Bishop Marray to become 11th Bishop of the Diocese of Easton

The Rt. Rev. Santosh K. Marray, was elected 11th Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Easton, June 11. He currently serves as the Diocese of Alabama’s Assistant Bishop.

Marray was elected on the third ballot from among four nominees. He received 69 of 88 votes cast in the lay order and 31 of 51 votes cast in the clergy order. The election took place at Trinity Cathedral in Easton, MD.

“Lynn and I give thanks to Almighty God and the lay and clergy of the Diocese of Easton for this remarkable call to serve and to dream God’s dream with the faithful people in the Easton shores of Maryland,” said Marray following his election. “We thank God for ministry in Alabama and the love and care our brothers and sisters have shown us during our ministry here.”

“Congratulations to Santosh and Lynn on his election to become the next bishop of the Diocese of Easton,” said the Rt. Rev. Kee Sloan, Alabama’s Diocesan Bishop, following the election. “We will miss them. We are thankful for their life and ministry among us. We also congratulate the Diocese of Easton who have elected a fine servant of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Pending consent from a majority of the Episcopal Church’s diocesan bishops and a majority of dioceses (via their Standing Committees), the installation of the bishop-elect is scheduled to take place on Saturday, October 15, 2016 at the Todd Performing Arts Center, Chesapeake College, Wye Mills, Maryland, with the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, the Most Rev. Michael Bruce Curry, presiding.

The current bishop, the Rt. Rev. Henry Nutt Parsley, Jr. became the Provisional Bishop of the Diocese of Easton in 2012. Parsley previously served as Bishop of Alabama until his retirement from that position at the end of 2012.

Marray became the Diocese of Alabama’s Assistant Bishop in 2012. In that role he shares collaborative and collegial ministry with the bishop, and diocesan staff and leadership. He was Bishop Assisting of the Diocese of East Carolina 2009-2012. From 2005-2008 he was the Bishop of Seychelles, Province of the Indian Ocean, and led the diocese through re-imagination, change, and clergy and laity empowerment. When the diocese returned to sustainability, he returned to his family in the US.

Prior to being elected bishop, he served a small parish in Florida, and multi-church parishes in his native country Guyana and the Bahamas, leading the revitalization of struggling congregations of various sizes. He has also planted new churches and carried out numerous successful capital campaigns. He taught for 10 years in the Bahamas Public School System.

Marray was the Province of the Indian Ocean’s representative on the Anglican Communion Covenant Design Group and was later appointed by Archbishop Rowan Williams as Commissary to the Anglican Communion.

Marray is a convert from Hinduism, the faith of his parents. His passion for Jesus and his Church is undergirded by his conviction that a loving Jesus who came looking for him in a small remote village in South America populated by majority Hindus and Muslims in Guyana deserves his love and devotion.

He was ordained to the diaconate and priesthood in 1981, and bishop in 2005. He holds a degrees from Codrington Theological College, Barbados; the University of the West Indies, Barbados; General Theological Seminary, New York; the University of Wales, UK, and Colgate Rochester/Bexley Hall Divinity School.

Marray is married to Nalini ‘Lynn’ since 1977. They have two grown children, Ingram and Amanda, a daughter-in-law, Tenille, and a granddaughter.

The other nominees were the Rev. Kathryn A. Andonian, Rector of the Church of the Holy Spirit in Harleyville, PA; the Very Rev. Brian Grantz, Dean and Rector of the Cathedral of Saint James in South Bend, IN; and the Rev. John A. Memell, Rector of St. Luke’s Episcopal Church Montclair, NJ.

According to its website, the Diocese of Easton is the entire Eastern Shore of Maryland, which includes territory in more than one-third of Maryland and shares the Delmarva Peninsula with the state of Delaware and a small part of Virginia. It is comprised of nine counties, from the Chesapeake Bay to Delaware; from Pennsylvania to Virginia.”
Hello, friends

I know you join me in congratulating the Rt. Rev. Santosh Marray, our Assistant Bishop and friend, on his election to become the 11th Bishop of the Diocese of Easton in Maryland. He and Lynn have been a wonderful part of our Diocesan family since 2012, and I am excited for them in this new opportunity. He will continue to work for us through the end of August, take September for vacation and moving, and start a new chapter up there on October 1st. We will have a grand send-off for the Marrays at St. Mary’s-on-the-Highlands here in Birmingham on August 28th from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m., ending with a service of commissioning at 5:00. The Diocese of Easton will celebrate their new bishop with a service of Investiture on October 15th.

I have been thinking and praying and listening to see what should happen next in the Diocese of Alabama, and I believe our best next step will be to hire another Assistant Bishop and carry on as we have these last four years. There will be more said about this when it comes more clearly into focus, but I believe this is the right direction for us to take. We have a lot of work to do, and I am going to need some help, as I continue to need your support.

I am writing this a few days after the shooting in Dallas, in which five law enforcement officers were killed, and others in and out of uniform were wounded. This shooting came after the deaths of two African American men at the hands of police officers in Louisiana and Minnesota. That alone would have been tragic enough, but our situation is more complicated than that: by the hard reality that we live in a society deeply divided by racism, by challenges to our overwhelmed mental health system, by our unresolved debate about guns, by people giving extreme and provocative statements to the media to intentionally agitate others, and by a political system that seems broken and powerless to address any of this. For many of us, this has become part of the background music of our lives. What does a faithful Christian have to say about all of this?

First, and it’s important that you trust me in this: I’m trying not to talk about politics, in this column, or in general – it so quickly escalates into anger and divides us into teams that are just not helpful. I hope you all vote on Election Day, and I hope you take your faith with you when you do, but I’m not talking Democrats and Republicans. As a country, we need to find a way to talk about race and racism so that we can see through someone else’s eyes what it means to be Black, White, Latino, Asian or other. We need to talk about how we can fairly and intelligently address complicated issues around guns and our constitutional rights. We need to understand what sorts of support the mental health system needs to serve the needs of people with mental issues, and the needs of our veterans who come back wounded physically, mentally or emotionally. We also need to talk about terrorism, immigration policies, international relationships and trading agreements, and the failure of civility. And we will inevitably couch and obscure all of this into red states and blue states, cheering for our team and booing the other guys …

I know this sounds an awful lot like something a preacher would be expected to say, but – I think our only hope is in love, understanding and forgiveness. Yeah, I know: it’s all that Jesus stuff.

Sometimes I wonder what the world we live in thinks about Jesus, if they ever think about him at all. They should love our enemies, and prayed to forgive those who nailed him to the cross. If you’re slapped in the face, Jesus tells you to turn the other cheek; if someone takes your coat, Jesus tells you to offer your shirt as well.

We can hear the world around us declaring such ideas to be simplistic, idealistic, naïve, absurd, dangerous – and I wonder if the world’s verdict is that the people who believe all that stuff must be a bunch of losers, too.

But here’s the thing, I believe that Jesus is the Light of the world, and that the Church as the Body of Christ is called to shine hope and love into dark and hate-filled places. I believe in the ideals that Jesus taught, and that they are as relevant and needed today as they have ever been. If that makes me a loser, then I am proud to be a loser.

At some point, if we’re ever going to be serious about following Jesus, we’re going to have to pay some attention to what he said we should do: love God with all our heart, soul, strength and mind, and love our neighbors as we love ourselves, even as we know we don’t get to choose our neighbors. We are saddened by the events of this past week, and we may be angry, or hurt. But Jesus does not give us permission to hate any of God’s children, ever. All people are God’s children – you and me and the people we like and agree with as well as those we don’t like and can’t stand – all of us are God’s children. The Christian message now is the same as it has been through the centuries: choose love and reject hate, choose light and reject darkness, love God, and love each other.

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I’m afraid they must think he was a loser. He fits the definition of a loser, after all: he squandered his life preaching the Kingdom of God, and died penniless with just eleven filled places. I believe in the ideals that Jesus taught, and that they are as relevant and needed today as they have ever been. If that makes me a loser, then I am proud to be a loser.

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We’re never going to get anywhere being tougher, harder, more heavily defended, armed with accusations and grievances and assault weapons. We have to learn how to love, and listen, and forgive. You know, Jesus stuff.

Jesus Stuff

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The Christian message now is the same as it has been through the centuries: choose love and reject hate, choose light and reject darkness, love God, and love each other.
From Bishop Marray

T
he seventh century English monk Aidan is remembered for his selfless devotion to God and God’s mission. He chose to live a life of total commitment to the poor, inviting people of his day to embrace the faith and remember to live their lives through words and actions. Aidan’s inspiration, we can safely contend, resonates for all times and seasons. He cautioned us to find our place in God’s purpose, receptive and open to God’s direction and inspiration. Aidan proceeded to remind the church that when we assume the destiny for which we were created and stand as children of God we become “Christ-carriers”. Aidan’s passion for the gospel should continue to define our own enthusiasm for the call of God.

There is a tendency to think of ‘call’ as limited to a certain type of vocation, usually a calling to the ordained or paid ministry. The biblical view offers a much wider perspective. The primary reference of call in the New Testament is of being called to faith in Christ as a part of his body – the church out in the world.

And some teaching on God’s call involves hints of a mystical secret, where a select few have knowledge. In reality, however, is that Jesus and the early church leaders were less concerned with what someone did and much more concerned with their level of faithfulness to God in the way they did it. We need to keep that kingdom perspective to the fore.

God’s call has many aspects. We are called as people to faith, as friends to relationship, as co-workers to churches, as parents to families, as praying people to communities, as partners to marriages, as leaders to ministries and as servants to all. These things cut across our neat boundaries of ‘church’ and ‘real life’ and can make, in the unexamined life, for disastrous consequences.

Now that all said, it is of course a harsh reality that our sense of calling can be limited by the culture that we grew up in or live in now; like what is expected or acceptable of Middle Class Christians; or we can rely too much on emotions or feelings, expecting a Damascus Road calling – but we are called in many ways and we need to use our intellect and mind as well as our hearts. So we need to guard against getting hung up on feelings, or being trapped in a foggy vagueness or in limiting what God can call us to be and do.

I am very conscious that one of the dangers in speaking about God’s call is ‘call-projection’. As a leader it is all too easy to project our own call onto others’ lives, giving the unintentional impression that our personal response is the ‘correct’ one; this can lead to the ‘cloning’ of the leader and an inauthentic response. John 21:20-23 (Peter asking Jesus about John and his future) provides a very helpful reference point as Jesus deals with the issue of call-projection/comparison in the lives of the disciples. So, examining our lives and understanding something about the shape of God’s call on us is important.

At the heart of a Christian understanding of call is the recognition that we’re not called to the contemporary understanding of a ‘balanced’ life. Rather God calls us to a ‘surrendered’ life. For example, ‘work/life’ balance implies that somehow work isn’t life, and yet many of us spend the majority of our waking hours ‘at work’. And a ‘balanced life’ makes us think of a tightrope where we are desperately trying to walk the narrow line, or one thing being weighed in the scales against something else, or balancing spinning plates on top of poles. All these images create a sense of stress and tension between one thing and another.

Jesus doesn’t call us to a balanced life. Indeed there are occasions where his teaching seems to go against a contemporary understanding of a balanced life – ‘if anyone wants to become my follower, they must deny themselves, take up their cross and follow me’ (Mark 8: 34). On another occasion he tells a man he can’t go home and bury his father. This is because Jesus calls us to a surrendered life. It is through this surrender to him that we discover what is called ‘His abundant life’ (John 10:10), which is lived out in what we might call a blended life.

When we are committed to Christ we remain in charge. But if one day I decide I don’t want to be (or don’t feel like being) committed to following Christ then I can walk away. When we surrender our lives to Christ we hand over charge. We become a slave, willing to go wherever he calls, in some senses without rights. The reason we’re prepared to do this is because we know that God loves us (Romans 1:7) and understands better than we do what is best for our lives.

So living a blended life is a more holistic approach to working our God’s call on our lives than the idea of a balanced life. Through surrender to him as our Lord and King at the centre, everything else then finds its rightful place around him as the centre of our lives. Nothing is more ‘spiritual’ than anything else – the common picture of God at the centre and then family, church, work as concentric circles around God. And at different times in our lives some of these things will take more of our time than others, and that’s fine because what we are looking to do is blend these various elements in a way which honor God’s call on every aspect of our lives at all times.

“We are immensely grateful to Bishop Kee Sloan for trusting us and God in issuing the call, and thankful to the diocese for welcoming us with open arms and genuine love.”

Four years ago my wife Nalini (Lynn) and I answered a call to come alongside our diocesan family in service to the mission of God lived out in the diocese. We are immensely grateful to Bishop Kee Sloan for trusting us and God in issuing the call, and thankful to the diocese for welcoming us with open arms and genuine love. By coming to Alabama, we gained a family and became part of a church that truly lives out God’s call to serve, and the importance of formation at every level in the Christian’s faith walk. There are so many ideas I go away with and I strongly believe that many aspects of ministry I have encountered in the diocese I take with me. Hopefully, they will serve well as God teaches me to love and serve another part of the kingdom. We hope and pray we have lived God’s call on our lives with a sense of clarity that would have been inspiration and to which Jesus is glorified and the church edified. We love and respect all of you. Thanks for the love and kindness you so unselshely shared over the four years we lived and served among you in the diocese.

In Gratitude for the Call to Serve

“Jesus and the early church leaders were less concerned with what someone did and much more concerned with their level of faithfulness to God in the way they did it.”
Annual Jonathan Daniels Pilgrimage set for Aug. 13 in Hayneville

The annual pilgrimage honoring slain civil rights advocate Jonathan Myrick Daniels and others who were killed in Alabama during the 1960s movement, is scheduled for Saturday, Aug. 13, beginning at 11:00 a.m. in Hayneville.

Jonathan Daniels was an Episcopal seminarian who answered the call of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to help register African-American voters in Alabama. He was shot and killed on Aug. 20, 1965, while shielding then 16-year-old Ruby Sales from a shotgun blast as she attempted to enter a store to buy something to drink. Daniels was added to the Episcopal Church Calendar of Saints and Martyrs in 1994 to be remembered each Aug. 14.

The pilgrimage begins at the Courthouse Square in Hayneville. The procession will go to the old county jail where Daniels was among those detained for a week after being arrested in Ft. Deposit for picketing whites-only businesses. The procession will then move to the site of the old Cash Grocery Store where Daniels was killed. The pilgrimage will end at the Courthouse where a service of Holy Communion will take place in the courtroom where the man who shot Daniels was tried and acquitted by an all white jury of men. The Rt. Rev. Santosh Marray, Alabama’s assistant bishop will preach at the service.

Following the service lunch will be available for purchase from vendors on the first floor and outside the courthouse. Commemorative t-shirts will also be available for purchase.

A tent equipped with television monitor and fans will be set up in the park across the street in the event of an overflow crowd.

This year, St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Selma will host the Young Pilgrims Lock-in Aug. 12 (See accompanying article).

St. Paul’s Selma to host Jonathan Daniels Young Pilgrims Lock-in

St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Selma, will host this year’s Jonathan Daniels Young Pilgrims Lock-in on Friday, Aug. 12 for youth and their adult chaperones.

The lock-in will begin at 6:00 p.m. with dinner fun, fellowship, a program and worship.

Saturday morning the group will walk across the Edmund Pettus Bridge, site of the 1965 “Bloody Sunday” attack by police on civil rights demonstrators attempting to march to the state capital of Montgomery. National television coverage of this event drew Jonathan Daniels to Alabama.

Following the bridge crossing, the group will travel to Hayneville – an approximately 30-minute drive from Selma. There the group will attend a breakfast hosted by Lowndes County School Superintendent Daniel Boyd, and take part in the Jonathan Daniels Pilgrimage.

Each youth group chaperone is responsible for transportation for their youth and a caravan will be formed so participants in the lock-in can travel together.

While there is no charge for this event, a donation of $10 per person is being accepted to help off set the cost of food.

For additional information and to register please visit: http://bit.ly/29Vn1zR.

Please contact Claire Mosley, event coordinator, at cla4387@gmail.com with questions.
“Faith, Trust, & Pixie Dust” was everywhere during the 18th Annual Special Session at Bethany Village

by the Rev. Michael Rich

On July 21, Bethany Village was filled to the brim for Special Session, our church’s annual camp gathering for campers with special needs. The theme of the 18th annual session was Peter Pan: “Faith, Trust & Pixie Dust,” which meant lots of fairy wings and plenty of pirates during activities and the big dance.

This summer’s session was the second in Bethany Village. Campers enjoyed Bethany with its level terrain for wheelchairs and walkers, easy access to Sloan Lake for boat rides, and air-conditioned cabins for good nights’ sleep.

One of the hallmarks of this camp is the ability of campers to choose activities. Bishop Kee Sloan, founding director of Special Session, emphasizes to counselors that many campers spend all year being told where to go and what to do. Campers could choose among an impressive array of options, including art, crafting, swimming, hiking, and much more.

One popular new activity this year was waking up early to feed the goats and chickens at the Camp McDowell Farm School before breakfast. Campers learned how to milk a goat, how to harvest vegetables and flowers, and how to feed pigs.

In longstanding tradition, campers showed off their talents during a two-night talent show. One innovative act included using campers’ speech-generating devices to tell knock-knock jokes. Other presentations included bed-making, basketball dribbling, poetry reading and, of course, singing and dancing.

There were 102 campers at this year’s session, with 54 counselors and 56 support staff members. All of the counselors and staff members are volunteers.

New executive director reflects on Special Session 2016

This year’s Special Session was the first to include Lindsey Mullen as Special Session Executive Director. She joined the diocesan staff at Carpenter House in November with year-round responsibilities that include fund-raising, strategic planning, and spreading the word about the session to parishes throughout the diocese.

The Alabama Episcopalian asked Mullen, who also has experience as a Special Session counselor, what it was like to put on her camp nametag as Executive Director for the first time.

So, how did it go? How would you characterize your first session as Special Session Executive Director?

It was beautiful and exhausting and energizing and chaotic and drenched in love. This was our second session in Bethany Village, and I think it was the first time that we really settled into the place and it began to feel like home.

Any surprises for you?

It’s an incredible gift to be trusted to lead something that means so much to so many people, and I was nervous at the start of the session that people would be resistant to change. We all know how hard it can be to let something we care about grow and shift. I thought people would be wary and resistant, insistent on clinging to things as they “have always been.” This was not my experience at the session. The staff who have been running this thing for almost 20 years were so flexible and supportive and up for anything.

This was a lesson for me that we as a Christian community can sing a new song together. As much as we joke about our unwillingness to change, the truth is that we can and will always be able to grow together. I have more faith in that now.

Tell me about the relationship with and camper experience of the Farm School.

I think this was one of the most exciting parts of this session. Two staff members from the McDowell Farm School, Lydia Atkins and Martin Jahn, volunteered to be on Special Session staff. Lydia and Martin led farm activities in the morning before breakfast and during morning activities. Campers and staff helped with animal chores, picked flowers for our tables, picked and prepared a salad for our lunch. For me, seeing our campers working in the kitchen preparing fresh food together was an amazing experience of the vision of Bethany Village coming to fruition. We are so grateful to Lydia and Martin who volunteered their time to make this possible.

Any spiritual lessons you’ve drawn from this experience?

There is a passage from Matthew that we read during Compline that is one of my favorites, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light” (Matt 11:28-30).

The thing about being yoked like oxen is that you are not only tethered to Christ, you are also bound to each other. Special Session is an experience of being yoked together with a huge (and growing) community, all pulling toward vision of a loving, vibrant community where all God’s children are celebrated.

I also was reminded again and again that Jesus’ encouragement not to be anxious is so important when we are in leadership positions. Rushing around in a panic and worrying over everything is a temptation; but these are barriers to relationship disguised as aids to productivity. What the campers of Special Session have taught me (and continue to teach me) is that slowing down and paying attention to each other, and to our selves, and to where God is acting right now—this is what makes our lives magical.

What’s coming up?

We have a lot coming up for Special Session! We are planning a talent show fund-raiser on September 24 at Good People Brewery called “Birmingham’s Got Potential.” Details at: http://bit.ly/2aGhrAD

From November 10-13 we will host Bethany in the Fall, a fall retreat for people with physical disabilities, staffed by adult volunteers.

We will have our annual Special Session Christmas Party on December 17 at Camp McDowell, and next summer we are planning to have TWO Special Sessions.
Thank you!

Special Session is staffed and supported by volunteers. So many organizations and individuals have done so much to make this year’s camp successful, and we are so grateful for all of the wonderful support we have received.

This year we had 54 counselors and 56 supporting staffers from 26 Episcopal churches as well as Catholic, Baptist, Methodist and non-denominational Christian churches.

For the first time this year, each camper received a special welcome packet. The packets were provided by:
- Youth of Church of the Resurrection, Rainbow City
- Christ Church, Tuscaloosa
- St. Michael and All Angels, Anniston
- Holy Apostles, Hoover
- ECW Birmingham Convocation, Birmingham
- St. James, Fairhope
- Youth Group of Church of the Nativity, Huntsville
- St. Michael and All Angels, Milbrook
- Church of the Epiphany, Guntersville
- Grace Church, Sheffield
- ECW Board of Directors, Birmingham

Also for the first time this year the Special Session Happy Hour, a time for refreshments and socializing, was hosted by a different organization each day. Happy Hours were hosted by:
- St. Michael and All Angels, Anniston
- Grace Church, Sheffield
- St. Stephen’s, Birmingham
- Youth of Church of the Resurrection, Rainbow City
- St. Thomas, Huntsville
- St. Mary on the Highlands, Birmingham
- Horizons School Birmingham

St. Luke’s Scottsboro provided lunch for the staff on closing day.

We are also grateful the many individuals and parishes who contributed to our camper scholarship fund. Thank you to all who helped make this a very special Special Session.

Lindsey Mullen
Executive Director, Special Session
Special Session — a summer camp for adults and young people with special needs — wrapped up its 18th year at Camp McDowell in June. It was a glorious week, filled with love and laughter.

It all began in 1998 when the Rt. Rev. Kee Sloan, then rector of St. Thomas, Huntsville, invited some folks to join him on a grand adventure. No one knew what to expect, but stepped out in faith on an incredible journey. Before moving to Bethany two years ago, Special Session spent the first part of its history “down the hill” in lower camp. The move to Bethany started a new chapter for this community, and provided an opportunity for some big changes. One of these changes was the retirement of the Special Session alter cloth used for 17 years in lower camp. It was quilted and now hangs in Doug Carpenter Hall at Bethany Village.

For many, Special Session is like a family reunion. We gather year after year to renew friendships and create new stories as we live together as family for a week in “God’s Backyard”. And the alter cloth became our family tree. Truth be told, the alter cloth is just an inexpensive sheet that has been written on with Sharpie markers. Each year, beginning with the first Special Session, campers and staff traced their hand and signed their name on the cheap, white sheet.

Much like Special Session itself, at a distance, the alter cloth looks a bit crazy. It isn’t until you look at it closely, that you see the hundreds of names of the folks who have been a part of this ministry through the years.

So the next time you visit Bethany at Camp McDowell, take a few minutes to go to “the Doug”, and check it out! You are bound to find the name of someone you know who has signed the old sheet-turned sacred symbol of the way the world should be.
Around Our Diocese

July/August 2016
Actor Michael O’Keefe & singer/songwriter Travis Meadows to keynote Recovery Ministries event

The Department of Recovery Ministries will host a day-long event Saturday, Oct. 15 that addresses topics surrounding addiction and recovery. The event is open to everyone and will take place at St. Stephen Episcopal Church in Birmingham beginning at 10:00 a.m. and concluding with a recovery-themed Eucharist later that afternoon.

“The Department’s goal is to invite those affected by the disease as well as those that want to know more,” said Kathy Graham, coordinator of Lifelong Christian Formation for the diocese. “This day is for youth, young adults, parents, adults of all ages and stages, professionals, ministers, church leaders, Episcopalians and non-Episcopalians.”

Two keynoters, Michael O’Keefe and Travis Meadows, will speak to the impact of addiction in their lives from two very different perspectives. O’Keefe is an actor best known for his role as Ben Meecham in The Great Santini and Danny Noonan in Caddyshack. His work in The Great Santini earned him an Academy Award nomination. O’Keefe continues to act in movies and on television. In addition, he is an accomplished songwriter and author who has released a book of poetry titled Swimming from under my Father which speaks to his life growing up as the child of an alcoholic parent. Meadows is a singer/songwriter from Nashville, Tennessee who describes himself as ‘an orphan who turned into a preacher, a preacher who turned into a songwriter, a songwriter that turned into a drunk and a drunk that is learning to be a human being’. Meadows is becoming recognized as one of the songwriters in Nashville and his songs have recently been recorded by Ronnie Dunn, Dierks Bentley, Levi Lowery, Eric Church, Blackberry Smoke, Adam Brand, Peter Fox of Go West and his most recent hit “What We Ain’t Got” by Jake Owen. Meadows also co-authored the song “Things I Lean on” for Wynona Judd’s recent album. Travis tells his story not only with words but also with his music.

In addition to the keynoters there will be morning and afternoon workshops that will speak to a variety of issues of interest to the person in recovery, those that are impacted by the disease and those that simply want to learn more about addiction and the journey toward recovery. There will be open 12-step meetings (AA and Al-Anon) during lunch. The closing recovery Eucharist will be a fitting end to a daylong discussion about the nature of addiction and the hope that is available to all in recovery.

The cost for the event will be $20, which will include a box lunch and refreshments throughout the day. Financial assistance is available in hopes that no one will be prevented from attending. You may register by using the following link: https://secure-q.net/Event/Q/Event/Info/OrgID=doa&EventID=2835.

“The work we are called to do with people in the grip of addiction is vital, difficult and holy work, and I am proud that the Diocese of Alabama has long been involved through the Department of Recovery Ministries,” said the Rt. Rev. Kee Sloan, diocesan bishop. “I believe this event has the potential to strengthen and support some who need it, and to challenge others to come to deeper awareness of the destruction of addiction and how to address it.”

“Sweet Jesus Bread” a St. Bart’s Tradition

by Sandy Murray

On his first annual visitation to St. Bartholomew’s in Florence, in November 2014, the Rt. Rev. Santos Marray, Diocese of Alabama’s assistant bishop, exclaimed after communion: “St. Bart’s has some of the sweetest Jesus bread in the diocese!” St. Bart’s communion bread comes with a story.

St. Bart’s bread tradition goes to the late 1970s and parishioner Dr. Harry Brown. Harry enjoyed cooking. He grilled chicken with a special sauce, made a Romaine salad with garlic dressing, and wife Patty was the sous chef. I remember eating my first bowl of black beans and rice at Harry and Patty’s on a cold November election night in 1980, but it isn’t Harry’s black bean soup that most remember. It’s his sour dough bread starter.

In its early years, St. Bartholomew’s used traditional communion wafer, but at some point wafer gave way to home-baked bread, thanks to Harry and others. Ginger Eich remembers that Louise Haney used Harry’s starter in a parish bread-making class in the 1970s. About the same time Pat Casteel got some of Harry’s sour dough starter. She says Harry kept the starter on his kitchen counter, and his daughter-in-law Debby Brown says that when it overflowed, he gave it away. In 1981 Donna Mefford got some starter from Harry, and she too began making bread. Others got Harry’s starter and shared it through the years. Beth Wallace said that she once forgot to feed her starter “every seven to ten days” as Harry instructed, but after she later fed it, it resurrected. For more than thirty years Harry’s starter has been a special ingredient in St. Bartholomew’s sweet Jesus bread.

During the years, many St. Bartholomew’s parishioners, but not all, have made communion bread using Harry’s starter. Louise Haney, Mary Head, Beth Wallace, Donna Mefford, Elizabeth Messer, Pat Casteel, and Mary Fran White. Mary Head also made unleavened bread for Lent (none of Harry’s starter here), and in the late 1990s Donna and Mary Fran made loaves (using Harry’s starter) to give parish visitors.

Harry and Pattye traveled the world after retirement, going to such places as Jordan, Guatemala, Honduras, and Indian reservations in New Mexico and Arizona where Harry did medical work. Like Harry, his sour dough starter has also traveled.

When the Rt. Rev. Mark Andrus was consecrated as bishop, the diocese asked St. Bart’s to furnish the bread. Louise Haney baked it and sent a loaf down the day before. But to be sure that they had a fresh loaf, she sent another one down with the Rev. Foster Eich the day of the ordination. She instructed that which ever loaf they didn’t use was for the new bishop to take home.

Last year Thompson Mefford used some St. Bart’s starter (as some call it) in a bread-making workshop for Clemson University honors students.

How has that starter traveled lately? Well, Harry’s starter has now begun traveling around the Diocese of Alabama. In June of 2015, the Rev. Mary Bea Sullivan, rector of Holy Spirit, Alabaster, tasted St. Bart’s bread at the funeral of John Roth, father of Holy Spirit parishioner Matt Roth, and asked for the recipe. At Easter of 2016, thanks to Pat Casteel, Matt returned to Holy Spirit with some St. Bart’s starter.

Anyone who would like some starter for their own parish bread-making should feel free to contact St. Bartholomew’s at stbarts.florence@att.net or 256-764-2000 for the starter and recipe.

Thanks to Pat Casteel, Beth Wallace, Donna Mefford, Foster and Ginger Eich, and Anna Brawley, who all contributed information for this article.
Mission matters

by The Rev. Deacon Judy Quick

“I do thank God for you, both for GEMN and those that serve as missionaries and missioners on behalf of the Episcopal Church in the context of our global community. The truth is that what you do and what we do, matters, and how we do it matters. It matters significantly, temporally and eternally. It matters.”

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry

What energy! What inspiration! The GEMN 2016 Global Mission Conference in Ponce, Puerto Rico offered meaningful workshops, inspiring keynote speakers, and fun events to spend time with missioners and mission leaders from around the world.

Christine Mercer (St. Stephen’s Birmingham) said that as a first time attendee, she wasn’t sure what to expect from a conference about missions. Was she ever surprised! Her comments reveal her excitement: “Inspiring, engaging, appealing breakout sessions, enjoyable, entertaining, informative, enlightening, illuminating, filled with the Holy Spirit. These are not words and phrases normally associated with a conference. The year’s GEMN Conference was all that and more.”

One participant tweeted: “Being inspired by some of our missionaries serving around the globe. This crew is truly on the frontline of the #JesusMovement.”

Yes, global mission is vital for living into Bishop Curry’s call for us Episcopalians to be revived by the transformative love of Jesus, to love and to serve and to witness the joy of our faith throughout the world.

Bishop Curry affirmed: “This Jesus is a game changer who can show us the way away from the nightmare and into something close to God’s dream for all of us.”

We heard from so many different missions and ministries.

Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM) highlighted the longtime response of the Episcopal Church to serve refugees entering the United States. The current Global Refugee Crisis is facing the largest number of refugees since the Second World War, over 60 million. Currently, the top 62 percent of refugees come from Syria, Iraq, Somalia, Sudan, and South Sudan.

There are a number of countries worldwide that resettle refugees. Donations to Episcopal Relief & Development help support the refugee response outside the United States.

The resettlement process in the United States is thorough multiple agencies involved in the vetting process, which can take at minimum two years and is often much longer.

EMM has affiliates in Atlanta (New American Pathways) and in Chattanooga/Knoxville (Bridge Refugee Ministries), which resettle refugees offering support services and orientation into their new home. Since Alabama does not yet have an EMM resettlement organization, parishes in the Diocese of Alabama are choosing to respond through partnering with parishes in Tennessee and Georgia.

EMM encourages all individuals to become involved through advocacy and the Episcopal Public Policy Network. EMM encourages participation in the training which helps discern individual and parish gifts to offer the most meaningful response to welcoming refugees: www.calledto-transformation.org. A coalition of interfaith and ecumenical organizations, Refugees Welcome, seek to address the complex issues of the refugee reality: http://www.refugeesarewelcome.org/

A panel of bishops and mission leaders from Puerto Rico, Colombia, El Salvador, the Dominican Republic, Cuba, and the Caribbean Council of Churches discussed the challenges of refugees, migration, and internally displaced persons in their countries and how the Church is responding to these unique situations in each of their dioceses and regions.

The workshops offered insights on mission as part of the Jesus Movement, mission as reconciliation, mission as it relates to development (specifically in Cuba), and the potential of public and private partnerships with the faith community. Practical workshops gave tips on planning mission trips, finding mission, discerning mission, and assessing gifts as one engages in mission.

Conversations with long-term missioners including Young Adult Service Corps Missionaries (YASC) inspired many to pursue or deepen their engagement in global mission.

Conversation is the key. The GEMN Conferences offer time to visit and learn and engage in deep conversation with others who share your passion for global mission.

Small group of Bible study sessions and reflection on mission were especially valuable to get to know others more intimately and to help discern our own call to mission.

In fact, Christine Mercer is discerning surprising new directions in global mission after her experience at the conference.

Come join us next year. We will be in God’s backyard at Camp McDowell, May 24-26, 2017.

Learn more about GEMN and its resources at www.gemn.org. Discover the joy of God’s mission!

For more information on the Global Mission Roundtable, contact the Rev. Deacon Judy Quick, (jquick@diocela.net) or consult www.dioala.org/globalmission. Christine Mercer: cm Mercer@gmail.com

The Abbey co-hosts interfaith service of remembrance

by The Rev. Deacon Kelley Hudlow

The Abbey, in partnership with Beloved Community Church, hosted an interfaith service of remembrance June 15 for the victims of the June 12 Orlando Shooting. Beloved Community Church is located next door to The Abbey. The event was supported by twelve congregations, representing 8 faith groups. While twelve leaders from Christian, Jewish, and Muslim faith communities from across Birmingham led prayers and singing in a communal space at Beloved Community, people were invited to move through several spaces, including a silent meditative prayer space lead by the Shambhala Meditation Center.

The Abbey was transformed into a place of prayer and art. People were invited to light candles at the altar. Photos of the victims were displayed, and the names and ages were read. There was space for people to paint messages, make origami cranes, and to write letters to the families and survivors. There were also stations where people could speak with chaplains.

In total, 29 clergy persons from 23 congregations representing 11 Christian denominations and 3 faith groups attended the Vigil. The denominations and faith groups represented were Quakers, United Methodist Church, United Church of Christ, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, American Baptist, Episcopal, Lutheran, Presbyterian Church USA, Metropolitan Community Church, CME Church, Progressive Christian Alliance, Unitarian Universalists, Reform Judaism, and Ulta Temple Ministries. Several community organizations were also represented, including Birmingham AIDS Outreach, Magic City Acceptance Project, Human Right Campaign - Alabama, and the Safe Schools Coalition. Throughout the event, more than 200 people moved throughout the spaces. Those in attendance were diverse in age, race, faith, sexual orientation, gender identity, and nationality.

Reflecting on the evening, the Rev. Katie Nakamura Rengers, Vicar of The Abbey, stated, “To me, the most important statement made on Wednesday is that Birmingham’s faith community - despite all stereotypes to the contrary - can faithfully celebrate the lives of all God’s children, gay and straight.”

Additional photos and videos of the event can be found at www.facebook.com/theabbeybham.
Parish summer feeding program provides unexpected lesson in welcoming and being welcomed

by the Rev. Mary Bea Sullivan, rector of Holy Spirit, Alabaster

Last week, the church where I serve, The Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit in Alabaster, AL, in collaboration with the school system, became a feeding site for offering free lunches for children.

The (parish) community has been gearing up—preparing the parish hall, signing up volunteers. We even received a grant from our diocese to provide free books to the children—nourishing body and mind and hopefully, through relationship, soul.

On day one a grand total of ONE child showed up from outside of our community for lunch. Our disappointment was abated by the parish hall being filled with young families from Holy Spirit sharing meals, laughing, and playing on the playground.

That afternoon I drove around a neighboring mobile home park distributing flyers in English and Spanish inviting families to eat and read with us. I met smiling mothers, home park distributing flyers in English and Spanish inviting on the playground.

families from Holy Spirit sharing meals, laughing, and playing on the playground.

By Monday we were distributing 75 lunches per day and all indicators are that the numbers will grow. We have set up a station at the entrance to the community for families to receive food and books. We continue to receive more children at the church as well. Yesterday there was story time in our choir room!

As is often the case when co-creating with Christ, so much has been turned on its head. Instead of receiving guests in our home, for the most part, they have been receiving us in their homes.

So many questions are swirling. When we approach the door/the neighborhood, how do we change the energy? Do we enter with humility or perceived power? Do we recognize our deep needs as well as those of our neighbors? Do we experience mutuality or superiority?

Most profoundly, Where is the church?

In a Spirituality and Practice course that I am taking, we were guided through visio divina with “The Messenger,” a painting by Roerich Nicholas. I was struck how when I approached our neighbors homes, I felt like the man pictured in the painting. I was received by those who were gracious and humble; I needed the sanctuary they provided.

Finally, in her book, Making All Things New, Ilio Delia describes the church as either a closed system which “perceives everything outside the system as a potential threat…” (127) Or an open system which can change as the environment changes. Quoting systems theorist Eric Jantsch, “To live with an evolutionary spirit is to let go when the right time comes and to engage new structures of relationships.” (The Self-Organizing Universe, 40).

Collaboration with the school system, the diocese, and the FDA; inspiration from a guest volunteer, and willingness to leave the confines of our physical space all reflect a thriving, evolving, open system. I am grateful for this ongoing experience and this beloved community.

Editor’s Note: The above article is from a June 15 post by Sullivan to her blog “soul stirring stories.” The summer feeding program grew out of the parish’s prayerful discernment of where its outreach ministry was being led, the desire to make a difference in the local community, and a need expressed by the local school system.

At press time, the ministry was feeding 65-75 children a day. In addition to providing meals, parishioners sometimes bring and set up nets and provide a soccer ball for the children to play. A woman in the neighborhood has invited the parish to set up its distribution table in her front yard so volunteers no longer have to drive around delivering meals. And the parish has been invited to start an English as a Second Language course for the community.

Parish thanks organist/choir director for 40 years of service with trip to London

Sandrea Allen has served as organist and choir director at Grace Episcopal Church in Pike Road (formerly Mt. Mei Ng) for almost 40 years.

In appreciation for her faithful service, the congregation sent her to London in July. While in London, she was scheduled to attend an organ recital at Westminster Abbey performed by friend and colleague, Dr. James Mellichamp, president and professor of music at Piedmont College in Toccoa, GA. She was also scheduled to visit Salisbury Cathedral, attend a performance of Phantom of the Opera, and do some sightseeing, according to William Martin, Grace’s senior warden.

Allen departed for London July 7, and traveled with friend Fran Copeland.

Martin, along with fellow parishioners, wished them “Bon voyage,” and thanked Allen for her long and faithful service to the parish.

Great Episcopal Picnic

Members of the three Shoals Area Episcopal Churches — Grace in Sheffield, St. Bartholomew’s in Florence, and Trinity in Florence — gather at Trinity on Trinity Sunday for the annual “Great Episcopal Picnic.”
We sit in lots of circles at Camp McDowell. It is also common for campers and guests to make life-long friends here. This fall we are going to ask our camp family to organize numerous Circles of Friends and help us complete the Bethany Campaign.

As you know the construction of Bethany is virtually complete and thousands of campers and guests are using our new facilities. With the completion of Bethany, Camp McDowell has more capacity to house people than any other camp and conference center in the Episcopal Church. As soon as the last lodge is completed we will have 780 beds! We are an incredible success!

The Bethany Campaign has already received more gifts and pledges than any other Diocesan Capital Campaign. We have raised almost 8 million dollars! On top of that we have received a little more than 1.6 million dollars in New Market Tax Credit funds. We are a raging success and only need approximately 1.8 million more dollars to completely fund all of our needs.

It is likely that you may be asked to invite/participate in a circle of friends to make a gift to the Bethany Campaign. Your circle will be able to combine the gifts and pledges, and make a substantial gift in honor or in memory of someone, or in honor of a Camp McDowell common memory. Already friends are wanting to make a gift in honor of the summer they worked together on staff. Others are giving in memory of a friend in their circle who has died. Another is going to make his foyer group a Circle of Friends who will combine their gift. Who are your Camp McDowell Friends?

There are numerous naming opportunities for Circles of Friends beginning at $10,000. Four friends could each pledge $500 a year for five years and have an inscription on a large paver in front of Doug Carpenter Hall. Other opportunities include naming benches, rooms, roads, and buildings.

The kick off of the campaign will be in September, during football kick off season. We hope to complete our campaign by the end of December. Much more information is forth coming. Please consider starting a circle. To receive more information on how to create your circle, email my friend Danielle@campmcdowell.com.
All summer, groups have been planting and growing at the McDowell Farm School. Our Clear Creek Summer Camps Farmer & Workboy, Ben Donaldson, has provided a consistent farm activity for all kids to come and harvest potatoes, pick blueberries, continue composting at Eppes, and experience the farm. Five Bethany interns were “farmer” trained and often bring campers to connect the care of plants and animals to the care of themselves and each other.

Our farm staff, Andrew and Wade, led CREATE campers in building a new rabbit (rabbit habitat!) and creating blueberry cobbler from the berries campers harvested in the mornings. CREATE campers were discovering how to grow and nurture their own creativity and skills to grow their communities. Farmers, Martin and Lydia, provided the opportunity for Special Session campers to come and harvest and care for our animals. After a few days on the farm, they led campers in a project to give back to the earth which provides so much for us. Special Session even shut down the slip-in-slide, because too many people wanted to be at the farm! We are grateful to have a growing team that can incorporate so much into all experiences at Camp McDowell.

We have also been working hard to grow our school community. Five teacher workshops this summer taught educators how to incorporate experiential farm-based education into their curriculum and introduced them to power of learning outdoors at McDowell. New schools continue to be added to our program calendar!

And, not to mention, the tomatoes! The McDowell Farm School continues to produce food for our dining halls, putting fresh tomatoes from the garden into the salads, as well as peppers, herbs, potatoes, and oh so many blueberries for breakfast!

The McDowell Farm School is planting seeds; seeds of curiosity and exploration. We are growing food, confidence, friendship, and healthy communities. As our school programs continue to build and grow, so does the strength of our McDowell community and our relationships with all Camp McDowell programs.
Imagine a very insecure, unconfident, unsure-about-her-career-choice senior in college. Now place her miles from home, more like several states to the south, in a place she has never heard of or been to before. That was me **BEFORE** I experienced the Alabama Folk School at Camp McDowell. I had the privilege to stay at Camp McDowell and shadow various people in the Alabama Folk School. A mentorship from Eureka College allowed me to stay for six weeks and gain various experiences in the areas of Music and Art specifically.

I first started out helping with Youth Folk Camp. Just learning how things operated, I filled in where I could and acted as a utility person when something needed to be done. I would have to say, one of my favorite things that I enjoyed was escorting the campers to their classes. Whether it was tie-dying, visiting the farm, fiddle classes, or guitar and mandolin class, there was something for everyone. I had the pleasure of working with the guitar and mandolin class. Aspiring to one day teach guitar, I watched carefully how the two instructors (Laine Poole and Jimmy Gauld) taught both the advance and beginning students. Everybody shone brightly at the concerts and presentations at the end of camp. Many friends and relationships were made in that short period of time, so it was hard to see them go.

One of the goals for my mentorship was to interview business owners to gain insight on how to be successful in the art and music industry. My first stop was visiting the wonderful quilters of Gee’s Bend at the Gee’s Bend Collective. Mary Ann Pettway and China Pettway are some of the best teachers I have ever met. I was taught how to hand sew, like Mary Ann’s mother taught her as a child. They may not have the biggest business, but they do have some of the richest spirits in Alabama. Come to one of their classes and ask them to sing while you sew; you’ll understand then! Another person I interviewed was Herb Trotman, a master banjoist and owner of Fretted Instruments. He taught me that the power of word of mouth can be more powerful than having a digital presence. Dori DeCamillis and Scott Bennett, owners of the Red Dot Gallery, gave me insights on being both teachers and artists themselves.

The Alabama Folk School does more than just provide classes to take. It gives you a foundation to forget your insecurities. It gives you confidence in the skills you learn in class. It forms lasting friendships that will last well after the classes end. Whether you’re just beginning or have been doing your craft for years, the Alabama Folk School has classes to fit your skill set. So what are you waiting for? Sign up already! Your adventure waits.

Sincerely,
Whitley Gregoire-A now very confident senior college student

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**Upcoming Workshop Dates:**

- Farm Folk Weekend, September 2-5
- Acoustic Guitar & Crafts, September 9-11
- Old Time Music & Crafts, October 13-16
- Watercolor & Painting, October 23-28
- Traditional Arts & Crafts, November 3-6
THANK YOU!!!!
Summer Camp on Clear Creek Staff and the Vine Interns

Summer Camp on Clear Creek Staff

Vine Interns

Reflections of a Wonderful Summer!

FARM FOLK WEEKEND
SEPTEMBER 2-4, 2016
NAUVOO, ALABAMA

INTRO CLASSES OFFERED:
• soap making
• small animal processing
• garden-to-glass
• bread making
• jam sessions and much more!

www.campmcdowell.com

SEPTEMBER 2-4, 2016
NAUVOO, ALABAMA

INTRO CLASSES OFFERED:
• mushroom foraging
• preserving/pickling/canning
• fish to table
• flower arranging
• cheese making

— KIDS CAMP OFFERED —
Please visit "Opportunities to Come to Camp" at campmcdowell.com to register

Join us in community Labor Day weekend at Camp McDowell in Nauvoo Alabama. The weekend will be full of opportunities to reconnect with your heritage and obtain forgotten knowledge leading you back to your roots. It will begin Friday night with the option to stay until Monday! This weekend will include class time, free time, old time dancing and corn shucking, culminating with a brunch Sunday at the barn.

— KIDS CAMP OFFERED —
Alabama’s Episcopal Relief & Development coordinators learn of organization’s life-changing work at annual conference

by Marilyn Lands, Diocesan Co-Coordinator, Episcopal Relief & Development

E ach year, the Diocesan Network Coordinators gather to renew friendships, make new connections, and deepen their understanding of the life-changing work of Episcopal Relief & Development. The Rev. Deacon Judy Quick, and I represented the Diocese of Alabama at the June meeting in Chicago.

President Rob Radtke highlighted three major accomplishments of Episcopal Relief & Development during the past year:

• The Episcopal Church Asset Map: A database of over 7,000 Episcopal churches, schools, and institutions which show their engagement in advocacy, aging, career services, children and youth ministries, community gardens, donation coordination, economic development, food pantries, immigration services, mission trips and partnerships, prison services, shelter and housing, and so much more. The purpose of the Asset Map is to connect users to resources and ideas. Many parishes are now using the Asset Map for informing a community about their parish and its ministries.

• The Called to Transformation Workshops: The workshops present an asset-based approach to engage a parish and its community through a process to discern their gifts from God and how those gifts can be used for the benefit of the parish and the community (following 1Corinthians 12). As they discover their abundance of gifts and strengths, parishes and the community learn to be in partnership and how to engage with one another as they work together. This guide is for any individual, congregation, organization, or community that is willing to shift from the “needs-based” (scarcity) model to a life-affirming asset-based (abundance) approach for community development and engagement.

• The Phenomenal Support of our 75th Anniversary: Thousands of Episcopalians and friends contributed to the $7.94 million raised in the 75-week celebration of the 75 years of life-giving work of Episcopal Relief & Development (formerly known as the Presiding Bishop’s Fund). Thank you Alabama for all individual, parish, and diocesan donations to help us exceed the goal of $7.5 million! These funds will continue our work to respond to disasters and transform lives and communities around the world, through our churches and its partners throughout the Anglican Communion, to empower local communities to develop lasting solutions to poverty, hunger, and disease.

Generosity of 2015 Jonathan Daniels pilgrims enable six Lowndes County students to receive scholarships

S ix Lowndes County high school students were awarded the Jonathan Myrick Daniels Making a Difference Scholarship this spring during the Wil-Low Dollars for Scholars Scholarship Awards Program.

The Dollars for Scholars program, now in its 21st year, provides scholarships to deserving high school students from Wilcox and Lowndes County. The Rev. Deacon Carolyn Foster, co-chair of the Diocese of Alabama’s Commission on Race Relations, presented this year’s “Making a Difference” scholarships.

“Because of the generosity of pilgrims at last year’s Jonathan Daniels Pilgrimage, we were able to provide six deserving students each with a $1,000 scholarship this year,” said Foster.

Receiving this year’s Making a Difference scholarships were Dominique Rudolph and Audriana Thicklin, of Central High School in Hayneville, and Myaira Coleman, Ashalya Hayes, Dashia Miles, and Keasia Truitt, of Calhoun School in Latohatchee.

Conference participants also gained a deeper understanding of one specific program that is indeed transforming lives and communities:

Microfinance/Savings Groups.

Globally over 2.5 billion people live on less than $2 per day. Jobs are scarce in rural and urban areas, especially for those with limited skills. For many, owning a small business can be a pathway to earn income, support a family, and become self-sufficient.

Micro-finance programs from Episcopal Relief & Development with local churches and communities offer the needed resources to help make these small businesses a reality.

Savings groups empower women (and men) to pool their limited resources and to develop their own rules about lending and interest rates. Some programs include business and vocational training. Some community-based self-help groups offer small business advice and encouragement. All contribute to the economic growth of the community and often contribute to the promotion of gender awareness and the empowerment of women.

Another life-affirming partnership of Episcopal Relief & Development is with Equal Exchange where individuals and parishes can order fair trade coffee, tea, and chocolate for fundraisers and/or gifts, while supporting the work of Episcopal Relief & Development.

http://www.episcopalrelief.org/church-in-action/church-campaigns/Fair-Trade

Remember a wealth of resources to share the inspiring message of Episcopal Relief & Development await you at www.episcopalrelief.org.

To learn more about Episcopal Relief & Development’s programs worldwide, visit www.episcopalrelief.org or contact the Rev. Judy Quick at jgquick@bellsouth.net 205.669.6862 (home), 770.366.4034 (cell) or Marilyn Lands at marilynlands@gmail.com.
HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT...

Have you thought about having a health and wellness ministry in your parish? There could be different offerings each month or each quarter— for example: blood pressure checks, group exercise classes, meal planning guidelines for dietary concerns, etc. There could be activities and sessions for understanding depression, estate planning, caregivers, winter blues, addiction, dementia and other health issues. This could include a ministry for all ages and with some topics and activities designed for certain age groups like senior adults, parents of young children, parents of teens, young adults etc.

What about including a parish emergency plan as a part of this ministry? Include areas of the church and its grounds and what to do in each of those areas if there is an emergency— fire, tornado, and intruder. Also include important contact information if there is an emergency in neighborhood, surrounding cities— ways to respond and who to contact within the parish. These events can easily happen on a Wednesday night or Sunday morning just like any other time. It’s helpful and comforting to know there is a plan in place and everyone knows what to do or how to find out.

There are numerous resources and resource people that can help you get this ministry established and some that will help lead classes or sessions on certain topics. For more information contact me at kgraham@dioala.org and I will connect you to parishes that have a ministry like this in place and those that helped it get started.

THINKING ABOUT ADULT FORMATION?

Did you know there are four seasons or stage of adult formation? Do you have offerings for each season or just focusing on adults in general? For more information and ideas for each season open a special issue of the Episcopal Teacher (at http://bit.ly/29sy5aZ), and read about the four seasons: young adulthood, midlife adulthood, mature adulthood and older adulthood.

An example of an offering for older adults, can be found in the Episcopal Teacher article “Tapping Memories Adds Joy to the Lives of Older People,” by Dorothy Linthicum about making a memory box (http://bit.ly/29VOUa5).

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd helps adults grow in their understanding of the religious potential of children

Forty-two members of Episcopal and other denomination churches in the Birmingham region recently completed eight months of formation in the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd program.

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is an association that exists “to assist the involvement of children and adults in a common religious experience in which the religious values of childhood, primarily those values of contemplation and enjoyment of God, are predominant,” according to its website. “Our mission is to support catechists, parents, and others in the Church and beyond, as they grow in their understanding of the religious potential of children.”

Beverley Hoyt, a long-time member and part of the Children’s Formation Staff at St. Mary’s-on-the-Highlands led a Level I Course at St. Luke’s Episcopal Church in Birmingham, to prepare adults working with children ages three to six years old. It involved 90 hours of coursework, reading, album page writing, lectures and observation.

Level I participants came from St. Luke’s, St. Andrews Episcopal Church, All Saints Episcopal Church, Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit in Alabaster, Cathedral Church of the Advent, St. Thomas Episcopal Church, the Independent Presbyterian Church, and the Church of Brookhills.

Level II training was conducted at St. Mary’s-on-the-Highlands and was led by Stephanie Diethelm of All Saints. It included 90 hours of coursework, reading, album page writing, lecture and observation to prepare adults working with children ages six to nine years old.

St. Luke’s, St. Mary’s-on-the-Highlands, All Saints’, Holy Trinity Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Cathedral, the Independent Presbyterian Church, and Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church were represented in the Level II course.

A Level III formation course is under way at St. Mary’s-on-the-Highlands to prepare adults working with nine to 12 year old children. The 120-hour course has 35 Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, Episcopalian, Baptist, and Methodist participants from Canada, Alaska, Kentucky, Massachusetts and Alabama. It is being led by Anna Hurdle from North Carolina.

For information about the formation program and future course opportunities contact Stephanie Spinks, St. Mary’s-on-the-Highlands Director of Children’s Formation, at: stephanie@stmarysofth.org

NEW TO THE RESOURCE ROOM AT CARPENTER HOUSE

**Frolic** by Sparkhouse Family (sparkhouse.org).

This resource for nursery and toddlers includes board books, music cd, storybooks, and posters.

**Half Truths – God Helps Those Who Help Themselves and Other Things the Bible Doesn’t Say**

By Adam Hamilton (author of 24 That Changed the World, The Way and The Journey)

This series includes DVDs, leader guides and a leader guide for youth for a five-week study.

“They are simple phrases. They sound Christian—like something you might find in the Bible. We’ve heard them and we’ve probably used them. They capture some element of truth, yet they miss the point in important ways. Join Hamilton in his search for the whole truth by comparing some common Christian sayings with the wisdom found in Scripture.”

Contact Kathy Graham for more information about Christian Formation resources at kgraham@dioala.org
Grace Anniston conducts Abundance Orchard Vacation Bible School

by Christina Dorn

What do you get when you mix children, leaders, Bible stories about Jesus, food, and one ton of mishapen sweet potatoes? Abundance Orchard Vacation Bible School (VBS) at Grace, Anniston. No joke here!

Children and leaders alike found Abundance Orchard an engaging and fun way to learn, share faith, and participate in a meaningful outreach opportunity. We learned that we are never too young (or too old!) to celebrate and share the goodness of God’s love.

The overarching theme of Abundance Orchard is one of welcome. All people are welcome at God’s table. We learned that there are folks in our own community and in our world who are food insecure and discovered some ways that we can help.

Children and leaders gathered each morning for an opening celebration that included singing, listening to a Bible story, and Prayers of the People led by VBS children. Each gathering also included a brief hands-on talk from a community leader who shared information about a ministry that they lead. After learning about ways we can help, children were excited to help!

Children and leaders gathered each morning for an opening celebration that included singing, listening to a Bible story, and Prayers of the People led by VBS children. Each gathering also included a brief hands-on talk from a community leader who shared information about a ministry that they lead. After learning about ways we can help, children were excited to help!

The Brotherhood of St. Andrew, Grace Church Chapter, teamed up with The Society of St. Andrew in Birmingham to secure one ton of sweet potatoes that provided a hands-on lesson and a tangible way that we could make a real difference in helping with those that are food insecure. The sweet potatoes that were delivered to Grace in what’s called a “crop drop” are perfectly good potatoes but because of their size and shape would not sell at market. Such produce is usually left in the field to rot. Children at VBS went to work! They bagged the sweet potatoes and loaded them on a truck to be delivered to help feed hungry people in our area.

Our speakers included a different leader each morning: Jewel Scruggs -The Society of St. Andrew, Ron Burson -Brotherhood of St. Andrew, Deacon Kim Beckett-The Anniston Soup Bowl, Meghanne Thompson – County Extension Nutrition Program, and Deacon David Whetstone-Beans & Rice Ministry at Grace, Anniston.

After the Opening Celebration each morning, children then traveled to exciting VBS site destinations to further explore our theme, using multi-media, games, interactive Bible story-telling, snacks, and more. Our five-day VBS concluded with a Closing Celebration for the whole family. Each class shared a bit about what they had learned throughout the week.

Virginia Theological Seminary Center for the Ministry of Teaching had this to say about Abundance Orchard VBS: “The theme of food is beautifully woven through the stories, activities, snacks and mission components of the Abundance Orchard VBS. Theological themes that run through the curriculum illustrate the abundance of God’s love and presence in our lives. The curriculum encourages the development of empathy, and invites the children not only into the Bible stories, but also to reflect on the meaning of the stories in their own lives.” We heartily agree!

Visit the Abundance Orchard VBS Photo Gallery at: http://www.graceanniston.org/photo-gallery/?galleryID=150
Visit the Abundance Orchard VBS page at: http://endhunger.org/vbs/
For more information about gleaning and crop drop opportunities in our Alabama, visit: http://endhunger.org/al-help/

Holy Spirit Alabaster conducts Harry Potter themed Vacation Bible School

It all began with 50 to 80 muggles passing through a brick wall onto Platform Nine and Three-Quarters for this summer’s Harry Potter-themed vacation bible school (VBS) at the Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit in Alabaster.

For five Sunday mornings this summer, Holy Spirit experienced a school of wizards and wonders, an intergenerational VBS, directed by Professor Minerva McMonagall (Julia Jackson, Christian Education director) and supported by Head Mistress Alba Dumbledore (the Rev. Mary Bea Sullivan, Holy Spirit rector).

Drama of epic proportions, potions to alleviate fear, team building activities, and Baptismal Covenant renewal, were all a part of the theological reflections at Holy Spirit’s Hogwarts school.
Summer Send-off Success!

From June 1-13, this community rallied together to start the summer with an extra boost of enthusiasm and support. Together, we moved supplies from Birmingham to Greensboro, wrote Prayer Partner letters, celebrated at Cahaba Brewery, and raised a grand total of $27,120! The Summer Send-Off was a big success, and we’re so grateful to everyone who participated, especially the Thomas E. Jernigan Foundation who provided the matching gift!

Session 1 and 2 of Sawyerville Day Camp were absolutely wonderful, and at press time we were getting ready for Session 3! During the first two sessions, we welcomed well over 450 campers ages 6-14 and more than 200 volunteer staff.

As always, campers enjoyed swimming at the pool at Judson College in Marion, creating arts and crafts projects, learning new games, and listening to guest speakers. The theme this summer was “Finding My Way” and all of the activities were based on Bible stories about being lost and found. The campers studied Jonah and the whale, Zaccheus, Ruth, and the Good Shepherd.

Thank you!

We’re so grateful to all of the individuals, parishes, small groups, businesses, and foundations who have given so much to make this summer possible. Thank you for your financial gifts, volunteer hours, supply donations, and prayers! It’s all for the kids!

Update from Sawyerville Day Camp

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Update from the Yellowhammer Learning Program

The Yellowhammer Learning Program at press time had completed two weeks of instruction and had two to go. The fifth grade students met at the Boys and Girls Club, and the sixth grade students met at Greensboro Middle School. Between the two groups there were 29 participants!

At the YLP, each day started with Character Building where the kids learned about concepts like respect and community. After that, the students rotated through six classes where they learned things like how to identify prepositions, write poems with alliterative lines, set up a chessboard, or identify place values in math. In the afternoon, students chose four activities like art, drama, science experiments, and computer coding among others. It’s always a busy day!

In addition to the regular schedule, Fridays were field trip days. They visited the McWane Science Center in Birmingham as well City Hall in Greensboro. At press time they were scheduled to travel to Birmingham again to explore the Civil Rights Institute.

Be sure to checkout the website for more updates from SDC and YLP throughout the summer! Learn more and see photos at www.sawyervilledaycamp.org.
The Episcopal Diocese of Alabama coordinated a group of 34 youth, four counselors in training, and 13 adults, who participated in Young People Paint Birmingham (YPPB) June 13-17.

St. Stephen’s in Birmingham was our host site and our work projects were coordinated again through the Joe Rush Center for Urban Ministries. The goal of this event is to provide the opportunity for the junior high age group to experience community service learning, build Christian community and worship God together. This year marked the 10th year of YPPB and it was a remarkable year!

Finding Grace in Unexpected Places was not only this year’s program title for YPPB 2016, but also the overall theme of the week. Upon learning that it would most likely rain every day of YPPB and that there really was no rain plan for painting houses outside, it quickly became apparent that we needed to find alternative ways to serve God. The first rain day we encountered was spent working on the relationships among all the youth and staff who were participating in the event. We had extra small group time to talk about our worth to God and how we are all priceless in God’s eyes. It was also discovered this week that dance parties can bring a group of Jr. High youth together better than free ice cream and fireworks. Echoes of music and the rumblings of dancing could be heard throughout the halls of St. Stephen’s throughout the week.

The second day was also blessed with rain and a need for work to do. Call it a coincidence or good timing, but I believe what happened that day was a God thing. Kay Williams runs a summer long day camp through Grace Episcopal Church in Woodlawn called Grace Works. She teaches her local campers how to be the hands of Jesus by building things, using tools, and living a Christian life. We were blessed to join Grace Works on our second day and it was almost indescribable what took place. Youth from YPPB were taught how to upholster chairs by the campers from Grace Works. If there was a God moment all week it was watching kids from different communities, different lives, but the same faith working together to build something for a community. God’s work being done by the people of God — Grace in unexpected places.

The third day came and was full of sunshine which allowed us to work on painting a house for a few hours before calling it day and heading to Christ Church Fairfield for a lovely, music filled service led by Bishop Marray. We concluded our week at Oak Mountain State Park with swimming, basketball, hiking, and BBQ. I can’t help but think that to many people’s surprise, the rain didn’t slow YPPB down, but only gained its momentum as a truly special event for all of God’s people to work, share, love, and laugh….Oh and dance.
Virgin Islands clergy and youth visit Alabama as companion relationship gains momentum

As the Diocese of Alabama and the Diocese of the Virgin Islands begin to live into their companion relationship, members of the clergy of both dioceses came together this spring at Camp McDowell for Alabama’s annual clergy and spouse retreat.

The Rt. Rev. Ambrose Gumbs, Bishop of the Virgin Islands, led the group which included the Rev. Lenroy Cabey, rector of St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church, the Rev. Ermine George, assistant curate at the Cathedral Church of All Saints, and the Rev. Stedwart Lee, supply priest at St. Luke’s Episcopal Church, all on St. Thomas; the Rev. Amonteen Doward, supply priest at Holy Cross, and the Rev. Gregory Gibson, priest-in-charge at St. John’s Episcopal Church on St. Croix; and the Rev. Esther Georges, supply priest at St. Mary’s Episcopal Church, and the Rev. Ian Rock, priest-in-charge at St. George’s Episcopal Church, both in the British Virgin Islands.

“We were delighted to have members of the clergy from our new Companion Diocese join us for our clergy and spouse retreat,” said the Rt. Rev. Kee Sloan, Bishop of Alabama. “Our new friends took full part in our worship, program opportunities and fellowship, and we greatly increased our understanding of how life and the Church is for all of us in our respective contexts.”

“We engaged in lively conversations and enjoyed fellowship,” said the Rev. Deacon Judy Quick, Companion Diocese Commission chair. “New possibilities for engagement emerged in the areas of congregational development, Episcopal schools, young adult ministry, Episcopal Church Women (ECW), Daughters of the King, stewardship, women clergy, and so much more.”

Following the retreat, several parishes around the diocese hosted the visiting clergy for the weekend. On Sunday, they participated in worship and formation with their hosts. Some preached, others visited Christian formation classes.

“The congregation was delighted to spend time with the Rev. Amonteen Doward,” said the Rev. Bentley Manning, a member of the companion diocese commission and assistant to the rector at St. Mary’s-on-the-Highlands, which was one of the host parishes. “She met the lay leadership and participated in the Adult Education sessions.”

Other host parishes included the Cathedral Church of the Advent, St. Luke’s, and All Saints, in Birmingham; Ascension in Montgomery; and St. Thomas, and the Church of the Nativity, in Huntsville.

The clergy group arrived in Alabama April 26 and was met for supper by Companion Diocese Commission members the Rt. Rev. Santosh Marray, Alabama’s assistant bishop, Quick, and Lee and John Hoerner. Prior to heading to camp on the 27th, the group was joined by other members of the commission and host parish representatives at a welcome luncheon hosted by the Cathedral Church of the Advent.

Since our time together in April, the Diocese of Alabama has begun to walk with our partners in the Virgin Islands to build one house of faith, to grow God’s kingdom,” said Deacon Quick.

- At press time, four young people and their adult chaperone from the Virgin Islands were wrapping up a visit to Alabama. Two attended a junior high summer session at Camp McDowell and participated on the staff of Bethany’s Kids. Two others served as members of the staff of Sawyerville Day Camp Session III. All were excited about their experience. “It was wonderful, amazing, I want to come back next
year,” said Aleta Tyrella. “I cried when I left my new friends.”

- Four more young people from the Virgin Islands had arrived to participate in summer camp at Camp McDowell.

- Six young people from Alabama have been invited to serve as counselors at the Diocese of the Virgin Islands Children’s camp on St. Thomas next summer.

- Alabama Cursillo weekends in September and October will include pilgrims and staff from the Virgin Islands.

- Members of the ECW in Alabama and the Virgin Islands are planning to work together. The Virgin Islands ECW has been invited to attend the Fall ECW Conference at Camp McDowell, and Alabama ECW members will attend the Virgin Islands ECW Annual Meeting next June.

In a letter to Deacon Quick, (adjacent) Bishop Gumbs expressed his gratitude to the Diocese of Alabama for hosting the clergy and the youth of the Diocese of the Virgin Islands.

There are many opportunities for parishes and individuals in Alabama to participate in our companionship, according to Deacon Quick. “For example, young people in the Virgin Islands would love to learn to play guitar, and are eager to teach Alabama’s youth to play the steel drums. Guitars and instructors are needed.”

“Donations are being accepted to provide youth camp scholarships,” said Deacon Quick. “Thank you to all who have already contributed.” The diocese is also in need of Alleluia III songbooks. For information about these and other opportunities to become involved in the companion relationship, contact the Rev. Deacon Judy Quick at jgquick@bellsouth.net.

“The Holy Spirit continues to guide our relationship as we discover the joys of walking together with Christ,” said Deacon Quick. Please continue to pray for our companion relationship with the Virgin Islands and as we continue to work to discern our relationship with the Diocese of Alaska.”

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, we ask your blessings and favor upon our Companion Diocese Covenant among the Diocese of Alabama, the Diocese of Alaska, and the Diocese of the Virgin Islands. May we fully commit to praying diligently and unceasingly for the success of all of our missions, that through this relationship we are bound to share our love of Christ and of each other, to share our knowledge and resources, to further the understanding of the reconciliation of all Christians to God, to support and to help those who are in need, and to nourish the spiritually deficient for the furtherance of God’s kingdom. Amen

**Music Under the Stars set for St. Mark’s Birmingham Sept. 9**

by Sandra Smith

Bring your favorite lawn chairs or blankets and plan to spend a wonderful evening enjoying some of the best Jazz music in town. Join us for the Fourth Annual Music Under the Stars set for St. Mark’s Birmingham Sept. 9 at 6:30 PM.

This year’s line-up includes Kim Scott, Cleve Eaton and friends featuring Elnora Spencer and Ray Reach, PJ Spraggsins Band, and the Alabama School of Fine Arts Jazz Band.

**Kim (Felder) Scott** is one of the most sought after flutists in both the classical and jazz fields. Born in Birmingham, Alabama, she has performed across the country and abroad since 2000 in recitals, concerts, and with her flute and harp ensemble.

Kim has been in high demand for her high energy performances. As Chair, Music Department at the Alabama School of Fine Arts, she has been an educator for 13 years and prides herself on passing her musical knowledge on to her students. She is the host of the “Block Party” Radio Show, a jazz radio show which airs weekly in several markets across the United States including WVSU, in Birmingham. Her debut CD “Crossing Over” was released in 2011 and her sophomore CD “Rite of Passage” was released May, 2013. Her CD is steadily climbing on the BDS Billboard chart and the Smooth Indie Star chart. Her third CD will be released in August, 2016.

**Cleve Eaton** is the consummate bassist, composer, arranger and producer. Eaton has played on notable recording sessions with nearly all genres – jazz with John Klemmer, Ike Cole and Bunky Green; R&B with The Dells 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 and over ten recordings with the Count Basie Orchestra. He has received numerous awards including induction into the Alabama Jazz Hall of Fame as well as the Alabama Music Hall of Fame.

**Eleanora Spencer** is a local blues legend. An entertainer and singer who specializes in blues, jazz, R&B and gospel, Spencer has sung with BB King, Bobby “Blue” Bland and many others.

Renowned pianist, guitarist and vocalist **Ray Reach** has performed with and arranged for other notable musicians including Dizzie Gillespie, Natalie Cole, 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 of All Stars.

**James “PJ” Spraggsins II** is a drummer, composer and producer. PJ developed a love for music at an early age in the church while growing up in Bessemer, Alabama. He has performed with some of the greatest musicians & entertainers all over the world like Stevie Wonder, Roy Ayers, Martha Reeves, Randy Owen (from country group Alabama), Kirk Whalum & Kelley O’Neal, Marcus Miller, Peabo Bryson, The Blind Boys of Alabama, Kim Scott, Eric Essix, Byron Cage, Dorenda Clark, and Kurt Carr, to name a few. In 2009, PJ did his first artist collaboration with Tracy Hamlin and co-wrote the title track of her second CD, “Better Days”, which went on to reach the top of the R&B charts in the UK later that year. In 2006, PJ released his self-produced debut jazz CD ‘The Light of Day’. PJ released his second self-produced project “Pure Logic” in early 2012 and continues to collate with new artist to help develop their sound.

The **Alabama School of Fine Arts (ASFA) Jazz Ensemble** under the direction of Dr. Robert Jansen has performed throughout the city. These are talented students who enjoy sharing their talents with others.

Proceeds from the Music under the Stars will fund the church’s monthly Food Assistance Ministry and other ministries which serve the community.

For additional information, please contact St. Mark’s Episcopal Church (228 Dennison Ave, SW, Birmingham, AL 35211) at 205/322-8449 or StMarks.Bham@gmail.com. Visit us at http://stmarks.dioala.org. Like us on Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/musicunderthestars2016.
It all began four years ago, when the members of Christ Episcopal Church in Albertville began to dream and discern how they might better serve their community and attract young families with children to their parish.

Today, after much prayer, planning and hard work, their dream has become reality. On June 8, the Rt. Rev. Santosh Murray, Alabama’s assistant Bishop, joined Christ Church parishioners to dedicate and bless a new space designed and equipped for recreation, relaxation, and meditation, for the church and the surrounding community.

What was once an under-utilized piece of church property across the church driveway is today a beautifully landscaped inviting space set off by wrought iron fencing. It features a refurbished labyrinth, a cedar gym/play set that serves as an invitation to families with children, a picnic table, and a Little Free Library offering a children’s book exchange.

The project was made possible by a bequest from the estate of longtime parishioner Freddie Richardson. A vestry-appointed Lot Development Committee coordinated the project. The committee was chaired by Myra Southerland, and included parishioners Pat Clanton, Teddy LaMunyon, Mel Potts, Meredith Battle, and Ron Scruggs.

The initial design and work on the Labyrinth was done by Alan Battle, Jr. as an Eagle Scout Project. He involved many parishioners as well as members of Boy Scout Troop 71 (4071) to plan, budget and carry out this important project. Church members brought crosses that were sunk into the concrete of the labyrinth. The Battle Family and other parishioners donated plants and trees to encircle the labyrinth with a small flower garden. This spring Ron Scruggs, Teddy LaMunyon, Randy and Myra Southerland and Jesus Rios-Marsales worked in the garden turning it into a place of beauty and peace.

The wrought iron fencing, a gate, and steps were installed to enhance and define the property as a part of Christ Church, and to invite the community to enter.

The cedar Gym/Playset was and constructed by the Episcopal Church men, lead by Mel Potts. The effort included friends and family members of parishioners.

The church’s irrigation system was extended across the church’s driveway so that the freshly planted trees, shrubs and flowers could be watered and maintained.

As the excitement grew to attract families with children to our church, Parishioners Sara Watwood and Pat Clanton proposed that we build a Little Free Library to further help attract families with children. New Christ Church parishioners, John and Trena Houston, took on the project and knocked it out of the ball park! The Little Library was paid for by a grant from the Diocese of Alabama, requested by Brenda Mayhall.

George Liles’ contribution of the wooden picnic table completed the project.

“The project is a dream realized through much prayer, discernment, and hard work,” said Christ Church Rector the Rev. Ben Alford. “We pray, with God’s help, will help grow Christ Episcopal Church. it contributes to a project.
Metagem Institute launches new spiritual direction certification program

Metagem Institute, a 501(c)3 founded by members of the Diocese of Alabama, recently launched a two-year program to form spiritual directors in the Christian tradition and further the work of formation.

The formation program is ecumenical in nature and includes seekers beyond the geographical boundaries of our diocese. The first class of 17 students, who will study together for two years, includes participants from four states and three denominations. The first gathering was held at St. Thomas Huntsville. Future gatherings will be at St. Stephen’s Huntsville and Holy Spirit Alabaster with Camp McDowell as the primary location starting in 2017.

Metagem Institute was founded by the Rev. Mary Catherine Akamatsu, associate rector of St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Huntsville; her husband Jeff; the Rev. Monica Carlson, rector of Epiphany in Leedz; and the Rev. Kammy Young, a member of the faculty of the School of Theology, University of the South, in Sewanee, TN. Its mission is “to teach spiritual and integrative practices that all may be transformed into our risen life in Christ.” The word metagem represents such transformations; “meta” denotes a change and “gen” signifies our precious life in Christ.

The Diocese of Alabama Commission on Spirituality helped guide the formation of the institute and endorses its certification program.

In addition to the spiritual direction certification program, the Metagem faculty members have conducted numerous workshops and retreats in Alabama and Tennessee. Metagem plans to offer additional programs in the areas of contemplation and leadership for mission.

The next spiritual direction formation class will be admitted in May 2017. If you are interested in that program or in hosting a themed workshop please visit www.metageminstitute.org.

For additional information contact the Rev. Mary Catherine Akamatsu by email at mary.c.akamatsu@metageminstitute.org or by phone at 256-714-8837.

Kelley Hudlow to become diocesan communications coordinator

The Rev. Deacon Kelley Hudlow will join the staff of the Episcopal Diocese of Alabama at Carpenter House Sept. 1 as communications coordinator, replacing the Rev. Deacon Dave Drachlis, who will step down Aug. 31.

As communications coordinator, Hudlow will assist the diocese in implementing a coherent and effective communications strategy and program. She will be responsible for a wide variety of communications elements and products including web and social media, print content including the bi-monthly newspaper, electronic newsletters, the diocese’s video ministry, and media relations.

“We are excited to welcome Kelley to our staff,” said the Rt. Rev. Kee Sloan, Bishop of Alabama. “She brings considerable expertise in social media and a story-telling talent to our communications program.”

Hudlow currently serves as general manager and deacon at The Abbey, a community coffee shop in the Avondale neighborhood of Birmingham. A nonprofit diocesan ministry, The Abbey offers a place of hospitality and conversation to the community, and is home to an Episcopal worshipping community.

In addition to the day-to-day business operations of the coffee shop, Hudlow manages the online and social media aspects of The Abbey’s communications program. She authors a blog, Notoriously Episcopalian, in which she shares her thoughts and stories about faith and the Episcopal Church. Hudlow also serves as chaplain and administrator of the Alabama IONA Ministry School, which trains non-stipendary and bi-vocational priests, and vocational deacons for the diocese.

Hudlow earned a BA in History from the University of South Alabama in 2002, and a JD from the University of Alabama School of Law in 2005. She practiced law for almost 10 years and taught as an adjunct professor at the University of Alabama School of Law from 2011 to 2014. She was ordained to the vocational diaconate in October 2011 and initially served as deacon at St. Michael’s in Fayette.

Drachlis joined the staff of Carpenter House as a part-time web assistant in 2007. In 2009 he became the diocese’s first full-time communications professional with responsibility for establishing a comprehensive communications strategy for the diocese. He oversaw the redesign, expansion, and enhancement of the diocesan newspaper, built a dynamic web and social media presence for the diocese, and created an innovative state-of-the-art television/video ministry that has significantly enhanced diocesan convention and has enabled live webcasting of major diocesan activities events. Drachlis also worked with parishes assisting with development of their web presence, and implemented a media relations program that resulted in significant coverage of the diocese by the mainstream news media.

A career institutional communications professional Drachlis served a combined total of more than 37 years with the U.S. Air Force and NASA prior to joining the Carpenter House staff. He was ordained to the diaconate in October 2004 and serves as deacon at St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Huntsville, and is a member of the diocese’s Companion Diocese Commission.

“We are all so grateful to Dave for his wonderful work in helping us set up a cohesive communications ministry,” said Sloan. “This is a part of our life in the Church and in our culture that is changing so quickly it’s hard to keep up with, and Dave has done a beautiful job helping us to share the work of the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Alabama within the diocesan community and with the larger world.”

Establishment of a comprehensive diocesan communications initiative was made possible by the ACTS2 capital funds campaign.

“I look forward to working with the diocesan staff and parishes together we work to continue to enrich our communications efforts, and spread the good news of our Lord Jesus Christ” said Hudlow.

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SUNDAY SERVICES ON LAKE JORDAN  
July & August, Bonner Point Outdoor Chapel  
Every Sunday through Labor Day weekend, residents of, visitors to, and boaters on Lake Jordan can worship on the lake at Bonner Point’s outdoor chapel. Trinity Wetumpka and the Lake Jordan Home Owners and Boat Owners Association sponsor the weekly 8:00 a.m. service. A brief service includes a different guest preacher from the area each week. The chapel is situated on the west side of the lake. If you live close to Lake Jordan, or expect to be on the Lake on Sunday, join us. If your family or friends are going to be on the lake or in the area, tell them as well. For additional information contact Trinity by telephone at 334-567-7534, or by email at secretary@trinitywetumpka.org.

INTRODUCTION TO CENTERING PRAYER  
September 2 - 4, Benedictine Sisters Retreat Center, Cullman  
This workshop is designed for those new to Centering Prayer, a form of Christian Prayer rooted in the ancient Christian contemplative tradition. Its purpose is to foster a deeper intimacy with Christ through silence and stillness of contemplative prayer. A registration form can be obtained at http://shmon.org/documents/Registrationform2.pdf or by calling 256-734-8302. The cost is $245 and a $60 non-refundable deposit is due at registration. The retreat is led by the presenters’ team of Contemplative Outreach Birmingham, A chapter of Contemplative Outreach, Ltd. Additional information about Centering Prayer is available at http://contemplativeoutreach.org.

LITURGICAL ARTS CONFERENCE  
August 21 – 26, Kanuga Conference Center, NC  
Join us for a memorable, creative and spiritually uplifting week at the 19th annual Liturgical Arts Conference at Kanuga Conference Center in Hendersonville, N.C. Known as FACE (Faith, Art and Creative Expression), you will be taught and guided by many experts in their field. This week offers not only an opportunity to increase your artistic skills, but to share with like-minded people and experience new ways of expressing your faith in a loving and inspiring environment. Visit www.kanuga.org/liturgicalarts for details and to register.

GOD’S WELCOME 5-DAY RETREAT  
October 16-21, Camp McDowell  
For five wonderful days, come immerse yourself in study and reflection on the spirituality of Christian hospitality, in the company of the Rt. Rev. Kee Sloan and Dr. Amy Oden. Each day will be shaped by a Benedictine rhythm of prayer, fellowship, learning, and periods of silent contemplation, as well as free time for recreation and relaxation. The cost is $750 and covers room, board and tuition. A $50 deposit is required. Register at: http://bit.ly/1qU9Chj For more information about the 5-Day Retreat, contact Pat Luna at patluna@me.com or 334-202-9440; or Kathy Norberg at Kathy.norberg@gmail.com, or 850-324-1015.

DAUGHTERS OF THE KING FALL ASSEMBLY  
October 29, St. Timothy’s, Athens  
The Diocese of Alabama Order of the Daughters of the King (DOK) 2016 Fall Assembly is scheduled for Oct. 29 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at St. Timothy’s Episcopal Church in Athens. A spirit filled day is planned focusing on the vows of the order, “prayer, service, and evangelism.” Save the date and plan to attend this inspiring and uplifting event in the fall. Registration and other information will be made available soon. For additional information contact Kathy Whatley, kwrolltide@mail.com.

October conference features interfaith panel discussion, live Enneagram demonstration and new consciousness theater  
by Brigid Galloway  
What would you do differently if you knew God’s purpose for your life? How would you act if you understood your true self? What would you do to transform the world if you knew the answer to end your own suffering?  
Oct. 27-30, Kanuga Conferences presents a thought-provoking weekend of soul exploration when the Institute for Conscious Being (ICB) conducts its 5th annual Consciousness Living Through the Spirituality of the Enneagram conference. This year’s theme poses the question “What If You Did Know?”  
Throughout an extended weekend of dynamic lectures, workshops and group work, participants will learn a method for answering the question “What If You Did Know?” for themselves as they apply the Enneagram’s wisdom to every aspect of their lives. Among the special events presented at this year’s conference are a live panel discussion featuring spiritual leaders representing some of the world’s most embraced spiritual pathways, ICB’s “Living Enneagram”, and a new theatrical performance enacting the principles of the Enneagram.  
On Friday evening, ICB will host a lively panel discussion with noted spiritual leaders Diane McKendree, Interdenominational minister, and Jungian therapist, teacher and Haden Institute faculty member; Jim McKinley, minister, Unitarian Universalist Church in Hendersonville, NC; The Rev. Rick Putman, Episcopal priest, Spiritual Director, Institute for Conscious Being faculty member; and Mohamed Taha, Imam at The Islamic Center in Asheville, NC.  
Moderated by ICB founder, Dr. Joseph Howell, panelists will be asked to explore how the world might be different if humanity took steps to implement individual and collective consciousness.  
A popular session since its debut at Kanuga in 2014, the “Living Enneagram” will be featured again this year to provide examples of the practical applications of the Enneagram in everyday life.  
And this year, ICB debuts another interactive presentation: Enneagram Consciousness Theatre. Led by theatrical experts trained in the Spirituality of the Enneagram, this live performance enacts typical human dramas while applying the Enneagram’s spiritual principles. The fascinating and entertaining exercise shows the process of transformation from lack of consciousness to consciousness.  
The 5th annual Enneagram Conference at Kanuga is open to anyone interested in developing a greater understanding of themselves, their relationships and the world around them.  
Details and conference registration are available online at kanuga.org/enneagram. For more information about the Institute for Conscious Being, go to instituteforconsciousbeing.org.

EVANGELISM MATTERS  
November 18-19, Dallas, TX  
Registration is now open for Evangelism Matters, an Episcopal Church Evangelism Conference on Nov. 18-19 in Dallas, TX, for anyone who would like to learn more about evangelism and available resources to share our faith. This innovative church-wide event is co-sponsored by Forward Movement and the Episcopal Church Presiding Bishop’s Office, and is hosted by the Diocese of Dallas and Church of the Transfiguration, Dallas, where the activities will be held. Among the planned activities are an address by Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, plus plenary sessions and workshops by evangelism leaders.  
“Evangelism Matters is an exciting venture which will allow Episcopalians to share, learn and grow our capacity for evangelism,” commented the Rev. Canon Stephanie Spellers, the Presiding Bishop’s Canon for Evangelism and Reconciliation. “People often speak as if Episcopalians don’t ‘do’ evangelism, and that’s just not true. We’re serious about sharing good news and growing new relationships everywhere.”  
A portion of the Saturday events will be webcast live to allow for individual and group viewing during conventions, discussion groups, and local evangelism gatherings.  
Learn more and register online at: http://bit.ly/29p12yK.
Around Our Diocese

WHAT’S NEW/NOTEWORTHY AT THE EPISCOPAL BOOK STORE
By Cindy Funderburk, Manager

Rain for Roots (3 CDs)
• Big Stories for Little Ones CD
  Ten collaborative songs between Rain for Roots (Ellie Holcomb, Flo Paris, Katy Bowser, and Sandra McCracken) and Sally-Lloyd Jones. Each of the East Nashville based singer-songwriters bring their voice and vision together in this collective effort to make scripture songs for children. The hope is that these words would take deep root in kids’ hearts and stay with them as they grow. It’s modern folk music - smart and inviting. Made for children from age 1 to 99.
• The Kingdom of Heaven Is Like This CD
  Ten songs from Rain for Roots that tell Jesus’ parables.
• Waiting Songs CD
  Ten songs exploring the themes of Advent.

ESV Journaling Bible by Crossway Bibles (Black hardback or Brown Bonded Leather, in stock – please call for other styles)
  This unique Bible makes a great gift and lasting keepsake for anyone interested in recording their spiritual journey through God’s Word. Each page has a 2-inch, ruled margin for writing notes, prayers, and reflections. Includes Book Introductions, footnotes, a one-year Reading Plan, and a Ribbon Marker.

On the Thirty-Nine Articles by Oliver O’Donovan (SCM Press, paperback)
  The Thirty-Nine Articles, together with the Book of Common Prayer, form the foundation of Anglican theology. Yet there are very few extended treatments of them. O’Donovan relates the Articles to the century in which they took shape. He also shows how the insights and values of that time relate to the demands of today’s world. ‘What I propose in this case - is not to talk solely about the Articles, but to talk about God, mankind, and redemption, the central matters of the Christian faith, and to take the Tudor authors with me as companions in discussion. Two voices will be speaking – each raising the questions that Christian faith in his time forces upon him.’ This book has been out of print for some time, so here is a new edition with a new introduction by one of the UK’s leading theologians.

Tried by Fire by William J. Bennett (Nelson Books, hardback)
  Spanning continents and centuries, Tried by Fire narrates the rise and expansion of Christianity from an obscure regional sect to the established faith of the world’s greatest empire with influence extending from India to Ireland, Scandinavia to Ethiopia, and all points in between. Bennett explores the lives of saints and sinners, paupers and kings, merchants and monks who, together and against all odds, changed the world forever. To tell their story, Bennett follows them through the controversies and trials of their time - challenged by official persecution, heresy, and schism, they held steadfast to the truth of Christ. Tried by Fire speaks across centuries to offer insight into the people and events that shaped the faith that continues to shape our lives today.

PLEASE NOTE OUR NEW HOURS – The Book Store is open Monday through Thursday 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and Sunday from 8:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.
For information about these and other books, or to have the staff research and special order a particular book, please contact the Episcopal Book Store, 2015 Sixth Avenue North, Birmingham, AL 35203; 205-323-2959; ebsinfo@episcobooks.com; or visit the bookstore online at www.episcobooks.com.

BISHOPS’ VISITATION SCHEDULE
Sunday, August 14
10:30 a.m.  Bishop Marray  Trinity, Bessemer

Sunday, August 28
10:30 a.m.  Bishop Marray  Trinity, Clanton

Note: The Bishops’ Visitations Schedule is being revised. A new schedule will be available on the diocesan website at http://diosa.org/bishop/visitations.html.

CLERGY NEWS

The Rev. Bob Backwell has accepted a call to serve as interim rector for Christ Church, Pensacola, beginning in August.

The Rev. Carl Saxton, curate at St John’s Cathedral in Jacksonville, FL, has accepted a call to serve as rector of Holy Comforter in Gadson. He and his wife Laura begin their ministry there Aug. 15.

The Rev. Steve Gruman, rector at St. Matthew’s in Madison, has announced his retirement effective Sept. 1. He has served the parish for 17 years.

The Rev. Bill King has resigned from Trinity, Clanton effective Sept. 4. He has served the people of Trinity parish for 13 years and will continue to serve the diocese.

July/August 2016
IRA Charitable Rollover is Now Permanent

The Charitable IRA Rollover

If you own an IRA, you can make a tax-free transfer of up to $100,000 to a religious organization including:

• Your Parish
• The Abbey
• Camp McDowell (including Bethany Village)
• Campus Ministries
• Cursillo
• Diocese of Alabama
• ECW
• Episcopal Relief & Development
• ECW
• Diocese of Alabama
• Campus Ministries
• Camp McDowell (including Bethany Village)
• Special Session
• Young Adult Ministries

and other Diocesan funds and ministries this year and into the future. A recent vote

• Young Adult Ministries
• Sawyerville Day Camp
• Foothills Day Camp
• Episcopal Relief & Development
• ECW
• Diocese of Alabama
• Campus Ministries
• Camp McDowell (including Bethany Village)
• Your Parish

Details:

• Donors must be 70½ years old on the date of the gift.
• Funds must be transferred directly to your parish, camp, ministry, or the Diocese from an IRA.
• Up to $100,000 per IRA owner may be contributed each year.
• Donors recognize no taxable income on the transfer but can’t claim an income tax deduction for the gift.
• The gift can count toward the IRA owner’s required minimum distribution for 2016.
• The gift needs to be made by December 31, 2016 to qualify this year.

Your generosity impacts the work God has given us to do in the Diocese of Alabama and helps keep our parishes and shared ministries strong. Please consider a gift from your IRA today.

Questions? Contact Danielle Dunbar, Director of Mission Funding at (205) 358–9234 or ddunbar@dioala.org.

No September/October Alabama Episcopalian

Due to budget constraints there will be no September/October Alabama Episcopalian this year. All of the September/October news will be available on our website at http://dioala.org, with timely notifications in our biweekly News Update email (sign up at http://bit.ly/2x2P91K), on Facebook (@dioala) and on Twitter (@ DioAlaNews).

IRA Charitable Rollover is Now Permanent

Coming to a parish near you!

Let Me Hear Your Money Talk:
Stewardship Essentials

WHO:
Rectors, associate priests, senior wardens, junior wardens, vestry members, stewardship leaders, and others who want to learn more about stewardship…

…please join Danielle Dunbar, Director of Mission Funding, and Kathy Graham, Lifelong Christian Formation Director, for a lunch workshop highlighting the key aspects of a successful stewardship campaign. A representative from the Department of Stewardship will also be on hand to connect with you and help answer questions.

WHAT:
This workshop includes a box lunch and will cover the essentials of parish stewardship. Danielle, Kathy, and the Department of Stewardship want you to feel empowered and equipped with the tools you need this fall.

✓ Let Me Hear Your Money Talk
Where we spend our money speaks volumes about who we are and talking about money in church is not a sin.

✓ Year Round Educational Opportunities
To fully prepare parishioners for their annual proportional giving and to help them live generously, personal financial education is a must. All generations in the church need to talk about and learn about what their money can do including giving, spending, and saving.

✓ Best Stewardship Plans
There are many plans available and every church is different. Learn what to include in yours. We will also discuss new plans, new technology like Tithe.ly, and other trusted tools and resources.

✓ Question & Answer
Danielle, Kathy, and a Department of Stewardship representative will answer the questions you have to help your stewardship campaign grow.

WHEN & WHERE:
See the listing below to attend a workshop near you. Pre-registration is important! Please go to http://bit.ly/29xdWhZ and register by Aug. 14 to reserve a box lunch and information packet. Questions? Contact Danielle Dunbar directly: 205–358–9234 or ddunbar@dioala.org.

• Aug. 16, 2016.......... St. Thomas, Birmingham ...................Noon–1:00 p.m.
• Aug. 18, 2016.......... St. Timothy’s, Athens .....................Noon–1:00 p.m.
• Aug. 23, 2016.......... Holy Comforter, Montgomery ..........Noon–1:00 p.m.
• Aug. 25, 2016 .......... Christ Church, Albertville ...........Noon–1:00 p.m.
• Aug. 30, 2016 .......... Trinity, Demopolis .....................Noon–1:00 p.m.
• Sept. 1, 2016 .......... Emmanuel, Opelika .....................Noon–1:00 p.m.
• Sept. 8, 2016 .......... Grace, Anniston .........................Noon–1:00 p.m.

The ALABAMA EPISCOPALIAN

The Alabama Episcopalian is published six times a year (January/February, March/April, May/June, July/August, September/October, and November/December). For the most current news about recent and upcoming events, please visit our diocesan Web site, www.dioala.org.

Please send stories and photographs (color, if available) to Editor Dave Drachlis at communications@dioala.org or 521 North 20th Street, Birmingham, AL 35203–2682; the submission deadline for each issue is the 1st day of the month of publication. Postmaster, parishes, and individuals, please send all address changes or additions to Circulation Secretary Denise Servant at dservant@dioala.org or Carpenter House, 521 North 20th Street, Birmingham, AL 35203–2682.

Keep up with the latest news from around our diocese between issues of The Alabama Episcopalian on our diocesan Web site, www.dioala.org. If you are not already receiving our “Web Site Update,” you can sign up to receive a weekly e-mail containing headlines with links to the latest news, photos, and videos about and from around our diocese. Simply send an e-mail with your name and e-mail address to ddrachlis@dioala.org and put “Headlines” on the subject line. You can “opt out” anytime.