1 Peter 4:10 “As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace.”

Are you and your stewardship leaders interested in discussing best practices and beginning thoughtful stewardship conversations? Danielle Dunbar, Director of Mission Funding, Kathy Graham, Director of Christian Formation, and members of the Department of Stewardship are all available to meet with your vestry and stewardship team. Theological reflection and Christian education are important components of a healthy stewardship plan. Please contact Danielle at 205.358.9234 or Kathy at 205.358.9229 to schedule a visit. Contact Department of Stewardship members directly by using the email links on the website: http://www.dioala.org/stewardship. We will be delighted to visit with you at your church at a time that is convenient for you.

This year we will hold Stewardship “Call In” days on Thursday, August 31st and Thursday, September 7th. Danielle and Kathy will be ready to answer any questions to help you finalize your annual stewardship plans as well as look towards year round stewardship and education ideas for 2018. We can also schedule a visit with you and your stewardship team. You are most welcome to call on days other than the 31st and 7th! Be on the lookout for more intensive stewardship workshops and new information from the Department of Stewardship in early 2018.

Stewardship • Generosity • Annual Response

ON THE COVER
Sawyerville Day Camp
Page 11

SAVE THE DATE: SPRING 2018 New Stewardship Workshops! Stewardship is using the gifts God has given us, to do the things God calls us to do.

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

In the Diocese of Alabama
About 34,000 baptized members in 92 parishes and worshiping communities and 8 college campus ministries. Established in 1830.
Bishop
The Rt. Rev. John McKee Sloan
Carpenter House
521 North 20th Street
Birmingham, AL 35203
205/715-2060

In the United States
A community of about 2.4 million members in 119 dioceses in the Americas and abroad. Established in 1789.
Presiding Bishop
The Most Rev. Michael Curry
Episcopal Church Center
815 Second Avenue
New York, NY 10017
212/867-8400

The Anglican Communion
An 80-million-member worldwide community of 38 provinces.
Archbishop of Canterbury
The Most Rev. Justin Welby
Lambeth Palace, London
England SE17JU

The Alabama Episcopalian
Kelley Hudlow, Editor
Miles G. Parsons, Art Director
Denise Servant, Circulation Secretary
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All address corrections or additions should be sent to Denise Servant at dservant@dioala.org or Carpenter House, 521 North 20th Street, Birmingham, AL 35203–2682.

POSTMASTER: Please send address corrections to Denise Servant, Circulation Secretary, The Alabama Episcopalian, 521 North 20th Street, Birmingham, AL 35203–2682.
I just got back from helping with the first Special Session at Bethany Village and visiting the second. I’m going to visit the Sawyerville Day Camp and Yellowhammer Learning Program in Greensboro tomorrow, and next month I’m going to visit the Foothills Day Camp in Anniston. These are incredible ministries that we should all be proud of. I’m pretty sure that what I will see at Sawyerville and Foothills will be like what I see when I’m at Special Session or at Camp McDowell: faces lit with the love of Jesus being shared between the wide assortment of God’s children who come to learn and teach dignity and respect, people of all ages living in the joy of Christian community, and racial tensions and socioeconomic divisions melting away in the heat of an Alabama summer, in the activities, in the music, in the love. Always what we’re doing in these programs is for the campers; always the people who work on staff get more out of it than they put into it. I will see the grace of God in Jesus Christ in the faces of all of them, campers and staff alike.

From Bishop Sloan

**Giving Thanks - It’s the Way God Works**

I will see the grace of God in Jesus Christ in the faces of all of them, campers and staff alike. What I will not see is the financial infrastructure, the funds raised and scholarships given to make all of this wonderful work possible. … I will not see how all of the money is raised, but I do see some of how it’s spent, and I want to thank you.

And while I’m at it, I want to be sure you are aware of some of the other ministries all around the Diocese of Alabama, ministries that you and thousands of other Alabama Episcopalians support: ministries like The Abbey, college chaplaincies, Diocesan youth programs, EfM, and the ECW. Also receiving support from our Diocese are programs farther from home: programs like Episcopal Relief and Development, Sewanee, and the General Convention budget. There are more: these are things we do together as a diocese, or in the larger church; if I try to make a list of all the things that are being done by all the parishes and other groups in the Diocese, our editor Kelley will become distressed with me. But you get the picture.

I’m not asking for money in this article, but I do want to give you a sort of report about some of where your money goes. Sometimes it might seem like we send money out into the void and never really see what becomes of it. Sometimes it seems like we can never give enough to all of these good causes, that what little we might have to share won’t ever do any real good at all. That’s when I want us to remember one of our favorite stories, about a boy a long time ago who had just a little to offer. Jesus had been telling his disciples they needed to feed more than five thousand people on a grassy hill, and Andrew said, “There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?” Jesus told them to have everybody sit, “and when he had given thanks,” he gave them fish and bread. He fed them all, and after everyone had eaten as much as they wanted, they gathered up what was left over: twelve baskets full.

But a little boy offered what he had, and Jesus gave thanks to God, and when it was all distributed, it was enough and more than enough. It’s not the way the world works; it’s the way God works.

That’s what I’m seeing this summer, the little bits you and I have to offer being blessed and shared in the love of Jesus Christ our Lord, making more than enough for all. A little bit to offer, some imagination and gratitude and enough faith to push aside our narrow definitions of what is possible, and the work of God’s Holy Church continues through the years across the centuries all over the world. I’m thankful to be part of it, and I want you to know you’re part of it, too, and that I’m grateful for every one of you — thanks be to God!

Jesus told them to have everybody sit, “and when he had given thanks,” he gave them fish and bread. He fed them all, and after everyone had eaten as much as they wanted, they gathered up what was left over: twelve baskets full.
Several years ago Bishop Kee invited me to attend Special Session as an adult volunteer. I had been working in the disability field for several years and had also served on the planning committee for Bethany Village. So I decided I would go and without knowing exactly what to expect, I packed up my things for a week at camp. After having worked in a setting where rules imposed by the State and other licensing groups determined the day, the relaxed schedules and laid back atmosphere were delightful changes. The week was full of unexpected joys – joy on the camper’s faces and joy on the counselor’s faces. I said more than once that I wish that I could hire caregivers as passionate, capable, caring and dependable as the young adult counselors who were not getting paid but instead actually paying to be there that week.

Since that first week, I’ve returned as often as possible, taking a week’s vacation to spend a week in what I consider Camp McDowell Paradise. Since that first experience a lot has changed. Not the atmosphere, it’s still as relaxed and full of unconditional love as it was the first time. What’s changed is the facility. What was once down the hill in lower camp is now at Bethany Village. We’re still at Camp McDowell but on a piece of property that is relatively flat, accessible and built with individuals who have accessibility needs in mind. The hot cabins have been replaced with air conditioned spacious cabins and the pool that was difficult for people with mobility issues has been replaced by a pool with a zero entrance that anyone can safely enter.

One of the things that will never change is the love that the campers and the counselors have for this place. If you’re not sure that you’ve ever experienced pure joy, please come to Special Session. I get choked up thinking...
of the sound of the camper’s voices as they sing or their faces as they arrive at camp and see their once-a-year friends. For most of these campers, their week at Bethany is their only vacation, the only week when they are truly treated just like anyone else — not as someone who has a disability but as a child of God, loved and cherished for their unique and special abilities or gifts.

This year, on the last day of staff training, before the campers arrived, we celebrated the Eucharist. Our guest preacher was a young man who has been coming to camp for many years, not only as a camper but also as a counselor and who had recently recovered from a critical illness. Zach Wooley is an amazing human being. He has accomplished more than most people without the challenges of a disability, but given that he has limited use of his arms and trunk and that he uses a wheelchair for mobility, his accomplishments put most of us to shame.

Zach reminded me that the relationships that are formed at camp are more than just once-a-year friendships they are a tether that connects us all, and sometimes that tether is our life-line through difficult, scary times. He also reminded me that those relationships — the ones between counselors and campers are symbiotic — they are a mutual give and take. The counselors receive as much, if not more, from the campers than they give.

Bishop Kee has used the analogy of gumbo to describe what happens and I can’t offer anything more perfect. A good gumbo always begins with a roux. Flour and fat are stirred and stirred over low heat until the two ingredients come together as chocolate-brown goodness. Then carefully, other ingredients are added, vegetables, okra, seasonings, sometimes chicken, sometimes sausage and sometimes my favorite, crab claws and shrimp. The whole concoction is cooked for hours. Carefully watched and stirred. The end result is one of the most divine inventions of the culinary world. No one ingredient stands out. The initial foundation has welcomed all those different ingredients and the whole pot is home to a blend of delicious wonderful warm love. After a few days of being together, no one is a counselor, no one is a camper, everyone is a child of God, each one uniquely special and important — it’s an image of the Kingdom of God this side of Heaven.

There are many things about the Diocese of Alabama that I consider exceptional and special, but Camp McDowell’s Bethany Village and Special Session will always stand out at the top of the list. I’d like to think that I will spend the rest of my life here, each year for one week, living the way I believe God intended us to live: with respect and admiration for each other’s differences and unique gifts, with unconditional love for each other, singing the Butterfly Song, taking a nap each day after lunch and having milk and cookies before bed each night. Thanks Be to God for our donors and friends and for those who have planned and sweated and sacrificed to make this special place a reality.

To learn more about Special Session visit www.specialsessionalabama.org. Also save the date for “Birmingham’s Got Potential,” a talent show and fundraiser, on September 29, at Cahaba Brewing Company, Birmingham.
Follow Jesus: No Turning Back

The Rev. Judy Quick, Deacon

“I have decided to follow Jesus…no turning back, no turning back.”

(Gospel Hymn)

Bishop Curry led the congregation at the Cathedral of the Incarnation in Baltimore in song and deep commitment to follow Jesus in this broken world. In his homily, Bishop Curry affirmed that the work of Episcopal Relief & Development is indeed a vital dimension of the Jesus Movement of the Episcopal Church. At the annual meeting of Diocesan Coordinators for Episcopal Relief & Development, the messages were clear. Episcopal Relief & Development continues to be the hands, feet, and heart of Jesus as we respond to disasters and rebuild communities throughout the Anglican Communion.

We learned that a key strategy to the transformation of communities is a focus on women and children, ensuring their safety, health, education, and prosperity, through the ongoing work to alleviate hunger, promote health, create economic opportunities, and as always respond to disaster, natural and manmade. We continue to use the sound methodology of Asset Based Community Development, guiding local communities, working with the local church and their partners, to discover and embrace their God-given gifts, human, social, physical, spiritual assets for the transformation of lives, both of individuals and of the community.

We encourage parishes to consider exploring this methodology as well. To learn more, visit www.calledto-transformation.org. Also, we remind parishes to continue to complete the Episcopal Asset Map. This process will reveal your own God-given gifts for ministry and service and will also let the world know of your mission and ministries. The Episcopal Asset Map is becoming a powerful tool for Evangelism. Visit https://edal.episcopal-assetmap.org/

Thank you for your ongoing support of Episcopal Relief & Development and thank you for your ongoing prayers:

Dear People of God:

Jesus taught his disciples that what we do for the least of God’s children we do for Christ; likewise what we do not do for the least of God’s children we do not do for our Lord Christ. Let us pray, therefore, that as we walk the way of the Jesus Movement with compassion, mercy, justice, and reconciliation in our hearts, we may inspire the Church and the world to follow in his footsteps to help bring healing to our hurting world as we serve our Lord Christ in the other.

For More Information on Episcopal Relief & Development, visit www.episcopalrelief.org or contact the Rev. Judy Quick, Deacon (jgquick@bellsouth.net) or Marilyn Lands at marilynlands@gmail.com.

Haiti Medical Mission Update

The Rev. Bob Serio, Deacon

The team from Nativity Huntsville spent the week of April 29 to May 6 in Croix de Bouquet, a suburb of Port au Prince. The team members included Lisa Caprio, Debbie Collette, Rebecca Epps, Lisa Hardy, Liz Hardy, Libby Potter and Bob Serio. The team assisted the regular medical teams supported by the Lespwa Timoun Nutrition Clinic. With Dr. Claude, a Haitian doctor, and a team of Haitian nurses and pharmacy workers the team saw about 600 patients in 4 clinics, including the remote villages of Boucan Boyer, Nan Gallette and Crochu. Most of these communities are over an hour away from medical facilities by car and an all day trip by walking. In Crochu, the team saw about 100 women in various stages of pregnancy and for many this was the only medical care they have received during their pregnancy.

The Diocese of Alabama has been in partnership with Pere Valdema and his wife Carmel through the work of the Lewpwa Timoun clinic for over 10 years, and this partnership continues with the help of Light from Light, an NGO partnership, and our Diocese. To learn more about Light from Light, please visit www.lightfromlight.me.
Our Companion Diocese Relationship with the Diocese of the Virgin Islands continues to deepen. In April, five Virgin Island clergy, the Right Reverend Ambrose Gumbs, the Reverends Esther Georges, Gregory Gibson, Ian Rock and Sandra Malone joined Alabama clergy at the April Clergy Retreat at Camp McDowell. At Camp, we discussed clergy exchanges and parish to parish relationships. The Rev. Gregory Gibson joined the parish retreat of the Church of the Nativity in Huntsville and visited at the parish on Sunday. Bishop Gumbs, the Reverends Georges, Rock, and Malone and the Reverends Judy Quick and Kathi Jacob, Deacons, met at The Abbey with John Poole, President-Elect of the Alabama Cursillo to discuss the implementation of Cursillo in the Virgin Islands in 2018.

During May and June, women partnerships flourished. Memorial Day weekend, the Virgin Islands ECW invited Alabama ECW President and Vice-President, the Reverends Andrea Peacock and Pearl Slay, Deacons, to their annual meeting, this year at St. Mary’s Episcopal Church on Virgin Gorda, with the theme of the Five Marks of Mission. Slay served as deacon for the Opening Eucharist. Peacock was the guest speaker. Peacock noted that “we were treated to wonderful home-cooked meals at the Cathedral (on St. Thomas) and in the homes of the ECW Board members. We had a lovely time and are truly thankful for their gracious hospitality.” An invitation was extended to the Virgin Islands’ ECW leadership to attend the Fall ECW Conference in the Diocese of Alabama.

On June 16, the Reverend Catherine Collier led a spiritual retreat at Bluebeard’s Castle on St. Thomas for the women clergy in the Virgin Islands. The Reverend Mary Bea Sullivan was instrumental in the preparation of the retreat, but a family emergency prevented her attendance. She plans to return for a follow-up retreat. One of the Virgin Island clergywomen wrote: “Thank you for the retreat. We all enjoyed it. It was a great day to get together and we look forward to spending more time sharing.”

Other activities:
July:
Emily Collette Linton, Senior High Youth Director and Seminarian, St. Mary’s on the Highlands, Birmingham, will lead a team of youth and adults, to share fun, begin new friendships, and serve the local community on Tortola with St. Paul’s Mission and with youth from other Virgin Islands parishes.

Ongoing:
Plans continue for a revitalization of Cursillo in the Virgin Islands.
Clergy Exchanges are welcome. Visiting clergy to parishes on the Virgin Islands will have lodging. In addition to serving at the altar and preaching, visiting clergy will be invited to offer educational experiences for congregational development.
Parish to Parish relationships are beginning, such as St. Mary’s on the Highlands with St. Paul’s Mission Tortola, St. John’s St. Croix with the Church of the Nativity Huntsville, and others in discernment. Parish to Parish partnerships are a wonderful way to become more deeply engaged. As you get to know the congregation, you may discover similar interests and gifts for all ages. Mission projects may emerge as you engage each other in your shared missions. There are opportunities for small, medium, and large parishes.

Pray about this additional possibility to discover the joys of walking with Christ together.

And continue to pray for our Companion Dioceses of Alaska and the Virgin Islands:

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

For more information, contact the Reverend Judy Quick, Deacon (jgquick@bellsouth.net; (h) 205.669.6862; (c) 770.366.4034)
Collect for Reconciliation: Kind and gracious God, in Christ you entered the pain and conflicts of humankind, and in Christ you were reconciling the world to yourself. Help us to rely on your reconciling presence in the resentment and enmity we suffer in families, communities, and nations. Nourish within us confidence that in your compassion all our wounds are vulnerable to healing and strengthen us for the movements of repentance, forgiveness, and restoration. As we journey toward your wholeness, form us in the mission of reconciliation you have entrusted to us that others may hear your appeal to be reconciled with God and neighbor through the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the friend and savior of the world. Amen.

From our Catechism we know that the mission of the Church is to restore all people in unity with God and each other in Christ. For a time such as this, the theme of the Global Episcopal Mission Network’s Global Mission Conference was “Reconciliation: God’s Mission and Ours.” Bethany Village at Camp McDowell was the perfect setting for this conference as the Bethany Tee-Shirt proclaims, it is the way the world could be.

The Rt. Rev. Mark MacDonald, National Indigenous Anglican Bishop of the Anglican Church of Canada and Ms. Heidi Kim, the Episcopal Church’s Staff Officer for Racial Reconciliation, reminded the participants that RELATIONSHIP comes first, before any hope of reconciliation can begin. As we develop a connection and acknowledge the other, we can then discuss the hard truths, the pain. We can begin to listen to each other. We must know the other, we can then discuss the hard truths, and in Christ reconciliation can begin. As we develop a connection and acknowledge the other, we can then discuss the hard truths, the pain. We can begin to listen to each other. In Christ reconciliation can begin.

The Rev. Dr. Phil Groves, leader and trainer of the Zulu Indaba process for reconciliation, asserts that “all mission is local mission, but it needs the partnership of others, and all global mission is expressed locally.” He reminded the participants that as we engage in mission, we are to be the guest. We are to receive hospitality as well as offer hospitality.

The guests for the conference did receive abundant Southern hospitality, thanks to the awesome Hospitality Team of Deacons CJ Van Slyke and Kathi Jacob, Judy Quick, Christine Mercer and Fiona Watts from the Diocesan Department of Mission and Outreach, and the amazing staff at Camp McDowell. The Hospitality Team organized sponsors for the Welcome Bags and for the four receptions. Thank you to the Department of Mission and Outreach, St. Thomas, Birmingham, and St. Mary’s on the Highlands as well as Golden Flake, Bud’s Best Cookies, Milo’s Famous Sweet Tea, Coca Cola of Birmingham, Rev Birmingham, and Birmingham Magazine.

The team organized volunteers to welcome our guests at the airport, to help with registration and with the receptions. A very warm thank you to the airport volunteers: Deacon Lou Thibodaux, Virginia Hillhouse, Ginger Savage, Lois Chaplin, Allen Mercer; registration volunteers Deacon Lynn Bullard, Lisa Gruner, and the Rev. Marge Doyle; and reception volunteers Deacons Gerri Aston and Mary Groff.

Hospitality continued throughout the Closing Eucharist at St. Francis Chapel where our awesome musicians Dwight Williams, Shaun Pezant, and Sam Pointer enhanced the sacred space with worship music. The Rev. CJ Van Slyke served as deacon. In his homily, Bishop Sloan affirmed the message of mission as relationship.

In addition to hospitality, the Diocese of Alabama offered workshop leadership. Christine Mercer (Honduras mission team leader) joined Bill Kunkle (Executive Director of the Dominican Development Group) to lead the short-term mission workshop. Judy Quick (Chair, Companion Diocese Commission) joined Martha Alexander (Province IV Companion Diocese Coordinator) to lead a workshop on Companion Diocese Relationships. Maggie Johnston led a workshop on the Environmental Reconciliation: Raising Environmental Awareness and Responsibility.

Christine Mercer was elected to the GEMN Board of Directors. Congratulations, Christine!!!

So many participants commented on the beautiful campus and accommodations of Bethany Village. Others said the conference was an excellent opportunity to meet and share with others of similar interest.

Learn more about the Conference and 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 Reverend Judy Quick, Deacon, (jgquick@bellsouth.net) or consult www.diocalamissions.org/mission-outreach.html.
A Reflection on the ECW Convention in the Diocese of the Virgin Islands

The Rev. Andrea Peacock, Deacon and ECW Diocesan President

Hello summertime! A time when the living is easier and life slows down. The Episcopal Church Women have been busy this year, on the road and in the air going to many places to represent our diocese. This includes a visit to the Virgin Islands. Now that’s a place where it is perpetually summer, and the living is easy and slow. Pearl Slay and I were invited by the ECW of the Diocese of the Virgin Islands to attend their Annual ECW Convention on Memorial Day weekend. We so enjoyed our visit with our ECW sisters of the Virgin Islands, and made many new friends. We learned that women in the Virgin Islands and Alabama have the very same issues, concerns and dreams for the ECW on the local and diocesan levels.

The convention was held at St. Mary’s in Virgin Gorda, BVI, which we reached by ferry. On Friday night Pearl served as deacon at an opening Eucharist service, and later a banquet was held and we were treated to music from a steel drum musician during our dinner. On Saturday the convention continued and I was surprised to learn that I was the guest speaker. At least I knew ahead of time that I was to speak.

We were treated to yummy home cooked meals and the views from their homes were spectacular. I think one of our favorite treats was a drink called “coquito”; made with canned milk, crème of coconut and rum. Normally it’s a Christmas drink, but they made an exception for this occasion. Thankfully, they gave us the recipe to enjoy back home. One thing we all agreed on was that we love to eat! A gift of an Alabama ECW cook booklet with our favorite Southern recipes and given to the ladies. It is now available on our website (www.alabamaecw.org).

The beauty of this trip was not only in the views and food, but in the people. One of my favorite things was to watch and listen in as children were being dropped off at the Cathedral school and then had assembly in the courtyard. Their sweet voices singing and praying were a sacred gift. Everyone was so polite everywhere we went. Strangers on the sidewalk wished us good morning, afternoon or evening, and the children had the best manners. We were able to get to know our host and share what life is like for them and for us. Through this experience we discovered we had the same type of concerns: getting younger people and children to attend church; caring for the increasing numbers of retired and aging members; and worrying about what the future holds for the church.

We so enjoyed our visit with our ECW sisters of the Virgin Islands, and made many new friends. We learned that women in the Virgin Islands and Alabama have the very same issues, concerns and dreams for the ECW on the local and diocesan levels.

The great thing about our trip was that we got the local experience, not the tourist version, and the hospitality was super. Pearl and I are very grateful to be able to have made this trip. I am excited for our relationship with our Virgin Island ECW sisters and what is to come.
What’s Up with Faith Formation in 2017 and beyond? It’s an exciting time but requires some thinking and planning!

Kathy Graham, Lifelong Christian Formation Coordinator

If you are a part of the Builder, Baby Boomer, Generation X, Millennials, or iGeneration- this pertains to you! (FYI- that’s everyone!)

In June, several formation leaders from our diocese attended a week long conference at Kanuga in North Carolina. The theme of the conference was “Faith Formation in an Era of Change: Re-imagining Faith Formation for the 21st century.” The keynote speaker was John Robert from Lifelong Faith Associates and author of several books: Faith Formation 2020, Reimagining Faith Formation for the 21st Century, Seasons of Adult Faith Formation, and Families at the Center of Faith Formation. Find more about him and great resources at www.lifelongfaith.com.

The workshops offered by various leaders offered more information and insight in rethinking our approach to formation in our churches. The nine of us who attended this conference will be working this summer and throughout the next year or two, along with the Department of Christian Formation, to implement and share with our diocese what was learned. We would like your input, so we have included here a simple assessment tool for you to take so that you may learn more about your church and identify areas you would like to know more about. The department would love to hear from you after using the assessment. You can email me at kgraham@dioala.org. Find the assessment here: http://bit.ly/2tqeb7w.

One of the main themes that came up in each session was that parents and families are the most important influence on the social and religious lives of their children, youth and emerging adults. With this reminder we were called to ask ourselves how are our worshipping congregations equipping and supporting these families and parents in this important task – not just by what we offer on Sunday mornings?

We learned 8 strategies to use to make families the center of faith formation and provide the building blocks for developing a comprehensive plan for family faith formation. These eight strategies are:

1. Discovering God in Everyday Life- guiding families to notice and reflect on God's presence in their daily life. (See the resources at www.faith5.org)
2. Forming Faith at Home through the Life Cycle- equipping and resourcing families to practice their faith at home through prayer, devotions, reading the Bible, rituals, milestone celebrations, service, learning, and more.
3. Forming Faith through Milestones- celebrating one-time milestones and annual milestones through experiences at home and in the congregation that includes activities of naming, equipping, blessing, gifting and reinforcing (with activities and resources).
4. Celebrating Seasonal events through the Year- celebrating church year seasons and calendar seasons at home, church and in the community with resources provided.
5. Encountering God in The Bible through the Year- reading and studying the Bible through Sunday worship and the lectionary, learning experiences, and at-home devotions and reading with activities and resources provided.
6. Connecting Families Intergenerationally- developing intergenerational programs and experiences that engage families with other generations through learning, service, community life, etc.
7. Developing a Strong Family Life- cultivating a strong family life and strengthening developmental relationships through parent programs, whole family programs, family mentors, life cycle support groups, and online activities and resources.
8. Empowering Parents and Grandparents- developing parenting competencies and skills, promoting faith growth of parents, and developing the faith forming skills of parents.

Our churches today have the most generations concurrently represented than any other time in history! In our congregations there are those from the Builders generation (born before 1946), Baby boomers (born 1946-1960), Generation X (born 1961-1979), Millennials (born 1980-1999), and the iGeneration (born 2000-present). With all of these ages and stages of life in our parishes we need a faith formation plan that helps us provide comprehensive formation throughout the lifespan. We need to be intentional about
The Ministry of Acolytes

The Rev. Kelley Hadlow, Deacon

I can remember eagerly awaiting my tenth birthday so that I could finally go through the training to be an acolyte. I was excited to wear a robe and to learn to tie a cincture. When the day finally came, I put on my robe, tied my belt, excitedly picked up a flag, joined the procession, took my seat, and waited for the end of the service so that I could do all that in reverse. That was the beginning of my ministry as an acolyte and was the beginning of my love of the movement and rhythm of liturgy.

Since that time, I have served as an acolyte as a youth and adult. I have also served as an “acolyte master,” both as a lay person and as a deacon. Working with young people and adults to incorporate them into the life of service in worship is perhaps one of my favorite things. No matter the size of the church or the style of liturgy, developing and incorporating a ministry of acolytes is a wonderful way to invite youth and adults into the life of the liturgy.

The term acolyte comes from the Greek word ἀκόλουθος, meaning “follower” or “attendant,” and those words sum up nicely the work of the acolytes. Acolytes date to at least the 200’s C.E., and began as one of the levels of ministry required for those preparing to be ordained. In the days before modern lighting, acolytes’ chief responsibility was tending and carrying the candles needed to illuminate the worship space and texts. Now with modern conveniences, the service of acolytes in the contemporary church can be quite varied. Depending on the size of the parish and the style of worship, acolytes can number from one to a half dozen or more.

A basic team of acolytes and their traditional duties are:

- **Caring relationships**
- **Celebrating the liturgical seasons**
- **Celebrating rituals and milestones**
- **Learning the Christian story and vision**
- **Praying and spiritual formation** — learning spiritual practices
- **Reading and studying the Bible**
- **Learning and working for justice**
- **Worshiping God with the faith community**

These processes can be used across multiple environments (church, home, digital, community) to develop methodologies to connect and engage everyone on the lifespan. Start your exploration by asking these questions:

1. **How are we doing as individuals and families as followers of Christ?**
2. **How are our faith and worshipping communities doing to equip and prepare individuals and families for discipleship and their lifelong faith journey?**
3. **How can the Department of Christian Formation assist and be a part of your mission and ministry?**

Use the assessment found here: http://bat.ly/2oVLoUE.
Let us know! Email Kathy Graham,kgraham@dioala.org.

The Rev. Allison Carmody dressed for a trip to Hogwarts for the intergenerational night on “Finding God in Harry Potter”

There are eight essential processes of forming faith – that promote faith growth and discipleship with age groups, families, and the whole faith community. These eight processes help provide a framework for comprehensive faith formation and the content-knowledge and practices of the Christian faith.

I can remember eagerly awaiting my tenth birthday so that I could finally go through the training to be an acolyte. I was excited to wear a robe and to learn to tie a cincture. When the day finally came, I put on my robe, tied my belt, excitedly picked up a flag, joined the procession, took my seat, and waited for the end of the service so that I could do all that in reverse. That was the beginning of my ministry as an acolyte and was the beginning of my love of the movement and rhythm of liturgy.

Since that time, I have served as an acolyte as a youth and adult. I have also served as an “acolyte master,” both as a lay person and as a deacon. Working with young people and adults to incorporate them into the life of service in worship is perhaps one of my favorite things. No matter the size of the church or the style of liturgy, developing and incorporating a ministry of acolytes is a wonderful way to invite youth and adults into the life of the liturgy.

The term acolyte comes from the Greek word ἀκόλουθος, meaning “follower” or “attendant,” and those words sum up nicely the work of the acolytes. Acolytes date to at least the 200’s C.E., and began as one of the levels of ministry required for those preparing to be ordained. In the days before modern lighting, acolytes’ chief responsibility was tending and carrying the candles needed to illuminate the worship space and texts.

Now with modern conveniences, the service of acolytes in the contemporary church can be quite varied. Depending on the size of the parish and the style of worship, acolytes can number from one to a half dozen or more.

A basic team of acolytes and their traditional duties are:

- **Caring relationships**
- **Celebrating the liturgical seasons**
- **Celebrating rituals and milestones**
- **Learning the Christian story and vision**
- **Praying and spiritual formation** — learning spiritual practices
- **Reading and studying the Bible**
- **Learning and working for justice**
- **Worshiping God with the faith community**

These processes can be used across multiple environments (church, home, digital, community) to develop methodologies to connect and engage everyone on the lifespan. Start your exploration by asking these questions:

1. **How are we doing as individuals and families as followers of Christ?**
2. **How are our faith and worshipping communities doing to equip and prepare individuals and families for discipleship and their lifelong faith journey?**
3. **How can the Department of Christian Formation assist and be a part of your mission and ministry?**

Use the assessment found here: http://bat.ly/2oVLoUE.
Let us know! Email Kathy Graham,kgraham@dioala.org.

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Resources for Preparing Those Serving in Worship Ministries

Find acolyte handbooks here: http://www.dioalaministries.org/liturgy--music.html

FROM CHURCH PUBLISHING:

**Acolyte Leader’s Resource Guide**, Donna H. Barthel  
This guide provides details on the duties of each acolyte position, followed by suggestions for dealing with training, scheduling, maintaining rosters, budgeting, writing reports for the vestry, and general supervision of acolytes and the program.

**A Manual for Acolytes**, Dennis G. Michno  
A valuable handbook for the server at all liturgical celebrations. Complete with illustrations, this volume covers in careful detail all the responsibilities and duties of the acolyte.

**The New Altar Guild Book**, Barbara Gent and Betty Sturges  
Offers a lively blend of liturgical history, sacramental theology, and practical hints to help parish altar guilds carry out their ministry. Covers everything from vestments, vessels, linens, hangings, flowers, and candles to bread and wine, housekeeping, and preparation for worship.

**The Complete Training Course For Altar Guilds**, B. Don Taylor  
This course offers the best education available to altar guild members and is also extremely informative for all laity. This comprehensive training course presents “modules” of easy-to-digest information, which include everything any member would need to know about what are humorously termed the “props”, the “stage”, the “holy hardware”, the “costumes”, and other aspects of the Passion Play we all attend on Sunday.

**The Cup of Salvation: A Manual for Eucharistic Ministers**, Beth Wickenberg Ely  
In the Episcopal Church, the term Eucharistic Minister is used to denote someone who assists the priest in administering the Eucharist, often handling the wine. Ely offers historical perspective on this ministry, a theological overview, practical tips, plus an invitation to engage in the spiriutal dimensions of serving one’s local congregation as a Eucharistic Minister. She concludes the book with a chapter on how to establish this ministry in a local parish.

FROM AUGSBURG FORTRESS:

**Acolytes and Servers: A Worship Handbook**, Gerald Spice  
As some of the most visible participants in the worship service, acolytes and servers play a crucial supporting role in liturgy. This readable, practical handbook helps provide background, history, and useful aids for filling these vital roles with vibrancy, depth and purpose.

**Leading Worship Matters: A Sourcebook for Preparing Worship Leaders**, Melinda A. Quivik  
A comprehensive guide with practical, succinct, easy-to-use tools and resources to support, plan, execute, and evaluate lay worship leadership development. More than 30 contributors have provided helps and training materials for assisting ministers, readers, intercessors, acolytes, ushers, greeters, communion ministers, altar guild, tech ministers, musicians, children’s sermon ministers, and those who care for the worship space. Practical help and support is also provided for both new and seasoned worship leaders through a reproducible library of helpful topics. Includes a CD-ROM and DVD.

FROM CHURCH NEXT:

**Introducing the Altar Guild with Hobey Hinchman**  
They’re the unseen, but irreplaceable ministers of beauty and decorum; the altar guild. Few ministries have such a deep and lasting impact on our spirituality as the members of this group who tend to the aesthetics of our common life. In this course, Hobey Hinchman, past president of the National Altar Guild Association, teaches us the basics of this time-honored ministry.

**Lay Eucharistic Ministry 101**  
Learn the hows and whys of serving wine at communion. Episcopal priest Susan Anslow Williams gives you a wonderful introduction, and refresher, on this important lay ministry.

For questions about any of these resource contact Kathy Graham, kgraham@dioala.org.
Susanna Whitsett and Stratt Byars, coordinators of programs and retreats in Bethany Village and on Clear Creek, along with their ever-energetic summer staff teams, have had a busy, demanding, fulfilling, amazing and unforgettable summer...and it’s not over yet! They’ve managed, once again, to find and Foster the “it factor” that makes us all want to come back again and again – and to bring our children and our grandchildren back again and again to Camp McDowell so that we can all get a little taste of living how the world could be in God’s Backyard.

Thank you Susanna Whitsett & Stratt Byars for keeping the magic going through Summer Camp programs!

The Tate-Davis family is one of many that includes multi-generational friends of camp! Pictured here: Tate Davis with his Uncle, Robert Tate, and children, Palmer, Mason & Tate Davis, Jr. pick-up day after Elementary 1.

Garrett Busby and Anslee Simon were the first campers to sign the 2017 autograph banner that will be made into a postcard at the end of the summer.

Another Spectacular Summer
....and it’s not over yet!

Thank you to our awesome Summer Staff
MEC Continues to be an annual highlight to students and teachers alike!

By Jen Kapnick, MEC Director

Mcdowell Environmental Center provides an experience that's impossible to find in any classroom of a school. We believe experiential classes help students better understand the natural world, leading them to a sense of responsibility for it. Our hands-on curriculum is focused on basic ecological concepts and our classroom is the great outdoors. Our program gives students the greatest opportunity to learn about themselves and their environment.

We had over 120 schools visit us during the 2016-2017 school year. Over 7,000 participants hiked the beautiful trails of Camp McDowell, canoed amazing Clear Creek, and bonded with their peers and classmates. We didn't stop the fun in May after school was out, but continued to host a few more groups throughout June: Tarrant Elementary, Girls Inc. of Birmingham, and Project Horseshoe Farms of Greensboro. They enjoyed rainy, unusually cool weather which was a great relief while hiking and exploring the woods. Even the most soak-your-socks days didn't get their spirits down!

We had a couple of great adult groups join us as well during the month of June. MEC and McDowell Farm School hosted our annual Teacher Advisory Board (TAB) meeting to grow our organizations. Many of our teachers have been bringing their students for upward of 10+ years and have a deep investment in the betterment of our curriculum and programmatic on-goings. We are so grateful that the TAB crew joins us each year to hear our new ideas and provide us with feedback. A reward for their hardwork and dedication was swimming at the Bethany Village pool and enjoying some much needed R&R in the famous Camp McDowell rocking chairs.

We invited teachers and educators from all over the South in mid-June for our workshop Rocking Inquiry Based Science (RIBS): Helping Teachers Make Geology Place Based and Fun. We hiked into the sandstone canyons of Camp McDowell and use inquiry based learning to explore and gather facts about what created them. Educators not only learned the geology of Alabama, but how to transform their classroom into a more creative and fun environment.

If you would like to start the school year off with a bang, and check off some COS and NGSS standards while having loads of fun, please give us a call or send us an email: (205) 387-1806 ext. 108, or pc@campmcdowell.com.

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Love in Action at the Farm!

By Ali Papp, MFS Director and Lydia Atkins, MFS Farmer/Instructor

Photos by Lydia with Special Session Bethany Summer Crew

We have had another fruitful and beautiful summer! We spent the month of June hosting teacher workshops, collaborating with both Bethany and Clear Creek Summer Camps, and had another magical experience with Special Session campers - some returning to farm care for a second summer in a row.

“Bringing folks onto the farm for both weeks of Special Session was all about community and love in action - from brightening up the dining hall tables with cut flowers, harvesting and preparing green salad and potato salad for lunch, feeding all the animals and milking the goats before breakfast, weeding the garden beds and working on the compost...to processing herbs for future cooking classes this fall. Everyone helped out in their own unique way and proved there are many ways to express pride and gratitude for this community” - Lydia Atkins

We also experienced that love in action through the hard work of the first official Bethany Summer staff. In between camp program sessions, AG, Allie, Bethany, Jack, Mary Alice, Savannah, Michael and Kurn woke up with us before breakfast to care for the animals, and got messy the rest of the day. We played with kids on the farm, harvested and processed crops for the dining halls, and trudged around in the mud even in the rainiest of days. This motivated team (and help of many hands) gave us the opportunity to complete the installation of more rain barrels throughout the farm, work harder at finishing a new tool shed, get our black soldier system alive, and weed oh so many garden beds! So many vegetables were delivered in our electric Jeep as well; working towards sustainability by loving our earth, one ride at a time!

This final month of the summer, we retreat from the heat to confirm our plans for the upcoming school year.

We learned a lot through the growth of our program last year. We jumped from 1764 total participants in the year 2016 to educating 1642 participants during our Spring 2017 season alone! Our gardens have grown and improved to make sure that all students still get their hands in the dirt, fulfill meaningful planting projects for the farm school community, and have enough food for everyone to experience the joy of harvesting and cooking food during our farm to table classes. This fall, we will host another 1000 participants with twenty schools on the calendar, and even more for 2018. Our garden beds are awaiting the young footsteps, and hoping for the cooler days to come and excited for the action that is to come.

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Would you be willing to DONATE your spectacular, high quality photos of camp to camp - like this one, from Zachary Nichols?

We’re looking for excellent pictures of interesting places, camp landmarks, and fun images that could be used for postcards that would be sold in the Camp Store. Credit for any photos printed will be listed on the back-side of the postcard.

Please include your full name, along with a brief description of the photo, to: wonderful@campmcdowell.com

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Camp McDowell’s Newest Ministry…
Come as you are.

For several years, the staff at Camp McDowell has often been asked by guests if there are Sunday church services at camp they could attend. We are happy to finally be able to answer, “YES!”

As of Sunday, May 14th, guests, visitors, and residents of camp and the surrounding areas are invited and welcome to attend a regular church service at 9 a.m. every Sunday in the Chapel of St. Francis, led by the Reverend Tim Murphy (a.k.a. Father Tim). This service is camp’s latest addition to its ever-growing list of solid, community-centered ministries.

Services will be officiated by Father Tim Murphy, a resident of Jasper, Alabama (about 20 minutes from Camp) and recently retired after being the rector of St. Mary’s Episcopal Church in Jasper for the past nine years. Father Tim says, “I grew up going to Camp McDowell. I was a camper, a counselor, a ‘work boy,’ then a program director of several camps over the years, and I’m excited to come back to ‘God’s Backyard’ to do these services.” Father Tim will provide most of the music himself with the help of his acoustic guitar but welcomes others to join in. He says, “I’ve always been spiritually fed by some of the old tunes like ‘Do Lord,’ ‘I Come to the Garden,’ and ‘Swing Low,’ but also like to incorporate some of the songs we do at camp that a lot of people are familiar with.”

Father Tim describes the goal of the services as, “casual, fun, and uplifting.” Whitney Moore, McDowell’s Interim Director, explains, “Often, guests who are weekend retreaters with us ask if we have church services on Sunday. It is a need we have heard for years. Just because you don’t bring your “Sunday Best” to camp doesn’t mean you can’t come to the service. Come as you are!” She continues, “We expect to have some local “regulars” attend, but also expect general attendance to vary widely, depending on the number of Saturday overnight guests. No matter the numbers, we’re excited to add the Sunday service and meet the needs of our growing community.”

Plan on joining us at 9am the next time you’re at camp - All are Welcome!

The next chapter begins...
An update on the search for the next Executive Director of Camp McDowell

As the Department of Camp McDowell and the Search Committee conduct a comprehensive, national search for an Executive Director, Whitney Moore is contracted to serve for up to one year as the Interim Executive Director. Rev. Mark Johnston officially retired May 31st after being the Executive Director for 26 years.

For those of you who have not had a chance to meet Whitney yet, here’s a little info about her:

Whitney grew up in Fayette, Alabama and attended the University of Alabama where she received a bachelor’s degree in Communications. She was a member of the United States Peace Corps, serving 24 months in The Gambia, West Africa. She returned and became an instructor at McDowell Environmental Center. After a short stint in Huntsville, AL, she returned to McDowell in 2014 as Guest Services Director.

Whitney has been Mark’s “Right Hand” for the last year and a half, serving as the Assistant Director and managing all the daily operations of the organization. As Interim Executive Director, Whitney will keep moving Camp McDowell forward, continuing her collaboration with camp program leadership, the Department of Camp McDowell, and with all Friends of Camp to make camp the way the world could be.

Come Back to Camp!

August
4 – 6 Summer Camp: Primary II
10 – 13 Folk School: Boat Building
18 – 20 1980’s Camper/Counselor Reunion

September
7 – 10 Cursillo
9 – 10 Cursillo Music Workshop
15 – 17 Folk School: Garment Sewing with African Prints
15 – 17 Folk School: Intermediate Blacksmithing
15 – 17 Folk School: Labyrinth Workshop
15 – 17 Folk School: Traditional Food Preservation
21 – 23 Enneagram Training
22 – 24 Camp McDowell’s Women’s Retreat
29 – 1 Deaf Family’s Retreat

October
5 – 8 Cursillo
7 – 8 Cursillo Staff Training
12 – 15 Folk School: Banjo I
12 – 15 Folk School: Banjo II
12 – 15 Folk School: Fiddle I
12 – 15 Folk School: Fiddle II
12 – 15 Folk School: Gee’s Bend Quilting
12 – 15 Folk School: Guitar
12 – 15 Folk School: Harmony Singing
12 – 15 Folk School: Old-Time Repertoire
12 – 15 Folk School: Ukulele
22 – 27 Folk School: Painting with Kentuck Artists in Residence
25 – 29 Fall Fling

November
3 – 5 Folk School: Songwriting
3 – 5 Folk School: Gambo Academy
3 – 5 Folk School: Intermediate Blacksmithing
3 – 5 Folk School: No Fuss Embroidery
3 – 5 Clergy’s Spouse Retreat (Spouse’s only)
17 – 19 Family Farm Camp

December
27 – 30 Christmas Conference

For more information about opportunities to come to camp, visit the camp website, follow camp on social media, or give camp a call!

Camp McDowell’s Newest Ministry…

Keep up with Camp!

www.campmcdowell.com | 205-387-1806

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@mcdowellfarmerschool
@alabamafolkschool
@thecampstore

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Book Program: What it is & how can YOU make a difference?

By Danielle Dunbar & Kate Murphy

Memily Colvin, a member of All-Saints, Birmingham, started the Black Belt Book Program over 10 years ago in 2006 and, since then, has helped get tens of thousands of books into the hands of thousands of kids who otherwise might never own their own books. Memily has always believed that, “Education is the great equalizer.” Memily is passionate about books, loves to read, and has a heart to share her passion with others. Her aim with the Black Belt Book Program is to get as many books as possible into the hands of as many children as possible of kids in the Black Belt region of our state.

She accomplishes her goal with the help of the hundreds of Friends of Camp McDowell who bring their gently used books to camp to donate to the program.

Anyone coming to camp is invited to participate and can drop off their books at the Camp Store where they are then boxed up and counted. Memily coordinates the distribution of the books to communities, classrooms and libraries across the Black Belt region. Even though the majority of books are donated during the summer, everyone is invited to bring books whenever you come to camp throughout the year for any reason.

Memily, a long-time camper and counselor, grew up in the Black Belt and served on Governor Riley’s Black Belt Action Commission. She volunteers with Sawyerville Day Camp and is delighted with the Yellowhammer Literacy Project that was created to address the fact that kids in the area are not proficient in reading.

800+ books have already been donated since summer camp started this year!
The Alabama Folk School: 10 Years & Going Strong!

By Lisa Marie Ryder

The Alabama Folk School at Camp McDowell is home to diverse folk art and music programming. In May, Montgomery-based artist Elana Hagler hosted a week-long plein air painting workshop. Participants ranged from college-age students to retirees. All enjoyed painting outdoors in the crisp spring weather and beautiful setting of Camp McDowell.

June's Youth Folk Camp combined a classic Camp McDowell summer camp experience with instruction in folk art and music. Students studied in the areas of ceramics, farming, fiddle, guitar, mandolin, and oil painting. Students also enjoyed hiking, paddle boating, swimming, campfires, and more.

This fall we have an exciting lineup of workshops. We are thrilled to welcome Washington, D.C. area seamstress, Tisha Thorne, to teach Garment Sewing With Ethnic Prints (Sept. 15-17), where students will sew a skirt and clutch using vibrant fabrics imported from Africa and beyond. Alabama Episcopalian, Mary Ellen Calhoun of St. Luke's Birmingham, will also lead The Labyrinth as a Spiritual Tool workshop (Sept. 15-17) where students will discuss and learn ways to walk and use labyrinths.

In October, we hosted Joni & Friends; a precursor to Hope Heals is a camp where a counselor is paired with a camper who has special needs, and the whole family of that camper have used its facilities and grounds. Before June was over, we had hosted Special Session and Hope Heals Camp. Hope Heals is a camp where a counselor is paired with a camper who has special needs, and the whole family of that camper is invited to spend a week at camp. It was the first year for the group, and they reached maximum capacity. We are as excited to see the future of this ministry unfold as we are to have an important place in that future.

In July, we hosted Joni & Friends; a precursor to Hope Heals Camp. They filled Bethany Village, including our recently completed seventh lodge. We are so excited to have them back for their third consecutive summer, and to see the fruits of the labor that built Bethany Village. The high quality of facilities and stellar services provided in Bethany Village for groups like Special Session, Hope Heals Camp, and Joni & Friends makes their stay at Camp McDowell truly unique and memorable.

Given that Bethany Village still feels new to many people, I’m often asked questions about our capacity and about the number of people Camp McDowell can now hold. I’m glad to tell them that we’re now the largest camp and conference center in the Episcopal Church. What’s more important to me, however, is not how many people we can now hold, but that we can accommodate and embrace people with all types of needs. More than ever before, our focus is on becoming more of the way the world could be.

Camp McDowell is always changing. Over the years, we’ve grown in capacity and expanded our capabilities. Through it all, we have tried to remember who we are and what we stand for. You, the Camp McDowell family, are an essential part of helping us discover and rediscover what that truly means in an ever-changing world. We walk into the fall of 2017 knowing we still have a lot of work ahead of us, but we walk into it knowing also that the work we’re doing is and ought to be work that shrinks the spaces between people, unifies what is divided, and makes more evident the closeness of the Kingdom of God to us all.

Conference Center Super Summer Recap!

By Lee Auman

As this summer comes to an end, we’re thrilled to look back at one of the Conference Center’s busiest seasons and realize the positive impact the conference center has had on the hundreds of people that have used its facilities and grounds. Before June was over, we had hosted Special Session and Hope Heals Camp. Hope Heals is a camp where a counselor is paired with a camper who has special needs, and the whole family of that camper is invited to spend a week at camp. It was the first year for the group, and they reached maximum capacity.

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Magnolia Nature School Celebrates Successful First School Year

When Maggie Johnston and a planning committee met in the spring of 2016 to discuss the possibility and vision of starting Alabama’s first nature preschool at Camp McDowell, the group hoped they could find two teachers and twelve students for the first school year. Madeleine Pearce and Melissa Frederick came on board as the school’s first teachers. The Magnolia Nature Preschool began in August of 2016 with five students. After partnering with Head Start in January, the class grew to twelve students and the school year was an overwhelming success!

The Magnolia Nature School students use everything in God’s Backyard to get Kindergarten ready. Elements of counting, reading readiness, vocabulary and science are learned by-way of discovery while hiking the trails throughout camp, roaming among the farm fields, and splashing along the creeks. The school wasted no time getting involved in the community, earning an honorable mention for their float in the Jasper Christmas parade and being awarded “Best Environmental Educational Community Project” by the Environmental Education Association of Alabama.

The school has continued their program this summer by offering a day camp program that is being attended by 12 children. Everyone is eagerly awaiting the beginning of our second year at Magnolia Nature Preschool! Parents interested in enrolling a child should contact Madeleine Pearce at mcdowellpreschool@campmcdowell.com.

Check out our updates online and join us on social media!
SAWYERVILLE DAY CAMP AND YELLOWHAMMER LEARNING PROGRAM

by Claire Cotten,
Sawyerville Day Camp Executive Director for Development and Communications

Before the session begins, all campers pick out a brand new bathing suit and pool towel. These items are lovingly donated by churches from around the diocese. Thank you!

Every morning, SDC Campers are welcomed off the bus by cheering staff members.

Thanks to the Caring Foundation and Wish2Enrich, two dozen Upper Campers, ages 12-14, were given golf lessons. This was the first time golf was offered at SDC, and the campers loved it!

When counselors go above and beyond, they are rewarded with the honor of wearing the “Ball Out Belt!”

This summer's program theme was “Be Not Afraid.” One day, Middle Campers, ages 9-11, were anointed with oil and reminded that they are Christ's own forever and need not be afraid, because Jesus is with them.

Friends of SDC from Grace, Cullman prepare sandwiches for the staff's lunch. Dozens of parishes prepared tasty and filling meals to fuel the hard-working staff.

At YLP book room is a part of our curriculum that gives the students an opportunity to have one on one help with teachers. They get attentive help and encouragement while reading books of their choice.

At YLP field trip Fridays are always a fun way to get extensive learning outside the classroom! Here is a photo from the May Farm in Greensboro where we got to laugh, play, and learn about insects.

At YLP our curriculum has many subjects, but we love being able to teach our students chess! Teaching chess enables them to use strategy and problem solving skills when it comes to thinking. We build confidence with chess as well as our many other subjects!

At YLP every ten class lessons we test our students to accurately find what reading level they are on. After our first week and ten class days, every single one of our students moved up by at least reading level, if not two or three reading levels! YLP is succeeding and achieving after only a short time with the students!

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LED Lighting at All Saints

Mary Foster, Member of the Diocesan Taskforce for the Stewardship of Creation

Entering the nave of All Saints Episcopal Church in Homewood, you might not notice the lighting. On any given Sunday, most worshippers arrive to hear the words and music, to worship and pray with family and friends. When running efficiently and consistently, the 30 lanterns and 35 spotlights illuminate the nave, quietly contributing to the overall spiritual atmosphere while calling little attention to the energy and maintenance they require.

Lighting the nave, however, is expensive and labor intensive. Bulbs constantly burn out and need to be replaced, a task requiring tall ladders and a trained crew. In addition to the financial cost, traditional bulbs also consume a large quantity of electricity and natural resources. After successfully replacing original fixtures with LED bulbs during a renovation and expansion of the educational space, the nave at All Saints was targeted for an update. Since replacing the lighting in the nave with LED fixtures this spring, All Saints has lowered monthly energy consumption by 18,040 watts. The initial renovation to the education facilities along with the changes to the nave upgraded the majority of the lighting at All Saints. Curry said that the remaining fixtures—about 30 percent of the lighting in the church—eventually will be replaced with LED bulbs.

The decision to change the nave was driven by the need to find something that lasted longer and would allow us to reduce the labor of getting crews to climb the ladders and change the perpetually burned out bulbs,” said the Reverend Dr. Glenda Curry, rector at All Saints. Unlike traditional bulbs which require frequent changes, the LED bulbs have a five-year lifespan. By replacing the original lighting with LED fixtures, All Saints has lowered wattage usage from 19,800 to 1,760 watts in the nave alone. Renovations to the existing building began two years ago in an effort to expand and update educational space. With the promise of energy efficiency and cost reduction, LED fixtures were selected for all new lighting added during the construction. The nave was not included in that project, but was targeted for new lighting once the construction was completed.

While the appearance of the lighting remains the same, the internal sockets and dimmers required rewiring to accommodate LED bulbs. Because the stark white light radiating from some of the earlier LED models would have been as much of a distraction as dark shadows cast by burned out bulbs, Curry said it took some time to find LED bulbs with the soft lighting typical of iridescent bulbs. The new fixtures were installed in the nave just before Easter.

Although the initial cost of purchasing the bulbs and changing out the internal sockets in each fixture totaled nearly $9,500, Curry said they expect to recoup that expenditure in a couple of years. Already they have seen a reduction of about $100 a month in electricity costs, and these savings do not take into account the savings in labor costs to change the bulbs.

Each of the 30 lanterns in the nave contains 12 to 14 bulbs. In addition to the lanterns, the chancel is illuminated by five banks of spotlights. Despite periodic efforts to change all the bulbs at once in hopes of reducing the need for single bulb changes, they found that several bulbs still burned out each month. Twice All Saints has hired a lighting company to change the bulbs.

“If you hire an outside company to change the bulbs, it is a thousand dollars every time,” Curry said. “That was mostly labor. It was a big production. We tried using volunteer labor but that was dangerous and difficult too.”

The spotlights are the most expensive bulbs to replace and they burn out faster than traditional bulbs. “Our 35 spotlights often cost between $13 and $25 each, and we lost about two or three a month, so changing to LED there essentially pays for itself,” said Curry. Because the LED lighting is much cooler than traditional bulbs, Curry said they also expect to see a temperature reduction in the nave which should reduce air conditioning use as well.

The initial renovation to the education facilities along with the changes to the nave upgraded the majority of the lighting at All Saints. Curry said that the remaining fixtures—about 30 percent of the lighting in the church—eventually will be replaced with LED bulbs.

To learn more about the work of the Task Force for the Stewardship of Creation please visit www.dioala.org/creation or contact the Rev. Pamela Payne, Chair, pam.payne34@gmail.com.

Province IV 2017 Synod

In June, Diocese of Alabama deputies and alternates for General Convention travelled to the Province IV 2017 Synod at Kanuga Conference Center near Hendersonville, NC. For two and a half days, 215 participants joined in worship, learning, conversation, and preparation for General Convention next year in Austin, Texas. Province IV is the largest of The Episcopal Church’s nine provinces and gathers two out of the three years of the triennium in Synod in the mountains of western North Carolina.

Middle District

Lay Deputy - Virginia Hillhouse (1st Alt. - Brad Lamonte; 2nd Alt. - Gene McCall)

Southern District
Clergy Deputy - The Rev. Candice Frazer (1st Clergy Alt. - The Rev. Dr. Tommie Watkins, Jr.; 2nd Clergy Alt. - The Rev. Donna Gerold)

Lay Deputy - Anne Kimzey (1st Alt. - Betsy Stallworth; 2nd Alt. - Jim Jolly)

At Large

Lay Deputy - Mark Smith (1st Alt. - Brian Denton-Trujillo; 2nd Alt. - Larry Parton)

Northern District

Lay Deputy - Shari Harrison (1st Alt. - Bingham Edwards; 2nd Alt. - James Harris)

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Diane Brorts
This book is a great tool to use & devotional time with little ones, as it will help you teach them about God, and the included pictures will help start a life of faith.

The Crucifixion, Planning Pathways
Rutledge, 10th anniversary of the bestselling illustrated Rutledge, 10th anniversary of the bestselling illustrated

Emblem of Faith Unbound, Leslie Williams
This biography by Williams profiles Christianity from the beginning, through its persecutions and history with the monarchy, to its ecumenical ties and eventual martyrs.

A Great Cloud of Witnesses
An expanded version of optional commemorations of significant figures in the history of the Episcopal Church.

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A 6 x 9 calendar. Just like all the Liturgical Calendars are in stock now.

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Gumbo Gala 2017—C’est Bon!

The 12th Annual Gumbo Gala, held April 22 at Sloss Furnaces, was the biggest and best to date! With record-breaking attendance, generous sponsors, and talented cook teams, Gumbo Gala raised over $92,000, benefiting the elderly and disabled residents of Episcopal Place.

The 3,200+ attendees enjoyed beautiful weather, tasty gumbo from 36 cook teams, Pogo’s Playground with face painting, bouncy houses, Whiskers the Clown, and a petting zoo including Wednesday the Camel, the Muskrat Art Ramble featuring local artists, fantastic New Orleans jazz music by Margeaux and the Cat’s Meow, and a bodacious Second Line Parade leading up to the awards ceremony.

Teams represented churches, local businesses and corporations, home cooks, and excellent local restaurants. To select the best gumbo in each category, an elite team of judges tasted and re-tasted a wide variety of gumbo from chicken, to seafood, to specialty ingredients. A special group of judges roamed the event seeking out the best costumes, décor, and themes, and attendees voted for their favorites for the coveted People’s Choice Award.

And the winners are: Most Spirit 3rd place Ascension Gumbo Filers, 2nd place Apostles with Fire, and 1st place Charly’s Highlanders of St. Mary’s-on-the-Highlands; Chef’s Choice categories Chicken/Sausage—All Saints Young Adult Krewe, Seafood—LSU Rougaroux Gumbo Krewe, Specialty—Boateng’s Cajun Creations; Gumbo Divine Charly’s Highlanders of St. Mary’s-on-the-Highlands; People’s Choice 3rd place Old Oak Advisors, 2nd place Dodd Law Firm, 1st place Wind Creek Casino and Hotel Wetumpka; and finally Birmingham’s Best Gumbo Backyard Division 3rd place St. Francis of Assisi, 2nd place SPM Property Management, 1st place Charly’s Highlanders of St. Mary’s-on-the-Highlands; and Birmingham’s Best Gumbo Professional Division Dodd Law Firm. A special prize went to Highland Commercial Mortgage as the Top Fund-Raising Team, raising over $4,400 for Episcopal Place.

Episcopal Place is an independent living facility for seniors and disabled adults with limited income. Proceeds from Gumbo Gala help provide services such as transportation, subsidized or free hot lunches, housekeeping for sick or frail residents, enrichment activities, pastoral care, and an emergency relief fund. For more information visit www.episcopalplace.org.

The Abbey Launches St. Martha’s Table Ministry

The Abbey, a coffee shop and worshipping community in the Avondale neighborhood of Birmingham, has launched a new ministry, St. Martha’s Table. St. Martha’s Table is a pay as you can cafe to help those in need of a good meal. In the Gospel of John, Martha, and her siblings, Mary and Lazarus are Jesus’ friends that live in Bethany. After the raising of Lazarus, Martha serves a meal for Jesus and her siblings. Again in the Gospel of Luke, Martha is a servant of hospitality, opening her home and making preparations to host Jesus.

On June 18, members of The Abbey’s worshipping community opened the doors to provide hospitality to the community, including the local homeless community, men from the Jimmie Hale Mission, local Episcopalians, and Abbey regulars. Members of the worshipping community and baristas cooked a delicious Sunday brunch of creamy grits, Conch sausage, roasted vegetables, fresh fruit, and Cronut scones. Volunteers took orders, served food, washed dishes, and simply sat and enjoyed food with guests both new and old. Money was not an obstacle to guests, and folks were only asked to pay what they were able.

Mack Knopf, a member of the worshipping community, found that The Abbey’s greatest example of Christian faith “is how the staff treats homeless persons, and that everyone is greeted with dignity.” The Rev. Katie Rengers describes The Abbey as a place where “the Christian life is lived out in a public space.” It was these experiences that led Stef Sierke, a member of the worshipping community, and Rengers, to begin exploring ways that this ministry of hospitality could be expanded. Exploring models of other “pay as you can” ministries, Sierke and Rengers planned a once a month Sunday brunch. Through welcoming smiles and delicious food, the Abbey community was invited to serve Christ by serving and offering hospitality to all in their neighborhood.

The first St. Martha’s Table was held on Sunday, June 18. About 70 people shared food and conversation that day. Food and supplies were donated by The Abbey and volunteers. The suggested donation for a single meal was $5. Guests were invited to donate $10 to pay for their meal and to give a meal to a neighbor. Funds raised beyond operating costs will go to support The Abbey’s continuing ministry of providing free hot coffee and grilled cheese sandwiches to anyone in need.

To learn upcoming dates for St. Martha’s Table, please like and follow The Abbey on Facebook, www.facebook.com/theabbeybham. If you are interested in volunteering with St. Martha’s Table, please contact Stef Sierke, stefsierke@gmail.com.

The Abbey is a ministry initiative of the Diocese of Alabama. The coffee shop is open Sun.-Friday, 7 a.m. - 7 p.m. (Closed on Saturdays). The worshipping community celebrates Holy Eucharist at 4 p.m. on Sundays. For information about events, reserving meeting space, and catering options, please contact the Rev. Katie Rengers, kvnakamuna@gmail.com, or visit www.theabbeybham.com.
Third Annual Loving Spoonful’s Soup Sale

Liz Fryer

Holy Cross Episcopal School is lovingly supported by the parishes in the Montgomery area. But, in early spring, there is a combination of much love and support and heavenly aromas arising out of the three church kitchens preparing containers and containers of soup appropriately named “Loving Spoonful’s Soup Sale”. Quarts of soup sold during Coffee Hour at all three churches help Holy Cross Episcopal School each year—with a quite impressive profit. Men and women of all ages gather together in kitchens, both in their own homes and at the church kitchens as they partner and stir up the most delicious recipes of soup that are highly anticipated each year by very enthusiastic fan base of customers.

The sale boasts one of the most profitable fundraisers for the school each year and contributes substantially to the success of the only Episcopal school in central Alabama. This year’s sale was the third annual “Loving Spoonful’s Soup Sale” and it was the greatest success since its inception raising $10,025 to support Holy Cross Episcopal School. Many heart felt thanks go out to all who worked to plan and prepare all the delicious varieties of soups for all to enjoy, and to all who supported this sale with their purchases. St. John’s, Ascension and Holy Comforter come together each year to plan, cook and sell quarts of soup from delicious time-tested and beloved recipes that comfort and warm the chilly early days of spring. Families have made it a cherished tradition to gather around a cozy warm fire and enjoy delicious bowls of this soul soothing, comforting soup together.

Harriet Johnston, a parishioner from Church of the Ascension said, “This is the second year the Church of the Ascension has participated in the Holy Cross Soup Sale, and it has been very successful. This year our parishioners enthusiastically cooked soup in their homes, and the response was overwhelming. We had 60 members donate their time and skills, and we made much more money than last year. The Brotherhood of Saint Andrew made over 60 quarts, and we are especially grateful to this group of men!”

Nancy Boston, a parishioner from the Holy Comforter commented, “Holy Comforter is a smaller parish, but we were mighty this year! We made and sold more soup than we have ever done in the past and so excited and proud to present Holy Cross Episcopal School a much larger amount than we have ever been able to contribute since the beginning. All of the soups we prepare are popular sellers, but this year our Chicken Noodle Soup was a different recipe and we were told it was the best Chicken Noodle Soup those who purchased it said they had ever tasted. Of course the Santa Fe and Collard Green soups are always so good and popular sellers, but the Holy Comforter cooks just out did themselves this year!”

Parishioners at St. John’s gathered together in the kitchen at the church and prepared quart and after quart of their delicious soup that they have been making for several years. One in particular, “Mike’s Vegetable & Beef Soup” must be ordered early because that is perhaps the most popular variety and most in demand each year, and the love is palpable that is put in as each quart is prepared. Jim Bennett, a parishioner from St. John’s proudly proclaimed, “Loving Spoonful’s is a great project in so many ways. Those of us who cook get to do something we really enjoy doing. The people who are generous enough to buy our products get to enjoy some wonderful soups. Holy Cross School gets a really good donation. What could be better?”

So, as Ludwig van Beethoven once said, “Only the pure in heart can make a good soup” and as we learned through the Sermon on the Mount as Jesus taught us, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God”. And Holy Cross Episcopal School is indeed blessed beyond measure.

Hero Central: Shared VBS at St. John’s Decatur

Anticipating the uncertainty that is usually created by construction and improvements, St. John’s Decatur partnered in a unique way with Westminster Presbyterian Church. Sally Marsh, Director of Children’s Ministries at St. John’s, attended school with Westminster’s Education Director, Jane Harper Rogers. Marsh and Rogers were able to build on the two churches’ relationship and a history of cooperative Vacation Bible School programs. For this summer, the churches used Cokesbury’s “Hero Central” program. Nearly 80 Pre-K through high school students, as well as 8-10 adults, attended intergenerational studies and fun. The two churches shared equally in planning, decorating, providing meals, and teaching.

Pasta for the Pantry – Teaming Up to Fight Hunger

Hannah Williams

Grace Episcopal Church, Pike Road, Alabama, is known for its extensive gardens. The gardens are more beautiful than ever this year, and they were part of the attraction when Grace held a fundraiser on May 17, 2017, to benefit... another Episcopal church? Yes and no. Or better yet, Win-Win-Win.
Charlene Roberson, Benevolence Committee Chair at Grace, says, “We have long admired and supported Church of the Holy Comforter, Montgomery, Alabama, in their Food Pantry ministry, and we wanted to do more than a canned-food drive. We’re a small parish, but we wanted to make an impact on hunger in our community. We wanted a fellowship opportunity, too, with an event that we’d all remember as fun and worthwhile.” As the Benevolence group talked, an idea grew that would meet the goal, and Pasta for the Pantry was born. “We decided to invite our Holy Comforter friends over for a spaghetti dinner,” Roberson said. “We asked them to join us in buying tickets and in selling tickets to other friends and neighbors, with the understanding that all profits from the event would go to the Food Pantry.” Grace was able to give over $1,900 to Holy Comforter in 2016, and this year’s Pasta for the Pantry netted another $2,157. According to Food Pantry Director Mac Hall, the cash gifts not only increase the amount of food on the shelves, they also increase significantly the variety and nutritional content of the food.

Pasta for the Pantry participants do have memories to savor. The décor was Italian, the dinners were delicious. The take-out meals were taken out, the guests lingered to talk, and the work that went into the events was, indeed, worthwhile. Teaming up to share the work, we can help defeat hunger. Grace wins, Holy Comforter wins, and – by far the most important – our neighbors who are often hungry win.
Bishop Sloan Appoints Betsy Fetner as Interim Youth and Young Adult Coordinator

Bishop Sloan has appointed Betsy Fetner to serve as the Interim Youth and Young Adult Coordinator for the Diocese of Alabama beginning July 1, 2017.

Betsy has recently coordinated Rites of Spring and will also do the same for Young People Paint Birmingham this month. Betsy served on the youth department when she was a teenager and has served in two parishes as a Youth Minister, St. Mary’s on the Highlands (1998-2000) and the St. Luke’s, Birmingham (2001-2002). She has served on many summer camp program staff and was on the Camp Out fundraising committee and was a member of the Visioning Committee for Bethany Village.

Betsy may be reached by email bfetner@dioala.org or by phone 205-358-9232.

Young People Paint Birmingham 2017

The first full day and a half were spent on work sites painting and scraping houses for those who are physically or economically unable to do the work themselves. Each work-site crew came back with stories of getting to know the homeowners and of doing some really hard, but satisfying work. When work day 2 got rained out, the group went bowling. The probability of rain for work day 3 meant inside work was needed. St. Mark’s Birmingham provided the opportunity to clean out the rectory that is being used to expand their food pantry ministry. Work had just been finished when the tornado sirens began. The group took shelter in the Sunday school hall. Knowing that bad weather was likely to continue in West Birmingham, the group’s dinner and closing Eucharist was hosted by St. Stephen’s Birmingham.

The last day was spent having fun, playing laser tag, and celebrating new friendships and community. It was a wonderful week, even though not everything went as planned! A very special thanks to Olivia Elam, Spencer Lotz, Emily Linton, Bartlee Linton, Julia Sanford, Sarah Watts, Tim Callahan, Simon Richardson, Marcy Miller, Megan Briggs, and the Revs. Blake Hudson and Worth Stuart of Holy Apostles Hoover for your talent, flexibility, and dedication that made YPPB a success! And special thanks to the Rev. Jayne Poole and the Rev. Carolyn Foster, Deacon, of St. Mark’s Birmingham, and everyone at St. Stephen’s Birmingham for helping with rain plans.

Happening #71

November 3-5, 2017
St. Stephen’s Birmingham

Happening takes place in the fall and spring each year. During the three-day weekend for young people in grades 10 – 12 (Friday evening through Sunday afternoon), the participants spend time seriously considering the person and teaching of Jesus Christ in a relaxed, fun, informal and loving atmosphere.

Registration for Happeners is open through October 20
Staff applications are open through August 18

For more information and to register visit www.dioala.org/youthevents.html#senior.
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ary retreats happen throughout the year at Camp McDowell and have become a staple of parish life for many churches of the Diocese. It’s difficult for a small parish to have the kind of organized event that a large parish typically enjoys. Amazingly, there are nearly 60 small parishes in the diocese and all were invited to attend an inaugural Small Parish Retreat in 2012. Five parishes participated that year and filled Miller Commons on the first weekend in May when the big leaf magnolia is in full bloom and the creek is lined with blooming Mt. Laurel. Every year since then the core group, with a few transitions, have kept the tradition alive and have come together to God's Backyard to enjoy a weekend of respite and relaxation. Being the 6th consecutive year, the 2017 organizers renamed the event to Ultimate Parish Weekend: Becoming a Tradition at Camp McDowell.

Cathy Roberton

"You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands." Isaiah 55:12

Joyce knows a lot about traditional Alabama music and dance. She is the author of With Fiddle and Well-Rosined Bow: The History of Fiddling in Alabama and Out of Whole Cloth: The Life of Bettye Kimbrell. She has also produced many articles and CDs about Sacred Harp singing, Primitive Baptist hymns, and children's folk songs. She is the Director Emerita of the Alabama Folklife Association and now is coordinator of the Old-Time Session at the Alabama Folk School.

Stewardship of Creation was the theme for the weekend. Table decorations, which became door prizes, were native plants dug from the woods and contributed by each parish. Learning to recognize and identify these gems was an added bonus to the educational fun. With the event taking place in the new Bethany Village, organizers were intrigued with the idea of teaching campers about the Environmental Center, the Farm School and the Alabama Folk School. Activities from each of these components were incorporated into the weekend.

Dave Holloway and Kendra Burns of the Environmental Center led early morning bird watching and Big Dave provided entertainment with the Radical Raptors Program, where kids and adults interacted with birds-of-prey and snakes native to Alabama. Of course, there was a paste party and the quintessential hayride, bonfire and s’mores.

For those who were not necessarily interested in the more physical activities of hiking, canoeing and swimming in the Bethany Pool, there were craft and spiritual activities available. Homesteading with Laura Spencer took place in the Teaching Kitchen and included rolling beeswax candles and canning fermented vegetables.

Laura Spencer lives on a 160 acre sustainable farm in Marion Junction, Alabama. At Spencer Farm, she and her family provide the local community and restaurants with heritage Tamworth pork, grass fed beef, and sustainably grown vegetables and hydroponic micro greens. Laura first came to Camp McDowell by way of the Alabama Folk School where she was introduced to soap making. She developed a passion for making soap, and soon began making more of her personal skincare products. In 2010, Laura created her own line that she calls "Simply Making It," an all natural line of goat milk soap, beeswax candles, and other skincare products. In recent years, her products have gained popularity. Laura has been sharing her passion with others by teaching, demonstrating, and speaking throughout the region. Laura also became an Episcopalian through her involvement with the Folk School, has raised her two children coming to Camp and has attended Cursillo.

On Saturday morning after breakfast some campers chose to Walk the Labyrinth as a Sacred Journey with labyrinth facilitator, poet and contemplative, Anne Markham Bailey. They learned about the history of the labyrinth as a tool for contemplation and healing, and as a way of deepening their relationship with the mystery and power of their lives.

Anne is a Veriditas-trained labyrinth facilitator and seeks to share the power of contemplative practice with diverse communities throughout the world. Anne lives in Birmingham and some of her labyrinth publications and materials from Green Bucket Press are available for purchase in the Camp Store.

One thing about the weekend that left a lasting legacy at Camp was the creation of the Camp Store mosaic quilt which was given in thanksgiving for the dedicated ministry of the Rev. Mark Johnston upon his retirement as Executive Director of Camp McDowell. Campers learned to cut glass to create the beautiful art piece which now hangs over the porch on the front of the Camp Store.

Linda Muñoz has worked in the medium of glass since 1980. Her artistic journey began prior to her introduction to glass, however. Working as an RN and night supervisor in a psychiatric hospital, she watched her nursing assistants as they pieced quilts between patient checks. She soon pieced her first quilt with their help and has since won awards for her pictorial quilts. Linda has taught stained glass, mosaic art, and fused glass to children and adults for the last 15 years. In 2010 she was chosen to become a DANA Teaching Artist in the state of Alabama, her home state. As part of her training, she developed an arts integrated unit of study called “The Children’s Patchwork History Project,” in which elementary students have the opportunity to study the Quilters of Gee’s Bend, Alabama, and then create a mosaic glass quilt which stays at their school. To date, this program has been implemented in 25 schools across the state of Alabama.
Montgomery Convocation Vacation Bible School

Sarah Collier

This year, St. John’s Episcopal Church hosted the Montgomery Convocation of Episcopal Churches VBS! The title was “LIFE STAR” (a “Star Wars” themed VBS). The theme was focused around Luke Skywalker and his various struggles with trusting “The Force.” We related this to “The Holy Spirit” and the life of Apostle Paul. The overall connection from the movie was that we all have a choice in life. We can choose the dark side or the light. The choice is ours to make, and we all will be tempted at times. Saul was tempted, and he even did bad things. However, in the end he chose the Holy Spirit and from that moment became known as Paul.

Moreover, the children watched a different “Star Wars” movie clip each morning during Opening Assembly. After this the leader helped the children make a connection(s) between the character(s) from the movie and the Bible lesson. This was a great way to build background knowledge before starting the day at VBS! Following this time, the children would rotate to various classrooms/areas throughout the day such as Bible Adventures, Art, Outreach, Games and Snack/Lego Building. In addition, the rising 6th graders participated in Outreach projects off campus. On Monday, the rising 6th graders learned about being disciples for Christ. Also, they made cat blankets for the local Humane Society, and letters to the Elderly for Meals on Wheels. Each following day they went out to help the community in areas such as Meals on Wheels, The Master’s Garden and the local Human Shelter.

Furthermore, all children and parents were invited to a closing Reception. Each child/family was served delicious food, cake and drinks. They watched a special slideshow from our week at VBS, and we had a special friend creating Lightsaber balloons. I enjoyed seeing the children excited about this year’s VBS, and I am so grateful for all of our volunteers who made it such a success! I give a very special thanks to the Rev. Daniel Strandlund. He led music at this year’s VBS, and he even created some special “Star Wars” themed songs for our sweet children! We all had a blast, and I look forward to next year’s VBS!
A Reflection on a Summer of Clinical Pastoral Education

Polly Robb, Seminarian

Removing a wedding ring from a man who’d just died and handing it to his crying wife, praying beside the hospital bed of a Jehovah’s Witness and seeing her frantic breaths finally calm, and sitting quietly with a family in their home waiting for death... these are but a few memories from the summer of 2017, the summer of CPE, the summer I learned what it means to be a chaplain. It has been the experience of a lifetime—both amazing and difficult—and it proved to me that Christopher Robin was right when he told Pooh, “You are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think.”

So what is CPE? It is Clinical Pastoral Education, a required component of training for seminarians in the Episcopal Church, usually fulfilled in a hospital or hospice program in the summer after the first year of seminary. If the first year of New and Old Testament lectures, Church History & World Religions papers and didn’t prove that we have a lot to learn, then CPE definitely has. To go straight from seminary’s comforting environment of study and its monastic routine of daily corporate worship to the starkly cold setting of sanitizers, intensive care visiting hours, and hospital masks, gloves, and gowns was a shock to the system. And, it was scary.

What does one say to the dying man, the distraught widow, or the terrified parent? One of my CPE classmates reminded us of Isaiah’s passage, “The Sovereign LORD has given me his words of wisdom, so that I know how to comfort the weary. Morning by morning he wakens me and opens my understanding to his will.” (50:4) Well, I’m glad for Isaiah, I thought, but when I open my mouth, I’m not sure what will come out.

One morning this summer when I arrived at the hospital, I heard someone crying, quite loudly, in the little room next to the patient’s. I noticed that the vestments used by local clergy and seminarians varied widely and that the vestments used by local clergy and seminarians varied widely and that the vestments used by local clergy and seminarians varied widely and that the vestments used by local clergy and seminarians varied widely. I wondered what the person would welcome my presence or if she just needed someone to pray with. We were all there to be present with her in her suffering.

One morning I crossed paths with a family in their blue car leaving the hospital. A woman in a blue blouse was sobbing uncontrollably and the male driver was trying to comfort her. They were a couple, and she was holding the wedding ring in her hand. The man started to talk about the wedding ring. He looked at me and nodded. I didn’t know what to say, and I didn’t know what to do. I opened my mouth, and nothing came out.

I am not going to claim strength, or bravery or smartness, but I can show that ability, writes that, “The willingness to show up changes us; It makes us a little braver each time.” I may not be able to claim strength, or bravery or smartness, but I can show that ability, writes that, “The willingness to show up changes us; It makes us a little braver each time.” I may not be able to claim strength, or bravery or smartness, but I can show that ability, writes that, “The willingness to show up changes us; It makes us a little braver each time.” I may not be able to claim strength, or bravery or smartness, but I can show that ability, writes that, “The willingness to show up changes us; It makes us a little braver each time.”

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And in doing so this summer I can now be a witness to the strength of God’s presence and its transformative power in us to be more than we can ever imagine. Chaplaincy is about seeing yourself with the gracious eyes of God and helping others see the image of God in themselves. I cannot imagine the road to ordination without this understanding.

Gathering Vestments for Msalato Theological College

In June, Jeremy Carlson, a Diocese of Alabama seminarian, traveled to Dodoma, Tanzania, to spend time at the Msalato Theological College. While worshipping there, he noticed that the vestments used by local clergy and seminarians were in very short supply and in a bad state of wear and tear.

In response, Carlson is collecting retired and/or used liturgical garments that could be gifted to Msalato’s students and faculty. Albs, casacks and stoles of any liturgical color would be much appreciated.

Items will be collected at The Abbey in Birmingham, and Carlson would be happy to pick them up from your church.

For more information, please contact Jeremy Carlson (carlsj10@sewanee.edu) or Katie Rengers (ktnakamura@gmail.com).

CLERGY NEWS

The Rev. Andrew Thayer has accepted a call to serve as rector at Trinity Church, New Orleans. His last Sunday at Ascension, Montgomery was June 18.

The Rev. Daniel P. Strandlund has accepted a call to serve as the Vicar of St. Elizabeth Episcopal Church in Buda, TX, in the Diocese of West Texas, beginning August 1.

The Rev. Kelley Hudlow’s last Sunday as the deacon at the Abbey was June 18. She will continue to serve as chaplain to Christ Church, Fairfield.

The Rev. Andy Anderson, rector of the Church of the Nativity since 2003, has accepted the call to serve as Executive Director of St. Mary’s Sewanee and The Ayers Center for Spiritual Development beginning September 1. His last Sunday at Nativity is August 6.

Please remember in your prayers all those in formation for Holy Orders and their families:


Jonathan Daniels Pilgrimage

The 21st annual pilgrimage of the Jonathan Daniels and the Martyrs of Alabama is Saturday, August 12, at 11 a.m., in Hayneville, AL. This year’s keynote speaker is Dr. Bernard LaFayette, co-founder of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in 1960 and an authority on the strategy of Nonviolence Social Change. Dr. LaFayette is a Civil Rights Movement activist, author, minister, educator, lecturer and was a leader of the Nashville Lunch Counter Sit-Ins Movement and the Freedom Rides.

This year’s pilgrimage is co-sponsored by the Dioceses of Alabama and Central Gulf Coast. The Rt. Rev. Russell Kendrick will be the Celebrant. Jonathan Myrick Daniels was a young seminarian in March 1965, when he responded to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr’s call to come to Selma to help black citizens register to vote. A shotgun wielding unemployed construction worker and special duty deputy killed him on August 20, 1965, in Hayneville, AL, when Jonathan and his companions were released from jail and they attempted to enter the Cash Store to buy something cold to drink. He took a blast meant for 16-year old Ruby Sales. The Episcopal Church designated Jonathan Daniels a martyr in 1991, observing his feast day on August 14.

The Alabama Diocese’s Commission on Race Relations in the Church coordinates this historic civil rights pilgrimage. Following the pilgrimage and lunch, the Commission invites attendees to participate more fully in exploring race relations in America. Dr. Mark Wilson of Auburn University will moderate a special forum on “Divided America: How Should We Address Race and Ethnic Tensions in America?” Participants will share stories and weigh the pros and cons of various approaches to the issue using a non-partisan guide published by National Issues Forums (NIF). The Forum will be held at New Salem Christian Church located behind the County Courthouse. Space is limited. We encourage you to pre-register online at https://g00.gl/tQ5esQ. Forum materials will be distributed to those who pre-register.

Former Catholic priest, Richard Morrisroe, who was also shot when Daniels was killed, will attend the pilgrimage and participate in the special forum. Additionally, the Young Pilgrims Lock-In and Retreat for youth, youth groups and adult chaperones will be on Friday, August 11 at 6 pm. For more information, contact Betsy Fetner at 205-715-2060.

1980’s Camper/Counselor Reunion
August 18-20
@Camp McDowell

Did you go to Camp McDowell in the ‘80s? Do you know someone who did? This is the weekend for you! Stay in the lodges or cabins of Bethany Village and enjoy hiking, pool time, visiting Camp at Clear Creek, tours of the farm, a talent show, and a Saturday night band party featuring Jimmy Gauld and Laine Poole. Space is limited so visit http://conta.cc/2tmDHdI and sign up today!
Agents of Peace in a Time of Fear
September 22-23, 2017
St. Stephen’s Birmingham
Costs: $10, includes dinner Friday, lunch Saturday, and workshop materials

“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” 2 Timothy 1:7

Discover your inner peacemaker and reconciler on this retreat designed to turn back our present tide of divisiveness. Participants will reconnect with the peacemaking example of Christ and be empowered with practical methods to become agents of peace and reconciliation in their own communities. Led by the Rev’s Masud Ibn Syedullah and Garrett Mettler. For more information and to register, go to www.ssechurch.org.

Birmingham’s Got Potential
September 29, 7:30-9:00 p.m.
Cahaba Brewing Company, Birmingham, AL

Special Session at Camp McDowell invites the public to the most marvelous talent competition in the history of the Magic City: the second annual “Birmingham’s Got Potential,” to be held at Cahaba Brewing Company on September 29th 2017 from 7:30-9:00pm.

Special Session is a summer camp session for people of all ages with mental and physical disabilities. It takes place at Camp McDowell, and is a ministry of the Episcopal Diocese of Alabama. This past summer, Special Session grew into two summer sessions, serving 116 campers. In the spirit of the Special Session Talent Show itself, which is always held at the end of the week-long camp, “Birmingham’s Got Potential” is asking anyone and everyone to participate!

Last year at the inaugural event, performers of all capabilities dazzled crowds, while raising over $11,000 for the Special Session camper scholarship fund. We hope you can attend or participate in the event this year. We want to celebrate and showcase the unique things that you can do—whether that be a talent for licking your own elbow, rapidly reciting the alphabet backwards, putting lots of grapes in your mouth, or something more conventional like singing and dancing; anything that makes you special.

For all the information about the event, please visit www.specialsessionalabama.org.

The DOK 2017 Annual Fall Assembly
The Order of the Daughters of the King (DOK) of the Diocese of Alabama will assemble on October 21, 2017, from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm at St. Alban’s Episcopal Church in Birmingham, Alabama, for the 2017 Annual Fall Assembly. The chosen theme, “Autumn Faithfulness: Let Us Fall Into Grace!” will appropriately allow spiritual reflections for all lead by the Rt. Rev. William Skilton. It will truly be a rewarding and exciting assembly with Bishop Skilton who is the Chaplain for the Province IV DOK.

More information will be available soon; for now, mark your calendars and plan to attend this promised unforgettable experience with the DOK. The contact from the Executive Committee of the Assembly Board of the DOK is Yolanda Seawright, president, ypseawright@gmail.com.

The mission of the Daughters of the King is to extend Christ’s Kingdom, especially among women and girls, and the strengthening of the church’s spiritual life.

The Journey: A Day on Addiction and Recovery 2017
The Diocese of Alabama Department of Recovery Ministries will be hosting The Journey: A Day on Addiction and Recovery. This year’s event will take place on Saturday, November 18 at All Saints in Homewood. Registration will begin at 9 a.m. and the program at 10. This year’s schedule will feature two keynote speakers, David Clark and Josh Horton. The will also be four breakout sessions in the morning and four in the afternoon addressing specific topics of interest for those in recovery, those that support and live with the disease and those simply wanting to learn more about addiction and recovery. Additionally and new this year, there will be a track designed specifically for youth. Lunch will be provided.

Josh Horton

David Clark spent year’s homeless, but somehow worked his way off the streets and into the grid of everyday life. He built an 8 million dollar company by the time he was 29 years old and lost his business to alcoholism, drug addiction, food addiction and tough breaks. After working through his recovery plan, Clark went about reconstructing his entire world view. Clark went on to become a sponsored endurance athlete. He tells all about his transformation in his shockingly honest book Out There: A Story of Ultra Recovery.

Josh Horton was a person with a substance abuse disorder who could not stay out of jail. Inexplicably, a judge saw something in Josh and the journey began from addiction and jail to a Magna Cum Laude graduate of the University of Mississippi Honors College and more recently from the University’s law school. Josh has started a non-profit in Oxford, the Southern Recovery Advocacy, and plans to devote his legal career to recovery advocacy. Josh was recently appointed by Mississippi Governor Phil Bryant to the state’s Opioid and Heroin Study Task Force.

Registration will be $20 per person, which includes lunch. Financial assistance and group rates are available. For more information and to register go to: www.journeyrecover.com or call 205-358-9229 for more information. Please join us and invite others as we continue this critically important discussion.
On May 25, 2017, twelve students gathered in the parish hall of St. John’s Decatur to celebrate an accomplishment many of us learned in elementary school with little fanfare. But this celebration was both meaningful and monumental as twelve adult English as a Second Language (ESL) students stood before a gathering of their children and St. John’s parishioners to read paragraphs they had written about themselves. With pride and reluctance to read publicly, homemakers, factory workers, landscape workers, all ESL students, introduced that gathering to their lives, their children, their hobbies in a language they’d spent a year learning. This was their graduation day. This was the culmination of a three-year exercise in building meaningful relationships in a diverse community.

To appreciate the significance, a little context is needed. St. John’s sits in a geographical crossroads where abundance meets scarcity. The historical neighborhood and gardens to the east are separated from the challenges of low wage incomes, limited education and health care by a mere forty feet of asphalt. Across the street from St. John’s is the neighborhood elementary school of five hundred students, mostly Hispanic, with 88% receiving food assistance. Because of the close proximity, St. John’s has cultivated an active relationship with the students at Banks-Caddell Elementary School through Backpacks for Kids, Homework Helpers, the community garden, and field trips to Camp McDowell. While all of these opportunities fed the hearts and minds of the children in our neighborhood, St. John’s began to dream about opportunities to build relationships with the larger community including the families of Banks-Caddell students.

Fast forward to June 2016 when the School of Theology at Sewanee introduced a six month initiative aimed at engaging parishes in discerning mission in new ways. This program, Missional Engagement Initiative (MEI), is a collaboration of partnerships among the School of Theology, clergy, lay leaders, and their communities to build bridges between the seminary, the parishes participating and the world we serve. MEI enlisted parishes from three diocese in Tennessee and three parishes from the Diocese of Alabama, Nativity Huntsville, Grace Cullman, and St. John’s Decatur.

The model for this initiative is to assign a seminar to each participating parish and together attend a series of Saturday trainings for discerning a mission project within the parish’s community, organization of the project, including its implementation. The program was derived from the inspiration of a similar program between Sewanee and the Diocese of Alabama named, Be The Change Alabama (BTCA). Both MEI and BTCA were designed in part to provide seminarians with “hands on” practical training to identify, organize and implement outreach projects. Although an “off shoot” from BTCA, MEI has been adopted and endorsed by the Seminary as curriculum.

For the lay leaders from St. John’s, the part of the world we serve is across the street from our parish home, and our engagement initiative began with existing relationships. Through conversations with teachers, school leaders, and community volunteers, the idea to begin an ESL class at St. John’s emerged as a welcomed opportunity to build deeper relationships in our immediate neighborhood and by extension Decatur. For example, one of the skills taught during the MEI sessions at Sewanee is the “one on one” engagement of conversation to be applied when building relationships. With a particular “one on one” conversation with an ESL student, the St. John’s team learned of another elementary school in Decatur with a substantial Hispanic population in need of ESL. Thus, the mission continues to expand.

Another aim in building deeper relationships is not merely providing the space and resources for the ESL class but engaging the students with activities that nurture trust and friendship. The ESL class has two parishioners volunteering during class periods to assist the instructor. Activities throughout the school year included: a cooking class where parishioners learned skills to make both Mexican and Guatemalan tamales which was preceded by a field trip to the grocery store to purchase the ingredients; a holiday lunch where everyone brought a covered dish; yoga classes; a field trip to the Wheeler Wildlife Refuge; and art classes provided by one of the class volunteers.

So while the May 25 gathering was a graduation, it was much more to a small community in Decatur. It was a celebration of relationships beginning and continuing. Nine of the twelve students attending moved on to higher level English classes offered at other churches in Decatur. The ESL class will continue over the summer, and the opportunity to live out our baptismal covenant to serve God and his children grows across communities, cultures, and languages.
Back to School

The Rev. Thomas Joyner, Chaplain at Trinity Commons & Chair of DMHE

Do you remember that old commercial which showed a parent happily dancing through the store, gleefully picking up pens, and paper, and notebooks to send the kids, trudging morosely behind them, back to school? While probably true for many grade school parents and kids it’s certainly not true for college students; they can’t wait to get (or get back) to campus.

There’s an excitement in going to college, or getting back to a life you’ve created on your own. Campus ministry is important as young people leave the settled patterns of home and begin a life on their own. As students wrestle, or struggle, with a life free of customs, practices, rules, and regulations, the church and the chaplains who serve on campus can be helpful as young men and women face questions about meaning and purpose without fear. Our chaplains and campus ministry centers are a place where college students can continue to meet Jesus, and hear the words of scripture which invite us to live a life beyond fear.

The Department of Ministry in Higher Education (DMHE) want all of you to know about it. Most importantly, we want the young people leaving home for college (DMHE) want all of you to know about it. Most importantly, we want the young people leaving home for college to know who we are and where to find us. This material is designed to help make connections between students and campus ministry centers are a place where college students can continue to meet Jesus, and hear the words of scripture which invite us to live a life beyond fear.

The Department of Ministry in Higher Education (DMHE) want all of you to know about it. Most importantly, we want the young people leaving home for college to know who we are and where to find us. This material is designed to help make connections between students and chaplains easier, so that ministry can happen and communities and relationships which sustain people can be formed.

But also, all of you should be proud of what the Diocese of Alabama does for this ministry. Alabama has a reputation for a strong and vibrant ministry to college students, and as someone who came to the Episcopal Church because of a chaplain and campus ministry, I can speak of its importance first hand.

What campus ministry offers young people during these transitional years is an intentional place to ask questions, to wrestle with faith, without shame. The community that campus ministry provides is one where the search can be open and receptive, and the relationships make all the difference to encouragement. Not everyone, Henri Nouwen reminds us, “needs encouragement, not everyone asks for correction, not everyone is ready to be invited to prayer or hear the name of God. Some ask for silence, some for single word, some need instruction, some just understanding, some want a smile, some a severe hand, some need support, and some need to be left alone.” The chaplains who serve our church on the campuses around the diocese are prepared to do just that. (Nouwen, Intimacy)

The chaplains who serve our church on the campuses around the diocese are prepared to do just that. (Nouwen, Intimacy)

You can help us and help the young people make these connections and find the place to connect (or reconnect) with Jesus and the Episcopal Church; to access this information on the diocesan website (www.dioala.org/college) or hopefully some of the brochures and posters we mailed to each parish are available for you to see. We want this information in the hands of the people around the diocese, so if you see or know of someone going off to college, whether it’s for the first or the fifth year, please let them know how to find us, and let us know how to contact them.

To download a brochure or poster, or to find a college ministries near you, check out www.dioala.org/college.