The Very Rev. Andrew C. Pearson Jr.
Instituted as Dean and Rector of the
Cathedral Church of the Advent
We’re All Homeless

A Meditation Written on January 29 by Bishop Marray

Last night, along with Bishop Sloan, Peggy Turner, and Jan Cook, I spent the night in the office at Carpenter House marooned by the snow blizzard of 2014. We were among hundreds of others who spent the night in their respective offices. Each of us at the office had attempted to make our way home sometime earlier in the day, but we had to return to the office where it was safer. The gravity of this treacherous weather was too overwhelming for lesser mortals like us to navigate.

As I bedded down in my office, I thought of all those who were on the road caught in the traffic and prayed that they found a safe place to spend the night. I thought of the parents who would spend the night away from their children still in schools across the state and would not be able to tuck them into bed, read the customary bedtime story, kiss them goodnight—and I said a prayer. I thought about those like us camping out in their offices, in hotel lobbies, on supermarket and pharmacy floors, and in auditoriums, churches, schools, and hospitals—and I said a prayer. I thought about the dedicated emergency response personnel, police, and other officials working around the clock to protect and serve—and I offered a prayer. I even spared a prayer for the meteorologists who got it terribly wrong today and remembered how often they usually get it right.

I thought about the animals living outdoors and hoped they found safe haven—and said a prayer for them. I thought of people on medication who wouldn’t necessarily have it on hand and hoped that my prayer would uphold them in this time of emergency. And in the event of overlooking any category, I offered a prayer for everything in between.

Strangely enough, however, I didn’t, as I generally do, say a prayer for the homeless. For this weather had rendered all of us “homeless.” What a way for Mother Nature to bring smack center into our lives the reality of our fellow sisters and brothers of lesser means and resources who spend their lifetime shuffling from one warming center to the next. Actually, I thought of how better off they might be tonight, how more organized they might be to tackle this weather from years of experience dealing with this phenomenon. They have the “rhythm” to deal with it, which most of us don’t possess. We who generally spend the night in the comfort of our homes don’t necessarily have this device in our life’s survival kit. Unlike them, we were probably at this time more stricken by anxiety, fear, and gross apprehension, and we were paralyzed for a response.

I thanked God for Leslie and her staff at Wall Street Deli in Harbert Plaza for opening to serve soup and sandwiches last night and hot breakfast today—we are grateful for their hospitality and kindness. I watched strangers become friends at the food court, and I wondered how often we haven’t witnessed solidarity in the midst of chaos! The resilience of the human spirit never ceases to amaze, and it was doing so again.

As I reflect on all of this, I’m swept over by a tidal wave of emotional gratitude to our Heavenly Father. Jesus reminds us, “In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places . . . and I go and prepare a place for you” (John 14:2). I smile in the face of all that surrounds us that in our Father’s presence no one is “homeless” and no storm, despite its ferocity and unpredictability, has the power to paralyze or diminish—and I say a prayer of immense gratitude for his love that knows no limit and is eternal.

I began today, as is my customary discipline, with the Daily Office. This time I used the office from the Celtic Daily Prayer. Listen to how the office ends:

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you, wherever He may send you.
May He guide you through the wilderness, protect you through the storm.
May He bring you home rejoicing at the wonders He has shown you.
May He bring you home rejoicing once again into our doors.
I pray for the safety of all, reconnecting parents and children, spouses with each other and loved ones. I pray for safer roadways, patience and forbearance among all during this critical time and unprecedented ordeal, and tolerance among our beloved people, and of course, for early return to life as normal—but yet life will never be the same again. The pain of the moment becomes memories of tomorrow.

Yes, we’re all “homeless,” and for that I thank God whose eternal home awaits our coming.
I Believe

Hello, friends,

I missed writing a column for the last Alabama Episcopalian because I was recuperating from a knee replacement at the end of September. The knee is okay and getting better every day; thanks to all of you for your prayers and cards and messages. I also want to thank Bishop Murray for filling in for me and the staff at Carpenter House for doing their jobs so well that you could hardly tell I wasn’t there—great for our diocese and only a little scary for me that they could so easily do without me.

After the surgery, I’ve had some time to think, and I’ve decided that there are some things I know, but the better things I believe.

I believe in God because I can see God’s hand in the world around me, in the love of my family and friends, in acts of kindness large and small, in the impulse to love and care for people we don’t know and who can’t do anything for us in return. I believe in God because I have received a long tradition of human hope and faith, and I choose to cast my lot in with that.

I believe that part of what Jesus came to do was to establish and empower a community of people who would carry His message to the world. I believe the followers of Jesus were just as silly and selfish as we are, and that it was the power of the Spirit of God that gave them the courage and compassion to share the Good News of the love of God as they knew and felt it in Jesus. I know the history of the Church is filled with stories of scoundrels and saints that we can still find some of each in the pews today. I know that if the Church were only a human institution, we would have ruined it completely by now; I believe that the Spirit of God is still among us, still giving us courage and compassion, still comforting us, and still challenging us. I know that it is now our responsibility to preach about love and forgiveness and hope, and to touch the untouchable.

I know that what I’ve written here is incomplete and inadequate and that it can and should and will be picked apart. I know I could have written much more and that it would still be incomplete and inadequate. I know I could be wrong about any of this, but I don’t believe I am.

I know that what doesn’t make sense, but I absolutely believe it not just to be true, but also Truth. I believe that Jesus healed the sick, restored sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf, that He fed thousands with a few fish and loaves of bread. I know that there are needs in the world we live in today that there are people who need to be healed and fed and loved, and I believe that we need to do what we can to help those who need help.

I believe that Jesus preached about love and forgiveness and hope, and I believe that He touched those who had been declared untouchable. I believe that Jesus had wonderful ideas about the nature of God and humanity, ideas that were new and different for the people who heard them, ideas that were freeing and exciting to some but shocking and distressing to many others who had power in the systems of the day. I believe the religious and political powers of the day were threatened by His new ideas and that they ultimately could not bear to hear them. I know what it’s like to be threatened by new ideas.

I believe that Jesus was tortured to death and that even on the Cross He was talking about forgiveness. I believe that Jesus went willingly to die on the Cross, not so that God could forgive us, but so that we can know we are forgiven. I do not know how Jesus could have loved us that much. I do know that it’s hard to forgive, and that sometimes it’s hard to ask for forgiveness, and sometimes even harder to accept it.

I believe with all my heart and mind and soul that Jesus died and was dead, and that He came out of the tomb alive again—not a near-death experience, but an experience of life after death. I know that following Jesus is not about my convenience or comfort, and I know that there will be pain and doubt for all who choose to have faith in God through Jesus. I believe that I will follow Jesus to my death and into the new life to come.

I believe that what Jesus came to do was to establish and empower a community of people who would carry His message to the world. I believe the followers of Jesus were just as silly and selfish as we are, and that it was the power of the Spirit of God that gave them the courage and compassion to share the Good News of the love of God as they knew and felt it in Jesus. I know the history of the Church is filled with stories of scoundrels and saints that we can still find some of each in the pews today. I know that the Church were only a human institution, we would have ruined it completely by now; I believe that the Spirit of God is still among us, still giving us courage and compassion, still comforting us, and still challenging us. I know that it is now our responsibility to preach about love and forgiveness and hope, and to touch the untouchable.

I know it’s easier to say than it is to do it. I believe we can do all of this and more, with God’s help. And I believe we have God’s help.

I know that what I’ve written here is incomplete and inadequate and that it can and should and will be picked apart. I know I could have written much more and that it would still be incomplete and inadequate. I know I could be wrong about any of this, but I don’t believe I am. I believe in the Truth of God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I believe in forgiveness. I believe in hope. I believe in love. I believe.

The Rt. Rev. John McKee Sloan
The 11th Bishop of Alabama
2013 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Through the generosity of the parishes and planned withdrawals from the Trust and Designated Fund of the Diocese and general holding and designated fund accounts, the diocese ended the fiscal year with a surplus of $667. Though we did see negative figures in the fall, our cash flow in the Operating Fund was more in the positive range than in the previous two years. However, the last several years have seen a toll on the Reserve Maintenance Fund, which is normally funded by the transfer of budget surpluses. The Maintenance Fund has a balance of $14,576, which is not considered adequate. A serious maintenance issue at a diocesan facility could require an amendment to the operating budget to provide repair funds. Because the diocese adjusted benefits for employees some years ago when General Convention first adopted a resolution urging the increase, the required implementation of the Canonical changes requiring certain benefits did not have an adverse effect on the operating budget.

ACTS2 CAMPAIGN

The campaign, of course, is long finished, but the generosity of Alabama Episcopalians remains. Income from pledges during 2013 was $27,025. During the year the Diocesan Council began investing some of the remaining funds rather than expending the amounts for immediate needs associated with the ministries funded through the Campaign. Their goal is to create endowments that can fund continuing work in the designated ministries, which include increasing the diversity of membership in the Church, skill development for lay leaders, strengthening of our parishes, and communications.

THE CONSOLIDATED TRUST AND DESIGNATED FUNDS OF THE DIOCESE

By the end of the fiscal year, this pooled investment fund, which includes funds of the diocese itself and of the congregations and associated organizations and ministries, had grown to an asset value of $18,718,362. The return on investments of this conservatively managed fund was 14% net of fees in 2013. The asset allocation during the last 6 months of the year was balanced between fixed income and equities. The Trustees shifted the allocation to favor equities midyear.

During the year the Fund received $1,406,408 in additional deposits and opened 6 new accounts for parishes or diocesan organizations. The fund distributed $1,035,325 to beneficiaries.

14 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT THE PROPOSED OPERATING BUDGET IN 2014

1. New initiatives being proposed are dependent upon a projected increase in the support of the diocese for our shared mission and ministry. The Diocesan Council and the thousands of Alabama Episcopalians and citizens who benefit are grateful for the generosity of the parishes.

2. The overall document reflects continued emphasis on including major work within the diocese in the operating budget even when the work is to be funded from sources other than covenants.

3. A COLA of 1.5% has been included for diocesan staff and college chaplains. No raises are included.

4. Bishop Sloan has decided to continue driving his current vehicle, which enters a 5th year of service.

5. The budget includes a new initiative in cooperation with the seminary in Austin to train people locally for ordination to the priesthood. It also provides for an additional Bacom in 2014 to accommodate the new class of Deacons. Funds are also included for new special events to enrich the diocesan sense of community.

6. The budget includes funding for The Abbey; for continued work with young adults (a new initiative in 2013), and to assist three parishes under the provisions of the St. Francis Fund. The plan reflects the decision to close de la Gracia muday.

7. The document provides initial funding for a new position within the diocese. The position is a Development Officer to be shared with Camp McDowell.

8. The document reflects the end of a two-year effort to develop campus ministry in Huntsville. Key leaders have moved, and new leadership has not emerged.

9. The document provides for an increase in support of the Sawyerville Day Camp of $15,700. In addition to $10,000 in direct support, the diocesan budget now provides funding for the compensation and benefits of the Director.

10. An Acolyte Festival (new in 2014) broadens the work within the Youth Department.

11. As presented, the document maintains diocesan support for higher education with a $20,000 contribution to the University of the South (Sewanee).

12. Matching funds for an initiative to develop techniques for systemic change to address poverty in cooperation with the School of Theology at Sewanee are included (Mission Enterprise Zone Grant). The diocese has been awarded a $20,000 grant by the Episcopal Church Center for this work.

13. The document reflects a change in leadership for The Alabama Episcopalian after the 1st quarter of 2014. The new model calls for increased reliance on the layout staff while a new person ("Reporter") produces content for print and electronic medium. The position of Editor will no longer exist. The document reduces our reliance on ACTS2 funds for the support of the Communications Coordinator position.

14. Shifts in funding within Administration will allow for creation of a part-time position of Volunteer Coordinator. This person will recruit and coordinate a group of volunteers to work in Carpenter House. One goal will be to return to having a person answering the phone during peak hours rather than relying on the automatic system.
# Nominees for Office

## GENERAL CONVENTION

### NORTHERN DISTRICT

#### Lay Nominees

- **Randall Byrd**  
  Member of Trinity in Florence  
  - Lay Eucharist Minister for 6 years  
  - Altar Guild member for 5 years  
  - Lector/Intercessor for 6 years  
  - Environmental Stewardship Team chair  
  - Stewardship of Creation Task Force chair for 1 year  
  - Parish Outreach Committee member for 3 years  
  - Vestry member  
  - St. Francis Project Board member

- **Barbara Meyer**  
  Member of St. Thomas’ in Huntsville  
  - Former Junior and Senior Warden  
  - Parish Finance Committee member  
  - Daughters of the King member  
  - Lay Eucharist Minister  
  - Diocesan Council member  
  - Deputy to General Convention (2012)  
  - EFM graduate  
  - Department of Christian Formation member

- **Sarah Miller**  
  Seminarian from St. John’s in Decatur  
  - Happening Staff member  
  - J2A participant and pilgrim  
  - Episcopal Service Corps Fellow in New Orleans  
  - Reimagining the Episcopal Church Task Force member

#### Clergy Nominee

- **The Rev. Evan Garner**  
  Rector of St. John’s in Decatur  
  - Standing Committee for Lifelong Christian Formation member (2012-present)  
  - Standing Committee member (2013-present)  
  - Department of Stewardship member (2010-present)  
  - Deputy to General Convention (2012)  
  - Diocesan Council member (2010-11)  
  - Chaplain to Youth Department (2007-10)  
  - Department for Ministry in Higher Education member (2007-10)

### MIDDLE DISTRICT

#### Lay Nominee

- **Virginia Hillhouse**  
  Member of St. Stephen’s in Birmingham  
  - Deputy to General Convention (2010, 2009, and 2012)  
  - EFM mentor  
  - Diocesan Convention delegate  
  - Senior Warden and Vestry member  
  - Bible class leader  
  - Commission on Ministry member

#### Clergy Nominees

- **The Rev. Donna Gerold**  
  Associate Rector of St. Stephen’s in Birmingham  
  - Department of Christian Formation member  
  - Graduate of Seminary of Southwest (2013)  
  - Seminary Student Representative to General Convention (2012)  
  - Seminary Student Representative Board of Trustees (2012-13)  
  - Seminary Student Representative Accreditation Team  
  - Student Council member (2011-13)  
  - Diocesan Council lay member (2004-07)  
  - Commission on Spirituality lay member (2000-06)

## STANDING COMMITTEE

### Lay Nominee

- **Heager Hill**  
  Member of St. Mark’s in Birmingham  
  - Senior Warden  
  - Lay Eucharistic Minister, Lay Reader, and senior member  
  - St. Martin’s in the Pines Board of Directors member  
  - Standing Committee former member  
  - Diocesan Council former member  
  - Diocesan Anniversary Working Committee—Camp McDowell

### Clergy Nominee

- **The Rev. Donna Gerold**  
  Associate Rector of St. Stephen’s in Birmingham  
  - Department of Christian Formation member  
  - Graduate of Seminary of Southwest (2013)  
  - Seminary Student Representative to General Convention (2012)  
  - Seminary Student Representative Board of Trustees (2012-13)  
  - Seminary Student Representative Accreditation Team  
  - Student Council member (2011-13)  
  - Diocesan Council lay member (2004-07)  
  - Commission on Spirituality lay member (2000-06)

## DISCIPLINARY BOARD

### Clergy Nominee

- **The Rev. William (Bill) King**  
  Rector of Trinity Church in Clanton  
  - Rector of All Saints’ in Birmingham (1990-98)  
  - Deputy to General Convention (2003)  
  - Standing Committee member (1991-95)

## DIOCESAN COUNCIL

### NORTHERN DISTRICT

- **John Thornton**  
  Member of St. John’s in Decatur  
  - Vestry member (2011-2013)  
  - Senior Warden (2013)  
  - Junior Warden (2012)  
  - Parish treasurer (2003-08)  
  - Lay Eucharistic Minister for 3 years  
  - Numerous leadership committees member

### MIDDLE DISTRICT

- **Brad Sandridge**  
  Member of St. Thomas’ in Birmingham  
  - Vestry member for 3 years  
  - Senior Warden  
  - Treasurer since 2009  
  - Sunday school teacher for 5 years  
  - Numerous outreach program staff member

### SOUTHERN DISTRICT

- **Sally Hudson**  
  Member of Holy Trinity in Auburn  
  - Vestry member  
  - Parish nurse  
  - Diocesan Companion Diocese Commission member  
  - Parish Haiti Mission coordinator  
  - Habitat for Humanity director  
  - Lay Deputy to General Convention (2014)

## AT LARGE

- **The Rev. John Mark Ford**  
  Rector of St. Catherine’s in Chelsea  
  - Founding Rector of St. Catherine’s in Chelsea (2007-present)  
  - Deacon and Priest in Charge of St. Alban’s in Birmingham (2006-07)  
  - Founding member of Holy Apostles’ in Hoover  
  - Deputy to General Convention (2009 and 2012)  
  - General Convention Layman and Music Committee member  
  - Department of Development and Evangelism chair (2012-13)  
  - Department of Development and Evangelism member for 6 years  
  - Stewardship of Creation Task Force member  
  - Episcopal Women’s History Project Board member  
  - Standing Committee member (2013-present)  
  - Standing Committee member (2010-12)  
  - Commission on Hispanic Ministries (2002-04)

- **The Rev. Candice Frazer**  
  Associate Rector of St. John’s in Montgomery  
  - Youth Department Advisor (2004-07)  
  - Numerous Curtill and retreats staff member  
  - Episcopal Women’s History Project Board member  
  - Standing Committee member (1991-95)

- **The Rev. Rob Iker**  
  Rector of St. James’ in Alexander City  
  - Dean of the East Alabama Convocation  
  - Department of Mission and Outreach (2014-17)  
  - Curtill Head Spiritual Director  
  - Diocesan Council (2010-12)  
  - Commission on Hispanic Ministries (2002-04)  
  - Standing Committee member (1991-95)

- **Mark Smith**  
  Member of St. Mark’s in Birmingham  
  - General Convention Standing Commission on Constitutions and Canons of the Episcopal Church member for 3 years  
  - St. Mark’s treasurer  
  - Commission on Ministry member  
  - Numerous parish and diocesan leadership roles  
  - Standing Committee member (2013-present)  
  - Standing Committee member (2010-12)  
  - Commission on Hispanic Ministries (2002-04)  
  - Standing Committee member (1991-95)

- **Virginia Hillhouse**  
  Member of St. Stephen’s in Birmingham  
  - Deputy to General Convention (2010, 2009, and 2012)  
  - EFM mentor  
  - Diocesan Convention delegate  
  - Senior Warden and Vestry member  
  - Bible class leader  
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- **The Rev. Donna Gerold**  
  Associate Rector of St. Stephen’s in Birmingham  
  - Department of Christian Formation member  
  - Graduate of Seminary of Southwest (2013)  
  - Seminary Student Representative to General Convention (2012)  
  - Seminary Student Representative Board of Trustees (2012-13)  
  - Seminary Student Representative Accreditation Team  
  - Student Council member (2011-13)  
  - Diocesan Council lay member (2004-07)  
  - Commission on Spirituality lay member (2000-06)
Partnership in the Vision of God

By appointment, the baptized community embodies both messenger and agent of Christian social outreach/partnership. This occupation with the community is integral to our vocational commitment to maintain communion and balance.

By appointment, the baptized community embodies both messenger and agent of Christian social outreach/partnership. This occupation with the community is integral to our vocational commitment to maintain communion and balance. In the language of spiritual formation, evil is the disembodiment of self from other, that is, community. On a regular basis, however, it’s common to see people who continue to feel that their actions, good or bad, have little or no consequence to the wider world. Sister Joan Chittister reminds us that, in effect, all of our actions have universal ramifications.

One of the fundamental responsibilities of the Church is to provide for the spiritual well-being of each human being. The Church, however, cannot abrogate its vocation to be involved in social outreach and advocacy if it would demonstrate the sincerity of its care for the “poor and needy, the marginalized and obscure.” The spiritually sensitive congregation will consciously or unconsciously be drawn into action.

The spiritual dimension in our formation constrains us to the fact that spiritual life gives rise to a moral imperative, and this sound spiritual background plays a role in how deeply we value the principles of honesty, humility, love, decency, respect for others, and inalienable rights of each person. When these principles are upheld, the base of spiritual formation is strengthened, which then penetrates the wider community.

The Church’s social advocacy arises out of the individual members’ heightened spiritual formation and obedience to Christ, the archetype of Christian outreach and advocacy. The response may not necessarily be overwhelming, but one sign of witness is representative of a multitude, “as much as you do it unto others, you do it unto me [Jesus].”

The fundamental message of the gospel is “good news to the poor . . . release to the captives.” (Luke 4:18-19). Our radical call is to embrace society with an adequate vision of what constitutes the foundation for human dignity and fulfillment. If we are the “salt of the earth and the light of the world” (Matthew 5:13-14), we cannot stop short of ministering to the wholeness of the complete person believing that “with God everything is possible” (Luke 1:37), while waiting for the kingdom of God to erupt in plentitude. The spirituality of the Christian community, the Church, its clergy and laity alike, commits us to signalize this kingdom by preaching the gospel, healing the sick, and reproving evil masked as injustice, inequality, oppression, and marginalization in all forms of indignity. In pursuit of fulfilling the principle of human rights, let us continue to advance the dignity of all human beings through various tangible and transformative mission partnerships.

I am so proud to be a servant in this Church where so much of the vision of Christ takes “flesh” in local and global initiatives, and where a clear sense of a strong, positive, sensitive, and caring attitude from both clergy and parishioners alike resonates. As we move into the challenges, opportunities, and possibilities of the new year, we commit to strengthening our partnership in God’s vision for the Church in being broken bread and poured out wine for a broken and hurting world.

A happy, healthy, and prosperous New Year to everyone, and God’s blessing to you and your family!

In our love in Christ!

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

The inspiration for this reflection comes from the recent Global Mission Roundtable sponsored by our diocesan Department of Mission and Outreach held at Carpenter House. The occasion was the gathering of a number of diocesan missionaries from across our Church, some of them via conference call. It was an extremely fruitful encounter in conversation that allowed for frank, energetic, passionate, and faithful discussion about how our lives as God’s children intersect with the world’s greatest needs. Throughout the conversation, we kept hearing the question “How can we be better stewards of the zeal for mission that the Holy Spirit has invested in us as a diocese?” At the end of it all, I began to reflect on how generous our diocese, churches, and parishioners are; how actively the faithful engage the work of God in areas that are life-giving and life-transforming; and what “big hearts” our parishioners have in the outpouring of love, personal resources, and genuine concern for the less fortunate.

How can I craft the work we do as a symbiotic or intimate part of our call to be the embodiment of the teaching of the Church? What kind of relationship with the people they had gone to as missionaries can we move into the challenges, opportunities, and possibilities of the new year fully? The diocese, churches, and parishioners are so profoundly felt.

It is no wonder that the effect on quickening of the soul is so profoundly felt.

The Christian Church is called by its founding tradition and practice. This paradigm is emphasized in the Acts of the Apostles, the book that chronicles the early practices of the believers and inspires the missional movement of the Church in every generation. The Book of Common Prayer liturgy articulates ways that promote and nurture the will of God for the faith community. For the wider Church community, there isn’t a more profound articulation of the call to “outreach/partnership” than the baptismal liturgy. In Acts 2:23, we see the intention of the early church to protect the welfare of the needy even if it meant sacrificing that which may make believers in the early church most comfortable. The thought that seems to garner this intention is a feeling of “common life” within the “common struggle”; that our life is diminished when the other person is hurting, especially if that individual in their largess were in a position to contribute to the improvement of the person’s human condition. In theological terms, it’s the “empowerment of the other in Christ.” When examined in its simplest form, the term “outreach/partnership” is really “reaching out.” The question then becomes “to whom?” and the answer comes lurching back—to someone or something outside you. This extension of who I am is modeled on the cross in the outstretched arms of Jesus welcoming all into his embrace, the broken and sinful thief included.

By appointment, the baptized community embodies both messenger and agent of Christian social outreach/partnership. This occupation with the community is integral to our vocational commitment to maintain communion and balance.
Roundtable Launches!

By the Rev. Deacon Judy Quick, Mission and Outreach Chair

People with a passion for global mission came together for the inaugural Global Mission Roundtable on November 14. They filled every seat at the large “round” table at Carpenter House, and others joined us via the gathering’s “virtual” round table.

Bishop Sloan welcomed everyone and thanked us for our devotion to mission. He reminded us that our Church views mission, rather than the institution, as our essential focus. After Beth Tucker offered the opening prayer, Bishop Marray, who was leading the discussion, added that mission is about give-and-take partnerships; we are all transformed in the process; we are living into the challenging scripture that says of those who have been given much, much is required; mission is our own reaction to the blessings God has given us; and mission allows us to go deeper into our relationships with God and each other. He emphasized that God is “mission” and we are His missionaries.

Each participant shared a mission-related story. Some have led mission teams for years, while others are discerning the call to mission. In addition to our Companion Diocese relationship with Haiti, a number of parishes have mission partnerships in countries ranging from the Dominican Republic and Central America (Honduras, Guatemala, Costa Rica, El Salvador, and Nicaragua) to Africa (Kenya, Ghana, Namibia, and Malawi). As people throughout our diocese communicate more with each other, we will learn about additional partnerships, and we may also seek to form new ones.

What purpose can the Global Mission Roundtable gatherings serve? Opinions vary. Some participants want practical information, the how-to aspects of mission—uniform policies, procedures, forms, and releases, or perhaps a packet of information to facilitate preparation for mission. Others, especially individuals and members of small parishes, prefer to join a mission team before developing one of their own, and they want to know how to connect with existing teams. Others simply want everyone to just go and experience the touch of mission. The consensus is that the Global Mission Roundtable gatherings provide a perfect forum to connect with others both in person and virtually. In addition to future gatherings, we plan to update our diocesan website so mission information can be easily accessed and shared.

We hope that the Global Mission Roundtable gatherings will help us continue to share our mission experiences, learn from each other, and gain practical insights and resources as we serve our brothers and sisters in Christ outside our borders. We can inspire others to discover the transformative power of Christ’s love as we engage in global mission. In fact, the Holy Spirit surprised Beth Tucker. She came to this year’s roundtable to learn about youth mission trips, but she discovered that she too is called to mission—and she has joined a mission team serving Honduras!

Let us heed the call of the Global Episcopal Mission Network’s (GEMN) to “Proclaim, Inspire, and Ignite the Joy of God’s Mission.” As the Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori reminds us, “Mission is the heartbeat of the Church.”

If you have questions, suggestions, or want to join some of the groups putting together practical resources, please contact me at jgquick@bellsouth.net, 205/669-6862 (home), or 770/366-4034 (cell). Also visit www.gemn.org, www.travel.state.gov, and www.cdc.gov.

Bishop Marray Leads Spirituality Conference

By Diocesan Staff

Our Commission on Spirituality’s Fall Conference Day was held at Comer Hall on the University of Montevallo campus. Kathy Graham, our diocesan Lifelong Formation Coordinator, collaborated with the commission in organizing this year’s program. Bishop Marray led the participants in exploring the Spirituality of God’s Creation: “God saw everything he had made, and it was good” (Genesis 1:31). He described Christian spirituality as a medium that transforms followers into disciples and an experience that connects interior life with spiritual experience and personal encounter with God. The simplest definition of spirituality is “being formed for Christ.” The Baptismal Covenant imprints the believer into the process of formation and calls the community of faith to live out its baptismal vows in the everyday activities of life, community, and world.

He emphasized that our call to be “Stewards of God” is not about ownership, but rather the gift of participation in something uniquely God—creation, and in the process help shape its preservation for today’s engagement and future generations. Bishop Marray drew from his personal ministry across the Anglican Communion to remind the participants that there are many vulnerable nations, particularly small island nations, whose present and future is defined by the preservation of creation. As part of the Anglican Communion, we are connected to them by our Christian faith and formation and Anglican Communion ethos and spirituality. The future of our brothers and sisters is assured by Episcopalians pledging our commitment to uphold the fifth of the five marks of mission articulated by the Anglican Communion: “To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.”

Bishop Marray also drew attention to the Trinitarian connection between the dove, the leaf, and the human being (Noah) after the cataclysmic event of the flood described in Genesis 8. God, nature, and humanity were together bringing into being a new world order with deep spiritual consequences for all humanity. In the crucifixion, Jesus took the “Tree” that brought about “The Fall” and redeemed it on the cross. Through that pain and suffering, Jesus transformed the most gruesome instrument of human execution of his day into the most powerful instrument and gift of God’s love and grace. Two sets of workshops allowed the participants to discern and articulate their own reflections on the theme.

A Reflection

By Louise Meredith, Member of Our Commission on Spirituality

“The Spirituality of God’s Creation” was an unexpected delight for me. The beautiful campus of the University of Montevallo offered a quiet, enriching setting for our conversations, and I enjoyed and was inspired by Bishop Marray’s heartfelt enthusiasm when he described his life’s complex journey and the work he directed us to take into our hearts.

He compared the formation of the universe with our individual lives—taking nothing and transforming ourselves into something. When we desire God, He moves us into becoming disciples of the Church—not hikewarm followers. We are pushed by our internal experience, our spirituality, to respond to God. Spirituality means being reformed in Christ, and this reformation propels us out into the world.

Bishop Marray explained that we become restless when we are being called to do God’s work. Mission is what God sends us to do, and the Church provides the structure, grounding, and education for us to go out and do mission. We have to go the extra mile and move out from safe places by taking risks and making ourselves vulnerable. He emphasized that God is always there to coach us, and we keep practicing our spirituality in order to get better at it! Practicing spirituality makes us sensitive to each other and those who need our help. It makes us aware of beauty that we have not noticed before; people we have not noticed before; and stewardship of all creation—humans, animals, water, earth, plants, birds, and insects. We are compelled to become visionaries for our surroundings and wards of our sacred land.

He asked each of us to look at the habit of our heart by daily prayer could begin with, “Lord, lead me in what I need to be developed or healed, visiting unfamiliar places, encouraged us to be seekers, perhaps seeking relationships that were together bringing into being a new world order with deep spiritual consequences for all humanity. In the crucifixion, Jesus took the “Tree” that brought about “The Fall” and redeemed it on the cross. Through that pain and suffering, Jesus transformed the most gruesome instrument of human execution of his day into the most powerful instrument and gift of God’s love and grace. Two sets of workshops allowed the participants to discern and articulate their own reflections on the theme.
Sign Up Now for Happening #64

Sam Cochran, who served as the rector of Happening #63, says, “You have to go through Happening to really understand why it is so great. I promise you won’t regret it!” He explains that while “it’s not the most action-packed or most exciting weekend in the way you might think, it will for sure be one of the most spiritually replenishing times of your entire life—and your outlook on life is likely to change in a positive way. I know mine did!”

We’re excited about Happening #64 on February 28 through March 2 at the Ascension in Montgomery. Adam Westfall will serve as the Happening Rector. “This Happening is going to be fantastic!” promises Adam. “We’re going to have an awesome high-energy staff who are sure to make this Happening the best one yet. Anyone who has been through will tell you it’s a great experience, and the best is always yet to come!”

To make sure you get a spot, sign up now online at www.dioala.org/ministries/youth-about.html. Registration ends February 14.

Calling All Senior-High Youth!

All senior-high youth (9th-12th graders) are invited to attend our Diocesan Convention Youth Lock-in, February 21-22, at St. Luke’s in Birmingham. Come help show a greater youth presence at this year’s “big people” annual diocesan convention. Games, food, community, and worship are just a few things on the agenda.

The cost is $25, and scholarships are available. Online registration ends February 14. For more information and to register, please e-mail Youth Minister Parker Garrett at pgarrett@saint-lukes.com.

Planning Under Way for 2014 Awakenings

Last October, 7th and 8th graders from around our diocese gathered at Camp McDowell for the 2013 Awakenings, a weekend of spiritual development and fun activities. High-school youth along with an adult mentor are now making plans for this fall’s 2014 Awakenings.

“Awakenings is my favorite youth event to participate in,” says Jen Manning, youth director of St. Stephen’s in Birmingham. “Not only is it a fun and deeply spiritual experience for the junior-high participants, but it is also a way for senior-high youth to have the opportunity to lead the retreat. It gives them an opportunity to fully understand what it means to be in the priesthood of all believers and have their words and actions deeply affect another person. It is a wonderful part of their spiritual journey to adulthood.”

“Awakenings is a great opportunity for Christian formation and fellowship for the youth of our diocese,” adds Will Sparks, youth minister of the Ascension in Birmingham. “Geared for 7th and 8th graders and staffed by their high-school peers, Awakenings provokes an intergenerational understanding of how life can be difficult at times. Throughout the weekend, we sing songs, hear a series of talks from members of the high-school staff, and tackle serious questions in small-group discussions.

“Awakenings weekends always include a few surprises,” Will notes. One of the surprise activities last year was packing more than 100 bag lunches for the Community Kitchens at St. Andrew’s in Birmingham.

For more about Awakenings and plans for this year’s fall weekend, please visit http://www.dioala.org/ministries/youth-about.html or e-mail our diocesan Youth Ministries Coordinator Susan Oakes at soakes@dioala.org.
Young People Paint Birmingham

Young People Paint Birmingham, a local mission experience made possible by our diocese in partnership with Urban Ministry’s Joe Rush Center, is open to all rising 7th through 9th-graders. During this week of mission, the youth and their leaders spend days working hard and evenings enjoying programs, fellowship, and rest.

The work of Young People Paint Birmingham is growing, and we’re finding ways to accommodate as many junior high youth as we can in this ministry. As the work grows, our faith grows too. We’re meeting Jesus along the way.

This year Young People Paint Birmingham will be June 16–20. Please save the dates! For more information and to register, please visit http://www.dioala.org/ministries/youth-about.html.

Sharing and Learning at Province IV Meeting

“Out of the many things I learned at the Province IV meeting, the biggest thing I took away was a greater appreciation for our diocese,” says Julia, who serves as a Youth Department Member-at-Large. “In comparison, the challenges that we face (at least from a youth perspective) come only from being human and nothing more, which is something to be extremely proud of. I also feel that I have a better understanding of what it means to be an Episcopalian after meeting so many other youth just like me from all around the Southeast and hearing about their experiences with their diocese and life in general.”

Kit, who serves as the Youth Department Representative from the Birmingham District, notes, “I was so privileged to go to the Province IV meeting. Not only did we learn so much about how other dioceses across our province function, but we also met some pretty cool people. We shared a lot during icebreakers and warm-ups, the food bar for every meal was pretty amazing, and the camp was really beautiful too—and it was on the beach. I am so glad I got to go with these great people!”

The Rites of Spring/EYC Convention

All senior-high youth are welcome to attend the important and fun-filled Rites of Spring/EYC Convention at Camp McDowell on March 28-30. This is your opportunity to run for and/or help elect the Youth Department Representatives for the upcoming year; to learn more about running for office, please visit http://www.dioala.org/ministries/youth-about.html, or speak with a current Youth Department Representative.

The cost is $115, and scholarships are available. Online registration ends March 14. For more information and to register, please e-mail Youth Director Kristin Hanson at Kristin@stjohnsdecatur.org.
Have you ever wanted to learn how to play a musical instrument? Are you ready to stop standing on the sidelines and learn how to dance? Come join us at the Alabama Folk School at Wonderful, Wonderful Camp McDowell for these upcoming workshops!

For more information please e-mail me at folkschool@campmcdowell.com or call Camp McDowell at 205/387-1806. Also visit www.alfolkschool.com for details and to register.

From Scratch Weekend
February 21-23
Learn a new hobby in a safe and relaxed environment surrounded by people just like you who are learning a new talent from scratch. We are offering classes in ukulele, mandolin, fiddle, harmonica, dance, and blacksmithing.

Bluegrass and Gee’s Bend Week
April 14-17
You don’t want to miss out on this workshop! Choose from one of eight bluegrass music classes or try your hand at quilting with loving guidance from Mary Ann and China Pettway of Gee’s Bend, Alabama, or screen printing from the talented and well-known Amos Kennedy. The beautiful spring weather will be a great addition to this fun week.

Jam Camp
June 20-22
This is Summer Camp for adult music lovers! Come to the Alabama Folk School to jam with friends and family in a relaxed setting, while taking breaks to enjoy canoeing, hiking, swimming, and more. Bring your instrument and bathing suit!

The Best Summer Ever Is Coming
By Susanna Whittett, Camp McDowell Staff

Our schedule for the best summer ever is ready!

Camps fill up quickly, so register now at www.campmcdowell.com; Episcopalians in our diocese will receive priority registration until March 3. For more information please contact me at susanna@campmcdowell.com.

June 17-21  Elementary 2 Camp for 4th and 5th graders
June 23-28  Junior High 1 Camp for rising 6th and 7th graders
June 29-July 1  Special Session Staff Training (age 16 and older)
July 1-6  Special Session for adults with special needs
July 7-14  Sophomore Camp for 8th and 9th graders
July 17-22  Middler Camp for 5th and 6th graders
July 25-31  Junior High 2 Camp for 7th and 8th graders
August 1-3  Primary 2 Camp for 1st-3rd graders with one adult

Father/Son Retreat
February 28-March 2
1st graders and up
The Father/Son Retreat is for ALL combinations of fathers and sons. This weekend is about spending lots of quality time together hiking, canoeing, doing the ropes course, enjoying bonfires, and singing plus a great program and meaningful worship. This is the stuff lifelong memories are made of—come join us! Register online at www.campmcdowell.com; registration closes February 26. For more information please contact me at susanna@campmcdowell.com.

Mother/Daughter Retreat
April 4-6
1st graders and up
The Mother/Daughter Retreat is for ALL combinations of mothers and daughters. This weekend is about spending lots of quality time together enjoying Camp McDowell in the beautiful springtime, camp activities, and singing plus a great program and meaningful worship. You may choose to do as much or as little as you like—“rocking chair therapy” is a favorite at this retreat. Register online at www.campmcdowell.com; registration closes April 2. For more information please contact me at susanna@campmcdowell.com.

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All rising 9th and 10th graders are invited to participate in this milestone first-ever event to be held at Bethany @ Camp McDowell!

God created humankind in God’s own image and calls us into relationship as collaborators in the ongoing work of Creation. We are called by God to CREATE! We will explore what this idea means in many different ways at this new weeklong event by working, worshipping, playing, learning, resting, singing, being in community, and Building the Kingdom of God. With the intention of developing a mission opportunity for this age group, we will spend a significant amount of time doing a variety of jobs to CREATE at Bethany and the McDowell Farm School. The jobs may include painting buildings, building fences and sidewalks, harvesting vegetables, and splitting and gathering firewood for the winter.

Registration is now open at www.campmcdowell.com; the cost for the week is $280, and scholarships are available. For more information, please e-mail registrar Sarah Nee at folkschool@campmcdowell.com.

Come Make Music and Dance!
By Sarah Mills Nee, Director

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In the Diocese of Alabama, we have 91 congregations, each of them with its own gifts and graces, each with its own challenges and difficulties. Each of these congregations is different from any of the rest of them, and yet each of them has the same purpose and mission—to reconcile the world and its people in the love of God through Jesus Christ. Some of our congregations are “high church,” some are “low church”; some are large, many are small; some are more formal or progressive or youth and family-oriented or in small towns, others are informal or traditional or appealing to an older set or in a city. And all of them are brought together in the mission that our Lord Jesus entrusted to the Church.

One of the best ways we pursue that mission together is Camp McDowell, the camp and conference center we all own together. Many of you have been there for something or another, some of you many times for many things, and I hope you’ll agree with me that it is a place where we see and feel and know God more fully: holy ground. Some of you have never been there, perhaps because of the false assumption that a summer camp must be rustic to the point of being primitive. Whether you’ve been there or not, whether you’re “high church” or “low,” whether you’re conservative or liberal or urban or rural, whether it’s War Eagle or Roll Tide, whether you stand or kneel at Rite One or Rite Two, whether you want the Hymnal or Alleluia III or Lift Every Voice and Sing—this is holy ground that we all own together. Our friend the Rev. Rich Webster, the rector of St. Luke’s in Birmingham, calls it “Common Ground.” No matter where you live in our diocese, this is our place, a place our various responses to the mission of the Church come together.

In the Diocese of Alabama, Camp McDowell is at the heart of our life and ministry together. The more I listen to other bishops talk about where they live and serve, the more fortunate I know we are—some dioceses in the Episcopal Church are having to sell their camps and conference centers, lacking the business to keep them open and losing the incredible opportunity for the same sorts of mission and ministry that we are expanding.

Someday soon you’ll be given the opportunity, as an individual or as a parish, to contribute to the Bethany at Camp McDowell capital campaign. I hope you’ll see this as your chance to be part of this diocesan effort. I really do believe we are building a gift for our children and grandchildren, an especially spiritual place that will continue to bring them together in the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ long after we’re gone. I hope you’ll take advantage of the opportunity to give, to be a part, to stand together in our corner of Christ’s Holy Church with our diocesan family on “Common Ground.”

God’s Peace,

The Rt. Rev. John McKee Sloan
The 11th Bishop of Alabama

Please continue to read Diggin’ Bethany in future issues of The Alabama Episcopalian and visit www.BethanyAtCamp.com for updates on the capital campaign. For more information, please contact Development Director Danielle Dunbar at 205/358-9234 or danielle@campmcdowell.com.
You may be familiar with the notion called six degrees of separation that says everyone on earth is connected through a chain of six people (remember the 1993 movie *Six Degrees of Separation* or the “Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon” game?). The three degrees of influence idea follows those same lines—we are able to influence our friends and their friends. While both are interesting theories, I do believe that our actions at Camp McDowell can have a ripple effect and influence our friends as well as their friends, possibly people we have never met.

Camp McDowell provides a place for ministry to happen, and the staff and volunteers view their work as a way to minister to others. So what looks like an environmental educator showing a student how to identify a tree becomes a minister preaching about God’s creation. And what seems to be a fun counselor goofing off with the boys in his cabin becomes Christ walking and talking with his disciples.

As the Rev. Mark Johnston, our executive director and vicar, says, “Things that happen at camp, don’t stay at camp.” All of the people involved in our retreats and ministries take what they learn at Camp McDowell back out into the world. This is what God asks us to do, and it is astounding to think about how many people have been affected by summer camp, the Environmental Center, Cursillo, parish retreats, the Alabama Folk School, and now the Farm School. Everyone who comes to Camp McDowell can help create the ripple effect—Cursillo staff, parish priests, schoolchildren and teachers, summer camp staff, Folk School instructors and students, and more.

The facts and figures below paint a picture about how many people come to Camp McDowell and how successful our business is—but they don’t tell the whole story. If you haven’t joined us at Camp McDowell yet, please come and introduce yourself to the story that continues to unfold here every day. You will be blessed by your experience, and you will possibly influence your friends and their friends to love as God first loved us.
The Evolution of Environmental Education at Camp McDowell

By Heather L. Montgomery

It was 1994, and I was fresh out of graduate school in Ohio with a degree in environmental education. Where was I headed? A brand-new environmental education center in northern Alabama. My classmates warned me that the prospects for environmental education in the South were just about dead. That it would be a dead-end. That I should head north or west for good career opportunities.

But I didn’t. I moved into a cinderblock room on the lip of a canyon at Camp McDowell. At that point, the “Environmental Center” consisted of one program director, three and a half seasonal instructors, a collection of lesson plans, and Tupperware bins of equipment all stuffed into the “library” at Stough Lodge.

That first spring we were fortunate enough to have the support of Episcopal schools and teachers from across the state, but our numbers were slim—and the next fall they were slimmer. Many days our “teachers” were kept busy cutting new trails, painting vehicles, and doing example classes for school administrators. Soon, though, word spread, and yellow buses from non-Episcopal groups ventured down that long road and rolled into the wonder of Camp McDowell.

Through the years, environmental educational programs evolved—Feathers in Focus, Nature Day Camp, The Garden of Eden, Elderhostel, Homeroom Habitat, Venture Out!, The Alabama Folk School, Growing Roots, etc. Some stood the test of time; others served their need and were retired. To meet the program needs, the facilities grew—the dining hall at Stough Lodge doubled, the Welcome Center grew out of the woods, blueprints became Miller Commons, and, cabins popped up on both the boys’ and girls’ sides of Camp McDowell.

Now, nearly 20 years after I made my way to Camp McDowell, the “Treehouse” (the upstairs of the Welcome Center) welcomes the muddy boots of almost 20 Environmental Center staff. New components of Bethany are being raised daily. The Farm Education program is beginning to bloom. And beyond that, environmental education in Alabama is thriving. Camp McDowell has played a vital role in bringing an environmental literacy plan to the state, invigorating the environmental education community, and training leaders who venture forth across our state and the country.

Each expansion at Camp McDowell—whether physical or programmatic—reaches out to a new audience. Like new species in nature, the expansions take advantage of a resource (the property of Camp McDowell) that is not being maximized (such as cabins during the week-days, an old clear-cut area, and artisans with skills). They feed on all that the resource has to share, and they multiply. Each one opens the cathedral of hemlocks, the spirit around the campfire, and the font of St. Christopher’s waterfall. Each one shares the message of stewardship and brings everyone who works at or visits Camp McDowell closer to creation.

A 5th grader asked instructor Nathan Ruby, “Can we solo hike again? I want to keep hearing the birds singing while we are quiet.”
Many Thanks to Our Village of “Saints”

By the Rev. Mark Johnston, Executive Director and Vicar

It takes a village of saints to build Bethany, and part of that village is the wonderful housekeeping crew at Camp McDowell. If camp rooms were not clean, if buildings were not maintained, and if meals were not good, we could not have the success we have experienced that is allowing us to bring the dream of Bethany to reality.

In my 23-plus years at Camp McDowell, I have never had anyone complain to me that their cabin or room was not clean. Diana Legg, who is the head of the housekeeping crew, is the only camp employee who has been here longer than I have, and she will tell you, “I always clean for the guests as I would if they were coming to my own home.”

In a normal week, Diana and her crew clean the summer camp area at least twice, often three times. They will often clean Stough Lodge and the lodges at Miller Commons twice. It is not unusual for them to “wear their running shoes” and have to clean quickly as one group arrives before the other leaves. During the school year this always happens on “Wacky Wednesdays”—the days when they must clean all of the camp cabins in a couple of hours as one group of schoolchildren leave their cabins at 8 a.m. and the next group arrives at the Environmental Center at 10 a.m.

Saints Diana, Carolyn, Julie, Pam, Judy, Joe, Tina, you, and me!

Come Walk the Road Into Bethany

The next time you are at Camp McDowell, walk the road into Bethany and see our progress for yourself! For more information, please contact Development Director Danielle Dunbar at danielle@campmcdowell.com or 205/358-9234. Also visit www.BethanyAtCamp.com.

“Did you know that Hoover Dam (once known as Boulder Dam) is 660 feet wide at the bottom? Our dam is 320 feet wide—we are holding our own!” Mark Johnston proudly notes.

FROM DIRT AND DREAMS TO REALITY
Hosting a Very Special Party

By Jen Manning, Senior High Youth Minister of St. Stephen’s in Birmingham

High-school and college students from around our diocese hosted a very special Christmas party for 45 Special Session campers at Camp McDowell on December 15. During the Special Session camp each July, the students serve as counselors and take care of the campers 24 hours a day. For the party, the counselors made all of the cookies, decorated the party room, and spent the afternoon having a wonderful time with the campers—who thoroughly enjoyed being back at Wonderful, Wonderful Camp McDowell!

Special Session is the highlight of the year for most of these campers. Nine years ago, some of the adults who staff Special Session thought it would help “shorten” the time between the once-a-year summer camps to invite the campers to come back at Christmastime—and so the holiday party tradition began. This “extra” time of reunion, fellowship, and joy has become a much-loved part of this special ministry.

Apply Now for Day Camp Staff

It’s time to apply to be on the 2014 Sawyerville Day Camp staff. We are offering three sessions this year: Session 1—June 14-20, Session 2—June 21-27, and Session 3—July 6-12. We are offering one day of training for new staff members on April 26 as well as our local staff training on May 17. Please read the information below even if you have served on staff before. Due to the number of applicants and the quality of the program we like to run staff before. Due to the number of applicants and the quality of the program we like to run.

Applicants must be at least 16 years old (there is no maximum age!) and willing to volunteer their time for at least one full session. If you are age 16 to 18, you must have a parent or guardian present when you fill out this application, and that person needs to fill out the parental release portion and give permission for you to staff since this is a youth event of the Diocese of Alabama. We have combined all of the paperwork into one application this year—please take the time to fill it out completely! If you need a hard copy, please contact Crystal Jones at cjones@dioala.org or 205/358-9226. Please apply only once. If you are an adult and want to help for only a day or two, please e-mail Leslie Manning at lmanning@dioala.org. You may apply for more than one session.

The deadline for applications is April 1. The Sawyerville staff selection team will do their best to place you in the session that works best for you and your schedule. Staff selections are made right after the deadline, and you will be notified by mid-April. For more information please contact Staff Registrar Crystal Jones at cjones@dioala.org or 205/358-9226, or Camp Director and Sawyerville Coordinator Leslie Manning at lmanning@dioala.org or 205/715-2060 ext. 9242. Also visit www.sawyervilletoworkproject.org.

Come Be Part of Special Session!

Looking for an amazing way to spend a week this coming summer? Be a volunteer counselor and help take care of a special needs camper at Special Session from June 29 through July 6. It is an incredible experience for both the campers and counselors. Many of our staff members come back again and again, and they all say that it is the best week of the year!

If you are at least 16 years old or have completed the 10th grade or if you are in college, please fill out an application on the Camp McDowell website, www.campmcdowell.com (follow the Summer Camp & Events link to Special Session, and scroll down to the link to the Counselor Application); the deadline to apply is May 1. For more information, contact Jen Manning at jenniferkmanning@gmail.com.

Remembering Debbie Tabb

By Leslie Manning, Camp Director and Sawyerville Coordinator

It is with great sadness that we report to you the recent death of our dear friend, Sawyerville superhero and Site Coordinator Debbie Tabb. Ms Debbie fought long and hard during her almost decade-long battle with cancer.

Ms. Debbie inspired us in so many ways, both in her advocacy work for cancer research and survivors as well as in her work with Sawyerville Day Camp and so many other local organizations. She worked hand in hand with me in the days leading up to the day camp sessions and also on the ground in the summer. She served as a year-round advisor and was a member of our diocesan Sawyerville Commission for years. She coordinated the Hale County school buses both professionally and also for the Day Camp sessions, and her care and love for the children of Hale County was unmatched.

She was our wisest counsel and the main reason for the success of the Sawyerville Day Camp over the years. She did not “just” coordinate buses, nor did she “just” tell us when it was time to expand to a mini-camp and later to three day camp sessions, but she also deeply improved our relationship with the area board of education to the excellent status it has now, brought the bus drivers on as full staff members, lined up even more local staff members and volunteers and helped put them in a place of pastoral care and mentoring roles for the young staff, and led us to the place where we can dream about the future while allowing our roots to grow deeper.

In God’s good time, we will know the best way to show tribute to this amazing and faithful woman. We ask for your prayers for Ms. Debbie’s daughter Danisha, her grandchildren Jamal and Jaylan, and all of her family and friends. Please also pray for the Sawyerville Day Camp family. I know one Camp Director who misses her friend already.

May God’s peace and perpetual light shine on Ms. Debbie, and may she rest in peace and rise in glory.
Giving the Gift of Christmas to Children in Haiti

By Andrew Shea

Can you imagine not getting any gifts at Christmas or never going to a party? That’s usually the case for many of the children in Haiti. Not this year though—thanks to the generosity of the many benefactors of our diocesan Krik! program and a special group of clergy spouses, the children at St. Alban’s school in Bouzi, Crochu, received gifts aplenty and everyone had more than enough delicious foods to eat!

For the second year, Krik! Krak! hosted a Christmas party for more than 200 students. The daylong festivities featured each class (kindergarteners through 6th graders) performing musical numbers and skits, a bundle of gifts organized by age and gender distributed by a couple of Santa’s elves who made the trip to Haiti, and a simple but lavish meal lovingly prepared by the faithful kitchen staff. The kids were overjoyed by the gifts of toy cars, dolls, stuffed animals, sunglasses, nail polish, soap, toothbrushes, and even socks—and each belly went home full and satisfied by luxuries not usually afforded in that part of the world.

The teachers and other school staff received a small bonus for all the hard work they do. Most of them travel up the mountain for the week at school and return home to their families on the weekends—they sacrifice a lot to teach in such a unique and challenging place.

I heard someone say that every kid deserves a Christmas, and I think that’s true. Coming from a place where presents are torn open and tossed aside to move on to the next, it’s refreshing to see these children and the people who work at the school be so happy and grateful for the small things we provided. Christmas never really is about the gifts you receive, it’s about showing other people that you care for and appreciate them and they are special... and everyone deserves that.

Trinity in Demopolis
“Floats” in Parade

By the Parish Staff

Members of Trinity in Demopolis created one of five new floats for the city’s 42nd annual “Christmas on the River” festival day parade in December. The theme of the parish’s float was Winter. It featured a “snow-covered” replica of historic St. Andrew’s in Prairieville, which is under Trinity’s care, with children from the parish providing a living Nativity.

Trinity member Stanhope Brasfield, who also serves as one of the trustees of St. Andrew’s, did the primary construction work, and Patricia Gaddy chaired the float construction committee. Parishioner Ben Sherrod served as the overall director of the parade.

Throwing a Party for Kyle Home Residents

By Staff of Holy Comforter in Gadsden

The parishioners of Holy Comforter in Gadsden continued their annual tradition of throwing a Christmas party for the residents of Kyle Home. The parish’s Great Hall came alive with parishioners and visitors who came to help the 17 current residents of the home celebrate the holidays. They enjoyed snacks and a delicious meal, and the residents received gifts purchased by parish families. Kevin Yates, the parish’s EYC director, noted the expressions of joy on the faces of both the givers and receivers.

Kyle Home, named in honor of the Kyle family who donated the property to the parish for the facility, opened in 1983 with nine residents. A ministry of Holy Comforter, the nonprofit corporation is licensed by the State of Alabama Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation for 18 residents and governed by a board of directors elected from the membership of the parish.
ECW Scholarships Available—Apply Now!

By Theresa Hester, Committee Chair

Our diocesan ECW Scholarship Committee is accepting applications for its two scholarship programs—the College Scholarship Program and the Women at the Well Program. College scholarships are open to any communicant of our diocese who meets the eligibility requirements, which are based on need, church involvement, and merit. Women at the Well scholarships are available to women, both lay and clergy, who seek spiritual refreshment.

Last year, the committee awarded 17 college scholarships ranging from $575 to $1000 each; over the past decade, the ECW has awarded a total of more than $140,000 in college scholarships. An applicant must be a communicant in good standing with the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Alabama, accepted or enrolled in an academic institution of college rank, pursuing professional certification or a degree from an accredited institution, able to show financial need, and a recipient of no more than one previous ECW scholarship. All college scholarships are based on need (40 percent), church involvement and activities (40 percent), and merit (20 percent). An applicant should be able to document her/his family’s financial status (Form 1040). An application for a college scholarship may be made any year a student is in college, but an award to any one person is limited to a maximum of two years. Awards will be announced in June, and the granted funds will be sent directly to the registrar’s office of the institution of the recipient’s choice.

Application packets for college scholarships must be complete and delivered by April 30. Each application form must be accompanied by a transcript, a digital photograph, and a short essay, along with a church involvement survey completed by the applicant’s parish priest (or senior warden, if there is a vacancy) or college chaplain. To obtain an application packet, please visit our ECW website, www.alabamecw.org, and follow the links to Ministries and then College Scholarship Program. College scholarships are made possible by the very generous donations of persons who have taken to heart the education of our members. If you or your parish would like to contribute to the education of a young person in our diocesan church family, please consider making a gift to the ECW College Scholarship Fund. Please send your contribution to ECW, Diocese of Alabama, 521 North 20th Street, Birmingham, AL 35203-2611; note ECW College Scholarship Fund in the memo line of your check.

ECW Scholarships; or contact me at hester.theresa@yahoo.com or 205/451-9806.

Women at the Well scholarship applications may be submitted at any time. An applicant must be a lay or clergy woman who is a communicant in good standing with the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Alabama, accepted or enrolled in a spiritual or religious program or lecture, and a recipient of no more than one previous ECW scholarship. Each recipient may receive no more than $400. For more information, please contact me at hester.theresa@yahoo.com or 205/451-9806.

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Trinity Commons Supports UAB Children’s Festival

By the Rev. Bill Blackerby, Episcopal Campus Chaplain for Birmingham

Smolian International House offers a variety of services and activities for international students, scholars, and their families. It provides a central focal point for programs and activities designed to foster a free exchange of information and international understanding among people of all nations, races, and cultures.

Fifteen volunteers from Trinity Commons helped children of UAB international students and faculty decorate tiny pumpkins and create bead jewelry. They also assisted with games including beanbag toss, disc drop, and ring toss, and handed out lots of prizes. And they met people from countries all over the world including China, Saudi Arabia, Hungary, Nigeria, Finland, Russia, Egypt, and Japan.

This was the 12th year in a row that Trinity Commons/Birmingham Episcopal Campus Ministries hosted this chaotically fun event, and plans are already under way for next year’s lucky 13th Children’s Festival hosted by the Trinity Commons gang. Many thanks go to our administrator Kristin Richman for coordinating the event and intern Olivia Collette for recruiting volunteers.

Hosting a Craft Day for Special Children

By Staff of Holy Trinity in Auburn

Holy Trinity in Auburn hosted a Christmas craft day for children with special needs on December 14. Thirteen children participated in the inaugural event, which was hosted by Trinity’s EYC and adult members. The children created a variety of crafts, played games, sang songs, ate pizza, and laughed. It was a rainy day, but the rain didn’t dampen the spirits of participants, according to the Rev. Thomas Joyner, Holy Trinity’s associate rector.

Parishioner Kelly Shaw, a pediatric physical therapist, coordinates Camp Mountain Top, a weeklong session each summer for children with special needs from the Auburn and Opelika area. Her work provided the impetus for this year’s craft day, and parishioners Sally Hudson and Samantha Lawrie organized the event. We hope this will be the beginning of a new and ongoing ministry.

ECW Scholarships; or contact me at hester.theresa@yahoo.com or 205/451-9806.

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St. Andrew’s in Birmingham Celebrates Centennial

By Parish Staff

St. Andrew’s certainly celebrated its 100th anniversary at its current location in grand style on Sunday, November 24. More than 175 people attended the centennial service, and they donated $700 to Community Kitchens, making this another “red letter date” in the parish’s already illustrious history.

St. Andrew’s began as a Sunday School outreach of the Church of the Advent in 1902, and it was established as a parish and admitted to full parochial rights at the diocesan convention of 1906. In March 1913, a tornado destroyed the original church building, which stood a few blocks from the present site, 11th Avenue and 12th Street South. The parish acquired the new property, and the 3rd Bishop of Alabama, the Rt. Rev. Charles Minnigerode Beckwith, laid the cornerstone on St. Andrew’s Day, November 30, 1913. The congregation used the current building for the first time at Easter 1915.

During the centennial worship service, the Rev. Francis Walter, who served as the parish’s 13th rector, preached a wonderful sermon; the Rev. Marc Burnette, the 14th rector, celebrated the Eucharist; and the Rev. Maurice Branscomb, the 12th rector, blessed a new historical marker. Other clergy who have served or are currently serving the parish also participated in the celebration, including the Rev. Rusty Goldsmith, the Rev. Dr. Roy Wells, the Rev. Dr. Jim Tuohy, and the Rev. Deacon Gerri Aston. Seminarians Bentley Manning and Tommie Watkins also joined in the celebration. During the brief program following the service, the Rev. Bill Blackerby, Episcopal Campus Minister for Birmingham and Chaplain of Trinity Commons, read a proclamation from Bishop Sloan.

The service featured special music by the choir under the direction of Stephan Calvert, with brass instrumental accompaniment. A bagpiper led an extra-long special procession around the church building and in front of Trinity Commons. A festive lunch catered by Nancy Hallmark was enhanced by a special DVD presentation of photographs of the church and its members compiled by Bertram Perry.

Leading up to the November event and following it, St. Andrew’s has hosted a preaching series featuring some of the people the parish has sent to seminary, including the Rev. Seth Olson of St. John’s in Decatur, the Rev. Geoff Evans of St. Mary’s-on-the-Highlands in Birmingham, the Rev. Robyn Arnold of Grace Church in Birmingham, the Rev. Katie Nakamura Rengers of St. Luke’s in Birmingham, and seminarian Bentley Manning. As part of the centennial celebration, the parish gave St. Andrew’s historical materials to the Birmingham Public Library Archives, framed portraits of former rectors, commissioned an icon and a banner of St. Andrew, and updated Barbara Schnorrenberg’s history of the parish.

The members of the centennial committee included the Rev. Rusty Goldsmith, Roger Conville, Rebecca Drake, Elin Glenn, Theresa Hester, Tommy McGlothlin, Parrish Nored, Stephanie Rhodes, and Barbara Sloan, who served as chair.
More Than a Place on a Map—Haiti Is People
By the Rev. Thomas Joyner, Assistant Rector of Holy Trinity in Auburn

Haiti is more than a place on a map or a spot we pray for on Sunday mornings. Haiti is people with great needs, great faith, and great smiles who welcome and benefit from what the people of our diocese can offer them.

For the fifth time, Holy Trinity in Auburn sponsored a medical mission to Haiti last fall. For five days, Dr. Keith Adkins; Dr. Will Meadows; Betsy Stallworth, RN; Sally Hudson, RN (a member of our diocesan Companion Diocesan Commission); and I participated in three medical clinics. We worked with the people of St. Simeon in Croix de Bouquet and the medical community in Haiti to see and treat more than 550 people in three clinics in Lespwa Timoun, Thomazeau, and Crochu. We saw mothers and children, fathers and grandparents all arrive in great numbers because they had not seen a doctor since April. The people of Haiti, like people everywhere, want to be made whole and well when they’re hurting and sick.

In addition to medical checkups and providing much-needed medicine, we also toured the expansion of the school at St. Simeon’s and the continued work on the new Lespwa Timoun Clinic—both are impressive and welcome additions to life in Haiti. We stayed with the Rev. Pierre and Carmen Valdema at St. Simeon in Croix de Bouquet and enjoyed the hospitality and wonderful food they provided. We encourage the people of our diocese to continue doing good work in our companion diocese and hopefully increase our presence and relationship with St. Simeon’s and the people of Haiti.

Icons in Transformation Exhibition Coming to Huntsville
By the Staff of the Church of the Nativity

The Church of the Nativity in Huntsville is delighted to be hosting Icons in Transformation, an exhibition featuring approximately 90 pieces created by acclaimed contemporary artist Ludmila Pawlowska. This remarkable exhibition, which has toured cathedrals and museums in both Europe and the United States, will be open on display at the Nativity from February 23 through April 20.

Traditional and modern icons are sometimes described as “windows to heaven” or a “showing forth of God.” The purpose of an icon is to represent the divine in a way that beckons the viewer, and the focus is on what the viewer sees through the icon rather than on the icon itself. Ludmila’s art presents a contemporary expression of this ancient art form. Her works incorporate a focus on eyes, deep reds and blues, textures achieved with dramatic layers of paint, metallic surfaces such as gold leaf, and small objects.

The pieces vary greatly in size—from very large double-sided 4 x 8-foot panels hanging from the arches in the nave to moderate-size works throughout the church and small objects. All the works are available for purchase.

As the exhibition’s only venue in Alabama, the Nativity offers it as a gift to the community as well as people throughout our diocese. This dramatic offering can also serve as a powerful enhancement to the journey through the Lenten season undertaken by many faith communities. The exhibition will be open Tuesday through Friday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and on Saturday from 1 to 3 p.m. Docents will be present to answer questions and guide visitors. Group tours can be arranged by contacting Wimberley Watts at 256/755-3980 or wimberleywatts@comcast.net.

Special events during the exhibition will include:

- Icons Art Day for Children from 10 a.m. to noon on March 8
- Youth Art Gathering on March 9
- A short Lenten service and homily presented by Father Kevin Millas of the Greek Orthodox Church of St. Constantine and St. Helen in Huntsville at 12:05 p.m. on March 11 (call 256/533-2455 to reserve a simple lunch after the service)
- Dinner followed by a program presented by Dr. Julia Gatta, Professor of Pastoral Theology at the University of the South in Sewanee, from 5:15 to 7 p.m. on March 12 (the program is open to all; call 256/533-2455 to make dinner reservations)
- Concert featuring the Cantare Vocal Ensemble at 5 p.m. on March 29
- Dinner followed by a program presented by Father Paul Costopoulos, Dean of the Holy Trinity-Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Birmingham, from 5:15 to 7 p.m. on April 2 (the program is open to all; call 256/533-2455 to make dinner reservations)
- Additional events may be scheduled; please check the Nativity website, nativity@dioala.org, for updated information.

For more information about the exhibition and related activities, or a poster for your bulletin board, please contact Virginia Caruso at 256/508-9142 or virginiaarcarus@gmail.com or Helen Vaughn at 256/534-4202 or vaughnart@bellsouth.net.
Around Our Diocese

St. Paul’s Hosts An Evening of Music

By Staff of St. Paul’s in Greensboro

St. Paul’s in Greensboro invites everyone to “An Evening of Music” hosted by the Greensboro Music Study Club and the Louise Fontaine Withers Guild at 4 p.m. on Sunday, February 23. The Parish Choir of St. Mary’s-on-the-Highlands in Birmingham and members of the Alabama Symphony Orchestra will present a choral concert including music of Bach, Mendelssohn, Lloyd Webber, Candlyn, and Mozart. The concert is free, and a reception will be held afterward in the parish hall.

The choir regularly leads Sunday worship, performs an annual Advent Lessons and Carols, supports all Feast Day services, and offers various major works throughout the year at St. Mary’s-on-the-Highlands. The choir’s repertoire is rooted in the rich tradition of Anglican choral music and also draws heavily on continental experience, including music from the 16th century to the present day. While on tour in France and England, the choir members gave concerts in the American Episcopal Cathedral in Paris, Canterbury Cathedral in England, and St. Paul’s Cathedral in London. This is the choir’s first performance in Greensboro.

The members are delighted to be visiting St. Paul’s and grateful for the parish’s kind hospitality.

For more information please call St. Paul’s at 334/624-8866 or visit stpaulsselma.dioala.org.

Celebrating Traditional Misa de Fieles Difuntos

By the Staff of the Ascension in Montgomery

The Hispanic ministry of the Church of the Ascension in Montgomery celebrated All Souls’/All Saints’ Day with the traditional Misa de Fieles Difuntos (Mass for the Faithful Departed) on Sunday, November 3. The Rev. Dr. Hernan Afanador-Kafuri celebrated the mass, and the Rev. Bill Winters, the parish’s interim rector, participated in the festivities.

Thirty-five parishioners and visitors admired the Ofrenda (Day of the Dead altar), with pan de muertos (bread of the dead), candles, lights, skulls, and photos of loved ones who have passed on. Before the mass began, the names of the departed were called. A meal of traditional tamales in the style of the state of Chiapas, Mexico, following the service turned the solemn mass into a joyful festival. We’re certain we felt the presence of the Faithful Departed.

Food Pantry Receives $7,000 from Local Foundation

By the Rev. Bob Hennagin, Rector of Holy Comforter in Montgomery

The Central Alabama Community Foundation has awarded the Holy Comforter Food Pantry in Montgomery $7,000 to upgrade the electrical service and purchase a new refrigerator. The improvements will allow the pantry to stock more perishable foods and also serve more clients.

The parish began its food ministry in 2004 operating out of a small closet at the church and serving no more than 10 people a month. Today the pantry, which is staffed entirely by volunteers, serves approximately 360 different families each month, and last year we provided more than 60,000 pounds of food to the hungry of Montgomery County.

Lobsterfest 2013 Benefits Habitat for Humanity

By Christina Dorn of Grace Church in Anniston

Grace Church in Anniston held the parish’s first Lobsterfest 17 years ago with a mission-oriented vision to provide funds for the Habitat for Humanity of Calhoun County. The proceeds from Lobsterfest 2013 allowed the parish to contribute $10,000 to the organization, which provides decent housing for families in the Anniston-area community. Senior Warden Betsy Davis presented the check to Chip Howell, the incoming executive director of the organization.

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Around Our Diocese

Luke’s in Jacksonville for the past seven and a half years. Michael has served as rector of St. Mark’s in Tuscaloosa on February 2. Michael has served as rector of St. Mark’s in Birmingham on January 18. Jayne previously began serving as rector of St. Mark’s in Tuscaloosa on January 12.

Bishops’ Visitation Schedule

February 23, Sunday
10:30 a.m. Bishop Sloan St. Matthias’, Tuscaloosa
10:30 a.m. Bishop Murray St. Joseph on the Mountain, Mentone
6 p.m. Bishop Sloan Canterbury Chapel, Tuscaloosa

March 2, Sunday
10:30 a.m. Bishop Murray Holy Cross, Trussville
11 a.m. Bishop Sloan St. Stephen’s, Smith’s Station

March 4, Tuesday
6 p.m. Bishop Murray St. Michael’s, Millbrook

March 9, Sunday
10:30 a.m. Bishop Murray Messiah, Heflin
11:00 a.m. Bishop Sloan St. Matthew’s, Seale

March 16, Sunday
10 a.m. Bishop Sloan Holy Comforter, Montgomery
10 a.m. Bishop Murray Holy Comforter, Gadsden

March 30, Sunday
10:30 a.m. Bishop Sloan Holy Cross/ St. Christopher, Huntsville
10:30 a.m. Bishop Murray St. Michael’s, Anniston

April 6, Sunday
10 a.m. Bishop Murray St. Stephen’s, Huntsville
11 a.m. Bishop Sloan St. Paul’s, Carlowville

April 13, Sunday
9:30 a.m. Bishop Murray Grace, Sheffield
10 a.m. Bishop Sloan Ascension, Birmingham

Changes in EfM Curriculum

By Nita Caldwell, Our Diocesan EfM Coordinator

Education for Ministry (EfM) mentors and I met at Christ Church in Tuscaloosa in August to review new curriculum materials. EfM is a four-year adult formation program that meets for 36 sessions each “school” year. The first year addresses the Hebrew Bible, followed by the New Testament the second year, church history the third year, and theology, ethics, and interfaith encounters the fourth year.

The new curriculum is the first major revision to EfM materials in 15 years. Previously all of the materials were written and printed by the School of Theology Programs Center in Sewanee, Tennessee, and these materials were only available to those participating in EfM. Even minor revisions to these materials proved costly to the program. The revised curriculum uses standard textbooks for all four years of study. Karen Meredith, EfM program director, selected the textbooks, while longtime EfM contributors Angela Hock and the Rev. Rick Brewer developed a Reading and Reflection Guide to coordinate the work done in the seminar groups.

Alabama has a rich, long-standing tradition of supporting EfM. Last year 36 EfM groups met for sessions, while other groups met “online.” We anticipate the number of groups to remain about the same this year. Our diocese has a contract with the EfM program that provides a number of benefits, including a reduction of $110 in the yearly registration fee for each participant, which saved our EfM participants a total of $29,150 last year. We thank our diocese and participants for supporting this Christian formation program! For more information please visit www.sewanee.edu/efm, contact me at 205/391-8623, or inquire if an EfM group meets in your parish.

Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday

By the Rev. Deacon Judy Quick

This year Bishop Sloan has appointed the third Sunday in Lent, March 23, as Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday. We are all asked to offer up prayers and almsgiving for people around the world struggling with poverty, hunger, and disease. During this Lenten season, Episcopal Relief & Development invites us to reflect on our faith and how we might take action to respond to a hurting world.

The 2014 Lenten Meditations booklet from Episcopal Relief & Development offers a focus on lifting up the least of these by creating opportunities for economic development, especially for women. Various theologians, writers, church leaders, and international partners offer reflections on how scripture speaks to this call.

Please order your Lenten materials by February 15 so that you will receive them by Ash Wednesday, March 5. To order, contact the Episcopal Media Center (EMC) at 866/937-2772, http://episcopalmarketplace.org, or sales@episcopalmedia.org. For more information or a presentation on the work of Episcopal Relief & Development, please contact me at jquick@bellsouth.net or 205/669-6862, or visit www.episcopalrelief.org.

Clergy News

The Rev. Martin Bagay began serving as Interim Rector of St. Francis of Assisi in Indian Springs on January 12.

The Rev. Jayne Pool began serving as rector of St. Mark’s in Birmingham on January 18. Jayne previously served the parish as priest in charge.

The Rev. Dr. Michael Rich began serving as priest in charge in discernment at St. Andrew’s in Birmingham on February 2. Michael has served as rector of St. Luke’s in Jacksonville for the past seven and a half years.
McDowell’s activities!

Remember what summer was like when you were young outside until the sun sets. Recapture those long, lazy days by signing up for Jam Camp this June. Bring your instrument and bathing suit, and enjoy all of Camp McDowell’s activities!

**Upcoming Events, Workshops, and Retreats**

**Church Leadership Conference**

February 21-23 at Kanuga

The Rt. Rev. Stacy Sauls, who is the Chief Operating Officer of the Episcopal Church and the former Bishop of Lexington, Kentucky, along with gifted storyteller the Rev. Jay Gamelin, who is the senior pastor of Pilgrim Lutheran Church in Lexington, South Carolina, will give the keynote addresses. The workshops will include Basics of a Parish Capital Campaign, Communications for Episcopal Leaders, Funding Your Future—the Basics of Planned Giving and Endowments, Leadership for Vibrant Congregations, Stewardship for the New Millennium, and Re-forming for Mission. **For more information please contact Kanuga Conferences, Hendersonville, North Carolina, at 828/692-0077 or www.kanuga.org.**

**Alabama Folk School**

Camp McDowell

The Alabama Folk School is offering three weekend events during the first half of 2014. **For more information please visit alsfolkscchool.com, e-mail Sarah Mills Nee at folkscchool@campmcdowell.com, or call Camp McDowell at 205/387-1806.**

**From Scratch Weekend**

February 21-23

Back by popular demand, our second annual From Scratch Weekend will feature classes just for beginners. Did you get a new musical instrument for Christmas, or have you always wanted to try blacksmithing? Well now is your chance!

**Bluegrass & Gee’s Bend Week**

April 14-17

This year’s Bluegrass & Gee’s Bend Week is sure to be a good time. Along with the Gee’s Bend quilters, we have two fantastic art classes—one in screen printing with Amos Kennedy and another in puppetmaking with David Stephens. Add in all the members of the band Helen Highwater, and this is a workshop you won’t want to miss!

**Jam Camp**

June 20-22

Remember what summer was like when you were a child? Running through the woods, swimming, staying outside until the sun sets. Recapture those long, lazy summer days by signing up for Jam Camp this June. Bring your instrument and bathing suit, and enjoy all of Camp McDowell’s activities!

**21st Contemplative Outreach**

Birmingham Conference

March 1 from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at St. Francis of Assisi’s in Indian Springs Village

The Rev. Dr. Julia Gatta will lead participants in exploring the theme “I Am the Ground of Thy Beseeching” by examining the mystical foundations of prayer in Julian of Norwich’s book The Revelations of Divine Love. Julia, who is an Episcopal priest, serves as Professor of Pastoral Theology at the University of the South in Sewanee. The cost for the day is $60 and includes lunch. **To register or for more information, please contact Diana Tschache at 205/991-6964 or tschache@bellsouth.net.**

**One—One Event, One Body, One Church, One Mission, One God!**

March 7-9 at Camp McDowell

The ONE Conference—Integrating Heart, Mind, Spirit, and Community by Christina Dorn

Every spring our diocese hosts PLTE (Parish Leadership Training Event), our Commission on Spirituality hosts a spring event, and our Department of Christian Formation offers a Nuts & Bolts workshop.

In the past, lots of folks spent several Saturdays attending these events, but this year we’ve combined all of these into the ONE Conference designed for all clergy, vestry, and lay leaders. You have several options for participation. You may bring your whole family for a night or the entire weekend! You may join us on Friday afternoon for registration, dinner, and keynote address, or come on Saturday for the keynote address and workshops only. A children’s program will be offered during the adult programs and workshop time so this can be an enjoyable time for everyone! Stay over Saturday night for dinner, fun, and a concert. Sunday morning will include worship with children’s liturgy following breakfast in your pajamas!

On Saturday, a variety of informative and hands-on workshops will be offered, including ways to transform hearts for discipleship and learning all about Confirmation to TED talks, Theological Gumbo, parenting classes, special days, and worship with families of young children and those with special needs, radical hospitality, spiritual practices as formation, music as formation, worship as formation, and mission and outreach as formation. You will leave Camp McDowell refreshed and equipped to share what you have learned with people in your parish.

Please plan to join us! We’re offering reduced rates for parishes that send three or more attendees, and scholarships are available. A brochure will be released soon with details about our keynote speaker, workshops, and the rest of the weekend activities. **For more information please contact Kathy Graham, Coordinator of Lifelong Christian Formation, at kgraham@dioala.org or 205/358-9229.**

**Lenten Teaching Mission Led by Bishop Henry Parsley Jr.**

March 23 and 24 at Trinity Church in Clanton

Bishop Henry Parsley Jr. will lead this Lenten teaching mission on the theme “A Reconciled—and Reconciling—Life” at Trinity Church in Clanton. He will preach at the 10:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist on Sunday as well as at the 6 p.m. Evensong on Monday, which will be followed by a soup supper and time of conversation. **For more information please contact the Rev. Bill King at bp3king@bellsouth.net or the parish at 205/755-3339.**

**Young Adults Retreat**

April 25-27 at Camp McDowell

Join us for a spiritual retreat at Camp McDowell for young adults. The Rev. Doug Carpenter will lead the program. **For more information please contact Austin Kendrick Cook at austinkendrickcook@gmail.com or Jennifer Manning at jenniferkmanning@gmail.com.**

**Calling All Gumbo Cook Teams!**

By Kris Mueller, Episcopal Place Director of Development

We are currently recruiting cook teams for our ninth annual fundraising Gumbo Gala, which will be held Saturday, April 26, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Sloss Furnaces in Birmingham. The cooks from the Ascension in Birmingham are already tweaking their recipe in hopes of retaining their 2013 award for the “Most Divine Gumbo.” Several other Episcopal parishes are also hoping to retain last year’s titles, including St. Luke’s “Two Priests and a Pot,” “Holy Apostles With Fire,” and St. Francis of Assisi.

Forty teams are expected to compete at the event, which was voted 1st runner-up for Best Outdoor Festival in 2013 in the “Birmingham’s Best” competition sponsored by The Birmingham News and AL.com. The teams will complete for 14 awards while handing out gumbo for event guests to sample. Guests also can enjoy live music by Rollin’ in the Hay, gumbo cooking demonstrations, family entertainment, theme-related arts, crafts and food vendors promoting Alabama products, and the Gulf coast vibe created around the spray pond at Sloss Furnaces. Rob Conrad, morning show host at Magic 96.5, will serve as the event emcee. Merrimon Epps, a member of St. Mary’s-on-the-Highlands, is serving as chairman of the 2014 Gumbo Gala Planning Committee. **For more information please contact me at kmueller@episcopalplace.org or 205/939-0085, or visit www.episcopalplace.org.**
What’s New/Noteworthy at the Episcopal Book Store

By Cindy Funderburk, Manager

**DZ's Panopticon: An Off-the-Wall Guide to World Religion** by Paul F.M. Zahl

Paul Zahl’s first book in seven years, *DZ’s Panopticon* has been described as entertaining and quirky almost beyond words. Zahl provides a “remarkably fresh survey” of the world’s religions, including some like “money” and “power” that aren’t “organized religions,” and offers “answers” to what it means to be human. It is unlike anything you’ve ever read—in the best possible way.

**Comfortable Words: Essays in Honor of Paul F.M. Zahl** edited by John D. Koch and Todd H. W. Brewer

Paul Zahl has devoted his life to exploring questions about grace and the difference the “comfortable words” of grace make in our lives. This collection of essays written in honor of him seeks to answer those questions. From literary theory to exegesis and systematic theology, this book represents the breadth and depth of the influence Paul Zahl has had on a variety of scholars and reflects his emphasis on the relationship between theology as an academic discipline and the pastoral impact of “one-way love” on everyday people. The contributors include C. FitzSimons Allison, Todd Brewer, George Carey, James D. G. Dunn, Susan G. Eastman, Mark Mattes, Geiko Müller-Farenholz, Justin Holcomb, John D. Koch Jr., Lauren Larkin, Jonathan A. Linebaugh, Jürgen Moltmann, Heinz-Dieter Neef, J. Ashley Null, Raymond C. Orthund Jr., Dylan D. Potter, Justyn Terry, Tullian Tchividjian, Jonathan K. M. Wong, Paul F.M. Zahl, and Simeon Zahl.

**Gospel Transformation Bible–ESV**

The publisher notes that this book was “produced out of the conviction that the Bible is a unified message of God’s grace culminating in Jesus.” A team of more than 50 noted pastors and scholars contributed to this new version, which features in-depth notes about the text “to help readers see Christ in all the Bible and grace for all of life.” Each print edition provides free access to the “Online Gospel Transformation Bible.”

**The Book of Common Prayer: A Biography** by Alan Jacobs

Alan Jacobs, Distinguished Professor of the Humanities in the Honors Program at Baylor University and author of a number of scholarly books, provides a fascinating, fast-paced account of the 464-year history of life that the Book of Common Prayer has both enjoyed and suffered. Conceived to unite English people in a common form of worship, the text soon became pluralistic and a source of controversy. While it was intended to promote the salvation of Christian people, it caused the violent death of Archbishop Thomas Cranmer, who played a key role in having the text compiled and promoting its use. Alan details how the Book of Common Prayer has been involved in political as well as religious controversies, revised to meet specific needs or preferences, and revered by many people for its stately style and Church III, professor of organ at Birmingham-Southern College at 12:30 p.m. at the Advent in Birmingham. For more information please contact Charles Kennedy at kennedy@cathedralsadvent.com or 205/226-3505.

**March 1** 21st Contemplative Outreach Conference featuring the Rev. Dr. Julia Gatta exploring the foundations of prayer in Julian of Norwich’s book *The Revelations of Divine Love*, from 9 a.m. to 3:30 at St. Francis of Assisi’s in Pelham. For more information please contact Diana Tschache at 205/991-6964 or tschached@bellouth.net.

**March 7-9** ONE—One Event, One Body, One Church, One Mission, One God! At Camp McDowell. For more information please see the description on page 22 or contact Kathy Grahm at kgraham@dioala.org or 205/358-9229.

**March 23-24** “A Reconciled—and Reconciling—Life” Lenten Teaching Mission led by Bishop Henry Parsley Jr. at Trinity in Clanton. For more information please see the description on page 22 or contact the Rev. Bill King at bp3king@bellsouth.net or the parish at 205/755-3339.

**Claypool Sermons Available Online**

An audio library of more than 100 sermons by the Rev. Dr. John Rowan Claypool IV has been compiled and is available on our diocesan website at http://dioala.org/Claypool/sermons.html. The library includes sermons from early 1990 to early 2000; additional material will be added as it becomes available. John was born in Franklin, Kentucky, and raised in Nashville, Tennessee. He received his undergraduate degree in philosophy from Baylor University in Waco, Texas, and his theological training at Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, and the Episcopal Theological Seminary of the Southwest in Austin, Texas. He earned a doctorate in theology and received six honorary doctoral degrees.

He was ordained to ministry in 1953 and served as pastor of five Baptist churches in Kentucky, Tennessee, Texas, and Mississippi prior to being ordained an Episcopal priest in 1986. He served as rector of St. Luke's in Birmingham for almost 14 years. He retired from full-time parish ministry in 2000 and served as the professor of homiletics at Mercer University’s School of Theology in Atlanta until his death on September 3, 2005. During that period, he also served part-time as theologian-in-residence at Trinity Church in New Orleans, Louisiana, and as an associate priest at All Saints’in Atlanta.
New Dean Instituted and Inducted

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

The Very Rev. Andrew C. Pearson Jr. was instituted and inducted as Dean and Rector of the Cathedral Church of the Advent during a special service on Saturday, January 25. The Rt. Rev. John McKee Sloan, Bishop of Alabama, served as the celebrant, and the Rt. Rev. Edward L. Salmon Jr., the retired Bishop of South Carolina and Dean and President of Nashotah House Theological Seminary, preached the sermon. Andrew succeeds the Very Rev. Frank F. Limehouse III, who served as dean of the cathedral from 2005 until his retirement on January 12.

Andrew was born in Washington, DC, and grew up in Virginia, where he worked in various youth ministries during his school years. After graduating from the University of Virginia in 2002, he worked for a Christian ministry in Washington, DC, before attending the University of Oxford (Wycliffe Hall), Divinity. After completing his divinity degree in 2007, Andrew served as Associate Rector of the Parish Church of St. Helena in Beaufort, South Carolina. In 2011, he accepted a call to serve as the Canon for Parish Life and Evangelism of the Advent. He also serves on our Diocesan Council. Andrew and his wife, Lauren Saddler Pearson, have three daughters, Lily, Mary Cabell, and Ware.

You can watch the entire service and listen to Bishop Salmon’s sermon on our diocesan website at http://bit.ly/143Rh2g.

Our 183rd Annual Diocesan Convention

“Inspire—Hold Fast to That Which Is Good, Sing to the Lord a New Song”

By Diocesan Staff

St. Alban’s, Holy Apostles’, and St. Thomas’ are hosting our 183rd Annual Diocesan Convention at the Wynfrey Hotel (Hyatt Regency) in Birmingham on February 21 and 22. This will be the second year of a three-year convention theme: “Invite, Inspire, Transform,” a theme borrowed from our Standing Commission on Lifelong Ministry. “This year we will especially consider what it means to inspire and to be inspired,” Bishop Sloan notes.

“At our convention we come together to celebrate the life and work of our diocese, to strengthen and give thanks for the work already done, and to hear the challenges and possibilities before us,”

This year’s convention will be one almost without resolutions. “Rather than having resolution committees addressing topics that concern us with written resolutions to consider and amend, we have designed a structure of having conversations among sisters and brothers without parliamentary procedure, without voting, without winners and losers,” Bishop Sloan explains. “We’ll still vote on the budget, which will be presented by resolution, and still vote for elections, but I’m hoping we can make the conversations more likely to build the Church up and less likely to tear us apart.”

Registration will begin Friday at 5 p.m. with the opening session at 6:30 p.m. The first business session will include introduction of nominees for deputies to the 2015 General Convention and hearing from Bishop Marray. The convention will reconvene on Saturday with business sessions to elect deputies and alternates to General Convention, Standing Committee, Disciplinary Board, and Diocesan Council as well as the presentation of reports and conversations. The convention will conclude with a Eucharist on Saturday evening. You can follow the proceedings live at http://dioala.org/tv.

All 9th through 12th graders in our diocese are invited to attend the Diocesan Convention Youth Lock-in on February 21-22 at St. Luke’s in Birmingham. For more information please see “Calling All Senior-High Youth!” on page 8.