Camp Day 2012—
Food, Fellowship, and FUN!
The Alabama Episcopalian
November/December 2012
On the Cover

HELPING VICTIMS RECOVER FROM HURRICANE/SUPERSTORM SANDY

By Diocesan Staff with contributing information from the Rev. Bill King, Rector of Trinity in Clanton

Our diocese is reaching out to help victims of Hurricane/Superstorm Sandy. The huge, complex wind/rain/snowstorm caused extensive damage and loss of life as it swept through the Caribbean, headed north along the east coast of the United States, and made landfall in New Jersey on October 29.

Our diocese has responded by sending emergency disaster relief funds to the hard-hit Dioceses of New Jersey and New York and offering the use of our disaster response equipment, including the mobile shower trailer built to support recovery efforts in Alabama after the April 2011 tornado outbreak. The Rev. Deacon Clyde Pearce and the Rev. Bill King recently upgraded the shower trailer by adding a generator and a hot water system.

The Rev. Deacon David Whetstone, our diocesan disaster response coordinator, is in contact with the leaders of the recovery efforts. In early November, David delivered the shower trailer to Tom's River in New Jersey (about 50 miles east of Philadelphia). The Christian and Missionary Alliance, which is partnering with the Episcopal Diocese of New Jersey, will use the shower facility to enhance the capabilities of a disaster relief volunteer center serving the Tom's River area, which sustained significant damage during the October storm.

Our diocese also is continuing to provide financial support. Individuals and parishes can make donations directly to Episcopal Relief and Development's Hurricane Sandy Response Fund or to our diocesan Disaster Relief Fund. Checks for Episcopal Relief and Development should be made payable to the organization and mailed to Episcopal Relief and Development, P.O. Box 7058, Merrifield, VA 22116-7058; contributions to our diocesan Disaster Relief Fund should be made payable to the Diocese of Alabama with Hurricane Relief in the memo line, and mailed to Carpenter House, 521 20th Street North, Birmingham, AL 35203.
In Defense of the Middle

There was a time when the Church shaped and formed the culture—you can read about it in history books. Now I'm afraid that the culture is returning the favor, with interest. I am concerned that we as a culture are losing our willingness to compromise, to consider another's idea, or live with differences.

Hello, friends:

Our first-ever Camp Day was a huge success, and I want to thank Tom Atkins who worked his logistical magic to coordinate a lot of people doing a lot of things, and I want to thank all those people who did a variety of jobs with cheerful attitudes, even though the weather wasn't cooperative. We'll do it again next year, and I'm hoping it will become an annual event that brings our diocesan family together—just for fun.

When I was in high school, our EYC advisor taught us a song that I'd like to pass on to you 40 years later. You may already know it, but even if you don't, you can sing along to the tune of “God Bless America.”

I am an Anglican, American P.E.
Traditional and liberal—protestant and catholic and free.
Not a Presby, or a Methodist, or a Baptist, white with foam!
I am an Anglican, two steps from Rome—
I am an Anglican, Via Media, boom, boom, boom.

I think our EYC advisor was hoping to trick us into an educational opportunity, to lure us into a discussion about the nature and essence of the Anglican Church and the English Reformation, which resulted in the Elizabethan Settlement and the idea of “Via Media,” the Middle Way between Protestantism and Catholicism. Instead, as I recall, we were much caught up in the “Baptist, white with foam!” part of the musical crescendo, a thinly veiled shot at our Southern Baptist friends and neighbors. I'm afraid I never really understood the whole song until I took Church history in seminary.

I've written and deleted several boring explanations about what it all means, but it doesn't leave me much room to talk about what I want to talk about. It would be graceful on your part to accept my suggestion that your local priest will be delighted to elucidate on any or all of this, and let me try to get to my point.

“Via Media” comes from the Latin words for “the middle road” or “the middle way.” It's actually an ancient idea, extolling the virtue of moderation in all things. Aristotle used the phrase in the fourth century B.C., urging his students to stay away from extremes in their actions or thoughts. Much later the phrase came to be applied to the Anglican Church as “the middle road” between Reformation Protestantism and Roman Catholicism. It is the essence of the Elizabethan Settlement that formed the Church of England, describing our efforts to keep the best of both Protestantism and Catholicism while steering clear of the extremes of either. We are, as the song goes, “protestant and catholic and free.”

The truth is very often in the middle. Standing in the middle is not mealymouthed fence-sitting or weak and wimpy political maneuvering—it is who we are. The extremes are more easily understood, more marketable, and fit better into bumper stickers and six-second sound bites. The truth is more complicated, not so clear, and more difficult to communicate—but it's true, and that should be worth something.

The Episcopal Church will not be all things to all people, but we can and should offer reasonable, moderate, intelligent, compassionate Christianity.

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So in the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Alabama, we have a family of parishes with individuals and congregations who are high church and low church, liberal and conservative, progressive and traditional. Some of us are informal, others more formal; some are wealthy, some are not; we value ministries for young and old alike. The Episcopal Church will not be all things to all people, but we can and should offer reasonable, moderate, intelligent, compassionate Christianity.

So let's all sing along. Go back up a few paragraphs and sing the song. Sing it to yourself, or sing it out loud. (Try not to get hung up on the word “liberal” in the third line; it's not a song about politics—way back when the song was written I think it had to do with the freedom to think and question. If it helps, you can substitute the word “liturgical.”) It's a song about the Via Media, the Middle Way. It's who we are, and it's the great gift we have to give to the world. Boom, boom!

The Rt. Rev. John McKee Sloan
The 11th Bishop of Alabama
Let’s Pursue Stability
As a Discipline

Earlier in the year at a religious forum, I made reference to Archbishop Desmond Tutu’s use of the term “Ubuntu.” He calls Ubuntu the essence of “being human.” For him, Ubuntu is a deeply spiritual thing involving hospitality, an open and welcoming attitude that is willing to share, to be generous and caring. We learn to be humans from other human beings. We need each other in order to be human. We are made for togetherness; we are made for family, for fellowship, to exist in a tender network of interdependence.

Tutu’s inspired analysis of how much as humans we need each other bears relevance to our diocese, community, and nation in general. As I review and reflect on the many challenging issues that have engaged our attention in recent months, I am firmly convinced that it will do us well in the ensuing time to promote more intentionally the discipline of “stability.”

Stability goes beyond any feeling of restfulness or emotional stability to imply a state of steadiness and commitment to the firmness of purpose. The common attributes associated with stability are tolerance, reliability, and durability in character formation. In essence, it is a spiritual discipline that harnesses the wondering heart to pay attention to every situation. In the presence of frustration and intolerance, it invites us to claim the present even if it brings discomfort and pain.

For clarification, stability does not advocate surrender or cowardice toward the challenges of life, but to meet them head on. By this attitude of tolerance and perseverance we can engage each other more patiently, respectful of what each offers to the whole process of community, society, and nation building.

so generously embodies and willingly shares.

Beloved, we are approaching the joyful and holy season of Christmas, which comes with the spirit of love; the God of all humanity becomes incarnate in human flesh so that humanity knows God is closer to us that we can ever imagine. This message comes as an important reminder of the necessity for Christians to live into Ubuntu.

May our Advent preparation lead us to experience “Emmanuel” and Christmas as we spread the joy and love of he who comes as “God among us.”

Again, a blessed, joyful and happy Christmas to everyone. Every blessing and affection for our fruitful ministry together.

The Rt. Rev. Santosh K. Marray
Assistant Bishop of Alabama

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The Rt. Rev. Santosh K. Marray began serving as our assistant bishop at the end of September. He holds a Diploma in Pastoral Studies from Codrington Theological College in Barbados; a Bachelor of Arts (magna cum laude) degree in Theology from the University of the West Indies in Barbados; a Master of Law degree in Canon Law from the University of Wales in Cardiff, United Kingdom; a Master of Sacred Theology degree in Christian Spirituality from General Theological Seminary in New York; a Doctor of Ministry degree in Congregational Development from Colgate Rochester/Bexley Hall Episcopal Seminary in Rochester, New York; and a Doctor of Divinity (DD, honoris causa) from Bexley Hall Episcopal Seminary in Rochester, New York (the latter was awarded to him for his work in church growth and renewal in many dioceses and his contribution to the Anglican Communion).

Bishop Marray received the Bishop Coleridge prize for the best graduating student in Theology from Codrington Theological College/University of the West Indies and a full scholarship as an international student from Colgate Rochester/Bexley Hall Episcopal Seminary.

From Bishop Marray

Bishop Marray Visits the Archbishop of Canterbury

The Rt. Rev. Santosh K. Marray, our assistant bishop, recently met with the Most Rev. Rowan D. Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury, at Lambeth Palace in London. Bishop Marray and nine other church leaders from across the Anglican Communion serve as the archbishop’s Pastoral Visitors.

The archbishop appointed Bishop Marray and the other Pastoral Visitors in the fall of 2008 to function as conciliators and advisors in situations of particular tension across the Anglican Communion. The Pastoral Visitors meet with the archbishop each year in October. The archbishop can call on them to act as his emissaries when the need arises, and different parties can invite them to assist in the resolution of particular cases.

Bishop Marray has visited several parts of the Anglican Communion in his role as a Pastoral Visitor. He also helped draft the Anglican Communion Covenant, a four-year process that involved travels to many parts of the Anglican Communion.

From Bishop Marray
The Rt. Rev. Justin Welby Appointed for Election As 105th Archbishop of Canterbury

By Diocesan Staff

Queen Elizabeth has nominated the Rt. Rev. Justin Welby, MA, DPhil, DD, FBA, Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, Primate of All England and Metropolitan, when he retires at the end of December.

Bishop Welby, age 56, was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge. After a career in the oil industry in Paris and London, he trained for the ministry at Cranmer Hall and St John’s College Durham. He served his title at Chilvers Coton with Astley, Coventry diocese from 1992 to 1995. From 1995 to 2002 he served as Rector of Southam and also as Vicar of Ufton, Coventry diocese from 1998 to 2002. From 2002 to 2007 he served as Canon Residentiary at Coventry Cathedral and also as Co-Director for International Ministry from 2002 to 2005. From 2005 to 2007 he served as Sub-Dean at Coventry Cathedral and also Canon for Reconciliation Ministry, and in 2007 he also served as Priest-in-Charge at Coventry Holy Trinity. From 2007 to 2011 he served as Dean of Liverpool, and since 2011 he has served as the Bishop of Durham.

“I am delighted to hear of Bishop Welby’s appointment as Archbishop of Canterbury,” says the Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori, Presiding Bishop and Primate of the Episcopal Church. “He brings knowledge of the immense challenges of the world in which the Anglican Communion seeks to partner in the service of God’s mission to heal and reconcile. He has experience of churches in several parts of the Communion, which should serve him well. The bishops of the Episcopal Church have met him and shared fruitful conversation, worship, and learning with him during a House of Bishops meeting earlier this year. We also welcomed him to our General Convention in 2009,” she notes. “I give thanks for his appointment and his willingness to accept this work, in which I know his gifts of reconciliation and discernment will be abundantly tested. May God bless his ministry, shelter his family, and bring comfort in the midst of difficult and lonely discernment and decisions.”


The Rev. Deacon Schiesz is from Trinity Church in Florence and will serve that parish. The Rev. Deacon O’Flinn is from All Saints’ in Birmingham will serve at St. Martin’s in the Pines in Birmingham. Our diocese has a total of 33 permanent, or vocational, deacons. They serve without compensation and provide a leadership role in a variety of ministry areas, both within and outside their parish, 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. They also play a role in both the liturgy of the Word and the liturgy of the table during Eucharist.
Camp Day 2012—Food, Fellowship, and FUN!!!

By Diocesan Staff; Photos by Gail Perna and the Rev. Deacon Dave Drachlis

More than 200 people from across our diocese gathered at Camp McDowell on October 27 for our inaugural Camp Day celebration. Smoked chicken and boiled shrimp with all the fixin’s along with an endless flow of soft drinks, coffee, and hot chocolate satisfied even the most hearty appetites. Gentle folk cozied up around the fire-place to sit and visit, while hardy souls tackled the McDowell ropes course. Homemade kites soared on the crisp fall breeze. Some groups hiked the trails amid the breathtaking colors of autumn or followed the freshly graded road, posted with informational signs, leading to the site of the future Bethany Village. Children enjoyed a variety of games including the very popular Ye Olde’ Toilet Paper Toss, and live foot-tapping music filled the Chapel of St. Francis.

A celebration of Holy Eucharist in the Chapel brought wonderful Camp Day 2012 to a close—but plans are already being made for an expanded, even more wonderful Camp Day 2013!
Wonderful, Wonderful Camp McDowell

Camp McDowell Offers Farm School Pilot Program

By Jon Nee, Director

At 6:45 a.m. on October 5, I pulled up to Stough Lodge at Camp McDowell to a familiar sound—kids’ laughter coming from the nearby playground. The 30 students and 10 adults from Paine Intermediate School in Trussville were dressed, ready, and excited about the chores we were about to do. We loaded up into three trucks and headed to the farm, and within an hour we had released about 200 chickens from the safety of their nighttime coop, fed and watered them, and milked four goats. With our chores completed, it was time for breakfast—so back to Stough Lodge we headed.

Paine Intermediate was one of three schools that participated in the first McDowell Farm School pilot programs, which provide a three-day, two-night farm experience for students from across Alabama.

The 4th, 5th, and 6th graders from Horizon Elementary in Madison and Hilltop Montessori in Birmingham also spent three days with us learning, laughing, and working on the farm.

Through a grant from the Alabama Sustainable Agriculture Network, McDowell Farm School is able to run pilot programs at a reduced price to jump-start our innovative educational classes. While the students were taking part in the farm work, they learned farming vocabulary, concepts, and systems. Working together in small groups, they sifted, mixed, and created potting soil; seeded flats of spinach plants to be transplanted later in the season; transplanted Tatsoi (an Asian green, genus Brassica), cabbage, and broccoli plants; and direct-sowed beet and pea seeds.

The highlight of each three-day program is harvesting vegetables and eggs produced on the farm and preparing a homegrown meal. Each group spent two hours gathering sweet potatoes, basil, eggplants, tomatoes, green beans, and eggs. Then they washed and dried the veggies and used them to make pesto, sweet potato fries, salsa, dilly beans, fruit leather, and pizza. After two hours of cooking, the entire group enjoyed their hard work in a delicious evening feast.

Everyone had a blast working at McDowell Farm, and we are still reaping the rewards of the children’s hard work. We have taken the Tatsoi to market, and we have transplanted the spinach from the flats into the fields. As fall turns to winter, we are making preparations for groups from more schools to join us next spring.

For more information please contact me at farmed@campmcdowell.com or call the camp office at 205/387-1806.
A Chance To Learn From Scratch!

By Sarah Mills Nee, Director of the Alabama Folk School

The Alabama Folk School at Camp McDowell is offering its first *From Scratch* Weekend on February 15-17. This workshop, which is for beginners only, will provide an inviting and supportive environment where you can learn a new craft or how to play an instrument from scratch.

Musicians and artists of all abilities will enjoy the Bluegrass & Gee’s Bend Workshop on April 15-18. Mary Ann and China Pettway will be on hand to share their beautiful and unique way of quilting with you.

The Alabama Folk School is currently hosting a series of exhibitions funded by the Walker Area Community Foundation. The exhibitions, which feature Walker County artists, will be on display in St. Francis Chapel through February 28. Next time you visit camp, please take a few moments to check out these very talented local artists and their wonderful artwork!

For up-to-date information on all upcoming Alabama Folk School workshops and events, please visit www.alfolkschool.com, e-mail folkschool@campmcdowell.com, or call the camp office, 205/387-1806.

Planting Bethany Orchard—Fun for Children of All Ages!

By Diocesan Staff; Photos by Trent Ponder and Sarah Mills Nee

In August, Camp McDowell finished in winning position in the Communities Take Root Program contest, a collaborative program between Edy’s Fruit Bars and the Fruit Tree Planting Foundation, which gives back to communities by providing trees for orchards. Camp McDowell competed with more than 100 organizations to become one of the 17 locations chosen to receive an orchard, and during the competition people had the opportunity to vote online once a day for their favorite
Wonderful, Wonderful Camp McDowell

Fall Fling—A Special Success!

By Susanna Whitsett, Camp McDowell Staff Member

Fall Fling at Camp McDowell, on November 2-4, was a wonderful, wonderful weekend! God sent us the most glorious weather imaginable, and 46 lovable and energetic 5th and 6th-grade campers from around our diocese came to worship and play in God’s backyard.

Jackie Walker, the Club 56 leader at St. Stephen’s in Birmingham, and Trent Ponder, of All Saints’ in Birmingham, led the campers and staff in a program entitled “Take Off Your Mask.” Through large and small-group discussions, skits, and activities, the participants explored the value of resisting pressures to act or be different from one’s true self, lifting up as a guiding scripture Genesis 1:27: “So God created man in his (own) image, in the image of God created he him—male and female created he them.”

The campers also enjoyed hiking, canoeing, games, a presentation by Senior Naturalist “Big” Dave Hollaway, a cookout, hayride, singing, and worshiping together. The Rev. Deacon Brandt Montgomery, of Canterbury Chapel in Tuscaloosa, served as the chaplain for the event.

Thanks to everyone who attended and made the weekend such a special success. See you in 2013!

Make Plans Now To Come to Summer Camp!

We are so blessed in our diocese to have a full-to-waiting-list summer camp—but this can bring disappointment to those who try to register after a session is full. To manage the complexities of registration for close to 1,500 campers, please note the following policies and procedures:

* Registration for 2013 Summer Camp will open online January 7 at noon.
* We encourage early registration for everyone because many of our sessions fill to capacity early.
* We encourage registering online to save paper and time.
* For those without access to the Internet, we offer limited “phone-in registration” on January 7, 8, and 9 from noon to 2 p.m. Please call 205/387-1806 during those times.
* For additional important information, please visit “Information & Policies” for Summer Camp & Events at www.campmcdowell.com.

May 24-26 Primary 1 (1st, 2nd, and 3rd graders with an adult)
May 29-June 1 Elementary 1 (3rd and 4th graders)

June 4-13 Senior Camp (10th through 12th graders)
June 17-22 Junior High 1 (6th and 7th graders)
June 25-29 Elementary 2 (4th and 5th graders)
July 1-6 Special Session (adults with special needs)
July 8-15 Sophomore Camp (8th and 9th graders)
July 18-23 Middler Camp (5th and 6th graders)
July 26-August 1 Junior High 2 (7th and 8th graders)
August 2-4 Primary 2 (1st, 2nd, and 3rd graders with an adult)

For information about Special Session for campers, please contact Gail Perna at pernagh@gmail.com or 256/426-3067; for staff members, please contact Jenn Manning at jenniferkmanning@gmail.com or 205/967-8786. For more information about all other Summer Camp sessions, please contact Susanna Whitsett, Summer Camp Coordinator, at susanna@campmcdowell.com or 205/387-1806.

Winter Weekend retreat for 7th and 8th graders
January 18-21

Mark your calendars now for the next Winter Weekend! All 7th and 8th graders are welcome, and bring a friend to this special three-night retreat over the Martin Luther King Jr. weekend.

Come experience Camp McDowell in the wintertime with prayers by the campfire, hot chocolate, games, group discussions, and, of course, the “Winter Wonderland” dance in Eppes Hall!

Registration is first-come, first-served. Cost is $145 per person; for scholarship information, please contact Susanna Whitsett at susanna@campmcdowell.com.

Father/Son Weekend
March 1-3

This special weekend is for all combinations of fathers, stepfathers, sons, grandparents, godparents, and special friends who are like fathers.

Mother/Daughter Weekend
April 5-7

This special weekend if for all combinations of mothers, stepmothers, daughters, grandmothers, godmothers, and special friends who are like mothers.

Upcoming Events at Camp McDowell
Awakenings is a new junior-high spirituality retreat that offers a path toward an awakening of their awareness of God's power and presence working in their lives and relationships, and to help them discover ways in which they can use their talents to love and serve the world. It is designed to allow junior-high youth to explore their personal, spiritual, and social identity and purpose through reflections, small-group discussions, activities, worship, and music. One thing that makes this experience really special is that senior-high youth are the primary leaders through peer ministry.

Our first-ever Awakenings retreat was held recently at Wonderful, Wonderful Camp McDowell, and here are some of the ways in which the campers felt close to Christ during the retreat.

- Walking the labyrinth
- Stargazing and the other service where we put our dissolving papers in the water for our sins
- During small groups, the silent prayer hike, singing, and chapel
- When the high-school kids were teaching the lessons and they told personal stories
- When people sang in the talent show and other people's encouragement
- Small groups helped me to see who I am and that being me is awesome
- On the last night when we were singing in chapel
- Talking about God with Andy (a high-school staffer)
- Prayer stations and every time one of the youth staff told their stories
- The teen-counselors
- The program and the talent show
- Reconciliation and seeing all of us here for a really good reason
- Talking about who I really am and how I am God's
- When my friend invited someone else who was sitting all alone to come and sit with us
- I saw the face of Christ in everyone this weekend
- While being annoyed with someone and realizing Christ is even in them
- People were kind to me and encouraged me to face my fears and sing in the talent show
- Everybody was friendly
- Singing, dancing, being in small groups, friends, and being at Camp McDowell
- Surely the presence of the Lord was at Camp McDowell for the first-ever Awakenings weekend. There were myriad precious moments where I felt God's presence or saw the face of Christ during that phenomenal weekend. I felt it most in the smallest thing. The most potent feeling I had was during our free time on Saturday. A group of about 10 junior-high youth and a few staff members, myself and Mama Oakes included, played multiple rounds of Just Dance 2. It was silly, crazy, and downright fun. Everyone was smiling and laughing and truly enjoying themselves. To me, God was present there, in the smiling faces, in the bellies aching from laughter, in the joy that radiated from everyone in the room. I truly felt that God's presence filled the whole room.
- The game ended, and we scrambled to find tables for lunch, but that spirit and that joy remained in Eppes Hall and throughout camp for the remainder of the weekend.”

—Molly Bogan, the Shepherd for the event

“This past weekend I went to Camp McDowell to staff the first-ever Awakenings. When I signed up, I was fighting some internal demons that were keeping me away from God and my worshiping him. I was slowly pushing God, Himself, out of my life as my savior. Going to Awakenings I was thinking about these battles in my mind and was scared and nervous to even go because I felt like I was not ready to come face-to-face with the problems. But I went—I went to Awakenings to awaken my soul and find who I am to God. Over the weekend each day tore down another brick in the wall that I had put up to God. I opened up again to my savior and to others. I made friends with the junior-high kids and my fellow staffers. When I signed up for this session, I never thought it was going to change my life and others around me. I made friends and regained a friendship with the most holy man, God. Awakenings helped me through my own problems by allowing me to spend a weekend with others and speaking my problems with myself and God. I realized there that I am God's. I am a child of God, and even though I sinned, I still have the ability to be saved. Awakenings is a fantastic program for junior-high schoolers (7-8 grade), high-school staff, and adult staff. It opened my mind, heart, and soul to a new Awakening.

—Olivia Stevens, a high-school staff member
A Reflection on Youth Ministry
By Ward Taliaferro, Youth Department Birmingham Representative

Something you can expect in any Youth Department event would be energy. It's inescapable. The motion is almost nonstop, and there's always something there that keeps you entertained and keeps your mind away from what's going on everywhere else. The next thing is community. The people, from youth to staff, and the events, from energized to spiritual, are the most wonderful things I've ever been a part of, and the community formed is unbreakable.

I remember that after going to my first Christmas Conference last year, I instantly fell in love with what this group of 11 young people in the Youth Department were doing—they were creating an environment consisting of all the close friends in the Diocese of Alabama doing crazy dances, programs, talent shows, coloring contests, all sorts of things. Honestly, they gave me the best experiences of my life, and I wouldn't be where I am today if it weren't for the influence of the youth.

From Christmas Conference I went to Rites of Spring, and in between business meetings, cabin time, capturing Horcruxes, and voluntarily getting drenched head-to-foot in chocolate syrup and flour, I had the time of my life. And now here I am, planning the next events capturing all the energy and community I've come to love.

My spiritual path has been drawn out by the Youth Department, and I'm honored to be a part of this incredible energy and community.

Upcoming Youth Department Events

**Diocesan Convention Lock-in:** This is a new event that we hope brings a stronger youth presence to our diocesan convention. The Youth Department will be hosting a lock-in for 9th-12th graders at the Ascension in Montgomery on February 22-23. More information about this event will be coming soon!

**Rites of Spring:** Rites of Spring will be held March 15-17 at Camp McDowell. This event includes EYC Convention. This fun-filled weekend is where you will get the chance to run for election to serve on the Youth Department! Registration will begin in January on www.dioala.org.
Sawyerville is a rural crossroads town in Hale County, Alabama, and the Sawyerville Work Project, now called the Sawyerville Day Camp or just The Camp as many locals call it, is a day camp sponsored by our diocesan Youth Department and Sawyerville Commission.

The Sawyerville Day Camp ministry began in 1993 and is supported by many people across our diocese. People serve as prayer partners and staff members, organize book drives, gather paper products, provide meals, and make financial gifts. Our diocese has committed substantial funds to this ministry. The generous people of the Black Belt have opened up their homes and churches for staff housing and meals. Volunteers from within and outside of the Episcopal circle lend their time and talents. High school, college, and adult staff come from all over our state and the local community to serve as counselors. The Hale County School Board permits us to use school facilities and buses. This project is woven together by hundreds of supporters all working together to form the Sawyerville experience.

Hale County is one of the most rural and impoverished areas in the Black Belt region of our state. This geographic region about 100 miles southwest of the Birmingham is at an economic disadvantage with very limited resources. The high-school graduation rate is only 34 percent with 74 percent of households earning less than $30,000 per year. Almost 200 families live without plumbing, and healthcare is nonexistent for most.

The camp developed when the Episcopal Black Belt Ministries and the Youth Department of our diocese connected. The Episcopal Black Belt Ministries was a worshipping community of a cluster of 10 parishes in the Black Belt and their clergy and lay leaders. The Youth Department is a group of youth and adults who plan and facilitate diocesan-wide events for senior-high youth and EYC advisors.

In the early 1990s, the Black Belt Ministries Coordinator was working with lay leaders and other clergy to keep alive a kind of summer event especially for children in Sawyerville. At that time, the Youth Department was searching for a summertime outreach project for senior-high youth. Previously, our diocesan companion relationship with the Diocese of South Dakota allowed a delegation of youth from our diocese to help facilitate a vacation Bible school for Lakota natives at Camp Thunderhead in Sioux Falls. The impact of that experience gave the Youth Department a strong desire to participate in and provide an outreach experience of similar depth in our own Diocese. The Youth Department issued an advertisement for a local outreach project, the Black Belt Ministries responded, and the idea of the first youth-led Sawyerville Work Project was born.

The Head Start Center in the small town of Sawyerville, hence the name the Sawyerville Day Camp, originally hosted the summer day camp. Within a few years though, the Head Start Center could no longer accommodate the increasing numbers of campers and staff volunteers. The elementary school in nearby Greensboro welcomed our project, and we have enjoyed this partnership ever since. The camp currently serves children and families from the towns of Sawyerville, Akron, Greensboro, Newbern, Eutaw, and Moundville. Most of the campers come from Sawyerville, Akron, and Greensboro, with a growing number from the Sunshine community in Newbern. It takes place in the summer for just a few weeks, and for that time, the children who attend the camp are not framed in the light of the region’s poverty—they are simply kids having fun in a place created solely for them.

For more information please contact Camp Director Leslie Manning at lmanning@dioala.org or 205/470-9482 or visit www.sawyervilleworkproject.org.
Nothing and Everything—
A Camp Director’s Reflection

By Leslie Manning

One of the many reasons I don’t think I could be a priest is that I’m afraid I would break down and sob every time I was behind the altar. Getting “choked up” occasionally is one thing—finding yourself moved by the words and the Eucharistic feast is fine and perhaps a regular occurrence among our clergy, but uncontrollably weeping is a whole other ball game.

I found myself in this position late this summer at one of our closing staff worship services at the Sawyerville Day Camp. It was nearing the end of the last session, and the Rev. Russell Kendrick boldly asked me to help him distribute the host, the bread, at communion. What a generous and loving move for him to invite this tired camp director into such a strong position. Since we were invited to worship at a new church this summer, St. Stephen’s in Eutaw (which was such a gift!) and would not be in attendance at St. Paul’s, Greensboro, on a Sunday, we decided to ask if we could have our weekly staff Eucharists there instead. The wonderful people of St. Paul’s immediately agreed to this arrangement and even joined us at this service as we celebrated the work that had been given to us and gave thanksgiving for the gift of it.

I stood before the staff in that gorgeous and historic place—a place so thick with timeless prayer that the air is almost full, full with the breath and life of the communion of saints. One in particular felt very close. I could sense and feel Father Richard (“Dick”) Cobbs, in all his glory: worshiping, laughing, and singing right there with us. Father Cobbs passed away around this time last year, and the Church and our world lost a faithful disciple of Christ. I lost a mentor and a friend. It is no secret to my family or those closest to me that I often struggle about whom to call now when I need help and guidance, particularly when it comes to the Sawyerville ministry. He left such an incredible mark on me and the camp’s ministry that his absence is felt but also honored. To leave a hole so deep means to have imprinted your mark so solidly that it won’t ever be missed or forgotten, no matter the time or space. I almost wasn’t sure if I was worthy enough to be standing in his place at this service. My prayer is that I love as deeply, challenge the status quo as passionately, and live with as much boldness and humility as he lived his life.

It was with this secret prayer that I stood before the staff of Session II with the Body of Christ, feeling very grateful to be a part of that living body. As I watched them come up, weary by long a day of field trips and servanthood, I was overcome with thanksgiving. In gratitude, I shared the bread of our Lord Jesus Christ with my brothers and sisters as 130-plus staff came up, some still covered in face paint and McWane Science Center stickers, symbols of the love that had been shared and received that day. I watched their tired faces—black, white, male, female, Episcopalian, Church of God, Pentecostal, apprehensive, and hopeful—come forward to accept what the Lord was telling them, that He died and rose for them, for the children of Hale County, for the people of Jefferson County, for each and everyone of us.

I was so blessed to be a vehicle for that good news that I wept. I wept because to me the Sawyerville Day Camp ministry looks a lot like that communion wafer. At first glance it doesn’t look like much. It doesn’t look like anything out of the ordinary. But it is at once both nothing and everything.

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Brother Kevin Hackett, of the Society of Saint John the Evangelist, said it best. “In the long wake of Jesus’ resurrection, early Christians gathered for meals in which bread and wine were taken and blessed and broken and shared, while stories of grace and hope and healing were told, to remind themselves that their lives, with all the joys and suffering and sorry, were full of meaning because Jesus Christ was once again alive and living still, among them.”
Reflections from 2012 Sawyerville Day Camp Participants

CAMPER REFLECTIONS

*I had fun at camp today in the pool. I can’t believe that I was swimming and went underwater!

*What I love about camp is that you have a lot of fun. I like drawing, and most of all I like to get in the swimming pool. When I get in, I feel like I’m floating. It is fun to go to camp. I love my counselors.

STAFF REFLECTIONS

What was the most meaningful part of your week?

*Prayer Partners and bonding with 100+ people you could share anything with (Sawyerville magic at work). Not to mention the ice-breakers!

*Everything. Sawyerville is my favorite week out of the whole year. It’s so physically and emotionally demanding, but the reward is so much greater. Be able to attend these past three years has been such a blessing.

*Just being around the children, influencing them, and having them influence me. I love kids so much, and this was just an overall great experience.

*Getting a phone call and a letter from two of the campers right after camp.

*It was probably that I got to see old campers from last year again! It was very special to me and to the campers. The campers were shocked to see me again. It made me feel good that they realized Sawyerville Day Camp wasn’t just a one-time deal for me.

*The greatest moment for me was dancing and singing in the rain Wednesday as the buses pulled out.

*Listening to Vonetta Flowers and getting to know new people while getting satisfaction from knowing I was part of an organization helping in the community.

Thank You!

THANK YOU to all the parishes and donors who made the 2012 Sawyerville “Olympics” Day Camp possible. We could not have done it without you! You all are amazing!!

With your tireless, faithful support we had:

* 495 total campers
* 119 Session I staff members
* 130 Session II staff members
* Support from more than 75 percent of the parishes in our diocese
* Received $825 in donations from camper families
Celebrating 20 Years of Sawyerville Day Camp Ministry

The 2nd Annual Sawyerville 5K was yet another success! Many thanks to St. Paul’s in Greensboro for hosting and sponsoring it!

Race coordinator Meg Rankin did a fantastic job of arranging the event and making it official through the help of Track Shack in Birmingham. Almost 100 runners registered and came out for the run/walk, and others came just to cheer and volunteer. We had participants come from as far away as St. John’s in Decatur!

The gorgeous day in the heart of the Black Belt kicked off with a welcome and prayer by the Rev. Kervin Jones. Mayor Johnny Washington signaled the beginning of the race, and lots of excited runners and walkers (many pushing strollers!) made their way down Main Street. The course went through Greensboro, led by a team of bamboo bikes from HERO’s Bike Lab to help people stay on course and lead in a creative way. The Greensboro police helped mark off the course and made sure the runners/walkers were able to cross busy roads safely.

The race ended back at St. Paul’s with free Blue Bell ice cream, water, awards, and door prizes! Robert Broach, from St. Paul’s, handcrafted beautiful wooden crosses as the “medals.” Georgia Rhodes, also a parishioner, served as the mistress of ceremonies and kept everyone laughing as she distributed the awards as well as all the wonderful donated

*The most meaningful part of my week was being able to share a meal with the campers’ families and learn more about them through conversation.

*Staff Eucharist in Greensboro and Sunday morning service in Demopolis

*What do you learn through your experience (about God, yourself, Hale County, service, etc.?)?
  *I learned so much more about the background of Hale County. I learned more of the miracles and lessons God teaches us every single day and of His unending love. I also learned my sleeping limits, and that I probably shouldn’t have stayed up till 12 every night.
  *I learned how awesome and caring people are when they come together in God’s name and in Christian fellowship.

*Experiencing Christ and His love for me through the face of 9-year-olds.

*Once you get past obvious differences like financial situations, home lives, and other circumstantial differences, all people really are created equal.

*I guess I realized that most kids don’t need to be preached to or lectured, they just need to be believed in.

*That I want to be a teacher.

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“Welcoming the Stranger”
The 123rd Annual ECW Fall Conference

By Linda Kennedy; Photos by Cathy Struntz

The 123rd Annual ECW Fall Conference, held October 4 and 5 at Christ Church in Albertville, reflected the 2012 theme “Welcoming the Stranger” from the moment the recently rebuilt church building opened its doors to more than 120 women from across our diocese to the closing Eucharist. The women from diverse churches and backgrounds reflected on not only the difficulty of being a stranger but also the difficulty of truly welcoming the stranger in our midst.

Bishop Sloan, our guest speaker, brought the theme home to us in two moving presentations about the stranger in our midst. “You have been loved so you are able to love, you have been included so you should include,” he reminded us in the first of his two addresses. Using the text of Luke 19: 1-10, he recalled the story of the tax collector Zacchaeus and his encounter with Jesus. In addition to these scriptural references, Bishop Sloan told many personal stories to help us think about times when we were welcomed in our own lives and how such a welcome can be life changing.

Bishop Sloan addressed the question “Who is not our Neighbor?” He used the text of the Good Samaritan to expand our thinking beyond the concept of “who is our neighbor” to the broader concept of “who we cannot see as our neighbor” since we are all children of God.

The afternoon short business meeting included reports on the Triennial meeting, Church Periodicals Club (CPC), United Thank Offering (UTO), scholarships, and the introduction of our 2013 calendar and theme based on the life of Mother Teresa. Later everyone attended three workshops on the Altar Guild and the Prayer Book, walking a Labyrinth, and parish fundraising. These informative workshops were a new feature of the Fall Conference.

In the evening, the group enjoyed the perfect fall weather with a wine and cheese party in the parish garden and participated in a silent auction to support the ECW Scholarship Fund. Harpist Karla Sullivan performed during the party. The group especially enjoyed the Church of the Resurrection’s welcome song, sung to the tune of “Angels from the Realms of Glory” and reminding us that their parish is known for cheese balls and that they “do wine and cheese just fine!” The evening continued with a banquet in the parish hall and a concert by the Mountain Valley Singers under the direction of Katherine Abbs, and Carolino.

The second day of the conference featured parish-sharing sessions. As women from each parish described their projects and events, the idea of reaching out to the stranger and serving through the ECW was made even more manifest. The far-reaching projects of the ECW range from a GED program for women, a community tutoring program, baskets given to hospitals, support for nutrition clinics in Haiti, and work with the clergy spouses’ Krik!? program, baskets given to hospitals, support for nutrition clinics in Haiti, and work with the clergy spouses’ Krik!? program. Programs include service of Holy Communion. The offering given at the service will benefit Pre-School Partners and Kairos Prison Ministry.

The second day featured workshops on the Triennial meeting, Church Periodical Club (providing college scholarships). The conference ended with an opportunity for us to meet Bishop Santosh Marray and his wife, Nalini (“Lynn”). Bishop Marray was the preacher and celebrant at the concluding service of Holy Communion. The offering given at the service will benefit Pre-School Partners and Kairos Prison Ministry.

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Transform a Life
By the Rev. Deacon Judy Quick, Diocesan Representative for Episcopal Relief & Development

Give an entire community the opportunity not only to survive but also to thrive! Selections from the “Gifts for Life Catalog” can provide the basics for life including clean water and sanitation. Gifts of agriculture and animals help feed and also provide income for families and communities. Green gifts provide solar energy and fruit trees to restore orchards. Health and Wellness gifts help stem the tide of malaria with mosquito nets and training and also provide HIV/AIDS education. Economic Opportunity gifts offer micro-credit and micro-enterprises to create small businesses. Create a Community gifts such as Community Gardens and Roving Health Clinics strengthen the community and enrich life for everyone. Please help spread the word about the “Gifts for Life Catalog” and the opportunities it offers to transform lives around the world. You can order a catalog online at www.er-d.org/OnlineStore/, e-mail sales@episcopalmedia.org, call 866/937-2772, or contact me at jquick@bellsouth.net or 205/669-6862.
Canterbury Chapel Constructs a “Green” Parking Lot

By the Staff of Canterbury Chapel in Tuscaloosa

A groundbreaking ceremony on October 8 in front of Canterbury Chapel and Student Center in Tuscaloosa marked the beginning of the construction of a “green” parking lot. The Rev. Marc Burnette, the parish’s rector, and the Rev. Brandt Montgomery, the parish’s curate, along with Catherine Dozier and Jon McLelland of McLelland Architecture, the firm that designed the parking lot, participated in the ceremony. Eric McNair of Land Design Services in Birmingham is doing the construction work.

“This parking lot will create little if any increase in storm water runoff,” Jon explains. “The parking spaces will be made of drivable grass-filled porous tiles, and the driveways will consist of small gravel, which also enhances water absorption.”

“It’s the first one we know of like this in our area,” Marc notes. “We’ve needed a parking lot here for a long time,” he adds. “Often there is absolutely nowhere for our ten students who live at Canterbury or for people visiting our church to park. Some people have just been jumping the curb and parking on the lawn.”

The new parking lot is on Hackberry Lane right beside where the local Farmers’ Market is held every Thursday from March through October. People shopping at the market and going to home University of Alabama football games often parked on the lawn, tearing up the landscape and endangering the trees in the area. None of the existing trees were cut down for the new parking lot, which will mark off space and restrict driving around the trees.

ESAU Society—Fun, Fellowship, and Fundraising

By Dorothy Bolton, St. Thomas’ in Huntsville

The ESAU Society at St. Thomas’ in Huntsville is a fellowship group of men who meet every other Monday night during the NFL season to play cards and get to know one another better. This fun group for laypeople started in 2003, and currently 12 men participate on a regular basis. Each member of the society, named for the “hairy man” in the Old Testament, donates $40 to participate. At the end of the season, the leading player determines which worthy community outreach program will receive the dues money. In the past the dues have funded handicapped ramps for Camp McDowell, playground equipment for St. Thomas’, the Krak? Krak! program to feed schoolchildren in Haiti, the parish’s medical missions, and other projects.

Lobsterfest Supports Habitat for Humanity

By the Staff of Grace Church in Anniston

The 15th annual Lobsterfest at Grace Church in Anniston on October 27 raised approximately $10,000 to help eradicate substandard housing in Calhoun County. The annual community celebration included lobster meals, craft vendors, a baked goods sale, children’s activities, and live entertainment. More than 1,200 Maine lobster were flown in for the event, which supports the Habitat for Humanity of Calhoun County, an affiliate of the national Habitat for Humanity based in Americus, Georgia. More than 100 volunteers from the parish worked in three shifts to ensure the event’s success.

Potatoes Sweeten Beans and Rice Ministry

By Staff Members of Trinity Church in Clanton; Photo by the Rev. Bill King, Rector

Trinity Church in Clanton’s Beans and Rice distribution program got a sweet boost this month. Cliff Rhodes, manager of the Gardendale branch of Pinnacle Bank donated more than 900 pounds of sweet potatoes to the parish’s food-sharing ministry. The gift enabled the parish to add 10 pounds of sweet potatoes to the bags of dried beans and rice given to the almost 100 families who came to the parish on November 3 for food assistance. Currently 15 parishes around our diocese participate in the Beans and Rice Ministry, according to the Rev. Bill King, who initiated the program. The ministry provides food to families who come by the distribution sites without charge and no questions asked. Distribution of dried beans and rice form the core of the monthly program, and other food items are added as available.

For information about starting a Beans and Rice Ministry at your parish, please e-mail the Rev. Bill King at bp1king@bellsouth.net.
**Upcoming Events, Workshops, and Retreats**

**2013 CLAYPOOL LECTURE**

January 10 at 6:30 p.m. at the Leslie S. Wright Center at Samford University in Birmingham

This year’s Claypool Lecture, sponsored by St. Luke’s in Birmingham, will feature Dr. Brené Brown, nationally renowned researcher, speaker, and author of The New York Times bestseller Daring Greatly as well as The Gifts of Imperfection and I Thought It Was Just Me. Dr. Brown has spent the past decade studying vulnerability, courage, worthiness, and shame. She has chosen “The Hustle for Worthiness” as the theme for her lecture. “Worthiness is not about who we should be or who we might be or who we could be. It’s about who we are. Right now. Today. It’s about waking up and believing, I am enough.”

The Claypool Lecture Series honors the service of the Rev. Dr. John Claypool IV, former rector of the parish and a highly regarded preacher and Christian author. For more information about tickets for the event, please visit www.saint-lukes.com or call the parish at 205/802-6207.

**OUTREACH GATHERING: REACH IN, REACH OUT!**

February 9 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at St. Stephen’s in Birmingham

The 2013 Outreach Gathering: Reach In, Reach Out! will be held at St. Stephen's in Birmingham on Saturday, February 9, with registration at 9 a.m. The morning will focus on domestic diocesan ministries including Safeway and Special Session, and the afternoon will focus on global missions including our diocesan Companion Relationship with Haiti as well as the activities of parishes with mission partners around the world. The goal is for participants to receive very concrete and practical information on how to participate, either virtually (through prayer, reading blogs, etc) or physically (offering supplies, volunteering, etc).

To register online, please visit our diocesan Web site, www.diocela.org. You may also send your registration payment (make checks payable to the Diocese of Alabama with “Outreach Gathering” in the memo line) to Sarah Sartain, Carpenter House, 521 North 20th Street, Birmingham, AL 35203. We look forward to seeing you there! For more information please contact the Rev. Deacon Judy Quick, Chair, Department of Mission and Outreach, jgquick@bellsouth.net, 205/669-6862.

**NATIONAL CATHEDRAL FLOWER GUILD WORKSHOP**

February 9 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Trinity Church in Florence

Everyone is cordially invited to the morning demonstration and afternoon hands-on workshop by members of the Flower Guild of the National Cathedral hosted by Trinity Church in Florence. The morning demonstration will feature 12 to 15 different arrangements; the afternoon workshop is limited to 40 participants. Supplies, flowers, and a container are included, but participants are welcome to bring their own.

All proceeds from the event will benefit the St. Francis Project, a community outreach program started the parish started in 2009. The mission of the project, based on the prayer of St. Francis, is to raise $1,000,000 and give it back to the local community in the form of grants. By the end of this year, the parish will have given $300,000 back to the Shoals community. For more information, please call the parish office at 256-764-6149.

**2013 Outreach Gathering: Reach In, Reach Out!**

February 21-23 at Camp McDowell

Everyone is cordially invited to the Lenten conference led by Dr. Joseph Benton Howell, who lives in Anniston and has practiced clinical psychology since 1981. A recognized expert and gifted teacher on spirituality, psychological change, and the Enneagram, Dr. Howell speaks and presents workshops around the country. His books include the recently released Becoming Conscious: The Enneagram’s Forgotten Passageway.

**“BEHOLD, I MAKE ALL THINGS NEW” — THE TRANSFORMATIONAL SPIRIT OF THE ENNEAGRAM**

March 21-23 at Camp McDowell

**Clergy News**

The Rev. Mary Anne Akin began serving as chaplain at St. Martin’s in the Pines in Birmingham on December 2. Mary Anne previously served as associate rector of the Nativity in Huntsville.

The Rev. John B. Fritschner, rector of Holy Trinity, in Auburn, is moving to Louisville in January to be closer to family. He will begin serving as interim rector of St. Luke’s in Anchorage, Kentucky, on February 1.

The Rev. Lee Graham Jr., a retired priest of our diocese who played an instrumental role in the rapid growth of St. Luke’s in Birmingham, died on November 18. Funeral services were held at St. John’s in Tallahassee.

The Rev. Bob Emmigan began serving as rector of Holy Comforter in Montgomery in November. Bob came to our diocese from the Diocese of Southwest Florida.

The Rev. Deborah Leighton joined the staff of the Cathedral Church of the Advent in Birmingham in October as Canon Missioner and Director of Women’s Ministries. Deborah, who is a priest in good standing in the Episcopal Church, previously served as a church planter in the Anglican Diocese of New England, which is a part of the Anglican Church in North America.

The Rev. Rusty McCown will begin serving as associate rector of the Nativity in Huntsville on January 1.

**Bishops’ Visitation Schedule**

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**From Scratch Weekend**

February 15-17 at the Alabama Folk School at Camp McDowell

This is our first annual beginners-only weekend workshop! Ever want to learn the banjo but don’t know anything about it? Did you get a guitar for Christmas but can’t even begin to play it? Want to knit a baby blanket but don’t know where to start? Our From Scratch Weekend will teach you the skills you need to get started on an instrument or craft from scratch — no experience necessary! For more information please see the description on page 8 or contact Director Sarah Mills Nee at 205/387-1806 or folkschool@campmcdowell.com, or visit www.afterfolkschool.com.

**“Behold, I Make All Things New” — The Transformational Spirit of the Enneagram**

March 21-23 at Camp McDowell

Everyone is cordially invited to the Lenten conference led by Dr. Joseph Benton Howell, who lives in Anniston and has practiced clinical psychology since 1981. A recognized expert and gifted teacher on spirituality, psychological change, and the Enneagram, Dr. Howell speaks and presents workshops around the country. His books include the recently released Becoming Conscious: The Enneagram’s Forgotten Passageway.

**NATIONAL CATHEDRAL FLOWER GUILD WORKSHOP**

February 9 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Trinity Church in Florence

Everyone is cordially invited to the morning demonstration and afternoon hands-on workshop by members of the Flower Guild of the National Cathedral hosted by Trinity Church in Florence. The morning demonstration will feature 12 to 15 different arrangements; the afternoon workshop is limited to 40 participants. Supplies, flowers, and a container are included, but participants are welcome to bring their own.

All proceeds from the event will benefit the St. Francis Project, a community outreach program started the parish started in 2009. The mission of the project, based on the prayer of St. Francis, is to raise $1,000,000 and give it back to the local community in the form of grants. By the end of this year, the parish will have given $300,000 back to the Shoals community. For more information, please call the parish office at 256-764-6149.
A Powerful Blessing—The Life of Charles Colcock Jones Carpenter, Sr. (1859-1969), Sixth Bishop of Alabama (1938-1968)

When the Rev. Douglas “Doug” Carpenter brought copies of this just-published book to the bookstore, he told me a little about writing it—he depended almost entirely on primary sources including letters, diaries, notes and clippings, scrapbooks, conversations with people who were present during the actual events, and his own memory. Going against some editors who said a biography of Bishop Carpenter should be written by a dispassionate third person, Doug has written about his father’s whole life, not just the parts that “would sell.” He also wanted to provoke readers to think about the qualities someone had to have to be such “a powerful blessing” to so many.

I couldn’t wait to start reading it, having been confirmed by Bishop Carpenter myself. I hope you will be as enthralled with this story and enjoy Doug’s easy and informative style of writing as much as I have. Sit back in your chair or read it while you exercise—and enjoy! (For more about this book and Bishop Carpenter, please see “A Powerful Blessing” below.)

Jesus Calling: Enjoying Peace in His Presence by Sarah Young

After many years of writing her own words in her prayer journal, missionary Sarah Young decided to be more attentive to the Savior’s voice and begin listening for what He was saying. In these pages are the words and Scriptures that Jesus gave to her—words of reassurance, comfort, and hope—words that have made her increasingly aware of His presence and allowed her to enjoy His peace. Maybe Jesus seems distant without you knowing why—or perhaps you have wandered farther from Him than you ever imagined you would. Here is a year’s worth of daily readings from Sarah’s journals, each day’s offering written as if Jesus were speaking to you, to bring you closer to him.

An Illustrated Story of the Nativity by Caspari

This beautifully illustrated book reveals the biblical story of the Nativity and also gives you the opportunity to open a window for every day of Advent in the 3-D stable scene that pops up at the back of the book.

Follow the Star illustrated by Moira Maclean

Take the three Wise Men on a push-along adventure across the pages as they search for the baby Jesus following the star—from a hillside, from village to village, and finally to a small dwelling in Bethlehem.

The Friendly Beasts: An Old English Christmas Carol illustrated by Anna Vojtech

“Jesus, our brother, kind and good, was humbly born in a stable rude. And the friendly beasts around him stood, Jesus, our brother, kind and good.” Join a cow, a camel, a dove, a donkey, and a sheep as they explain what gifts they brought the son of God on the very first Christmas. The Friendly Beasts offers a new way to look at the birth of Jesus through beautiful, memorable illustrations, traditional holiday lyrics, and a CD with narration and music performed by Rebecca St. James.

The Alabama Episcopalian • November/December 2012
The 2012 Sawyerville Christmas Card—a Beautiful Gift and Card in One!

By Leslie Manning, Camp Director

This Christmas give the gift of Sawyerville! Our 2012 card features photographs from the past summer. It’s a beautiful gift and card in one—a gift that truly keeps on giving!

For every $10 you donate, we will mail one of our Christmas Cards to a friend or family member of your choosing—or we can send the card to you for you to mail. You may purchase as many cards as you’d like for your personal use or to sell at a Christmas bazaar or other event at your parish. Special thanks to Sawyerville Commission members Amanda Ennis and Jamie Plott for leading this effort.

Blessings to each of you this Advent and Christmas season. Thank you for your support, and please remember that “it’s all for the kids”!

To make a donation and order cards, please use our easy online system at www.sawyervilleworkproject.org. For more information please e-mail Sawyerville Camp Director Leslie Manning at lmanning@dioala.org.

Camp McDowell—One of the Best Christmas Presents Ever!

By Danielle Dunbar, Development Director

Consider giving your loved ones the gift of a camp session, retreat, or an Alabama Folk School workshop this Christmas. They will have a fun-filled, memorable time playing in God’s Backyard! You might also consider giving the priceless gift of a camp session to those with limited means by donating to the Scholarship Fund. Your generous contributions in the past have helped us award more than $80,000 in scholarships annually to campers in need. Your tax-deductible gift this year will help us bring someone to Summer Camp, the Environmental Center, or Special Session in 2013. The carefully planned, innovative camp sessions and workshops, loving community, and opportunities for creativity that Camp McDowell offers help young people and adults alike learn more deeply about themselves in relation to God and each other.

* You can make a year-end gift to the Camp McDowell Scholarship Fund. If the gift is in honor or memory of someone you love, we will send your family members of friends a Christmas card acknowledging your gift.

For more information or to place an order, please contact Danielle Dunbar at danielle@campmcdowell.com or 205/387-1806, or visit www.campmcdowell.com and follow the “Christmas Cards” link on the righthand side of the home page.

* You can give 7th and 8th graders the gift of participating in Winter Weekend on January 18-21 or youth of all ages the gift of going to Summer Camp. For more information please contact Susanna Whitsett at susanna@campmcdowell.com or 205/387-1806.

* You can give an adult in your family or a friend the gift of creativity and renewal they will enjoy by participating in a workshop at the Alabama Folk School at Camp McDowell. For more information please contact Sarah Mills Nee at folkschool@campmcdowell or 205/287-1806.

All of us at Camp McDowell thank you for your faithful, generous support of all the ministries we offer—and we wish each of you a blessed Advent and Christmastime and a wonderful new year!

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By Leslie Manning, Camp Director

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