Baptism before communion is still Church’s norm
Convention debate shows practice doesn’t always follow canons

By Mary Frances Schjonberg

[Episcopal News Service] The seeming disconnect in some parts of the Episcopal Church between the theology and practice of admission to communion became newly apparent to the Rev. Canon Beth Wickenberg Ely on a recent Sunday morning.

Ely, canon for regional ministry in North Carolina, who was presiding at St. Martin’s Episcopal Church in Charlotte, had to consult her notes to remind herself how to describe who was welcome to receive communion.

“I didn’t know whether they say ‘everybody come’ or ‘baptized Christians,’ “ she recalled during a July 23 interview with Episcopal News Service. “I go with what the church does, and it varies.”

For Ely, who chaired the diocesan delegation to the recently concluded 77th General Convention, that moment at St. Martin’s epitomizes why her diocese proposed (via Resolution C029) that the Episcopal Church spend the next three years studying its theology that underlies access to Holy Baptism and Holy Communion.

Convention rejected both that suggestion and one from the Diocese of Eastern Oregon (Resolution C040) that would have allowed the church’s congregations to “invite all, regardless of age, denomination, or baptism to the altar for Holy Communion” by eliminating Canon 1.17.7, which says “no unbaptized person shall be eligible to receive Holy Communion in this Church.”

Instead, the convention passed a substitute for C029 in which the Episcopal Church “reaffirm[ed] that baptism is the ancient and normative entry point to receiving Holy Communion and that our Lord Jesus Christ calls us to go into the world and baptize all peoples.”

The substitute resolution came out of the convention’s legislative committee on evangelism to which C029 and C040 were assigned.

“The committee worked very hard with the two original resolutions and it was very clear that even those who would be leaning more towards the open-table idea were not ready to change the canon at this time,” the Rev. Canon Dennis Blauser, the Northwestern Pennsylvania delegation chair who also chaired the deputies’ Evangelism Committee, recalled during a July 25 interview with ENS.

Blauser said the committee heard from nearly 50 people during its hearing on the two resolutions. Some witnesses voiced concern over East Oregon’s proposal to do away with the baptismal requirement while others gave personal or second-hand testimony of people “who had had this powerful call to go to communion — to receive communion — and [how that experience] brought them into a new relationship with Christ and with the church, and eventually being baptized into the body of Christ,” according to Blauser.

In the end, the committee members sensed from the witnesses and amongst themselves that “there was really no strong pull” to abolish the canon, but they wanted to acknowledge that unbaptized people were receiving communion in the Episcopal Church.

Thus, when the House of Deputies first considered the committee’s substitute resolution on July 9, it included a second sentence saying: “We also acknowledge that in various local contexts there is the exercise of pastoral sensitivity with those who are not yet baptized.”

That sentence remained in the version of the resolution the deputies passed, despite an attempt by the Rev. Canon Dr. Neal Michell, chair of the Dallas delegation, and others to remove it. He told the deputies that accepting the sentence would give clergy permission to violate the canons of the church.

The Very Rev. Canon James Newman of Los Angeles, who opposed removing the sentence, said those distributing communion do so amidst a tension between deciding what do when someone puts out his or her hands to receive the sacrament and knowing what Canon 1.17.7 says.

In the end the House of Deputies passed the committee’s resolution on a vote by orders, by 77 percent in the lay order and 64 percent in the clergy order. The resolution then went to the House of Bishops.

When the bishops took up C029 on the morning of the last day of convention, they eventually rejected the “pastoral sensitivity” sentence after first considering rejecting the entire resolution or referring to it their theology committee, which convention had done in 2003 (via Resolution A089) at the bishops’ behest.

Bishops vote to relocate but not to sell Episcopal Church headquarters

By Pat McCaughan

[Episcopal News Service] The House of Bishops on July 10 approved a move away from, but did not authorize the sale of, the Episcopal Church Center headquarters.

Bishops voted 74-71 in favor of Resolution D016 after striking the last paragraph, “General Convention directs the Executive Council of The Episcopal Church to sell the Church Building at 815 Second Avenue, New York City.”

Deputies had approved the church center sale July 6. Since bishops amended the resolution, which came through the legislative committee on structure, the measure now returns to deputies for another consideration.

Several bishops objected.

“It is fiscally irresponsible to demand immediate sell of a building without knowing where you’re going, knowing if the economic climate is right,” said Bishop Suffragan Diane Jardine Ewalt of Los Angeles.

Bishop Stacy Sauls, chief operating officer of the Episcopal Church, also opposed the measure. He said a study is underway to help determine answers to two issues: what to do with the strategic and mission location of the church center and what to do with a real estate asset in Manhattan that is owned by the Episcopal Church.

He said Executive Council has been kept informed as the study has progressed and anticipates presenting its final results in October of this year.

Letter from Bishop Gray regarding General Convention

July 25, 2012
My dear friends,

A little over a week ago I returned from our Church’s triennial General Convention held in Indianapolis, Indiana. With the benefits of a few days’ perspective, let me share with you my impressions of this 77th General Convention.

As usual, the secular press’s accounts of what transpired stood in rather stark contrast to what I experienced. It could be that either I am just missing something or that the subtle complexities of our church and our faith do not lend themselves easily to interpretation by contemporary journalism.

The topic that gathered the most media attention, though not nearly the same time and energy of the General Convention deputies, was the approval of a liturgy for the blessing of same gender relationships. As I have tried to tell this diocese over the past year or so, the Standing Commission on Prayer Book, Music and Liturgy had been asked by the last General Convention to take a look at all the liturgies that were being used for such blessings and present a single one for the church to study and use, if desired, on a trial use basis. Since blessings of same sex relationships have been taking place in our church for almost 30 years, there were dozens of liturgies and other resources available throughout the church.

The Standing Commission’s charge was to develop a standard liturgy that would be used for the blessing of life-long, monogamous same sex relationships in dioceses where this practice had been authorized by the bishop. Thus, the “new thing” was the development of a single rite, not the liturgy for the blessing of these relationships.

Letter from Bishop Gray, Continued on page 2
General Convention 2012 -
an Acts 8 Moment

By David Knight

I have been privileged to serve the Diocese of Mississippi at three General Conventions (GC), and I must say that 2012 was a far better experience for me than previous conventions. Leading up to GC, a group of people began talking about change. At our last diocesan council, we joined with +4 other dioceses to call on GC to institute reform in all the structures of our church (including GC itself). Leading up to GC three deputies coined the phrase “an Acts 8 moment.” They reminded us of the story from the 8th chapter of Acts, and compared it to the state of our church today. In Acts 8 we see a church in disarray — Stephen has been stoned to death, leaders of the church are scattered, and the Temple is no longer serving as the place of power and authority for the early church. Everything is upside down. Yet the Holy Spirit is leading them to a new way. We see Philip going to Samaria and preaching the good news; many are converted. Peter and John travel to Judea, where they heal and preach, and the world is never the same.

Is this our Acts 8 moment? The Structure Committee at GC had to deal with 90 resolutions calling for reform. A small group of us met the night before a hearing on those resolutions was to take place. We were concerned that the “powers that be” would fight hard to hold on to the status quo. We talked and prayed about how we could move this conversation forward. The dozen or so of us in that room decided to do three things - first to meet with as many deputies as we could the next day and ask them to attend the hearing and perhaps speak in favor of reform, we committed ourselves to address the hearing, (and I was privileged to be one of 40 people who spoke that night along with Bishop Gray). And we promised to be in prayer about what the Holy Spirit was calling us to do as a church.

The results were phenomenal. The Structure Committee, which included our own Canon David Johnson, crafted a wonderful resolution (C095) calling for a task force consisting of people NOT currently involved in church governance to examine every aspect of the way our church functions from the top down, including GC itself. This resolution was debated on the floor of the House of Deputies, and then passed unanimously! When the call for “nay” votes was answered by complete silence, it was the best moment I have ever had at GC. It was stunning, and the look on people’s faces was of incredulity and hope. The entire house burst into applause, and we then sang “Sing a New Church into Being.”

I believe this was part of an Acts 8 moment. I am more hopeful for our church than I have been in a long time. My experience post-Katrina showed me that this Episcopal Church of ours can do monumental things when we let the Holy Spirit lead us and don’t get so tied up in structure and committees and the like. Please join me in prayer for our church, the task force, and for our own Acts 8 moment.

The Rev. David Knight is interim rector at St. James’ Jackson and a deputy for the Diocese of Mississippi at the 77th General Convention of the Episcopal Church held in Indianapolis last July.

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Ninth Bishop of Mississippi

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August 2012

Letter from Bishop Gray

Continued from page 1

For reasons that I have shared with this diocese over the past 12 years, I do not intend to authorize this liturgy for use in Mississippi. However, I will be encouraging the study of the resources that are a companion to this liturgy. Other resources will also be suggested. Whether one agrees or disagrees with the use of such liturgies it is essential that our discussions are grounded in a theological, sacramental and pastoral context and not tied to the shrillness of our society’s current debate on this issue.

One final note is important here. This is not a change in the Prayer Book, but rather a supplementary liturgical rite. Our Book of Common Prayer continues to define for us the nature of marriage and its theological underpinnings. Approximately 50 years ago the church made a “pastoral exception” to the traditional theology of marriage by providing for divorce and remarriage. (Had I been at General Convention in those days, I probably would have voted against that change as well!) I believe that we can understand the liturgy for the blessing of faithful, monogamous, life-long committed relationships in our time as something similar.

The issue that truly dominated this year’s General Convention was the almost universal agreement for the need to re-imagine and reorganize the structures of the church. While no one pretends that a major reorganization of the church will solve all our problems, there is an increasing awareness that the top-down bureaucratic model that worked in the 1950’s, symbolized by the church center’s office building in New York City, no longer works in the “flattened” world of this century. While several very dramatic individual proposals for change were narrowly defeated, we did create a task force that will present a comprehensive plan for reorganization and reform to either the next regular General Convention in 2015, or a special called Convention prior to 2015.

My take from all of this energy is that we are in the midst of a major change in the way we organize ourselves as a church. The networking of congregations and dioceses will become the norm for resourcing the church while the Presiding Bishop and his/her staff will become increasingly focused on matters that individual dioceses cannot do alone; e.g. ecumenical and Anglican Communion matters.

Related to the reorganization conversation was the development of the budget for the triennium. I was pleased that the budget reflected priorities in youth, young adults and new church starts. We reversed the trend in recent years, as the old saying goes, “to eat our seed corn.” As I reported in the Mississippi Episcopalian, last month the Anglican Covenant has become an increasingly most issue as more and more churches from around the Anglican Communion, including the Church of England, have rejected it as improper or inadequate. I was pleased that General Convention chose not to act, thus leaving open the conversation with our global Anglican partners.

One of the more surprising actions (one with which I was quite pleased) was the almost universal reaffirmation of baptism as the normative requirement for the reception of Holy Communion. I chaired the committee that reported out a proposal to reaffirm this traditional understanding of the relationship between the two sacraments, and to acknowledge that, for pastoral reasons, this “communion of the unbaptized” was taking place in some churches. The House of Bishops, unanimously voted to strike my carefully constructed, pastorally sensitive language, and reaffirm baptism as normative, period. I was shocked, but delighted, by their action.

Two of our deputies were elected to significant church positions - Dr. Anita George was elected to the Church’s Executive Council (equivalent to the vestry of a local church) and Canon Kathryn McCormick was elected to the board of the Church Pension Fund. Both are now in positions to significantly impact in different ways the lives of this church. Our prayers go with them in their new responsibilities.

The House of Deputies elected the Rev. Gay Jennings as its new President. Gay was a significant resource for us in Mississippi immediately following Hurricane Katrina. She will serve us well.

In addition to the above actions General Convention considered more than 600 resolutions (a sure sign that something needs to change!) delighting some and infuriating some. Most have already faded into a deep corner in the archives, but stand, nonetheless as General Convention’s “position” on a particular matter.

Unlike the aforementioned issues, most of these others were given neither the time or energy by me for careful, reflective consideration. Such is the challenge of a General Convention that tries to do its best with a structure designed in the 18th century. I think we can do much better.

Finally, the spirit of this 77th General Convention was, for the most part, extraordinarily upbeat. There was a clear understanding of the challenges this church faces in an increasingly post-Christian culture, but accompanying that clarity was a genuine desire, with God’s grace and guidance, to creatively and with hope engage the future God is giving to us.

The daily Eucharist, where thousands gathered for extraordinary music, prayer and preaching was always the highlight of the day for me and brought me back, again and again, to why I do the things I do. Our common worship, particularly when we gather at the altar together, both defines us as God’s people and nurtures us as God’s servants being sent into God’s world. May we never forget whose we are.

Your General Convention deputies and I will be at St. James’ Jackson on Saturday, August 11, to give a detailed report to the wider diocese, to answer all questions and engage in conversation about our two weeks in Indianapolis. I invite any and all who wish to be a part of this discussion to join us. Advance registration, for purposes of planning for lunch are important. We expect to conclude no later than 2:00 p.m.

In Christ’s Peace,

The Rt. Rev. Duncan M. Gray, III
ORDINARY CONCERNS

The Bishop’s Journal

June 26 - Staff meetings through the morning. Annual consultation with the Rev. Bill White. Late afternoon appointments with Ms. Alice Perry and Ms. Hermine Welch.

Drive to Gray Center for dinner with participants in the Cooperative College for Congregational Development, an extraordinary program that pulls participants from six dioceses from around the Southeast.

June 27 - Morning appointment with Mr. Russell Wilcox. Appointments later in the day with the Rev. Deacon Carol Spencer and annual consultation with the Very Rev. Lee Winter.

Drive to the coast for a meeting with the vestry of St. John’s in Ocean Springs. Overnight in Ocean Springs.


June 29 - In-office all day. Annual consultation with the Rev. Deacon Patricia Cantrell. Afternoon session with ordained clergy person from another tradition discussing a call to the Episcopal priesthood.

June 30 - Spend most of the morning reading in preparation for General Convention. Family time in the afternoon.

July 1 - Early morning worship at St. Andrew’s. Then spend most of the rest of the day preparing for General Convention.

July 2 - Kathy and I fly to Indianapolis, Indiana, for the 77th General Convention of the Episcopal Church. We check into our hotel, then begin the process of orienting ourselves.

July 3 - General Convention, Indianapolis. Registration in the morning. In the afternoon I join with other chairs of General Convention committees for an in-depth orientation session.

July 4 - General Convention formally opens. I spend most of the day chairing the legislative committee on evangelism. Each day at General Convention for me will begin with 7-30 a.m. committee hearings, followed by the Convention Eucharist, and legislative sessions in the House of Bishops through much of the day. Additional committee hearings will consume most evenings while we are here.

July 5-12 - General Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana.

July 13 - Kathy and I return from General Convention very weary, but appreciative of the gift of grace that is present in the church as faithful people to try to respond in their own diverse ways, to God’s claim on their lives.

July 14 - Day off.

July 15 - Drive to Collins for visitation to St. Elizabeth’s. Enjoy the fellowship of a large congregation as I preach, celebrate and confirm 5. An abundant luncheon prepared by the congregation allows for good sharing time. I am so appreciative of the work done by the Rev. Van Bankston and the Rev. Susan Hrostopski as supply clergy to this congregation.

Drive back to Jackson to catch a flight to Washington, D.C.


July 19 - Return to Jackson to spend a few days of vacation time with Kathy.

July 20-23 - Vacation.

July 24 - Staff meetings in the morning. Drive to Chapel of the Cross/Madison for a meeting with the Bishop Masafera Christian Foundation Task Force as they continue to work toward a medical mission in support of the BMCF in Uganda.

Return to Jackson to work with my father and representatives from Ole Miss as he prepares to donate his papers to the university.

Late afternoon appointment with the Rev. Alston Johnson.

July 25 - Work from my home in the morning. Afternoon staff appointments, one with an aspirant for holy orders and another with the Rev. William Ndishabandi.

July 26 - Morning session with those working on a medical mission to South Sudan. Late morning appointment with an aspirant for holy orders. Afternoon session with the Trustees of the Diocese.

July 27 - Morning appointment with aspirant for holy orders. Later, the Rev. Van Bankston arrives for his annual consultation. Late afternoon appointment with leadership of the Honduras Medical Mission.

In the evening, I join with the Board of Managers of Gray Center to begin work with a consultant on a long-term plan for the Conference Center.

July 28 - Work through most of the day with Gray Center board and a consultant on the revised long-term plan for the Center.

July 29 - Celebrate the Eucharist at the closing liturgy of the Mississippi Conference on Music and Liturgy at St. Philip’s Jackson. Though attendance has been down over the past two years, the faculty from Boston and Virginia encourage me to keep this conference alive since it is so important to the entire Episcopal Church.

Baptism before communion

Continued from page 1

Missouri Bishop Wayne Smith told the House of Bishops during its debate that the issue is an ongoing concern for the House’s theology committee and so “whether you tell us or not we will keep addressing this matter.”

Bishop Duncan Gray III of Mississippi, chair of the bishops’ legislative committee on evangelism, said that the bishops and deputies’ committee chose to rewrite C029 (and eventually discharge C040) because the former “was a more appropriate vehicle for what the committee wanted to say.”

Northern Indiana Bishop Ed Little told his colleagues that “we don’t need to tell clergy in the parish to be pastorally sensitive, and this will be read as opening the door to communion of the unbaptized and will put a resolution of General Convention in conflict with the canons of the church, so I urge a no vote.”

Bishop Gerald Wulf of Rhode Island, who converted to Christianity from Judaism and was baptized as an adult, said that when her priest invited her to consider being baptized, “I had to deal with my identity. I had to deal with what it meant to make a public affirmation of faith.”

And for those who have found their faith through communion I say ‘Wonderful, I’m happy for you. I’m not going to turn you away if you come up to the altar rail. But I also want to say I’ve written a little banner here for myself that says ‘open baptism,’” she said. “I rarely ever see the invitation to adult baptism expressed in our churches and if we’re talking about identity and if we’re talking about faith and mission I believe this is where it begins.”

New York Bishop Mark Sisk moved that the bishops strike the “pastoral sensitivity” sentence but approve the rest of the resolution because doing so “communicates clearly where we are.”

Blauer said the deputies’ committee then faced in the “last minute on the last day” whether to recommend that the House of Deputies concur with the amended resolution, of which he said “we thought that it really gutted the resolution as we intended it.” The committee did recommend concurrence and the one-sentence resolution was accepted by the entire house.

The Rev. Anna Carmichael, who helped write the Eastern Oregon resolution, told ENS on July 23 that she wished convention had accepted the entire substitute resolution because she found it to be “a really great example of how we try to find a middle ground and work together in this church even when we don’t necessarily always agree theologically or even pastorally.”

Carmichael, for whom this was her first foray into General Convention resolution drafting, said she was glad C040 “sparked a lot of conversation both online and actually at convention.”

“We should be proud as a church to be willing to engage in these kinds of dialogues,” she added.

Ely admitted she was “very frustrated with the disconnect that I see between the interest in the particular topic and the unwillingness of some people to have a church-wide discussion on it,” which she said was “all we were trying to do with what we sent” to convention.

“There were many people at the hearing that wanted to talk about this particular thing and I think when people show up to give their input and they show up in such numbers it’s irresponsible of the church to basically shove it aside,” she said. “It’s time for a conversation.”

Blauer told ENS that the committee rejected the idea of a study, “which was going to cost money and we felt that we did not to have another committee set up to do this [because] the study will be done by the reality that this practice has been in the church and will continue in the church at some level, and we will continue the discussion.”

Both Carmichael and Ely agree that the question of what is variously called open communion, open table and communion of the non- or unbaptized is not going to go away.

“I think we go back to meeting it head-on with a resolution in three years, again saying we’re doing one thing and we’re saying another,” Ely said.

Carmichael said she was not entirely surprised that the committee’s resolution was amended in the House of Bishops, “but I think it gives us great some food for thought and an opportunity to reflect on how we could better present a resolution like this in the future.”

“This discussion is ahead of us and we’re not going to be able to avoid it forever, particularly if we re-vision ourselves,” Ely said, referring to convention’s decision to re-imagine the work of the Episcopal Church in the 21st century.

She said that future decisions about open communion will inevitably be “a by-product of the way we’re going to be church in the future.”

Meanwhile, Carmichael says she will not change her practice of inviting all people to receive communion at St. Mark’s Episcopal Church in Hood River where she is rector.

While I understand that as a priest I have taken a vow to uphold the rubrics of the prayer book, I feel that sometimes pastoral care and pastoral sensitivity are equally as important as our theology behind what we do,” she said, adding that the Episcopal Church is always striving to extend its welcome to all people “and I hope that at some point our welcome will include unbaptized at the communion rail.”

The Rev. Mary Frances Schonberg is an editor/reporter for the Episcopal News Service. The Rev. Pat McCaughan, an ENS correspondent, and Melodie Woorman, a member of the ENS General Convention news team, contributed to this report.
Reflections from the road

By Bishop Duncan M. Gray, III

Many years ago while still in seminary, I visited a friend who had graduated a year before me. Remembering his drive to succeed and the all night study sessions that we shared through the years, I was surprised to find him relaxed and content in his small church in West Virginia. Asking him about what seemed to be a significant shift in attitude he responded, “I decided that an overly stressed, exhausted and driven priest would be a terrible witness to the life-giving power of the Gospel.”

I’ve thought a great deal about Barry’s comment through the years as I’ve tried to find the balance between the ministry of servant hood to which I have been called and the health of my body, soul and mind that make up the delivery system of that ministry. This journey toward physical, emotional and spiritual wellness, not as an end in itself, but as the means to be a more effective witness to the Risen Lord, has taken many paths over the years.

I’ve learned a few things along the way:
1. The Benedictine balance of work, rest, play, study and prayer is an ideal to be cherished, but is so rarely achieved.
2. The health of any system — family, church, business, etc. — is directly related to the health of its leadership. Healthy leadership reduces anxiety and encourages creativity in problem solving.
3. The well-intentioned but uncompromising establishment of rigid personal boundaries is both a pastoral and theological disaster. Healthy boundaries are always very flexible.
4. Families of clergy pay a very high, and very often unnoticed price. That reality can never be ignored.
5. Accountability to someone beyond myself for my health is important. Over the years clergy support groups that build in accountability have been a lifeline for me. As bishop I require all clergy to have an annual consultation with me in which we discuss, among other things, their physical, emotional and spiritual health. Our letters of agreement between clergy and congregations are built on the principles of health and balance.
6. Neglect of personal health and wellness has tragic personal and institutional consequences.

A few months back I invited a group of people to join me in thinking about ways in which we could begin to move the culture of our church in Mississippi toward increasing health. Those have been very rich and insightful discussions, and the work of this Wellness Task Force will be impacting our common life in the coming years. This year’s Clergy Conference will be greatly influenced by their work.

What kind of witness are we to the life-giving power of the Gospel? Do those outside the church look at us, both individually and collectively, and say, “I want what they have?” or do they run for cover?

Those are health and wellness questions. They are well worth thinking about.

+Duncan

Diaconal Ministry: Striving for justice and peace among all people and respecting the dignity of every human being

By Penny Sisson

I am often asked, “What is a Vocational Deacon?” My answer is that Matthew 25 and our Baptismal Covenant explain it well:

“They the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’

“The righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothed you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

“The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”

The work of the deacon is to call and lead the laity to respond to this mandate while living into our Baptismal Covenant.

Ordained on January 6, 2001, I was assigned to St. Peter’s/Oxford to continue serving in Hispanic ministry and lay pastoral care. Advent I marked our 14th year serving the Hispanic community of Oxford and Lafayette County. We began and continue this ministry as a faithful response to the Gospel and our Baptismal Covenant. With the support of our rector and his wife, we began this ministry with a Eucharist in Spanish followed by an ecumenical fellowship hour every Sunday at 7 p.m. As we began this ministry, we identified 3 areas of need that we wanted to address through our ministry:

(1) To provide a worship experience in Spanish
(2) To provide ESL classes to the community
(3) To facilitate access to Oxford-Lafayette County community services

This is also a ministry of Peace and Justice and Reconciliation which requires patience in the face of prejudice and resentment. Hispanics in many communities have become easy targets of scams and victims of crime.

Assistance has been provided by many members of the Oxford/Lafayette community in the following areas: (1) health care (including diabetes screening and visits to the Health Department, to the emergency room, to physicians, to dentists), and enrolling women and children in the WIC program; (2) car tifling and taxes; (3) transportation; (4) clothing; (5) home furnishings; (6) legal matters; (7) housing; (8) translation; (9) vision screening; and (10) employment.

Working with the Lion’s Club, we have secured glasses for several people. We have provided funeral and memorial services, baptisms, marriages and Quinceañera celebrations. Literature in Spanish is available to the congregation through the Forward Movement materials.

Bibles in Spanish have also been provided. Working with Bishop Gray and the Camp Brattton staff, we have sent one teenager to serve as a Counselor and we have sent two children to work.

We serve approximately 75 - 100 people in the various ministries that we offer to the Hispanic community of Oxford and Lafayette County. We average 25 - 35 at the weekly Eucharist and fellowship. Members of the congregation (both youth and adults) read the lessons, Psalms and Prayers of the People and five youth serve as acolytes for the Eucharist. We began a stewardship education program two years ago and have continued this education.

We are delighted that many of the congregants are being assimilated into the life of St. Peter’s. The youth have helped and attended Vacation Bible school and EYC. Jose Rodriguez was the preacher on Youth Sunday last year. They have accompanied us to the monthly worship at NMBC.

We are grateful to the clergy, the vestry and parishioners for their support and participation in this vital ministry. We give thanks for the participation and support of St. Andrews Methodist Church, OU Methodist Church and First Presbyterian Church.

We have answered God’s call to serve God and His people. We are welcoming the stranger in our midst. Strangers are no longer strangers, but friends. One way ministry has been transformed by God’s grace and love into a two-way ministry of hospitality and friendship.

In addition to Hispanic ministry, I assist with lay pastoral care and participate in a monthly worship service at North Mississippi Regional Center. I carry my keyboard to Parchman and to the local jail to provide music for our annual Christmas lessons and carols. I served as a translator for the Honduras Medical Mission for 24 years. My latest endeavor is Mats for the Homeless which has become an ecumenical effort with All Saints’ Episcopal Church and First Baptist Church in Grenada.

In the Sunday Eucharist, I read the Gospel, set the table and give the dismissal. In the Spanish Eucharist and at the healing and Eucharist on Wednesdays, I also play the piano.

The Rev. Deacon Penny R. Sisson serves at St. Peter’s/Oxford.
Daughters of the King triennial meeting held

By Eleanor Baran

The Diocese of Mississippi delegation attended the 45th National Triennial of the Order of the Daughters of the King at Indianapolis, Indiana, on June 27th through July 1st, 2012, the week before the General Convention of the Episcopal Church. The diocesan president, Eleanor Baran; past president, Virginia Montgomery; and Province IV advisor, Doris Bradley, spent five days praying, networking, and doing the business of the National Order with approximately 400 senior Daughters and 100 junior Daughters of the King.

Dinners were held for the Provinces and the junior Daughters on Wednesday night. The Holy Eucharist was celebrated by Bishop Sylvester Romero, national chaplain, before the opening of the convention itself. The keynote speaker was a priest chaplain of the 125th Air Force National Guard, Florida Wing, the Rev. Dr. Sarah Shirley. The chaplain spoke on the First Commandment and her service experience in the United States and in Afghanistan.

Business meetings began Thursday afternoon. Bylaw amendments were proposed. One amendment was to raise the national dues five dollars. These monies are to be sent back to diocesan treasuries for projects. After much discussion, the amendment passed. Other bylaw changes will be mentioned at a later date. There was also a presentation of a theatre piece on Martha and Mary by a group from Texas. Roger Grenier’s ensemble, “Friends of the Groom.”

On Friday, nominations and presentations for officers and members of the National Council were offered. The elected Officers are: Pam Runyon, president; lst vice president, Jennifer Mariano; 2nd vice president, Melinda Denney; Secretary, Susan O’Brien; and treasurer, Annmarie Delgado. On Sunday, the closing rededication service and Holy Eucharist were celebrated, and new officers and council members were introduced. The after-service fellowship included hugs, good-byes, and preparation for the trips back home.

The Mississippi diocesan officers for 2012-2015 are: Eleanor Baran, president; Judy McGlothlin, vice president; and treasurer, Susan E. Steadmian. The Rev. Billie Abraham, Rector of St. Alban’s/Bovina, serves as diocesan chaplain.

Eleanor Baran is the diocesan president of the Daughters of the King and a member of St. Pierre’s/Gautier.

Brotherhood of St. Andrew Triennial Counsel meeting held in Nashville

By Chet Dobrowski

The Triennial Convention for the Brotherhood of St. Andrew was held at the Sheraton Music City Hotel in Nashville, Tennessee, on June 20-24, 2012. This year was the 129th year of ministry to men.

Representatives from Mississippi were Chet Dobrowski from St. John’s/Pascagoula and Leonard Fuller from St. Pierre’s/Gautier. Chet Dobrowski was reelected to the National Counsel. The National Counsel is the legislative body of the Brotherhood of St. Andrew.

Leonard Fuller was appointed to Campus and Jail Ministry.

The Triennial Convention meets every three years to examine and revise the constitution and by-laws. The major purpose of the convention is to prepare a three year plan, budget approval, and election of officers. One of the new changes in the constitution was to rename the Central Office to National Office, since it has chapters worldwide. There are 3,938 Episcopal men in the brotherhood in eight provinces in the United States as well as chapters in foreign countries.

The Brotherhood of St. Andrew was founded in 1885 and has developed worldwide as a ministry to men and boys of the Episcopal and associated churches. Examples of the accomplishments of the Brotherhood include: introduction of the layreader program in 1886; creation of several youth camps throughout the country; establishment in 1898 of what is known today as “Forward Day by Day” and the invention of Faith Alive. PewSaction, an umbrella organization of renewal ministries had its roots in the Brotherhood. Many other services are performed behind the scenes daily by individual chapters.

Programs of the Brotherhood are activities of church and community life. A major goal is to support the priest and church officers and communicate with the bishop on programs accomplished. The major programs are men’s and boy’s ministry, prison ministry, evangelism, Boy Scouts, youth camps and seminars. The Brotherhood sponsors a school and orphanage in Uganda. All Episcopal Church chapters have programs and projects of their own and report to the National Office of their progress. Reports are given at the National and Triennial Conventions to highlight the work of the Brotherhood. Every Episcopal man is encouraged to be a member of the Brotherhood of St. Andrew, because this important organization is for the men of the church to spread the work of God’s kingdom. Information can be found at www.brotherhoodstandrew.org; or the National Office: Brotherhood of St. Andrew, 1109 Merchant Street, Ambridge, PA 15003, or any local chapter.

Chet Dobrowski is the president of the Jackson County Brotherhood of St. Andrew.
Churches across the diocese held vacation Bible schools and Redeemer/Greenville was no exception. The week long VBS had a record 25 students with 8 adult leaders.

St. John’s/Leland raised $7500.00 for Camp Bratton-Green special session scholarships by hosting the Hot as Hades half marathon. Gray Center executive director, Bill Horne (far left), with other Gray Center staffers and volunteers are pictured with members of St. John’s/Leland after Holy Eucharist was celebrated to mark the marathon’s successful fund raising event.

Members of St. Paul’s volunteered at Corinth Elementary’s summer enrichment camp. Children wove rugs out of old t-shirts using hula hoops as looms and finger-knit yarn into bracelets and pet collars. Vestry member Dana Ballard organized the project with help from Amanda Patrick, vestry member Kari Hughes and her children, and senior warden Susan Adams.

Fill’er up this fall

By Bill Horne

If you’ve ever spent a few restful days at Gray Center, I don’t have to tell you how the experience can re-charge your battery, give you more drive and zeal for whatever it is you have to face back at home in the world. It can truly be a “religious experience!” This fall everyone can have an opportunity to find peace and relaxation right here at your diocesan home, Gray Center.

Responding to a challenge to “fill up the Center,” the staff at the conference center has committed itself to putting a day or two at Gray Center within the easy grasp of everyone. We’ve thrown away almost all the rules and rates we usually operate within. From September till Christmas there are a bunch of days when we have from five to fifteen rooms vacant and you can put your name on one of these. The dates - effective today, but subject to availability at time of reservations - are listed below with dramatically discounted prices.

September 4 & 5 and 16-18
October 1-4
November 5-7 and 18-21
December 2-6, 10-15, 16-18, and 21-23

All rooms for $40.00, regardless of number occupants - 2/3rd OFF Regular Pricing
All meals reduced 25-30%: B/L/S at $10, $12 & $14
Big House and cottage kitchen fees waived with 50% Occupancy
Minimum numbers for meals and Big House rental: 8

Never before and probably never again will such a promotion be made, but we are determined to “Fill ‘er Up This Fall” — come help us out and enjoy a much deserved rest at Gray Center.

Call Linda at 601-859-1556 or send her an email at lindac@graycenter.org.

*The small print.....all reservations require the first day in advance and are only confirmed with receipt of this non-refundable deposit....all reservations subject to availability and rates and continuation of this promotional campaign may be changed at any time without further notice. Confirmed reservation contracts represent the only agreement between Gray Center and rental applicants.

Bill Horne is the executive director of the Gray Center.
Deployment report for the Mississippi Episcopalian
August, 2012

Resignations, Retirements
The Reverend Alston B. Johnson, announced resignation, as Rector, Chapel of the Cross, Madison
The Reverend Dr. Wayne Ray, announced retirement, as Rector, St. John’s, Ocean Springs

Calls and Appointments
The Reverend David A. Elliott III, called to be Canon Associate for Pastoral Care, St. Andrew’s Cathedral, Jackson
The Reverend Elizabeth Wheatley-Jones, called to be Rector, All Saints’, Grenada

In Transition
Grace, Canton
Calvary, Cleveland
Creator, Clinton
Redeemer, Greenville
Nativity, Greenwood
St. Mark’s, Gulfport
St. Paul’s, Hollandale
St. James’, Jackson
St. John’s, Leland
St. Patrick’s, Long Beach
St. Mary’s, Lexington
St. Paul’s, Picayune
Chapel of the Cross, Rolling Fork
Advent, Sumner
Epiphany, Tunica

Grave digging tradition a final act of love for departed

You get to experience or learn something new all the time. No matter what you’ve already done or how much you think you know or how old you are. I got my shot at something brand new for me a few weeks ago. I helped dig a grave. For a person! I’ve done it for plenty of pets. But this was way different.

I will admit that I didn’t help all that much. But I was there to do a television story about a tradition that they have at the Chapel of the Cross Episcopal Church in Madison County where other members of the congregation pitch in to dig the graves of members who have died and are to be buried in the church’s graveyard. But while I was there, the people doing the digging thought I should take a turn and get a feel for the experience myself.

They started about 4:00 in the afternoon. I didn’t count them, but it seemed to me that maybe a dozen men, more or less, took part. Some stayed the whole time; others came and went. Even family members helped. The daughter of the lady whose grave was being dug took a turn, as well as her son.

Back years ago somewhere, this would have been a family and neighbor’s duty. I could see it adding to closure in a way little else could.

The grave digging tradition has been going on for several years at the church. A former pastor suggested it as an act of showing love for a member’s family and for the departed. And although it is hard, long work, it seems to be a tradition embraced by pretty much everybody in the congregation.

They dig the graves by hand, with picks and shovels. No machinery is used. It is a slow process. Our grave went relatively fast with recent rains having loosened the dirt all the way down: “down” being a hole 54 inches deep, not a full 6 feet like we’ve heard all our lives. And thank goodness-54 inches takes long enough to dig, up to 12 hours in dry weather when our Mississippi hill clay turns into the equivalent of concrete.

As daylight dwindled, it didn’t seem eerie being in a graveyard after dark like I thought it might. The pizza deliveryman didn’t even think it was all that strange when he delivered supper to the workers behind the church.

I stalled as long as I could before taking my turn with the shovel. But I was finally pressed into it as the process was just a few inches shy of the goal. I don’t really know why, but I was a bit nervous. Digging a grave is kind of a serious thing if you think about it. I mean, there is little left you can do for a person after digging their grave. You don’t want to mess that up. And that deep in, looking at the dirt walls around you, you realize that you’ll have one of these for yourself some day. But then a cheery thought: This isn’t it!

After the grave was finished, the church’s priest, Austin Johnson, blessed it. All the gathered diggers took a sip of Macallan Scotch and poured the rest into the hole with a prayer for the spirit of the departed. (I suppose we Baptists could use grape juice.)

The tradition has meaning for everyone who participates. Feet on the floor of a grave, you are standing as far as you get to go in this life. What happens next is a matter of your faith.

Walt Grayson is the host of “Mississippi Roads” on Mississippi Public Broadcasting television, and the author of two “Looking Around Mississippi” books and “Oh! That Reminds Me: More Mississippi Homegrown Stories.”
Cursillo in Mississippi planning #123 September 27-30 at Gray Center

Read about Cursillo below and contact your priest or the diocesan office to find out how to attend. The article below is used with permission from the National Cursillo website http://www.nationalepiscopalcursillo.org

What is Cursillo?
Cursillo is a movement of the church. Its purpose is to help those in the church understand their individual callings to be Christian Leaders. The leadership may be exercised in work situations, in the family and social life, in leisure activities, and within the Church environment. Leadership, in Cursillo, does not mean power over others, but influence on others; all of us need to be aware that we can exert a positive influence on those around us.

What is the Goal of Cursillo?
The goal of Cursillo is to bring all to Christ. This is done when informed, trained leaders set out with the support of others having a similar commitment.

What does Cursillo do?
It helps to renew and deepen Christian commitment. Cursillo is one of many renewal movements. Many people have said Cursillo provides an important learning experience which causes many to feel like newly made Christians with a purpose and with support.

What is the Cursillo Movement About?
Cursillo is patterned on Jesus’ own example. He searched out and called a small group of potential leaders (pre-Cursillo); He trained them by word and example and inspired them with a vision (Three-Day Weekend); He linked them together and sent them out into the world to bring the world to Him (Fourth Day).

Pre-Cursillo:
During this period, sponsors (i.e. those individuals that have been to the three-day Cursillo weekend and are living the Fourth Day) identify those Episcopalians who are leading an active Christian life and are a living witness to their love for Christ, recommending their candidacy. It is also the period that selected candidates are informed of what to expect at the three-day weekend and assisted in appropriate preparations.

The Three-Day Weekend:
These three days bring together a diverse group of Episcopalians to share the richness of many modes of worship and to broaden each one’s appreciation for our Church. Lay people conduct the weekend with two or three members of the clergy functioning as spiritual advisors. Cursillo presumes that those who attend are already well grounded in the faith. It is not intended to be a conversion experience but an enriching and deepening of what is already there. It often provides new insights into our faith as well as fostering ministry among lay people. The weekend begins Thursday evening spent in the Chapel with meditations and discussions. Then blessed silence is kept until after the worship on Friday morning. After breakfast participants are assigned to table groups for the weekend. The three days are filled with talks and group discussions with emphasis on the doctrine of grace, the Sacraments, and the great Cursillo tripod: Piety, Study, and Action. Plus there is fellowship, singing, good food, and time for privacy, meditation, prayer, and walks. Eucharist is celebrated each day.

Fourth Day:
The Cursillo weekend is not an end to itself. It is a starting point that lasts the rest of your life and a springboard to a long-range practice of the Baptismal Covenant in the life of the Church called the Fourth Day.

The Fourth Day is composed of three major elements:
• The Group Reunion the heart of Cursillo, is a small group of friends (usually 3-5) who meet weekly, and who hold each other accountable for their spiritual journey. They report on their piety, their study, and their apostolic action. A bonding develops that institutes a strong support group for life.
• The Ultreya which is usually held monthly, is a “reunion of the reunions”. It provides support and builds community by allowing the sharing of communal experiences.
• Spiritual Direction is an important element of the Cursillo Movement. It is a commitment to seek out skilled lay persons or cleric for spiritual direction to provide help in deepening their union with Christ.

Are there Cursillo Secrets?
You may have been told by some who have attended the weekend that they cannot tell you what Cursillo is all about or what goes on during a Three-day weekend. This is not correct. Everything that goes on during the weekend may be told to anyone. Cursillo literature is available to anyone who wishes to read or purchase the materials.

“But grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift. And His gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.”
Ephesians 4:7, 11-12

FAITHFUL DEPARTED

Caroline Hamilton Smith, 64, communicant of Nativity, Greenwood, died April 15, 2012.


Kathleen Krebs Crowe, 77, communicant of St. John’s, Pascagoula, died June 29, 2012.

Johnye Clark Harrell, 89, communicant of St. Timothy’s Southaven, died July 13, 2012.

Theodore Cornelius Jones, 70, communicant at St. Mark’s, Jackson, died July 19, 2012.

Virginia (Edith) Speed Lamke, 91, communicant of St. John’s, Ocean Springs, died July 19, 2012.

Wildred Griffin Schoonover, 85, communicant of St. James, Greenville, died July 20, 2012.

Emile M. Baumhauer Jr., M.D., 85, communicant of St. John’s, Pascagoula, died July 23, 2012.

Eldridge Lee Crowe, Jr., 77, communicant of St. John’s, Pascagoula, died August 1, 2012.
August 2012

GOOD READING

The Edge of Terror: a review

Janet C. Nail

When I was a child, I would ask my father to read to me at night. He would sit beside my bed and read aloud what he was reading himself, books by Omar Bradley, Mark Clark, Ernie Pyle, Richard Tregaskis, William Shirer. You probably realize that these were not standard children’s writers.

I realized, too, that if I sat very still and quiet when his friends were over, they wouldn’t notice I was there, and I could listen to them talk about their experiences in World War II. I drank it all in and thirsted for more.

I became a student of World War II or, as my brother said, an obnoxious militant pacifist.

The bombing of the Philippines was fascinating to me because of the stories of the American civilians who were trapped there for the duration. Most were imprisoned, but many, frightened by the stories of the atrocities in Nanking and other towns, fled to the hills to await the arrival of American troops, expected immediately. THE EDGE OF TERROR, by Scott Walker (Thomas Dunne Books/St. Martin’s Press, 2009) is the story of both the military action in the islands and the narrative of twenty-three Americans who evaded the Japanese for almost two years.

The missionaries in Panay met to decide what to do; most of them decided to surrender to the Japanese and endure the prison. But Frederick and Ruth Meyer, Erle and Louise Rounds and their small son Douglas, James and Charm a C oville, and Francis and Gertrude Rose decided to flee for various reasons. Dr. Meyer felt that his work in treating the guerrilla soldiers would mark him for death. James C oville had fled Japan because his pacifist views were considered treasonous. The others felt their health or their frailty would mean they could not survive in prison.

Joining them were a group of gold miners who were determined that they would not fall into the hands of the Japanese. The men soon joined the guerrillas while their wives stayed in a refuge the missionaries had christened Hopevale.

The true hero of their sanctuary was the Rev. Delfin Dianala, a Baptist minister who remained faithful to the refugees, providing them with food even after their money was gone, providing sentries who warned them when the Japanese were near and acting as a liaison between the Americans and the Filipinos. Most of all he provided friendship and fidelity.

As the men became more involved with the guerrillas, their position became more precarious. Dr. Meyer continued to serve as a medical consultant, Rounds was a chaplain, and all the men in the mines served in the fighting. This meant that they would not find any clemency should the Japanese find them.

Always there were problems. Food was short; their housing was fragile and often disintegrating. Two of the miners’ wives became pregnant; one gave birth shortly before their rescue.

Time ran out for the group as one miner, a captain in the guerrilla army, came to lead his wife and the pregnant wife of a fellow officer away to a place of greater safety. As they were packing, the Japanese were spotted marching on Hopevale. They left almost everything behind and fled over treacherous terrain, finally reaching safety at a military outpost.

The missionaries were not so fortunate. They had elected to stay at Hopevale because, first of all, they did not feel physically able to manage the trek to safety, and, secondly, they astonished the miners by saying they could not leave their possessions! The Japanese commander showed no mercy. The children were either strangled or bayoneted. The adults were ordered to line up and come forward to be beheaded.

Witnesses later said the missionaries approached their executioners singing a hymn.

The story doesn’t end there. The faith and courage of these men and women reverberated through the years for us. The epilogue of the book tells of the ways in which their life and deaths truly exemplified the meaning of martyr — witness. War doesn’t have to spawn hate. Faith can overcome death, can overcome hate.

Bishops vote to relocate

Continued from page 1

Bishop Mark Sisk of New York offered the amendment, saying he is “convinced there are ways to make a property like that - it’s extremely valuable - make it an income-earning asset. At the very least there could hardly be a worse time to enter the real estate market in the sales end than this time. This resolution would not prohibit the sale, it simply wouldn’t direct it and would allow leadership to consider the alternatives, of which there are many.”

Bishop S. Johnson Howard said the structure committee, which he chaired, supported the resolution “to provoke just the sort of conversation we’re having now, with the feeling that in the church at large there is a will to leave that building in New York and to get out from under some of the debt it evidently carries and to have some of the income from the sale.

“You will notice there is no time period set on the sale. It could be a matter of years before it happens.”

Bishops also saluted both outgoing President of the House of Deputies Bonnie Anderson and President-elect the Rev. Gay Jennings with sustained applause and standing ovations. The house passed a courtesy resolution expressing “thanks and praise to God” for Anderson’s service and leadership.

Anderson thanked bishops for their hospitality, commitment and service. “Our relationships are critical,” she said. “I think it’s important for us to continue to talk with each other and solve problems. Many of you served so long and so diligently in the standing commissions and I had the pleasure of working with you and the work you did is just so great.”

Jennings said she looks forward to the next triennium. “If there’s anything I or the House of Deputies can do to be of assistance to you, we’re ready.”

In other convention business, bishops also considered several resolutions involving the relationships of bishops with dioceses. Among those was a substitute for Resolution B021, which would create a process for the office of the presiding bishop and the House of Bishops to help reconcile disagreements affecting pastoral relationships between a bishop and a diocese, including mediation, reconciliation and even removal of that bishop from office. The bishops requested discussions be continued in private.

They approved Resolution D001, which would allow a suffragan bishop to serve also as a rector of a congregation, but rejected Resolution D085 which provided that a bishop could leave a diocese before he or she reached the recommended commitment of at least five years service and be elected in another diocese if the pastoral relationship isn’t working.

It seems an unlikely way to solve a pastoral relationship, to hope that (a bishop) will be elected in an other diocese,” California Bishop Marc Andrus said. “I would also raise the question of the financial burden it would place on the diocese in which that person is currently serving. We have seen departures after one or two years in the House of Bishops and the cost it imposes on the diocese.”

Bishops also approved an amended resolution directing the Standing Commission on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations to initiate dialogue between the Episcopal Church and the Mormon Church “for the interreligious purposes of friendship, goodwill, mutual understanding” and in anticipation of the 78th General Convention to be held in Salt Lake City in 2015.

A courtesy resolution (D030) honoring the life and service of Pam Chinnis, the first woman president of the House of Deputies, was approved and applauded by bishops.

The Rev. Pat McCaughan is a correspondent for the Episcopal News Service.
July Mentor Training at the Gray Center

Sixteen persons from Mississippi, Florida, and Louisiana attended the July 12-14th EFM mentor training sessions at the Gray Center in Canton. Participants were Ann Holmes (St. James'/Baton Rouge LA), Lynn Evans (St. James'/Jackson), Ginger Butler (St. Paul's/Key West FL), Taylor Moore (St. Peter's/Oxford), Barbara Brown (St. Peter's/BTL/Brandon), Shirley Treppenedahl, (St. Peter's/BTL/Brandon), Sherry Beale (Christ Church Covington LA), Pam Rhea (St. Paul's/Columbus), Duane Hamill (St. Andrew's/Jackson), Wendy Coles (St. Paul's/Key West FL), Mary Ann Garrett (St. James'/Baton Rouge LA), Frances Lavelle (Nativity/Greenwood), Dave Duggins (St. Thomas/Diamondhead), Barbara Jones (St. Timothy's/Southaven), Robert Collins (Resurrection/Starkville), and Judy Morris (St. Peter's/LA). Trainers assigned from the Programs Center of the University of the South in Sewanee were Bud Holland and Noel Workman.

The next EFM mentor training opportunity in the Diocese of Mississippi is scheduled for January 10-12, 2013 at the Gray Center. Basic/Inservice and Formation (Common Lessons) sessions will be available.

Total training cost is $290 for a shared room and $320 for a single. The cost of the training includes two nights lodging, meals, snacks and drinks, trainer expenses, and training materials. Places can be reserved with a deposit of $100 with the balance due no later than June 5.

For more information, please contact EFM MS Diocesan Coordinator Barbara Jones at dbhjones@bellsouth.net or 901-485-2860.

Saint Elizabeth’s to Host Convocational Lay Ministry Workshop

By Don Corbin

St. Elizabeth’s will host a Licensed Lay Ministry workshop for the Sowashee Convocation on Saturday, October 6. Registration will be $25.00 at the door between 8AM and 9AM. The workshop will begin at 9AM.

The featured speaker will be Sister LaVerne Peter. Sister LaVerne is the Assistant Spiritual Leader of the Worker Sisters and Brothers of the Holy Spirit. Following the opening address the Very Reverend Susan Bear will conduct her BCP scavenger hunt. This promises to be a fun day. Lunch will be provided and the session will conclude with a short service a 2PM.

The workshop is for licensed lay worship leaders, lay eucharistic ministers, lectors, vergers and servers. The time will count for license renewal. If you are not from the Sowashee Convocation you are still welcome to attend.

For information or to let us know you will be attending please contact Don Corbin at 601 517-1658, email djcorbin@gmail.com or Brenda McClendon 601-677-7627, email brendamcclenden53@yahoo.com. St. Elizabeth’s is located on west 4th street just off US Hwy. 49 next to Sonic Drive Inn.

Don Corbin is a communicant at St. Elizabeth’s/Collins.

Los Angeles suffragan bishop leads spiritual retreat at Gray Center

By Ben Roach

The Diocesan Committee on Ministry with LGBT Persons of the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi welcomes the Rt. Rev. Mary Douglas Glasspool, bishop suffragan of the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles, as the seventh annual retreat leader. The “Weekend of Spiritual Renewal and Healing” will be held August 24-26, 2012, at the Duncan M. Gray Episcopal Conference Center in Canton, MS.

Bishop Glasspool, the first openly lesbian bishop in the Episcopal Church, was elected eighth bishop suffragan of the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles on December 5, 2009, after serving nine years in Los Angeles diocesan history. She was ordained to the episcopate on May 15, 2010. Bishop Glasspool was previously rector of St. Margaret’s Church in Annapolis (1992-2001); rector of St. Luke’s and St. Margaret’s, in Boston (1984-1992); and assistant to the rector of St. Paul’s, Philadelphia (1981-1984). Bishop Glasspool has been in a committed relationship with her partner, Dr. Rebecca Sander, since 1988.

“We are honored to have such a gifted person come to Mississippi to further the diocesan ministry with LGBT persons.” said diocesan committee on ministry with LGBT persons chairman, John Lever.

He went on to emphasize that the retreat has in the past had great meaning and been rewarding to non-LGBT attendees as well. He also indicated that all persons interested in ‘spiritual renewal’ are encouraged and welcomed to attend.

Ordaimed a priest in 1982 in the Diocese of Pennsylvania, Bishop Glasspool holds a master of divinity degree from Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and a bachelor’s degree from Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. She was a 2006 Merrill Fellow at Harvard Divinity School. Bishop Glasspool’s areas of specialization include ecumenical and inter-religious ministries, diocesan schools, and LGBT ministries. In addition, she has designed and facilitated over 20 spiritual retreats.

“Throughout her 30+ years of ordained ministry, Bishop Glasspool has been faithful and consistent to the ministry, doctrine and teaching of the Episcopal Church,” wrote Bishop Nathan Baxter of the Episcopal Diocese of Central Pennsylvania in a pastoral letter supporting her election to Bishop.

This year’s retreat will create time for worship (including a service of healing and the Holy Eucharist), discussion groups, guided meditations, spiritual presentations, social gatherings with entertainment, great food, and time to relax and enjoy the beautiful natural setting of Gray Center.

The retreat begins Friday, August 24, at 4:00 and ends after lunch on Sunday August 26. For information about the retreat, or to register, visit the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi’s website at www.diomss.org. Click on Mission and Outreach, then click on LGBT Ministries. There is a link about the retreat and registration details. Scholarships are available. To apply, please contact John Lever at jlever@live.com or 601-362-2792.

Ben Roach, a communicant of St. Andrew’s Cathedral/Jackson, writes on behalf of the diocesan committee on ministry with LGBT persons.

Firm Foundation organized in Diocese of Mississippi

By George Woodliff

The establishment of Firm Foundation, formed in March, 2012, is announced. Firm Foundation is a community of lay and clergy members of The Episcopal Church.

Their mission statement is “Jesus Christ is the firm foundation of the Church. He is the way, the truth, and the life. We seek to promote strong, orthodox, Anglican Christianity in Mississippi through conferences, intercessory prayer, networks, resources, and other available means.” Those interested in knowing more about the work of Firm Foundation are invited to send an email to trinityyzaoo@gmail.com.

Firm Foundation evolved out of the previous group known as “Stand Firm”, which was organized in 2004. Over the years, Stand Firm sponsored conferences and gatherings, including keynoters The Rev. Dr. Paul Zahl and The Rev. Canon Kendall Harmon.

Also under the auspices of Stand Firm was the website “Stand Firm in Faith.” This website will continue to be known as Stand Firm in Faith, but is now under Griffith Enterprises and is not a part of Firm Foundation. Griffith Enterprises is not a member of Firm Foundation. Those who have questions about the website and its content may contact the website administrator.

Firm Foundation will offer encouragement and support to all Episcopalians and Christians who desire a vibrant relationship with Jesus Christ under the authority of Holy Scriptures and the Apostles’ and Nicene Creeds from a traditional, orthodox view.

George Woodliff is the rector of Trinity Church/Yazoo City and one of the organizers of Firm Foundation.

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George Woodliff is the rector of Trinity Church/Yazoo City and one of the organizers of Firm Foundation.
You Are Invited:
Fall healing conference with the Rev. Dr. Jack and Anna Marie Sheffield
October 26-27, 2012

I pray you be made whole in spirit, soul and body, and that you be kept blameless until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Thessalonians 5:18

The Center for Formation and Mission is pleased to collaborate with the Order of St. Luke the Physician and in offering a very special conference on healing this fall. The Order of St. Luke the Physician is an international ecumenical organization dedicated to the Christian healing ministry, especially empowering the laity to study scripture and engage in healing prayer for body, mind and spirit. The Rev. Dr. Jack Sheffield is the North American director of the organization and will be keynote this conference along with his wife, Anna Marie Sheffield. The Rev. Mary Berry, rector of St. Matthew’s/Kosciusko, will serve as conference chaplain.

The Sheffield’s have been involved in healing ministries for thirty years, both in Episcopal congregations and in ecumenical settings. The Rev. Dr. Sheffield notes that in healing, human spirits are joined with the Holy Spirit whose power captures our toxic beliefs, cleanses our hearts, and transforms our minds, opening our bodies to benefit from the gift of healing. There is much in the world that opposes the work of God’s Holy Spirit, and “healing occurs as heaviness and oppression are lifted from God’s people and replaced with the brightness, lightness, cleanliness and joy of the Kingdom of God.”

The cost for this conference is $95 for double occupancy, and $110 for single occupancy, and includes all meals. Some scholarship assistance is available. Online registration is available at http://cffm.dioms.org, or you can print a paper registration form. For more information, please contact Jane Watts at jane@centerforministry.org or the Rev. Jennifer Deaton at jdeaton@standrewscathedrals.org.

“The need for healing ministry in the church has never been greater,” writes Sheffield. “Come join us in this exciting encounter of freedom in Christ.”

DIOCESAN CALENDAR

AUGUST

• 11: General Convention Day - St. James’, Jackson - 10:00 a.m.
• 12: Bishop Gray visits St. Mark’s, Raymond - 10:30 a.m.
  Bishop Gray visits St. James’, Port Gibson - 4:00 p.m.
• 15 - 17: Commission on Ministry - 6:00 p.m.
• 17: Standing Committee Meeting - Gray Center - 9:30 a.m.
• 25: Finance Committee Meeting - St. Andrew’s - 11:30 a.m.
• 24 - 26: Spiritual Renewal Retreat - Gray Center
• 25: Bridges Out of Poverty Seminar - St. James’, Jackson - 9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
• 26: Bishop Gray visits St. John’s, Aberdeen - 10:30 a.m.
• 26 - 28: Junior High DOY - Camp Bratton Green
• 26 - 30: Sudanese Planning Meeting Planning Meeting - Allin House - 9:00 - 10:30 a.m.
• 30: Executive Committee Meeting - St. Andrew’s - 11:30 a.m.

SEPTEMBER

• 3: Allin House closed for Labor Day
• 4: Deadline for The Mississippi Episcopalian
• 7 - 8: Adults Working with Youths - Gray Center - 7:00 p.m.
• 7 - 8: Lay Leadership Training Institute - St. James’, Jackson - 6:00 p.m.
• 9: Bishop Gray visits St. Timothy’s, Southaven - 10:30 a.m.
  Bishop Gray visits St. Thomas’, Belzoni - 4:00 p.m.
• 14: A Day Apart: Day of Silence & Prayer - Gray Center - 9:00 a.m.
• 15: “Fishing for People” Speaker Series with Phyllis Tickle - St. Peter’s By-the-Lake, Brandon - 8:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.
• 16: Bishop Gray visits St. Paul’s, Columbus - 10:30 a.m.
  Bishop Gray visits Good Shepherd, Columbus - 5:00 p.m.
• 23: Bishop Gray visits St. George’s, Clarksdale - 10:30 a.m.
• 25: Deacons’ Council - Allin House - 12:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.
• 26 - 30: Cursillo #123 - Gray Center
• 28 - 30: Senior High DOY - Camp Bradton Green
• 30: Bishop Gray visits Grace Church, Canton - 10:30 a.m.
• 30: Racial Reconciliation Commemoration - Oxford - evening

OCTOBER

• 2: Deadline for The Mississippi Episcopalian
• 7: Bishop Gray visits St. Columb’s, Ridgeland - 10:30 a.m.
• 8 - 11: Clergy Conference - Gray Center
• 12 - 14: Happening #76 Staff Training - Chapel of the Cross, Madison
• 14: Bishop Gray visits Church of the Creator, Clinton - 10:30 a.m.
• 17: Finance Committee Conference Call - 11:00 a.m.
• 18: Diocesan Trustees Meeting - Allin House - 2:00 p.m.
• 18 - 20: Silent Retreat - Gray Center
• 19 - 20: Gray Center Board Meeting - Gray Center
• 19 - 21: catechesis of the Good Shepherd, Level II Training - All Saints’, Tupelo
• 21: Bishop Gray visits Holy Innocents’, Como - 10:30 a.m.
  Bishop Gray visits St. Stephen’s, Batesville - 4:00 p.m.
• 26 - 28: Order of St. Luke the Physician Conference - Gray Center
• 26 - 28: Junior High DOY - Gray Center
• 28: Bishop Gray visits St. James’, Greenville - 10:30 a.m.
  Bishop Gray visits Church of the Redeemer, Greenville - 5:00 p.m.
• 30: Standing Committee Meeting - Allin House - 11:30 a.m.

The Center for Formation and Mission 2012 Offerings: You Are Invited

Sept. 14 A Day Apart: Day of Silence and Prayer
Take a day apart from the demands of life to settle into a rhythm of silence and prayer at Gray Center.

Co-sponsored with Journey Partners, a ministry of the Center for Ministry
The Rev. Dianne Braman, LCSW

Oct. 18-20 Silent Retreat: “Lord, Teach us to Pray,” Meditations on the Lord’s Prayer
A series of teaching, reflection, and guided meditation on spiritual disciplines, prayer, and the words and phrases of the prayer Jesus taught us to pray. Each guided meditation will invite us to consider how the words of the prayer invite us to respond.

Co-sponsored with Journey Partners, a ministry of the Center for Ministry
The Rev. Bill Livingston, Faculty Member of Journey Partners and CRED
The Rev. Jennifer Deaton, St. Andrew’s Cathedral

Oct. 26-27 Fall Healing Conference: I Pray You Be Made Whole
We are called to pray for ourselves, one another, and the world for healing in mind, body and spirit. Learn about and engage in the healing ministry of the church.

The Rev. Dr. Jack and Anna Marie Sheffield, Order of St. Luke the Physician
The Rev. Mary Berry, St. Matthew’s Episcopal Church, Kosciusko

Oct. 26-28 Fall Men’s Retreat
Co-sponsored by the Brotherhood of St. Andrew

Nov. 2 A Day Apart: Day of Silence and Prayer
Take a day apart from the demands of life to settle into a rhythm of silence and prayer at Gray Center.

Co-sponsored with Journey Partners, a ministry of the Center for Ministry
The Rt. Rev. Duncan M. Gray, III

Nov. 30-Dec. 2 Knitting and Needlework in Advent: The Lord is My Shepherd
Bring your needles and thread and rest beside still waters as we enter the season of Advent. We will share a rhythm of needlework, laughter, learning, and meditation on the words and phrases of the 25th psalm.

Mrs. Susan Nix, St. Andrew’s Cathedral
The Rev. Jennifer Deaton, St. Andrew’s Cathedral

For more information or to register for events, please go to http://cffm.dioms.org.
Parish work in Gautier

St. Pierre’s celebrates 90th anniversary

By James Henry LeBatard

St. Pierre’s Episcopal Church is celebrating both its 90th Anniversary of founding and 20th Anniversary of its new location and church building in 2012.

The “Rouse property” was purchased in 1988, a prime location on Gautier-Vancleave Road, the major artery between I-10 and Highway 90. The church itself was designed by Ralph Maisel, and was built by Stark’s Construction of Biloxi in 1992. The church building is traditional in design, but constructed of steel beams, brick and sheetrock. The first service held in the new church was Advent IV, 1992.

Fuller Hall is the original front part of the parish house, and is a renovated World War II house that was originally built on Keesler Air Force Base. It was moved to its present location in 1990, and renovated as an “outpost” of St. Pierre’s church to show that work was in progress.

Bratton Hall was also a Keesler barracks house and was moved to St. Pierre’s in 1997. Its renovation provided space for a kitchen, bathroom, and a great hall. It was connected to Fuller Hall with an enclosed breezeway containing cabinets with a countertop frequently used for covered-dish luncheons. Bishop Marble blessed Bratton Hall (named to honor Bishop Theodore Bratton, who founded St. Pierre’s in 1921) on St. Peter’s Day, 1998.

Our beautiful outdoor chapel was built in 2002 as a memorial to Brett McLaughlin by his father and brother, and as an Eagle Scout project. The furnishings of the chapel were built on site, and the place is often used for meditation as well as for occasional worship.

A memorial garden, for a columbarium and interment of ashes, was added next to the chapel in 2007. Parishioners did the actual layout and brickwork creating a beautiful final resting place for our loved ones.

The Episcopal Church Women have undertaken a major landscaping project for our 7.5 acres in 2012. Brush has been cleared by a parishioner and her bulldozer, and a landscape architect is working with us on a long-term plan to develop and beautify our grounds. Plans call for a cutting garden for altar flowers, a vegetable garden, and fruit trees (such as mayhaws) for making jelly as an ECW project. The Gautier Garden Club regularly meets at St. Pierre’s, and their efforts have already helped beautify our grounds.

The Rev. Hunter Isaacs, vicar at St. Pierre’s, said, “It is delightful to work with people who like each other. We have plans to develop our grounds as well as grow our congregation.”


20th annual conference held at St. Pierre’s


The Rev. Hunter Isaacs celebrated the Holy Eucharist for the conference at 9 a.m. with music provided by Marjorie Williams, church organist. The Rev. Johnny Bond preached for the service using the propers for the Nativity of John the Baptist.

James Anderson, a member of St. Mary’s Church/Bolton and director of the Chimneyville Players, offered a workshop on reading scriptures entitled “Bringing the Living Word to Life.” The emphasis of the presentation was on studying and understanding the text of scripture before reading it in public.

Deacon James LeBatard did a presentation on Richard Hooker, a pre-eminent theologian in Elizabethan times who helped formulate our Anglican ethos of authority based upon scripture, tradition, and reason.

As always, participants were treated to a delicious seafood gumbo luncheon, prepared by St. Pierre’s ECW, in Bratton Hall after the conclusion of the workshop.

“Continuing education has always been important to me,” said Deacon LeBatard. “I am happy that we at St. Pierre’s can offer this workshop to the Coast Convocation and beyond.”

Plans for a conference for the summer of 2013 are already under way.