Time to apply for ECW Scholarships

By Pat Clanton

The applications for the College Scholarship Program and the Women of the Well Scholarship are now available online.

Applications are now being accepted for the 2016 United Thank Offering (UTO) grants.

The focus for the 2016 grants is Mark Five of the Anglican Marks of Mission: To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

“The United Thank Offering is continuing its tradition of thankfulness by awarding grants for 2016,” said Sandra K. Squires, Ed.D., United Thank Offering Board President.

Established by United Thank Offering, a ministry of The Episcopal Church to promote thankfulness and mission in the whole Church, the purpose of the grants is to provide start-up money for a new project that focuses on the Fifth Mark of Mission. The funds are not permitted for the continuation of ongoing ministries.

The deadline for submitting an application is 5:00 p.m. Eastern time on Friday, March 4.

Known worldwide as UTO, the United Thank Offering grants are awarded for projects that address human needs and help alleviate poverty, both domestically and internationally in The Episcopal Church.

Applications are now being accepted for the College Scholarship Program and the Women of the Well Program.

The College Scholarship Program is open to any communicant in the diocese who meets the eligibility requirements based on need, church involvement, and merit. The Women of the Well Scholarships is available to women, both lay and clergy, seeking spiritual refreshment. The deadline for applications for the College Scholarship Program is April 30, 2016.

Women of the Well applications may be submitted at any time.

Applicants for a college scholarship must be in good standing with the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Alabama; accepted or enrolled in an academic institution of college rank; pursuing professional certification or a degree from an accredited institution; able to show financial need; and a recipient of no more than one previous ECW scholarship. Last year, the committee awarded 11 scholarships representing nine parishes.

To be eligible for a Women of the Well Scholarship, an applicant may be lay or clergy and must be a communicant of good standing with the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Alabama; accepted or enrolled in a spiritual or religious program or lecture; and a recipient of no more than one previous ECW scholarship. Each recipient of this scholarship may receive no more than $400. To apply for this scholarship an applicant must complete the application form and follow the instructions provided on the website. An application for this scholarship may be submitted at any time.

Additional information on the scholarship program is available online at: http://www.alabamaecw.org/#!c1xu8.

These scholarships are made possible by generous donors who have a passion for the education of our members. If you or your parish would like to make a donation to the education of a young person in our diocesan family, please consider making a gift to the ECW College Scholarship Fund. Contributions may be sent: ECW, Diocese of Alabama, 521 North 20th Street, Birmingham 35203-2611. Please note on your check ECW College Scholarship Fund.

Questions should be directed to: Pat Clanton

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Cell: (205)-559-4769

The United Thank Offering will accept:

• grant applications for start-up costs of a new ministry;
• one grant application per diocese within The Episcopal Church;
• one additional application for a companion grant from a diocese of The Episcopal Church may be submitted. This relationship may be formed with an aided diocese from The Episcopal Church or with a diocese from The Anglican Communion. The sponsoring bishop with jurisdiction will be responsible for the accounting of the grant.

For more information about guidelines and applications, contact Bea Strong, Diocesan Coordinator for United Thank Offering, gtr113@aol.com.

The application forms, detailed guidelines, and a list of both eligible and not eligible projects are available at: http://www.episcopalchurch.org/page/uto-grants

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Without a Trace of Vehemence

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

The First Sunday after Christmas we read one of my favorite passages in the Bible, from John’s Prologue: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.” As the writer of this Gospel tells the story of the Incarnation, there’s no mention of shepherds or the babe laid in swaddling cloths — for John it’s the story of the Word of God taking flesh to dwell among us as the life of the world and the light of God in all of us.

One of the striking things for me about this passage is that John does not assure us that because the Word of God becomes human, now everything’s going to be easy and convenient. Instead: “the light shines in the darkness;” the darkness is still there. The darkness is always there, and so, John assures us, is the Light of Christ.

John does not assure us that because the Word of God becomes human, now everything’s going to be easy and convenient.

Recently the Primates of the Anglican Communion met to discuss concerns that threaten the unity of the Church. Their most notable action was to declare that because of The Episcopal Church’s vote to offer same sex marriage to people of the same sex, we are now considered to be in observer status. There is, as there often is, a great deal of sound and fury being expressed by some people who agree vehemently, and by others who don’t, just as vehemently. So you might get the impression that if you’re not vehement, you’ve got nothing to say. But maybe, I’m hoping, two or three of you might hear me say, quite un-vehemently: “The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.”

Darkness did not overcome the Light at the Crucifixion, did not overcome it in century after century of heresy and schism, has not overcome it in the struggles of The Episcopal Church, and will not overcome it ever, so long as faithful people like you and me offer ourselves into the love and service of God through Jesus Christ our Lord, and hope and pray to do the right thing in the Name of Christ.

The statement from the Primates’ Meeting is not a surprise; it’s a reaction to actions taken by our General Convention in June of 2015. I think we did the right thing by making a way for parishes to offer same sex marriage in The Episcopal Church, and I am proud of the way we’ve gone about it in the Diocese of Alabama. If I’m wrong about this, if The Episcopal Church is wrong about this, and this proves to be not what God is leading us to do, I hope that others near and far will have the grace and humility to join us. Either way, I think we can trust God enough to put God’s Church in God’s hands.

And either way, all the sound and fury, all the vehemence rhetoric and righteous indignation (and there’s plenty of it, from both extremes) does not help. And either way, I repeat without a trace of vehemence, the Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness will not overcome it.
Second Chance

Second chance is a license to make mistakes, with the knowledge that God isn’t this angry judge ready to pounce on us whenever we do so. It’s more of an invitation to be not afraid to take risks, walk the faith, and live in the zone of holy uncertainty. You can trust God always to be at the end of the line waiting to catch you in case you fall, and if you do, to restore your dignity.

As we enter the New Year, second chance is a timely reminder of how much life isn’t about surrender, rather it is about conquer. Even if to achieve it you may need to start over and exercise the fruit of the spirit in perseverance. Second chance is all about believing that surrender isn’t an option, and we should not feel embarrassed to start over, albeit for many, the guilt of pride gets in the way of acknowledging the need to pursue second chance as integral to life’s complex journey. This need to access second chance is a redemptive action that could be best described as humbling and transformational. Humbling in terms of exercising the gift of self-awareness; it takes a lot of courage to acknowledge our faults and weaknesses. And even much more to seek forgiveness and amendment of life; realizing things could be worse! Transformational in recognizing that some of life’s most inspired learning and insights have come from the crucible of mistakes. For me, failure is the ‘holier grail’ to edification. However, the gift of God through patience and perseverance gives the opportunity to go at it again, even prosper and do well by God.

My beloved friend, you don’t have to be a literary genius or technically savvy nerd to know that the possibility does exist for the best of us to get some things in life wrong on the first attempt or even the second... This is speaks to the natural fallibility, and brokenness of human nature. However, in a faith that exudes tolerance, and practices perseverance as two of its inspirational qualities, Christians are encouraged to see it as integral to faith formation. Yet, it all resides in humility, and willingness to pursue second chance. We should not feel so overwhelmed, and/or estranged from our past and/or present actions that we are numb to hear or feel the offer of a new beginning which awaits us. To think and act in that manner is certainly defeating the whole purpose of faith that invites us to breathe in more and more of God’s grace. We live and believe in a faith that doesn’t constrain us to a God who makes unimaginable demands that we are incapable of fulfilling. It is one that calls us to feast on the love of our beloved Savior who came to “pitch his tent” among us so that God’s love may permeate and inhabit our dwelling.

Second chance is equally appropriate to individuals who may have, through circumstances and family commitment, postponed or suppressed an age long innate desire. There are so many persons out there that I have spoken with over the years who lament the fact of an unfulfilled dream, especially, to a “higher vocation” they hope one day to pursue. This compelling desire has lingered in the deep recess of the soul. Here is the good news; the opportunity may be now to follow that dream leaving the details of life to the marvelous mystical working of the Holy Spirit. Ours is a call to respond in submission, obedience and faith, trusting in the One who bids us come to assemble the myriad complex details in some cohesive linear way that ultimately make sense.

Second chance beckons the church to think eschatologically. Eschatology in academia is related to “end time”. However, I am more inclined to associate it with the question of “present time” or to be more theologically correct, the best in you, to walk alongside you on the patient journey of reconciliation and redemption. The Episcopal Church is bold, and unabashed in proclaiming, and promoting the dignity of every human being irrespective of class, creed, culture, status and/or ethnicity.”

The Episcopal Church is bold, and unabashed in proclaiming, and promoting the dignity of every human being irrespective of class, creed, culture, status and/or ethnicity. I see myself as a perfect example to this TRUTH; a stranger who came among you, and has experienced hospitality, grace and acceptance with much thanksgiving. As Christ’s ambassadors, we are the healing balm in an otherwise hurting world; the almost perfect personification of second chance.

 Fellow workers with Christ, let us commit afresh to be agents of second chance, and vessels of righteousness for the mission of God. Christians are tough through perseverance, and resilient in fortitude who just don’t know the word “quit,” because we look to the cross of the Savior who conquered where others surrendered. Let us continue to be those who turn stumbling blocks into stepping stones!

May God give you the grace to be broken bread, and poured out wine for the world! May this New Year bring you peace, prosperity, and good health as we live in the renewed hope for the Church whose Lord and architect is the One who conquered death, rose and ascended with words, “...and remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:20) May you know today how much you are loved and cared for by him who came to be God’s love, Jesus the Christ!

For me, the other joy that greets you at “Miss Mary,” are some succinct words inscribed on a photo hanging on the wall of the left porch bedroom. The caption reads, “O God of second chance here am I again”. Every time I read these simple words I think of my mortality, and like brother Paul cry out, “Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!” The fragility of the human condition makes it forever in need of God’s mercy, compassion and forgiveness. Although life is short in terms of relativity, we are mindful of God who is all pervasive, all compassionate, all loving, all caring and more. Also, God is all forgiving always prepared to give us a ‘start over,’ “a complete makeover;” or as the GPS in my vehicle would so often remind me when I go off track, “recalculating! recalculating!” This isn’t unusual in so far as biblical narrative goes, because both the prophet Isaiah and John the Divine (Revelation) speak of God doing a “new thing” on behalf of his people.

Second chance is a favorite term preachers use to articulate courage and confidence in the present, pointing to a forgiving God who focuses attention to the future with optimism and hope. The message of the prophet Ezekiel to the people of Israel is still relevant for today, and clearly bears repeating. Listen to the good prophet speaking for God, "for I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, turn then, and live!" (Ezekiel 18:32; 33:9) Moreover, the term second chance is best understood when it is seen in light of continuum, as against numerical application. Jesus uses this style to address his disciples on the question of “forgiveness.” “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.” (Matthew 18:22)
Diocese to hold convention in “God’s backyard”

The Diocese of Alabama will gather at Camp McDowell this year for its 185th annual convention Feb 5 – 7. This will be first time the convention of the diocese has been held at camp.

“Camp McDowell has long been referred to as God’s backyard and it is surely the heart of the diocese and common ground for us all, so it seems appropriate to hold our annual convention there,” said the Rt. Rev. Kee Sloan, diocesan bishop.

Completion of Bethany Village, with its large new multifunction Doug Carpenter Hall, made it possible to accommodate the nearly 500 delegates, alternates and visitors who attend the annual gathering.

The theme for convention is “Beloved.” “The greatest gift we have to share as Christians and as Episcopalians is the assurance of the Gospel, that through the incarnation, life, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ we are all invited into the love of God; we are the Beloved of God,” said Sloan. “The gift is given to all, and our calling is to receive and open it, and bring others to do so as well.”

The Rev. Tom Brackett, Officer for Church Planting and Ministry Redevelopment at the Episcopal Church Center will be convention’s featured speaker.

This year’s gathering will again feature a number of workshops Friday morning; before convention is officially called to order and throughout the weekend. Topics are to include: the Five Marks of Mission for Small Parishes, Sawyerville/ Yellowhammer Literacy Program, Lifelong Formation/ Church Next, Youth Ministry Cohort Training Program, Emergent Church, Liturgy Innovations, Companion Diocese, Stewardship of Creation, Turning Point Ministries, and several Camp McDowell offerings.

Convention registration begins at 10:00 a.m. Friday, followed by two workshop sessions and lunch. The first business session will be convened at 1:00 p.m. and will include a presentation by featured speaker. Caucus elections will follow the session. After dinner convention participants will be treated to a Folk School Concert by 3 on a String, and the day will conclude with Compline.

Resolution hearings, workshops and the second business session follow breakfast Saturday morning.

Bishop Sloan is scheduled to address the convention during Saturday morning’s business session. The clergy spouse luncheon is also set for Saturday. The Rt. Rev. Santosh Marray, Alabama’s assistant bishop, is scheduled to address the convention during the afternoon business session. Special camp offerings, additional workshops, and the convention gala round out the day.

The business of Convention will conclude on Saturday afternoon, but we are invited and encouraged to stay through Saturday night for more time together as a Diocesan family. On Sunday morning there will be an opportunity for a morning silent hike, breakfast, the closing Eucharist and lunch. Brackett will preach at the closing Eucharist.

Since this year the closing Eucharist will be Sunday, parishes are encouraged to lead an alternate form of worship such as Morning Prayer in the absence of their ordained leadership, or are invited come worship with us at Camp McDowell. Service music will incorporate original works for the diocesan family, and will include a ‘pop-up choir’ made up of delegates, spouses, alternates and visitors.

A youth retreat for young people in grades nine through 12, and the adults who work with them, will be part of convention again this year. It will provide young people an opportunity for community building and will bring an important youth presence to the convention.

Tom Brackett to be convention keynote speaker

The Rev. Tom Brackett, the Episcopal Church Center’s Officer for Church Planting and Ministry Redevelopment, will be special guest and featured speaker at this year’s diocesan convention.

Brackett has been passionate about lively communities of faith during his twenty-seven years of ordained life. Originally ordained as a Baptist, he worked with cell group ministries in the 1980’s. Later, he explored liturgical renewal and culturally sensitive evangelism on other continents, including Korea and Japan. His undergraduate studies focused on new leadership models for the 21st century, as well as the power of storytelling and the use of metaphor to make sense of cultural shifts and organizational changes.

He has led two church plants, twenty years apart and is quick to point out that he has learned from his failures (as well as his successes) in church planting and congregational renewal. He has recently completed international certification as an executive coach and offers his gifts as a strategist and communicator via a coaching delivery style.

Since his ordination, Brackett has studied the impact of post modernity on worship and the arts, as well as on organizational development. He has revitalized a campus ministry, served as a rector in three very different parishes, led a turn-around process in a rural Maine ambulance service and served as the vicar of a diocesan homeless ministry in Asheville. He has consulted with diocesan leaders across the Episcopal Church in the areas of congregational redevelopment and new ministry development, as well as Fresh Expressions of ministry.

Join convention via social media & the web

Can’t make it to convention this year? You can still be a part of the annual family gathering via social media and the web.

This year’s convention proceedings, including the bishops’ addresses, the guest speaker’s remarks, and convention reports, and everything in between will be webcast live via the diocesan website at: http://dioala.org/tv.html, and on YouTube. Video will also be available online following convention.

You can join the conversation on Twitter using the convention hashtag: #dioalacon. You can also follow the convention on our Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/dioala, on Instagram at https://www.instagram.com/episcopalalabama, and on Periscope at https://www.periscope.tv/dioalanews.

The Diocese of Haiti presents plaques recognizing the Diocese of Alabama during a service Jan. 6 celebrating the nine year companionship between the two dioceses.

Joint Haitian/American teams work together to establish sustainable agriculture to improve nutrition and health.

The Diocese of Alabama has worked with its partners in Haiti to help build, equip, and supply schools, and provide scholarships to educate students and teachers.

ALABAMA & HAITI
Companions in Christ 2006-2016
Alabama Delegation Visits Haiti, Celebrates Nine-Year Companionship

A delegation from the Episcopal Diocese of Alabama was in Haiti in December to celebrate Alabama's more than nine-year companion relationship with the Episcopal Diocese of Haiti.

The Rt. Rev. Kee Sloan, Alabama's bishop; the Rev. Deacon CJ Van Slyke, Companion Diocese Commission chair; the Rev. Deacon Judy Quick, the Episcopal Relief & Development coordinator for the diocese, the Rev. Deacon Dave Drachlis, former commission chair; and commission member Mike Hubbard, traveled to Port au Prince Dec. 4 for the weekend celebration.

A special service at St. Simeon Parish in Croix des Bouquets on Sunday, Dec. 6, marked the conclusion of the formal companion relationship between the two dioceses.

St. Simeon Parish, which included several geographically separated churches served by Priest-in-Charge Father Fritz Valdema and his wife Carmel, has been the focus of Alabama's companion relationship with Haiti. Parishioners from St. Alban's, St. Simeon in Crochu, St. Sacrament in Fond Parisian, St. Mark's in Lilavois, and other local churches have been involved in assisting parishes and individuals continuing to work with the Episcopal Diocese of Haiti.


Sloan emphasized that although, the official Episcopal Church Center-sanctioned companionship has ended, the relationship between the people and parishes in Alabama and Haiti has not. “There will be people from parishes and all over the diocese of Alabama who will continue to come to Haiti to give what we can give, and to receive what you give us,” Sloan told the assembled congregation.

“In a good relationship it goes both ways, and our lives are richer because of you.

“We speak different languages, our skin is different colors; there is much that makes us different,” said Sloan. “But your father in heaven is our father in heaven and so we are sisters and brothers – sisters and brothers in Christ because we all have the same father. We are brothers and sisters whether we like it or not - but we choose to be friends.”

Sloan thanked those in attendance for their hospitality to the teams who visited from Alabama, thanked Bishop Duracin for his leadership in a difficult time, and thanked Per Val and Carmel for their hard work.

Referring to the devastating hurricanes of 2008, and the massive earthquake of 2010, Sloan concluded by saying, “After unspeakable tragedy, the people of Haiti sing, and we sing with you, brothers and sisters. The Lord bless you and keep you, this day and evermore.”

As the service concluded Bishop Duracin and Father Valdema presented the delegation plaques commemorating the relationship. A reception and meal followed the service.

While in Haiti, the delegation also visited the permanent home of the Lespwa Timoun (Hope for the Children) nutrition and medical clinic in Croix des Bouquets. The clinic is operated by the Valdemas. The Diocese of Alabama has been instrumental in construction of the facility and in supporting the work of the clinic.

The Alabama group carried with it some 350 pounds of supplies for schools operated by the Episcopal Church in Haiti, and birthing kits for a midwife program initiated by the Valdemas and the Diocese of Alabama in the Crochu area.

Although the commission established to facilitate the companionship with Haiti has been dissolved, former commission chair Van Slyke, will serve as a point of contact to assist parishes and individuals continuing to work with the

Lespwa Timoun, nutrition and medical clinic, and the midwife program and sustainable farming efforts in the Crochu area. Maggie Johnston remains the point of contact for the Krik Krak school lunch program. Van Slyke can be reached by email at: cjenkinsro46@gmail.com. Johnson can be reached by email at: Maggie@compmcdowell.com.
At our closing Eucharist to honor our almost decade of friendship and partnership with the Episcopal Diocese of Haiti, Bishop Zache Duracin lauded our works of love and unity in Jesus Christ.

There have been so many works from individuals and parishes in the Episcopal Diocese of Alabama shared with our friends in Haiti. The volume of work is remarkable, especially after the earthquake – new churches, new schools, wells, latrines, clinics, health programs (HIV screening/nutrition/midwife training), lunch for children in Crochu, educating future professionals (school administrators/nurses).

But as the Rev. Deacon CJ VanSlyke said in her remarks to the congregation at Saint Simeon parish, the buildings are necessary, but most importantly, we have shared love and friendship.

Alabama Bishop Kee Sloan offered the same message to all he met in Haiti. We may look different and speak different languages, but we are one in Christ, we are brothers and sisters with the same father.

The road up the mountain to the remote village of Crochu exemplifies the life of our friends in Haiti. The path is rocky, bumpy, treacherous, full of obstacles, road-blocks, and the unexpected.

But each time I visit Haiti, I am humbled by the indomitable spirit of the Haitian people, a spirit of joy and a profound love of Jesus.

Thanks to this amazing love, God’s kingdom has grown in Croix des Bouquets. Two missions have become parishes with their own priest. When Père Val arrived thirteen years ago at Saint Simeon parish, there were 23 worshippers. Now hundreds worship there, a new church building is under construction, and the kindergarten is thriving with new classrooms and a new playground.

Bishop Duracin joked that the new St. Alban’s Church in Crochu, destroyed by natural disasters and rebuilt with the help of a UTO grant submitted by the Diocese of Alabama, was finished before Trinity Cathedral in Port-au-Prince, which was destroyed in the 2010 earthquake! In this remote mountain village, a gorgeous church is filled with worshippers and the school has 200 students, with plans to grow to 600 students. Thanks to the devotion of the clergy spouses, the Krik Krak lunch program, sustainable agriculture, cisterns, and latrines have helped this community thrive.

The need is overwhelming throughout Haiti, but little by little, lives have improved. Children get better nutrition thanks to Carmel Valdema’s Nutrition Programs. Babies now live, thanks to Carmel’s midwife training program.

Slowly, sustainable agriculture with gardens, orchards, and goats ensure a food supply. The Lespwa Timoun Clinic is remarkable and will serve hundreds of families in need. St. Mary’s-on-the-Highlands is to be commended for their commitment to Lespwa Timoun and their leadership as the new Clinic becomes a 501(c)3 entity.

Lespwa Timoun – The Hope for the Children – is indeed the hope for the Episcopal Diocese of Haiti.

The Diocese of Alabama should be proud of our partnership to help the region of Croix des Bouquets begin to flourish. Although the formal companion relationship has ended, our friendships continue. Several parishes throughout the diocese have long-term relationships and ties to Croix des Bouquets and will continue to work with Père Val and Carmel.

Love is the theme, eternal theme.
Parents attend nutrition education supported by the Diocese of Alabama.

Joint medical team treats pregnant woman in distress and delivers a healthy baby during mission to mountain village. Dioceses subsequently establish midwife training.

Malnourished children await treatment during nutrition clinic supported by the Diocese of Alabama.

Parents attend nutrition education supported by the Diocese of Alabama.

At the request of Haiti’s bishop, Alabama team provides medical care for earthquake refugees at tent city in Port au Prince in February 2010. Alabama medical teams return seven times during the following 12 months.

Rice and beans are repacked for transport up the mountain to Crochu. Alabama teams delivered food to two hard hit communities following 2008 hurricanes.

Team from St. Mary’s-on-the-Highlands helps lay foundation for permanent home for Lespwa Timoun (Hope for the Children) Nutrition & Medical Clinic in Croix des Bouquets.

Alabama helped fight the post 2010 earthquake Cholera outbreak by providing water purification chemicals and medications, and supporting prevention education classes.

Alabama teams delivered food to two hard hit communities following 2008 hurricanes.
Diocese supports multiple drinking water, and sanitation projects by drilling and equipping wells, helping fund purification systems, and building latrines, to help improve health and quality of life.

St. Alban’s Episcopal Church, Crochu, Haiti

Tiny St. Alban’s Church in 2006. Pere Val hopes to build a larger church to house the growing congregation.

A concrete slab is all that remains following devastating 2008 hurricane season.

New church completed with support from the Diocese of Alabama provides worship facilities for a 200-member congregation.

Clergy spouses inaugurate Krik? Krak! school lunch program in October 2010 with one hot meal a week. Program quickly expands to three meals a week.

Diocese of Alabama medical teams join with Haitian medical personnel to provide healthcare in poor communities. The diocese fielded more than 30 medical missions during during its nine-year companion relationship.

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Joint Haitian/Alabama team builds school benches in October 2007 during the first of numerous construction missions from the diocese to help build and equip schools & churches.
Greetings from wonderful Camp McDowell,

I am honored and delighted that the Diocesan Convention is going to be held at your camp and conference center! The McDowell staff has been planning the weekend carefully for several months with the staff of the Diocesan office. It is common for us to have more people at Camp McDowell than will attend the convention, but this will be the largest single group to stay at McDowell for one purpose.

Our primary meeting place will be Doug Carpenter Hall (lovingly known as “The Doug”). The Doug is the central meeting and dining hall for Bethany, the newest area of McDowell. It holds up to 600 people around tables and I think you will find it to be a beautiful and functional facility. Many of you will also be staying in Bethany’s new lodges, in Stough Lodge, or in Miller Commons. As a not-so-subtle reminder, the new Camp Store will be open so you can browse our tempting selection of tee shirts, sweat shirts, and other merchandise.

The workshops at convention will include opportunities to learn more about our ministries at Camp McDowell. There will also be tours of Bethany and of our new teaching farm. Hikes on our beautiful campus will be offered. A workshop will also detail what our finishing touches will be at Bethany as well as how we intend to complete the Bethany Campaign.

Yes, we are over 90% complete in our effort to fund Bethany and ready to finish it!

One reason I believe that I have the best job in the whole world is that I have the honor of taking care of a spiritual home for the people of our Diocese. I think the convention will be like a homecoming. It will be a time for us to do our business, but even more it will be a wonderful opportunity to enjoy living in Christian community. It will be a time to see old friends and a time to make new friends, and to discern who God is calling us to be. I so look forward to being with all of you.

Blessings and peace,

The Rev. Mark Johnston

PS The Camp McDowell address now shows up on a google map!
Check out our updates online and join us on social media!

Camp McDowell Offerings

Summer Camp Schedule 2016 on Clear Creek

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<th>Date</th>
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<td>Primary I—May 27-29</td>
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<td>Junior High I—June 1-7</td>
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<td>Primary II—August 5-7</td>
<td>(entering 1st-3rd with parent)</td>
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Summer Camp Schedule 2016 at Bethany Village

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Our Time grief camp</td>
<td>June 3-5</td>
<td>(entering 6th—8th For kids healing from loss; concurrent program for their adult caregivers.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diocesan Homecoming</td>
<td>June 10-12</td>
<td>(All ages! Diocesan-wide weekend retreat.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alabama Folk School</td>
<td>June 14-17</td>
<td>(entering 5th—12th Classes in fiddle &amp; guitar, some experience helpful, pottery &amp; indigo dye!)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special Session</td>
<td>June 19-26</td>
<td>(Summer camp for adults with disabilities.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CREATE! June 28—July 1</td>
<td>(entering 9th &amp; 10th—leadership development through work projects &amp; camp community!)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bethany's Kids I</td>
<td>July 12-15</td>
<td>(entering 4th-6th—inclusion summer camp for typical kids &amp; kids with disabilities. “Camper Buddies” program for 9th gr—HS grads.)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bethany's Kids II</td>
<td>July 19-22</td>
<td>(entering 6th-8th—inclusion summer camp for typical kids &amp; kids with disabilities. “Camper Buddies” program for rising 9th—HS grads.)</td>
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Summer Camp registration is now open!

Father/son weekend
April 1-3, 2016
For all combinations of fathers, sons, other relatives and special friends. Quality time in God’s backyard with folks you love. Recommended age is 1st grade and up.

Mother/daughter weekend
April 15-17, 2016
For all combinations of mothers, daughters, other relatives and special friends. Quality time in God’s backyard with folks you love. Recommended age is 1st grade and up.

Family farm camp
April 22-24, 2016
Enjoy a family friendly experience of fun, food, and fellowship in Bethany Village at Camp McDowell! All ages are welcome and encouraged to attend Family Farm to Table Camp to experience the beauty and bounty of God’s Backyard!

Our knowledgeable farm staff will guide you in planting, harvesting, and food preparation activities, as well as hands-on care of McDowell farm animals. We have goats, chickens, pigs, and some very cute rabbits!

Faith-based discussion along with traditional camp activities (like hiking and boating) will make this a truly memorable and holy time for you and yours. Quality time in God’s creation is a true gift.

Growing roots
July 10-12, 2016
Have you ever thought about what fun it would be to share a love of Nature with your children? Ever wanted to teach your children more about where their food comes from? Want to take them picking berries and swimming in the creek? But you are not exactly sure how to make this happen... where can you make your dream come true?

Come to Camp McDowell for Growing Roots: Connecting Families to the Natural World! July 10-12, 2016 we will find the magic again in nature. We will do all of these fun things and more! A STAYcation for the family that you will never forget!

ALABAMA FOLK SCHOOL AT CAMP MCDOWELL
From Scratch
Fri, Feb 19, 2016 to Sun, Feb 21, 2016
Our annual From Scratch weekend is a workshop designed for beginners. Ever wanted to learn an instrument or art, but not sure where to start? This is the perfect workshop for you! Learn to play a new instrument or finally take up painting or blacksmithing as a hobby in a safe and secure environment.

- Banjo from scratch with Herb Trotman
- Blacksmithing from scratch with Russell Colvin
- Fiddle from scratch with Michael Ismerio
- Guitar from scratch with Susie Coleman
- Harmonica from scratch with Jamie Finley
- Harmony singing from scratch with Kathy Hinkle & Ann Whitley
- Ukulele from scratch with Nancy & Charlie Hartness
- Whatever is lovely - an introduction to oil painting with Dorothy Dixon

Words, Words, Words
Fri, Mar 18, 2016 to Sun, Mar 20, 2016
This weekend workshop is all about the written word. Enjoy the spring weather and immerse yourself in the art of writing.

- Hand marbling paper with Pat K Thomas
- Mending and collecting memory - book arts with Doug Baulos
- Soul to stage: the life of a song with Louisa Branscomb & Claire Lynch

Bluegrass & Gee’s Bend
Mon, Apr 18, 2016 to Thur, Apr 21, 2016
One of our most popular workshops is back with great Bluegrass music classes, Gee’s Bend quilting and pottery. This 4-day workshop provides a truly immersive experience with a fun and enthusiastic community of musicians and artist.

- Banjo I with Herb Trotman
- Banjo II with Nedd Luberecki
- Faces in Clay with Sam Williams
- Fiddle I instructor TBD
- Fiddle II: Jamtasmagorical Fiddling with Becky Buller
- Gee’s Bend Quilting with Mary Ann Pettway & China Pettway
- Guitar I instructor TBD
- Guitar II with Stephen Mougin
- Mandolin I with Jason Bailey
- Mandolin II instructor TBD
More Than Bricks.
Building Spiritual Muscle.

by Danielle Dunbar

I've played a lot of sports in my time: softball, soccer, volleyball, cheerleading, and diving. I'm learning to play tennis and I'm a huge fan of yoga. Whether it's a team sport or an individual one, I find the competition comes mostly from within. I don't follow football or basketball closely but I like to hear what the coaches have to say because it's often applicable to my own life, in the realm of athletics or otherwise.

Lately, the sports feedback I have read or heard has me making connections to the Bethany campaign. For example, Clemson Head Coach Dabo Swinney said after the ACC championship game, “We're happy today, but we're not done yet. We have a lot of football left to play, so we're going back to work this week.” Looking back to see who else might have said something similar, former forward Sidney Ball of the UAB Blazers basketball team said, “Coach Anderson does a great job of reminding us at all times that we're not done yet. We don't want to be satisfied with what we've accomplished. We want to keep moving.”

“Coach” Kee Sloan and “Quarterback” Mark Johnston have the same sense of urgency and competition within themselves and for the campaign. We aren't finished yet with the Bethany Campaign. We are raising the remaining $1.8M. Coach Kee and Quarterback Mark are reminding us all to “keep moving” and that we “have a lot of football left to play!” The fact is that expanding our beloved Camp McDowell is allowing us to build spiritual muscle that we haven’t been fully exercising.

Yes, we have been a loving Christian summer camp since 1923—before we even purchased the Winston County property in 1947. That in itself is a win. Along the way we added environmental education so we could better care for God’s creation. That was another victory. Today, because of the expansion of facilities at Bethany, we are able to expand education—environmentally through the McDowell Farm School and artistically through the Alabama Folk School. We are also able to care for more individuals with special needs whether at Special Session, Bethany’s Kids, or at a parish retreat.

The spiritual muscle for hospitality must be the heart because every time I have ever hosted a group at camp whether for the Alabama Folk School or St. Stephen’s EYC, mine was made bigger. I am grateful for the opportunity that Bethany Village brings. It is certainly more than bricks. It has helped me build my non-athletic muscles that help me know God more deeply. I imagine it is doing the same for others. I hope it has inspired you to work similar muscles and to make a pledge or contribution today. Please see below for ways you can participate. The game will be over soon. Don’t wait on the sidelines. Thank you!

- Purchase tickets to the Camp Out III held at Good People Brewery on Sat, Feb 27, 2016 at 6:00 PM tickets starting at $36.87. Go to www.campmcdowell.com.
- Purchase one or more “The Way the World Could Be” books by Doug Carpenter for $20. All proceeds benefit Bethany at Camp McDowell. Contact Doug Carpenter, carpenter.doug7436@att.net, for your copy.
- Make a gift of stock towards your existing pledge or extend your pledge with an extra gift. Contact Danielle Dunbar at danielle@campmcdowell.com or 205.358.9234 for more information.
- Fill out the pledge card on this page today or contact danielle@campmcdowell.com to extend your pledge or make a pledge to Bethany at wonderful Camp McDowell.

Please add this to (my parish’s)________________pledge total.
Check out our updates online and join us on social media!

A BENEFIT FOR BETHANY @ CAMP MCDOWELL

THE CAMP OUT

FEBRUARY 27, 2016

TIME: 6PM-9PM

- Live Music
- Food provided by Little Donkey
- Silent Auction

GOOD PEOPLE BREWING CO. / 114 14TH STREET SOUTH // B’HAM, AL

WWW.BETHANYATCAMP.DIOALA.ORG
“Do What Matters” – Faith Formation for a New Age is theme for 2016 One Conference

Trinity Clanton Renovates, Blesses Heflin House

A newly acquired house and property adjacent to Trinity Episcopal Church in Clanton has been renovated and was recently blessed for parish ministry.

The Heflin House, named for its former owners, now houses Trinity’s parish offices, library, public parlor, adult classroom and a rector’s apartment. The apartment allows the priest, who lives in Birmingham, to spend three consecutive days in Clanton and less time on the road.

The blessing took place Sunday, Nov. 8. Ten members of the Heflin family were in attendance as the parish choir sang “We are Standing on Holy Ground, parishioners placed crosses in each room, and the priest and deacon blessed the rooms with baptismal water.

The acquisition doubles the size of the parish property. Purchased at a cost of $110,000, the facility was renovated for an additional $15,000. Much of the work was accomplished by members of the parish during September and October.

Trinity received a $50,000 developmental grant from the Diocese of Alabama, and the parish received of $60,000 loan from the Diocesan Revolving Loan Fund.

“This active partnership between diocese and parish made it possible for Trinity to acquire the much needed additional space for both its current and long-term ministries,” said the Rev. Bill King, Trinity’s priest in charge.
Sawyerville is looking for a “few” good staff members

by Crystal Jones, Assistant Director for Staffing and Logistics

W e are looking for a “few” good staff members -- really hundreds of them! There is still time to apply to be on the Sawyerville Day Camp (SDC) staff. It is the best volunteer position around.

Join us down in Greensboro, Alabama this summer to be on staff at Sawyerville Day Camp. Why? The Sawyerville Day Camp is a unique opportunity to serve and share in God’s love. This is your chance to form new relationships and reconnect with old friends in a fun-filled Christian community. It is a chance to practice service-learning as well as learn more about a special place in our diocese.

Please visit our website, www.sawyervilledaycamp.org, and apply to be a volunteer staff member at one of our camp sessions this summer. You need to be 16 years old (there is no maximum age!) by Sept. 1, 2016 and willing to volunteer your time for at least one full session. If you are age 16 to 18, you must have a parent or guardian present when you fill out this application and that person needs to fill out the parental release portion and give permission since this is a youth event of the Episcopal Diocese of Alabama.

We hope that you will take a few moments to complete the application and prayerfully answer some questions. Due to the number of applicants and the quality of the program we like to run for the community of Hale County, this will be a true application process, so please take your time with the answers and trust us to discern what’s best for the camp and all volunteers. So come and share your time and talent as a SDC camp counselor. It is an amazing experience!

The deadline to apply for staff is March 11. For more information please contact me at cjones@dioala.org. Staff selections will be made mid-March and applicants will be notified at the end of March so there is plenty of time to plan your summer schedule.

To schedule a presentation, or for additional information about any of these opportunities, please contact me at cajones@dioala.org.

CALLING ALL PARISHES

by Claire Cotten, Assistant Director for Development and Communications

N ow’s the time to think about how your parish, small group, or reunion group will be involved with Sawyerville Day Camp (SDC) in Summer 2016.

You can give a financial gift, gather supplies, bring and serve a meal, or write prayer partner letters.

Need more information before you make a commitment to SDC? Let us give a presentation to your parish or small group. We love to share our story. When we make presentations, we offer the history behind the ministry, facts and figures on the local community, the camp, and the literacy program, plus our latest documentaries highlighting Summer 2015. Even if your parish or small group is already committed to supporting SDC, we’d love to keep you up to date on this important work by giving a presentation.

To schedule a presentation, or for additional information about any of these opportunities, please contact me at ccotten@dioala.org.

Pray without ceasing

by Linda Kennedy, Volunteer Prayer Partner Coordinator

W hat better way to start the New Year than by joining the 2016 Sawyerville prayer partner team?

As one of our staff members has said, “Being a prayer partner allows you to offer encouragement, a moment of humor, or a small act of kindness to a staff member who has given up a week of vacation to work and work hard. As you are writing those letters – you find yourself reflecting…and then you realize you don’t have to be at camp to experience the joy and magic of Sawyerville.”

Being a prayer partner is as much a gift to the writer as it is to the staff member who will receive your letter. Do it!

It’s easy. Just send an email to me at lindakennedy17@gmail.com to sign up. It may be one of the easiest and most rewarding things you do in 2016. Visit the Sawyerville website at www.sawyervilledaycamp.org, for more information.

Get paid to do SDC all summer

Intern application deadline extended

by Crystal Jones, Assistant Director for Staffing and Logistics

D o you want to spend your whole summer at Sawyerville Day Camp (SDC)? If you are 19 or older, you can apply to be an intern with us. This is a paid internship with housing provided (both in Birmingham and Greensboro). It is a wonderful experience and we have room for 10 paid interns. You can lead a specific camp (Lower, Middler, Upper), work on Communications and Social Media, register campers, or work alongside the assistant director for staff. There is something for everyone. More information and a link to the application on the Sawyerville website at: www.sawyervilledaycamp.org

We have extended the deadline to apply for an intern position until Feb. 10 so please visit our website, and consider applying. Contact me at cjones@dioala.org with questions.
Thank you

Thank you to everyone that made a donation in honor of a loved one this Christmas season. Because of your support of this Christmas honor card campaign, we raised $4,450 for the 2016 camp and its programs.

Special thanks to Jamie Plott, our Christmas card elf, without whom none of this would be possible. She sends out hundreds of cards each year to your loved ones around the country. And special thanks to Amanda Ennis for designing the 2015 Christmas card.

Look for them again Thanksgiving 2016!

The Sawyerville Staff

Food, glorious food

by Evelyn Pritchard, Volunteer Meals Coordinator

Help us feed the masses! Each year we look for volunteers to come down to Greensboro to feed our wonderful and hungry volunteer staff. This year we will need at least 24 dinners, 6 lunches and 3 breakfasts provided for the staff.

If you are interested in helping out in this way please contact me at esp0921@aol.com or 205-529-0863 for more information.

This is a great opportunity for members of a Bible study group, youth group, Cursillo reunion group or outreach committee to do together. There are lots of options and we provide plenty of direction. It is also a wonderful opportunity to visit this special place and ministry. The staff always looks forward to these meals.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yellowhammer Project:

It’s back and better than ever

by Andrew Cotten, Chair of the YLP Design Team

It has been six months since we taught our final class during last summer’s Yellowhammer Literacy Project (YLP), but even though we have packed up all our books, closed up shop at the Greensboro Boys and Girls Club, and finalized our data, we have not stopped working to make the best summer reading program that our friends in Greensboro deserve. In fact, as soon as everyone on the design team took a quick breather, we were back to the drawing board to plan for the summer of 2016.

During our first YLP design team meeting after the end of last summer’s program, we made two major decisions that will significantly impact this upcoming summer’s program. First, after much prayer, reflection, and discussion, we decided to invite the same group of students from last year’s program back for a second summer. It was not our original intention to ask this wonderful group back, but God has a funny way of showing us the obvious when our own common sense fails us. Not only will we invite this group of rising sixth-grade students back, we are also inviting 25 new rising fifth-grade students to join us next summer as well. Yes, you heard me correctly; we are doubling our staff and student body! The second major change for next summer is that we have decided to extend the number of weeks from three to four.

At the end of last summer’s program, we were thrilled by the growth we saw and the data we collected, but somewhere in everyone’s mind, we were all wondering, “What if our program was longer?” Well, when you put questions like that next to the question, “What’s best for kids?” you can’t help but answer the call. Apart from those two changes, we have a fresh group of curriculum team members who are tasked with writing next summer’s program. I have had the pleasure of sitting in on their meetings and watching great minds do great work. When you put together a group of eight educators who love kids, who are passionate about their content, who dare to dream, and who feel the need to give back, something truly extraordinary occurs. Recently, this group decided on two program themes for next summer: Superheroes and Exploration. Both themes will be the foundation of two weeks of academics and enrichment. While we are currently planning the academic curriculum and enrichment opportunities, I can tell you— if only a quarter of the ideas they proposed end up happening, this will be the best summer program I have ever seen.

Lastly, the design team is making headway on all the logistical plans that need to be addressed and finalized, such as transportation, housing, staffing, and funding. In fact, I feel confident that with the team we have in place, we will make this summer’s program run like a well-oiled machine.

If you feel called to help serve this YLP in some capacity or make a tax-deductible donation, please visit our website: http://www.sawyervilledaycamp.org/yellowhammer-literacy-project.html
Some 172 campers in grades 9-12 and 35 staff members participated in the 2015 Christmas Conference Dec. 28 – 30 at Camp McDowell.

The theme for this conference centered around exploring the Episcopal faith in relation to other faiths, and discovering what that faith meant to the individual. Our program director was The Rev. Daniel P. Strandlund, associate priest at St. John’s Episcopal Church in Montgomery, and he did a great job.

Christmas Conference is the highlight of the season for our youth and many college age adults who come to volunteer to staff the event.

The Youth Department began planning Christmas Conference back in the summer and has been preparing at the monthly meetings during the first semester of the year.

Fran McKendree has served as our music director for more than five years and we were so glad he could come and help us with music yet again. At each conference he introduces himself by saying that he’s “here to help with the music”. What a humble introduction by someone as talented as Fran. He is so good at connecting with the youth and he is always intentional about lifting everyone up as the leaders of the event. He is especially gifted at involving the youth musicians. He mentors them, helps build their confidence, and pushes them to use their musical abilities in leadership. It’s a beautiful thing to watch the transformation take place in these young musicians. He is also a gift to our diocese.

The following are brief reflections by a few of our Christmas Conference campers:

- “To me, being an Episcopalian means that I can be myself and see other people be themselves and see everyone be accepted in the community. I see a lot of my friends who are apart of other denominations, which they have strong faiths in but, they don’t have the same spunk and accepting personality that Episcopalians do.” - Abi Young (Senior)

- “Being an Episcopalian to me means being surrounded by people who will always accept me no matter what path I take, but also having a strong faith base.” - Margaret Neely (Sophomore)

- “To me being an Episcopalian means being able to express my opinion without being judged.” - Hudson Dunbar (Freshman)

- “To be an Episcopalian means loving everyone as God would, and being nice and sharing his love and word.” - Ava Claire Mattox (Sophomore)
Three from Alabama attend the Province IV Youth Ministry Networking and Leadership Meeting

The Diocese of Alabama’s Youth Ministry Coordinator Susan Oakes, and two youth representatives attended the Province IV Youth Ministry Networking and Leadership Meeting hosted in Charleston by the Episcopal Church in South Carolina Dec. 3-6.

Representing the Diocese of Alabama’s youth were Taylor McLemore, one of two Southern District Youth Department representatives, from Holy Comforter in Montgomery; and Mary Patton Sims an At-large Youth Department member from St. Stephen’s in Birmingham.

During the meeting, McLemore and Sims presented a report on the state of youth ministry in the Diocese of Alabama, in which they shared strengths of Alabama’s youth ministry program and offered ideas and support to others in attendance.

Sixteen of the 20 Province IV dioceses were represented at this year’s meeting. The meeting is designed to allow youth to expand their perspective and leadership experience, as well as learn about the local area and hosting diocese. Each diocesan youth coordinator is invited to bring two youth to represent their diocese.

The following are highlights of the meeting shared by Alabama’s youth representatives:

- Province IV was such a wonderful experience. It was so cool to meet so many people that had such a passion for God and their church. I loved learning about the events that we have in common with other Dioceses and the things that they do differently that we can bring back and use at our events. One of the best moments of the weekend was when the youth were asked to discuss how the adults could help us create a better future for our church. I was amazed to hear that many ideas that people brought up were things that were already present in our diocese, like our seat, voice, and vote (as a youth department) in Diocesan Council and Diocesan Convention. It made me realize how privileged our youth is, and how much support is given to us by the adults.
  ~Mary Patton Sims, YD At-large Member

- It’s really cool meeting other youth from other dioceses. We discuss real issues in the Episcopal Church relating to the youth. I am extremely blessed and thankful that the diocese of Alabama allows the youth to have seat, voice, and vote. And I’m proud that our diocese is doing so well and excited at the fact that we are offering a helping hand to other dioceses, like the Central Gulf Coast with re-building their Happening ministry.
  ~Taylor McLemore, YD Southern District
Diocese initiates pilot program to assist parish youth ministries

by Susan Oakes, Diocesan Youth Ministry Coordinator

The Episcopal Diocese of Alabama has begun a pilot initiative in partnership with Ministry Architects to assist parishes in developing effective, lasting youth ministries.

Ministry Architects is the nation’s leading provider of youth ministry consulting. The organization partners with churches and youth ministers, working alongside key stakeholders—including clergy, youth ministers, parents, and students—to customize strategic plans for building successful and sustainable models of ministry. The initiative—officially named the Youth Ministry Cohort Training Program—is in response to dozens of parishes desiring assistance in developing their youth ministry programs and we are seeing great results so far.

The diocese has established an initial cohort of leaders, from four parishes—St. Timothy’s in Athens, St. Thomas in Huntsville, Christ in Tuscaloosa, and Holy Apostles in Hoover. By gathering a cohort group, we are able to reach more parishes at once to help them develop their staff, volunteers, programming, and structures. The cohort training does not provide a one-size-fits-all approach, but rather a shared learning experience that includes the following benefits:

- Deepen each team member’s understanding of important youth ministry concepts and leadership practices;
- Develop vision and clarity for youth ministry in their parish as a whole;
- Develop a plan for whole-church youth ministry that is fruitful and sustainable;
- Equip laity and develop a strong volunteer team;
- Incorporate youth into the life of the church and develop youth as leaders;
- Build a strong culture of call within the youth ministry;
- Expand or strengthen its youth ministry outreach efforts;
- Develop a youth ministry administrative plan (budgeting, calendaring, youth database, etc.);
- Equip leaders to lead meaningful youth gatherings and studies;
- Create a youth ministry discipleship plan according to the scope and sequence set forth by the diocese;
- Evaluate staffing (paid and volunteer).

The cohort training program involves four, day-long training meetings throughout the program year, along with reading, program development task assignments, and two coaching calls between each meeting. This program is ideal for those parishes that are primed and ready for growth, are able to build a team of adults committed to working the process, and have leadership in place who support the work of youth ministry.

This model is proven to work and our diocese is supporting this effort by sponsoring a significant portion of the costs, making the program accessible for parishes of all sizes.

Another cohort group is currently being formed and will include up to twelve parishes. For further details about what the cohort involves and to see if it would be a good fit for your parish, contact me at soakes@dioala.org.

Registration opens for Young People Paint Birmingham

It’s time to register for Young People Paint Birmingham (YPPB) 2016!

YPPB is a weeklong service event for youth in seventh, eighth, and ninth grades. While at YPPB, youth have the opportunity to work hands-on in some of Birmingham’s poorest neighborhoods, scraping and repainting houses for people who are unable to do so themselves. Youth will discover how something as simple as a fresh coat of paint can not only save families from eviction, but can also increase morale for these families and their communities.

Participants learn how to volunteer in the spirit of servant ministry, and they have the chance to be the hands and feet of Christ to our hurting neighbors in Birmingham. Each day will include program and worship opportunities, and the youth will also have time to form connections with Episcopalians from around the Diocese of Alabama. Jr. High is the perfect age group to get plugged into diocesan events and to make friends that will last a lifetime.

This year, YPPB will be held June 13-17, 2016. Youth will stay at St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church in Birmingham and work in West End neighborhoods.

The cost to attend is $225.00, and scholarships are available for those who need financial assistance. To register, please go to Dioala.org. Registration is under the Youth Ministries Summer Opportunities tab.

Registration will be open through early May. This year, YPPB will be led by Tyree Shelton, youth minister at St. Stephen’s, Birmingham, and Emily Collette Linton, youth minister at St. Mary’s-on-the-Highlands, Birmingham. For more information or answers to questions, please contact Tyree (Tyree@ssechurch.org, 205-967-8780) or Emily (Emily@stmarysoth.org, 205-933-1140, ext. 112).
Diocese announces postulants for Holy Orders

The Diocese of Alabama’s Commission on Ministry recently approved six postulants for Holy Orders. Five will study for the priesthood and one will study for the vocational diaconate.

The six postulants are:

- **Deanna Clogg**, a member of the Church of the Good Shepherd in Decatur. She entered the priesthood track with the Alabama Iona Ministry School (AIMS) in Jan. 15, 2016. She was formerly in a similar program in the Diocese of Eastern Oregon.

- **Jay Gardner**, former Jr. High Youth Associate, and a member of the Cathedral Church of the Advent in Birmingham. He is scheduled to enter seminary in August 2016 for one year of Anglican Studies.

- **Marilyn Lands**, a member of the Church of the Nativity in Huntsville. She entered the diaconate track with the AIMS in Jan. 15.

- **Emily Collette Linton**, Senior High School Youth Minister and member of St. Mary’s-on-the-Highlands in Birmingham. She is scheduled to enter a three-year residential seminary in August of 2017 after her husband completes graduate school. Her sponsoring parish is the Church of the Nativity in Huntsville.

- **Polly Robb**, a member of St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Huntsville. She is scheduled to enter a three-year residential seminary in August 2016.

- **Randy Sellers**, a member of St. Luke’s Episcopal Church in Birmingham. He is scheduled to enter a three-year residential seminary in August 2016.

In addition, the commission previously approved three postulants to enter the priesthood track with AIMS. They are:

- **Paul Goldman**, a member of St. Mark’s in Birmingham;

- **Mark Likos**, a member of St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church in Vestavia.

- **Pamela Long**, a member of the Church of the Ascension in Montgomery

They also began their studies with AIMS Jan. 15. AIMS is a school for ministry that will train non-stipendiary and bi-vocational priests, vocational deacons and lay people who want to further their training in ministry. The school uses the Iona Initiative, developed by the Diocese of Texas, as its basis. The program normally runs one weekend a month for 10 months of the year and includes both practical sessions and academic ones in a classroom setting.

Transitional deacons with Alabama ties ordained to the priesthood.

Five transitional deacons with ties to the Episcopal Diocese of Alabama were recently ordained to the Sacred Order of Priests, and, at press time, two more deacons were scheduled to be ordained to the priesthood in January.

- **The Rev. John William Andrew Jenkins**, ordained to the priesthood Nov. 24, on behalf of the Diocese of Alabama, by the Rt. Rev. Scott Benhase, Bishop of the Diocese of Georgia. Jenkins was ordained at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Augusta, GA, where he is serving as assistant to the interim rector. Jenkins was ordained to the diaconate in May at St. John’s Episcopal Church in Montgomery.

- **The Rev. Robin Hansen Hinkle**, ordained to the priesthood Dec. 9, by the Rt. Rev. Santosh Marray, in May at St. John’s Episcopal Church in Montgomery. She serves as associate priest. Hinkle was ordained to the diaconate in May at the Cathedral Church of the Advent in Birmingham.

- **The Rev. Daniel Patrick Strandlund**, ordained to the priesthood Dec. 12 by Bishop Sloan at St. John’s Episcopal Church in Montgomery, where he serves as associate rector. Strandlund was ordained to the diaconate in May at St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church in Birmingham.

- **The Rev. Emily Rowell Brown**, ordained to the priesthood Dec. 12, by the Right Rev. Susan Goff, Bishop Suffragan of the Diocese of Virginia, at the Church of the Holy Comforter in Vienna, VA. Brown was ordained to the diaconate in May at Christ Episcopal Church in Tuscaloosa.

- **The Rev. Stephen Joseph McCarthy**, ordained to the priesthood Dec. 12 by Bishop Marray at the Cathedral Church of the Advent in Birmingham where he is serving as a curacy fellow. McCarthy was ordained deacon in June in the Diocese of Massachusetts at Emanuel Church in Boston.

- **The Rev. Deacon Sarah Leanne Miller**, ordained to the priesthood Jan 23, by the Rt. Rev. Scott Barker, bishop of the Diocese of Nebraska at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral in Omaha. Miller was ordained to the diaconate in July at St. John’s Episcopal Church in Decatur.

- **The Rev. Deacon Clare Hea Suk Seales**, ordained to the priesthood Jan. 31, by Bishop Sloan at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Auburn, where she is working with the leadership of the parish to strengthen the missional witness of the church among its neighbors in the Korean community. Seales was ordained to the diaconate at Holy Trinity in May.

Episcopal Relief & Development: A Refuge

“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.”

(Psalm 46:1)

In this period of seemingly constant disasters in our own country and global crises with refugees from the Middle East and Central America seeking refuge, let us remember that Episcopal Relief & Development is ever-present, bringing the love of Jesus, while serving the immediate needs of those in trouble and guiding long-term recovery and self-sustainability of communities in the United States and around the world.

This Sunday in Lent, Feb. 28, as Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday, however each parish may choose its own convenient time to honor Episcopal Relief & Development. Let us offer prayers and almsgiving to people around the world struggling with poverty, hunger, and disease, for those who seek refuge from the tragedies of their circumstances. Bulletin inserts are available for your use.

Written by a diverse community of Episcopal Church and Anglican Communion leaders and published by Forward Movement, the 2016 Lenten Meditations booklet from Episcopal Relief & Development centers on the spiritual practices of our contributors and how the meditations of their hearts have transformed the way they encounter Jesus’ presence in all persons. Our prayer is that these Lenten meditations will deepen your faith in the risen Christ and strengthen your connection to our community that walks together with others around the world.

Please order your Lenten materials early so that you will receive them by Ash Wednesday, Feb. 10. Meditation booklets will be available at Diocesan Convention. To place orders, contact the Episcopal Media Center (EMC) at 1.866.937.2772, or http://episcopalmarketplace.org, or sales@episcopalmedia.org.

Editor’s Note: For more information or a presentation on the work of Episcopal Relief & Development, contact the Rev. Deacon Judy Quick, Diocesan Coordinator, (jgquick@bellsouth.net; 205-669-6862) or Marilyn Lands at mari-lynlands@gmail.com. You may also want to visit the website: www.episcopalrelief.org.
Barbara Crafton to lead April spiritual retreat at Camp McDowell

by Monica Carlson

The Rev. Barbara Cawthorne Crafton is scheduled to lead a spiritual retreat at Camp McDowell on April 15-17.

An Episcopal priest and author, Crafton heads The Geranium Farm, an institute for the promotion of spiritual growth found online at http://www.geraniumfarm.org/home.cfm.

Crafton has served a number of churches, including historic Trinity Church, Wall Street, St. John’s-in-the-Village in Greenwich Village, and St. Clement’s in Manhattan’s theatre district. She was a maritime chaplain on the New York waterfront, served as a chaplain at Ground Zero after the attack on the World Trade Center, and also served at St. James, the American church in Florence, Italy. A spiritual director, Crafton leads retreats and teaches throughout the United States and abroad.

An award-winning author, Crafton’s many books include collections of essays (The Sewing Room, Yes! We’ll Gather at the River, Some Things You Just Have to Live With), daily meditations (Let Us Bless the Lord, Vols 1-4, Meditations on the Psalms, Finding Time for Serenity), and poetry (Blessed Paradoxes), as well as books about the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan in the aftermath of the World Trade Center bombing (Mass in Time of War), about how people of faith experience depression (Jesus Wept: When Faith and Depression Meet) and about aging (The Courage to Grow Old).

The Diocese of Alabama’s Commission on Spirituality is sponsoring the retreat. Look for details in the coming weeks at your church and online.

Holy Apostles Hoover seeks part-time office manager

Holy Apostles Episcopal Church is seeking a part-time office manager.

The staff position reports directly to the Rector and coordinates efforts with the vestry, parish treasurer, bookkeeper and ministry leaders. The position is responsible for the management of all office functions. The office manager is a resource position interacting with both members and non-members.

This is a salaried position requiring between 20-25 hours per week for 50 weeks a year with two weeks paid vacation. Anticipated office hours are Monday through Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Applicants are asked to email resume and references to: bhutson@holyapostleshoover.org.
WHAT’S NEW/NOTEWORTHY AT THE EPISCOPAL BOOK STORE

By Cindy Funderburk, Manager

Busy Bible – Jesus Our Savior by Judy Starks (softbook)
11 stories about Jesus! Children will love arranging a puzzle scene, scroll writing, buttoning, discovering items in a pocket, and adjusting movable items to vary the scene while manipulating the colorful pieces in this soft handcrafted book containing 11 Bible stories about Jesus. Each page features a scene from a different Bible story complete with a variety of manipulatives. Includes a story sheet and vinyl carrying case. Ages 3+. (We also have the original Busy Bible.)

People of the Passion – A Lenten Weekly Study by Cathy Randall (CSS Publishing Company, paperback)
It is a simple theological truth: We become more like Jesus when we draw close to him. People of the Passion unpacks this tenet in a powerful examination of some of the main characters of Jesus’ final days: Mary, Mother of Jesus; Mary Magdalene; Pilate; Nicodemus; Peter; and Judas. Throughout each chapter, Randall explores our perceptions and our knowledge of these individuals, pointing out how each played significant roles in exposing our perceptions and our knowledge of these individuals, and Judas. Throughout each chapter, Randall explores our perceptions and our knowledge of these individuals, pointing out how each played significant roles in our way forward. Instead, he reminds us why being a Christian is the most wonderful thing in the whole world.”

Bread and Wine – Readings for Lent and Easter by Plough Publishing House (paperback)

Not by Bread Alone: Daily Reflections for Lent 2016 by Mary DeTurris Poust (Liturgical Press, paperback)

Provoking Thoughts – A Collection of Scriptures, Meditations and Prayers by Russell J. Levenson, Jr. (Insight Press, paperback)

The ache of the human heart has always been to be made whole and the thrust of the Christian hope is that it can only come to that wholeness by being connected in a personal relationship with God, through Christ. This book is intentionally written as perhaps one more avenue towards deepening, strengthening and for some, maybe birthing such a relationship. Lord Carey says, “he does not duck the tough questions … neither does he offer simplistic solutions to the moral demands that come our way day after day. Instead, he reminds us why being a Christian is the most wonderful thing in the whole world.”

BISHOPS’ VISITATION SCHEDULE

Tuesday, February 9
6:00 p.m. Bishop Marray St. Michael & All Angels, Milbrooke

Wednesday, February 10
5:30 p.m. Bishop Sloan St. Wilfrid’s, Marion

Sunday, February 14
10:00 a.m. Bishop Marray St. Michael’s, Fayette
10:30 a.m. Bishop Sloan St. Matthias, Tuscaloosa

Wednesday, February 17
6:00 p.m. Bishop Sloan Canterbury Chapel, Tuscaloosa

Sunday, February 21
10:30 a.m. Bishop Marray St. Thomas, Huntsville
11:00 a.m. Bishop Sloan St. Stephen’s, Smith Station

Sunday, February 28
10:00 a.m. Bishop Marray Christ Church, Albertville
10:00 a.m. Bishop Sloan St. Matthew’s, Seale
6:00 p.m. Bishop Sloan Resurrection, Rainbow City

Sunday, March 6
10:00 a.m. Bishop Sloan St. John’s Deaf Church, Birmingham

Sunday, March 20
8:30 a.m. Bishop Marray St. Luke’s, Scottsboro
10:00 a.m. Bishop Sloan Ascension, Birmingham

Saturday, March 26
7:00 p.m. Bishop Sloan St. Andrew’s, Birmingham
8:30 p.m. Bishop Marray Grace, Woodlawn

Sunday, March 27
10:00 a.m. Bishop Sloan St. Paul’s, Selma
10:30 a.m. Bishop Marray St. Peter’s, Talladega

CLERGY NEWS

The Rev. Dr. Michael Rich has accepted a call to serve as rector of St. Andrews Episcopal Church in Birmingham. He has been serving as priest in charge in discernment at St. Andrew’s for the past 24 months.
St. Mary’s Jasper Christmas meal ministry feeds 150 families

St. Mary’s Episcopal Church in Jasper extended its weekly food ministry by providing some 150 special meal packages to families in need this Christmas.

During 2015, the parish provided weekly groceries to more than 2,000 people through its food bank ministry. The majority of the recipients were from Walker and Winston counties.

“We are thrilled to have been able to take our ministry a step further this Christmas by ensuring more people had a complete Christmas meal to help celebrate this special day with their families,” said Ilona Jordan, who helps run St. Mary’s food bank ministry.

“We are especially grateful to the businesses and members in the community that helped make this possible,” said Katie Rhodes, who spearheaded the Christmas effort.

“It says something about a community when so many are willing to step up to help our own.”

Each meal consisted of green beans, cream of mushroom soup, gravy, stuffing mix, cranberry sauce, sweet potatoes, corn bread, cake, pears, macaroni & cheese, and a nine pound ham. Sons Groceries provided the hams to St. Mary’s at a discount. TJ Max manager, Stephanie Franks, donated large, decorative, reusable bags that were used to package up the meal items.

Every year, St. Mary’s hosts a community Valentine’s Coffee & Luncheon to help raise funds for the food bank ministry. The 2016 Valentine’s Luncheon is scheduled for Feb 12. The parish welcomes donations from individuals and businesses throughout the year.

In 2015, St. Mary’s food bank ministry raised $8,500, of which $3,500 was used for the Christmas meals.