It Makes You Happy: Alda & John McDowell Leave a Legacy

Danielle Dunbar, Director of Mission Funding

When Alda and John attended, they were introduced to the “Food Waste Warriors” and watched the children learn about making good choices regarding food quantity at meals. By taking only what they would eat, the children learned they could save water and energy, which alleviates our impact on the environment. During their stay, students also learned about the ecology of the area and how to work together as a community. Alda and John were grateful that school children were attending such a high quality academic program at Camp McDowell.

John passed away in November of 2012. Long before his death, he and Alda made their wills and plans for charitable giving. Because of their love for the Episcopal Church in Alabama and the ministry of Camp McDowell, they decided to establish a Charitable Remainder Unitrust (CRUT) with camp as the beneficiary. This irrevocable trust provided John, and now Alda, a fixed percentage of income annually for life and any remaining balance will be given to Camp McDowell. By creating a CRUT, Alda and John realized a tax benefit as well as the benefit of making an investment in our beloved Camp and Conference Center.

When asked why they would leave a gift to camp, Alda said simply, “When you help others, it makes you happy.” Alda credits many people for helping her learn to be generous including her father, Henry, who assisted the clergy of St. John’s and anyone else in the community during times of need; her Godparents; and Bishop Henry and Mamie Goidel of Decatur, Alabama.

Alda & John McDowell who was constantly working to help his clergy as needed. She also told me, “John and I always saved and put money away for later.”

I believe all of us can make a difference with a planned gift, whether it is a charitable remainder untrust, a charitable gift annuity, a gift of life insurance, or a specified percentage or amount in our will. What makes these gifts possible is planning and foresight. Please contact your attorney, accountant, and/or financial planner as you begin or revise your legacy gift planning and consider making a legacy gift to your parish and ministries of the Episcopal Diocese of Alabama. Your gift is so important.

Contact Danielle Dunbar, Director of Mission Funding, at 205-358-9234 or ddunbar@dioala.org with questions.
From Bishop Sloan

Bishop’s Visitation Schedule

December 23 6:30 p.m. St. Mark’s, Boligee

November 1 6:30 p.m. All Saints’, Montgomery

December 10 10:30 a.m. Trinity, Wetumpka

November 5 9:30 a.m. St. Simon Peter, Pell City

December 17 10:30 a.m. St. Luke’s, Birmingham

November 8 11:00 a.m. St. Martin’s-in-the-Pines, Irondale

December 2 10:30 a.m. St. Matthias, Tuskegee

November 12 9:30 a.m. St. Francis, Indian Springs

December 3 10:30 a.m. St. Matthias, Tuscaloosa

November 19 10:30 a.m. Trinity, Clanton

December 10 10:30 a.m. Trinity, Wetumpka

November 26 10:30 a.m. St. Andrew’s, Tuskegee

December 17 10:30 a.m. St. Luke’s, Birmingham

January 21 10:00 a.m. Holy Comforter, Montgomery

December 23 6:30 p.m. St. Mark’s, Boligee

January 28 10:30 a.m. Holy Cross, Trussville

January 14 11:15 a.m. St. Andrew’s, Sylacauga

February 4 10:00 a.m. Grace Church, Pike Road

January 21 10:00 a.m. Holy Comforter, Montgomery

February 3 10:00 a.m. Grace Church, Tuscaloosa

February 11 10:00 a.m. Resurrection, Rainbow City

February 4 10:00 a.m. Grace Church, Tuscaloosa

February 18 9:30 a.m. Grace Church, Sheffield

March 18 11:00 a.m. St. Andrew’s, Montevallo

March 4 10:30 a.m. St. Joseph’s, Mentone

March 25 10:00 a.m. Ascension, Birmingham

Hello, friends

It’s been a tough couple of months. Hurricanes and an earthquake have left people dead or hurt or homeless, we are in a season of political and social turmoil, and recently a man shot and killed 58 people in Las Vegas, and wounded more than 500 others. The people of the Diocese of Alabama have been generous in our responses, and I’m sure we will continue to be, but … it’s been a tough couple of months.

It feels like we are being pushed from all sides, as if we are in danger of being overwhelmed by a tide of distrust, anxiety and anger rising all around us. The great message of the Church is the life preserver we throw to those who are drowning in gloom and doom, still as it has always been: we present the love of God offered to those who are drowning in gloom and doom, still as it has always been: we present the love of God offered in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who became one of us so that we can begin to see the nature of God, and the potential of humanity.

What we have to offer, even on the darkest days, is love.

What we have to offer, even on the darkest days, is love. I watch the news and I feel the despair of the moment. I want it to go away. And if it won’t go away, I want it to be somebody else’s fault. “It’s the liberals’ fault, it’s the conservatives’ fault; it’s because of the Republicans, or the Democrats, or the Muslims, or the people looking for something to offend them, ready for a fight.

In a moment like this, the holy Church needs to stand up and be heard. You and I need to stand up and be heard. Now of all times, our privilege and responsibility as followers of Jesus Christ is to love people, and invite them to love. Love all of them, whether we agree or not, whether we like them or not – love our neighbors, love our families and friends, love our enemies – love them all.

I imagine the temptation for the reader is to be skeptical of my idealism, or possibly my naïveté. Certainly this attitude is not what the world has been throwing at us relentlessly. The message swirling around us leads us to be selfish and angry, to live without hope, to be suspicious. Surely our Lord God has better intentions for us.

I feel Bedwyr’s cynicism; it’s part of me, too – part of all of us. I am reassured and challenged by Merlyn’s answer. In the clash between the teaching of the world and the wisdom of God, we have to choose where we stand.

“Love?” asked Bedwyr. “That is all?”

“There is nothing else, Bedwyr. Love lies beneath all that is, and upholds it. Arthur has seen that this is so. His kingdom will be built upon the only enduring foundation.”

There is a lot of truth in fiction, I find.

The headlines are filled with division and despair, the television news shows us destruction and disaster, and where we get our news determines who we think we should blame for what. It feels like there are a lot of people looking for something to offend them, ready for a fight.

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I’m reminded of one of my favorite passages from

“Love? That is all?”

Arthur, a wonderful novel by Stephen R. Lawhead. The much-hated Saxons have invaded and settled in much of the southeastern part of England. The Britons and the Saxons have been at war for centuries, and it seems they will continue to fight for generations to come, until Arthur decides it is the will of God to offer peace. Bedwyr, Arthur’s trusted companion and a commander of his army, doesn’t want anything to do with it, and can’t imagine establishing peace with their life-long enemies. As he is grumbling and griping, Merlyn tells him a story.

“Once some men were digging a well, and came upon a great flat stone. It was, they discovered, the foundation stone of this world’s realm. So they decided to lift it up and see what lay beneath it. This they did. And do you know what they found?”

Bedwyr answered “I cannot say, what did they find?”


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“There is nothing else, Bedwyr. Love lies beneath all that is, and upholds it.”

Amen. 

[Signature]
Companion Diocese: Relationships Deepen Through Joy and Sorrow

The Rev Judy Quick, Deacon, Chair, Companion Diocese Commission with the Dioceses of Alaska and the Virgin Islands (jquick@bellouth.net)

The Reverend Catherine Collier and her family spent a month on St. Thomas in July as part of Reverend Collier’s sabbatical grant for intergenerational family mission. Reverend Collier preached and served the congregation at All Saints’ Cathedral and her daughter preached at Holy Spirit. Her family helped with the Sunny Saints Summer Camp for local children, with a superhero theme for the Bible Study and with the classes for Language Enrichment Activities. The Collier family was present with our Virgin Islands friends as the hands, feet, and heart of Jesus.

“Seeing God Together” was the theme of the co-diocesan camp hosted by St. Paul’s Church, Tortola in collaboration with St. Mary’s on the Highlands, Birmingham, with representation from St. Stephen’s, Birmingham and St. George’s Church, Tortola. Together youth worshiped, played, and engaged in shared ministry. They visited St. Mary’s Church on Virgin Gorda.

The Reverend Sandra Malone, Priest-in-Charge, St. Paul’s, Tortola wrote in the Province II newsletter:

One of the highlights was a BVI Culture Day where campers got to sample local foods like Johnny cakes, fungi and fish, and guava tart, as well as drinks made from fruits like sour sop and tamarind. The day culminated in a display of local culture as the BVI Heritage Dancers performed several pieces and participants joined in dancing to music by the Razor Blades Fungi Band and Sounds of Steel steel band. Youth from both dioceses have described their experience as ‘amazing’ and are looking forward to continuing to build the relationship between St. Paul’s and St. Mary’s.

Melodie Elam from St. Mary’s on the Highlands, Birmingham remarks:

Not gonna lie- it was hot, hot, hot during the day and cold, cold, cold at night- I slept too close to AC!! But I had a FANTASTIC time. Not only was it a great bonding experience for me and my daughter (who was a participant), but I got to know several other youth in my own parish plus some really wonderful kids from BVI. Every single person we met, worked with, ate with, and worshiped with was so full of joy and the love of God- one simply couldn’t help but to be happy! Since our return, I have really missed everyone and dreamed of going back as soon as I could!!

Emily Collette Linton, who was the Senior High Youth Minister at St. Mary’s on the Highlands and organized the group (and is now a seminarian), comments:

I thought this summer was such a wonderful experience for our youth, and hopefully for the youth in the BVI, as well. Our goal in planning this mission exchange was to give everyone a fuller picture of what God is up to in the world, which is something you really see best through experiences with other people. We worshipped, worked, prayed, and played together, and we made some wonderful friends. Our hosts in the BVI was the kindest and most gracious people, and they shared their cultures and lives with us. It was really a wonderful experience, and I hope that we can continue to grow and develop these friendships!

Fall brought sudden devastation to all five islands of the Diocese of the Virgin Islands as Hurricanes Irma and Maria barreled through.

Relationships formed in fun and fellowship have proven invaluable in this time of trial and suffering. In fact, many more parishes and individuals have answered the call, saying “Send Me!”

Little by little communications began to trickle in after Irma, and again after Maria. So far all clergy and the three Deans have reported no injuries or deaths, but the property damage is horrendous. Roofs have blown off houses and some of the churches. Stained glass windows are broken. Water covered the floors of churches and parish halls. Congregations can no longer use their prayer books and hymnals.

Our Companion Relationship has been a special gift as it has facilitated communications between Episcopal Relief & Development and the Diocesan leadership. Mrs Abagail Nelson, Senior Vice President of Episcopal Relief & Development, is directing the emergency response and will be an instrumental partner as we begin the long-term recovery and rebuilding.

Bishop Gumbs began the emergency needs assessment which has led to numerous shipments of tarps, mosquito nets and repellent, non-perishable foods, water and water purification systems, batteries, generators, gasoline, and a planned establishment of a satellite communication system to both the US Virgin Islands (USVI) and to the British Virgin Islands (BVI).

Relief efforts to the Diocese of the Virgin Islands are especially challenging as we have needed to deal with both the United States Government (military and FEMA) as well as the British government and Caricom (Caribbean Community Regional Integration). Episcopal Relief & Development has also partnered with other non-governmental organizations to ensure the most effective emergency relief response. Bishop Gumbs requested that the Deans be the primary point of contact to coordinate relief distribution to all parishes in each Deanery (Convocation). (cont’d next page)
GraceWorks 2017 - Another Year of Growth, Learning and Fun

Kay Williams, Director

GraceWorks has just completed its 5th summer of youth ministry in Woodlawn. The revamping of the ministry to allow 10 year olds and up to join was a tremendous success. The younger children were eager to learn carpentry, pottery, and cooking skills in their efforts to complete community service projects. The older teenagers matured as they took on the responsibilities of mentoring and leading as staff members. The ministry grew in participant numbers, volunteer staff, partners and workshops. Together the participants and staff spruced up around the outside and inside of 55th Place thrift store, sacked over 600 bags of groceries for Grace Food pantry, built raised vegetable beds including two handicapped accessible beds and made cement mosaics for the labyrinth. But the biggest community project the group conquered this summer was painting a 50 foot outdoor mural for Willow Wood Park.

Although many of our Friday trips were altered by the rains, we found time to have fun swimming, exploring, learning new team games, glazing our pottery, and learning about God’s great love for us. We enjoyed sharing our new skills with St. Mary’s on The Highland’s VBS class, and other visitors. A huge thank you to all our many donors and partners who kept us fed and hydrated and well stocked with wood for all our building projects. Thank you prayer partners and friends of GraceWorks for making GraceWorks 2017 the best one yet!

At the appropriate time, Bishop Sloan and Companion Diocese Commission members will meet with Bishop Gumbs and his leadership team to develop a recovery/rebuilding plan.

Many in the Diocese of Alabama remember the long year of recovery after the April 27, 2011 tornados. We discovered that each community affected developed its unique approach to recovery, using the gifts found in that community, in the church and with partner churches or organizations.

Undoubtedly, a similar approach will apply for the Diocese of the Virgin Islands, as Episcopal Relief & Development encourages Asset Based Community Development. Each island and its parishes will assess their gifts and the gifts of their partners to develop a recovery/rebuilding plan that is best for their community. The Diocese of Alabama will bring its gifts to the partnership.

Thanks be to God the people and parishes of the Diocese of Alabama have a heart as big as the ocean. Thank you all for generous donations and a willingness of a number of parishes to partner with parishes in the Virgin Islands. These relationships will be instrumental in the healing after the trauma of the storm. A number of activities were planned for 2018, such as the revitalization of Cursillo in the Virgin Islands the week after Easter (April 2-8), the development of a process for clergy exchanges, and youth engagement with parishes in Alabama and the Virgin Islands. We will revisit these activities as part of our overall recovery and rebuilding plan in partnership with our friends in the Diocese of the Virgin Islands.

Please continue to pray for strength and courage as our partners in the Virgin Islands travel this difficult road to recovery.

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; 205.669.6862 (home); 770.366.4034 (cell))
Pilgrimage to Keene, New Hampshire - Hometown of Jonathan Myrick Daniels

The Rev. William King

Pat and I drove from Portland, Maine to Keene, New Hampshire on Tuesday, September 12, 2017. It was our final stop on a two week journey through the state of Maine, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia in Canada. This final stop was different. For a 24 hour period, we would be deeply and emotionally involved in a spiritual pilgrimage. We were traveling to Keene because it was the home for Jonathan Daniels, a martyr of the Christian church. We were traveling to Keene to visit his home church, to meet and have conversation with lifelong friends of Jonathan; to be given an opportunity to offer a prayer at his grave site; and to present to the Reverend Elsa Worth, rector of St. James Episcopal Church in Keene, a copy of the Jonathan Daniel's icon that is at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Birmingham and other documents from the Commission on Race Relations in the Diocese of Alabama.

One of our hosts in Keene was Robert Perry, a childhood friend to Jonathan. Our pilgrimage driver for the afternoon was Tom Newcombe, a member of St. James. Bob and Jonathan attended grammar school, junior high and senior high schools together. They were very close to each other in life. Since the death of Jonathan in 1965, Bob has continued to tell the story of the life and death of Jonathan and has compiled a brochure titled, “A Walk Through Jonathan Daniels’ Keene”. It is a one mile walk through central Keene to places such as St. James (home church to Jonathan), the Daniels house on Summer Street, the First Congregational Church on the Central Square (which the entire Daniels family attended until Jon joined the Episcopal Church during his high school years). Another member of St. James, Pam Croteau, regularly goes out to the city owned Monadnock View Cemetery, Section C, to maintain the Daniels grave sites (Dr. Philip Daniels - 1959; Jonathan – 1965; and Constance Daniels - 1984) and to see that the flowers and plants around the grave sites stay healthy. It should be noted that small rocks and other buttons are regularly placed on top of the Daniels family monument as signs of remembrance and prayer. Before heading back to St. James for a potluck dinner with parishioners, we traveled to the campus of the Keene State College where Rodney Ohnen, Head of Special Collections and Archives at the college library, was waiting for us with a selection of newspaper articles and letters relating to the life and death of Jonathan. Some of The Keene Sentinel (local newspaper) articles about the death of Jonathan are being copied to be placed into the Diocese of Alabama archives at the Birmingham Public Library.

The rector of St. James, Elsa Worth, also gave us a tour of St. James church and shared with us the hope that a “Jonathan Daniels chapel” might soon be constructed in part of the church nave to the left of the chancel area. Following the church tour, we were welcomed to a special potluck dinner in the Parish Hall where about 30 parishioners had gathered. Following the dinner, everyone was invited to share with Pat and me something that they might want to say to us or something that they wanted to share with us about their relationship with Jonathan.

We were overwhelmed with the words and stories shared and we were thanked over and over again for coming to Keene. They did tell us that a Church Youth Group from St. James had traveled to Montgomery and Hayneville, AL, for the 50th anniversary pilgrimage in 2015. They also told us that no clergy from Alabama came to St. James for the funeral of Jonathan, but that several lay people did come and on occasion non-ordained persons from Alabama have stopped by the church. After about an hour of open conversation, Elsa Worth gathered everyone into a circle with hands held together and led us in a prayer and blessing.

Pat and I went back to our hotel that evening overwhelmed by the living spirit of love and forgiveness and celebration of life that had been shared with us. It had truly been a time of pilgrimage in the hometown of a martyr saint of the 20th century, Jonathan Myrick Daniels. And on hearing his name aloud, we said “Present”.

St. James’ Episcopal Church, Keene

Jonathan with Judy Upham at Brown Chapel, Selma

Jonathan Daniels Grave Marker

Daniels Peace Garden at Jonathan Daniels Grammar School, Keene

Daniels’ family home on Summer Street

October/November/December 2017
Clergy Update

The Rev. Danny Whitehead began his ministry at St. Bartholomew’s, Florence, on September 1.

The Rev. Christ Starr has accepted the call to serve as Interim Rector for Ascension, Montgomery.

The Rev. Robin Hinkle has accepted the call to serve as rector for St. Mary’s, Jasper.

Deacon Bill Cunningham has retired from St. Michael’s and All Angels, Millbrook.

The Rev. Stephen Hood has accepted a call to serve as rector at St. Luke’s in Bartlesville, Oklahoma. His last Sunday at Ascension, Vestavia Hills, was September 24.

Please remember in your prayers all those in formation for Holy Orders and their families: Drew Brislin, Kevin Burke, Jeremy Carlson, Nate Darville, Paul Goldman, Sally Herring, Marilyn Lands, Mark Likos, Emily Collette Linton, Pam Long, Susan Oakes, Polly Robb, Randy Sellers, Lucy Strandlund, Richelle Thompson-Pridmore.

Five to Be Ordained to the Priesthood

Five transitional deacons will be ordained to the Sacred Order of Priests in November and December. Each is being ordained in the congregation that they are serving as transitional deacons, and each will continue to serve these congregations as priests.

All are invited. Festal color is red.

James Wynn Gardner, November 18, by Bishop Suffragan Allen Shin at St. George’s Church, Manhattan, N.Y.

Katherine Stuart Harper, December 2, at 5 p.m. at St. Thomas, Huntsville

Corey Matthew Jones, December 2, at 10 a.m., at St. Francis of Assisi, Indian Springs

Jamie Lee Osborne, November 11, at 11 a.m., at St. John’s Montgomery

Mose Wadsworth Stuart, December 9, at 11 a.m., at Holy Apostles, Hoover
15 Years of Diaconal Ministry

Deacon Kelley Hudlow, Associate Dean of Students and Chair of Diaconal Studies for the Alabama Integrative Ministry School

For the past six years, thanks to social media, I am reminded of the joyful event of my ordination to the diaconate in the Diocese of Alabama. October 1, 2011, I joined my fellow classmates at the Cathedral Church of the Advent. In the midst of a beautiful service of hymns, prayers, Scripture, and preaching, we knelt. Alternately, Bishop Parsley and Bishop Sloan laid hands on us. We stood and were vested with our stoles, and our adventure in ordained ministry began. Just like everyone that finds themselves called to ordained ministry, each of us had a unique story that brought us to that place and that moment.

My story began in the Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast. I was born in Mobile, and according to the usual schedule, was baptized and confirmed in the Episcopal Church. Growing up, my only experience of diaconal ministry was the transitional diaconate—clergy on the way to the priesthood. It was not until I moved to Tuscaloosa that I experienced diaconal ministry through Deacon Roland Ficken at Canterbury Chapel.

As I began my discernment and formation program, I learned about an order of ministry that was both ancient and contemporary. The ministry of the diaconate is rooted in Christ’s own ministry to the poor, the outcast, and the forgotten. Traditionally, the Seven from the Book of Acts are considered the first deacons. Deacons are found in the epistles of the New Testament and throughout the history of the Church.

In the modern period, the diaconate has gone through overlapping waves of development. The first wave was that of missionary or indigenous deacons serving in the United States from the 1840s for about a century. The second wave was that of the deacons, from 1885 to 1970. The third wave was male “perpetual deacons” from 1952 to 1970, ordained at a time of church growth “primarily to serve as pastoral and sacramental assistants.” The fourth wave, starting in the 1970s, was a transitional time: deaconesses were made deacons; some women became deacons in anticipation of eventual ordination to the priesthood; many others, male and female, and indeed the church as a whole, were seeking what a renewed vocational diaconate should be. The fifth wave, beginning with the implementation of the 1979 Book of Common Prayer, was a time of definition—focusing on total ministry of the church and servant ministry. The sixth wave, beginning in the late 1980s, emphasized the leadership role of the deacon and focused on the deacons’ involvement in the world outside the church community. Since about 2005, a seventh wave began to develop defined by integration of the elements of the previous waves.

The Diocese of Alabama’s experience with diaconal ministry began in the “second wave.” On December 20, 1864, the Rt. Rev. Richard Hooker Wilmer, the second Bishop of Alabama, some 25 years before the national church authorized the order of deaconess, set apart Rebecca Hewitt, Harriet Irwin, and Jane Williams to serve as deaconesses. The ministry of deaconesses in Alabama would continue into the twentieth century. In 1999, after years of study and work by clergy and lay leaders, the diocese ordinated its first Holy Orders to the diaconate.

November 2, 2002: Roland Ficken, Carolyn Foster, Robert Hart, Katherine Jacob, Mark LaGory, Janet Mason, Tom Osborne, Arthur Ray, Katy Smith, Adele Stockham, Mary Jane Taylor, Louise Thibodaux.

October 30, 2004: Gerri Aston, Bill Cunningham, Mary Groff, Don Owen, Steve Shankle, Lynn Ballard, Dave Dulchis, Joanie Hammonds, Cindi Park, Mary Vandegriff, Preston Colangelo, Bruce Drupe, Kenneth Lewis, Clyde Peace.

ministry, together with the Commission on Ministry, the Rt. Rev. Henry Nutt Parsley, Jr., announced the formation of the first class of “permanent deacons.”

When I landed at Canterbury Chapel in 2006, I encountered a diaconate in the sixth wave but still remembering the work of the fifth wave. The deacons I encountered had their place in the liturgy and diverse ministries in the world, but there was still work of definition and education of “what a deacon was.” It was the diversity of ministry, and the deacon’s role of linking our worship to service in the world, that spoke to me in my discernment.

Serving as a deacon has allowed me diversity. In six years, I have served four churches. My ministry has included work with college students and young adults, work to address food insecurity, and disaster response. I am sure that on October 1, 2011, I had an idea of what my ministry would be like, but my path has gone in directions I would have never guessed.

While diverse ministry was attractive to me, it can create difficulties in trying to answer “What is a deacon?” A call to the diaconate can be hard to pin down. You just can’t seem to fit deacons into boxes. In six years of living into diaconal ministry, I have found that some things do not change. Scripture is the foundation. I talk about Jesus a whole lot more. I have abiding hope and faith that the Church, through the grace of Jesus Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, can change the world. And that a lot of my ministry is about remembering what others forget.

In one of my last classes in the Deacon School for Ministry, the Rev. Bill King, who led deacon formation for four classes, noted that I would be able to serve as a deacon for 40 years (with extra emphasis on the 40). This was an invitation for us to image what the church and the diaconate would look like in 40 years. In 2011, at 32 years old, I was as old as the “new” prayer book that was the basis for a new wave of diaconal ministry, and God willing, I will likely see multiple transformations of the prayer book, the church, and diaconal ministry. I am sure that the Church and the world of 2051 will be a sight to behold, but the path to that future is well worn and has been marked by the generations of faithful followers of Jesus and brave deacons.

For more information about the history of diaconal ministry: Many Servants: An Introduction to Deacons, by Ormonde Plater, and Unexpected Consequences: The Diaconate Renewed, by Susanne Watson Epting. To learn more about the Alabama Community of Deacons, visit www.dioala.org/deacons

In memoriam

The Rev. Janet Mason, Deacon 1941-2007
Ordained in 2002, Mason served St. Matthias’ and Christ Episcopal Church in Tuscaloosa. As part of her ministry, she coordinated Alabama’s efforts with Episcopal Relief & Development and worked in disaster relief efforts.

The Rev. A. Richard Ray, Deacon 1940-2006
Ordained in 2002, Mason devoted his life to helping others, particularly children through his career in the Alabama Department of Youth Services and the American Correctional Association. He was instrumental in establishing the Epiphany Ministry of Alabama (a spiritual retreat, similar to Cursillo or Happening, for incarcerated youth) and chaired the national Epiphany Ministry board.

The Rev. Adele Stockham, Deacon 1931-2013
Ordained in 2002, Stockham served Christ Church Fairfield and Grace Episcopal Church in Woodlawn. As part of her ministry, she worked with homeless and working poor and served on the board of Bridge Ministries of Birmingham, Birmingham Hospitality Network, Birmingham Contemplative Outreach and BARD Housing.

The Rev. Mary Vandagriff, Deacon 1931-2016
Ordained in 2004, Vandagriff served campus ministries at Trinity Commons, as the chaplain of Integrity of Alabama (an advocacy group for LGBT Episcopalians), and St. Alban’s Episcopal Church in Birmingham. Vandagriff was affectionately known to many as “Reverend Deacon Oma (grandmother).”
The Parable of The Talents

Lindsey Mullen, Executive Director of Special Session

On September 29, friends of Special Session gathered at Cahaba Brewing Company in Birmingham to celebrate our talents and to raise money for the Special Session camper scholarship fund. The second annual “Birmingham’s Got Potential” raised over $14,000 for the cause.

The event was modeled after the Special Session talent show—the culminating evening of the summer camp session, where every camper performs and every camper is celebrated. In addition to the usual singing and dancing, we have campers that get more creative, showing off their skills in bed-making or competitive sitting. The event is made into something remarkable not only by the courage and authenticity of the performers, but also by the enthusiasm of the crowd. Special Session staffers and guests wave their arms along to every song; they whistle and yell at the end of every act. As in the parable of the talents—each talent-haver who has the courage to invest their talent is rewarded with praise. Every talent is given as a gift to the community; every gift is made even greater by the recipients’ joy.

We wanted Birmingham’s Got Potential to feel like the Special Session talent show. Even though we don’t have the magic of being at camp—we believed that we could create an event that felt like a celebration of everyone there. We wanted moments of holiness to peak through the performances.

As happens so often when we set out to get a glimpse of the kingdom; God provided. The spirit of the community of Special Session was present in the place. Gumbo was served. People cheered and clapped alongside strangers. A few Special Session campers performed to raucous applause; by the end of the night everyone was dancing.

Birmingham’s Got Potential was not only a fundraising success, but an opportunity to share the gospel truth that all are beloved, and all are welcome.

Applications for Special Session 2018 summer sessions will be available on our website, specialsessionalabama.org, in mid January.

Special Session, a shared ministry of the Diocese of Alabama, is a summer camp session for people of all abilities, hosted by Camp McDowell each summer.

Special Session Christmas Wish List

Looking for a meaningful Christmas gift? Purchase something from the Special Session Wish List, and we will send you or your loved one a card telling you about how we will use it at Special Session this year. (specialsessionalabama.org)
Trinity Commons, the Episcopal Student Center for Birmingham, is pleased to announce a gift from a donor to sponsor one of our student interns. This donor has chosen to name the internship after the Rev. Bertie Pittman, former Associate Rector at St. Stephen’s, Huntsville, who died in a car wreck in 1988. She was the Associate Rector at St. Stephen’s from 1982-1988, and previously worked at the CDC in Atlanta before being ordained a priest.

Trinity Commons serves all Birmingham colleges but primarily serves students at UAB, Birmingham-Southern, and Samford. Trinity Commons has two student interns who serve as leaders at the student center and on campus. For more information about Trinity Commons, visit www.trinitycommons.org.

For more information about our diocesan college ministries, visit www.dioala.org/college.

District Day 2017!

Northern District’s Galaxy Day was hosted by Epiphany, Guntersville. The youth tie dyed space themed t-shirts and played a wild new game called Galaxy Ball (a combination of capture the flag and Star Wars dodgeball). Everyone who came was out of this world!

Central District hosted a Fiesta Day at Holy Cross, Trussville filled with games such as Bean Blast, Sombrero Toss and Taco Battle, which was a favorite among the participants! After fun in the sun, there was plenty of food and even a piñata! It was a great start to the new YD year!

Southern District’s Hippie Day was as groovy as it could be! Everyone enjoyed playing games, making flower crowns and building dream catchers. Looking the part in their tie dye and Birkenstocks, the youth enjoyed a very cool day in Gold Star Park, Wetumpka!

The Youth Department would like to thank everyone who donated the use of their space, food and adult support to District Day! We couldn’t do this without you!

Christmas Conference 2017

It’s time to register for Christmas Conference 2017 (December 28-20)! Registration for this event opened in early October, but there is still room, so please register today!

The Youth Department has been planning this event with the Rev. Aaron Raulerson of Epiphany, Guntersville, and Anne Elizabeth Cowan from Nativity, Huntsville, as our program team! Our longtime friend and amazing musician, Fran McKendree will offer a short concert and involve youth in leading music throughout the event. This event is open to all senior high youth (grades 9-12).

The event cost is $115.00. Scholarship money is available.

Registration is open until space is full or no later than December 18, 2017.

Staff applications are open until November 12, 2017.

To register or to apply to serve as staff, visit www.dioala.org/youthevents.html.

Be on the Look-out for these registrations opening soon!

•  Diocesan Convention/Youth Lock-In, February 9-10
•  Rites of Spring, April 6-8
•  Young People Paint Birmingham, Summer 2018

Visit www.dioala.org/youthevents.html
It’s the Most Wonderful Time of the Year…

Kathy Graham, Lifelong Christian Formation Coordinator

I t’s the most wonderful time of the year! No, not like the Christmas song that is already playing throughout shopping malls but the time of year when our Christian formation programs are in full swing! Most parishes kicked off their program year a week or two after Labor Day giving families time to settle in to the routine of school and after-school activities.

But along with these activities come things like practices, tournaments (some on Sunday mornings), football games — and some that have kickoff times later in the evenings and numerous others things that take our time and dedication. Regular church attendance is now considered to be twice a month versus every Sunday a generation ago.

So what does this mean for our churches and our formation programs? Twice a month equals about 2 hours of worship and 2 hours in Sunday school, or maybe 4 hours a month. That’s not a lot of time for Jesus. So a lot of the Christian formation directors from across the diocese have been working on ways to address this cultural shift.

Several attended the formation conference at Kanuga this past June and some are planning to attend the FORMA conference in January. There is a lot of work and research being done on how to navigate this culture of business.

Some things to think about and consider: What if we transformed our narratives in ministry to families?

Instead of saying “passing on the faith” we say and implement “living into the faith”. What if we could reach families through relationships across all generations instead of just offering programs, and what if instead of serving families we partner and empower families for faith formation in their homes? With these thoughts in mind our formation leaders have been thinking about and working towards new and different ways of doing ministry.

Here are some new things going on in our parishes:

Jennifer Jones and Amy Passey from St. Stephen’s in Birmingham, have created Wednesday night programs to be more church family oriented with dinner and the activity being created for generations working and interacting together. They have a Facebook page where they post links to the lesson and activities for those not able to attend and have information available on their website for faith in the home ideas. You can see it here https://secchurch.org/family-resources.php.

Katharine Gould from Christ Church in Tuscaloosa, with help from Nita Caldwell and Elizabeth Hinson, has made a Faith At Home tab on their website with links and resources for families. You can find it here https://www.christchurch1828.org/faithathome.

Lynne School from St. Thomas in Birmingham, writes a blog for formation with thoughts and ideas for families (https://saintthomaschildren.wordpress.com)

Elizabeth Wilson from the Cathedral Church of the Advent in Birmingham, welcome their five year old kindergarteners into the regular worship service to worship with their families with the opportunity to attend children’s chapel for a short time during the service to learn more about our worship.

Kathleen Buzbee from All Saint’s in Homewood, has started a class just for sixth graders that helps them form community and provides lessons designed especially for this age group.

Audrey Clark at St. Thomas Huntsville helped their children and youth with an outreach project for victims of Hurricane Harvey and Irma. They made blankets and collected fun items for the children affected by the storms.

Kelly Branch with the youth and volunteers from Resurrection in Rainbow City held a community centered Vacation School instead of a congregation centered one. They did their VBS with the Boys and Girls Club.

Stephanie Spinks and Katie DeWees from St. Mary’s-on-the-Highlands offered a Bible School day one day a week during the summer instead of one week.

Christina Dorn from Grace Annniston led the parish in participating in the Kindness Rock project. For more information look here: www.thekindnessrocksproject.com. Several other churches participated in this too. It’s a fun way to connect with the community.

Several parishes welcome new formation directors:


Suggested Resources


Four Daily Exercises that Illuminate Gratitude and Joy (Parent Co.) http://bit.ly/2VTNYql

Five Simple Thanksgiving Activities to Teach Gratitude (Parent Co.) http://bit.ly/2xwnrlC

5 Routines that Infuse Everyday with Gratitude (Parent Co.) http://bit.ly/2J2jg64

Other sites with a wealth of good stuff:

www.buildfaith.org

www.faith5.org

http://vibrantfaithathome.org

https://www.parent.co/

Resource available from our diocese:

For ideas and resources check out our Pinterest page- www.pinterest.com/dioaladirectors/boards/

The Resource room has items for Advent, Christmas and Epiphany in the resource room and on the Pinterest page.

For resources for Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany, visit our Pinterest page (www.pinterest.com/dioaladirectors/boards), or visit our Resource Room. Contact Kathy Graham Coordinator of Lifelong Christian Formation by emailing kgraham@diala.org.
Our diocese is a diverse community of people unified and transformed by the love of God in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit to share that transformational love with the world.

In 2017, to better reflect the financial support given to our shared ministries, our budget reporting was modified to include the estimated contributions of $237,150 to specific ministries.

Since 2011, when adjusted for inflation, our diocesan operating budget has decreased by 1.6%.

Our parishes saw an increase of their Plate and Pledge of +11.3%.

Our diocese saw a decrease of the proportion pledged for covenants of -10%.

This information packet was distributed to our parishes as part of our diocesan covenant invitation. This information is a summary of how we fund the shared resources and ministries of our diocese, as well as to give a snapshot of those shared resources and ministries in 2017.

Please visit www.dioala.org/finance for additional information.
Called Together... in God... in love... in joy

Categories from 2017 Approved Budget

- Mission & Outreach (15.80%)
- Administration (1.2%)
- Sawyerville Day Camp & TLIM (11.44%)
- College Ministry (11.43%)
- The Episcopate (11.11%)
- Leadership Development (0.09%)
- Parish Development/evangelism (0.42%)
- Formation, Youth, Young Adult (0.36%)
- Communications (4.11%)
- Camp McDowell (3.93%)
- Stewardship (2.93%)

Our 87 parishes and shared ministries are supported by our Bishop and 16 full & part time staff members.

Our diocesan staff work to support our ministries in our parishes

Christian Formation
- 30 Parish Formation Consults
- 56 Attendees at ONE Conference
- 91 Attendees at Spirituality Retreats
- 170 Attendees at The Journey

Communications
- 14,765 The Alabama Episcopalian Households
- 3,000 DioAla News Update Subscribers
- 2,873 Facebook Page Likes
- 80 Websites Hosted

Youth & Young Adults
- 40 Parish Consults
- 40 Attendees at Young Adult Retreat
- 45 Parishes Represented at YD Events

Stewardship
- 37 Parish Consults/Presentations

Special Events
- 4 Special Diocesan Events (including Our Diocesan Convention)

In addition to these events and consults, our diocesan staff support the various councils, committees, departments, and commissions of the diocese.
Forming Ordained Leaders in 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ordained in formation in traditional Seminary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>in formation or entering the Alabama Integrative Ministry School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>in Diocesan Level Discernment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Consults for Parish transitions &amp; Mutual Ministry Assessments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Programs for continuing clergy formation, and Fresh Start for clergy new to our Diocese.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Our shared ministries allow us to serve together & share the Gospel

Sawyerville & YLP 2017

- 70 Parishes supported SDC & YLP with staff, funds, supplies, & meals
- 99% of Campers
- 33% of Volunteer Staff are Non-Episcopalians

Special Session 2017

- 90% of Campers
- 25% of Youth Counselors are Non-Episcopalians

Our College Ministries support our parishes’ students and young adults, and share the Gospel by inviting new people to explore faith in the Episcopal tradition. Learn more: www.dioala.org/college

- 35 Parishes Represented at Canterbury Chapel Tuscaloosa
- 31% of students at Trinity Commons Birmingham are non-Episcopalians

Members of our 87 worshipping communities take part in the governance of our diocese by serving at Diocesan Convention and elected terms on Diocesan Council, Standing Committee, and Disciplinary Board. Members also support the ministry of our diocese by serving on 27 departments, committees, commissions, organizations.
## Our Diocesan Staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan Cook</td>
<td>Diocesan Bookkeeper, Bookkeeping, Accounting, Issuance of Checks</td>
<td>205-358-9228 <a href="mailto:jcook@dioala.org">jcook@dioala.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claire Cotten</td>
<td>SDC/YLP Ex. Dir. for Development &amp; Communications &amp; Contributions for SDC/YLP</td>
<td>205-358-9237 <a href="mailto:ccotten@dioala.org">ccotten@dioala.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danielle Dunbar</td>
<td>Director of Mission Funding, Stewardship, Planned Giving, Development, Stewardship of Creation</td>
<td>205-358-9234 <a href="mailto:ddunbar@dioala.org">ddunbar@dioala.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betsy Fetner</td>
<td>Interim Youth &amp; Young Adult Coordinator, Youth, Youth Department, Young Adults, Youth Ministers</td>
<td>205-358-9232 <a href="mailto:bfetner@dioala.org">bfetner@dioala.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathy Graham</td>
<td>Lifelong Christian Formation Coordinator, Formation, Liturgy &amp; Music, Diocesan Altar Guild, Spirituality, Recovery Ministries</td>
<td>205-358-9229 <a href="mailto:kgraham@dioala.org">kgraham@dioala.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judy Hall</td>
<td>Administrative Assistant to Bishop Sloan, Bishop’s Visitations, Bishop’s Calendar</td>
<td>205-358-9224 <a href="mailto:jhall@dioala.org">jhall@dioala.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Venerable Marti Holmes</td>
<td>Archdeacon, Community of Deacons</td>
<td>205-567-6195 <a href="mailto:mholmes@holyapostleshoover.org">mholmes@holyapostleshoover.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rev. Kelley Hudlow</td>
<td>Communications Coordinator, Website, Social Media, Email Newsletter, <em>The Alabama Episcopalian</em></td>
<td>205-358-9233 <a href="mailto:khudlow@dioala.org">khudlow@dioala.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crystal Jones</td>
<td>SDC/YLP Ex. Dir. for Programs &amp; Operations, Logistics, Programs &amp; Staffing for SDC/YLP, Happening</td>
<td>205-358-9226 <a href="mailto:cjones@dioala.org">cjones@dioala.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitney Moore</td>
<td>Interim Executive Director for Camp McDowell, Camp McDowell</td>
<td>205-387-1806 ext. 113 <a href="mailto:whitney@campmcdowell.com">whitney@campmcdowell.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rev. Rob Morpeth</td>
<td>Staff Officer for Finance &amp; Administration, Finances, Policies &amp; Compliance, Parish Audits, Title IV Intake Officer, DMHE</td>
<td>205-358-9225 <a href="mailto:rmorpeth@dioala.org">rmorpeth@dioala.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lindsey Mullen</td>
<td>Executive Director of Special Session, Program development, organization, staffing, and funding for Special Session</td>
<td>205-530-0685 <a href="mailto:lmullen@dioala.org">lmullen@dioala.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georganne Perrine</td>
<td>Special Events Coordinator, Convention, Database Maintenance, Online Registration for Diocesan Events</td>
<td>205-358-9230 <a href="mailto:gperrine@dioala.org">gperrine@dioala.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah Sartain</td>
<td>Staff Officer for Ministry Development &amp; Clergy Transitions, Clergy Deployment, Mission &amp; Outreach, Parish Development &amp; Evangelism</td>
<td>205-358-9227 <a href="mailto:ssartain@dioala.org">ssartain@dioala.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denise Servant</td>
<td>Administrative Assistant, Subscription Secretary for <em>The Alabama Episcopalian</em>, Member records</td>
<td>205-358-9221 <a href="mailto:dservant@dioala.org">dservant@dioala.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rt. Rev. John McKee Sloan</td>
<td>Bishop of Alabama</td>
<td>205-358-9224 <a href="mailto:kslano@dioala.org">kslano@dioala.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makenzie Snyder</td>
<td>Financial Administrative Assistant, Safeguarding Program, Background Checks</td>
<td>205-358-9231 <a href="mailto:mnsnyder@dioala.org">mnsnyder@dioala.org</a></td>
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**Called Together in Christ**

October/November/December 2017
SAWYERVILLE DAY CAMP AND YELLOWHAMMER LEARNING PROGRAM

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

Summer 2017 in Review

Sawyerville Day Camp

This summer at Sawyerville Day Camp, we hosted three four-day sessions at Greensboro Elementary School in Greensboro, Alabama. Over the course of the three sessions, we registered 758 campers and welcomed 346 staff members! One third of the staff came from the local community and 79 staff grew up as campers at SDC. Our theme was “Be Not Afraid,” and the Bible lessons focused on stories like the angel speaking to Mary, Jesus calming the storm, and Jesus walking on water.

At SDC, campers received two meals and a snack each day. We served more than 6,500 meals to campers alone, not to mention those shared with staff. Daily activities included Bible lessons, arts and crafts, journaling, games, and swimming. We added “skills sessions” to Upper Camp’s daily schedule, and campers were able to choose one skill to work on over the course of the week. This summer’s skill sessions covered martial arts, soccer, basketball, dance, cheer, art, and photography. When asked about the art skills session, one camper responded, “I liked the part when we tie-dyed our t-shirts. I learned that art is a beautiful thing.”

Fifteen rising third-grade students completed the Yellowhammer Learning Program this summer. This was the first year with this age group, and it was a big success! Third-grade students are at a perfect age to soak up all the goodness YLP has to offer. Each day, the students studied reading, math, science, and chess, all taught by incredible teachers. The YLP boasts teacher to student ratio of 1:2.5. Every Friday either the students ventured on a field trip or the field trip came to them! We traveled to a nearby farm for a nature walk and all the way to Birmingham to visit the Birmingham Museum of Art and the Birmingham Zoo. The McWane Science Center brought special presentations to the students in Greensboro and a local artist taught a workshop on book making.

The YLP students grew by leaps and bounds over the course of the four-week program. 100% of students grew by at least one reading level. Two students grew by 6 reading levels, and 2 more grew by 7 reading levels! On average, the students gained three months of learning in both reading and math. We’re so proud of the students and thankful to the teachers and parents!

Thank you to all of the volunteers, donors, parishes, organizations, and businesses who made this summer possible. This ministry is the work of the entire Diocese and the Hale County community - a true partnership. We are grateful to everyone in every role from campers to staff to supporters. Thank you for your time, energy, gifts, and prayers. It’s all for the kids!

To learn how to support SDC & YLP, including recurring monthly gifts, visit www.sawyervilledaycamp.org/giving.html or contact Claire Cotten (205) 358-9237 or ccotten@dioala.org.

October/November/December 2017
I already know that words will be inadequate, but I am going to try anyway.

The other day, my coworker asked me if my summer had been what I expected. The question threw me for a loop, mostly because I hadn’t really taken the time to compare the reality of my experiences to the picture I had drawn up in my head. I told him I would have to think about that for a second, and when I did, I realized that picture in my head didn’t really exist.

I learned about laughter and friendship and courage. I learned about truth and heartbreak and perseverance. I never thought a job at a summer camp could so completely change my life and my outlook.

Each morning, I would wake up in the room (yes, room) that I shared with sixteen other people. I would put on my brick-red, slightly-more-faded-than-the-day-before staff shirt, and maybe a swipe of mascara if I skipped the third press of the snooze button. I’d walk into

reminding me that miracles still happen and for teaching me to love and serve and live with everything I’ve got.

Thank you for showing me that this is so much more than a summer camp or an elementary school or a small town in Alabama. Words will never do justice to you or the things you do in this place, and I will never be able to tell you the ways that you have shaped my heart.

And to my fellow summer long staff. My love for you is where words truly fail. Thank you for sharing that room with me. Thank you for holding my hand and hugging me tight. Thank you for being kind and gentle in your leadership. Thank you for bringing light and laughter into my stressful days. You have shown me what insane courage, boundless passion, and complete joy look like. You have taught me to live unapologetically and authentically, and to appreciate each little moment. You give every single ounce of yourselves to this place and these people, and it has been such a gift to witness. You have given me a home and a family I didn’t even know I wanted or needed, and I will never be able to thank you enough for that. I love y’all so much more than I could ever tell you. You are my heroes and some of my greatest blessings.

So, I guess to answer that question that was asked of me, this summer was like nothing I could have imagined.

Sawyerville, it has truly been my greatest honor.
We want to thank everyone who has given and continues to give to Wonderful, Wonderful Camp McDowell! We appreciate you sharing your hard-earned resources to help us actualize the vision of God’s Backyard. Your gift not only allows campers to experience the joy of community, inclusion, and love, it also helps us strengthen our programs, facilities, and staff so that we can serve more of God’s people.

Thank you.

“Camp McDowell is so much fun and gives you the chance to honor God.” - Scout Barber, 8 years old; Mother/Daughter Camp 2015, 2016, 2017; Summer Camp 2017

“Wonderful, wonderful Camp McDowell has become a huge part of my family’s life. From Father/Son Camp to Mother/Daughter Camp to all three of my children attending summer camp, we have been truly blessed with the friendships we have made and the experiences of a lifetime.” - Mary Beth Barber, Jasper; Mother/Daughter Camp 2015, 2016, 2017

Did you know……..?

- Camp McDowell Summer Camp is a ministry that has been shared and experienced by thousands of young people for 70+ years...

- Camp McDowell offers scholarships to families who otherwise would not be able to afford to send their children to camp...

- Every year, the number of campers increases, along with the need for scholarship help...

- For the past few years, the amount of scholarship funds raised has not kept up with the growing need...

In 2016 we raised approximately $30,000 for summer camp scholarships, while we gave out approximately $60,000 in scholarships.

This year, for 2017, we have about $20,000 for scholarships and need to raise another $50,000.

Visit www.campmcdowell.com or find us on Facebook to learn how you can support camp scholarships and how you can support Camp on #GivingTuesday, November 28th!
Around Our Diocese

October/November/December 2017

If you’re interested in attending or need more information on any of our upcoming retreats, contact Susanna or Strat: susanna@campmcdowell.com | stratt@campmcdowell.com

2018 Summer Camp schedule

Primary I: May 25-27
Create May 28-June 1
Junior High I: May 30-June 5
Diocesan Homecoming June 8-10
Sophomore Camp: June 8-16
Middler Camp: June 20-25
Elementary I: June 28-July 1
Senior Camp: July 6-15
Junior High II: July 18-25
Camper Buddy @ Bethany’s Kids July 23-28
Bethany’s Kids July 24-27
Elementary II: July 28-Aug 1
Primary II: Aug 3-5

Mark your calendars! Registration for most summer sessions will be open at the beginning of January. Visit www.campmcdowell.com for more information and to register.

Come Back to Camp!

NOVEMBER
3 - 5  Folk School: Songwriting
3 - 5  Folk School: Gumbo Academy
3 - 5  Folk School: Intermediate Blacksmithing
3 - 5  Folk School: Polymer Clay for Beginners
10 - 12  Grace Anniston Parish Retreat
17 - 19  Family Farm to Table Camp

DECEMBER
27 - 30  Christmas Conference (9th - 12th grade)

JANUARY
12 - 15  Winter Weekend (7th - 8th grade)

FEBRUARY
16 - 18  Folk School: From Scratch
          Banjo
          Blacksmithing
          Drawing
          Fiddle
          Guitar
          Harmony Singing
          Ukulele
22 - 25  Cursillo #211
24 - 25  Diocesan Ultreya

MARCH
2 - 4  Folk School: Fiber Arts & Song Writing
2 - 4  Our Time
16 - 18  Awakenings (7th - 8th grade)

There are still some openings on the calendar for 2018! Give camp a call to make reservations: 205-387-1806

October/November/December 2017
McDowell’s Educational Ministries Started the School Year Strong...

The Amazing Momentum of the McDowell Farm School

McDowell Farm School

The McDowell Farm School started off as a pilot program and, for two years, had classes on the three acre production site on camp called Fallen Oakes. In 2014, the program expanded into Mark’s Farm, which is a 40 acre hold and is now the permanent home for the McDowell Farm School. With the help of students and the whole Camp McDowell community, we have raised two barns, reassembled a greenhouse, built an expansive chicken coup with multiple chicken yards, have established over four acres in crop production, and have added goats, sheep, pigs and other critters to the farm. We are constantly growing, building and improving our farm and love to share it with the hundreds of students who now come through our program to learn how to be stewards of the land and animals. This year, the Farm School is almost at capacity!

Meet the new Director of the McDowell Farm School!

We welcome Kelsey Evans to the camp family as the new Farm School Director! Kelsey was previously the Director of Programming for the Girl Scouts in Harrisburg - the Heart of Pennsylvania. She stepped into her new role at camp mid August and, in her words, she is “excited to be a part of the Camp McDowell Family!”

Kelsey has a dual degree in Agricultural Education and Agriculture and Natural Resources with a concentration in Animal Science from University of Delaware. She also has a teaching certificate in Agricultural Education, and is certified to teach k-12 in all of the sciences. Kelsey resides at camp and has already adopted a puppy named Pepper.

A student experiences hands-on learning with the help of one of our goats!

Farm Manager, James Walawender, leads a group of students in a discussion about how things grow.

Students love to explore the farm grounds, rain or shine.

Pictured here are Phil, Tiel, Aubrey, Annalise, and Leah, who came from all over the country to teach at the Farm School this season: Alabama, California, Washington, New Jersey, and Georgia!
MEC: 23 Years and Counting!

The McDowell Environmental Center is going strong as it heads into its 23rd school year. Our EC staff unites to bring the youth of the Southeast adventure and educational experiences at Wonderful, Wonderful Camp McDowell! This fall, our seasonal staff hail from places as near as Jasper, Alabama, to as far as Oregon City, Oregon, bringing diverse understandings of the natural world that surrounds us. With Masters degrees, PhDs, and unique degrees in psychology, sociology, biology, and the arts, they are well equipped to tackle the thorough curriculum and standards that our program provides to schools from Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, and Tennessee.

Our Curriculum and Education Manager, Trish Smrecak, is pointing out where lichen can be found on the trees of Camp McDowell to the Capital School 4th graders.

MEC Instructor, Nick Raines, teaches the Mill Creek 5th grade how to orient and use a topographic map in Orienteering class.

Only in its second year, the Magnolia Nature Preschool celebrates its success and is at full capacity! Pictured here with the 2017 Fall preschool class are teachers, Melissa Frederick & Anne-Emerson Sorrell, and the Director of the preschool, Madeleine Pearce.
The Alabama Folk School Ends Its 10th Year Strong

The Alabama Folk School celebrates its 10 year anniversary this year and it has never been stronger. People from all skill levels have participated in a multitude of diverse, high-quality workshops this year. Polymer clay, watercolor & oil painting, blacksmithing, Gee’s Bend quilting, and guitar, fiddle, banjo & other music workshops are only some of the classes that have been offered this year. One of the newest workshops – boat building – was a huge success in August, with teams building their own 10 foot wooden boats from scratch.

We thank everyone who has supported the Folk School for these past ten years through participation, instruction, or donating time and resources to this ministry that enriches lives and reconnects people to music, art, and each other. Our goal for the next ten years is to continue to provide the opportunity for people to work creatively with their hands, minds, and spirits and to help preserve Alabama’s cultural heritage in God’s Backyard.

Mays Path is Complete!

We are happy to announce that Mays Path is complete! Mays Path is named after June & Joe Mays from St. Mary’s on the Highlands, Birmingham, and is the path that surrounds Sloan Lake. Until September, the path did not quite connect. Now, thanks to the boy scouts of Troop 86 from Birmingham, visitors can walk all the way around beautiful Sloan Lake. The troop built several walkways along the path during their service project weekend.

On September 17, a native plant garden was planted at the entrance to the Mays Path. The 30’ x 10’ garden bed, is hedged on three sides by 25 Inkberry shrubs, and opens along the path on the front. Native plants donated by Chris Boles and June Mays were added to plants purchased from local nurseries.

When you visit the garden, you will find Agastache, Amsonia, Asclepias, Baptisia, Coreopsis, Echinacea, Eupatorium, Gaillardia, Helianthus, Hibiscus coccineus, Hibiscus moscheutos, Iris cristata, Liatris, Penstemon, Phlox divaricata, Phlox pilosa, Rudbeckia hirta (black eyed susan), Ratibida pinnata (grey headed coneflower), Salvia azurea, Salvia coccinea (Texas sage), Silene, Silphium, Spigela, and Vernonia. Blooms will begin in early spring with Iris cristata, continue through the heat of summer, and finish with Coreopsis in the fall.

There are more native plants located along the path that will be identified and labeled as they bloom.

The garden was planted by volunteers, including June Mays, Margie Fox, Cathy Robertson, Andrew Shea, Camp’s Farm Manager, prepared the bed and set up the irrigation.

Next time you are at Camp McDowell, take a stroll along Mays Path and enjoy the beauty of Sloan Lake and beautiful native plants.
Disasters Overwhelm the South and the Caribbean

The Rev. Judy Quick, Episcopal Relief & Development Diocesan Co-coordinator

Photo from Episcopal Relief & Development

On the Occasion of a Disaster

Compassionate God… Draw near to us in this time of sorrow and anguish, comfort those who mourn, strengthen those who are weary, encourage those in despair, and lead us all to fullness of life; through the same Jesus Christ, our Savor and Redeemer, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen

— Holy Women, Holy Men: Celebrating the Saints (Church Publishing: New York), page 733

The onslaught of these hurricanes, not to mention the earthquakes in Mexico and the fires in the Western United States can be overwhelming to comprehend. Thank God for God. He sustains us as we discern our call to respond.

The Diocese of Alabama has been extremely generous in response with donations to Episcopal Relief & Development to support the US Disaster Program for our neighbors in the Diocese of Texas, the Diocese of West Texas, the Diocese of Louisiana, the Diocese of Florida, the Diocese of Southwest Florida, the Diocese of Southeast Florida, the Diocese of Central Florida, and the Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast. Teams and individuals have registered with the Ready to Serve Volunteer Database so they can go help our neighbors in their recovery and rebuilding.

https://www.episcopalrelief.org/what-you-can-do/volunteer/ready-to-serve

Episcopal Relief & Development is also actively responding to the hurricane devastation in Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, and the Virgin Islands, all dioceses of the Episcopal Church (Province IX and II).

Our Companion Relationship with the Virgin Islands has truly been providential as we have been able to connect the emergency relief efforts of Episcopal Relief & Development with Bishop Gumbs and his leadership team. The Diocese of Alabama (with parishes and individuals) will partner with Episcopal Relief & Development and the Diocese of the Virgin Islands (and its parishes) for the long-term recovery and rebuilding of churches and communities on all five islands of the Diocese of the Virgin Islands: St. Thomas, St. John, St. Croix (United States Virgin Islands) and Tortola, Virgin Gorda (British Virgin Islands).

Thank you for your kindness and care for those struggling after these many disasters. We know all shall be well with God’s help … And ours.

Please:

**PRAY:** Prayer for people in need is an essential part of Christian faith. It brings us into communion with God, where our hearts can be tuned to the needs of others — especially those who are suffering. Worship Resources can be found at http://www.episcopalrelief.org/church-in-action/worship-resources/prayers-and-liturgies


**DONATE:** Hurricane Relief Fund https://support.episcopalrelief.org/hurricane-relief

**PREPARE:** Take time to review your parish’s preparation plans for a disaster. Complete the Episcopal Asset Map. Other disaster preparedness resources are found at http://www.episcopalrelief.org/what-we-do/us-disaster-program/us-disaster-program-preparedness-resources

For More Information on Episcopal Relief & Development, visit www.episcopalrelief.org or contact the Reverend Judy Quick (jgquick@bellsouth.net) or Ms. Marilyn Lands at marilynlands@gmail.com. To update your parish’s entry on the Episcopal Asset Map visit https://edal.episcopalassetmap.org.
The Day I Saw God

Tommy McGlothlin

A few days before I graduated from high school, my grandfather — sage, wise, old man who enjoyed playing the part — sat me down to impart upon me (as a gift) some of his wisdom. I remember that he spoke about honor, and character and other such things that wise, old men are supposed to impart upon the next generation. However, of all the things he told me, the one thing I remember word for word was this: "Mark the events that will change your life and that you will recall on your deathbed."

And so it is that I have marked those events. I remember graduation from college (25 May 1988). I remember when I moved to Tupelo (14 February 1999), when I met Mark Pratt (20 January 2006), and when I moved to Birmingham (20 October 2006). And, on Monday, 21 August 2017, I looked up into the sky and saw God.

Prior to the so-called Great American Eclipse of 2017, we all knew that the event was going to take place. Many of us honed up on the science of eclipses that we learned in school. For instance, I learned that such phenomenon are unique to this particular era in the lifespan of our planet, our moon, and our sun, and that millions of years ago, eclipses were not possible on earth because of the differences in the sun’s size (young suns are smaller than older suns), the distance of the moon from the earth (it was closer to us than it is today), and that in a few million years from now, the phenomenon of eclipses will no longer occur as the sun gets even bigger and the moon farther away. I reacquainted myself with the meaning of such terms as umbra, penumbra, and Bailey’s Beads. We knew exactly when “first contact” would begin (1:04 PM EDT) and when annularity (totality) would begin (2:33:02 PM EDT). Mark, Bernard, and I were ready — armed with all of the science we needed to know about eclipses and to separate ourselves from our ancestors who prepared for the end of the world with fear and dread when eclipses occurred.

It was quite exciting when first contact was made, and for the next hour and a half (or so), we were amazed as we watched the sunlight dim, as if filtered by a giant ultra-violet filter in the sky. We noticed the change in temperature, and were amused as the cicadas began to buzz and mosquitoes swarmed. Then, at precisely 2:33:02 PM EDT — as scientifically predicted — annularity occurred. Everything was precisely as we knew it would occur. When the sun was completely covered, I took off my protective glasses, procured from www.eclipse2017.org. I looked up directly at the sun (probably for the first time in my life). And I gasped. For 2 glorious minutes and 2 glorious seconds, I saw more than a mere celestial phenomenon. I looked up and saw God looking back down at me.

Now, I won’t get into all of the pharisaical arguments against such a statement. Atheists will shake their heads in despair, theologians will argue about the heresy of confusing the Divine with the material elements of the Created world. Some folks may even start backing away from me and planning their escape. I completely understand. All I can say is that I went into the event of the Great American Eclipse of 2017 expecting to watch a great science experiment in the sky. What I got was a religious experience in which I worshipped (yes, worshipped!) the full display of the Divine Majesty of the great I AM. Heresy or not, I was enraptured with God.

A Swedish man named Carl Gustav Boberg wrote a poem in 1885 that eventually became a popular Protestant hymn here in America, in England, and in the former British colonies, spread by British Methodist missionaries. We all know it. It’s called How Great Thou Art. The modern English translation (from the 1950s, I believe) takes some liberties with the translation of Boberg’s poem written in Swedish. But it’s the one with which most of us are familiar:

O Lord my God! When I in awesome wonder Consider all the works Thy hand hath made. I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder, Thy power throughout the universe displayed.

Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to Thee: How great Thou art, how great Thou art!

“Mark those events that will change your life and that you will recall on your deathbed.” I now know exactly what my grandfather meant, even if I thought it a bit morbid at the time. I will always recall the day that I became intimately familiar with the Majesty of God, the Glory of God’s Creation. I will always recall that divine two minutes in which I worshipped God in awesome wonder, face to face. Thanks be to God for this.

Tommy McGlothlin is a member of St. Andrew’s in Birmingham. He is an Education for Ministry Mentor, Lay Reader, and Leader of the Catechumenate. Tommy viewed the total solar eclipse from Lenoir City, TN. This reflection was originally published in the September 2017 edition of Andrew’s Net, a monthly newsletter published by St. Andrew’s in Birmingham.
Special Services and Concerts at the Cathedral Church of the Advent, 2017

**Sunday, September 17, 2017, 3:00 p.m. - Choral Evensong**: The Cathedral Choir, under the direction of Frederick Teardo, sings the traditional Anglican service of Choral Evensong, a beautiful service of lessons, anthems, and prayers.

**Sunday, October 15, 2017, 3:00 p.m. - Choral Evensong**: The Cathedral Choir, under the direction of Frederick Teardo, sings the traditional Anglican service of Choral Evensong, a beautiful service of lessons, anthems, and prayers.

**Friday, November 17, 2017, 12:30 p.m. - Mid-Day Music**: Anthony Pattin, piano, will perform a free, 30-minute recital in Clingman Commons. Pattin is Professor Emeritus of Music at the University of Montevallo.

**Sunday, November 19, 2017, 3:00 p.m. - Choral Evensong**: The Cathedral Choir, under the direction of Frederick Teardo, sings the traditional Anglican service of Choral Evensong, a beautiful service of lessons, anthems, and prayers.

**Sunday, December 3, 2017, 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. - A service of Advent Lessons and Carols**: This beautiful service, sung by the Cathedral Choirs, consists of readings, hymns, and carol anthems to celebrate the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Thursday, December 14, 2017, 5:30 p.m – A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols**: The Cathedral Choir sings the traditional service of Nine Lessons and Carols celebrating the birth of Jesus, modeled after the famous service held annually at King’s College, Cambridge.

**Friday, December 15, 2017, 12:30 p.m. - Midday Music**: The Cathedral Ringers Handbell Ensemble, under the direction of Frederick Teardo and Charles Kennedy, will perform a free, 30-minute concert.

**Friday, January 26, 2018, 12:30 p.m. - Midday Music**: Charles Kennedy, organ, will perform a free, 30-minute recital on the 100-rank Grieb-Williams Organ. Kennedy is Associate Director of Music and Organist at the Cathedral Church of the Advent.

**Sunday, January 28, 2018, 3:00 p.m. - Choral Evensong**: The Cathedral Choir, under the direction of Frederick Teardo, sings the traditional Anglican service of Choral Evensong, a beautiful service of lessons, anthems, and prayers.

**Friday, February 2, 2018, 7:30 p.m. – Cathedral Concert Series: With the Sound of Trumpets – Ambassador Brass Quintet; Frederick Teardo, organ**: The Ambassador Brass Quintet, well-known at the Cathedral Church of the Advent for being a cherished addition to Christmas Eve and Easter services, will join with Cathedral Organist Frederick Teardo for a concert of music for brass and organ. This specialized repertory promises a night of festive and joyful sound.

The Church Leadership Conference is an annual gathering of vestry members and congregational leaders for practical learning, reflection and formation. The 2018 Conference is on March 2-4, 2018 and registration is now open. Speakers and presenters will address core needs in strategic leadership, financial planning and creative communications.

For more information and to register, visit https://www.kanuga.org/our-programs/adult-conferences-retreats/church-leadership/.

**Episcopal Place invites you to the 13th Annual Gumbo Gala on Saturday April 21, 2018 at Sloss Furnaces!** Gumbo Gala is one of the largest gumbo competitions in the Southeast, as well as the largest Episcopal event in Alabama. Over 3,500 guests and 50 cook teams are expected to fill Sloss Furnaces for this family friendly event. Guests will enjoy delicious gumbo samples, live music by Marjaux and the Cat’s Meow, kids’ activities, art vendors, and more. Join us on Saturday April 21st and cast your vote for the best gumbo. Think you’ve got the best gumbo? Enter as one of our valued cook teams and join Episcopal Place in this spirited celebration and annual fundraiser. Proceeds from Gumbo Gala help Episcopal Place provide supportive services to residents. With your continued support Episcopal Place is enriching lives with grace and comfort.

**The Rev. Dr. Tommie Watkins, Jr., Associate Rector and Chaplain at Canterbury Chapel Tuscaloosa, is a contributor for the 2018 Disciplines, published by The Upper Room. Watkins provides the devotions for February 12-18 - “Lenten Metanoia.” Disciplines is available from at www.cokesbury.com.**
Celebrating the next great Reformation

500 years after Luther nailed his theses to the door of Wittenburg Cathedral, the Church is entering into another great moment of self-reflection and reformation. The Abbey, the Episcopal Diocese of Alabama’s newest church (and coffee shop), is itself part of the Emerging Church – a movement some theologians and sociologists have said may eventually be as transformative as Luther’s Reformation. The Abbey has dedicated its 2017-2018 program year to exploring many of the crucial questions confronting 21st century Christians. For example,

“How do we follow Jesus when going to church isn’t the cultural norm?”

“How will the Episcopal Church live on as its resources and prestige dwindle?”

“Where have all the Millennials gone?”

“How do you market a God who always chooses love over power?”

The Abbey’s TAG Talk speaking series will bring in academics, clergy and lay people who are actively doing the work of Reformation. Together we will wrestle with these, and many other, ideas and questions to try to gain an understanding of what the Episcopal Church might look like in the future. These talks will be broadcast live and made available on The Abbey’s Facebook page. In October, a community art project will invite Abbey patrons to create their own list of 95 Theses addressed to the Church today.

To follow current events at The Abbey, watch our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/theabbeybham.

Open that letter from Camp McDowell to receive your free sticker (see left)! If you haven’t sent in a donation to “Close the Gap,” please go to www.campmcdowell.com and help complete the Bethany funding today by clicking “DONATE.” Rather mail a check? Send it made to Camp McDowell with Bethany in the memo line to Carpenter House, 521 20th St. N, Birmingham, AL 35203. Thank you for your generosity!
187th Diocesan Convention to be held in Decatur
February 9-10, 2018

Georganne Perrine, Special Events Coordinator

Our 187th Diocesan Convention is quickly approaching and we hope you will make plans to join us! The wonderful folks at St. John’s in Decatur will host us at the DoubleTree Hotel and Ingalls Harbor Pavilion February 9-10, 2018. We are continuing with year 2 of our 3-year cycle focusing each year on one of the Presiding Bishop’s main initiatives in the Jesus Movement—Evangelism, Reconciliation & Stewardship of Creation. Last year’s focus on Evangelism was: WHY JESUS? Telling the compelling story of God’s Love. This year we will focus on our mission and ministry of Reconciliation.

On Thursday, February 8, “Seeing the Face of God in Each Other” antiracism training will be offered for anyone who seeks to build bridges of racial reconciliation. This training is offered in the spirit of hope and offers a positive vision of the unity that can be achieved through Christ. Participants will need to register in advance for this training.

Registration will begin at 9 a.m. on Friday at the DoubleTree Hotel. Workshops highlighting several ministries and missions from around our Diocese will be offered beginning at 10 a.m. Our opening Eucharist will be at 2 p.m. at the Princess Theatre, and our first plenary session will begin at 4 p.m. at the Ingalls Pavilion, with our dinner social following at 6:30 p.m.

On Saturday, caucus elections will be held at 8:15 a.m. at the DoubleTree Hotel. Our business sessions will begin at 9:30 a.m. at Ingalls Pavilion, with the Bishop’s address at approximately 10:30 a.m. Our business sessions will conclude with prayer at 4 p.m.

Our Gathering falls over Mardi Gras Weekend, which, I hear in Decatur is a big Event! Make plans to come and enjoy the festivities of the City of Decatur as well as our Diocesan Gathering.

If you have questions, please contact Georganne Perrine, gperrine@dioala.org, (205) 358-9230. For the most current information, including important dates, registration information, hotels, and a detail convention schedule, please visit http://dioala.org/Diocese/convention.html.

Share Your Stories & Events!

*The Alabama Episcopalian* is published quarterly (March 1, May 1, August 1, November 1), with the deadline for submission being the first day of the preceding month.

Submissions should be sent via email as Word documents. Submissions should be a minimum of 500 words and be written in news style. A limited number of first person reflections may be accepted.

Photos or artwork should be submitted as separate files at the highest resolution possible. Please include information for captions and photographer/artist credit.

For more information about submission requirements and style guides, visit www.dioala.org/communications.

For questions, or to submit an article, email khudlow@dioala.org.

THE ALABAMA EPISCOPALIAN

*The Alabama Episcopalian* is published four times a year (March 1, May 1, August 1, and November 1). For the most current news about recent and upcoming events, please visit our diocesan Web site, www.dioala.org.

*Please send stories and photographs* (full color, at highest resolution possible) to Editor Kelley Hudlow at khudlow@dioala.org or 521 North 20th Street, Birmingham, AL 35203–2682; the submission deadline for each issue is February 1, April 1, July 1, October 1. Postmaster, parishes, and individuals, please send all address changes or additions to Circulation Secretary Denise Servant at dservant@dioala.org or Carpenter House, 521 North 20th Street, Birmingham, AL 35203–2682.

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