The ONE conference is coming soon so make sure you mark your new calendars. March 7, 2015 is the day! But you can come on March 6, stay till March 8, and have even more fun. Weekend rates, single day rates, and family rates are available and there are scholarships for smaller parishes.

A brochure and online registration are available at: http://www.dioalaministries.org/conferences--events.html.

Last year instead of offering a Parish Leadership Training Event (PLTE), the Commission on Spirituality spring event day and the Dept. of Christian formation Nuts and Bolts workshop day as in years past, it was decided to join forces and offer ONE event. The goal is to help with everyone’s busy schedules by not having so many events with great offerings on so many Saturdays in the spring. The ONE event includes the main elements of the three separate events. And we are doing it again this year.

Camp McDowell, a place central to all formation and spiritual formation, was chosen as the location. So instead of feeling like you have to choose between events or not at all because you cannot be away from Saturday responsibilities now you can get it all in one day (or a weekend). And the best part is that children can attend as well and be a part of a program that is designed just for them incorporating all the great things camp has to offer. So bring the family for the day or the weekend and learn a lot and play a bunch.

There is something for everyone at this year’s event. Saturday morning The Rev. Ron Delbene will present “Living Our Story,” a discussion of spiritual gifts. The rest of the day will include workshop on a variety of topics. All workshops take place on Saturday so if you can’t make it for the entire weekend, Saturday Workshop Day may be just the thing for you.

Workshops will include:
- Parenting – come hear and share with a panel that discusses joys and challenges of single parenting, grandparents parenting, and more. Learn and share ways the church can be helpful in your journey;
- Christian formation programs– Montessori style programs (Catechesis of the Good Shepherd and Godly Play), weeknight programming, Vacation Bible School, and more;
- Coping with life’s transitions;
- Centering Prayer;
- Spirituality in the Book of Common Prayer;
- Nobody Brings a Casserole – learning as a community of faith to respond to mental health issues;
- Parenting in the Pew – children in worship and children’s chapel;
- Music as formation for adults and children;
- The sandwich generation – dealing with palliative care issues, spirituality and nature;
- Labyrinth, yoga and other spiritual practices;
- What is spiritual direction and how/why do I need a spiritual director, teaching children and youth about sexuality;
- Senior adult ministry (parish programs for ages 65 and over– it’s more than retirement home visits and funeral planning);
- Altar guild workshops;
- Flower arranging workshop for flower guilds using nature’s gifts;
- Digital media – it’s uses and benefits in our church settings;
- Acolyte and acolyte master training for adults and youth;
- Worship – writing your own prayers of the people, using the hymnals, Wonder, Love and Praise, and Lift Every Voice and Sing;
- Plus much more.

There will also be guided hikes, canoeing in the new lake, visits to the farm school at Bethany Village, a pasture party and concert, and campfires with s’mores.

For more information contact Kathy Graham at the diocesan office kgraham@dioala.org or visit the website at: http://www.dioalaministries.org/conferences--events.html.
We Ought to Spread Love with Love

“I made up my face as a sad clown with a blue tear going down my cheek, put on my Sewanee academic gown and a blue bandanna on my head…”

very clean-looking young adults came to talk to me. They were Evangelists. I suppose they assumed I had enjoyed too much of something, and that I might be less inclined to try to get away from them, or to move much at all. The young man, noticing my make-up, said, “You know, I’ve been painting tears of sadness on my face lately.” My lips were getting too tired for whistling, so I asked “How come?” He said, “Because of people like you who don’t know the Lord Jesus Christ.”

They sat down; we talked for a long time. Actually the young man did most of the talking, with me tossing something in every once and a while. The young woman spent most of her time looking things up in her Bible; by the time she could find a verse appropriate to refute or instruct me, the moment would usually have passed. By now the Square was getting crowded, and people walked by gave me sympathetic looks, as if I was a victim of Evangelism.

After they realized I wasn’t stoned or drunk and that I knew a little about the Bible, and after I found out that Mark and Laura were seminarians, too, from a different part of God’s Church, the conversation shifted to why we were all there. They didn’t buy the ‘Largest Annual Religious Festival in the United States’ line (neither had I, really.) I told them while I was a victim of Evangelism.

Laura became defensive at that point, and while I was trying to get them to consider the effect they were having on people, she stood up to leave. Just then a college girl, seeing me in a heated conversation with Evangelists, stopped to give me some beads and a smile. I gave her some beads and said “Happy Mardi Gras!” Laura had found the appropriate verse for her parting shot and was reading it when I interrupted her. “Wait a minute!” I said, “Wasn’t that ministry right there? Wasn’t what just happened an expression of the love of God?” He said “There was no ministry there. Neither was there love with love.”

Laura was confused but unconcerned, but the young man was thinking about it, so I kept on. “You say you want others to feel the love of Jesus that you feel. And I say that I want to help others be more aware of the love of God through Jesus that’s all around us. Pretty much the same, right? What’s the difference? Our methods.” Then I gave Laura a bead necklace (she didn’t have any) and said, “I don’t think you can actually spread love by planting guilt or fear. Maybe you ought to spread love with love.”

On Shrove Tuesday, some of us were feeling puny after too much celebrating the night before, so we agreed we could all meet at the public bathrooms on Jackson Square at nine p.m. if they were feeling up to it. I made up my face as a sad clown with a blue tear going down my cheek, put on my Sewanee academic gown and a blue bandanna on my head, and went to the parades. I went to Jackson Square early, just to watch the people. It was nearly deserted, which was fine with me; I sat with my back against one of the streetlight poles, and began to whistle “Just a Closer Walk with Thee,” a New Orleans jazz standard.

As the parades ended, people started to fill the Square, and I was enjoying watching and whistling (an older man threw me a quarter!) when a couple of...
Welcome aboard 2015!

Spirit's work by being open and receptive to how the Spirit is leading. It is through listening, hearing and acting in accordance with the Spirit's leading that our churches grow. This level of 'holy recklessness' will not come cheaply; it may require some significant sacrifices concomitant with a deep level of humility and un-egotistical obedience in giving up some well entrenched stereotypes. This is the era of strengthening and/or regaining the Anglican/Episcopal brand of evangelism and spiritual nurture where 'all are welcome' and hospitality to the 'holy other' (the neighbor, like us made in the likeness and image of God, stands at our door and knocks: Revelations 3: 21) is offered freely as was the pattern of Jesus in the gospel. I say all that to bring this question to you: when strangers come to your church, would they want to come back?

When people come to your church, do they feel welcome? Are they assisted in finding their way around? What can we do to ensure our guests will want to come back and eventually stay? The aim is ultimately to encourage them to take Christ as Savior and remain in the local church where they will grow and serve him. The Church is the place to find love and acceptance. Generally, church folks must have a positive and friendly disposition. That's just being Christian! Let us ask the Lord to give us the tolerance to be open and receptive to people of all backgrounds, whether of different nationality, various age groups, language or culture. He calls them, saves them and fills them with His Spirit. How can we not make them feel welcome in the Father's house? There are individuals who need to put away little prejudices, petty grievances, and silly behavior that would be barriers to visitors to our churches. Ask God for the grace to just smile, lay your grievances down at the altar, and be a help and blessing to others. Here are some points to ponder in this regard.

First, greeters and ushers play a vital role as our first impression. If for one moment we fail to connect and create a pleasant atmosphere for the visitor, we may never get another opportunity, and that person may not want to visit any other Christian church. Our friendliness must touch them. It must be genuine, warm and suggest our offer to help the individual. Our way of dress sends a message of respect and how serious we take what we do. A too casual approach suggests a not too serious approach in our service about so we need to see more souls come to Him. We don't need believers to show a negative face toward our guests. One day, we shall give account for each soul that comes our way. As Jesus gave his all, we can also give our all to show friendliness and build relationships with the stranger, and keep them for eternity and for God's glory.

Second, every believer must be involved in this. People come back to a church for the friendliness of members (or as I would more prefer to say disciples for that's precisely what the Lord calls us to be), cleanliness of facility and care offered for children. So, we need to examine how we handle these areas of ministry. No one should behave unconcerned while assuming there are assigned people who will apply to these functions. At the end of the service, the visitor would have enjoyed worship, received the ministry of the Word and Sacrament, and felt they and their family members enjoyed the warmth of a friendly church. Church members need to be careful in the choice of words spoken to others. Your tone of voice and facial expression tell a lot too. You don't know their emotions as they enter, whether they had tense moments with someone, feel fearful or anxious about their life circumstances, or they feel hurt or disappointed about something. Don't take for granted that they are just happy to be here. Let your words encourage, uplift and strengthen them. Be sure to keep their focus on the Lord Jesus Christ. You don't have to impress them about yourself. God forbid you should begin to state your personal grief and complaints to them. You won't want to discourage a soul seeking after God.

Third, the worship must accommodate them. Worship leaders must be sensitive to include strangers who have never been exposed to Episcopal worship. The flow of hymns/songs should be easy to catch on and reverently ministered. The ministry of the Word must be appropriate. It should be presented in a manner that is not over the head of the visitor, and not below their anticipated standard of intelligence. The skill of presenting the message should hold their attention, increase faith in Jesus Christ, and cause them to desire more of God in their lives. Believers may assist a stranger in sharing a prayer book, showing them how to find passages; offer to walk with them to the altar if they so desire, and praying with them before they leave. Finally, follow up is important. It would make them feel connected if someone nearby asks for their phone number to continue calling and helping them in serving the Lord. At that same time you will appreciate your phone call because when someone is seeking to grow in faith they may need new Christian friends to help them grow in Christ. When I was in parish ministry I never failed in paying a visit to the people who came to my parish. My mentor bishop would always say, “a home going priest makes a church going people”.

As the Holy Spirit brings them to us, let everyone of us work to make sure we keep them and nurture them for Christ, for disciple making is ultimately what the church is about so we need to see more souls come to Him. We don't need believers to show a negative face toward our guests. One day, we shall give account for each soul that comes our way. As Jesus gave his all, we can also give our all to show friendliness and build relationships with the stranger, and keep them for eternity and for God's glory.

Fourth, I am quite aware of many of our churches that are already steeped in demonstrating the many facets of Anglican/Episcopal evangelical practices and we celebrate this holy work. However, these few notations, as we embark on a New Year of ministry, I hope and pray will help to stimulate healthy conversations on growth - spiritual first and numerical if it is God's will. Thereby, opening up the possibility of a breath of fresh ideas flowing through anew in our congregations across the diocese. God is doing a new thing in the Diocese of Alabama and aren't we fortunate to be called to partnership with the Spirit in bringing it to fruition! Amen!!

A very happy, healthy and fruitful New Year 2015 comes with my love and gratitude. Thanks for allowing me to serve as a servant of God among some of the most precious friends I have encountered so far in ministry.

Every blessing!

From Bishop Marray

January/February 2015
Owner demolishes store where Jonathan Daniels died
Commission on Race Relations raising funds for historical marker

By The Rev. Deacon Tom Osborne, Commission on Race Relations Co-Chair

On the cover of the September/October issue of the Alabama Episcopalian there was a moving photograph of the Rt. Rev. Santosh Marray, the Diocese of Alabama’s assistant bishop, and me watching as the Rev. Frank Walter knelt and prayed during the Jonathan Daniels pilgrimage last August.

The site was the front step of the former “Cash Store” turned insurance agency in Hayneville, a small town in Lowndes County, Alabama. It was at this place, 49 years earlier that Episcopalian seminarian Jonathan Myrick Daniels was shot and killed for his involvement in the civil rights movement and his work for basic human rights.

For me the irony was heavy when that issue arrived in the mail, because that very morning I had been surprised to learn that the old historic building in the picture had been razed to make way for a new building.

It was an especially difficult moment because the site has become a place of annual pilgrimage and the apron and step a sacred artifact where hundreds of pilgrims have knelt to touch, to pray, and to connect. Moreover, for the past two years, diocesan leaders, members of the Commission on Race Relations, and Lowndes County and Hayneville community leaders had worked with the building’s owner to find a way to preserve the historic building or at least the concrete apron and step where Daniels died. And we believed we had.

Although that didn’t happen and the building, apron and step are now gone, the site remains a sacred place of pilgrimage. The Diocesan Commission on Race Relations is now working to raise funds to place a historical marker at the site. The project will cost approximately $2,500. It is our hope to dedicate this marker during the pilgrimage this August, as part of the observance of the fiftieth anniversary of Jonathan Daniels’ death.

We will also continue to encourage and support the community’s efforts to convert the old Hayneville Jail -- where Daniels and other civil rights activists were held for the week prior to Daniel’s murder -- into a civil rights museum and a place of learning and reconciliation.

Anyone interested in learning more about these projects is invited to get in touch with me at troborne@una.edu.

Historic Civil Rights Era churches in Selma and Birmingham to hold service of reconciliation

St. Mark’s Episcopal Church in Birmingham and St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Selma will join together on Palm Sunday, March 29, 2015, for a worship service in the spirit of ongoing reconciliation between people of all races in the church, state and country.

This service will also reaffirm St. Paul’s and St. Mark’s commitment to welcome all people in the name of Christ.

Fifty years ago on March 27 when racial tensions were high, the vestry of St. Paul's reaffirmed to abide by Canon 16, Section 4 of the Canons of the Episcopal Church. The canon declared that no one should be excluded from worship based on “race, color or ethnic origin.”

Previously during March of 1965, members of St. Mark’s parish, a historically black church, were not permitted to worship at St. Paul’s because leaders of the church identified these members of St. Mark’s as “outside demonstrators.” However, other leaders of St. Paul’s walked out of worship to join those who were excluded. Together on the steps of St. Paul’s, they joined to say together the General Confession in which we will recognize that no one is worthy to enter the household of God except by the grace and merit of Jesus Christ our Savior,” said Jack Alvey, rector of St. Paul’s. “Everyone then will process into the nave, where members of St. Mark’s and St. Paul’s will serve in the leadership of worship. All are welcome to worship our Lord Jesus Christ with us on Palm Sunday.”

As a sign of a continued commitment to work together, members of both parishes will come together and identify ways to promote peace and reconciliation in both churches and communities.

During the season of Lent, which begins on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 18, 2015, St. Paul’s will also host a Lenten Lecture Series entitled “Opening Doors,” as they prepare for this historic worship on Palm Sunday. The series will take place on Wednesday evenings from 5:30-7:00 p.m. beginning with soup and salad followed by a speaker.

Five speakers have been confirmed, including the Rev. Doug M. Carpenter, retired priest in Alabama and son of former Episcopal Bishop of Alabama who served during the Civil Rights Era, the Rt. Rev. Charles, C.J. Carpenter Sr. (Feb. 25); Mrs. Sharon J. Jackson of Brown Chapel AME in Selma and author of Images of America: Selma (March 11); the Rev. Candice Frazer of St. John’s Episcopal Church in Montgomery (March 18); and Ms. Ruby Sales, Founder/Director of SpiritHouse Project in Atlanta and participant in Selma to Montgomery marches (March 25). All are invited and welcome.

For more information, please visit St. Paul’s website at stpaulselma.dioala.org.
Final preparations underway for 184th Diocesan Convention

At press time final preparations were underway for the 184th Convention of the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Alabama Feb. 6 and 7. The parishioners and staff of Christ Church in Tuscaloosa are hosting this year’s convention at the Bryant Conference Center on the University of Alabama.

The convention will mark the third year of the diocese multi-year theme: Invite, Inspire, Transform, an idea borrowed from the Standing Commission on Lifelong Ministry. “This year we will especially consider transformation, and our theme is Transform: I will with God’s help,” explained the Rt. Rev. Kee Sloan, Alabama’s diocesan bishop.

Annual convention is part business meeting, part informational gathering, and part family reunion. “At Convention we come together to celebrate the life and work of the Diocese, to strengthen and give thanks for the work already done, and to hear the challenges and possibilities before us,” said Sloan.

Diocesan youth will be an important presence at convention again this year. They will take part in a youth lock-in at Christ Church, lead convention worship Friday evening, join convention on Saturday for the youth report, and to lead an energizer. “We will lead convention worship on the Friday evening, join the convention at lunch on Saturday during the youth report,” said Oakes. “We will also shake things up with an energizer. Our diocese gives the youth so much support, so let’s show them our gratitude and have a strong youth presence at convention.”

Convention to be broadcast live via the internet

Major portions of this year’s diocesan convention including the bishop’s address and all three business sessions will be webcast live in high definition via the diocesan website at http://dioala.org.

Live coverage begins with the opening gavel at 1:00 p.m. Friday, Feb. 6, and will continue through the first business session scheduled to end at approximately 3:00 p.m.

Saturday’s coverage starts at 9:00 a.m. with the beginning of the second business session. Bishop Sloan’s address is scheduled for 10:00 a.m. After a break for lunch at noon, coverage will resume at 1:30 p.m. with the start of the final business session and will continue through the closing worship service which begins at approximately 3:00 p.m.

Friday afternoon’s opening Eucharist at the First United Methodist Church will not be carried live due to technical limitations, however, Bishop Marray’s sermon will be recorded and posted to the diocesan website. Recorded highlights of the convention including Bishop Sloan’s address, and ministry reports will also be available online following convention.

All times are approximate.

Youth reminded to register for convention lock-in


Youth lock-in to be at held at Christ Church in Tuscaloosa, is much more than just a fun night for young people from across the diocese, according to Susan Oakes, diocesan youth ministries coordinator. It promotes an important youth presence at convention.

“We will lead convention worship on the Friday evening, and will join the convention at lunch on Saturday during the youth report,” said Oakes. “We will also shake things up with an energizer. Our diocese gives the youth so much support, so let’s show them our gratitude and have a strong youth presence at convention.” Cost is $20 to cover food and a t-shirt.
STANDING COMMITTEE NOMINEES

At-Large Election  ***  4 YEAR TERM
(Electing 1 presbyter or deacon & 1 lay member)

Clergy Nominee

The Rev. Josiah Rengers
Associate—St. Luke’s, Birmingham 2013- present
Diocesan Council Member 2014
Chaplain - Youth Department
Camp McDowell—Session Director 2012-pres
Rites of Spring Director 2013
Sawyerville Chaplain 2012
Christmas Conference Director 2012
Rector of St. Stephen’s Eutaw, AL 2012-13

Lay Nominee

Mr. Conway Brooks
The Abbey, Birmingham
St. Thomas, Bham Vestry 2011-2013
Jr. Warden 2011 & 2013
Kairos-Donaldson Prison #58, 59, 60
Lay Eucharistic Minister
The Abbey—Chairman of the Executive Committee

Lay Nominee

Mr. Christopher Turner
Church of the Ascension-Montgomery
Verger, Lay Reader, Chalice Bearer
Rice & Beans Ministry, Outreach Committee
Happening, Vocare, Cursillo, EFM (2nd yr)
Costa Rica Mission Team
Department of Camp McDowell (1989-1991)
Camp McDowell Staff (1986-1988)
General Convention 2015 2nd Lay Alternate

Lay Nominee

Mr. Bingham Edwards
St. John’s-Decatur
Diocesan Council Member-2011-2014
Cursillo Lay Rector #120
Cursillo Secretariat
St. John’s Vestry, LEM, Reader, Adult Sunday School Teacher
Member St. John’s Men’s Reunion Group

DISCIPLINARY BOARD NOMINEES

At-Large Election  ***  3 YEAR TERM
(Electing 1 presbyter or deacon & 1 lay member)

Clergy Nominee

None at the time of print

Lay Nominee

Mr. Chris Gonzalez
St. Francis of Assisi, Indian Springs
Adult Acolyte & LEM
Usher, Special Events, altar guild, healing service & outreach
Vestry-3years, Sr. Warden—one year
Sunday School Teacher
Maintained church website

DIOCESAN COUNCIL NOMINEES

Caucus Election  ***  3 YEAR TERM
(Electing PRESBYTERS ONLY)
(Electing 2 presbyters in the Southern District- One 3-year term and One 1-year term to serve until 2016 fulfilling the term of Rev. Brandt Montgomery)

Northern District Nominee

None at the time of print

Middle District Nominee

None at the time of print

Southern District Nominee (3 year term)

None at the time of print

Southern District Nominee (1 year term)

The Rev. Candice Frazer
Associate—St. John’s—Montgomery
2015 General Convention Delegate
Youth Dept. Advisor 2002-2004
Diocesan Youth Coordinator 2004-2007
Numerous Cursillo Staffs and Retreats
Board Member—Episcopal Women’s History Project

January/February 2015
Help make Sawyerville 2015 a success

by Claire Cotton, Assistant Director for Parish Giving & Connections

Sawyerville Day Camp relies on the generosity of parishes to make this important ministry possible. Every year, congregations supply several hundred campers with breakfast, lunch, books, backpacks, water bottles, bathing suits, pool towels, goggles, and much, much more.

This year, we have a new and lofty goal of 100 percent participation from churches in our Diocese. For Summer 2014, roughly 55 percent of parishes contributed in some way. Consider what wonderful things we have accomplished with that level of support and then imagine what would be possible with 100 percent participation. We need you!

Whether your parish’s gift of time, talent, or treasure may be big or small, there is a role for everyone to play in this ministry. Consider these opportunities to give to SDC:

- **Donate** – Every monetary gift helps!
- **Serve a meal to the staff** – Every night, teams of volunteers come to camp to make and serve a meal for our staff of 100. This is a phenomenal ministry perfect for parishes or smaller groups like Cursillo reunion groups or Bible studies.
- **Host a supply drive** – Your parish can host a drive for supplies we need at camp like bathing suits, pool noodles, goggles, and books.
- **Be a prayer partner** – Prayer is always a wonderful way to support SDC. Prayer Partners are given the name of one staff member and asked to write one letter of support and prayer for each day of camp. These words of encouragement help our staff make it through the week!
- **Staff a session** – We need roughly 300 staff to run SDC effectively! People ages 16 and up can apply to serve as small group leaders. We also need clergy and lay people to create and implement Christian-based teachings, arts and crafts, and group games.

For a full list of opportunities and contact information, visit http://www.sawyervilledaycamp.org.

Supporting Sawyerville Day Camp is a wonderful way to come together as a congregation and live out Jesus’ call to serve the “least of these.” Please join us in making Summer 2015 the best ever!

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2015 Sawyerville Day Camp staff applications now available online

by Crystal Jones, Assistant Director for Staffing & Logistics

What better way to spend part of your summer than at Sawyerville Day Camp? The Sawyerville Day Camp is a unique opportunity to serve and share in God’s love. This is your chance to form new relationships and reconnect with old friends in a fun filled Christian community. Please read the information below even if you have served on staff before.

Want to be a part of this amazing experience? First, you need to be 16 years old (there is no maximum age) by Sept. 1, 2015 and willing to volunteer your time for at least one full session. If you are 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.

Second, look for the online application at: http://www.sawyervilledaycamp.org. We hope that you will take a few moments to complete the application and prayerfully answer some questions. Due to the number of applicants and the quality of the program we like to run for the community of Hale County, this will be a true application process, so please take your time with the answers and trust us to discern what’s best for the camp and all volunteers! 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 me, 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.

There is no fee associated with staffing, just give of yourself and your time. Not sure which session to do? Well, here are the dates so you can be sure to choose the one you are available for (and remember—you can volunteer for more than one session):

- **Session I** – June 6–12, 2015
- **Session II** – June 13–19, 2015
- **Session III** – June 27–July 3, 2015

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 me at cjones@dioala.org or 205/358-9226, or Camp Director Leslie Manning at lmanning@dioala.org or 205/715-2060 ext. 9242. Also visit www.sawyervilledaycamp.org to learn more.
Several Huntsville fire crews are a little better trained today thanks to the Episcopal Diocese of Alabama and parishioners from St. Columba in the Cove Episcopal Church.

The diocese recently provided an unused building on church property for firefighter training. The building, which was deteriorating and destined to be demolished, was burned Thursday, Dec. 4 in a morning-long training exercise conducted by the Huntsville Fire Department's Fire and Rescue Training Division.

The structure was situated on diocesan property on Taylor Road in Big Cove. St. Columba had moved the building to the property in January 2011. Members of the parish, which has petitioned the diocese to be declared dormant, raised the idea of donating the building for fire training among other options.

The fire department appreciates opportunities like this because they provide a realistic situation, according to Capt. David Fry, Huntsville Fire Department training officer. “A live fire experience is certainly better than a book” or even a permanent concrete training simulator.

The training division set up the scenarios, but those being trained do not know what to expect. They might encounter a victim to be rescued, or some other unexpected situation, according to Fry.

In the case of the Taylor Road structure, trainers lit the fire inside the structure, let it develop, and then sent a crew in through heavy smoke to locate the source of the fire and knock it down. After the crew exited the building, they re-stoked the fire and sent in another crew. Several crews were rotated through the scenario before the building was finally allowed to burn to the ground shortly after noon. Each fire situation is different according to Fry. During this training exercise, crews had to deal with a very hot fire.

There was an added bonus to the exercise. It provided the opportunity to three Huntsville television stations to do pre-holiday fire safety stories on their newscasts.

Additionally, allowing the fire department to burn the building likely saved the diocese money because crews did not need to invest the time and equipment to demolish the building and the debris to be removed was significantly reduced.
St. Alban’s Birmingham helps reduce infant mortality in Haiti

St. Alban’s Episcopalian Church in Birmingham, Alabama, partnered with the Diocese of Crochu, Haiti, to help reduce infant mortality in Haiti. The partnership has been ongoing for the past four years, and the results have been impressive.

Some of the supplies that make up the kits have been donated by Global Women, and purchased with donations made by various individuals and parishes in the Alabama diocese.

St. Alban’s Episcopal Church in Birmingham and St. Alban’s Episcopal Church in Crochu, Haiti, are linked in the fight against infant and prenatal mortality. The Daughters of the King at St. Alban’s in Birmingham and St. Alban’s Church in Crochu, Haiti, are linked in the fight against infant and prenatal mortality. The Daughters of the King at St. Albans in Birmingham and St. Alban’s Church in Crochu, Haiti, are linked in the fight against infant and prenatal mortality.

The first class of midwives was trained in 2012 using a protocol based on World Health Organization recommendations. Funding came from the Diocese Outreach Committee and the Companion Diocese Commission, and the diocese has supported monthly visits by training supervisors to provide continuing education and follow-up. Carmel Valdama, a Haitian nurse, who’s husband is priest for St. Alban’s, Crochu, administers the program. Reports indicate that the program has been successful in reducing infant mortality in the area.

For more information about this project, contact the Rev. Deacon CJ Van Slyke, at 205-914-3866.

A Merry Christmas in Crochu

by Maggie Johnston

Imagine a life where you have never been able to give your child a Christmas gift. You are never quite sure from where your next meal is coming. All life sustaining water must be brought to your home in a bucket on top of your head. And yet, you live in the Western hemisphere only a short hour and a half flight from Miami. This is everyday life if you live in the mountainside community of Crochu, Haiti.

According to the December 2014 issue of National Geographic, 32 percent of Haiti’s population is undernourished. This is the highest rate in the entire world.

The Krik Krak organization, founded by the Clergy Spouse group of the Alabama Episcopal Diocese as part of the diocese companion relationship with Haiti, has been providing school lunches for the St. Albans children for the past four years. We currently serve lunches to about 260 students, plus their teachers and staff, at least three times per week. For most, this is the primary meal of that day.

In mid December 2014, Krik Krak celebrated the birth of Christ with the people of Crochu. For the third year, Krik Krak threw a Christmas party at St Albans School and Church. There was delicious chicken, rice and beans and even green salad. Just like the loaves and fishes, the one Christmas cake somehow served the crowd.

Generous donors provided gifts for the children and their teachers. The little girls received Cabbage Patch baby dolls, thanks to Leigh and Wells Warren and the generosity of the Cabbage Patch Company. The little boys got Matchbox Cars from Susan and Joe Warren. Cloth bags, donated by Susan Tate and Promorma, were used as gift wrap and will be a fashion statement in Crochu for a while. All got toothbrushes (thanks to Becky Parsley) and socks (thanks to Jessica Grayson), treasures for these children. Older children got jump ropes, paddle balls and other fun toys from generous people like CJ Van Slyke and Ann Carpenter.

Krik Krak, thanks to a generous grant from the Murdock-Tinker Foundation, also has built 15 latrines for the Crochu community, where previously families had no sanitation facilities available. This requires education as well, since even the adults had never known a hygienic method of waste disposal. When cholera was accidentally brought to Haiti in 2010 after the devastating earthquake, the Crochu community was hard hit with many deaths due to the poor sanitation. The most exciting news from the December 2014 trip was that for the first time since 2010, there have been no cases of cholera in Crochu! This is thought to be in part due to the Krik Krak latrines.

Krik Krak is continuing to work toward building a more sustainable life for the people of Crochu, Haiti. We are about to start five more latrines. We are hoping to try a new composting toilet design being used in other parts of Haiti.

We have built several cisterns both for the school, church and for private homes. One of these was funded by a Girl Scout troop from Florence, AL, when Beth Keyse, a clergy spouse and Girl Scout leader, suggested it to her troop. They earned the money selling cookies. The cisterns fill during rainy season and provide water closer to home than the spring down the mountain. More cisterns are being built soon.

Krik Krak and the children of Crochu continue to need help. The biggest need is for more support of the Krik Krak School Lunch fund. The cost of feeding a child a healthy meal is $1.00. But if you multiply this by 260 children three times a week, the numbers are large. To feed a child three meals a week for the school year costs $120.

To learn more, Krik Krak speakers are available to visit to your church of civic organization. We can show photos and tell stories to inspire. Contact Maggie Johnston at Maggie@campmcdowell.com for more information or to schedule a talk.
Looking Back
Moving Forward

By Danielle Dunbar

The Rev. Doug Carpenter and I agree on a simple truth, “You see what you look for.” After reading Doug’s essay by the same name, it struck me that if we weren’t looking for Bethany at Camp McDowell, we would not be building it today. Read an excerpt from his essay to decide for yourself:

My four year old grandson, Trevor, found a box turtle so I got a call asking what to feed it. I answered with “blackberries, tomatoes, slugs, and worms,” and my mind jumped back three decades when my children and I were driving to Anniston one spring day.

We saw a large turtle in the road and stopped to move him to safety. As we approached we were surprised when he lunged out at us. It was a snapping turtle, and hecouldn’t let us get close to him. I took off my belt, and when he grabbed the end of it in his powerful jaws I was able to pull him, with much trepidation, to the side of the road.

We left him there, still clutching my belt, and drove on with an animated conversation about turtles. My children would always stay at a distance from a large snapping turtle after the ferocious display they witnessed, but I explained what good pets box turtles make. I told them how my father had brought home box turtles he spotted on a logging road and came to an area that was a mess. The owner had cut down all the hardwood trees to sell and had left debris everywhere. It was really scruffy looking. But the men were looking for a permanent Camp McDowell, and because they were looking for it, they could see it there. They didn’t just see stumps and debris in this isolated place. They saw what you and I can see there today. You see what you look for.

Jesus said, “The Kingdom of God is like a mustard seed.” One would really have to be looking hard to see the Kingdom of God in a mustard seed! But that’s what Jesus said.

In the twenty-first chapter of John we read about Jesus looking for a leader to help bring his Kingdom on earth. He looks at Peter. He had looked at Peter a few weeks earlier just before he was crucified. He saw a frightened Peter deny he had ever known Jesus. Surely one would have seen nothing but a coward there. A few weeks later, because Jesus is looking for leadership and compassion in Peter, he sees it there and commissions him to “feed my lambs.” Jesus is the good Shepherd, but he is looking for other shepherds and he sees one in Peter.

I am grateful that a few Episcopalians were “looking for” Bethany. I am even more grateful that so many others can see it, too. Today it has more shape and form than when those first few went “looking.” Come to camp and see for yourself or enjoy the photo essay later in the newsletter. Then join with many of us who have pledged to build what others could see from the start. You will be making a great impact on the future of our Diocese and beloved Camp McDowell.
The Bethany Campaign has been a great journey among the people of the Diocese of Alabama during 2013 and 2014. The campaign leadership has had the pleasure of reconnecting with and getting to know those who have donated to the project or those who led their parishes on an expedition to raise funds for the expansion of camp. Relationships have flourished. There have also been a few side trips to meet people outside of our diocese or not connected to the Episcopal Church who were willing to listen and support our vision of Bethany at Camp McDowell. We welcome these new friends as part of our larger family. In 2015 we will finish gathering the support of our parishes and Bethany will be dedicated on June 20, 2015. The graphic shown indicates the total amount pledged and donated from each convocation and beyond our Diocese. We are grateful for every gift that has been made. Each one matters tremendously. There are places where we have not yet traveled on our journey. As we make our way toward you, I hope we will be welcomed with hospitality and excitement to take part in the wonderful, wonderful work that is happening at Camp McDowell. We need your help to exceed our campaign goal of $7.5 million and complete the project goal of $10.5 million to build all of Bethany. To date we have raised $7.4 million in gifts and pledges; adding the New Market Tax Credits, we have reached $9 million towards that final goal.

**BETHANY BY THE NUMBERS**

By Danielle Dunbar

The Bethany Campaign has been a great journey among the people of the Diocese of Alabama during 2013 and 2014. The campaign leadership has had the pleasure of reconnecting with and getting to know those who have donated to the project or those who led their parishes on an expedition to raise funds for the expansion of camp. Relationships have flourished. There have also been a few side trips to meet people outside of our diocese or not connected to the Episcopal Church who were willing to listen and support our vision of Bethany at Camp McDowell. We welcome these new friends as part of our larger family. In 2015 we will finish gathering the support of our parishes and Bethany will be dedicated on June 20, 2015. The graphic shown indicates the total amount pledged and donated from each convocation and beyond our Diocese. We are grateful for every gift that has been made. Each one matters tremendously. There are places where we have not yet traveled on our journey. As we make our way toward you, I hope we will be welcomed with hospitality and excitement to take part in the wonderful, wonderful work that is happening at Camp McDowell. We need your help to exceed our campaign goal of $7.5 million and complete the project goal of $10.5 million to build all of Bethany. To date we have raised $7.4 million in gifts and pledges; adding the New Market Tax Credits, we have reached $9 million towards that final goal.

**Diocese of Alabama Convocations**

- **BIRMINGHAM:** $4,015,644
- **BLACK BELT:** $658,676
- **CHEAHA:** $104,510
- **EAST ALABAMA:** $64,250
- **MONTGOMERY:** $279,300
- **MOUNTAIN:** $54,410
- **TENNESSEE VALLEY:** $1,361,007

**Outside the Diocese of Alabama (including all foundation gifts and New Market Tax Credits):**

$2,484,703
Construction on Bethany officially began in October of 2013 when we raised a barn at Camp Day. Earlier progress had been made with the clearing of Sloan Lake and the building of the dam then continued as the accessible cabins, farm structures, and Doug Carpenter Hall began to come out of the ground. Much progress has been made at your camp and conference center. Please visit the facilities you helped build and see for yourself.

Contact Danielle or Mark to allow them to prepare for your visit. Reach Development Director Danielle Dunbar at danielle@campmcdowell.com, or 205/358-9234 and the Rev. Mark Johnston at mark@campmcdowell.com, or 205/387-1806. [www.BethanyAtCamp.com, Instagram account, CampMcDowell, or Facebook page, Camp McDowell (official)]

Sloan Lake and the St. James’ Pier

Doug Carpenter Hall
In support of Bethany Village at Camp McDowell, I/we intend to contribute a total of $_____________________. Payment of this gift is to extend over _________ (three to five) years, beginning in 20_____. An initial payment of $______________ is enclosed and I/we prefer to remit the balance q annually, q quarterly, or q monthly. I understand that this statement represents neither a binding obligation on my part nor the part of my estate, and that contributions are tax deductible to the fullest extent provided by law.

Full Name  ____________________________________________________________________________________________________________
Address  _______________________________________________________________________________________________________________
Phone____________________________________________________Email address __________________________________________________
Signature ______________________________________________________________________________________________________________

I prefer to receive statement information via q email or q traditional mail.

Please return this pledge card to Danielle indicating if you would like your pledge to be added to the corporate pledge your parish has made. If your vestry has not voted to make a pledge yet, we will gladly add it towards the total once a parish pledge is made. For example, if you are from St. James’-- Alex City, we will add your individual pledge to the many others in your parish toward the goal of $50,000 for St. James’ Pier.

Please make checks payable to Camp McDowell with Bethany Village in the memo line. Mail contributions to Danielle Dunbar:
Carpenter House, 521 N. 20th St., Birmingham, AL  35203

Please add this to (my parish’s)________________ pledge total.
FROM THE ECW PRESIDENT

Happy New Year!! I have never been very good at keeping new year resolutions, but I do cherish the spirit of a new year. A new year just seems to give me a little extra spring to my step and thoughts.

The ECW Diocesan board is gearing up for an exciting 2015. Our theme this year is “Honoring our Heritage.” January the board meets at Camp McDowell to get started with plans and excitement for the upcoming year. Look for some exciting things coming your way. As we honor our heritage this year and look back at all the multi generations of women who have gone before us and paved the way we are traveling as daughters of our Heavenly Father. We will also be looking forward to our future daughters and how we can inspire and motivate their spiritual paths.

Please join us as we leave our legacy as Episcopal Church Women in the Diocese of Alabama. May God richly bless all of our paths this new year.

Brenda Mayhall
ECW Diocesan President

“Honoring Our Heritage” – ECW offers 2015 calendar/handbook

Happy New Year and greetings from the Episcopal Church Women of the Diocese of Alabama!

Along with a brand new year comes a new 2015 calendar/handbook to keep you up to date and on schedule. This year’s theme is “Honoring Our Heritage”; honoring those many women of our past and present that have paved the way for what we have inherited today as the ECW. Psalm 61:5 says, “For you, O God, have given me the heritage of those who fear your name.”

Each month features a woman from our biblical Judeo-Christian heritage whose gifts made such an impact, they were included in the Holy Scriptures. The calendars are our handbooks with information on everything you ever wanted to know and more about Episcopal Church Women. If you would like to purchase one or more, please contact Andrea Peacock by email, andreapeacock60@gmail.com.

St. John’s Decatur walks in the shoes of St. Nicholas

In celebration of the Feast Day of St. Nicholas Dec. 6, St. John’s collected new pairs of shoes, stuffed them with candy, toiletries, pencils, socks, and toys, wrapped and presented them to the local Boys and Girls Clubs representatives.

Parishioners selected a shoe ornament from the St. Nicholas Shoe Tree. Each ornament gave information about the child’s shoe size. After a Wednesday night parish dinner and before wrapping the gifts, parishioners learned about all the good things the Boys and Girls Clubs offer the children in the community.

This is the fifth year that St. John’s has partnered with a St. Nicholas Shoe Project.

“The giver of every good and perfect gift has called upon us to mimic His giving, by grace, through faith, and this is not of ourselves.” - St. Nicholas of Myra

Christ Church Fairfield Hosts Christmas Pageant

Some 28 young people and children participate in Christ Church, Fairfield’s first Christmas pageant in many years on Dec 20. The parish also took 38 children to see the Nutcracker at the Sanford Wright Theater on Sunday afternoon. “It was a great trip thanks to several members of the parish who served as chaperones, said Bob Blackwell, the church’s rector.
Three from Alabama participate in the 2015 Province IV Youth Ministries Meeting

Each year, the twenty dioceses of Province IV are invited to join together for a three-day informational and networking meeting called the Province IV Youth Ministries Meeting.

This year, the meeting was held in New Orleans, LA, and the Diocese of Alabama sent a delegation that included Lucy Gardner, a senior at St. Mary’s-on-the-Highlands in Birmingham, Hailey Smith, a junior at St. Stephens in Birmingham, and Emily Collette, the Senior High Youth Minister from St. Mary’s-on-the-Highlands.

They spent three days in fellowship, worship, and program with fifteen other dioceses from Province IV. There were more than seventy people in attendance from all over the southeast. Lucy and Hailey acted as delegates to the meeting. They gave a short presentation on the state of youth ministry in the Diocese of Alabama and voted on business items put forth from the province. The group ended their weekend by enjoying a day of fellowship and program in New Orleans! After exploring the French Quarter for a couple of hours, they embarked on a tour of the Episcopal Churches in New Orleans. They heard how the congregations worked through the devastating storm.

Below are some of Hailey’s and Lucy’s thoughts about their weekend experience.

Enjoying beignets at Café Du Monde with representatives of other dioceses during a downtown visit are Alabama’s youth representatives Hailey Smith, second from left, and Lucy Gardner, far right.

This past weekend Lucy, Emily and I had the opportunity to represent our diocese at the Province IV networking youth convention. Going to New Orleans for this meeting was an incredible chance to meet young people with great ideas and to realize how strong our diocese actually is. In meeting other youth, and a few adults, several shared stories about their churches and events they had within their dioceses. I learned that we, specifically the youth, are blessed to be in such a beautiful and powerful community. We are the only Episcopal diocese in the southeast that has a youth department that creates and plans events and that alone is a blessing.

Our youth are also very supported by the rest of our diocese, because as I experienced through other youth, several of them believed that they were not necessary to their diocese and having a strong youth program was not important in every diocese. But on the contrary, it is.

We are powerful youth who are shaping the future for ourselves and the Episcopal community and I am blessed to have realized this at the age I am. The Province IV meeting gave me so many great ideas and a new outlook on how strong we are, and I hope to share this with the rest of our community.

Hailey Smith, St. Stephen’s, Birmingham

I had such a wonderful time at Province IV! After the weekend I spent at Province IV in New Orleans, I am truly proud of the Episcopal Diocese of Alabama. We learned about other dioceses in the Southeast and we shared our strengths and weaknesses, but after sharing, I realized we do not have many weaknesses. Our youth program is thriving from the many opportunities for service and fellowship throughout the state. One main factor we brought up to the meetings was Sawyerville Day Camp, which some youth from other states had even heard about. Alongside that, we also discussed Happening and the unique differences each diocese put on their retreats, while talking about ways for other states to begin Happening in their diocese if they had not done so. Furthermore, as a group we also ventured into the city of New Orleans for an afternoon, where we visited various Episcopal churches throughout the city that

Epiphany EYC sleeps out so others don’t have to

By Shelly Hardin

The Church of the Epiphany in Guntersville is a host church for Room in the Inn, a ministry of the Marshall County Homeless Ministries. Approximately thirty churches in Marshall County participate in hosting our homeless neighbors from December through March.

Each year Marshall County Homeless Ministries hosts a community “sleep out” to raise awareness and funds for the Room in the Inn Ministry. This year they decided to add a social media campaign, similar to the Ice Bucket Challenge. People in the community were asked to spend the night outdoors, make a video of the experience, and challenge their friends to “sleep out so others don’t have to.”

Epiphany youth members Jon Auman, Sam Jones, Spencer Panazze and Jacob Raulerson set up tents behind the church, built a fire pit and tended the fire to keep warm during the evening. Before turning in for the night, they scripted and recorded their challenge video. They will continue to support our homeless neighbors in January by spending an evening setting up the sleeping areas, preparing the meal and getting to know our guests.

Epiphany youth have supported Room in the Inn by providing sack lunches and preparing the bedding. Camping out and making a video was another way the group could get involved to support our homeless neighbors. We placed an article in the Epiphany newsletter explaining the event. We raised $650 from donations from Epiphany parishioners and a corporate donation from the employer of one of our parishiners.

The money raised was donated to Marshall County Homeless Ministries, which provides our homeless neighbors with a warm place to sleep each night, provides day shelter, helps with medical care and assists with the search for employment. Several people have found employment and a home with help from Room in the Inn and Marshall County Homeless Ministries.
**UPCOMING SUMMER YOUTH EVENTS**

**Sawyer Ferry Day Camp**  
Session 1: June 6-12  
Session 2: June 13-19  
Session 3: June 27-July 3  
An opportunity for youth ages 16 and up to serve as counselors for this free summer camp for the children of Hale County.  
Contact is Crystal Jones at cjones@dioala.org.

**Special Session**  
June 14-21  
An opportunity for youth ages 16 and older to serve as counselors for a summer camp for adults and young people with special needs. Hosted at Bethany at Camp McDowell  
Contact is Jeannie Randall at jrrand228@gmail.com.

**Young People Paint Birmingham**  
July 6-10  
A one of a kind mission experience for rising 7th through 9th graders scraping and painting houses for economically disadvantaged community members in Birmingham's West End neighborhood. There are also a few openings for 11th and 12th graders to serve as high school counselors in a peer leadership and ministry role.  
Hosted at St. Stephen's in Birmingham.  
Contact is Caitlin Gilliam, caitling@stjohnsmontgomery.org

**Foothills Day Camp**  
July 20-24  
An opportunity for youth ages 15 and older to serve as counselors at a summer camp for children ages 6 to 10 in the Cheaha region of the diocese who might not otherwise have an opportunity to attend a summer camp. There is also an opportunity for youth ages 13 and 14 to serve as counselors in training. Hosted at Camp Lee in Anniston.  
Contact is the Rev. Lee Shafer, gracerector@ableone.net

**Jonathan Daniels Pilgrimage and Young Pilgrims Lock-in**  
August 14-15  
An opportunity for young people and their adult chaperones to experience the annual pilgrimage to honor and remember Daniels an Episcopal seminarian and others who were martyred during the 1960's Civil Rights movement.  
Details to be announced.  
Details and online registration and application links for all of these events will be available on the diocesan website at: http://www.dioala.org/ministries/youth-summer-opportunities.html.

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“Here Comes the Son.”  
**Christmas Conference 2014 at Camp McDowell a sold-out success**  
By Kathleen Lynch, Director of Youth Ministry, St. Thomas in Huntsville

One hundred sixty five young people and adults celebrated Christmas through worship, activities, program, and community, at Wonderful, Wonderful, Camp McDowell during a sold-out Christmas Conference Dec. 28 through 30.  
We were lucky to have Fran McKendree join the family again with his warm presence, kind spirit, and guitar for the concert. We are so blessed to have had Fran join us for so many years, it wouldn’t feel right without him!  
Our theme for this year was “Here Comes the Son.” We used the imagery in the verses of the Beatles song “Here Comes the Sun” for each program period.  
Program One was “It’s Been a Long, Cold, Lonely Winter” focused on talking about those “frozen” times we experience, the “winters” we have in our lives and how we deal with those times. The Rev. Paul Pradat, shared a personal story of his with the campers which led to deep, real, discussions with the youth in their small groups.  
Program Two was “The Ice is Slowly Melting” which focused on identifying the gifts that each of us have and accepting others and their gifts. After identifying individual gifts, each small group made a stepping stone representing their gifts as a whole. This was followed by a Christmas service in a “Lessons and Carols” format featuring songs led by Fran and Music Crew along with reflections by members of the Youth Department after each reading.  
On the final day, true Camp McDowell fashion, after two days of rain, the sun came out and we ended the program on a coincidentally beautiful day, with the program theme being “The Smiles Returning to Their Faces.” We celebrated the joy of bringing our gifts to the world with campers creating and performing skits with their small groups. They were definitely enjoyable!  
The program was led by St. Thomas, Huntsville crew Rev. Paul Pradat, Jeannie Randall, and myself. We had so much fun creating this program and we couldn’t be more thankful for the campers and staff alike who welcomed us into their community with such open arms.  
Many parents and friends joined us for a closing Eucharist on the 30th in the St. Francis Chapel. It was a fantastic way to close the Wonderful, Wonderful weekend at Camp McDowell. We hope to see everyone again soon.  
Don’t forget there are many more events where this community can be recreated! Stay connected for other youth events this spring and summer through the Diocesan website at http://dioala.org/ministries/youth_upcoming_events.html or you may contact Susan Oakes, Diocesan Youth Ministries Coordinator, at soakes@dioala.org.

**Participant Reflections:**  
I cannot say enough good things about the group of youth who created and attended Christmas Conference. We create such an incredible community that is overflowing with joy and so much love, which was so evident at Christmas Conference this year. The most amazing thing about camp is all of the new friendships that are formed and this retreat was no exception. Even on the first night we saw a few teenagers break out of their shell and others begin lifelong friendships. We live in such a great and flourishing Episcopal diocese and the youth attendance continues to grow; and I believe that Christmas Conference is one of the main factors as to why we have such a strong youth. It was such a huge success this year, and everybody left as a different, more loving person. I can’t wait for next year to be even better!  
Haley Smith  
YD At-Large Member  
St. Stephen’s, Birmingham

Christmas Conference is one of the most intimate and wonderful events that the Youth Department of the Diocese of Alabama has to offer. I love getting to meet new people and my favorite thing about youth in general is the amazing sense of community. This year was no exception. What really hit me was the fact that people were so willing and comfortable to listen to everyone’s story. It showed that we see people simply as people. As I left that activity, I really looked around and took in the community I was blessed to be a part of. I made a few decisions that this community that I had become a part of was one I would cherish for the rest of my life. These people were real, genuine, and just all around amazing people. I always get butterflies in my stomach before every event and I never knew why. Now, I know; it’s because I get to really be myself. The youth of diocese has really shown me that if you aren’t fully yourself, you aren’t yourself at all.  
Jackson Massey  
YD District Rep  
Ascension, Montgomery

Open Mic night was the first thing on the agenda for the second night of Christmas Conference, where many very talented people performed songs from singing to some awesome dancing. After the amazing talent at open mic night, we all travelled up to St. Francis Chapel where we had a candle light Christmas service. At the service, a series of passages were read and then reflections were given about each passage. This service is one of my favorite parts of Christmas Conference because it is a moment to truly reflect on the day and to hear the Christmas story in a new light. After the service, everyone headed down the hill for a New Year’s Party. We danced the night away and it was so fun to see everyone having a blast. It was one of the best Christmas Conferences ever and I am so happy to have been apart of it.  
Sally Fargason  
YD District Rep  
Holy Trinity, Auburn

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**January/February 2015**

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**THE ALABAMA EPISCOPALIAN • 17**
On Dec. 15, 1989, the Diocese of Alabama’s newly formed Dixie Disciples, related the “Greatest Story Ever Retold” — the off-Broadway Cotton Patch Gospel — to an enthusiastic audience at St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Huntsville. It was to be a one-time, two-night performance of the full-length, toe-tapping contemporary musical about an ancient story, to raise funds to support the work of Episcopal Missionaries in Honduras.

This past December, the Dixie Disciples said farewell to the cotton patch and took their final bows before an equally enthusiastic packed house at the very church where it all began almost a quarter century to the day earlier.

Written by Tom Key and Russell Treyz with music and lyrics by Harry Chapin, the Cotton Patch Gospel is lively and entertaining musical, based on the book The Cotton Patch Version of Matthew and John by Clarence Jordan in which the Gospel is presented in a setting of rural Georgia with country music songs.

Having performed more shows than they can — or care to — remember, three of the four final night cast members were original members of the 1989 Dixie Disciples. They are the Rev. David Meginniss, rector of Christ Episcopal Church in Tuscaloosa; David’s brother Andy, a member of St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church in Birmingham; and Jeannie Randall, a member of St. Thomas in Huntsville. Randolph Horn, of All Saint’s Episcopal Church in Birmingham, joined the cast in 2011 replacing Eric Shaw who left the diocese. David Meginniss played the character of Matthew, and the musical’s 16 other speaking parts. The band — Andy Meginniss, Randall, and Horn — musically handled the rest of the roles.

Over the years, the group has shared their musical ministry at other North Alabama churches, in Birmingham, Scottsboro, Selma, Tuscaloosa, Mobile, Cullman, and Anniston. They have performed at Camp McDowell, the diocesan camp and conference center in Winston County, at the Kanuga Episcopal Conference Center in North Carolina and at a Baptist church on Signal Mountain in Tennessee.

The group took a hiatus while David Meginniss a former attorney and St. Thomas parishioner attended seminary and began his ministry as an Episcopal priest. The group took another break when Shaw, also of St. Thomas, moved out of state.

When asked why the Cotton Patch Gospel, Preacher Meginniss puts it this way: “Jesus commissioned His disciples to spread the Good News. The Cotton Patch Gospel is surely one of the most fun means to carry out this mission. Tom Key and Harry Chapin were so clever with their presentation that people seem to get drawn into the ‘old, old story’ in a new way. A lot of people tell me that, after seeing the show, they hear things in Scripture they didn’t hear before. And, that’s got to be better than preaching!

Visit the diocesan website at http://dioala.org/cottonpatch.html
Small congregation atop Lookout Mountain struggles to preserve its historic church

The congregation of a small Episcopal church atop Lookout Mountain in Mentone, AL, is struggling to find a way to preserve its historic building for future generations of worshipers and tourists.

St. Joseph's-on-the-Mountain is plagued with major structural issues including an unsound foundation and holes and cracks in the walls that could cost as much as $200,000 to repair. It is money that the parish does not have.

The church was born in an 1870's log cabin that has been preserved and remains at the heart of today's church structure. The cabin was originally the home of the Simmie Sherman Vernon family and originally included a sleeping loft and a small lean-to kitchen. It was built in 1870 on adjoining property and was moved to the present site in the 1880s where it served as a residential dwelling for several families over the years.

In 1965, the Rev. John Franklin Machen, a retired Episcopal priest, established a small chapel and held daily services in the log cabin. The small, unique church served its rapidly growing congregation until 1974 when construction began to build around the historic log cabin. Volunteers did much of the work. Construction materials included wood from old barns and buildings from the surrounding area, many of which were of the same vintage as the log cabin.

Many of the furnishings and other appointments were given to St. Joseph's by other churches, individuals and groups. The stained-glass window behind the altar was a gift from St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Scottsboro, Ala., where it had been in their original church building. It was hand painted and fired in France over 100 years ago. The heavy wooden front doors were from a 19th Century building and the long, dark pews in the side areas, came from the Advent Episcopal Church in Tuskegee. It has been said that these were stained and hand-rubbed by George Washington Carver with a stain he made especially for these pews.

Located at the corner of Highway 117 and Scenic Highway in Mentone, St. Joseph's is open 24 hours a day for locals and visitors to enter in for visitation, meditation or prayer. The church also serves those in need through its "Food Pantry" ministry. A grocery cart with non-perishable food is kept in the log room to provide food assistance for passersby in need of a meal. The "Food Pantry" is funded through the sale of St. Joseph's note cards and individual donations.

For more information about the project, call 256-634-4476.

Holy Comforter in Gadsden celebrates the holidays with Kyle Home residents

Holy Comforter Episcopal Church in Gadsden held its annual holiday celebration for residents of its Kyle Home Dec. 14.

Parishioners and guests joined with the home’s 17 residents to enjoy snacks and a delicious meal. Residents also received holiday gifts purchased by parish families.

The Episcopal Kyle Home opened in 1983 as a residential training home for intellectually disabled adults with only nine residents. In the thirty-one years since opening, two more homes -- the Sally Armstrong Home and the Isbell Home have been added bringing the total housing capacity to 18 residents. Residents range in age from 40 to 75 years. At present the home has vacancy.

The Kyle Home is a 501(c) 3 non-profit corporation and derives its name from the family who donated the home to the church. It is funded by the Alabama Department of Mental Health and receives rental subsidy from the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

A 24-hour residential staff totaling 29 members, including a licensed nurse and a Qualified Developmental Disability Professional, monitors the home. A ministry of Holy Comforter, the home is governed by a board of directors elected from the membership of the parish.

The mission of the Episcopal Kyle Home, Inc. is to provide the best possible care for the developmentally disabled in a community home setting, with strong emphasis on "HOME".
Anna Brawley named AIMS dean

The Rev. Dr. Anna Brawley has been named Dean of the Alabama Iona Ministry School (AIMS).

AIMS is a new school for ministry in the Diocese of Alabama that will train non-stipendiary and bi-vocational priests, vocational deacons and lay people who want to further their training in ministry.

Brawley was appointed to the position of dean by the Rt. Rev. Kee Sloan, diocesan bishop. She will also continue to serve as rector of St. Bartholomew’s Episcopal Church in Florence, AL. She was called to that position in October 2010.

Brawley earned the MDiv in 1992 and the STM in 1994 from Yale Divinity School. She earned the PhD in Religion, concentrating in Old Testament/Hebrew Bible and with a minor in Linguistics, from Vanderbilt University in 1999.

From 1999-2002, she taught Bible subjects, mainly Old Testament, but some New Testament courses, including Hebrew and Greek, at the Pacific Theological College (PTC) in Suva, Fiji Islands. She also served as Chair of the Bible Department at PTC and President of the Fiji Biblical Society from 2000-2002. Beginning in 2002, she taught Bible subjects as an adjunct at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. She was ordained to the transitional diaconate in June 2009 and to the priesthood in June 2010, by the Rt. Rev. Jeffery Lee, Bishop of Chicago.

AIMS is scheduled to begin its first class in January 2016.

The Beginning Experience Ministry is a peer ministry of grief recovery, for those who have lost a spouse through death, divorce or separation. It was started in 1974 by Sister Josephine Stewart a family counselor, and her friend Jo Lamia, who was divorced.

St. Andrew’s Montevallo hosts Thanksgiving meal for international students

St. Andrew’s in Montevallo put on a traditional Thanksgiving meal with “turkey and all the trimmings” for International students at the University of Montevallo the Monday before Thanksgiving.

“Before we started filling our plates, we went around the room and everyone made a brief statement about what they were thankful for,” said the Rev John Wesley, St. Andrew’s rector. “Most of the students mentioned thankfulness for friends and family, for being able to study in the U.S. and for the wonderful women of St. Andrew’s who took the time to prepare the meal for them.”

As the students finished their meal, they went, one-by-one to those who had prepared the meal; and to Wesley and his wife, expressing their sincere gratitude for this special occasion. Some voiced what possibly most were feeling: that, so far from home, it was nice to feel welcomed and to feel like part of a larger international family.

“To me it felt like one small building block in a bridge to world peace,” said Wesley.

Beginning Experience offers grief recovery ministry in Birmingham

The Beginning Experience Ministry is a peer ministry of grief recovery, for those who have lost a spouse through death, divorce or separation. It was started in 1974 by Sister Josephine Stewart a family counselor, and her friend Jo Lamia, who was divorced.

It is an international ministry with groups in England, Ireland, Australia, Singapore and the United States. The Birmingham Team is now affiliated with the Episcopal Church in Alabama.

We hold two Weekends a year, focusing on resolution of the grief process and a gentle transition into a new beginning. We also offer weekly support groups that meet for ten weeks, four times a year.

Using copyrighted material and a process of writing and sharing, we journey alongside those experiencing this particular loss, through grief and on into a new phase of life.

Our 2015 Weekends are at The Sacred Heart Monastery in Cullman, March 27 – 29 and Oct. 23 – 25. The weekly support groups are at Our Lady of Sorrows in Homewood and last for ten weeks. The first weekly support group session began Jan. 13. The others begin, April 14, July 14 and Oc. 6.

Please visit our website at www.birminghambeginningexperience.org ; and the international website at www.beginningexperience.org. Or call us on 205-969-8509 for more information.
INTRODUCTION TO CENTERING PRAYER WORKSHOP
Feb. 7 at St. Stephen’s, Birmingham
Do you need some quiet in your life? Would you like a deeper prayer life? Come and join us for an Introduction to Centering Prayer Workshop at St. Stephens Episcopal Church, 3775 Crosshaven Dr. 35223. This prayer; beyond words, images, and concepts has been part of the Christian Contemplative tradition for hundreds of years. It is also called “resting in God,” or the “prayer of consent.” The doors open at 9:00 a.m. The workshop begins at 9:30 a.m. and concludes at 2:30 p.m. The cost is $30 which includes lunch. This workshop specifically teaches how to do Centering Prayer. For information contact Louise Meredith at calli.meredith@gmail or 205/970-1892. Please register by Jan. 30.

CONTEMPLATIVE OUTREACH CONFERENCE
March 21 at St. Stephen’s, Birmingham
Finding Peace Through Silence in a Busy World” is the theme of the Contemplative Outreach Birmingham Annual Conference. Gail Fitzpatrick-Hopler is the presenter. One of the biggest complaints in modern society is being overscheduled, over committed, and overextended. Ask people at a social gathering how they are and the stock answer is “super busy” or even “crazy busy.” If there is a small moment for a reflective thought while waiting at the doctor’s office or standing in line at the bank-out comes the mobile device. How do we find the time in this whirlwind that makes up our life everyday? The conference will explore ways of discovering the peace in silence that will go a long way to make you the person you truly are. Additional information and a registration form is available at: http://bit.ly/1sNUfYw.

FROM SCRATCH,
Feb. 20 – 22 at Alabama Folk School, Camp McDowell
Join us for our third annual From Scratch workshop, designed for people who have always wanted to learn something, but didn’t know where to start. Each class will teach you the very basics. This workshop features classes in banjo, blacksmithing, embroidery, fiddle, guitar, harmonica and ukulele. Details at: http://www.folkschool.dioala.org.

DOK SPRING ASSEMBLY
April 11 at St. Andrew’s, Tuskegee
Mark your calendars for the Alabama Daughters of the King (DOK) Spring Assembly. Details including the theme and guest speaker are to be announced. Contact Yolanda Seawright, ypseawright@gmail.com.

YOUNG ADULTS RETREAT
May 1 – 3 at Camp McDowell
Join us for a spiritual weekend retreat for young adults at Camp McDowell. Our program will be presented by the Rev. Sharon Hers from St. Bartholomew’s in Atlanta. More information will be available soon. For questions, please contact Austin Cook at austinkendrickcook@gmail.com or 334-207-4505.

Enneagram workshop set for Alexander City Feb. 13
St. Jame’s Episcopal Church in Alexander City is hosting an Institute for Conscious Being Enneagram Workshop Feb. 13 and 14.

Enneagram expert, Dr. Joseph Howell, will present this amazing spiritual tool in its basic as well as advanced concepts. For seasoned beginners and advanced students of this work, new concepts will be presented in light of Jesus Christ’s message and how the Enneagram corresponds to and elucidates that message. Of special focus will be the use of the Enneagram in interpreting the Beatitudes of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew.

Dr. Howell, author of “Becoming Conscious” the only book of its type on the Enneagram, will also present a live demonstration of how to work the Enneagram to reveal God’s pathways of faith, for the purpose of personal and collective spiritual discernment. Dr. Howell will use small groups, lecture, video, and story telling to convey this most sacred pathway to God.

Participants will have a chance at this event, to learn about opportunities for further study of the Enneagram through the Institute for Conscious Being. The institute is an organization for study of consciousness and the Enneagram originated by people from this diocese, and now having affiliates across the country. This institute founded by Dr. Howell and co-founded by The Rev. Susan Sloan is for the purpose of furthering spiritual awareness in personal spiritual growth, teaching, business, family, and in spiritual direction. Visit the institute’s website at: www.instituteforconsciousbeing.org.

For additional information about the conference and how to register contact the church at: 256-234-4752 or email Dorothy Dixon at dorothydixon@charter.net.

CLERGY NEWS
The Rev. Betsy Powell began serving as part time priest in charge at Good Shepherd, Montgomery on Dec. 1.

The Rev. Mary Catherine Akamatsu has joined the staff of St. Thomas, Huntsville as a part time priest associate. Her ministry there began Jan. 1.

The Rev. Daniel Cenci has accepted a call to serve as rector of St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Clinton, NC in the Diocese of East Carolina. He will begin his ministry there Feb. 1.

The Rev. Dex Bender, rector of St. Luke’s, Scottsboro will retire March 1, 2015.
In the Beginning by Pockets of Learning (softbook)
This colorful fabric, interactive book encourages children and adults to discuss Creation and the Book of Genesis. Each hand-crafted book is a soft-sided, zippered carry bag with padded handles. The quality and craftsmanship in each Pockets of Learning cloth book and travel bag is unparalleled. Multiple pieces and characters store neatly inside their own pocket and are REPLACEABLE! Each book is designed to be a learning tool that will last for generations. Closed book size is 8.5” W x 11.5” H without padded handles. Recommended ages 18 months and up. Safety tested for all children from birth and up.

Thank You for the Morning Light: Prayers for Children by Robert Swaim Flowers, author and illustrator (Bob’s Books, hardback)
Dr. Bob Flowers has created a wonderful children’s book of rhyming prayers, filled with heartwarming illustrations he created to emphasize their poetic messages. Thank You For The Morning Light is for the entire family to share and enjoy, bringing them closer together while strengthening both their faith and their spiritual relationships. As you pray together, often memorizing the poems and alternating the reading (or saying) of its lines, you grow closer to each other — and closer to our Father in Heaven. There is little in life that children enjoy more than reading out loud, memorizing, reciting and making rhyme — like that in the book. May it be a blessing for you and those you love!

A Mess of Help from the Crucified Soul of Rock N’ Roll by David W.F. Zahl (Mockingbird, paperback)
In his debut book, Mockingbird founder and editor-in-chief David Zahl plays on the intersection of music, memoir, and theology to create a fresh and colorful series of essays that truly stands alone.

The Book of Common Prayer, Large Print Edition by Church Publishing (red kivar paperback)
Available for the first time from Church Publishing, this complete, large-print edition of the 1979 Book of Common Prayer (BCP) is ideal for anyone who prefers reading larger type. Special features include highly readable 14-point-type size, kivar cover for long-lasting quality, and lay-flat binding for versatile hands-free use. It is correctly paginated to match all other editions. Designed for use in pews or for personal devotion, the large-print BCP is a perfect gift book. The larger size of the book makes it a useful volume for clergy and others who read from the lectern. The large-print BCP presents the certified Standard Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments and Other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church together with The Psalter or Psalms of David according to use in the Episcopal Church in the United States authorized in 1979.

Not by Bread Alone: Daily Reflections for Lent 2015 by Jay Cormier (Liturgical Press, paperback)
Not by Bread Alone offers daily reflections and meditations that focus on the Lenten themes of repentance and redemption, sacrifice and salvation as well as the Easter message of resurrection and new life. In just minutes per day, these meditations can deepen your experience of the solemn season of prayer and penance and prepare you to participate more fully in the joy of the great Easter mystery.

The Book Store is open Monday through Thursday from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and Sunday from 8:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. For information about these and other books, or to have the staff research and special order a particular book, please contact the Episcopal Book Store, 2015 Sixth Avenue North, Birmingham, AL 35203; 205-323-2959; ebsinfo@episcobooks.com; or visit the bookstore online at www.episcobooks.com.
Diocese to host Episcopal Relief & Development 75th Anniversary Photo Exhibition

by The Rev. Deacon Judy Quick, Diocesan Coordinator, Episcopal Relief & Development

In celebration of Episcopal Relief & Development’s 75th Anniversary, the Diocese of Alabama will host the organization’s traveling photo exhibition at Canterbury Chapel in Tuscaloosa from Feb. 5 to 15, 2015.

Featuring 33 iconic photos of Episcopal Relief & Development’s work around the globe, the exhibition leads viewers through a vivid, intimate exploration of the organization’s history and programs.

“We’re proud to support the efforts of Episcopal Relief and Development as a way to address the needs of the world, and delighted to have this exhibit at our Convention to show us some of the work being done on our behalf,” said the Rt. Rev. Kee Sloan, diocesan bishop. “I want to thank the Rev. Deacon Judy Quick for coordinating this for us, and I hope that as we gather for Convention people will take a few minutes to look at the display.”

Through compelling images and insightful descriptions, the photo exhibition builds meaningful connections to Episcopal Relief & Development’s four core program areas: alleviating hunger, promoting health, creating economic opportunities and responding to disasters. Photos come from five continents and were chosen from over 20,000 images by curator Johanna Lehan, who has worked for The New Yorker and Newsweek.

“We are delighted to host the 75th Anniversary exhibition at Canterbury Chapel,” said Canterbury’s deacon, the Rev. Cindy Roff. “We welcome participants in the 184th Diocesan Convention to be held in Tuscaloosa from Feb. 6-7, to view the exhibition. Members of the University of Alabama community, and all other interested persons are also welcome. Of special interest will be images of Episcopal Relief and Development’s activities in Alabama following the 2011 tornadoes.”

The “AllHands75” e-docent app, available for iPhone and Android, provides enrichment while experiencing the exhibition in person, and acts as a virtual tour for remote viewing. The app features a variety of voices – including the Presiding Bishop of The Episcopal Church and the president, staff and supporters of Episcopal Relief & Development – giving deeper detail and background for each image. The applications can be downloaded at http://bit.ly/1D85lyv.

“It is incredibly moving to stand in front of these powerful images and hear from someone who was there in the midst of amazing transformation, or whose faith in the importance and impact of our work inspires deeper connection,” said Sean McConnell, Episcopal Relief & Development’s director of engagement. “Striving together with local partners, our programs truly engage communities in realizing their vision of a thriving future. I hope that this exhibition helps people to see what we can do when we act together to heal our hurting world.”

The Episcopal Diocese of Alabama has a long history of connection with Episcopal Relief & Development, even when the organization was the Presiding Bishop’s Fund for World Relief. The Right Reverend Furman “Bill” Stough, Eighth Bishop of Alabama, directed the Presiding Bishop’s Fund (1988-1993) when the Most Reverend Edmund Browning was Presiding Bishop. Two presidents of Episcopal Relief & Development have visited the Diocese of Alabama, Sandra Swan and Rob Radtke. Most poignantly, the Diocese of Alabama received emergency relief and long-term development funds from Episcopal Relief & Development to support the Diocese’s response to the 64 tornadoes which struck Alabama on April 27, 2011.

The photo exhibition is one of many events that the Diocese is hosting during 2015 to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of Episcopal Relief & Development. Bishop Sloan has chosen the “Carry the Water” theme with a focus on improving hygiene, sanitation and overall health by building water systems to ensure communities can access this crucial natural resource, this life-giving water. Parishes are planning events such as a “Wine into Water” gala to help raise awareness and funds for projects such as wells and sanitation systems.

In the Diocese of Alabama, March 8 is Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday, the third Sunday in Lent, a day set aside to pray and honor the work of Episcopal Relief & Development.

Episcopal Relief & Development works with more than 3 million people in nearly 40 countries worldwide to overcome poverty, hunger and disease through multi-sector programs that utilize local resources and expertise. An independent 501(c) (3) organization, Episcopal Relief & Development works closely with Anglican Communion and ecumenical partners to help communities rebuild after disasters and develop long-term strategies to create a thriving future. In 2014-15, the organization joins Episcopalians and friends in celebrating 75 Years of Healing a Hurting World.

For more information on Episcopal Relief & Development in the Diocese of Alabama, contact the Rev. Deacon Judy Quick, Diocesan Coordinator for Episcopal Relief & Development, jgquick@bellsouth.net, 205-669-6862 (home); 770-366-4034 (cell).

For visits to the Episcopal Relief & Development 75th Anniversary Photo Exhibition, contact the Rev. Deacon Cindy Roff, cindyroff49@gmail.com.