by Big Dave at Camp McDowell, and we ended it with a day on the Gulf of Mexico aboard one of the research vessels from Dauphin Island Sea Lab.

Even after a long week on the road, the teachers were so excited that they spent the journey home talking about ways to include more about local ecology issues in their classrooms and curriculums. The staffs of McDowell Environmental Center and the other partners who organized this hands-on learning expedition believe that these 20 teachers will have a huge influence on the children they teach this school year and beyond. For more information please visit www.campmcdowell.com or contact me at maggie@campmcdowell.com or 205/387-1806.
Bethany Village—
From a Dream to Reality

By Mark Johnston, Vicar and Executive Director of Camp McDowell

Enthusiastic” and “optimistic”—words that describe the feelings of everyone who is working to make Bethany Village at Camp McDowell a wonderful reality for our diocesan family. We believe that “it takes a village to raise a child,” and Camp McDowell truly was a village for me when I was a summer camper.

Since 1948, Camp McDowell has been a “spiritual village” for hundreds of thousands of people who have come here for Summer Camp sessions, Special Session, Youth Department events, Vocare, McDowell Environmental Center classes, Alabama Folk School workshops, Cursillo-related events, parish retreats, conferences, and many other occasions. For the past several years, Bishop Sloan, who has been my friend since our seminary days, and I have dreamed of adding facilities that will allow even more children of God to come to Camp McDowell to learn, grow, worship, and play.

Bethany is where Jesus’ friends lived, and Bethany Village at Camp McDowell will have a group of lodges similar to Miller Commons for parish retreats and conferences. It will also include a new very “green” and accessible camp area suitable for hosting additional Special Sessions each summer. Bethany Village also will host a residential Farm Education Program for schoolchildren, mimicking the successful McDowell Environmental Center educational programs. Plans provide for both a teaching farm and a production farm that will provide food for our guests. In addition, the Alabama Folk School will find a home in Bethany Village with dedicated studio space and a dance/music hall.

As part of the Bethany Village project, we will continue to make Camp McDowell a vision of the way the world could be. The farms and Farm Education Program will provide living examples. We plan to use windmills as well as solar, geothermal, and biofuels at camp, and we are shaping Camp McDowell as a place that does not contribute waste to landfills—all of which will exemplify an eco-friendly lifestyle. We are also planning to upgrade the Rec Hall in the current camp area and make Eppes Hall more energy efficient. And we intend to employ more people with disabilities, or as Bishop Sloan says, “those with disabilities more apparent than ours.”

A master plan of Bethany Village has been drafted, and architects, planners, contractors, and engineers have volunteered their services. The next step is seeking permission from our Diocesan Council to do a feasibility study to determine how much money might be raised to construct Bethany Village.

For more information about Bethany Village, please visit Camp McDowell’s Web site, www.campmcdowell.com, or contact me at mark@campmcdowell.com or 205/387-1806.

Thank You, Friends!

By Mark Johnston, Vicar and Executive Director of Camp McDowell

Did you know that Camp McDowell operates as a business? Did you know that the rates our guests and campers pay cover almost all of the expenses—and that our rates are some of the lowest of all the Episcopal camp and conference centers? Did you know that Camp McDowell does not receive any funds from our diocese except the executive director’s salary? These facts make Camp McDowell unique. Virtually every other Episcopal camp and conference center depends on diocesan subsidy, fundraising, and/or endowment income to balance its budget.

Did you know that Camp McDowell is the 4th largest Episcopal camp and conference center and one of the busiest? Because we are a large and busy center and because we manage Camp McDowell carefully, we are able to keep our rates low enough that almost everyone in our diocesan family can afford to attend.

Our budget provides little money for extra things though, and we depend on gifts from our “Friends of Camp McDowell” and others to help us fund facility upgrades and improvements while keeping our rates low. The next time you visit Camp McDowell, look at the new lamps and artwork in Stough Lodge and the new tile and carpet in the common rooms in Miller Commons. Thanks to contributions, we have also been able to order new bedsprads for the conference center and new rocking chairs to replace the “rocking fatigued” ones. The camp staff will also gladly show you the much-needed and appreciated new copy machine and laptop computers in our offices.

Many thanks to the “Friends of Camp McDowell” and everyone else who helped make these things happen! Here are some other ways you can help.

* Make a donation to improve camp resources and/or programs.
* Contribute new or gently used items, including rugs, lamps, end tables, and artwork, for Stough Lodge.
* Volunteer to work with Clyde’s Builders (twice a year).
* Recruit a school to participate in the Camp McDowell Environmental Center education program.
* Donate a vehicle to Camp McDowell.
* Contribute to the Camp McDowell Scholarship Fund—campers depend on your support!
* Include Camp McDowell in your estate planning.

If you are interested in any of these ideas or have a better one—and for more information about the “Friends of Camp McDowell” group, please contact me at mark@campmcdowell.com or 205/387-1806. I am looking forward to hearing from you!
How do we love summer camp? Let us count the ways—it is magical and messy, blessed and busy, exciting and tiring, mysterious and moving. We love summer camp as campers—when we make friends and laughter fills the cabin on a hot summer morning. We love summer camp as a volunteer program staff—when campers watch our silly skits that actually convey religious doctrine that lives are built upon. We love summer camp as summer staff members—who are too exhausted to know we are having the time of our lives. We love summer camp as parents—when our children come back home more independent, joyful, and insightful than when they left.

As the pictures show (please see the front cover and pages 12-13, and visit www.campmcdowell.com), we covered a lot of ground at Camp McDowell during summer 2011—canaoeing, hiking, playing, praying, working, worshipping, laughing, swimming, arts and crafting, going to Tiller’s, floating down the creek, camping, community building, blueberry-picking, singing, sweating, learning, listening, hearing, seeing, and feeling. Most of the campers and staff had the best time of their lives, while some others felt homesick or had to make a trip to the Health Hut—this is part of summer camp too. We take all of it—the good, the great, and the greatly difficult—and work with it, learn from it, celebrate it, and ask God’s blessing upon it. We have already received God’s blessing by getting to be a part of God’s backyard!

This summer marks my first as Summer Camp Coordinator, following in the footsteps of my good friend Michael Goldsmith. Coming to camp in this capacity, and serving under the Rev. Mark Johnston’s leadership, has been and continues to be a richly rewarding and often challenging experience for me and my family. I hope that each of you will have an opportunity to go to Uganda with the Invisible Children organization, thus being part of God’s backyard!

Many thanks to the hardworking 2011 Camp McDowell summer staff who served as the hands and feet of summer camp—they worshiped, worked, and played all summer long with all of the children who came to camp this summer? (Top row) Jordan Lee, senior cabin counselor (wearing a purple shirt); Stratt Byars, head counselor; Murray Stewart, workcrew; Will Sparks, workcrew/cabin counselor/health hut assistant; Gabe Rosser, cabin counselor; Thomas Lane, music director/lifeguard; Jim Sanders, cabin counselor; (middle row) Emily Hanson, arts and crafts director (wearing a flowered dress); Anna Bryant, summer camp registrar/ropes course director; Madi Turner, cabin counselor; Meredith Meelheim, cabin counselor; Richard Armistead, workcrew; Rachel Smith, cabin counselor; Susanna Whitsett, summer camp coordinator; Emunny Faison, cabin counselor; Catherine Pollenitz, cabin counselor; Caroline Martin, cabin counselor; Vikash Naran, cabin counselor; PJ Grass, cabin counselor; (front row) Julia Erwin, workcrew/cabin counselor/health hut assistant; Mary Emma Kingsley, senior cabin counselor; Christine Covell, lifeguard; Ginny Nix, lifeguard; Saunders McElroy, cabin counselor; Sloane Brewer, activities director; Taylor Moody, cabin counselor; Ashley Frye, waterfront director; Nancy Evans, chief medical officer of Camp McDowell; (kneeling) Danny Tanner, lifeguard (not pictured because she left camp early to go to Uganda with the Invisible Children organization; Allison Kendrick, support staff/nanny)

Keyse (Middler Camp), the Rev. Tim Murphy (Primary 2), the Rev. Susan Sloan (Elementary 2), the Rev. Mark Waldo (Junior High 2), and the Rev. Charles Youngson (Primary 1)—for their leadership, love, and the learning they imparted on the hearts and minds of campers and staff members alike. We also thank all of the many other clergy and lay leaders who brought themselves and their gifts and talents to camp. My gratitude for each of them can only be matched by the smiles on the more than 1,400 campers who came through Camp McDowell’s gates this summer.

I hope that each of you will have an opportunity to visit Camp McDowell soon—there is so much to do, so much to learn and celebrate, so much to love!
In the jargon of the campers, “It was the best summer ever!” With more than 1,400 campers joining us in God’s Backyard, it was a busy one, full of laughter and learning and nurtured by phenomenal permanent and seasonal staff, volunteers, and beloved parish priests (please see the story on page 11).

I hope that you will have an opportunity to visit camp soon. There is so much to do, so much to learn and celebrate, so much to love!
Deep-Rooted Connections

By Kimberly Ramsey, Holy Cross Episcopal School in Montgomery

The University of the South, Holy Cross Episcopal School, and other Episcopal-related educational institutions share the heritage of nurturing “an academic mind” and “a servant’s honorable heart” in every student.

Cobbs went to Lookout Mountain, Tennessee, to meet with Bishop Leonidas Polk of Louisiana and delegates from a total of 10 dioceses to discuss the beginnings of what would become the University of the South. In November 1857, delegates of the 10 dioceses met at St. John’s to continue planning the university, which initially was for “Southern men.” They voted down Atlanta, Georgia, and Huntsville, Alabama, in favor of Sewanee, Tennessee, as the site of the campus, and the university’s newly appointed trustees chose the name “The University of the South.”

As happens in tough economic times, funding dwindled during the financial crisis of 1857, which put plans for the university on hold. By 1859, the economy had improved, and planned construction began in earnest. Despite damage and disruptions during the Civil War years, the University of the South held its first convocation in 1868.

When Vice Chancellor John McCardell Jr. addressed the university’s students in 2010, he summed up the value of the liberal arts, faith-based education the founders who met at St. John’s in 1857 envisioned and the University of the South continues to offer today. “We at Sewanee share something special, even unique,” the vice chancellor noted. “That something involves an awareness of history, a sensitivity to place, a respect for the natural order and a love of the God who created it, and a commitment to honorable conduct. From these distinguishing characteristics, and perhaps especially from our Episcopal heritage, emerges our insistence upon principles that lie at our very core: the worth of all persons and, in the words of our liturgy, a prayer that we may always ‘strive for justice among all people and respect the dignity of every human being.’”

In 1998, more than 140 years after Bishop Cobbs reported plans being made for a “Southern University” during the diocesan convention at St. John’s, another group of Episcopalians from several parishes in Montgomery, including the Ascension, Holy Comforter, St. John’s, met at St. John’s to plan the latest addition to the Episcopal academic tradition—Holy Cross Episcopal School.

Mrs. Harold Nicrosi responded to a request in her parish newsletter: “If you are interested in exploring the possibility of an Episcopal School in Montgomery, please contact Melanie Kelley or Roy Elam.” She used the information she found about St. John’s Day School, which operated from 1953 to 1962, to help with planning Holy Cross Episcopal School. As Episcopalians came together on this extraordinary project, St. John’s
emerged as a leading supporter, and the parish’s rector, the Rev. Robert Wisnewski, was chosen to serve as the first chair of the board for the new school.

Furthe...
Creating Smiles—One Dress at a Time

By Anne Roy, a Member of Trinity in Florence

What female doesn’t love something brand-new to wear? More than 50 girls and women in Haiti are now wearing new designer dresses—and smiling—thanks to a group of seamstresses in the Shoals.

This summer the women of Trinity Church in Florence started sewing sundresses to send to an orphanage in Haiti, where we have a personal contact. A member of Grace Church in Sheffield read about our project in “Tidings,” Trinity’s newsletter, and before long the women at Grace Church started sewing like crazy! Soon we had more than 50 original creations to send. Since there are only 26 girls in the orphanage, we gave the rest of the dresses to a group of people from Edgemont United Methodist Church in Florence who just happened to be leaving for a mission trip to Haiti.

The women at First Presbyterian Church in Florence read about our sewing project on Facebook, and at a recent church convention, they heard a speaker who is the director of another orphanage in Haiti. Now they are encouraging women throughout their district to sew dresses to send to Haiti. A member of a quilting group that has made more than 100 quilts for victims of the April 27th tornadoes in Alabama recently called me to get the pattern—and now they are making dresses for Haiti too!

Eight couples from Knoxville, Tennessee, are in the process of adopting 10 girls in Haiti, a daunting undertaking that is costing each family about $40,000. Some members of these families have been traveling to Haiti monthly to help the girls in the orphanage they are working with, as well as people in the surrounding remote areas. Preston Cunningham, who just completed his sixth trip to Haiti, traveled with a Baptist missionary group—and he took some of our dresses with him.

As the familiar song reminds us, “It only takes a spark to get a fire going.” It only takes a dress to get some smiles going, and we hope that you will not only help us spread the word about the dresses but also consider sewing a dress! Just visit www.creativekindness.com, and search for “little dresses for Africa” to download a free pattern for either the dresses or pants. It takes about a yard of fabric and an hour to make a dress.

If you can’t or don’t want to sew, please consider buying some much-needed and appreciated underwear to send with the dresses. Also please pray for the children in Haiti who have lost their parents or been abandoned, and pray that the adoption process for the couples in Knoxville and elsewhere will be completed as quickly as possible.

As the familiar song reminds us, “It only takes a spark to get a fire going.” It only takes a dress to get some smiles going, and we hope that you will not only help us spread the word about the dresses but also consider sewing a dress!

For more information please contact Anne Roy at Trinity Church in Florence, annehr@comcast.net or 256/436-5080.
Remembering Dr. Sofia Cavalletti, Founder of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

Amanda Jones and Christian Formation Director Stephanie Diethelm, of All Saints’ in Birmingham, and Sarah Sartain, Diocesan Deputy for Christian Formation and Youth Ministries, contributed to this article.

Dr. Sofia Cavalletti, the founder of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, died peacefully at her home in Rome, Italy, on August 23 at the age of 94. As a mentor of many people in the area of children’s religious and spiritual formation, Sofia goes ahead of a large family of catechists and children in 37 countries around the world.

Sofia leaves to the world an approach to the Christian formation of children from the ages of 3 to 12 that is theologically sound, systematic, and rich in Bible, liturgy, and sacred history. Sofia’s reverence for the Bible and liturgy, her fresh and compelling style of writing and speaking, her wise and intelligent way of discussing complicated theological themes simply, her sense of humor, and personal warmth will be greatly missed by many.

Sofia received her degree in Hebrew and Comparative Semitic Languages from the Universita La Sapienza in Rome, and she contributed to several editions of the Bible (Old Testament), translating Isaiah, Leviticus, Ruth, Esther, Judith, and Proverbs, and to international publications on biblical studies. She was also a specialist in the field of ecumenism, especially pertaining to the Jewish-Christian relationship.

In 1954, Sofia began to work with children in collaboration with Gianna Gabbi, a Montessori educator. Both of them felt called and inspired by the children they served to listen, watch, and deepen an understanding of children's spirituality in relationship with God. They worked together for more than 50 years listening to and observing children in the context of a prepared religious environment called an atrium, basing their approach on the principles of education developed by Maria Montessori. What the children revealed to them was their unexpected capacities for relationship with God.

Sofia believed that the formation of adults as catechists to children was vital. She shared her biblical scholarship and liturgical studies, along with her observations of the children’s responses to certain biblical and liturgical themes, in lectures, seminars, and courses for adults as well as through some of her books. Once Sofia’s books were published in other countries, she and Gianna were somewhat surprised by the interest and development of their work beyond Rome. People began to come to them seeking training courses or inviting them to lead courses in other countries.

The first time training in the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd was offered in the United States was 1975, when Sofia taught a course in St. Paul, Minnesota. Since that time, churches of various denominations as well as schools and families have begun using the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, which is often referred to as a “movement of the Spirit in the Church” for children as well as adults that is a theologically sound and systematic approach to Christian formation rich in the Bible, liturgy, and sacred history. The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd was brought to Alabama in 2003 and is now practiced in more than 10 churches in the Birmingham area.

For more information please visit the National Association of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd in the USA, www.ngusa.org, or contact Sarah Sartain, ssartain@dioala.org or 205/715-2600 ext. 314, or Stephanie Diethelm, smdiethelm@yahoo.com or 205/769-3189.

Providing Innovative Resident Services

Submitted by Kris Mueller, Director of Development

Episcopal Place in Birmingham recently received the second-place award in a national competition that recognizes innovative thinking among housing communities that serve the elderly. The Innovation in Service Coordination Awards, sponsored by Critical Signal Technologies, were presented to three housing facilities during a national training conference for the American Association of Service Coordinators.

Service Coordinator Shannon Atchenson, who coordinates the “ECares” Supportive Services Program, accepted the award for Episcopal Place. Our ECares program provides supportive services designed to help residents age in place and stay independent for as long as possible. It includes transportation to medical appointments, grocery stores, banks, shopping malls, and cultural and recreational activities; subsidized noon meals and housekeeping programs for residents who can no longer cook or clean their apartments; resident activities and health programs; the St. Teresa of Avila Fund, a relief fund for residents in need; and worship services and pastoral care.

“This national recognition is evidence of our dedication to helping our residents live independently in their own homes with the help of supportive service,” notes Tim Blanton, executive director of Episcopal Place. “It takes a team effort for us to achieve the high standards of our ECares program, but our Service Coordinator sets the bar for putting the needs of our residents at the forefront of all that we do.”

Episcopal Place offers a number of classes and other enrichment activities for the residents. This year, some of the men and women who are in watercolor or graphite art classes designed Christmas cards as a fundraising project. Proceeds from the sale of the cards, which are suitable to send to family members and friends as well as business contacts, will benefit the St. Teresa of Avila Fund, which helps residents who are experiencing temporary financial hardship.

Located on Birmingham’s Southside, Episcopal Place serves 148 seniors and disabled adults with limited incomes who live in the facility’s 141 apartments that are rent-subsidized by HUD (the Department of Housing and Urban Development). The mission of the nonprofit organization is to provide affordable housing and supportive services so that residents can live and age with independence and dignity. Episcopal Place is unique among HUD facilities because of the scope of its “ECares” program, which is funded by donations from the community. For more information please contact Kris Mueller at kmueller@episcopalplace.org or 205/939-0085 or visit www.episcopalplace.org.
Hospitality—A Way of Being Who We Are

By the Rev. Dan Thornton, Rector of St. Wilfrid’s in Marion; Photo by Bill Hansen

As I struggle with what it takes to keep a small parish viable and even growing, “hospitality” keeps coming to my mind.

I believe the greatest gift the Church has to offer is hospitality. The ancient law of hospitality demanded that a host protect and serve a guest, not allowing any harm to come to the guest while that person stayed under the roof of the host. The concept of hospitality involves more than merely being friendly and welcoming, although being that way is surely a part of hospitality. Hospitality demands that the welcome be sincere, that a host project a sense of trust to his guest, and that the guest becomes a member of the host’s family for the duration of the stay. It is imperative that the welcome fulfill the comprehensive meaning of the Spanish phrase ¡bienvenido!—“welcome home!”

Being a member of the family and being welcomed “home” engenders a responsibility for both the one being welcomed—the one who welcomes because of the interdependency between family members. The hospitality of the Church also transcends local boundaries and expands to become universal caring. In addition, hospitality for the Church includes caring for the soul as well as meeting physical and mental needs. How we attend to each other in the Church will dictate how we attend to each other every day in the everyday business of living. In our baptismal vows, we promise to treat every other person as we would treat our friends or ourselves—to recognize and honor the integrity of every person regardless of who that person is. That is the essence of hospitality; to allow persons to be without our dictatorial pronouncements about good and evil and without judgment and to realize the different paths people may choose to travel and to aid them in their journeys.

Hospitality is seeing the Christ in others and attempting to imitate Christ in our treatment of them. The traditional word for hospitality is love—love without condition, love of humanness in all people, including ourselves. Hospitality means meeting persons where they are, making the field of encounter level—a meeting of equals in living regardless of social or economic circumstances.

It is difficult to explain how hospitality works at St. Wilfrid’s. Pretty much it’s a way of being who we are. It begins with invitation—people in our parish community invite others to meet us, to learn who we are. When others come, we welcome them unconditionally and treat them like family.

For example, we invite visitors and newcomers to join us for lunch after our worship service. We have a tradition of meeting for lunch at a local restaurant, where we fill a whole room almost every Sunday. During the week, we host home dinners for students from Judson College and Marion Military Institute.

In addition, we open our doors to community organizations including the local interdenominational CrossTies, which meets at our place bimonthly, and the continuing education program for the staff of the local nursing home. People in town say that we are always available and present to do things in the community, and people who come to our “home” say that they have hardly ever, if ever, been so warmly welcomed and cared for as at our home.

We are just a welcoming and caring “family” who takes the ancient idea of hospitality to heart. We contribute our time and ourselves to the community at large as well as to each other in our parish family. Although it isn’t a designed program, hospitality at St. Wilfrid’s is the intentional desire to meet people where they are and who they are without judgment and to care for them as part of our family.

Hospitality is difficult; it is the way, as Jesus said and lived. Hospitality is honoring the same-ness of our human condition in all people; it is overcoming the hesitation to love caused by fear of difference, the tendency to hate because of jealousy, the desire to overcome because of greed (for wealth, power, or anything else). Hospitality is the call of Christ to love, honor, and abide with others whose journey path crosses or runs beside ours. It is the outstretched hand, the open door, the wish of goodwill and peace for all of us who are guests in God’s created universe. Hospitality must be the centrality, the focus of the Church in the community, in the world, and in our hearts. Without hospitality we are “as sounding gongs.”

My emphasis is not on a “do good” attitude that rings hollow as a mere show of welcome. The law of hospitality, in essence, requires the same kind of relationship that Jesus developed with his closest followers, even to the death—the extreme of hospitality—and to the last commandment that Jesus left with his closest disciples: “This command I leave with you, that you love one another even as I have loved you. You will be known as my followers as you love one another,” he said. That commandment is the center of the Gospel, not a demeaning affection for one over another, but a love that sees each person as a part of the larger love of Christ.

It is difficult to explain how hospitality works at St. Wilfrid’s. Pretty much it’s a way of being who we are. It begins with invitation—people in our parish community invite others to meet us, to learn who we are. When others come, we welcome them unconditionally and treat them like family.

But hospitality is more than mere acts of kindness. It is the way of being who we are. It means we are “as sounding gongs,” and love that sees each person as a part of the larger love of Christ.
Rebuilding of Homes and Families Begins

By our Diocesan Tornado Response Team

The generosity of donations and hard labor continues to guide the long-term recovery efforts for families suffering from the 62 tornadoes that struck central and northern Alabama on April 27. Volunteer teams from throughout our diocese and 20 states are wielding hammers and paintbrushes to help families rebuild their homes and their lives.

The visible work of rebuilding homes is now under way, but “this is just the beginning of a long-term response on the part of the Episcopal Church in Alabama,” the Rev. Bill King emphasizes. “We will be in need of continued funding and volunteer effort for many more months,” he explains.

In Calhoun, Cullman, DeKalb, Franklin, Jackson, Jefferson, Madison, Marion, Marshall, St. Clair, and Tuscaloosa Counties, volunteers have already spent weekends working on building projects with Habitat for Humanity and other organizations to help others in need. In Birmingham/Pratt City, Sawyerville, and the Huntsville/Madison County areas, parishes are working with Family Partnership and Adopt a Family programs in “walking” with families through their recovery and offering spiritual, emotional, financial, and physical support, which may even include volunteer work to help a family repair or rebuild their home. In Cullman and Tuscaloosa Counties, we have used Episcopal Relief and Development funds to hire case managers who are in contact with families who might have unmet needs. In Tuscaloosa County, we have hired a construction manager to oversee the actual construction phase of recovery, and construction of new homes with diocesan and local parish resources has begun in at least six locations. The members of Trinity Church in Florence are working with the local authorities in Marion and Franklin Counties to respond to the needs of tornado survivors in Phil Campbell and Hackleburg.

You might see our Episcopal Disaster Response Trailer anywhere from DeKalb and Jackson Counties in the north to Tuscaloosa and Hale Counties in the south. In addition, an Episcopal Disaster Response Shower Trailer, constructed by the Rev. Deacon Clyde Pearce, is providing a much-needed and appreciated resource for volunteers.

“The response of the parishes throughout our diocese to this horrible disaster has been phenomenal,” notes Judy Quick. “Parishes continue to offer their gifts of time and money to those suffering from tornado damage. We are grateful also for the generous donations to our Diocesan Tornado Relief Fund and Episcopal Relief and Development, which enable our diocese to support local efforts to meet local needs.”

Over the summer, our diocese welcomed volunteer teams from Georgia, Ohio, South Carolina, and Texas who worked in Fort Payne, Phil Campbell, Pratt City, St. Clair County, Sawyerville, and Tuscaloosa. Local parishes hosted the teams working in these areas. Our diocese will continue to welcome volunteer teams to help with the rebuilding efforts during the fall months.

For more information about how you might help with this long-term recovery ministry, please contact one of our Episcopal Church Disaster Response Coordinators, Bill King at bp3king@bellsouth.net or Judy Quick at jgquick@bellsouth.net.

If you are interested—or if you know of someone who is interested—in volunteering in one of the recovery areas, please contact our Diocesan Tornado Volunteer Team Coordinator David Whetstone at whetstone@cableone.net or 256/282-9760.

If your parish wants to provide food and/or lodging for volunteer teams, please contact David Whetstone at whetstone@cableone.net or 256/282-9769.
Bishops’ Visitation Schedule

October 16, Sunday
10:30 a.m. Bishop Parsley, Grace, Mt. Meigs
10:30 a.m. Bishop Sloan, St. Luke’s, Jacksonville

October 19, Wednesday
6:30 p.m. Bishop Parsley, Trinity, Clanton
6:30 p.m. Bishop Sloan, Messiah, Heflin

October 23, Sunday
9:30 a.m. Bishop Parsley, Grace, Cullman
10:30 a.m. Bishop Sloan, St. Catherine’s, Chelsea

October 30, Sunday
10:30 a.m. Bishop Parsley, St. Thomas’, Birmingham
10:30 a.m. Bishop Sloan, Holy Apostles’, Birmingham

November 2, Wednesday
6 p.m. Bishop Sloan, St. John’s Deaf, Birmingham

November 6, Sunday
10:30 a.m. Bishop Sloan, Holy Spirit, Alabaster

November 9, Wednesday
5 p.m. Bishop Sloan, Calvary, Oneonta

November 13, Sunday
10:30 a.m. Bishop Sloan, Epiphany, Leeds

November 20, Sunday
10:15 a.m. Bishop Sloan, Trinity, Wetumpka

November 27, Sunday
10:30 a.m. Bishop Sloan, Holy Cross, Trussville

December 4, Sunday
10:30 a.m. Bishop Sloan, St. Luke’s, Birmingham

December 10, Saturday
6 p.m. Bishop Sloan, Iglesia Episcopal de la Gracia, Birmingham

December 11, Sunday
9 a.m. and 11 a.m. Bishop Sloan, St. Stephen’s, Birmingham

December 14, Wednesday
7 p.m. Bishop Sloan, St. Columba, Huntsville

December 18, Sunday
10 a.m. Bishop Sloan, St. Mary’s, Jasper

December 21, Wednesday
6 p.m. Bishop Sloan, Epiphany, Tallasee

December 24, Saturday
10:30 p.m. Bishop Sloan, Advent, Birmingham

Remembering Margaret Dargan McCaa Stough

Mrs. Margaret Dargan McCaa Stough, widow of the Rt. Rev. Furman C. Stough, Eighth Bishop of Alabama, died on August 9. Her death is mourned by her family, friends, and our diocesan community.

“The diocese is grateful for her life and ministry among us,” said Bishop Parsley. “May she rest in peace and rise in glory.”

“Thank you so much for all your thoughts, prayers, telephone calls, and expressions of comfort during these past years,” Leslie Stough Lynch said in expressing the family’s gratitude. “Please know how important each and every one of you have been in our lives. Thank you for allowing us to be part of yours.”

Clergy News

The Rev. E. David Basinger Jr. has retired as the rector of St. Timothy’s in Athens.

The Rev. Richard H. Cobbs IV has retired as the rector of St. Paul’s in Greensboro.

The Rev. David Dill has begun serving as the rector of the Church of the Good Shepherd in Decatur.

The Rev. Evan Garner will begin serving as the rector of St. John’s in Decatur in November. Evan previously served as associate rector of St. John’s in Montgomery.

The Rev. Matthew Grunfeld began serving as priest-in-charge of All Saints’ in Montgomery in September.

The Rev Bob Henderson is serving as the priest-in-charge of Trinity Church in Wetumpka.

The Rev. Derrick Hill is serving as a transitional dean at St. Mary’s-on-the-Highlands in Birmingham.

The Rev. Basye Holland-Shuey is serving as a transitional dean-in-charge of Holy Cross-St. Christopher’s in Huntsville.

The Rev. Ed Hunt, will begin serving as the rector of St. Andrew’s in Birmingham in October. Ed is currently the rector of Zion Episcopal Church in Rome, New York.

The Rev. Hugh Jones is serving as the interim rector of St. Michael and All Angels’ in Anniston.

The Rev. Canon Heidi Kinner began serving as the Dean of the Cathedral of St. Peter in the Diocese of Montana in September. Heidi previously served as the vice-dean at the Cathedral Church of the Advent in Birmingham.

The Rev. Katie Nakamura-Rengers is serving as the transitional dean-in-charge of St. Michael’s in Fayette.

The Rev. David Perkins is serving as the interim rector of Holy Comforter in Montgomery.

The Rev. Callie Plunket-Brewton is serving as a transitional dean at Grace Church in Sheffield. Callie is also continuing her work in Campus Ministry and the University of North Alabama.

The Rev. Josiah Rengers is serving as rector of St. Stephen’s in Eutaw.

The Rev. Larry Sharpton has retired as the rector of the Church of the Epiphany in Talladega.

The Rev. Louie Skipper is serving as rector of South Talladega Episcopal Ministries in Sylacauga, Childersburg, and Alpine.

The Rev. Eric Stolle, who served as the associate rector of All Saints’ in Birmingham, has accepted a call to serve in the Diocese of Olympia (Washington).

The Rev. Ray Waldon has accepted the position of Dean of the Cathedral in Salt Lake City, Utah. Ray previously served as priest-in-charge of St. Peter’s in Talladega.
Church Leaders Oppose Immigration Law—Judge Issues Ruling on Preliminary Injunction

As The Alabama Episcopalian went to press, Chief U.S. District Judge Sharon Blackburn issued a ruling on motions requesting a preliminary injunction to block implementation of Alabama’s new immigration law, HB-56, which religious leaders believe would criminalize many of the churches’ ministries. “The ruling is a painfully mixed picture,” says Bishop Parsley. “There is good news in the judge’s preliminary blocking of some aspects of the law. One of these is the section that the suit filed by me and the other bishops was most concerned about, section 13, which, in our judgment, could make it a criminal offense to offer Christian care and assistance to an undocumented person.”

“This section was blocked by a preliminary injunction under the suit filed by the Justice Department. The result is the same as our request, so we are relieved by this ruling and hope that the injunction will become permanent. It protects our churches’ ministries from prosecution under this overreaching law and substantially protects our religious liberties,” Bishop Parsley explains. “Some other parts of the law were blocked by the ruling, but most of the law is now in effect. Unfortunately, in my view and that of many others, it remains a mean-spirited law and the nation’s most harsh anti-immigration statute. Alabama is simply better than this.”

On August 1, Bishop Parsley filed ecumenically with Bishop William H. Willimon of the United Methodist Church, Archbishop Thomas J. Rodi of the Catholic Archdiocese of Mobile, and Bishop Robert J. Baker of the Catholic Diocese of Birmingham a complaint to stop enforcement of the law, which they believe would prevent the free exercise of religion.

Judge Blackburn consolidated the bishops’ complaint with lawsuits filed by the U.S. Justice Department and Hispanic advocacy groups. The suits were subsequently separated by the judge who ruled on the motions for a preliminary injunction September 28.

“We believe that our involvement in this case has been necessary and important. We will continue to provide food, shelter, transportation, housing, and the church’s sacraments to all of God’s people, regardless of race, class, or citizenship status,” said Bishop Parsley.

“If allowed to stand in its original form, this law could be interpreted to criminalize many of the ministries that are at the heart of Christian service,” Bishop Parsley explained. “Ministries such as daycare, health clinics, feeding programs such as Community Kitchens and beans and rice ministries, hospitality networks, and even worship and sacramental ministries would become subject to severe restrictions and penalties of this law. Further, we believe that the Alabama law is not consistent with the First Amendment of our Constitution and oversteps the boundaries between church and state.”

Early versions of the legislation provided a degree of exemption for churches; however, the exemption was removed from the final bill. “We bishops agree that this is not acceptable and that we must ensure the churches’ ability to minister the love of Christ to all people,” said Parsley. “The diocesan council discussed this matter at great length and supported the action I have taken. The chancellors of the bishops have generously collaborated in this and join us in believing this action was right and necessary.

“I am sure that there are differing opinions about immigration law in our country and about HB-56,” Bishop Parsley acknowledged. “I respect those who have other points of view and who wish to express them to us. “It is clear that our current federal immigration laws urgently need significant reform. I support such reform and obviously believe that we all must live under the rule of law,” he said. “Just as surely the church must continue to be free to minister to all persons and offer worship and care in the name of God to them in all circumstances. Loving our neighbors as ourselves, Jesus said, is at the very heart of God’s law. HB-56 is already creating a climate of fear and inhospitality among our neighbors, which the church must oppose.

“I ask that you keep this action in your prayers and seek to understand why we bishops together believe that this complaint was necessary. We trust that our actions will have good effect in helping our church and state work together to make Alabama a place of love and care for all of God’s people.”

“If I Had a Hammer”—CCCDD Conference Provides Parishes with Tools

As the rector of a small parish, I found the college to be one of the richest and most beneficial continuing education experiences I’ve had. I would easily recommend it to others.

Angels’ in Millbrook, Grace Church in Mt. Meigs, Emmanuel in Opelika, and St. Matthias’ in Tuscaloosa. Our diocesan Department of Parish Development generously funds a portion of the cost to participate in the conference.

The Rev. Canon Melissa Skelton, rector of St. Paul’s Church in Seattle and Canon for Congregational Development and Leadership in the Diocese of Olympia, led the college. The college has several aims, but its primary focus is to develop, foster, and encourage healthy, sustainable congregations grounded in a robust identity that is rooted in an Anglican ethos and spirituality. It is also designed to develop parish leaders who are both aware of and responsive to the particular challenges and opportunities before them. Translated another way, participants came away from the experience with a great “toolbox” full of ideas and concrete next steps for developing and strengthening their parishes. During the sessions, challenges were raised but with very practical, doable steps in place to successfully meet them.

The college provides a nearly perfect blend of theory and practice, reflection and action, and group and individual work—all in the context of prayer, conversation on many levels, and a party or two thrown in for good measure! As the rector of a small parish, I found the college to be one of the richest and most beneficial continuing education experiences I’ve had. I would easily recommend it to others.

For more information about the Cooperative College for Congregational Development, please contact the Rev. Pat Wingo at pwingo@dioala.org or 205/715-2060 ext. 317.
**COMMISSION ON SPIRITUALITY FALL RETREAT**

**November 18-19 at the Ascension in Birmingham**

Our diocesan Commission on Spirituality is proud to sponsor and invite you to attend “There Is More To You Than You Think” led by the Rt. Rev. Larry Maze. Bishop Maze retired as the 12th Bishop of Arkansas in 2007 and has been the Bishop-in-Residence at St. Mark’s in Little Rock since 2008. He now preaches and lectures on Jungian spirituality and dreamwork and how it interfaces with Christian spirituality. He has taught teaching conferences in many areas of the Southeast and serves on the faculty of the Haden Institute.

The retreat will begin Friday at 6:30 p.m. with “Walking the Inner Faith . . . and Then What?” Paying attention to the inner life contained in every soul is countercultural in our fast-paced, materialistic, and highly rational society. Most people who seriously walk an inner path have made an intentional decision to go there. Our opening talk will explore the importance of making that decision and what to do once the journey is launched.

On Saturday we’ll begin with “Discovering the Shadow—Making Sense of Our Interior World,” an exploration of the Jungian concept of shadow—those things in every life that have been disowned in the exterior world and still exist in the interior life. This is a key step to take on the inner path simply because we cannot understand much about ourselves until we know something about what is hidden inside. Then, in a session called “Wholeness and Incarnation,” we will explore and discuss biblical themes of God’s presence in every moment and every thing and every place—whether or not we know it and whether or not we care. Saturday’s schedule will also include “Dream Workshop” and “Dreamwork—Discussion and Questions.” The retreat will end about 3 p.m.

For more information please contact Sarah Sartain at ssartain@dioala.org or 205/715-2060 ext. 314. The registration deadline is November 10.

**ORGAN RECITAL FEATURING DR. JEREMY FISSELL**

**November 20 at 4 p.m. at the Ascension in Birmingham**

Dr. Jeremy Fisell, who currently is the artist-in-residence at Washington National Cathedral, previously served as the senior organist of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, DC. His discography includes more than 25 CDs of selections played on both piano and organ, and he maintains a busy performance career on both instruments throughout Europe, Scandinavia, and North America. In commenting on his series of 12 CDs that comprised the premiere recordings of Marcel Dupré’s complete organ works for Guild in 2000, Gramophone magazine described it as “one of the greatest achievements in organ recording.”

Dr. Fisell’s performance is presented as a part of Independent Presbyterian Church’s 47th annual November Organ Recital Series. The nave of Independent Presbyterian Church currently is being renovated before the installation of the Joseph Schreiber Memorial Organ, and the church has asked the Ascension, St. Mary’s-on-the-Highlands, and Samford University to host this year’s events.

The public is cordially invited to this free concert and the reception that will follow the performance. For more information please contact Music Director and Organist Mike Sparks at mark.sparks@ascensionepiscopal.org or 205/822-3480.

**2012 OUTREACH SUMMIT**

January 28 from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

The amazing success and energy from the 2010 Outreach Summit has spurred the Department of Mission and Outreach to organize the 2012 Outreach Summit. The summit will include workshops for small, medium, and large parishes with specialized “best practices” sessions on a variety of ministries. Let us know what workshops would be meaningful to you!

Who should attend?

Clergy, lay leaders, parish outreach chairs, and anyone interested in outreach

Expected outcomes:

* A renewed energy for mission and outreach
* Information sharing and networking opportunities with others interested in outreach
* Practical tips on implementing and sustaining outreach activities

For more information please contact the Rev. Deacon Judy Quick, chair of our diocesan Department of Mission and Outreach, at jjquick@bellsouth.net or 205/669-6862.

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**Renovated Pond House Now Accepting Reservations**

*By Diocesan Staff; Photos by Dan Miller and the Rev. Wren Miller*

Pond House, our diocese’s small group meeting and retreat facility, has been renovated to include additional meeting space and several upgrades and is now accepting reservations for day and overnight gatherings. Situated on 40 wooded acres off I-20 close to Pell City, the facility is well suited for meetings, seminars, conferences, retreats, weddings, and other events.

Pond House, which is operated for our diocese by St. Peter’s in Talladega, was donated to the parish in 1992 by Col. and Mrs. Hugh Cort. Available year-round, it offers space for up to 30 people in its main meeting area with additional indoor and outdoor meeting, break-out, and social areas. The property features walking trails and a stocked 3-acre pond. Comfortable overnight accommodations are provided for up to 12 guests in four sleeping areas, and a variety of additional lodging is available within a 15-minute drive. Pond House features a fully equipped kitchen, and several restaurants are nearby.

For more information please visit the new Pond House Web site, http://pondhouse.net, or contact Donna Dase at stpeters@bellsouth.net or 205/362-2505.
**What’s New/Noteworthy at the Episcopal Book Store**

*Parenting Is Your Highest Calling: And 8 Other Myths That Trap Us in Worry and Guilt* by Leslie Leyland Fields

As the mother of six, Leslie Leyland Fields knows firsthand the insecurities and questions that come with rearing children. In this provocative book, she explores with refreshing honesty the myths that can lead to unrealistic expectations and distract us from God’s purposes for our children and us. These myths include:

- Children make you happy and bring great fulfillment.
- You will always feel love for your child.
- Your success as a parent can be measured by your child’s behavior.
- There is one “right” biblical model for family life.
- Good parenting will result in happy children.

A close look at God’s own life as a parent as well as stories from real-life families, Leslie highlights the transforming biblical truths that release parents from the trap of damaging assumptions. Fresh, provocative insights will lead you to a deeper understanding of God and yourself—an understanding that lifts the weight of guilt and fear and frees you to love your children as God intended. The book includes “going deeper” questions that can be used by individuals, couples, and groups.

*The Grace Effect by Larry Taunton*

What does Christianity give us beyond televangelists, potlucks, and bad basketball leagues? Not much, according to the secular Left. The world, they say, would be a better place without it. Historian and Christian apologist Larry Taunton has spent much of his career refuting just this sort of thinking, but he has encountered an unlikely champion for the transforming power of grace. Through the narrative of Sasha’s redemption, we see the false promises of socialism, the soul-destroying influence of unbelief, and how a society cultivates its own demise when it rejects the ultimate source of grace. We see, in short, the kind of world the atheists would give us: a world without Christianity—cold, pitless, and graceless. And yet, as Sasha shows us, it is a world that is not beyond the healing power of “the grace effect.” Occasionally infuriating, often amusing, but always inspiring, *The Grace Effect* will have you cheering for the courageous little girl who shows us how to conquer the long-term consequences of spiritual indifference.

*The Gilded Chamber by Rebecca Kohn*

For centuries Esther’s name has been a byword for feminine beauty, guile, and wisdom. This sweeping, meticulously researched novel restores Esther to her full, complex humanity while reanimating the glittering Persian empire in which her story unfolded. Esther comes to that land as a terrified Jewish orphan betrothed to her cousin, a well-connected courtier. She finds a world racked by intrigue and unfathomable hatreds, and she realizes that the only way to survive is to win the heart of its king. Passionate, suspenseful, and historically authentic, *The Gilded Chamber* illuminates the dilemma of a woman torn between her heart and her sense of duty, resulting in pure narrative enchantment.

**Mark Your Calendar**

*Parenting Is Your Highest Calling* Retirement Celebration Honoring the Parsleys

October 28 at The Club in Birmingham

*Youth Department District Day Events*

October 30

*Youth Department Christmas Conference*

December 28-30 at Camp McDowell

*Consecration of the 11th Bishop of Alabama* January 7 at the Cathedral Church of the Advent in Birmingham

*Diocesan Ultreya*

January 27-29 at Camp McDowell

*Diocesan Convention* February 17-18 in Huntsville

*Youth Department Spring Event*

March 23-25 at Camp McDowell

**October 15**

14th Annual Angel Fest at St. Michael and All Angels’ in Millbrook, featuring unique arts and crafts, a silent auction, food, and entertainment, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. to benefit the community. For more information please call 334/293-3385 or e-mail Leslie.Ekobal@bellsouth.net.

**October 16**

Evensong sung by the Cathedral Choir at 4 p.m. at the Advent in Birmingham. For more information please contact Dr. Charles Kennedy at keneddy@cathedraladvent.com or 205/443-8553.

**October 21**

Midday Musical Menu handbell concert featuring Kelly Jensen at 12:30 p.m. at the Advent in Birmingham. For more information please contact Dr. Charles Kennedy at keneddy@cathedraladvent.com or 205/443-8553.

**November 4-5**

SPAFER, 2011 Lecture Series featuring Bishop John Shelby Spong speaking on “Eternal Life” and Jesus for the Non-Religious.” For more information please e-mail spaper@spaper.org or visit www.spaper.org.

**The Bible Book by Book: A Journey through Its People, Places and Themes by Cris Rogers**

The Bible Book by Book offers a fully illustrated introduction to each book of the Bible, written and designed for teens and youth workers. Each 1,200 to 1,500-word introduction can be read in five minutes. The pithy, direct, effective presentations will help teens and youth workers experience Scripture as the living story of God and His people, not just words on a page. This makes a great gift for a high-school or college student.

*My 1st Book of Questions and Answers by Carine MacKenzie*

“I want to commend this resource to you. Carine MacKenzie’s *My 1st Book of Questions and Answers* provides a great catechism for children. Take it out during suppertime, read a question or two, and teach your children the answers provided. When you’ve finished the books, start over! You will find that both you and your children will be well-formed in Christian understanding, and soon talking about faith in your home will seem completely natural.” — The Rev. Canon Joe Gibbs, Cathedral Church of the Advent in Birmingham

**November 18**

Midday Musical Menu featuring the Alabama School of Fine Arts Orchestra and Choir at 12:30 p.m. at the Advent in Birmingham. For more information please contact Dr. Charles Kennedy at keneddy@cathedraladvent.com or 205/443-8553.

**November 18-19**

“There Is More To You Than You Might Think” Fall Retreat sponsored by our diocesan Commission on Spirituality and led by the Rt. Rev. Larry Maze at the Ascension in Birmingham. For more information please see the description on page 22 or contact Sandi Santar at santar@sdaola.org or 205/715-2060 ext. 314.

**November 20**

Organ Recital Series performance featuring Dr. Jeremy Filsell at 4 p.m. at the Ascension in Birmingham. For more information please see the description on page 22 or contact Mark Sparks at mark.sparks@ascensionepiscopal.org or 205/822-3480.

**December 16**

Midday Musical Concert “A Christmas Celebration” featuring the G.W. Carver Concert Choir at 12:30 p.m. at the Advent in Birmingham. For more information please contact Dr. Charles Kennedy at keneddy@cathedraladvent.com or 205/443-8553.

**January 6-8**

Church Leadership Conference “Leading and Innovating a Mission-Shaped Church” at Kamya in Hendersonville, North Carolina. For more information please visit www.kamya.org or call 828/692-9136.

**January 28**

Outreach Summit. For more information please see the description on page 22 or contact the Rev. Deacon Judy Quick at jquick@bellouth.net or 205/669-6862.

**Hispanic Worshipping Communities in Our Diocese**

*All Saints’ Church*

70 17th Street Northwest

Aliceville, AL 35442

205/367-7508

*Iglesia Episcopal de la Gracia*

901 Kingman Road

Birmingham, AL 35235-1237

205/838-2565

http://gracia.dioala.org/

delagracia@bellsouth.net

**St. Philip’s Church**

2813 Godfrey Avenue Northeast

Fort Payne, AL 35967-3746

256/845-1192

Stphilipsadmin@boonlink.net

**The Church of the Ascension**

315 Clanton Avenue

Montgomery, AL 36104-5598

334/263-5529

www.coascension.org

For more information about Hispanic ministries in our diocese, please contact the Rev. Dr. Herman Afanador-Kafury, our diocesan Hispanic Missioner, at herman.afanador@yahoo.com or 205/381-4885.
Past Imperfect, Present Hope Project Culminates in Historic Service

By the Rev. Deacon Tom Osborne, Cochair of our Commission on Race Relations; Photos by the Rev. Deacon Dave Drachlis

“Past Imperfect, Present Hope.” Our diocesan Commission on Race Relations assigned this well-chosen name to our project of gathering historical memories and personal stories about the role the Episcopal Church in Alabama played in slavery and segregation and the role we are now playing in helping overcome that legacy of discrimination.

In 2006, the delegates to our 75th General Convention adopted a resolution endorsing the principles of restorative justice and calling on the people of the Episcopal Church to engage in storytelling about historical and present-day privilege and under-privilege. In response to the General Convention resolution, the delegates to our 2008 Annual Diocesan Convention adopted a resolution that our Church strive to be “the reparer of the breach” (Isaiah 58:12) and to achieve spiritual healing and reconciliation that will lead us to a new life in Christ. Our diocesan resolution also called for our Commission on Race Relations to develop resources to document slavery, segregation, and discrimination in our diocese, and the efforts we have undertaken to repair and rectify the tragedy of slavery and the sin of racism. In addition, the resolution called for a day of repentance.

For more than two years, parish historians around our diocese collected stories and materials from written histories and old vestry minutes. We created a three-panel pictorial timeline to illustrate the history of race relations in the Episcopal Church in Alabama, and we prepared a liturgy for a historic service as part of this year’s annual Jonathan Myrick Daniels and the Martyrs of Alabama Pilgrimage. It all came together on August 13 in the Lowndes County courthouse in Hayneville in a moving Service of Remembrance, Repentance, and Reconciliation. During the service, Bishop Parsley celebrated Holy Eucharist on the bench used by the judge during the trial of the man who shot and killed Jonathan Daniels, an Episcopal seminarian who had come to Alabama to help register African American voters. Jonathan died on August 20, 1965, while he was shielding then 16-year-old Ruby Sales from a shotgun blast as she attempted to enter a store to buy a soft drink—an all-white jury acquitted the man who fired the gun. Now in that same place, almost 300 people, black and white, prayed for true justice and reconciliation and shared the body and blood of Christ.

In his sermon, Bishop Parsley pointed to the words of St. Paul in his letter to the Galatians, “There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.” Bishop Parsley spoke of Paul’s radical vision of a world changed by the reconciling love of God in Christ. Paul made the remarkable leap “from his belief that on the cross God was reconciling the world to himself to the faith that this meant the reconciliation of us with one another.” Bishop Parsley held up Jonathan Daniels, who he said saw the truth of Paul’s words and was bold enough to live them, so much so that he was willing to give his life for this vision of radical equality.

Bishop Parsley recalled our Church’s tragic part in the sin of racism over the years: “We especially remember and lament our part in the institution of slavery both active and passive, from which the Church benefited, and our slowness to support civil rights for our African American sisters and brothers.” He also gave voice to the Church’s repentance for its failures and shortcomings of the past: “We are not the Church of then. We are the Church of now, where all are welcome, a Church very different from the early 19th century. Even though we have a long way to go, we have yet come a long way.”

Following a solemn reading of the names of the civil rights martyrs of Alabama, Bishop Parsley led the standing-room-only gathering in a litany of penitence. A gong sounded as the litany began, and the congregation responded to each of the petitions with the moving words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.: “The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.”

The service concluded with James Weldon Johnson’s “Lift Every Voice,” which for many years was known as the Negro National Anthem. “Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us; sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us; facing the rising sun of our new day begin, let us march on, till victory is won.”

The Church celebrates its Alabama Martyrs every year in this place, but this year it did more. It called a solemn assembly, collectively confessed and repented of the sin of racism, and asserted the truth that for the Body of Christ there is only one ministry, the ministry of reconciliation.

For more about this year’s Pilgrimage and the historic Service of Remembrance, Repentance, and Reconciliation, and to see the pictorial timeline, please visit our diocesan Web site, www.dioala.org.