Episcopal Relief & Development and Equal Exchange have launched a new Fair Trade partnership, offering customers an opportunity to enjoy premium products while supporting small-scale farming communities and healing a hurting world.

The Episcopal Relief & Development Fair Trade Project offers a range of products including coffee, tea, chocolate and snack items. Equal Exchange donates 15 cents per pound of product purchased* to Episcopal Relief & Development, supporting programs that alleviate hunger, promote health and fight disease.

“I am so pleased to begin our Fair Trade Project with Equal Exchange,” said Sean McConnell, Episcopal Relief & Development’s Director of Engagement, since they not only support farmer-run cooperatives but are actually a co-op themselves. With our own focus on asset-based community development and empowering small-scale farmers to earn a living while protecting the environment, our mission is in perfect alignment with our vision.”

Samples of Fair Trade products were offered at Episcopal Relief & Development’s booth at the 78th General Convocation of The Episcopal Church in Salt Lake City, Utah: Three coffee blends (medium roast African Roots, darker Love Buzz, and Full City Roast) and three premium chocolates (dark with almonds, dark with sea salt and caramel crunch, and milk with a hint of hazelnut).

New and existing Equal Exchange customers who wish for their purchases to benefit Episcopal Relief & Development should sign up online at: http://interfaith.equalexchange.coop/ or contact Equal Exchange at interfaith@equalexchange.coop or 774-776-7366. Both individuals and groups, such as congregations and community organizations, can purchase products online through the Equal Exchange website or request a catalog and order form via mail.

“Fair Trade enables small-scale farmers to support their families and stay on their land with fair and steady income through their cooperatives,” said Abagail Nelson, Episcopal Relief & Development’s Senior Vice President of Programs. “And organic farming keeps toxic pesticides and chemical fertilizers out of the soil and water, which preserves the environment. Additionally, shade-grown crops improve the soil and prevent erosion, while providing habitat for birds and other wildlife. Equal Exchange does a wonderful job of ensuring that their products create the greatest real benefits for farmers, consumers and the world.” Learn more about the Fair Trade Project at: http://bit.ly/1fRhxHn

Shop Now! Support Episcopal Relief & Development!

*15 cents per pound donation does not include Equal Exchange’s Palestinian olive oil.

To learn more about Episcopal Relief & Development’s programs worldwide, visit www.episcopalrelief.org. 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.

Gratitude continues for the generosity of parishes and individuals in the diocese to honor the 75th Anniversary of Episcopal Relief & Development. For more information, contact the Rev. Deacon Judy Quick at gjquick@yahoo.com

Episcopal Relief & Development’s Senior Vice President

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

An 80-million-member worldwide community of 38 provinces.

Archbishop of Canterbury
The Most Rev. Justin Welby
Lambeth Palace, London
England SE17JU


All editorial submissions should be sent to Dave Drachlis at communications@dioala.org. The deadline for each issue is the first day of the month of publication.

All address corrections or additions should be sent to Denise Servant at dservant@dioala.org or Carpenter House, 521 North 20th Street, Birmingham, AL 35203–2682.

POSTMASTER: Please send address corrections to Denise Servant, Circulation Secretary, The Alabama Episcopalian, 521 North 20th Street, Birmingham, AL 35203–2682.
Hello friends,

The first Special Session at Bethany Village at Camp McDowell featured the Blessing and Dedication of Bethany Village – both the session and the Dedication were huge successes. There were an awful lot of moving parts in both the session and the service; I’m not going to tell you that everything went off completely without any frustration at all, but I can tell you that any difficulties were met with a lot of love, patience and grace. The great success of the Special Session, and of the service of Dedication and Blessing, and of God’s holy Church, is not that there are no problems or challenges, but that people by God’s grace are willing and able to overcome whatever comes in the Name of Christ and for the love of God. Sometimes it just takes a lot of love, and patience, and always the grace of God.

I want to thank all of the hundreds of people who came and participated in the Dedication, all of you who had roles to play, all of you who contributed and are still contributing. The Special Session campers and staff just loved our new part of Camp – thank you all so much! (If you still haven’t made a contribution, it’s not too late – our friend Danielle Dunbar who works at the Diocesan Office would love to hear from you! Seriously, we’re not through raising funds yet; we’ve still got a little ways to go.)

I went to the 78th General Convention of The Episcopal Church General Convention the day after the end of the Special Session, and there were some frustrations there, too. Our deputation did very well, and represented our diocese faithfully and with style. There were hundreds of resolutions working their way through committees and hearings, and then through first one House and then the next. Some were rejected, most were amended, many were passed. Some of those resolutions are of limited interest, but some of them will make a difference.

Two of the most important and controversial resolutions had to do with same sex marriage. The Convention voted to change our canons to allow monogamous committed people of the same sex to marry in the Church, in civil jurisdictions where the law permits. This came a day or two after the Supreme Court of the United States ruled that it is not constitutional to withhold the rights of marriage from same sex couples, but we need to remember that The Episcopal Church is not only in the United States, but also in sixteen other countries as well. The other resolution authorized for trial use several services which may be used for same sex marriages, as well as different sex marriages.

I want to tell you all that the conversations in the House of Bishops and in the House of Deputies were respectful and prayerful. Voices from all points of view were heard and appreciated. In both houses of General Convention the people who voted against these resolutions said they felt loved and included, even though they were in the minority. This is only my third General Convention, but I understand that this was a welcome change from the destructive ways we have worked in the past. There were challenges, met with love, patience and grace.

We have a policy in place in the Diocese of Alabama which allows for clergy and congregations who agree with each other that this is the right thing for us to do to offer the blessing of same sex unions, while at the same time allowing for clergy and congregations who do not believe this is appropriate to not offer them. The Bishops’ Commission on Generous Pastoral Response, who helped your bishops form this policy, will gather at the end of July to consider how the General Convention resolutions and the ruling from the Supreme Court affect the policy, and how we should proceed from here. As I wrote in my statement from General Convention (which is on the diocesan website) “No priest in the diocese of Alabama is authorized to solemnize a marriage between people of the same sex until permission is expressly given by one of the bishops of this diocese. No priest will ever be forced or pressured into performing a marriage between two people of the same sex.”

I am grateful to the people of the Diocese for many things, and particularly for our willingness to disagree respectfully about issues about which we feel strongly.”

I am grateful to the people of the Diocese for many things, and particularly for our willingness to disagree respectfully about issues about which we feel strongly. The unity of the church is more important than winning an argument. We are not of one mind about this issue, and so we will continue to move deliberately, carefully, and prayerfully, and in such a way that we respect the opinions of others.

There are always hitches and glitches, in whatever we do: we’re just people, and we do the best we can. I hope and pray that we will continue to give thanks for the gifts and joys our Lord generously lavishes on us, and do the best we can to meet our challenges together with love, patience and grace.

From Bishop Sloan
Common Good

I have been very privileged to participate in the governance and polity of several ecclesiastical jurisdictions in the Anglican Communion, and in doing so witnessed firsthand how polity, governance and structure function differently in different contexts. Also, I have witnessed how much the church does become a subject of its context, and how much context (much to our discomfort) shapes and influences missional focus and ministry responses. Mission and ministry are interpreted in light of the prevailing challenges and opportunities, and cultural trajectory. There is also another equally compelling dilemma circulating in the recess of our inner soul, and that is, the conscientious deliberation, and acute awareness to guard against oppressive and dehumanizing behaviors that once marked the practice of the church. The church is always in the process of redeeming itself, and such efforts may take us to unlikely places of overreach. However, the overarching question is discerning, ‘how far is the Spirit leading to where it becomes uncomfortable even for the Spirit to tolerate?’

Equally pertinent is the whole issue of Kainos or God’s time, and how much we are in sync with it. Even more elusive is the question of whether or not we want God to speak, or if God is speaking are we patient enough to hear with clarity of thought and stillness of spirit. Also, how do we obediently exercise the spiritual gift of wisdom to interrupt our pursuits, because it’s not overtly clear that where we may be heading is necessarily the will and purpose of God. Conversely, that God is leading in a particular direction and the church is caught in the middle unwilling to listen, because on one hand, traditional values and long acceptable norms are wreaking havoc on our quest to conquer new frontiers of missional opportunities, and on the other faithful to the dictum of our baptismal covenant, “to honor and respect the dignity of every human being.” Sometimes to preserve the dignity of the other we may need to recall the Lord’s adage, “the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath.”

Over the years of global journey in servanthood to the mission of God and gospel imperatives, I have learnt the value of practicing spiritual interrogation, because to be multi-cultural and bear fruit in multi-cultural mission field require significant discipline, patience, tolerance, cultural humility and contextual hermeneutics. Paying attention to the conversation and the skill of reading from the underside, to borrow a term from liberation theology, does offer perspective from unlikely sources. God, how woefully inadequate we are in living out our call to be ‘a peculiar people’, in the words of the chief apostle, “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people…” (I Peter 2:9).

General Convention 2015, Salt Lake City, Utah, was my second iteration of a much anticipated and highly energetic gathering of the Episcopal Church. It warms the soul to see how many denominations within Christianity send representatives to General Convention. This representation is a good sampling, and tangible indication that our witness among ecumenical partners is invaluable and respected. General Convention also gave this convention an opportunity to observe the skillful and strategic workings of interest groups that vigorously, yet purposefully with Christian grace and fortitude, pursue their favorite agenda item in the meta interest of promotion of the mission of God. Imagine how fascinating all this beehive of activity was for an apolitical individual like me.

And, what was even more fascinating was to witness that at the end of the day, the Holy Spirit in the Spirit’s uniquely indomitable way sorted out the confusion, assuaged frustration, calmed fear, and vanquished apprehension for the common good. The Spirit assuaged the anxiety felt by some who offered controversial resolutions and watched them accepted, and comforted those who grieved at the outcome. Yet in the conundrum of general convention politics, it did not degenerate into hostility or disrespect. At no time was there a sense to continue with decisions made at the General Convention, for instance, the ‘high-fives.’ Bishops and deputies remained resolutely respectful of each other and genuinely loving toward one another. It was absolutely amazing to experience such grace among deputations and between bishops. The experience was genuinely palpable, and you had to be out of touch with yourself, and/or out of tune with the reality of the ‘moment’ to miss it.

Interrupting some of this heightened tension were some exquisite moments for celebration in the spirit of common good. Paramount among them was the election of the Episcopal Church’s first black Presiding Bishop, the Right Reverend Michael B. Curry, Episcopal Bishop of the Diocese of North Carolina. If ever in the halls of General Convention there was need for a moment of solemn pause, this was truly that moment. The fact that Bishop Curry received the overwhelming confidence and support of both the House of Bishops and House of Deputies is a testament to the common mind of convention, and unquestionable movement of the Spirit. It’s obvious that the common voice of General Convention spoke with overwhelming consensus that our new presiding bishop-elect has the gifts, aptitude, wisdom, humility and sensivity the Episcopal Church needs in this season. It has always been my humble opinion that God’s chosen leaders in the Church are called for a particular season and time. Bishop Curry describes himself as the CEO (Chief Evangelism Officer) of the church. Such affirmation we need from our new Presiding Bishop elect. Evangelism is the bedrock of gospel imperative for any church that is serious about growth and impact in this and every season.

The Episcopal Church’s next triennium budget reflects an intentional focus and energy directed in promoting evangelism, the first mark of mission. Bishop Curry and I worked very closely during my time in North Carolina, and I firmly believe he is God’s servant for this season. The Episcopal Diocese of Alabama pledges its wholehearted support of this man of God. And, we pray God’s guidance and protection on him and his family. Another reassuring aspect of General Convention is emphasis on the Mission of God Strategy. The focus and tenor of the next Triennium budget are on mission imperatives, reconciliation and transformation.

At the end of General Convention 2015, bishops and deputations did leave Salt Lake City with mixed emotions depending on whose side you aligned on certain issues of faith and order. Nevertheless, it is visibly optimistic that we have been faithful to our convictions, genuinely honest with each other, devoutly loyal to God’s church and God’s mission, albeit within the embodiment of human frailty and brokenness, as led by the Holy Spirit. In the end, history will judge our actions rightly or wrongly, and that’s in God’s hands. For my own self, I don’t take my personal actions lightly, so I humbly pray God’s forgiveness, and unfathomable mercy embedded with a heavy dose of compassion, for an imperfect son who daily strives to faithfully serve the will of his ever glorious Savior as led by his Spirit.

Finally, our human relationships at their best are marked by a dynamism and interactivity capable of changing all involved through genuine encounters which lead us into new life. Those we call ‘other’ are no longer over against us, but present to us and us to them, human beings whose energy connects with ours and ours with theirs, who are fellow followers, disciples or guests in God’s house with us. Even in our sin, weakness, fear and timidity, we are constantly challenged by the God who calls us to abide with our neighbors as signs of his presence with them, and who sends us to engage as agents of his mission among them. Through prayer and worship the triune God forms us to be a people called into newness of life in our diverse states of encountering Jesus.

Peace & Love!

+Santosh
General Convention Wrap-up

The 78th General Convention, in a series of historic moments, elected the first African-American presiding bishop; adopted a budget that emphasizes racial reconciliation and evangelism; endorsed the study of fossil fuel divestment; opposed divestment in Israel, Palestine; made some significant changes to the church’s governance; and approved resolutions to provide for offering marriage to same sex couples.

North Carolina Bishop Michael Curry elected presiding bishop
The Episcopal Church’s General Convention made history June 27 when it chose Diocese of North Carolina Bishop Michael Curry to be its 27th presiding bishop. Curry became the first person of color to be elected presiding bishop, and the first person to be elected to the office on the first ballot. (See page 8 for full story.)

Budget emphasizes racial reconciliation, evangelism
The General Convention adopted the 2016-2018 triennial budget after agreeing to add $2.8 million for evangelism work.

The 2016-2018 triennial budget is based on $125,083,185 in revenue, compared to the forecasted $118,243,102 for the triennium that ends Dec. 31 of this year. The expenses are projected to be $125,057,351. The budget comes in with a negligible surplus of $25,834. Its revenue projection is based in part on asking the church’s dioceses and regional mission areas to give 18 percent of their income to fund the 2016 budget, 16.5 percent for the 2017 budget and 15 percent in 2018.

The version of the budget presented July 1 by the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance also included a major new $2 million initiative on racial justice and reconciliation, even as it reduces the amount of money it asks dioceses to contribute to 15 percent by 2018.

General Convention also made mandatory the current voluntary diocesan budgetary asking system for the 2019-2021 budget cycle and imposed penalties for noncompliance. The mandatory assessment will not apply to the upcoming 2016-2018 triennial budget, but becomes effective Jan. 1, 2019.

Marriage
General Convention on July 1 approved canonical and liturgical changes eliminating language defining marriage as between a man and a woman, and authorizing two new marriage rites with language allowing them to be used by same-sex or opposite-sex couples.

“‘This is an extension of work done in previous General Conventions, and continues the effort of the Episcopal Church to invite and welcome all people into this part of God’s Church,’” said the Rt. Rev. Kee Sloan Alabama’s bishop. “‘We recognize that all people are broken, and that we are all beloved of God, and redeemed by God Sloan went on to say,’The Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Alabama already has a policy in place regarding the blessing of same sex unions, which makes it possible for congregations and clergy who believe this is a loving extension of God’s Kingdom to offer these blessings, while at the same time making it possible for those who do not believe this is right to not participate. The same commission which helped form that policy will come together to review the policy in light of resolutions passed at General Convention and recent rulings by the United States Supreme Court.’” (See Bishop Sloan’s column on page 3.)

Divest from fossil fuels, reinvest in renewables
General Convention passed two resolutions aimed at environmentally responsible investing and creating a climate change advisory committee.

One calls upon the Investment Committee of Executive Council, the Episcopal Church Endowment Fund and the Episcopal Church Foundation “to divest from fossil fuel companies and reinvest in clean renewable energy in a fiscally responsible manner.” The other calls for the creation of a climate change advisory committee with one representative from each of The Episcopal Church’s nine provinces. The resolution also calls on each province to create a Regional Consultative Group composed “of no fewer than five experts in areas of environmental sustainability appropriate to the demographic, ecological, cultural and geographic specifics of each region.”

Agrees to major structural changes
The General Convention approved two resolutions making major changes to the structure of The Episcopal Church. One resolution slightly expands Executive Council’s appointment power concerning three members
of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society's executive staff, including the chief operating officer, chief financial officer and chief legal officer (a position created in the resolution). The other reduces the number of the church’s standing commissions from 14 to two. The two would be the Standing Commission on Structure, Governance, Constitution and Canons, and the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music. The presiding bishop and House of Deputies president would appoint study committees and task forces to complete the work called for by a meeting of General Convention, with council's approval. All of those bodies would expire at the start of the next General Convention unless they are renewed.

Oppose divestment in Israel, Palestine
The House of Bishops sent a strong and clear message that divestment from companies and corporations engaged in certain business related to the State of Israel is not in the best interests of The Episcopal Church, its partners in the Holy Land, interreligious relations, and the lives of Palestinians on the ground.

The bishops rejected a resolution, which would have called on the Executive Council’s Committee on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) to develop a list of U.S. and foreign corporations that provide goods and services that support the infrastructure of Israel’s occupation “to monitor its investments and apply its CSR policy to any possible future investments” in such companies.

General Convention passed two resolutions on peacemaking. One “reaffirms the vocation of the Church as an agent of reconciliation and restorative justice,” and recognizes that “meaningful reconciliation can help to engender sustainable, long-lasting peace and that such reconciliation must incorporate both political action and locally driven grassroots efforts.”

The other expresses solidarity with and support for Christians in Israel and the Israeli-occupied territories; affirms the work of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem in healing, education, and pastoral care; and affirms the work of Christians engaged in relationship building, interfaith dialogue, nonviolence training, and advocacy for the rights of Palestinians. The resolution also urges Episcopalians to demonstrate their solidarity by making pilgrimage to the Holy Land and learning from fellow Christians in the region.

Plans to be created for prayer book, hymnal revision
General Convention took a step toward revising the 1979 Book of Common Prayer and The Hymnal 1982, directing the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music to prepare plans for revising each and to present them to the next convention in Austin, Texas, in 2018.

Among other liturgical issues, the convention directed bishops to find ways for congregations without clergy to receive Communion, but the House of Bishops defeated proposals to allow unbaptized people to receive Holy Communion or to study the issue.
The convention approved making available a revised version of “Holy Women, Holy Men” with additional saints’ commemorations but left “Lesser Feasts and Fasts” as the church authorized supplemental calendar of. The revised “Holy Women, Holy Men,” is called “A Great Cloud of Witnesses.”

Convention takes a first step, admits: ‘Alcohol affects us all’

General Convention passed three resolutions on the issue of alcohol and drug abuse. One recommends that ordinands should be questioned at the very beginning of the discernment process about addiction and substance use in their lives and family systems. Another acknowledges the church’s role in the culture of alcohol and drug abuse. And the third calls for the creation of a task force to review and revise policy on substance abuse, addiction and recovery.

Closer relations with Cuba

The U.S.-based Episcopal Church and the Episcopal Church of Cuba took a step toward closer relations during the 78th General Convention. Convention also passed a resolution calling for the U.S. government to lift its economic embargo against Cuba.

Greater solidarity for persecuted Christians

Advocacy for Christians facing persecution and living in the context of civil war are the subject of several resolutions passed by the convention. Convention agreed that Christians in Pakistan, Syria, Liberia, South Sudan and Sudan are among those for whom the church needs to step up its support and solidarity as many of them live in fear of death, starvation, and displacement in their war-ravaged or extremist-influenced countries.

Churchwide day of prayer

A slightly amended resolution originally drafted by the Diocese of Alabama, submitted by Province IV, and passed by convention calls for a churchwide day of prayer in 2016 in remembrance of “contemporary martyrs and in solidarity with persecuted Christians in our own day” and the Episcopal Church “condemns the heinous acts of violence and persecution directed toward our brothers and sisters in Christ and all others throughout the world persecuted for their faith.”

In other convention actions

Alabama Deputy Mark Smith, St. Mark’s Birmingham & Alabama deputation chair, was elected to a position on Disciplinary Board for Bishops; and the Rev. Jayne Pool, St. Mark’s Birmingham rector, was elected to the Joint Nominating Committee for Election of the Presiding Bishop.


ECW Triennium

Diocese of Alabama delegation members (from right) Brenda Mayhall, president, Pat Clanton, Andrea Peacock, and Marilyn Atkins, attend the 48th Triennial ECW Meeting during the 78th General Convention of the Episcopal Church in Salt Lake City, UT.

Alabama Diocese Recognized for its UTO Support

The Episcopal Diocese of Alabama was recognized at the 48th Episcopal Church Women (ECW) Triennial Conference in Salt Lake City for its contribution to the United Thank Offering (UTO).

In 2014, the diocese out gave all other Province IV dioceses with a contribution of more than $41,700. The diocese was also recognized for being one of only six dioceses in the entire Episcopal Church to increase the amount of its contribution over each of the last three years. The other five dioceses are Ohio, Northern California, Northwest Texas, West Texas, and Western New York.

The triennial ingathering was offered and blessed during the June 28 General Convention Eucharist in the Salt Palace, attended by more than 4,000 convention goers. Each diocese was recognized by province as a representative of that diocese carried its symbolic offering to the altar. Diocesan UTO Coordinator Marilyn Atkins presented Alabama’s offering.

The Province IV triennial ingathering topped $882,000 — more than any other province in the church. The total ingathering for this triennium was $4.3 million.

The United Thank Offering is able to fund grant requests domestically and abroad with the money received from UTO In gatherings and the UTO Blue Boxes.

“The people of the Diocese of Alabama have consistently been giving to the United Thank Offering,” said Atkins. “Thank you for supporting the important ministries of the Episcopal Church through your generosity.”
Bishop Michael Michael Curry to be next Presiding Bishop

by Episcopal News Service and Diocesan Staff

The Episcopal Church’s General Convention made history June 27 when it chose Diocese of North Carolina Bishop Michael Curry to be its 27th presiding bishop.

Curry, 62, was elected by the House of Bishops from a slate of four nominees on the first ballot. He received 121 votes of a total 174 cast.

Curry’s election was ratified an hour later by the House of Deputies, as outlined in the church’s canons, after being confirmed by a special committee whose members included Diocese of Alabama Deputy Virginia Hillhouse. A delegation from the House of Bishops delivered the election results to the chair of the House of Deputies, who passed the results to the confirmation committee for deliberation.

As word of the election spread, the House of Deputies filled with visitors in anticipation of the announcement. Hillhouse and the rest of the committee returned in less than an hour with confirmation of the election. The House of Deputies then ratified the election by a vote of 800 to 12.

“I was touched by the moving of the Holy Spirit in the House of Bishops, and in this part of God’s Church,” said the Rt. Rev. Kee Sloan, Bishop of Alabama. Sloan said of the election that was held in St. Mark’s Cathedral, “the sense of the presence of God was felt by most of the bishops there – it was a holy moment.

“After the announcement was made, and we understood that Michael had been elected on the first ballot, we applauded until our hands hurt, and then we all sang the Doxology together,” said Sloan.

“It was a holy mix of joyful tears, and I had the very strong conviction that we had done the right thing. I know Michael fairly well, and I am excited that he will serve faithfully and energetically as the face and voice of The Episcopal Church.”

Curry will serve a nine-year term that officially begins Nov. 1. On that date, Curry will succeed current Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori and he will become the first person of color to hold that position.

A liturgy marking the beginning of Curry’s ministry as presiding bishop and primate will be celebrated Nov. 1, All Saints Day at Washington National Cathedral.

The House of Deputies, which had filled with visitors and bishops, erupted into sustained applause when Jefferts Schori and Curry entered at about 2:30 p.m. His entrance came about 30 minutes after the House of Deputies confirmed his election. Deputies stood on their chairs, holding aloft their phones, tablets and cameras to capture the historic moment.

“Oh, God love ya,” Curry said when he got to the microphone on the dais. “I know you haven’t had lunch so, no sermons now.”

The deputies worked past their scheduled 1:00 p.m. recess to vote on Curry’s election and hear him speak.

“It really is a blessing and privilege to serve our church and to serve our Lord in this way,” he said. “I treasure this church, this house, the House of Bishops, all of us. We are God’s children.”

Curry said The Episcopal Church is “the church where I learned about Jesus.”

“This is a good and wonderful church and we are good and wonderful people and I thank God to be one of the baptized among you,” Curry said, adding, “My heart is really full.

“We’ve got a society where there are challenges before us and there are crises all around us. And the church has challenges before it,” he said. “We got a God and there really is a Jesus, and we are part of the Jesus Movement. Nothing can stop the movement of God’s love in this world.”

As Curry left the dais, people in the house sang the Doxology.

“I think Curry’s election represents not only the will of the House of Bishops but the will of the whole church and it seems to be an expression of Gods will,” said the Rev. Evan Garner, rector of St. John’s Episcopal Church in Decatur, and a deputy to convention from the Diocese of Alabama. “It is an exciting time to be in the Episcopal Church. I felt an overwhelming sense of hope.”

“It was very moving,” added the Rev. Lee Shafer, rector of Grace Church in Anniston, and a convention deputy. “The Holy Spirit has been moving a lot this week.”

Curry has been North Carolina’s 11th diocesan bishop since he was ordained and consecrated on June 17, 2000. He was the rector of St. James’ Episcopal Church, Baltimore, Maryland, when he was elected to the see on Feb. 11, 2000. He is also the current chair of Episcopal Relief & Development’s Board of Directors.

This makes the second time in a row that the General Convention made history with its election of a presiding bishop. In 2006, Jefferts Schori became the first woman ever to be elected presiding bishop of The Episcopal Church. She was also the first female among the primates, or ordained leaders, of the Anglican Communion’s 38 provinces, a distinction she still holds.

Curry’s election also made history by being the first time a presiding bishop was chosen on the first ballot.

Curry and his wife, Sharon, have two adult daughters, Rachel and Elizabeth.

Diocese of Alabama receives UTO Grant to establish “Christ Church Café”

The Episcopal Diocese of Alabama has been awarded a United Thank Offering (UTO) Grant to enable Christ Church in Fairfield to establish the “Christ Church Café,” a ‘feeding ministry’ to the Fairfield community.

The Grant will enable Christ Church to refurbish and expand their small, outdated kitchen, enabling Christ Church to provide meals to the community on the fourth Sunday of each month.

The grant was announced June 26, during the 48th Triennial Meeting of the Episcopal Church Women, in conjunction with the 78th General Convention of the Episcopal Church. Marilyn Atkins, Diocese of Alabama’s UTO Coordinator accepted the award on behalf of the diocese.

The 2015 United Thank Offering grants session focused on the Episcopal Church’s Fourth Mark of Mission, “to seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation.” In celebration of the 125th anniversary of the United Thank Offering, the annual grants focus is working towards God’s vision for his people and is seeking to change lives in a new way by a variety of actions.

The United Thank Offering is able to fund grant requests domestically and abroad with the money received from UTO In gatherings and the UTO Blue Boxes. The people of the Diocese of Alabama are leaders in contributing to this important ministry that brings hope, peace and reconciliation to those who desperately need it.
Lynn Hendricks Installed as President of the National Altar Guild Association

He Diocese of Alabama's Lynn Hendricks was installed as president of the Episcopal Church's National Altar Guild Association during a special service at St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral in Salt Lake City, UT, July 2.

Hendricks, who is a member of All Saints Episcopal Church in Birmingham, has served on altar guilds for the past 40 years. She is a member of the Diocese of Alabama Altar Guild, and has served as first vice president of the National Altar Guild for the past three years. As first vice president a major responsibility was to plan the guild's triennial conference, which is held in conjunction with General Convention.

The Rt. Rev. Henry Parsley, celebrant for the service, commissioned Hendricks and the other new national officers. He blessed and presented a special cross to Hendricks. The Very Reverend Raymond Joe Waldon, dean of the cathedral, preached the sermon, reminding the congregation of the vital role the altar guild plays in the parish.

"The National Altar Guild's primary purpose is to be a resource for diocese and parish altar guilds," said Hendricks. Among its many roles, the organization provides all of the stoles for the U.S. Armed Forces. Its members make communion kits, and linens for parishes or missions that require them. The guild distributes disaster communion kits when needed, and some of its members knit for the Seamen’s Church Institute.

“Our big joy is to be the altar guild for the National Church,” said Hendricks. Every three years its members serve at the daily celebration of Holy Eucharist during the General Convention of the Episcopal Church. “So every three years we take care of all the logistics of getting the bread and wine to where it needs to be and serving the deacon that is at that station.” The altar guild volunteers set the altar and communions stations, and reverently clean up after each service – no small task since each service is attended by from 2,000 to more than 4,000 people. This year, the guild provided 48 loaves of communion bread and 24 pitchers of wine for each service.

Altar guild members from throughout the church, attending the triennial meeting have the opportunity to serve during convention. Martha Noble, St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church in Vestavia, was among those who served during this convention.

A role of the president of the altar guild is to be a focal point for working with the Church Center. Hendricks sees her role over then next three years as also working to broaden the organization’s base and getting dioceses more involved. “I see my role as getting out to the dioceses (and meeting with bishops) so that I can introduce altar guild beyond the parish level.” Her hopes are that at least one person from every diocese will participate in the triennial meeting.

The meetings provide an educational component. They allow for sharing of ideas and solutions to problems, according to Hendricks. They also provide a spiritual component. “We look at altar guild as ministry, and for me spirituality is very important,” she said.

The National Altar Guild publishes an epistle four times a year which contains articles on different areas, ranging from spirituality to practicalities. For more information on the association, visit: http://www.nationalaltarguildassociation.org

The Abbey ministry featured at General Convention

The Diocese of Alabama’s innovative ministry “The Abbey,” was featured at the 78th General Convention of the Episcopal Church in Salt Lake City.

The short video highlighting the ministry played on convention information kiosks throughout the Salt Palace. The kiosks provided convention goers the daily schedule of events and activities.

The Abbey is a community coffee shop in the Avondale neighborhood of Birmingham. It is a nonprofit project of the Episcopal Diocese of Alabama. The Abbey’s mission is to offer a place of hospitality and conversation to the community.

The Abbey is also home to an Episcopal worshiping community which gathers on Sundays at 4 p.m. for conversation and the Eucharist.

The Episcopal Church Center created the video.
How Grace Works: Giving kids concrete skills and quiet time with God
by Stephanie Rhodes Narayanan; photos by Bob Sims & Stephanie Rhodes Narayanan

Young teens in bright green T-shirts mold concrete into pathways lined with pea gravel behind Grace Church in Woodlawn. There is little chatter from their worksite under the shade trees. Tomorrow will be a Friday adventure, a fun day somewhere beyond the neighborhood boundaries. But on this Thursday morning, they are busy building a winding community labyrinth.

The labyrinth is one of many projects in the seven-week Grace Works program begun by parishioner Kay Williams. Now in its third summer, the program offers its fifteen-plus participants a range of experiences: art, dance, worship, service-oriented building projects, outdoor adventures, and centering prayer.

Williams works with 12 to 15 year-olds, she says, because they are the group caught in a gap. Younger kids have good programming options, and 16 year-olds are free to drive out of neighborhoods with dangerous influences. “They’re a handful,” she says of these attitude-heavy early adolescent years. “But they’re also sponges, and they need the positive stuff in their lives.”

The kids come from neighborhoods like Woodlawn and Avondale and Gates City. When Williams talks about them, she talks about kids trapped in cycles of poverty and the basic tools she can give to help them escape it. Some of those are exactly what you’d expect — education, for instance, and vocational skills — but she’s also a firm believer in the power of exploration.

“It encompasses so much. I don’t know where to begin when I talk to people,” Williams says of the Grace Works approach. “I just know the kids need a place like this. They need a place where they can grow, that’s safe and encouraging and where God’s the center of it all.”

The Rev. Robyn Arnold, rector of Grace Church, sees kids caught not just in tough neighborhoods but in a limited mindset. “Part of the issue with our children,” she says, “is that they have trouble visioning a life for themselves that’s different than the one they know.

“You can’t change the life that you have unless you see that there can be another life. So helping them to begin to have a vision beyond this moment, beyond this day, even beyond this year, is one of the things we’ve been trying to do with all this. One really useful tool for doing that is to give them experiences of things they’ve not had before.”

They also find sets of skills that no one imagines possible for kids this age, Williams says. They use saws and power sanders and things beyond what many of their parents can handle, and parents are blown away by what their kids are able to learn. “It’s changing the way parents are viewing their own children,” she says.

“That is monumental.”

There are quieter changes as well, brought on by this year’s integration of a contemplative prayer practice. “One of the things that we wanted to work on this year with the children was internal quiet, because so much of their regular lives are full of chaos and drama and noise, both emotional and physical,” Arnold says.

“They’re working every afternoon with contemplative prayer so that they can have this quiet space that they carry with them, basically. That they can access no matter where they are and what they’re doing.”

Grace Church is a long time member of the Jubilee Ministry Network, part of the Episcopal Church’s domestic poverty mission. Deacon Jerry Jacob, jubilee officer for the diocese, describes network membership as a “recognition of individual parishes — or even an entire diocese — doing something tangible about bringing the needs and concerns of the world to the Church.”

Jacob is impressed by the scale of ministry at a small parish like Grace. “It’s going to have a profound impact on their community,” he says.

And, in fact, it already is. The Grace Works program has had a steady grassroots growth, attracting a range of partners from the YWCA to the Jones Valley Teaching Farm, working with Grace Works on food programs and mentoring and community gardens, according to Williams. Other Episcopal parishes have pitched in too, with volunteers and prayer rugs and funding support. “It’s just everyone wanting to be a part of what God’s growing,” Williams says.
With approximately 1,200 in attendance, the dedication of Bethany at Camp McDowell was a huge success! Special Session campers, counselors, and volunteers; Elementary I campers, counselors, and staff; the Alabama Folk School’s C.A.M.P. session participants and board members; Diocesan Homecoming guests; more than 55 clergy; parishioners and families from across the diocese; Department of Camp McDowell members; volunteers of all ages and abilities; and camp staff were present. Melanie Martin Couch remarked on Facebook, “Gosh what a great day to be at camp yesterday [for the dedication]. There was so much excitement, so much fun, so much celebration, and so much love! We were going to leave for home right after lunch…and ended up staying until 8:00!!”

It was a day for great celebration as we surpassed our campaign goal of $7.5 million and all of the groups listed were able to fully utilize our new and completed facilities. The breadth and depth of Camp McDowell—based in the love of Christ—was fully evidenced at the dedication. Special Session campers and counselors opened the service with, “The Butterfly Song.” We joyfully and playfully gave thanks for the love of our creator when we sang,

If I were a butterfly, I’d thank you, Lord, for giving me wings;
And if I were a robin in a tree, I’d thank you, Lord, that I could sing;
And if I were a fish in the sea, I’d wiggle my tail and I’d giggle with glee.
But I just thank you, Father, for making me “me.”

Charles DeBacker, a blind camper, read Genesis 28:10b-17 in braille. It was one of many beautifully tearful moments when he read, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.” Jim Brooks of Christ Church, Tuscaloosa followed by reading Psalm 67: 1-7 and Pam Parker, Bethany Campaign Consultant, read Colossians 3:12-17. Gathered together in one great assembly in “The Doug,” the Old Testament reading brought more tears of joy when we heard, “And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body.” Maggie Wade Johnston followed with “The Peace of Wild Things” by Wendell Berry and some of us cried a little bit more.

After a rousing rendition of “This Little Light of Mine,” the Rev. Dn. Clyde Pearce

After a tour of Camp McDowell and being part of the Bethany dedication the Presiding Bishop said, “I’m awed at the scope of the work here and the transformative possibilities it presents.”
read the gospel, Matthew 6:25-33, and the Rt. Rev. Kee Sloan preached a homily. He said, “You and I as God's beloved children have a light to shine.” He continued, “Today we celebrate that we have built a city on a hill for the light of God to shine into the darkness. And what we have to share is that we are all beloved children of God.” Bishop Sloan thanked all who helped dream, design, donate to, and build Bethany, the place where Jesus’ friends live.

Following the sermon, the congregation dispersed into the many parts of Bethany Village. First we divided into three groups as The Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori, The Rt. Rev. Kee Sloan, and The Rt. Rev. Santosh Marray concurrently blessed Mark’s Farm, the Bethany Cabins, and Parsley Commons. 48 new facilities were blessed after these main areas by priests and deacons from all reaches of the Diocese of Alabama. All the blessings were lively and spirit-filled as donors and family members went to the place they helped build to shine the light of Christ at Camp McDowell.

Once the blessings finished, we all returned to The Doug and Bishop Marray blessed the kitchen, the Rev. Doug Carpenter blessed the dining room, and Bishop Sloan blessed the fireplace. Then the presiding bishop asked God’s blessing on all of Bethany and Camp McDowell ending with the following prayer:

Visit, O blessed Lord, this place with the gladness of your presence. Bless those who visit and work here now and in the years to come with the gift of your love; and grant that we may manifest your love to all whose lives we touch. Grant that we may grow in grace and in the knowledge and love of you; guide, comfort, and strengthen us; and preserve us in peace, O Jesus Christ, now and forever. Amen.

The Rev. Mark Johnston greeted and welcomed everyone and made announcements pertaining to lunch. He gave thanks for all who had participated in the Bethany campaign and invited anyone who felt called to join him and Maggie in extending their pledge one more year. He announced that while we have surpassed our campaign goal, there are still unmet needs totaling $1.5 million to finish all of Bethany.

The Liturgy of the Table followed and the Elementary I campers sang, “The Gospel in a Word is Love” (Love Canon) for the offertory. During communion Mary Ann Pettway and China Pettway, Gee’s Bend Quilters who teach at the Alabama Folk School, sang several a Capella songs including, “Give Me Flowers While I Yet Live.” The Rev. David Meginniss and Andy Meginniss led us in, “Alleluia, He is Coming,” “I’ll Fly Away,” “Lean on Me,” and “Since I Laid My Burden Down.” After the Eucharist, we read in unison, A Prayer Attributed to St. Francis. To conclude the service, the Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori sent us out with the peace that passeth all understanding.

Links to more photos at: http://bit.ly/1KE0PYS
Email to Camp Staff After the Bethany Dedication

Mark: I do not have the words to tell you how inspiring, exciting, amazing and joyous it was to be in the midst of so many wonderful people for the blessing and dedication of Bethany Village and, really, a new life for all of Camp McDowell and the Diocese of Alabama. We are committed to serving all in need, which will turn us outward in our faith, a truly wonderful thing.

I do not in any want to belittle how amazing this collection of facilities from a design, aesthetic, energy efficient and functional perspective. Nor from how rapidly this dream became a reality. The impact of all of this is enormous!

This would never have happened without your vision, commitment, and unwavering enthusiasm. Because of you it was not possible to do anything except get on board with the plan. It has been a joy to watch the enthusiasm grow from parish to parish and person to person.

– John Hicks, Christ Church, Tuscaloosa

Danielle: Hope you are having a great summer, and maybe enjoying a little bit of quiet time since the Bethany dedication last month. Scotti and I were both there, and it was awesome!! We decided on the ride home that we would like to double our pledge…” – Sonny & Scotti Bozeman, St. James, Alexander City
The fifth chapter of the Gospel of Matthew remembers Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount, in which he said to the people gathered there, “You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.”

Jesus told these people that they were the light of the world. I remember when I was much younger wondering what made them so special: the light of the world – that’s got to be a pretty big thing. Were they smarter than people nowadays, or richer, or better looking? I mean, it’s hard to find many ‘light of the world’ sorts of people now, right? Were the people that Jesus was talking to just better, more moral, less hard-headed? Or – and this is challenging – was Jesus looking at people just like you and me and telling us that we are the light of the world?

Maybe it’s challenging to be the light of the world all by ourselves, but maybe if the New Testament had been edited through the centuries by people who learned how to talk right like we do in the South we would understand that perhaps what Jesus really said was, “Y’all are the light of the world.” The great truth is that it is not our little paltry light we are shining – that would hardly be worth the effort – but the eternal Light of Christ. We are the light of the world to the extent that we shine the love of God through Jesus Christ our Lord, by the grace of the Holy Spirit.

The normal and sane response to such a claim, I think, might be to assume that either 1.) Kee has gone completely bonkers and needs a sabbatical, or 2.) he must be talking to somebody else. I want to invite you to consider a third option, that Jesus actually knew what he was talking about, that the people of first century Judea were essentially no better or worse than we are, and that you and I are the light of the world, together.

We’re not quite through, but we’re close enough to say that I believe that at Bethany Village at Camp McDowell we are building a city on a hill, taking the light we’ve been given to shine and putting it on a lampstand to give light to all. We’re not through with the construction, and not quite finished with the fundraising. But the Light of Christ is shining there, strong and bright, and I thank all of you who have helped in so many ways. The first Special Session at Bethany Village was wonderful, and the Dedication and Blessing as well. Other events and groups have used the place, and I understand the Spring Meeting of the House of Bishops is working to come in March 2017. Thank you all for your support and help. Let your light shine, friends – let the Light of Christ shine!

The construction of Bethany at Camp McDowell has been a wonderful success. A primary reason is that Ingram Thornton discerned he was called to be our Construction Manager.

Ingram went to summer camp as he grew up, and later was one of those handsome and dashing workboys during his summers in college.

Ingram has continued to stay connected to camp like so many of his peers. He assisted with the visioning of Bethany and when he learned that his third child would have special needs, he began to hear a call to be part of the Bethany project. The call was affirmed by the McDowell staff and leadership. Soon Ingram was resigning from his job to build Bethany.

What a wonderful job Ingram did in rain, heat, snow, mud, and dust. He utilized over one hundred workers to construct the infrastructure and forty buildings of Bethany in just eighteen months. Yes, it was all accomplished just under budget.

We are grateful for all the saints who serve their Lord through Camp McDowell. We are especially grateful for Saint Ingram.

Many Thanks to our Village of Saints

By the Rev. Mark Johnston
The Rev. Doug Carpenter has done it again. He has written another enjoyable book. This one chronicles the history of our beloved Camp McDowell as it grew from a summer camp to a conference center and place of learning. With chapters like, “The First Camp Sessions in Winston County, 1948,” “Scott Eppes and Dynamite,” “Glen and Talma DeLong,” “Cursillo,” and “Mark Wylie Johnston,” you will have a hard time putting it down.

This 144-page book is $20 and all proceeds go to finish building Bethany at Camp McDowell. There are several ways you can purchase The Way the World Could Be. Contact Doug Carpenter, carpenter.doug7436@att.net, or Danielle Dunbar, danielle@campmcdowell.com, with questions.

To purchase a copy:
1. Send a note to Doug Carpenter and for $23 (checks made payable to Camp McDowell) he will mail you a copy of the book. 3037 Overton Rd., Birmingham, AL. 35223 or carpenter.doug7436@att.net
2. Go to Camp McDowell and find the book at the new Camp Store. Julia Emrich is the store manager and can fill your orders. julia@campmcdowell.com
3. Visit Danielle Dunbar at Carpenter House in Birmingham. 521 North 20th St., Birmingham, AL. 35203, danielle@campmcdowell.com

Please use this pledge card today to prayerfully make a financial gift which you can pay over the next 3-5 years. Every gift is important! Join Mark and Maggie Johnston and many others as we extend or increase our pledges so we can raise the final $1.5 million in unmet needs. Thank you!

The Way the World Could Be
NOW ON SALE!

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.

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 □ annually, □ quarterly, or □ 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 □ email or □ traditional mail.

The Bethany Newsletter • July/August 2015
When more than 1,000 people showed up for the Blessing and Dedication of Bethany Village on June 20, there were a couple hundred people waiting for them wearing red T-shirts, name tags and, most importantly, big smiles. They were the campers and staff of Special Session.

Campers stood at the doors of Doug Carpenter Hall, welcoming visitors and distributing service leaflets. Session musicians played guitar and led songs for the Eucharist. And they welcomed Presiding Bishop Katherine Jefferts Schori with her own T-shirt, name tag and all-important water bottle.

Year 18 of Special Session in the Diocese of Alabama will be remembered as the first year in Bethany Village, the year that hundreds of our friends came to join us to sing, worship, and bless our new home.

Special Session is an annual camp for teen-agers and adults who have special needs including physical, mental, and emotional challenges. This year’s camp came in at record size with 102 campers and more than double that number in counselors and adult staff.

A year ago, most of Bethany Village was a series of dirt roads and surveyors’ stakes. As he rolled along the road in his electric wheelchair, camper Jeff Downs shook his head and said, “I never believed they would have it ready in time. But they did! It’s already home – home away from home.”

Some of the detail work was still being done as campers poured in, but workers and campers coexisted with few problems. Bishop Kee Sloan, co-director of Special Session along with the Rev. David Meginniss, spoke thankfully of a group of workers who quietly stopped and watched during the staff Eucharist on the morning before campers arrived.

“I told the staff that in the beginning of the church, before there were worship spaces, that it was the assumption that other things would be going on around us,” he said. “There’s been a lot of that, workers coming in and out, delivering furniture. I think we’ve peacefully coexisted.”

The bigger concern was that homesickness for the longtime home at Eppes Hall and the cabins of lower camp would cause some transition shock. As it turned out, the transition went well.

“I was concerned that there would be more campers and staff that would be emotionally out of sorts because we loved camp down the hill,” Sloan said. “It was and is holy ground for a lot of campers, for me, and for a lot of the staff. There was a little bit of that.”

He told the story of one camper who every year loves to help the kitchen staff with set-up and cleanup.

“On the first day he said, ‘I need to go to the old kitchen down the hill to see my friends. I need to see that kitchen.’ So I let him go down, telling him that he was reluctant because of all the memories and friends he had made down the hill. Then he came up from his visit and said, ‘Fr. Kee, I’m gonna love Bethany Village!’”

Some things were new, such as the huge, barn-shaped Doug Carpenter Hall, which was immediately dubbed “The Doug.” Sloan Lake, with its easy-to-reach shore was popular as a site for paddle boating. Also new and exciting were the pigs and chickens and goats, some of whom were happy to be petted.

“The hit of the blisteringly hot week, though, was the air conditioning in the cabins. Nurse Gail Perna said the six nurses on staff saw fewer illnesses because cool rest time meant less stress, especially for older campers.

“We have noticed that campers are more rested and less anxious,” Sloan said. “Campers always have been excited to get here, but also became worn out from sleeping without air conditioning. We still have outdoor activities, soapy slide,
I

Session's new home, the altar cloth was retired. The staff outlined their hand and signed their name on a special altar cloth used during the camp's closing Eucharist. This year, commemorating the transition to Special Session's new home, the altar cloth was retired. The staff had it quilted and it hang over the fireplace in the new Doug Carpenter meeting hall. A new hand-print altar cloth has been started.

Bishop Jeﬀerts Schori said she enjoyed the chance to meet the campers and reﬂected on the possibilities it offers. This is a taste that is available to people without spending an entire year living in community,” she said.

The theme of this year's camp was “Somewhere Over the Rainbow,” with decorations and activities based on “The Wizard of Oz.” Bishop Jeﬀerts Schori dropped in on the talent show; a two-night extravaganza of camper talent. Camp also included traditional highlights -- pie-n-the-face bingo, the soapy slide, arts and crafts, quality porch time in McDowell's big wooden rocking chairs, horseback riding, and a Saturday night dance with Huntsville entertainers Tony Mason and Charlie Scott.

Links to more photos at: http://bit.ly/1JAy2Tp

---

I

It was a bit over four years ago when I was talking with Bishop Kee about Special Session. My wife, Paula, and I were vaguely aware of Special Session but really did not understand what the camp was all about. Somewhere along the way horses entered the conversation and the next thing I knew I was offering to bring our horses to camp to give rides to the campers.

Little did Paula and I know how our lives would be changed by this event. We, like so many of those who serve in various capacities, plan our summers around the dates of Special Session. In talking with people at Grace Church, Cullman, we realized most of them were like us ... they had heard of Special Session but really had no idea what went on during those hot days of summer at Camp McDowell. The ﬁrst three years we took our horses camp was held in July in what is referred to as “lower camp” and you know how hot it can be at camp the ﬁrst week of July! This year was the inaugural camp in Bethany Village with the end of camp coinciding with the dedication of Bethany What a way to bring camp to a close!

That ﬁrst year it was just the two of us and Mirados and Shalako (our horses). We had no idea what was going to be involved so we had not asked folks to come help. Thank goodness the counselors and staff pitched in and helped. After that ﬁrst year we started trying to rope folks in to help by promising them their lives would be changed and that their experiences would be unbelievable. We now have several helpers. This year we had friends bring extra horses for one day.

In talking with various counselors and staff over the past four years we learned that many of them are just like us ... they plan their summers around Special Session and PAY to get to come and work with special needs campers. So this year we decided to do a little survey of counselors and staff to learn and share why they come, and what keeps coming back. We asked ﬁve questions, and here are just a few of the responses:

**Why did you decide to help with Special Session?**

It’s a good thing - Fun working with campers and horses
As nurse I worked with special needs people and wanted to

**Why do you keep coming back?**

Smiles of campers - Reunite with friends - Great experience - So rewarding impossible not to come back - Helps my heart; - Love and affection of campers - Seeing smiles, laughter, joy of campers riding horses - Feels good to help others - Powerful ministry - Spiritually rejuvenating - Happiness horses bring campers - It is what makes my year - Being in community with a group of people who are mutually giving and receiving the love and spirit of Christ in a very concrete way - Learning from campers - Feeling God's presence and unconditional love.

**What do you get out of being a volunteer/staff person?**

Joy - Learning patience - Learning about my limits as a person - Showing campers the great times at camp like I had - A chance to get out of my comfort zone and help others - Makes me a happier person - Spiritually refreshing and rejuvenating - Feel like campers minister to me - As a person

I get to do what I tell others to do -- commit to a ministry of compassion - Experience that brings me closer to God; - Humility and awe - Strengthens my faith - Words can't describe.

**What is your most memorable experience?**

Good morning forehead kiss from Margaret - Lynnette riding a horse and when small twig touched here forehead yelling "what's wrong with you? I'm the one that's blind" - Singing the Butterfly song and seeing the campers so happy to be who they are - Clara talking to me - When one of my campers said "I love you" - Laughing so hard we cried - Bruce has CP and communicates via a keyboard but he spoke to me verbally once and I was shocked and asked him why he didn't speak out loud much? He said he had to be relaxed for his speech muscles to work. I was speechless - Too many to count - Seeing the light in the face of a rider - Not being able to communicate with my camper then something I did made him smile - Hearing the prayers of the campers - Watching the faces of many campers go from being terrified when they ﬁrst get on a horse to quickly laughing out loud with pure joy - Meeting my ﬁrst camper - Learning sign language to communicate with deaf camper - One of my campers writing I love you on a piece of art. Whether it was for me or someone else it will be remembered for the rest of my life.

Remembering the words attributed to St. Francis ---

“For it is in giving that we receive.”

---

**“For it is in giving that we receive”**

*By David Paynor*

---

**What has this helped you on your spiritual journey?**

Greater sense of purpose - Shows me all are loved by God -Reminds me we are all children of God - Just because some people are “different” doesn't mean God sees THEM as different - All of us are the same in the eyes of God - Feeling God's love - Wasn't really religious before coming to Special Session - Seeing the face of God in the faces of the campers - Forgetting the petty things - God is everywhere in all things and all people - The week reminds me I can just "be" and I am enough - Strengthens my faith.
We cannot thank our donors enough for their gifts to help build Bethany—in the Rt. Rev. Kee Sloan’s words, “A city on a hill.” We appreciate your continued support! Listed below are new donors as well as donors who have increased their pledges since the last printing in the March/April Alabama Episcopalian.
Bethany Village was alive with hard-working 9th-10th graders in late June as CREATE got underway for its second year.

CREATE is a special summer work week program for young people who are too old to participate in Young People Paint Birmingham and not quite old enough to staff for Special Session or Sawyerville Day Camp.

Some 40 young people and counselors worked with several professional adult project leaders June 23-27 to help put some finishing touches on Bethany Village, the new environmentally friendly and universally accessible addition to Camp McDowell, which had been dedicated the previous week.

After the opening night festivities, the group began three full days of work on a variety of projects.

The Rev. Rob Iler, rector at St. James in Alex City, coordinated the completion of nine picnic tables that will be placed around Bethany. In the process of building the tables, the youth learned how to safely use power tools, including a chop-saw and a drill. Rhys Greene, a member of St. Michael’s in Fayette, led the creation of a mosaic that reflects the different areas of spiritual growth. This beautiful art piece will become a permanent embellishment at Bethany. Many hands helped Bethany Farm School staffers Jon Nee, Andrew Shea, and Sabol Rodgers harvest potatoes, garlic, and eggs, and the “tons” of blueberries ready for the picking. Another team headed by Bethany staff member Brandon Phillips, did some repair work on the trail to Tillers.

But the week wasn’t all work. In the evenings, Mary Balfour Van Zandt, rector of St. Michael’s in Fayette, led a program on Mind-Body-Spirit and a different camper led worship each night.

One afternoon, Sharon Faison, St. John’s in Decatur, led a centering prayer exercise and a communion bread-baking class. Our nights were spent doing a night swim, night hike, and star-gazing. The Bethany summer support staff led each night activity. On the last night, we enjoyed a celebration supper at beautifully decorated tables on the back porch of Phifer Hall overlooking Sloan Lake. It was a special treat to enjoy some of the fruits of our labor by having homemade (by our campers) blueberry cobbler from the blueberries we picked ourselves. Our nights were spent doing a night swim, night hike, and star-gazing. The Bethany summer support staff led each night activity. On the last night, we enjoyed a celebration supper at beautifully decorated tables on the back porch of Phifer Hall overlooking Sloan Lake. It was a special treat to enjoy some of the fruits of our labor by having homemade (by our campers) blueberry cobbler from the blueberries we picked ourselves.

One afternoon, Sharon Faison, St. John’s in Decatur, led a centering prayer exercise and a communion bread-baking class. Our nights were spent doing a night swim, night hike, and star-gazing. The Bethany summer support staff led each night activity. On the last night, we enjoyed a celebration supper at beautifully decorated tables on the back porch of Phifer Hall overlooking Sloan Lake. It was a special treat to enjoy some of the fruits of our labor by having homemade (by our campers) blueberry cobbler from the blueberries we picked ourselves.

Our CREATE experience was supported by a new group of young adult leaders, the Bethany Interns. They served as camp counselors and cabin and small group leaders. They were mentors and helped keep things going smoothly throughout the event. We could not have hosted the event without them. In their servant leadership role, they are called into sacramental ministry, which to them means “to respect the dignity of every living thing; giving up your own intentions and letting God guide you; to work for the wellness of others and to make the world a better place; and to show Love through words and actions”.

The interns did a fantastic job and it will be interesting to see how their role grows with the needs of the new space at Bethany.

We’re happy with how the CREATE program is taking off. The youth who have participated so far have loved being part of the crew who has helped build Bethany. Planning for next year’s CREATE event will begin in the fall and we’re looking forward to another group of youth coming to work, worship, and play with us in 2016!

Editor’s Note: CREATE was coordinated by Susan Oakes and Emmy Faison.
This Spring, I was fortunate enough to experience the Young Adults Retreat at Camp McDowell, the pride of the Episcopal Diocese of Alabama. Located on a national preserve, this mecca for kids (and big kids alike) has acted as a “destination parent” of sorts — a safe haven that has raised, nurtured and changed lives. Illustrious and acclaimed McDowell, coined “wonderful, wonderful” Camp McDowell and just plain, endearing “camp” for those brought up in its nurturing shade, was a new place for me. And I loved it. Spiritual Director, Rev. Sharon Hiers, was our guide for the weekend.

Sabbath was the theme of the weekend. It seemed ironic to have a program revolve around a term denoting, even requiring, rest. I was pleasantly surprised the first morning (after a refreshing, early morning canoe trip) when the priest read a few verses, and bid us go and make an effort to Sabbath. The term used in its verb form was foreign to me, but really, it does take effort, especially in the fast-forward world we live in now. I was expecting a lengthy, lecture style program complete with worksheets or something, but after reading a few verses, Sharon entreated us to go sabbath.

I followed Sharon and few others up the road to a wooded area where the labyrinth was located. A small wooden sign etched with “labyrinth” pointed into a patch of woods and was the only indication that anything beyond pine trees and armadillos existed in the direction the tilted arrow suggested we go.

In its simplest form, aesthetically speaking, a labyrinth is a pathway in which the entrance and exit are the same portal. The path covers a quarter of the circular design, switchbacks folding back onto itself as it reaches the center. Then, unexpectedly, the path drifts outward again into another sector, taking you further away from the progress seemingly made along the way. Again and again you purposefully pace until reaching the center. The small circular hub of the labyrinth feels like a safe haven, but the only exit is backwards. Following the path once more, you eventually find your end.

Sharon compared the prayerful walk to our Christian journey, and no better visual and experiential moment has ever brought such clarity. The winding pathways were life’s journey with the destination being the heart of God in the center. We walk through segments of our lives drawing closer to Him, but we can, in an instant, be set back by circumstances of staggering doubt or problems that wish to ensnare. She suggested we meditate on a certain prayer or thought as we walked. Having not been prepared for such an inward journey, I took small steps and just quieted my mind. I saw obstacles in the brush, became confused when turns were unclear and battled my mind’s desire to be distracted by passers-by. I needed guidance, and the only applicable passage that came to mind was Psalm 23. Quoting it over and over again, I traced the lines as intricately as I traced my path through the labyrinth and ultimately to God.

When I got to the third verse that says, “He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake,” I heard a newer version than I’d ever heard before. As a Christian, I have submitted myself to God, therefore I am submitting myself to a life of holiness. Once we begin, there’s no turning back. Yes, there are discouraging bends and paths steering us from our central focus. They seem like long, cold hallways that shrink and leave us suffocating and unloved. But around the bend, there are ways back. Intricate and irregular as they may be, our desire to press on draws us closer to God once again. Righteousness is rooted in love, and as simple as it seems, following this command should be our focus. Yes, the trials shake our confidence and we waver in our faith, but sanctification is a cleansing gift.

The labyrinth taught me that although our lives are intricately unique, our path is as simple as submission and steadfastness. Like a magnet, He draws us inward. Lord, give me grace and strength to carry on.

Editors note: The Young Adults Retreat is an annual spring weekend retreat at the diocesan camp & conference center for people age 23 and up. For additional information on the retreat, contact Austin Cook at austinkendrickcook@gmail.com
Summer 2015 at Sawyerville Day Camp was a huge success! We welcomed well over 600 campers, roughly 300 staff, and dozens of short-term volunteers. Every child who attended camp received a brand new bathing suit, pool towel, water bottle, back pack, and two books. Thanks to all of the groups that donated those items or collected money to fund them!

Each one of the three sessions followed the same theme, “Dreaming is Believing.” Campers were asked to think, write, and pray about their dream for themselves, their dream for their community, what they think God dreams of for them, and what might get in the way of their dreams becoming a reality.

This year, campers had access to even more enrichment opportunities. For years, John Scalici from Get Rhythm in Birmingham, has led the campers in drumming circles that allow for creative self-expression and teach direction-following skills. And this year, Wish 2 Enrich, another Birmingham-based organization, brought in three more activities, martial arts, chess, and soccer. The campers loved it!

We are so very thankful to everyone who helped make this summer possible, especially those who provided meals to the staff, gathered supplies, donated funds, served as prayer partners, and volunteered their time. This camp would not be the same without a giant and ever-growing family of supporters! Thank you!

We’ll have more to report in the coming weeks as the summer wraps up. We can’t wait to share even more good news of God’s Kingdom in Hale County!

Save the Date
Sawyerville Camp 5K Run/Walk

Hosted by St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, Greensboro, Alabama
Saturday Oct. 17, 2015
Registration: 8:00 a.m.
Race begins at 9:00 a.m.
Fun for your family, church, youth group or former staff and campers! You can run/walk the whole 5K or there is a one-mile ‘fun run’ with color.
For more info visit: www.sawyervilledaycamp.org

Questions? Want to volunteer? Contact Meg Rankin, Race Coordinator, margaret.rankin@gmail.com
It’s a bird! It’s a plane! It’s SUPERFAITH VBS!

by Christina Dorn

Deep connections to superheroes and Scripture came to life at Grace Church in Anniston during SUPERFAITH VBS (vacation Bible school) this summer, and delivered a fun way compare and contrast superheroes, biblical heroes, and every day heroes in our community.

All of our heroes have more than one thing in common, but mostly, they are all unlikely heroes. Our everyday heroes were people in our community who have unleashed their inner hero to serve God, the church, and world through their service.

Superheroes to make the participants’ faith relatable and real for today. Superheroes have strengths and flaws. Biblical folk have strength and flaws, too, but when it matters the most, the Holy Spirit can enable us to do great things! You cannot think of the disciples just as “some friends of Jesus who lived a really long time ago;” we went deeper to explore the flaws, quirks, and strengths they might have exhibited as disciples of Jesus and realize that we, too, are modern day disciples. After all, we all have flaws and all have something worth redeeming.

Superfaith VBS began with a kickoff celebration for the whole family. Captain America visited the kick-off event along with every day heroes from the Anniston Fire Department, who took time with the children, allowed them to tour their fire engine, tell them all about fire-fighting.

Each morning we began with an opening celebration that included singing, a Bible story about an unlikely hero, a presentation from a local every-day hero from our community, and of course, short stories about famous superheroes. Following the opening, children traveled to SUPERFAITH destination stations to further explore the theme for the day through games, multimedia, snacks, and more.

Scripture is filled with stories of people who unleashed their inner hero by the power of the Holy Spirit, and today we continue to depend on the Holy Spirit to enable us to do what we are called to do.

Visit the SUPERFAITH VBS Photo Gallery at: http://bit.ly/1Idi295

The Church of the Holy Comforter in Gadsden partnered with the Church of the Resurrection in Rainbow City to co-hosted this year’s vacation Bible school at Holy Comforter.

Holy Comforter chose a Legos-enhanced theme “Building the Faith.”

We focused on the following Biblical stories: Tower of Babel, Walls of Jericho, Parable of the wise man who built his house on a rock & building a Church/Pentecost (the reverse of the Tower of Babel).

Opening exercises introduced each day’s theme through use of puppets, reading of scripture and prayer. The children explored their faith through geography, acting, singing, art & discussion. Closure included watching YouTube videos and singing. The children also sang during the June 7 worship service.

Thanks to all the adults under the leadership of Meagan Harris; and a special thanks to Christina Dorn, Grace, Anniston for sharing VBS resources.
Resurrection Rainbow City offered a “Hometown Nazareth” VBS this summer

by: Bill Gandy

Sharing God’s love with children is pure joy! The Church of the Resurrection in Rainbow City shared that joy through vacation Bible school (VBS) in June. “Hometown Nazareth: Where Jesus was a boy” was the theme of three days of song, story, sights, smells, tastes, and laughter. With support from the adults and youth of the parish, 44 children, through 5th grade, learned “Jesus had a name...we do too!”, “Jesus had a home...we do too!” and “Jesus had a family...we do too.”

The carpentry shop, the oil/herb/tasting shop, the bead shop, and the animal farm gave all of us the chance to build, discover, sample, create and celebrate. Sharing God’s love with children is pure joy and at the Episcopal Church of the Resurrection we are grateful for the opportunity.

Find more VBS photos at: http://on.fb.me/1KfqKG9

Montgomery churches VBS: “Building Faithful Friendships”

by Sarah Collier

“BFF” (Building Faithful Friendships) was the title of the Montgomery Convocation of Episcopal Churches’ 2015 vacation Bible school (VBS). The curriculum was built around “The LEGO Movie,” and Biblical friendships including Ruth and Naomi, Jonathan and David, and Moses and Aaron.

St. John’s Episcopal Church in Montgomery hosted this year’s VBS.

Each morning, the children watched a brief clip from The LEGO Movie during an opening assembly. Following the clip, the assembly leader helped the children connect the characters in the movie with the Bible lesson.

The movie helped the students understand that we all are special alone and as a team. We should love and trust each other, and embrace each person for who they are. We all have different talents and things that make us special. No one person should be the same as someone else.

The assembly was a great way to build background knowledge before starting the day at VBS. After the assembly, the children rotated among various activities set up by station. These included Bible Adventures, LEGO Building, Snacks, Outdoor Games, and Crafts. It was exciting to observe the children during LEGO Building to see what they comprehended from the daily lesson and movie clip.

Raising 5th and 6th graders created altar crosses using Legos. The crosses will be used at various Episcopal Churches in Montgomery.

On the last night of VBS, the children and their parents were treated to “LEGO Movie Night” -- a showing of the entire movie -- complete with popcorn and lemonade. Families were asked to bring blankets and pillows, so all would be comfortable during the movie.

I truly enjoyed seeing the children excited about this year’s VBS, and we will continue to incorporate LEGOs into our curriculum for the children.

Eutaw community churches join to offer vacation Bible school

by Sheila Scott

When churches in a small town band together for a common purpose, they are able to accomplish much more than they can when working individually. Together they have more physical and human resources.

And that is just what four Eutaw, AL churches have done. For many years, the four churches; Eutaw Baptist Church, Eutaw United Methodist Church, First Presbyterian Church, and St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church have worked together to offer a community vacation Bible school. This summer vacation Bible school was held at the Eutaw United Methodist Church.

The churches used Son Spark’s Lab, a community Vacation Bible school curriculum for children ages 3 to those leaving sixth grade. Some 30 children from around the community attended the four-night program.

Members of each church worked together to plan, teach, and prepare a nightly supper. The vacation Bible school culminated with a presentation for the families and a meal together the final night. The children sang, “God made the world and God made me.”

The curriculum’s Bible teachings, scientific based experiments, crafts, and music taught children that God made us, he came to be with us, he wants us to know him, he saved us, and he will love us forever.

It was wonderful to see children from different denominations, children who do not attend church, children from different racial backgrounds, children who have little knowledge and children who have an amazing knowledge about God, all being God’s children together.
UPCOMING EVENTS

“GLEN CAMPBELL - I’LL BE ME”
August 18 – 20, Virginia Samford Theater, Birmingham
Epicentrum Place is partnering with the Virginia Samford Theatre to host a private screening event of the critically acclaimed “Glen Campbell - I’ll Be Me,” a powerful portrait of American music icon Glen Campbell’s journey with Alzheimer’s disease.

Screenings are at 7:00 p.m. each day, with a matinee Aug. 19 at 1:00 p.m. Continuing education credit for healthcare providers will be offered for matinee attendees. Following all screenings there will be a special talk-back session (Details at: http://bit.ly/1H6RdS6). Tickets for the evening shows are $20 and $35 for the matinee and can be purchased by calling 205-251-1206, or by visiting the Virginia Samford Theatre website at www.virginiasamfordtheatre.org.

ACOUSTIC GUITAR & CRAFTS WORKSHOP

St. Luke’s, Mountain Brook
Through formation courses in Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, adults have the opportunity to see all age appropriate presentations and materials given to children from the Bible and liturgy. Each formation course focuses on a specific developmental age group of the child.

A Level I formation course is being offered at St. Luke’s Friday mornings 9:15 a.m. – 11:30 a.m., Aug. 28 – Dec 11 (No class Nov. 27) & Jan. 8 – May 13 (No Class March 25 or April 1). The course prepares adults working with children ages three to six years old.

A Level II formation course is being offered by St. Luke’s Thursday mornings from 9:15 to 11:30 a.m. Aug. 27—

Dec. 17, 2015 (No class on Nov. 26) and Jan. 7– May 12, 2016 (No Class on March 31). This course prepares adults working with children ages six to nine years old.

For additional information visit: http://www dioalaoministries.org/conferences—events.html

RECOVERY MINISTRIES ANNUAL RETREAT
September 25 – 27 at Camp McDowell
Meditating on the Psalms as a Spiritual Tool for People in Recovery is the theme for the Recovery Ministries Annual Retreat. Register at: http://bit.ly/1DSM9re

DAUGHTERS OF THE KING FALL ASSEMBLY
September 26, Cathedral Church of the Advent, Birmingham
The Order of the Daughters of the King (OK) of the Diocese of Alabama will assemble Sept. 26, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. for the annual Fall Assembly. The theme is “Answering the Call.” The focus will be on ministry and leadership of the Order. The key business of the assembly includes the installation of the Diocesan Board officers and a vote on the proposed Diocesan By-laws. The Rt. Rev. Santosh Marray, assistant bishop, will join the assembly in the afternoon. Liz High, elhigh@knology.net, is the contact for the DOK Diocesan Board.

ENNEAGRAM CONFERENCE
October 4 – 7, Kamloops Conferences
Discover how the Enneagram can engage your faith and create a greater sense of harmony in your life. This conference is specifically designed to increase understanding of Enneagram’s spiritual principles for the purpose of finding our sacred essence, healing our inner pain, and relieving suffering within our personal and professional relationships. For details visit: http://bit.ly/1O7qoO3

COURAGE TO LEAD: A COURAGE AND RENEWAL RETREAT SERIES
October 28 – 30, St. Mary’s Seanace

Based on the work of Parker J. Palmer, “Courage to Lead” is a new model of leadership development known as leader formation. It is based on the belief that effective leadership is rooted in the identity and integrity of the person. This program of five seasonal retreats has been carefully designed to create open and disciplined spaces – circles of trust – where participants can discover again the deep connection between role and soul. For details visit: http://bit.ly/1D3qi5J

THE ROAD TO SANTIAGO - A SPANISH PILGRIMAGE
April 30 – May 10
The Rev. Bill Winters, priest-in-charge of St. Joseph’s-on-the-Mountain, Mentone, and his wife Rita will lead a pilgrimage to the Galatia area of northern Spain in April. The pilgrimage will begin in Madrid; travel to Leon, and along a portion of El Camino de Santiago — the pilgrim’s road — to Santiago and the Cathedral of St. James. Departing Santiago, the group will fly to Madrid and home. There will also be an optional Iberian Transatlantic Cruise prequel April 15-29. For more information, call 256-506-8857 or email brwinters@bellsouth.net.

Folk School to offer four fall workshops

By Sarah Nee

This fall, the Alabama Folk School at Camp McDowell will offer four wonderful workshops that will provide an opportunity for people to relax, enjoy the cool weather and be creative.

ACOUSTIC GUITAR & CRAFTS WORKSHOP
In September, our Acoustic Guitar & Crafts workshop has six unique classes in art and music that are sure to stimulate your senses! Choose from one of two acoustic guitar classes or learn how to make a basket, create indigo dyed fabric, cast metal or build a rock-landscaping wall. This is a weekend workshop Sept. 11-13 with eight total hours of instruction.

OLD TIME MUSIC & CRAFTS WORKSHOP
Our longstanding Old Time Music & Crafts workshop has moved dates and will now be in October. Students will be staying in Bethany Village and can choose from one of nine music classes in banjo, fiddle, guitar, mandolin or repertoire. If you’re more interested in the arts, you can either take a basket making class or learn the art of storytelling. This four-day workshop will take place Oct. 15-18 and includes fifteen hours of instruction.

WATERCOLOR WORKSHOP
The 19th annual Watercolor Workshop, Oct. 25-30 is a week long, immersive retreat where students fully explore the medium of watercolor. Three very talented instructors will guide participants during their journey. Don Andrews will explore landscapes and address a different visual concern each day. Deborah Hill will instruct students in mixed media watercolor helping them to employ non-traditional methods and materials to create rich, multi-layered works. Finally, Wayne Spradley will help students use a limited palette to create realistic landscapes. After a week at the folk school, students will re-enter the chaos of the world with a renewed energy.

TRADITIONAL ARTS & CRAFTS WORKSHOP
Finally, the folk school is thrilled to announce a new workshop, which will take place in November. The Traditional Arts & Crafts workshop will offer six classes in art making; choose from classes in basket weaving, blacksmithing, glass mosaics and fused glass, fiber arts, homesteading and pottery. Each student will have the opportunity to create many different objects, which can be special, handmade gifts for friends and family during the holiday season. Another four-day workshop, Traditional Arts & Crafts will take place Nov. 5-8.

You may view descriptions for all of these workshops on our new website at www.alfolkschool.com.

Folk School to offer four fall workshops

By Sarah Nee

This fall, the Alabama Folk School at Camp McDowell will offer four wonderful workshops that will provide an opportunity for people to relax, enjoy the cool weather and be creative.

ACOUSTIC GUITAR & CRAFTS WORKSHOP
In September, our Acoustic Guitar & Crafts workshop has six unique classes in art and music that are sure to stimulate your senses! Choose from one of two acoustic guitar classes or learn how to make a basket, create indigo dyed fabric, cast metal or build a rock-landscaping wall. This is a weekend workshop Sept. 11-13 with eight total hours of instruction.

OLD TIME MUSIC & CRAFTS WORKSHOP
Our longstanding Old Time Music & Crafts workshop has moved dates and will now be in October. Students will be staying in Bethany Village and can choose from one of nine music classes in banjo, fiddle, guitar, mandolin or repertoire. If you’re more interested in the arts, you can either take a basket making class or learn the art of storytelling. This four-day workshop will take place Oct. 15-18 and includes fifteen hours of instruction.

WATERCOLOR WORKSHOP
The 19th annual Watercolor Workshop, Oct. 25-30 is a week long, immersive retreat where students fully explore the medium of watercolor. Three very talented instructors will guide participants during their journey. Don Andrews will explore landscapes and address a different visual concern each day. Deborah Hill will instruct students in mixed media watercolor helping them to employ non-traditional methods and materials to create rich, multi-layered works. Finally, Wayne Spradley will help students use a limited palette to create realistic landscapes. After a week at the folk school, students will re-enter the chaos of the world with a renewed energy.

TRADITIONAL ARTS & CRAFTS WORKSHOP
Finally, the folk school is thrilled to announce a new workshop, which will take place in November. The Traditional Arts & Crafts workshop will offer six classes in art making; choose from classes in basket weaving, blacksmithing, glass mosaics and fused glass, fiber arts, homesteading and pottery. Each student will have the opportunity to create many different objects, which can be special, handmade gifts for friends and family during the holiday season. Another four-day workshop, Traditional Arts & Crafts will take place Nov. 5-8.

You may view descriptions for all of these workshops on our new website at www.alfolkschool.com.
Expanded pilgrimage weekend to honor Alabama civil rights martyrs

A series of weekend events, Aug. 14 – 16, are planned to commemorate the sacrifice of Episcopal Seminarian Jonathan Daniels and other martyrs of the bloody 1960s struggle for civil rights in Alabama. This year marks the 50th anniversary of Daniels murder in Hayneville, AL.

Activities will begin Friday evening with special programs for adults and young people in Montgomery, will continue on Saturday in Hayneville, and will wrap up Sunday morning with a special service at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Selma.

Friday, Aug. 14

• Morris Dees, Jr., co-founder and chief trial counsel for the Southern Poverty Law Center, will be guest speaker at St. John’s Episcopal Church at 5:30 p.m. The Southern Poverty Law Center is dedicated to fighting hate and bigotry and to seeking justice for the most vulnerable members of our society.

• A Young Pilgrims Lock-in for junior and senior high school age young people begins following Dees’ at the Church of the Ascension in Montgomery. The evening will include supper, social time, and a program.

Saturday, Aug. 15

• The Young Pilgrims will join local Hayneville young people for breakfast in Hayneville, prior to participating in the pilgrimage. Lowndes County School Superintendent Daniel Boyd will host the breakfast. Episcopal Presiding Bishop-elect Michael Curry will join the students after breakfast.

• The Jonathan Daniels & Martyrs of Alabama Pilgrimage begins at 11:00 a.m. in the Lowndes County Courthouse Square in Hayneville.

Pilgrimage participants will process from the square to the jail where Daniels and others were held after being arrested in Ft. Deposit for protesting whites-only businesses. The group will then move to the site of the Cash Store where Daniels was killed, to dedicate a historical marker. The participants will process back to the square and to the Lowndes County Courthouse for a special service.

• Bishop Curry will preach at the service in the courthouse where Daniels killer was tried and acquitted. In a solemn ceremony during the service, the role of the civil rights martyrs of Alabama will be called.

• The jail where Daniels was held prior to his death will be open for tours following the service.

• A variety of lunch options will be available at the courthouse and in the square for a nominal cost following the service. Commemorative T-shirts will also be available to purchase for $10.

• St Paul’s Episcopal Church in Selma, which Daniels helped integrate, will be open to visitors from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m.

Sunday, Aug. 16

Bishop Curry will preach at a 10:00 a.m. service at St. Paul’s in Selma.

Jonathan Daniels Pilgrimage Weekend

Special Guests

This year’s pilgrimage weekend is attracting participants from as far away as Alaska and the Virgin Islands. Among the many special guests participating are:

• The Rev. Judith Upham, who as a fellow seminarian worked with Jonathan Daniels in Selma in 1965;

• Richard Morrisroe, the former Catholic priest who stood with Daniels and was critically wounded when Daniels was killed;

• Ruby Sales, who was among the group of Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee workers arrested with Daniels, and who Daniels pushed out of the line of fire when he was shot;

• West family members, with whom Daniels and Upham lived while in Alabama;

• The Rev. Francis Walter, who was head of the Selma Inter-religious Project, a coalition religious denominations serving as a spiritual presence in Selma in the aftermath of the “Bloody Sunday” civil rights march and who visited Daniels in jail.

Delegations from Keene, NH, Daniels’ hometown; Virginia Military Institute, his alma mater; and Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, the seminary he and Upham attended; are also planning to participate.

The experience drew him and a fellow seminarian, Judith Upham, to return to Selma to support the civil rights movement. They worked to integrate St. Paul’s Episcopal Church and helped assemble a list of federal, state, and local agencies that could provide assistance for those in need. They also tutored children, helped poor locals apply for aid, and worked to register voters.

In August 1965 Daniels and twenty-some others – mostly Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee members including Stokely Carmichael— were jailed for a week in Hayneville after being arrested while protesting whites-only businesses in nearby Fort Deposit.

After being released unexpectedly, Daniels and three others who had been jailed with him went to a local store to purchase soft drinks. As the group approached the door, a shotgun-wielding volunteer deputy sheriff confronted Daniels, Father Richard Morrisroe, a white Catholic priest; and Joyce Bailey and Ruby Sales, two black teenagers, barring their entrance. Following a brief verbal exchange, the deputy fired his shotgun as Daniels pushed Sales safely out of the way. Daniels was hit at near point-blank range, fell onto the apron of the store, and died instantly. A second blast from the deputy’s shotgun cut down Morrisroe who had grabbed Bailey’s hand and turned to run.

Although critically wounded, Morrisroe survived. The volunteer deputy, Tom Coleman, was tried for manslaughter in the Lowndes County Courthouse and acquitted by an all-white jury of men. In 1991, the Episcopal Church designated Jonathan Myrick Daniels as a martyr and saint, and Aug. 14 was designated as his feast day.

The pilgrimage will be webcast live at: http://dioala.org/tv.html
Diocese ordains first Korean national

History was made in the Diocese of Alabama on the Feast of Pentecost (May 24), when Clare Hea Suk Seals became the first Korean national and first Korean woman to be ordained in the diocese.

The Rt. Rev. Santosh Marray, Alabama’s assistant bishop, ordained her deacon at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, Auburn. Members of the Korean community in the Auburn, Opelika, and Montgomery area, including members of Holy Trinity Church family, attended the service of ordination. Marray began the service by reminding the congregation about the awesome work of the Holy Spirit, and the odds that the first and to date only Asian Indian bishop from South America/Caribbean in the global communion, would ordain the first native Korean woman in the diocese.

Her journey into the Episcopal Church began more than five years ago during the incumbency of former rector of Holy Trinity, the Rev. John Fritschner, and associate rector the Rev. Thomas Joyner. She had come to Holy Trinity from the Korean Methodist Church in Montgomery, and in her own words, had “fallen in love with the Eucharist”.

The growing Korean Episcopal congregation at Holy Trinity Parish has been served by the Rev Daniel Li, a Korean national who serves in the Diocese of Georgia, and commutes to Alabama on Sundays to provide pastoral and sacramental ministry. “The vision of a new missional frontier was conceived, and Clare offered herself for discernment for ordination in the Episcopal Church, with the hope of serving this congregation,” said Marray. “With the call of the Rev. Geoff Evans as Holy Trinity’s rector, and subsequently the Rev. Jonathan Chesney as associate rector, and unanimous support by the vestry, her discernment with the Commission on Ministry continued.” She fulfilled all canonical requirements for ordination in the Episcopal Church, and in March the bishops, the Commission on Ministry and the Standing Committee approved her for ordination. She was ordained to minister to the growing Korean population.

She studied theology at the Methodist Hyupsung University, and Hyupsung Theological Seminary College Korea. She was ordained a minister in the Korea Methodist Church in 1985. “We see this as an opportunity to strengthen the missional witness of the church among our neighbors in the Korean community,” said Marray. “Clare will work with Holy Trinity’s clergy leadership in shaping and executing mission, ministry strategy and pastoral care.” She is scheduled be ordained a priest by the end of the year. She is married to Gene Sales. “We thank God for Clare and Gene, and pray for fruitfulness in her ministry,” said Marray.

Alabama Episcopalians Join Demonstration Against Predatory Lending Practices

A group including several Alabama Episcopalians opposing abusive predatory lending practices staged a demonstration outside a local payday loan establishment in Birmingham July 10.

The group used the occasion of television’s “Shark Week” as an opportunity to raise community awareness of Alabama’s legalized loan sharking practices and to warn potential customers about getting caught in payday/title loans.

Among the demonstrators were The Rev. Peter Horn, the Rev. Jayne Pool, and the Rev. Stephen McCarthy. The Rev. Deacon Carolyn Foster was one of the local organizers of the demonstration.
Fresh Faith by Anna Meade Harris (BAM Publishing, paperback)

Just in time for “going off to school” is Fresh Faith by Anna Meade Harris. In 2014, Anna, a Birmingham native, started writing Scripture-based prayers for boys and girls, emailing them to (now) more than 300 moms and dads. She asked college students what they struggled with and their parents what they worried about – consequently, there are 35 topics in all, from how to choose friends to what to do when you don’t get something you want. Harris hopes that the book will get students thinking about what they believe before they enter school.

The Story by Jon Nelson (P&R Publishing, paperback)

This yearlong, daily study of God’s Word guides you through this grand story or redemption. Although you won’t read every chapter in the Bible, the daily Scripture and devotional readings will equip you to understand the unity and development of God’s story and to grow in your personal discipline of Bible study and prayer.

ESV Following Jesus Bible by Crossway Bibles (Crossway, hardback)

Designed for children ages 8-12 as they transition from a beginner’s Bible, the ESV Following Jesus Bible will strengthen children in their faith and teach them what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. Nearly every other page features a box answering the who, what, where, when, or why of a particular text. “Seeing Jesus” sections explain how certain Bible passages point to Christ and “Following Jesus” sections connect the Bible with the hearts and lives of young readers. Additional content includes book introductions, a glossary, Old and New Testament timeline art, and kid-friendly maps. “God’s Word for Me When...” and “God’s Word for Me About...” pages also help orient kids to key Scriptures on various topics.

Heaven Is for Real for Little Ones as told by Colton Burpo to his parents, Todd & Sonja Burpo (Tommy Nelson, board book)

Heaven is for real, and you are going to like it! Colton Burpo came back from his trip to heaven with a very important message: Jesus really, really loves children. In an effort to reach even more families with this eternally significant story, Heaven Is For Real is now simplified and told in a board book format for little ones.

Welcome to Church Music & The Hymnal 1982 by Matthew Hoch (Morehouse Publishing)

The book discusses the importance of hymn singing and service music in Episcopal worship, as well as the history, structure, and content of The Hymnal 1982. While most parishioners participate in music making at some level (such as singing hymns or common responses), fewer people might understand the specific genres that comprise the music of an Episcopal worship service or the liturgical meaning behind each selection. This book provides a more in-depth understanding of this rich and complex tradition, discussing the history and evolution of music within the Episcopal Church, including its Anglican roots. Additional topics—such as psalm singing, anthems, major works, organs, and other Anglican traditions (such as Lessons and Carols)—are also addressed. Matthew is Choirmaster and Minister of Music at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Auburn.

The Story by Jon Nelson (P&R Publishing, paperback)

This yearlong, daily study of God’s Word guides you through this grand story or redemption. Although you won’t read every chapter in the Bible, the daily Scripture and devotional readings will equip you to understand the unity and development of God’s story and to grow in your personal discipline of Bible study and prayer.

ESV Following Jesus Bible by Crossway Bibles (Crossway, hardback)

Designed for children ages 8-12 as they transition from a beginner’s Bible, the ESV Following Jesus Bible will strengthen children in their faith and teach them what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. Nearly every other page features a box answering the who, what, where, when, or why of a particular text. “Seeing Jesus” sections explain how certain Bible passages point to Christ and “Following Jesus” sections connect the Bible with the hearts and lives of young readers. Additional content includes book introductions, a glossary, Old and New Testament timeline art, and kid-friendly maps. “God’s Word for Me When...” and “God’s Word for Me About...” pages also help orient kids to key Scriptures on various topics.

Heaven Is for Real for Little Ones as told by Colton Burpo to his parents, Todd & Sonja Burpo (Tommy Nelson, board book)

Heaven is for real, and you are going to like it! Colton Burpo came back from his trip to heaven with a very important message: Jesus really, really loves children. In an effort to reach even more families with this eternally significant story, Heaven Is For Real is now simplified and told in a board book format for little ones.

Welcome to Church Music & The Hymnal 1982 by Matthew Hoch (Morehouse Publishing)

The book discusses the importance of hymn singing and service music in Episcopal worship, as well as the history, structure, and content of The Hymnal 1982. While most parishioners participate in music making at some level (such as singing hymns or common responses), fewer people might understand the specific genres that comprise the music of an Episcopal worship service or the liturgical meaning behind each selection. This book provides a more in-depth understanding of this rich and complex tradition, discussing the history and evolution of music within the Episcopal Church, including its Anglican roots. Additional topics—such as psalm singing, anthems, major works, organs, and other Anglican traditions (such as Lessons and Carols)—are also addressed. Matthew is Choirmaster and Minister of Music at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Auburn.

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; ebinfo@episcobooks.com; or visit the bookstore online at www.episcobooks.com.
Third annual Music Under the Stars set for Sept. 11

The 3rd Annual Music Under the Stars at St. Mark’s in Birmingham is set for Friday, Sept. 11, at 6:00 p.m. Bring your favorite lawn chairs or blankets and plan to spend a wonderful evening enjoying some of the best Jazz music in town. Jazz groups to be featured include Cleve Eaton and the Alabama All Stars featuring Ray Reach, Jason Bailey and Company, Shawn Pezant, Chad Fisher Group and the Birmingham Heritage Band.

Cleve Eaton is the consummate bassist, composer, arranger and producer. Eaton has played in notable recording sessions in nearly all genres - jazz with John Klemmer, Ike Cole and Bunkley Green; R&B with The Del’s and Bobby Rush; pop with Minnie Riperton, and Jerry Butler; big band George Benson, Henry Mancini, Frank Sinatra, Joe Williams, Billy Eckstein, Sarah Vaughan, and Ella Fitzgerald. Eaton was dubbed “the Count’s Bassist” during his seventeen-year stint with the Count Basie Orchestra. He has received numerous awards and has been inducted into the Alabama Jazz Hall of Fame as well as the Alabama Music Hall of Fame.

Renowned pianist, guitarist and vocalist Ray Reach has performed with and arranged for other notable musicians including Dizzie Gillespie, Natalie Cole, Ellis Marsalis and Cleve Eaton. Reach is a composer, conductor and educator. Currently, he is the musician at St. Mark’s and Director of Student Jazz Programs at the Alabama Hall of Fame and Director of the Alabama Jazz Hall of Fame.

Composer, educator and mandolinist Jason Bailey has performed with a wide variety of groups throughout the area. He has quickly pushed through the Birmingham music scene to become a regional performing musician in a short amount of time. He has been a guest at Birmingham’s City Stages and Do Dah Day, Mobile’s Bayfest, Georgia’s Little Turnip Overnight Music Jam, and Acoustic Cafe in Hayden, AL.

Shawn Pezant is a well-known performer, composer, record producer, and liturgical musician serving as Music Associate at Saint Luke’s Episcopal Church, Birmingham. He has produced several CDs including “On Earth as in Heaven” by Crossties, the “Saint Luke’s Evening Choir.” Shawn also composed the soundtrack for Thornton Dial, which won best documentary, short subject at the San Francisco Film Festival.

Trombonist and singer Chad Fisher and his band perform a variety of musical styles, exploring the roots of traditional jazz alongside an eclectic blend of influences. Ranging in performance from rock, soul, and Afrobeat to interpretations of honky-tonk country classics. Fisher and many of the band’s members have played with such artists as Jason Isbell, The Temptations, The Four Tops, The O’Jays, and Natalie Cole. Their combined experience is evident wherever the group performs. Longtime fans and first-time listeners are equally drawn in to the band’s energy, virtuosity, spirit, and swing.

The Birmingham Heritage Band has been in existence for more than 50 years. This group performs in the Birmingham area on a regular basis celebrating Birmingham’s music heritage. This group is based at the Alabama Jazz Hall of Fame.

Proceeds from the Music under the Stars will fund the church’s monthly food assistance ministry, which serves more than 50 families each month. General admission tickets are $28.00 and a VIP reserved ticket with meal from Zoe’s is $45.00.

For additional information, please contact St. Mark’s Episcopal Church at 205-322-8449 or StMarks.Bham@gmail.com. Visit us at StMarks.dioala.org. Like us on Facebook at Music Under the Stars 2015. St. Mark’s is situated at 228 Dennison Ave, SW, Birmingham, AL 35211.

Holy Apostles Hoover seeks part-time bookkeeper

Holy Apostles Episcopal Church in Hoover is seeking a part-time Bookkeeper who will be responsible for managing church finances and business practices. The Bookkeeper will work with the Parish Administrator, Treasurer and Sr. Warden.

Primary Responsibilities Include:

- Weekly recording of all deposit receipts including pledges, plate, capital monies and discretionary funds.
- Accounts Payable functions: invoice approval, entry in QuickBooks, check preparation, and mailing.
- Semi-monthly payroll to Paychex and appropriate journal entry into Quickbooks.
- Weekly, monthly and as-needed reports prepared for rector, vestry, treasurer, and committee chairs using Quickbooks and Excel.