What puts the “Wonderful” in Wonderful, Wonderful Camp McDowell?

See article on page 8.
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Part of my job as an ordained person is bringing Episcopalians to order. At parish dinners, meetings and gatherings, and now at various diocesan events, the moment comes for me to look out at the people of God chatting away in happy fellowship, and to declare that it’s time for us to do whatever it is we’re all there to do. In true time-honored Episcopal fashion I yell out above the din: “The Lord be with you!”

Some hear me and respond as we’ve all been taught: “And also with you!” Some hear me but just want to complete whatever they were talking about; others don’t hear me and have to be shushed by others. Every time, I remember Mama telling me not to interrupt grown-ups when they’re talking; every time, I regret that I disrupted the camaraderie in the room.

Recently at such a moment after the people had quieted down enough for us to start with a prayer, I was a little surprised to hear myself say what was on my mind: “Lord, forgive me for interrupting all those conversations.”

Sometimes we have to do something we were taught was rude.
As children we all learned to share, to respect our elders, to not call people names. We learned to take turns, and to walk in line to lunch or recess. Later we learned that polite people don’t talk about politics, religion or other people’s money.

Sometimes it’s a challenge for me to be polite. Quite often I have to interrupt grown-ups when they’re talking. I try real hard not to talk about politics, but I’m pretty much expected to talk about religion. I still try to share, and I walk in a line almost every Sunday morning.

Now, hoping you’ll give me license to be a bit rude, I want to talk about other people’s money. More specifically and even worse, I want to talk about your money.

The Episcopalians of the Diocese of Alabama are generous people. We give to our universities, we give to various charities and worthy causes, and we give to our parishes. Our parishes in turn give to the Diocese, and the Diocesan Council – elected at the annual Diocesan Convention – makes the annual budget which determines how we as a Diocese can support many of the wonderful ministries that are being offered by our little part of God’s holy Church.

I hope we give to our parishes because it’s a way for us to give thanks to God for all that we have been given. I hope we give to our parishes because we believe in the work of the Church, bringing all of God’s people to unity with God and with each other. I hope we give joyfully and freely. And I hope we give more. (If you’re still reading this, perhaps you’ll be willing to forgive me this rudeness: I hope you will give more.)

I don’t think I’ve ever known a parish or a diocese who had too much money. Somehow it seems that we always work out by some arcane church algebra that in the coming calendar year we’ll need about what we needed this year, and we manage to scrape together the needed amount minus just a little bit, to keep the Vestry and the rector on their toes. The Vestry then sighs and wrings their hands and cuts the budget: not the utility costs, insurance premiums or payments to the bank, but discretionary spending – funding ministries and programs, paying the employees, and almost inevitably, giving to the Diocese. Diocesan Council then adds up all those numbers, sighs and wrings their hands, and cuts the budget.

But wait. Is that really the way we want it to be? Is that the way it has to be?

What if your parish had enough money that the Vestry wasn’t just scraping by to pay the bills but could look around and see what more we should be doing to further the Kingdom of God? What if the parishes gave so generously to the diocese that our Diocesan Council could more fully fund ministries that are important to the people of the diocese and to God’s children near and far? What if we could pay off what we still owe for the expansion of Camp McDowell at Bethany Village, or if we had enough money for a second bishop? What if the people charged with being stewards of our money – the parish Vestry and the Diocesan Council – worked out all the numbers and made a budget and had some left at the end of the process so we could imagine what more could be done in the name of Jesus Christ? What if scraping by is not the best we can do?

What if we changed the algebra, so that we had a sense of what it would take to scrape by, and then gave that much plus more, just to keep the Vestry or the Diocesan Council on their toes? What if we gave a little more, just so we could imagine what more we could do together?

Above the din of our noisy lives I yell out “The Lord be with you!” to gather the people of God and call us to do what we’re supposed to be doing. It is not enough that we in this part of God’s holy Church should be content to scrape by. There is so much that we need to do. Thank you for your generosity in the past. Please be generous as you consider your pledge to your parish and your covenant to our diocese.
Our Diocesan Convention was held in Decatur and centered on the theme "CALLED TOGETHER." As we explored the ministry of reconciliation, our keynote speaker, Bishop Rob Wright reminded us that "to walk in love is to be surrounded by God’s love. To walk in love is to be in something that has no bottom, something infinite. So encompassing, so elastic is God’s love that even when we fall — we don’t break, we bounce… If you and I are immersed in a love that has no borders, limitations, or litmus tests, then you and I have all that we need to go to the places that appear to be loveless for Christ’s sake."

The mission of SPECIAL SESSION is to know Christ in all people through ministry to and with people of all abilities. We do this at our two summer sessions and our new fall retreat called, Unbound. The goal of Unbound is to serve different campers than the summer sessions with preference given to those with mobility issues. This year Special Session also welcomed laypeople as session directors. Bishop Kee and other clergy stepped out of this role as our veteran staffers, Grace Mullen, Jen Manning, McKee Sloan, and Bartlee Linton, stepped in.

This year, SAWYERVILLE served over 700 campers at Summer Camp and taught 33 students at Summer Learning. In addition to these two programs, Sawyerville also hosted the second-annual Person2Person, a race relations pilgrimage through Montgomery, mentored 6 Greensboro High School juniors, and awarded 6 $1,000 scholarships through the Leslie Manning Scholarship Fund. All five of Sawyerville’s programs would not be possible without the support of the diocese and many, many parishes and individuals!

THANK YOU!
Our shared ministries are possible because of the generous support of our parishes. It would take more pages than we have to tell the whole story of our shared ministry in 2018, so we would like to share some highlights and new things.

To learn more about our ministries, please visit the “What We Do” section of www.dioala.org.

To learn about our Diocesan Covenant and finances, please visit www.dioala.org/finance.
The Department of **RECOVERY MINISTRY** hosted The Journey: A Day on Addiction and Recovery at St. Luke’s, Birmingham. The event offered workshops for people in recovery, and for parents, families, friends, and communities of people dealing with addiction. Documentary film maker Drew Callner gave the key note address on his film *Recovering Hope*, which follows six people from Birmingham as they walk their path to recovery from heroin addiction.

The mission of our diocesan **COMMUNICATIONS** is to tell the story of the Good News of Jesus as told through our shared ministries and parishes. This is done through our email newsletter, quarterly magazine, website, and social media. *The Alabama Episcopalian* is mailed to nearly 15,000 households each quarter. This year, our publication was redesigned to a magazine. This new format allows for better picture quality and longer feature articles while still providing a place to share a wide variety of stories from around our diocese.

The Department of Stewardship offered a new program in 2017-18. **TRANSFORM ALABAMA** is a cohort of clergy and lay leaders who study and discuss the best of stewardship planning and generational communications. This collaborative learning process is welcomed and needed as more clergy and lay leaders become interested in reframing stewardship efforts in a modern context. This work is theologically grounded in the Alabama Plan and focuses on the spiritual and transformative process of proportional, first fruits giving. We seek to answer the question, “Why give?”

The Commission on **SPIRITUALITY** provides opportunities for spiritual development each year to lay people and clergy. In 2018 they offered a retreat at Camp McDowell led by the Rev. Dr. Brad Hauff, Missioner for Indigenous Ministries in The Episcopal Church. Participants were invited to “Find the Christ through Native American Spirituality.” In November, the Commission will host seminarian Lucy Strandlund in a reflection day that focuses on the Rule of Life, a spiritual practice. The event will be live-streamed to satellite locations in Huntsville, Montgomery, and St. Martin’s in the Pines with facilitators at each site.

The Department of **CHRISTIAN FORMATION** hosted the annual One Conference at St. Stephen’s, Birmingham. The theme was “Creating Sacred Digital Space.” Lisa Brown, Director of Digital Ministry at Membership Vision, served as the keynote speaker. Hands-on workshops were led by Brown, Danielle Dunbar, and Kelley Hudlow on digital storytelling, digital stewardship, and making videos. The Department is excited about *The Way of Love* resources that have been developed for all ages, and continues to make a variety of resources available through the Web and social media.
Isn’t one “wonderful” enough? Ask any Friend of Camp McDowell and they’ll look you in the eye and with all seriousness tell you, “No. One “Wonderful” is not enough.” Ask them to explain themselves and you’ll likely get vague answers such as, “Well, it’s God’s Backyard!” or “It’s the beautiful Queen of Clear Creek!” or, “Um…well…it’s Camp McDowell…you just have to experience it for yourself.” There are reasons why friends of Camp McDowell affectionately refer to camp as “wonderful, wonderful,” and articulating those reasons involves conversations, explanations, and enthusiastic story-telling. It’s hard to pin-point it to a nice neat one word or one sentence explanation. It’s like trying to explain what a banana tastes like. (It tastes like….banana!)

A few months ago we asked, on our Facebook page, for our followers to describe Camp McDowell in one word. Some of the responses: beloved, home, community, utopia, peaceful, happiness, inclusive, agape, heaven, amazing, beautifulqueenofclearcreek, wonderful, heart, love, recharge, magical, sacred, beautiful, inspiring, amen, joyful, backyard, holy, bounce, leafy, awesome, friendship, replenishing, grace, memorable, bliss, engaging, refuge, etc. (see the April 10, 2018 post to see the full list). What word pops into your head when you think of Camp McDowell?

Stewardship pops into my head. A couple of years ago, I would have claimed one of the words from the Facebook post mentioned. But, after working here for a couple of years and getting to see what’s ‘behind the curtain’ and watching the interactions of the hundreds of guests and campers with the staff and with the environment, there is no other word that encompasses the “wonderful” except for “Stewardship.”

I see everything that happens at Camp McDowell as stewardship. I see young adults serve as summer counselors, supervising children and youth while teaching through example the ideal of fully accepting the uniqueness of others while protecting and respecting their dignity. I see those summer counselors come back and give back by becoming Environmental Center or Farm School instructors who transfer their passion for resourcefulness in taking
Stewardship, simplified, is the supervising, taking care of, overseeing, and/or the protection of something.

care of the earth to students and teachers from all over the southeast – some of who have never played in a creek or hiked a trail or understood why recycling and renewable energy matter. I see McDowell Environmental Center (MEC) students come back, looking for and finding the “wonderful” they experienced with their first visit by attending summer camp, and bringing a friend because they want to share the “wonderful” with them. I see students learning at the Farm School where their food comes from by being taught how to plant, nurture, and tend to the land and how to take care of Waldo (our resident pig) and the rest of the farm animals. For many of these children, it is the first time they make the connection between the farm fields they’ve seen along the highway and the food on their plate.

I see frequent dedications and donations of people’s time, money, tools and talents made to this place, aiding in making it even more wonderful. I ride my bike through campus and am in awe of the enormous undertaking and accomplishment that is Bethany Village; inspired by a motive to provide a safe and loving place where people of all abilities can worship, rest and play. I meet people at parish retreats who tell me they started going to their church after they visited Camp McDowell for a work-related retreat or meeting. They tell me they’ve found a home in their church and they found it through Camp McDowell. I’ve watched my own children grow to become open-hearted, ‘make-your-circle-bigger’ kind of people - directly influenced, summer after summer, by their camp experience where “you be you” is unapologetically embraced and lived.

I see joy and hear laughter from Folk School participants because they did not realize they could play the guitar, learn the banjo, create a quilt, or build a hang-worthy piece of art until their confidence was nurtured and their eyes were opened at camp. I see the Magnolia Nature School preschoolers splashing through the creek in rubber boots as they count leaves, name bugs, and learn how to play with others. I see former summer campers and MEC students working alongside me, behind the curtain, as program directors, coordinators and teachers, overseeing, managing, and running McDowell’s six ministries.

I see Camp McDowell reciprocate stewardship. With Camp McDowell, God has given us His Backyard to help take care of us. It’s why we feel better when we get here, prepared in peace as we leave, and compelled to share it with others. Together, Camp McDowell and Friends are stewards of our spirits, our land, our resources, our children, our friends and of each other. I see stewardship everywhere at Camp McDowell. It is the way the world could be. God’s grace can be seen and felt at Camp McDowell through the landscape, by the traditions, and with generations of relationship-building. At Camp, it’s easy to see and live how God calls us to be. It is the way the world could be. It is Wonderful, Wonderful.

The Summer Camp Scholarship Fund helps make camp available to everyone. The goal this year is to raise $100,000, which will send over 300 kids to camp. To learn how to support this scholarship fund, please visit www.campmcdowell.com/give.
At the end of the summer, Dashauna, a rising third-grade student at Greensboro Elementary School, wrote a reflection on her experience at Sawyerville Summer Learning: “My favorite class is science because we dance. My favorite field trip was the zoo because I saw a giraffe. Playing the whole game of chess was my favorite memory.” Dashauna sums up the highlights of Sawyerville Summer Learning—our students learned a lot in their academic classes, but they also had fun doing it. They took four field trips that broadened their horizons. And they were exposed to new skills like chess and swimming. Thirty-three students completed the four-week program, and on average, they gained 1.5 months of learning in math and advanced by 2.7 reading levels. We’re so proud of their hard work, and we’re grateful to the Diocese of Alabama for supporting this ministry.

This summer marked twenty-five years of Sawyerville Summer Camp here in the Diocese of Alabama. That’s twenty-five years of individuals and churches working together to create a safe place for children in Hale County to play, pray, and learn. The day camp began in 1993 on a Friday when members of the Black Belt parishes placed a sign on the community center door in Sawyerville that read “Camp on Monday.” When they returned Monday morning, there were seventy-five children ready and waiting for camp. Clearly, these parishioners had discovered a deep need in the community, as well as a solution they could provide: camp.

The Rev. Rob Morpeth, one of Sawyerville’s founders, has been known to say that camps are part of our diocese’s DNA. From Camp McDowell to Special Session, Sawyerville to Foothills, camp is something we do well. Camps are an integral part of our children’s spiritual formation, and they provide opportunities for connection across the diocese. Twenty-five years ago, the good folks of the Black Belt decided to bring all that goodness to the tiny community of Sawyerville and to the children and youth of Hale County.

Since its inception, Sawyerville has grown by leaps and bounds, the kind of growth that can only be explained by the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit. While the first camp session had 75 campers, this past summer, we welcomed over 720 campers. We added the learning program in 2014, which now has the capacity to serve 40 rising third- and fourth-grade students. Our goal of improving race relations in Alabama has evolved into a race relations pilgrimage for youth and young adults called Person2Person, which takes place in Montgomery over Martin Luther King, Jr. weekend. Several of our former campers who have grown up to become volunteer counselors requested help as they navigated their final years of high school. Sawyerville answered this request with Sawyerville Mentoring, and this year, we’ll
connect six juniors and six seniors from Greensboro High School with not one, but two mentors who will coordinate job shadowing and college campus visits for them. Finally, in honor of Leslie Manning, who directed Sawyerville for nine years, we have created the Leslie Manning Scholarship Fund, which supports former campers and counselors seeking higher education, and this year, six young people each received a $1,000 scholarship.

All of these programs—Summer Camp, Summer Learning, Person2Person, Mentoring, and Scholarships—answer a need from the community, and they are all things that we, as a diocese, can do well with God’s help.

Creating and implementing these programs does require an immense amount of work. The kind of work that leaves you sweaty, tired, and happy. At Sawyerville, we frequently say, “many hands make light work.” That motto reminds us that yes, we have a lot of work to do; perhaps it seems insurmountable, but we can do it together, faster and better than if we tried it alone. When parishioners of all ages, parishes, and clergy work alongside members of the Hale County community, we can take on this important work that lifts up children and youth, glorifies God, and helps to build God’s kingdom here on Earth.

There are countless ways to be involved with Sawyerville. Here are just a few ideas of how you can join us, how you can help us make light work:

- Serve as a mentor to a junior or senior from Greensboro High School
- Coordinate a job shadowing experience or college campus visit for a junior or senior from Greensboro High School
- Volunteer to help at the annual Sawyerville Christmas Party at Greensboro Elementary School
- Collect supplies at your church, office, or school for one of our programs
- Serve a meal at one of our events—we have events year-round and serve groups of 20 to 120
- Invite Sawyerville to give a presentation to your Sunday school class or small group
- Spread the word about Sawyerville by sharing our social media posts or e-newsletters
- Give to Sawyerville—a gift of any size has a positive impact on the ministry

Visit our website, www.sawyerville.org, and reach out to Crystal Jones (crystal@sawyerville.org) or Claire Cotten (claire@sawyerville.org) to ask questions or to volunteer. As we gear up for a new program year, now is the perfect time to jump in with us.

Thank you to everyone who made our 25th year one of the best ever. Thank you to the volunteers, the donors, the supply collectors, the meal makers, bus drivers, teachers, and those who pray without ceasing. Each of you make this ministry possible.

**First Quarter Dates**

- November 19 - Summer intern applications open
- December 10 - Junior Board Applications close
- December 15 - Christmas Party at Greensboro Elementary School - email Crystal@sawyerville.org to volunteer
- January 1 - Summer intern applications close
- January 14 - Summer Camp staff applications open
- January 18-21 - Person2Person race relations pilgrimage at St. John’s, Montgomery
- February 1 - Leslie Manning Scholarship Fund applications close

All applications available at www.sawyerville.org.
A chorus of birds, the melody of a rippling stream—these are not the typical accompaniments to Sunday liturgy, but for the Tennessee Valley Chapter of Holy Hikes, creation’s musicians call them to worship the second Saturday of each month as they hike nearby trails together. The chapter, sponsored by St. Bartholomew’s Episcopal Church in Florence, is open to anyone who wants to worship and fellowship with one another, the land and its creatures.

“I wanted to make it regional,” explained Danny Whitehead, rector of St. Bartholomew’s. “We have had folks from Grace, Trinity, St. Bart’s and First Presbyterian in Florence. The whole idea is for people to build community.”

Whitehead, who heard about the national program through an Episcopal News Service article he read last spring, applied to charter the Tennessee Valley chapter and was approved in June. The national program was founded in the San Francisco Bay area by the Rev. Justin R. Cannon. Seeking a way to rebuild the relationship between human beings, creation and God, Cannon organized the program in 2010 based on a model designed by the Rev. Jon R. Anderson in Albuquerque, N.M. Holy Hikes now has chapters in multiple states throughout the country. The hikes are offered on Saturdays, rain or shine, and provide a unique liturgical experience that enhances rather than competes with Sunday church worship.

Like Sunday morning services, the hikes progress through the liturgy, but the procession is along a trail rather than down an aisle. The group gathers at a nearby trailhead for the opening collect, and the service continues as they hike, stopping from time to time to read the lessons or the psalm, to pray, and to celebrate the Eucharist. Whitehead crafted the liturgy, which was approved by Bishop Sloane, from Enriching Our Worship and The New Zealand Prayer Book. However, the structure of the service and the way the Eucharist is shared has evolved with the community.

“It really builds community when people hike,” Whitehead said. Now instead of having the Eucharistic Minister as the chalice bearer we get in a circle and pass the Eucharist from one person to the next. Being in a circle is a symbol of complete-
ness. There’s so much about nature that encourages that. It’s different from worship when I’m on the altar and everyone else is watching from their seats. I also try to involve folks from the different parishes as readers.”

St. Bartholomew’s church member Olin Mefford, who grew up hiking all over Alabama, serves as the trail scout. “I look for places that lend themselves to a Holy Hike. We try to have some that are easy and others that are more challenging.”

So far, the hikes have attracted people of all ages and abilities. While many participants hike the entire trail, others turn back and wait to celebrate the Eucharist at the trailhead. A few people also continue hiking after the liturgy ends. Whitehead said a six-year-old told him it was best church she had ever had.

“I think people really enjoy being out in nature,” Mefford said. “It’s open and less formal. We get to appreciate everything around us that you don’t get to do in a building. It’s informal but when you stop and hear the birds and the wind in the trees, it’s just very nice.”

The informal nature of the liturgy also allows for some flexibility in the service. “We usually do the Eucharist at the end,” said Whitehead, “but when I was scouting Shoals Creek with Olin and we came to the creek, we both said it would be the perfect place. We still made sure those folks who didn’t go all the way received the Eucharist at the end.”

Pat Casteel, who says she has always loved the outdoors, is quick to assert that she is not a hiker, but she was intrigued by the idea of worshiping outside. “This for me is a spiritual experience of being in natural surroundings. I live in a house that’s kind of like a treehouse, so this is right down my alley. For me it’s like communing with nature.”

The first hike at Te-lah-nay’s Wall (Tom Hendrix Wall) in July drew 52 people. The chapter also has hiked along the Old Railroad Bridge in Muscle Shoals as well as trails at the Shoal’s Creek Nature Preserve and Rock Spring.

“I’ve been to all those places but they are very different when you hike it this way,” said St. Bartholomew’s parishioner Dorothy McCanless. “It’s a really spiritual type thing and it’s totally different because you know all the people with you are there for the same reason. Sometimes I don’t have the time to go, but I make time because it’s a truly spiritual experience. It’s peaceful. It’s not total silence, but then when you do communion it’s a quiet, reverent time.”

Casteel agreed. “The communion is absolutely fabulous but also the breaks. We stop and read a little and then you have something to think about as you walk along. People are talking and interacting but there is an opportunity to think, too. And some people talk about what was read.”

Being open to God’s presence in nature not only connects people with creation but also offers an opportunity to face challenges from a fresh perspective. McCanless said that hiking the Old Railroad Bridge with a spiritual awareness helped her overcome a long-held fear.

“I had been to an art show there, and I was afraid to walk all the way across. But for some reason that day I went all the way to the other end. Maybe it was because I felt safe or something. I accomplished that and God said, ‘You’re okay. Don’t be afraid.’”

To learn more about Holy Hikes Tennessee Valley (in the Florence area), visit www.facebook.com/holyhikestnvalley. For information about Holy Hikes in West Alabama, visit www.facebook.com/holyhikeswestalabama.
As a mother of two, I recognize that teaching good saving and giving habits is a critical part of parenting. While discussed in my own childhood, the lesson did not take until later in life which is not ideal. I recently had the opportunity to have lunch with Gail and Ronnie Rogers, members of Nativity Episcopal Church in Huntsville. As we talked about their church life and I heard stories of their childhoods, I realized how early in life they learned to be savers and givers. They inspired me and I hope this interview will help inspire you to teach those around you the importance of saving and giving.
DANIELLE: *Who taught you the importance of money and what wisdom did they share with you?*

GAIL: My Daddy made the money and Mama managed it. Mama taught me the skills I have managing money. [These are:] Giving a portion of what you have back to God comes first, before anything else. Live within your means, if you don’t have the money to pay for something you won’t have the money to pay the bill when it comes in. Save money for a rainy day, or for a “luxury”.

When I was 6 years old Mama and Daddy decided it was time for me to start learning money management. They started giving me an allowance of fifty cents a week. Daddy took me to the bank and introduced me to Mr. Henderson the bank president. I had to tell Mr. Henderson that I wanted to start a savings account. I remember feeling so grown up! I had to put 10% of my fifty cents into the savings account every week. This was non-negotiable. 10% had to go into the church collection plate every Sunday, also non-negotiable. The remaining 80% of my fifty cents was mine to do with as I pleased! No questions asked.

DANIELLE: *What is your earliest memory of saving?*

GAIL: In 1953 in Shelbyville TN you could take your 6 year old to town with you and let them entertain themselves around the square: drug store, dime store, popcorn stand, cotton candy stand, ice cream stand, etc.

Daddy went to town every Saturday morning and I went with him. He’d go get a haircut and I’d go around the square spending my money. When we went home I had no money and nothing to show for my money! Neither mama nor Daddy said a word.

A few months later I was in Ben Franklin’s dime store with Mama. I saw a red dress that I just had to have!!! Mama would not buy it for me no matter how I pleaded. She simply said, “If you want it save your money and buy it.” It did not take me long to decide I wanted the red dress more than popcorn, ice cream, etc.

From the day I bought that red dress and wore it to church I have not had trouble saving money. Mama and Daddy provided me with necessities. I saved and paid for things I wanted which included entertainment.

This continued until somewhere between 11 and 12 years. I started babysitting at age 11 and by the time I was 12 the allowance had stopped. At 16 I started working in a grocery store. Not one time in all those years did Daddy give me money for entertainment or wants.

In my early 30’s I went to work selling insurance. In my training they told me that most people bought life insurance, gave to the church and saved out of whatever money they had left at the end of the pay period. This usually meant they did not buy life insurance, did not give to the church and did not save. In my training it was stressed to attempt to convince people to consider life insurance, church contribution and saving as bills and to pay them at the beginning of the pay period just like all other bills. To this day I think this is great advice.

DANIELLE: *Is it the transformation you experienced with God that inspires you to give or is it the giving that transforms you and your relationship with God? What is the connection between you, giving, and God?*

GAIL: Because giving has been something that I just did without thinking I have to say there is no transformation involved at all concerning my basic giving. Cursillo transformed Ronnie and me and our relationship with God which has resulted in us giving more to God’s work that is over and above our Nativity pledge. (Cursillo, Bethany, McDowell, Alleluia III books to Nativity)

DANIELLE: *What tip do you have for those with an IRA who must take a distribution?*

RONNIE: When I first had to make a draw on my IRA [after age 70½], I learned from our financial advisor that because we didn’t need the money to live on, I could make a pass through charitable gift. If the gift went directly from my IRA to the church or another non-profit organization, the money would be tax-free. We would not be able to claim the gift as a deduction but it’s not taxable. This is an enjoyable gift to make because you don’t feel it but it really benefits the organization. We have made gifts to Bethany and Cursillo this way.

Money and God have the power to change us in important ways. Gail learned to be financially independent at a young age and save for something she treasured: that beautiful red dress. For Gail and Ronnie, Cursillo transformed their relationship with God which inspired them to give above and beyond their pledge to Nativity. Gail said, “To see people respond to our offer to match Alleluia III purchases was emotionally thrilling.” If you’re 70½, talk to your financial advisor and discuss if a Charitable IRA Rollover gift is right for you. May God be with each of us as we are challenged to become more knowledgeable about saving and giving.
The Rev. Ed Bacon served as the preacher for the Holy Communion service.

Pilgrims at the old county jail.
The 22nd annual Jonathan Daniels Pilgrimage was held on August 11, in Hayneville, Alabama. The overcast skies brought some relief to the usual August heat, as pilgrims gathered in the Courthouse Square. After opening prayers in the square, the procession moved to the old county jail where Daniels was among those detained for a week after being arrested in Ft. Deposit for picketing white-only businesses. The procession then moved to the site of the old Cash Grocery Store where Daniels was killed, and pilgrims kneeled in silent prayer.

The pilgrimage ended at the Courthouse, where a service of Holy Communion was celebrated in the courtroom where the man who shot Daniels was tried and acquitted by an all white jury of men. Through prayers, fourteen other martyrs of the Alabama civil rights movement were also recognized and honored. A choir, with members from the Diocese of Alabama and the Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast, led the singing at the service. The Rev. Ed Bacon was the preacher, and the Rev. Dr. Tommie Watkins was the celebrant.

Youth were invited to participate in a lock-in and other activities on Friday night and Saturday morning. These young people assisted the pilgrimage by carrying the large images of the Martyrs of Alabama. Following the Pilgrimage and lunch, attendees were invited to a special forum on issues related to immigration titled “Coming to America: Who Should We Welcome, What Should We Do?” Through a guided discussion, participants shared their personal experiences relating to immigrants and issues related to immigration.

Jonathan Daniels was an Episcopal seminarian who answered the call of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to help register African-American voters in Alabama. He was shot and killed on August 20, 1965, while shielding then 16-year-old Ruby Sales from a shotgun blast as she attempted to enter a store to buy something to drink. Daniels was added to the Episcopal Church Calendar of Saints and Martyrs in 1994, to be remembered each August 14. The annual pilgrimage is usually held on the second Saturday of August.
It has been about a year and a half that I left the comfort of St. James Fairhope. I am a cradle Episcopalian, but the St. James family was responsible for much of my spiritual growth even though I had only been a part of their parish for a short time. I learned to live and love the life of a Christian and to embrace every blessing life sends my way. I remember one of my last Sundays at St. James, Bishop Russell happened to be visiting our parish. I asked him what the Episcopal Church offers to college students, and if there were any Episcopal Campus Ministries across the state. He smiled and told me that it’s hit or miss depending on where I go, but maybe that one day I’ll start a campus ministry of my own.

I laughed off the idea to myself knowing I wasn’t ready for such a large task, but this goes to show our God has a sense of humor because now I’m knee deep in emails, Compline, and coordinating weekly Canterbury Events.

I remember I was approached about the idea of an Episcopal Campus Ministry by our Deacon Jeannie at St. Thomas Huntsville during the first Diocesan Confirmation Retreat. It had been a long time dream, and I really just couldn’t say no. After all, St. Thomas was becoming not just a church, but my home away from home. And sometimes I wish I had the opportunity to share that same unconditional love that they gave me with my peers. Later that weekend, I was sitting in our Student Union grabbing some food when one of my friends, Chris, walked in. I came around to telling him what I did that weekend. Call it fate, destiny, or being called to a ministry, but it turns out Chris is Episcopalian too, and the rest is history.

After six months of planning, coordinating, late nights, and talking with local parishes and priests, we are proud to announce the beginning of Canterbury at the University of Alabama in Huntsville. We are a welcoming family of faith, community, and service—welcoming all Christians to join us in fellowship. UAH is a vibrant and rapidly growing University with a diverse student body, with students coming from all over the country and the world. Likewise, UAH Canterbury is very diverse with members coming from all over the state, different walks of life, and denominations. While we may be small, we have very excited and active members. We focus on different ways to bond with each other and find the Good News in our own lives. Fridays we have “Popcorn and Theology” where we find God in movies all the way from Narnia to less obvious such as The Matrix. Sundays we join each other in fellowship visiting local parishes and then wrapping up with “Dinner and Compline” in the evening. Later this semester we plan to participate in the 25th annual Lobsterfest at St. Thomas Huntsville. We have a long way to go, but UAH Canterbury is truly committed to the spiritual growth of students here at campus.

We’re a new fellowship learning to grow in faith with each other as we tackle the next frontier. Every day we find new ways that God is present in our lives. Life never turns out the way you expect it. I didn’t expect to be leading a campus ministry 2 years ago. But no matter the way it goes, I love every second of it. We all have one abundant life ahead of us, so live it.

For more information, email uahcanterbury@uah.edu.
News from our Parishes

BBQ and Bluegrass Benefits Medical Clinic

The traditional church custom, “Dinner on the Grounds,” took on a whole new attitude on June 2 at St. Michael and All Angels Anniston at the Annual BBQ and Bluegrass fundraiser to benefit St. Michael’s Community Services medical clinic. Set under the 100-yr-old oak trees on the grounds of St Michael’s, hundreds of attendees enjoyed the cooked-on-site BBQ platters, prepared by volunteer members of the congregation and community, who worked all night to prepare the meat to perfection.

Besides the music and food, local vendors added their wares to the audience and guided tours of the historic church and buildings were offered.

The medical clinic began in 1988 and is open two days a week. Staffed by volunteers, it provides free primary care to 1600 low-income, uninsured residents of Calhoun County annually. The Executive Director, Nanette Mudiam, RN MSN, who has been with the clinic since 2014, said, “This fundraiser is a wonderful event that helps to make healthcare available to those who need it most. The proceeds help us to directly mitigate the devastating impact of health disparities in our community.”

The community and local businesses give generously to this event and work hard to ensure its success. As one local resident who attends every year, said, “This is the best BBQ in the region, after all, it is part of God’s work.”

And God’s work will continue at the medical clinic at St. Michael and All Angels. The next Annual BBQ and Bluegrass is scheduled for June 1, 2019. Come enjoy our version of “Dinner on the Grounds.”

To learn more about St. Michael’s and All Angels and the St. Michael’s Community Services medical clinic, please visit stmichaelsanniston.org.

Holy Cross School Celebrates 20 Years

Holy Cross Episcopal School in Montgomery celebrated its 20th anniversary on Holy Cross Day, September 14, 2018. Holy Cross serves students in from Pre-K to sixth grade, and serves a diverse student body. Students begin each day with worship in the Chapel of the Annunciation, and then continue onto their classes that include enrichment classes in foreign language, music, visual and performing arts, and STEM lab.

Bishop Kee Sloan served as the celebrant at the Eucharist, which included a performance by Holy Cross student choir. Guests were invited to a reception, and to join in the balloon launch outside of the chapel. The colorful balloon launch is an annual event on Holy Cross day and is a favorite of the students. Students write messages of encouragement and hope that are attached to each balloon. Messages from Holy Cross have been found as far away as Georgia.

To learn more about Holy Cross Episcopal School, please visit www.holycrossmontgomery.org.
Province IV held its annual meeting & retreat at Kanuga Conference Center, Hendersonville, North Carolina, June 3-6, 2018. This was the third year of a program series called “Art in Worship.” The Rev. Thack Dyson from St. Paul’s, Daphne, Alabama, served as Conference Chaplain, with their organist & music director, Paul Anderson, providing music for various services, including Opening and Closing Eucharists, Morning Prayer every day (one with Deconsecration and Burning of Linens), and a Taize service. Attendees “gleaned on the grounds” to obtain materials for a flower workshop given by Rebecca Dyson, entitled “Altar-Worthy Weeds”. A day was devoted to a field trip to Calvary Episcopal Church in Fletch, North Carolina, home of a most amazing collection of original needlepoint kneelers depicting the history of this pre-Civil War church, along with images of local birds, insects, animals, flowers, trees, and mountains of western Carolina. Judy Henderson treated everyone to a slide show with images from the 2017 Conference, and Paul Anderson presented a program on church architecture. Plenty of time was allocated for members to share pictures of needlework from their home churches, and to swap ideas. In the evenings, old friendships were renewed and new ones made at Social Hour, including a joint get-together with members of the ECW. At the Closing Eucharist, newly elected officers were installed. Officers for the 2018-2021 term are: President, Ann McCormick (Memphis TN); Vice-President, Martha Noble Langston (Birmingham AL); Secretary, Valerie Riley (Irmo SC), and Treasurer, Phyllis Bruce (Fairhope AL).

Article taken in part from the National Altar Guild Association’s Epistle newsletter, Summer 2018 #187.

Birmingham’s Got Potential Raises Over $15,000 for Special Session

This was the third year of Special Session’s annual fundraiser, Birmingham’s Got Potential. Hosted at Saturn music venue in Birmingham, this event is the second most affirming talent show you’ll ever witness (second, of course, to the Special Session talent show at camp). The goal of this event is to raise money for camper scholarships, but we also hope that people who attend get a taste of Special Session. Special Session campers and counselors perform alongside Birmingham musicians, dancers, and other talented folks. Our panel of “judges” celebrate and affirm every person brave enough to get on the stage. Church members prepare and serve gumbo, and everyone has a good time. This year, we raised over $15,000 for Special Session scholarships.

To learn more about Special Session, visit www.specialsessionalabama.org.
Camp McDowell Executive Director
Search Now Open

The Episcopal Diocese of Alabama announces the national search for Executive Director of the McDowell Camp and Conference Center, one of the largest and most admired Episcopal facilities of its kind in the United States. Described as “God’s Backyard,” McDowell is a unique setting for education, outreach, environmental study, and farm culture.

As the fifth Executive Director in 70 years, the energetic and dedicated individual chosen for this position will have a career-defining opportunity to set the future course and work with committed partners to continue McDowell’s dynamic trajectory.

The Executive Director will oversee and build on facilities and programs that are well established, highly respected, and enthusiastically supported by donors and the Diocese. This individual leads in creating and implementing the vision, mission, and strategic planning; supervises day-to-day operations; and provides sacramental and pastoral ministries. Proven management and administrative skills, successful fundraising experience, and a collaborative leadership style are among the key qualifications sought by the Search Committee.

Through worship, learning, rest, and play in this extraordinarily beautiful setting, Camp McDowell celebrates the care of creation, the gift of inclusion, and the joy of creativity. Easily accessible by Interstate highways and just one hour northwest of Birmingham, Camp McDowell is situated on 1,140 acres of lush forest and fields with miles of trails winding through picturesque sandstone canyons. The budget exceeds $4.2 million and generates almost all operating income from fees.

Established in 1947, the Camp and Conference Center have grown exponentially to encompass a year-round calendar of retreats, Diocesan and educational programs, conferences, and special events as well as the extremely popular residential summer camp for children. In addition to the 780-bed Camp and Conference Center, McDowell includes an Environmental Center, Farm School, the Alabama Folk School, and the Magnolia Nature School. Facilities include two chapels, three dining halls, 13 lodges, numerous meeting spaces, individual and dormitory-style cabins, a dance and performance facility, two pools, and extensive recreational facilities. The largest meeting and dining hall accommodates 800 theatre-style or 500 seated dining guests.

The newest addition is Bethany Village, a $10 million eco-friendly, fully accessible complex that serves youth and adults of all ages and physical challenges and features a production teaching farm, pottery studio, blacksmith shop, and other facilities.

The Search Committee will begin reviewing candidate materials November 25, 2018. Applications/nominations will be accepted until the position is filled.

Inquiries, nominations and applications – to include a current resume, a detailed letter reflecting on the desired attributes, and contact information for five references – will be received and considered in confidence. Please submit materials electronically: McDowellExec@dioala.org and address them to the Search Committee, c/o Search Coordinator John Hicks. Confidential discussions about this opportunity may be arranged by contacting John Hicks: hicks3130@gmail.com.

For a detailed description of Camp McDowell and the position, please visit www.dioala.org/McDowellExec.
Summer was a time for deepening Parish to Parish relationships, which included a number of visits from Alabama clergy to parishes in the Virgin Islands. A team of youth and adults from St. Paul’s Selma joined the congregation at St. Peter’s St. Croix for fun, fellowship, worship, and service. The Rev. Dr. Catherine Collier returned to the island of St. Thomas and served at Holy Spirit and Nazareth by the Sea. The Rev. Dr. Tommie Watkins served at St. George’s on Tortola and led a health and wellness workshop for congregants from both St. George’s and St. Paul’s. The Rev. Liston Garfield visited parishes on St. Thomas and on Tortola.

In September, three aspirants for the diaconate in the Virgin Islands – Dana Lewis Ambrose, Nora Jane Hendrickson, and Rita Payne Samuel - spent nine days in Alabama getting to know the Alabama deacons to understand the deacon discernment and formation process and to appreciate the wide and diverse ministries to which Alabama deacons are called. They learned about the formation of deacons through the Alabama Integrative Ministry School. Bishop Sloan met with them as well.

The three Virgin Islands aspirants expressed their profound gratitude for the warm hospitality. They commented that the experience was far more than they had ever imagined. They saw the practical implementation of the theoretical which they had been studying in the Virgin Islands. They
really appreciated the spiritual dimensions of their experience in Alabama, with hopes for both spiritual and deacon mentors from the Diocese of Alabama.

Recovery Response

Please know that the generous donations to the diocesan hurricane fund for the Virgin Islands as well as parish-led fundraising efforts for parishes in the Virgin Islands are sustaining the rebuilding effort and are helping support missionaries on their journey with our Virgin Islands partners. These donations supplement the substantial financial and staffing support from Episcopal Relief & Development to the Diocese of the Virgin Islands.

Specifically, funds from the Diocese of Alabama have been pooled with funds from Episcopal Relief & Development to support the Hurricane Recovery Mini-Grants Program, to support parishes and their efforts to serve their communities, their neighborhoods, reaching the most vulnerable with the God-given gifts of the parish and its individuals, whether for rebuilding, reconstruction, emotional support, food sustainability such as community gardens, to engage the parish with the community for long-term recovery and transformation.

Thank you for your continued generosity and your prayers for our Virgin Islands friends who radiate hope and resilience after such a traumatic time. They are ever grateful for our love and friendship.

As 2018 closes, the third year of our Companion Relationship with the Virgin Islands, remember that starting in 2019 Deacon Jeannie Randall will chair the Companion Diocese Commission with the Virgin Islands. From our discernment of this relationship throughout 2014 to the resolution at the 2015 Diocesan Conventions until now, it has been a privilege to serve our Diocese and our friends in the Virgin Islands. The plan is to renew the Companion Diocese relationship with the Virgin Islands with a resolution at Diocesan Convention in February, 2019.

If you are interested in volunteering with recovery and rebuilding in the Virgin Islands, please contact Deacon Jeannie Randall (jrann228@gmail.com). She will assist you with the new Volunteer Management System being utilized. Mrs. Riise Richards has been named the Volunteer Coordinator for the Virgin Islands. Riise and Jeannie will coordinate all individuals and teams who will serve in the Virgin Islands.

For More Information on the Companion Diocese Relationship with the Virgin Islands, contact Deacon Judy Quick (jgquick@bellsouth.net) or Deacon Jeannie Randall (jrann228@gmail.com).

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188th Diocesan Convention to be held at Camp McDowell

Plans are well under way for our 188th Diocesan Convention to be held at Camp McDowell February 8th-10th, 2019. The Diocesan Task Force for the Stewardship of Creation will be guiding our programming as we explore the final year of our 3-year study of Evangelism, Reconciliation and Creation, the initiatives of the Most. Rev. Michael Curry’s Jesus Movement. Camp McDowell is the perfect setting for us to rediscover our connection with the natural world and how our connection with the creation around us can strengthen our relationship with God.

Dr. James B. McClintock, a fellow Episcopalian and an Endowed Professor of Polar and Marine Biology at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, will serve as our keynote speaker. Jim has led or co-directed sixteen scientific expeditions with the United States Antarctic Program (USAP) in which he and his research collaborations have become the world’s authorities on the Antarctic marine chemical ecology. He is the author or A Naturalist Goes Fishing and Lost Antarctica-Adventures in a Disappearing Land.

There will be lots of opportunities throughout the weekend to explore Camp McDowell and learn about the missions and ministries at Camp and around the Diocese. Convention is always a great place for fellowship and learning, for work and renewal.

This will be a full weekend of worship, rest, work and play in God’s backyard!

For more information, please visit www.dioala.org/diocese/convention.html.
Celebrating 34 Years of Diocesan Ministry

For the past 34 years, Denise Servant has served seven bishops and has been a loving presence and cheerful voice at the diocesan offices at Carpenter House. At the end of August, her ministry at Carpenter House came to an end, and she began a new ministry of being a grandmother.

To celebrate Servant’s ministry, the staff of Carpenter House gathered for a luncheon. This was a time to share laughter -- and a few tears -- with Denise and her husband, Reginald, to celebrate her years of ministry and service.

Denise began her work at the diocesan office at the invitation of the Rt. Rev. Furman Charles Stough, the eighth Bishop of the Diocese of Alabama. In her 24 years, she has served Bishops Stough, Miller, Parsley, Soto, Andres, Sloan and Marray. She has been the calming voice and presence for countless aspirants, postulants, seminarians, and clergy that found themselves sitting in chairs near her desk, waiting their turn to “see the bishop.”

To celebrate Servant’s new ministry as Mia’s grandmother, staff gave gifts to equip her for her new work -- storybooks, baby blankets, and baby toys. Before the luncheon was concluded, Bishop Sloan presented her with a framed “Resolution Honoring Ethel Denise Dawson Servant,” which was signed by Bishop Sloan and the staff of Carpenter House. To read the full text of the resolution, please visit www.dioala.org/dfc/newsdetail_2/3194134.

Presiding Bishop’s Office Announces New Way of Love Resources

Two new formation resources are being made available for download via The Episcopal Church’s website at www.episcopalchurch.org/wayoflove.

Following the Way of Love: 9-session Small Group Guide for groups that seek to reshape their lives around Jesus and his Way of Love. The guide details best practices for organizing small groups and discipleship groups, and then moves participants through reflection, discernment, action and deep commitment around the seven practices. Excellent for small groups, vestries, ministry leadership groups.

Journeying the Way of Love: 4-week Advent Curriculum pegged to readings and themes from the Sunday lectionary. Ideal for Christian formation hour offerings at churches and ministries exploring the Way of Love. Available for download on November 2.

Also available for download are print-ready resources including wallet cards, brochures, and handouts. These are available at www.episcopalchurch.org/way-of-love-materials. Print resources are available for purchase from Forward Movement at www.forwardmovement.org.
Episcopal Relief & Development has launched a new logo and tagline to inspire and deepen engagement and to represent more effectively our work around the world.

The September 5 Press Release notes that the logo features colors that reinforce a connection to the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion. The tagline, “Working Together for Lasting Change,” highlights the importance of collaboration and achieving a measurable and sustained impact in all aspects of its global programs.

President and CEO of Episcopal Relief & Development Rob Radtke commented: “I am excited about the fresh look. It is bold, forward-looking, and energetic.” He said: “The new logo reflects our core values and commitment to our faith while conveying how we work together with partners and supporters to create lasting change for communities worldwide.”

With this changing face of Episcopal Relief & Development comes a more intentional emphasis on Women, Children, and Climate.

Our work with women focuses on helping communities promote the rights of women and children and move toward the vision that everyone deserves a life free from violence in a society where they are treated with dignity and respect. Only then can communities truly heal and thrive.

Our work with children supports and protects kids under age six so they reach appropriate health and developmental milestones. This focus on early development is foundational and critical to helping children achieve their full potential as future contributing members of their communities.

Our work with climate focuses on how families and communities can work together to adapt to the effects of rapidly changing weather patterns. This work includes preparing for and recovering from climate-influenced events such as floods, hurricanes and other disasters.

The Disaster Response work continues, especially through the US Disaster Program, which has most recently responded to Hurricane Florence in the Carolinas.

The Gifts for Life Catalogs continue to be a viable support of our meaningful work. Advent is a perfect time for Alternative Gift Giving!

As 2018 closes, remember that in 2019 Deacon Andrea Peacock will be your Diocesan Coordinator for Episcopal Relief & Development.

Many thanks for your continued support of Episcopal Relief & Development over these past twelve years of my involvement with this amazing ministry. Let’s keep working together for lasting change!

For More Information on Episcopal Relief & Development, contact Deacon Judy Quick (jgquick@bellsouth.net) or Deacon Andrea Peacock (andreapeacock60@gmail.com) and visit www.episcopalrelief.org.
Eleanor Newman Hutchens was a great teacher, businesswoman, and Episcopalian. She studied English and Greek at Agnes Scott College and received her M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania in English literature. Dr. Hutchens taught for many years at UAH and at Agnes Scott but she also worked as a business woman who helped the community of Huntsville to grow. She was president of the Huntsville Hotel Company, a director of the Huntsville Land Company, a founder and charter member on the first board of the Randolph School, and she served in many capacities at the Church of the Nativity. Dr. Hutchens was a member of the vestry and altar guild and she was also a student in the Sewanee School of Theology program, EFM (Education for Ministry).

Dr. Hutchens was never married but she enjoyed a big family which included many nieces and nephews. I recently spoke with Marnie Hogan of Houston, Texas who is one of her nieces. Marnie and her brother grew up at Nativity where her aunts, uncles, parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents also attended. This church home was important in their lives throughout the year. Marnie particularly remembers the annual Christmas Festival when there would be a huge tree at the church and each child would receive a gift. Afterwards the extended family would go to her Aunt Eleanor’s house and continue the celebration.

Church and faith were very important to the Hutchens family especially Marnie’s mother, Margaret Henson Hutchens, and her Aunt Eleanor. The Hutchens family was thoroughly involved in parish life and in financially supporting the church through annual pledges. Marnie said her aunt made a legacy gift to Nativity because it was such an important part of her life. Dr. Hutchens’s gift through the Alabama Episcopal Foundation will continue to support Nativity’s many outreach ministries and the parish’s ability to maintain and improve the historic parish buildings. With her endowed gift through the Alabama Episcopal Foundation, the principal will be preserved and an annual distribution made directly to the parish.

If you have questions about making a legacy gift to your parish, please contact Danielle Dunbar. For most of us it takes only a couple of sentences in our will to have a lasting impact on our parish home. Danielle can be reached at (205) 358-9234 or ddunbar@dioala.org.
News from Our Shared Ministries

Collaborative Learning Environment for Stewardship: Transform Alabama

Danielle Dunbar, Director of Mission Funding

Since December of 2017, a cohort of clergy and lay leaders representing four parishes has been meeting to study the best of annual stewardship planning and generational communication in the context of proportional, first-fruits giving. This cohort meets every other month for two hours. We have named our work, Transform Alabama, because its roots are theologically grounded in the Alabama Plan and because good stewardship is a spiritual and transformative process. Here are some further details about the program:

Process and Commitment

- It is a three-year process: the first year’s focus is on stewardship and year-round giving; the second year’s focus is on planned and capital giving campaigns; the third year’s focus is on refining these tools by offering a mentor relationship with another parish.
- Participants must be willing to engage in six focused training sessions in Birmingham throughout the course of a year, meeting every other month.
- Sessions include theology of stewardship; stewardship committee design and recruitment; The Golden Circle and communication; designing the campaign; expressing gratitude; and year-round giving.
- In between diocesan meetings, participants must be willing to meet with parish clergy/vestry/stewardship committee to complete “homework” assignments on the parish level.
- Participants will be accountable to the diocesan group for completing parish assignments and reporting on efficacy and critical analysis of on-going work.
- Members will become mentors in the second year, facilitating at least one training session and offering support/guidance to an entry-level parish that they have recruited with assistance from the Department’s Advisory Board.

If you are interested in reframing and updating stewardship education and programming in your parish, please contact the Rev. Candice Frazer (cfrazer@coascension.org) or Danielle Dunbar (ddunbar@dioala.org) with questions or to sign up for the 2018-19 year. We will begin our next cohort December 13, 2018.

Youth Department Hosts District Days

NORTHERN DISTRICT

Jacob Raulerson

The Northern District got to experience another successful District Day! This year we were hosted at Good Shepherd in Decatur. This year’s theme was “Color Splash.” Youth from grades 6th to 12th joined together for all sorts of fun, such as making custom tie dye shirts or tagging their friends with paint in the Paint War. We had a great turnout and are excited for more youth participation in the diocese!

CENTRAL DISTRICT

Keeley Davis

The Central District hosted a Holiday themed District Day called “The Best Day of the Year”! It was a great kick-off to our upcoming year of diocesan youth events. We want to thank St. Francis of Assisi for hosting us again. We had over 40 youth participants from around the central district join us in holiday themed yard games, and some holiday themed arts and crafts.

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News from Our Shared Ministries

SOUTHERN DISTRICT

Edward Lam

The Southern District hosted a Luau themed District Day that was awesome! Our small group time went really well, and a lot of our people got to make new friends from other churches. Capture the flag and arts and crafts were really fun. We made several announcements about upcoming YD events, and closed in prayer. There were about 60 youth and adult advisors at this event hosted by Holy Trinity, Auburn. Everyone had a great time!

Clergy News

Three to be Ordained to the Sacred Order of Priests

Three transitional deacons will be ordained to the Sacred Order of Priests in December. Each is being ordained in the parish that they are serving as transitional deacons and each will continue to serve these parishes as priests. All are invited. Festal color is red.

December 1, at 11:00 am, Nathaniel Darville will be ordained to the priesthood at Grace Church, Pike Road.

December 8, at 11:00 am, Jeremy Carlson will be ordained to the priesthood at St. Mary’s-on-the-Lakes, Birmingham

December 15, at 11:00 am, Richelle Thompson will be ordained to the priesthood at St. Michael’s in Fayette.

The Rev. Bob Hennagin accepted a position as interim rector at the Church of the Heavenly Rest in Abilene, TX, beginning September 23.

The Rev. Rosa Lindahl accepted a call to serve as Priest in Charge at Holy Comforter, Montgomery, beginning October 1.

The Rev. Candice Frazer accepted a call to serve as rector at the Church of the Ascension, Montgomery, beginning October 15.

The Rev. Wells Warren retired from serving as Chaplain at St. Dunstan’s Auburn.

Bishop Sloan’s Visitation Schedule is available online at www.dioala.org/Diocese/Calendars.html.

Upcoming Events

November 9-11 Happening #73

Happening #73 will be held at St. Luke’s in Birmingham. During this three-day weekend retreat, participants spend time seriously considering the person and teaching of Jesus Christ in a relaxed, fun, informal and loving atmosphere. Those wishing to serve on staff should submit applications by August 27. For more information, please visit https://bit.ly/2uEJHRG.

November 17, 9 am-12 pm Crafting a Rule of Life: Preparing for Advent with Lucy Strandlund

The Commission on Spirituality invites you to a day of reflection and prayer in anticipation of the Advent Season led by Lucy Strandlund. The program will frame a series of reflections on “Turn” and “Pause” from Presiding Bishop Michael Curry’s take on the spiritual practice of a rule of life — “The Way of Love.” The program will be held at St. Stephen’s Birmingham, and will be live-streamed to parishes where on-site facilitators will engage participants in small-group discussions. To learn more, please visit http://bit.ly/2QyXJKX.

December 28-30 Youth Department Presents Christmas Conference

Christmas Conference at Camp McDowell is presented by the Youth Department. This event is open to youth in grades 9-12. The cost is $135, and scholarships are
Upcoming Events

available. For more information please visit www.dioala.org/youthevents.html.

January 12, 2019 Diocesan Altar Guild Festival
The Diocesan Altar Guild Festival will be held at St. Stephen’s Birmingham and will include presentations on care of linens, vestments, and altar hangings; baking your own Eucharist bread; and gleaning greenery from your gardens for altar arrangements. For more information, please visit http://bit.ly/2OINre2.

January 12, 5 pm, Feast of St. Aelred
All are invited to attend the annual Eucharist service for the Feast of St. Aelred of Rievaulx, the patron saint of Integrity, an organization of the Episcopal Church that advocates for the LGBTQ+ Community. Reception to follow the service. For more information, please visit http://bit.ly/2y6OOcY.

January 13, 3 pm, Confirmation Service at Camp McDowell
All parishes are invited to bring their candidates for Confirmation or Reception to this service. For confirmands in grades 8-12, a retreat will be held at Camp McDowell beginning January 11. For more information, please visit http://bit.ly/2CwmOmz.

January 18-21 Sawyerville Person2Person: A Race Relations Pilgrimage
At Person2Person, young people can learn and discuss together alongside lay leaders, clergy, and the Sawyerville directors. The group will participate in a pilgrimage across Montgomery, visiting sites that speak to our shared history and to the future of Alabama. For more information, please visit www.sawyerville.org/person2person.html.

February 8-10 Diocesan Convention
The 188th Diocesan Convention will be held at Camp McDowell. The Diocesan Task Force for the Stewardship of Creation will be guiding the programming as we explore the final year of our 3-year study of Evangelism, Reconciliation, and Stewardship of Creation, the initiatives of Presiding Bishop Michael Curry’s Jesus Movement. For more information, http://bit.ly/2OQrg5o

February 9-10 Diocesan Convention Youth Lock-In
The Youth Lock-in at Diocesan Convention is open to youth in grades 9-12. Registration opens January 7, and the cost is $25. For more information, please visit www.dioala.org/youthevents.html.

February 27-March 3 Cursillo #216
Cursillo is an opportunity to grow in faith and in spirituality. Cursillo begins with a three–day weekend at Camp McDowell. During these three days, lay people and clergy share their experiences and perspective on a variety of topics related to the love of God, the Christian life, and Christian community. Cursillo weekends take place 5 times a year. To learn more, please visit www.alabamacursillo.org.

March 1-3 Vocare 19
Vocare is a form of a Latin word meaning “to call.” The Vocare weekend is a renewal weekend addressed to young adults in the time when they face many serious decisions that set the direction for much of their adult life. To learn more or to register, please visit www.dioala.org/vocare.

March 22-24 Rites of Spring
Rites of Spring is a weekend retreat at Camp McDowell and EYC Convention. Youth in 9-12th grade are eligible to run for Youth Department. For more information, please visit www.dioala.org/youthevents.html.

April 24-28 Cursillo #217
Cursillo is an opportunity to grow in faith and in spirituality. Cursillo begins with a three–day weekend at Camp McDowell. During these three days, lay people and clergy share their experiences and perspective on a variety of topics related to the love of God, the Christian life, and Christian community. Cursillo weekends take place 5 times a year. To learn more, please visit www.alabamacursillo.org.
Upcoming Events

ALABAMA FOLK SCHOOL EVENTS

November 9-11 November Session
This 3-day session features the following workshops: Blacksmithing: Forging a Gate (Brady Jackson); Cooking: Homemade Pasta (Jane-Ellen Shumate); and Spinning with Angora Wool & Off Loom Weaving (Nancy Barnett). [www.alfolkschool.com/calendar/2018/11/9/november-session](http://www.alfolkschool.com/calendar/2018/11/9/november-session).

February 15-17 From Scratch
Our annual From Scratch weekend is a workshop designed for beginners. Would you like to learn an instrument or art form, but are not sure where to start? This is the perfect workshop for you! Learn to play a new instrument or take up a folk art, craft or hobby in an encouraging and supportive environment. [www.alfolkschool.com/calendar/2017/7/14/from-scratch](http://www.alfolkschool.com/calendar/2017/7/14/from-scratch).

CAMP MCDOWELL EVENTS

November 16-18 Farm to Table
All combinations of families are invited for a special weekend of fresh air, farm food, and quality time in the beauty of God’s Backyard! Harvest vegetables and feed the pigs, learn sustainable practices for home, enjoy a “Garden to Glass” class while the kids play games led by our staff. The Rev. Jamie McAdams will facilitate faith-based discussion on the theology of creation. Registration opens September 1. To register, please visit [https://conta.cc/2P70cM7](https://conta.cc/2P70cM7).

December 1 All Summer Camp Registration Opens
Registration for all Summer Camp programs will open on December 1. For full schedule and registration links, please visit [campmcdowell.com/summer-camps-retreats](http://campmcdowell.com/summer-camps-retreats).

January 18-21, 2019 Winter Weekend
Camp-style retreat for 7th & 8th graders at Camp McDowell. For more information, please visit [campmcdowell.com/summer-camps-retreats](http://campmcdowell.com/summer-camps-retreats).

March 2-4, Our Time
A retreat at Camp McDowell for young people in grades 6-12 and their adult care-giver who have lost a significant person in their life. Registration opens November 1. For more information, please visit [campmcdowell.com/summer-camps-retreats](http://campmcdowell.com/summer-camps-retreats).

March 15-17 Awakenings
A Spiritual retreat for young people in grades 7-8 hosted at Camp McDowell. Registration opens November 1. For more information, please visit [campmcdowell.com/summer-camps-retreats](http://campmcdowell.com/summer-camps-retreats).

April 5-7, Mother Daughter Retreat
A retreat at Camp McDowell for all definitions of mothers & daughters. Registration opens November 1. For more information, please visit [campmcdowell.com/summer-camps-retreats](http://campmcdowell.com/summer-camps-retreats).

THE FOLLOWING DATES ARE AVAILABLE AT CAMP MCDOWELL!
GATHER FRIENDS AND FAMILY AND RESERVE A SPOT NOW!

| Nov. 9-11 | Dec. 7-9 |
| Nov. 16-24 | Dec. 14-16 |
| Nov. 30-Dec. 2 | Dec. 21- Jan. 1 |

Call 205-387-1806 or wonderful@campmcdowell.com.
Upcoming Events

Want a ticket to Lessons & Carols at Sewanee?

Start the holiday season with a unique gift for you and your spouse or a loved one. Enjoy the delights of a rolling French bistro on your way to Lessons & Carols, an event Southern Living highly regards, “if you’re lucky enough to get tickets.”

Your donation secures a round-trip seat to Sewanee with a five-course gourmet meal and none of the usual hassles of driving, parking, and accommodations. Because any road trip should be fun and full of humor, we have dubbed the charter bus, God’s Glorious Gastrobus. It will be departing from and returning to Birmingham on December 8. Net proceeds benefit the Stronger Truer Sewanee campaign.

Sewanee is an outward and visible sign of the traditions and values of the Episcopal Church. It is a place where leaders are formed and community is forged. Join us for Lessons & Carols on December 8 and support these traditions and values by letting us take care of your dining and travel needs. Please make a gift today at the ticket level of $450 or at any level to help underwrite this glorious trip!

As a founding and owning diocese we are committed to growing and strengthening this remarkable Episcopal institution of higher learning. You may know that the University of the South is in the midst of an ambitious $250 million capital campaign. Your donation is important as we work toward a diocesan goal of $100,000 for the Stronger Truer Sewanee campaign. To date we have raised $20,000 towards our goal.

With your donation of $450 you will enjoy:

- a five-course gourmet meal served as we travel
- signature cocktail and hors d’oeuvre as soon as you step onto God’s Glorious Gastrobus
- cheese soufflé, followed by roasted winter vegetables and roast Cornish hen with lingonberry sauce, and mixed green salad on trip up the mountain
- select wine, beer, and non-alcoholic beverages to accompany your meal
- one of 40 reserved tickets to Lessons & Carols in All Saints Chapel on December 8 at 4:00 pm
- cheese board and festive tart with coffee on return trip
- no hard to come by reservations at Sewanee dining establishments or hotels
- no driving hassle or trouble finding parking near All Saints Chapel
- no overnight required
- all the good Episcopal community you can enjoy
- benefits of making an investment in the University of the South
- donors will be recognized at Diocesan Convention
- $325 of your $450 donation qualifies as a charitable contribution
- our 40 tickets will go quickly, please make your reservation today

God’s Glorious Gastrobus departs promptly at noon on December 8 at All Saints Episcopal Church in Homewood and returns at 9:00 pm. To reserve your tickets please make your check out to Episcopal Diocese of Alabama and mail to Carpenter House, 521 20th St. N, Birmingham, AL 35203. You may also go online at http://bit.ly/2RpywE2, selecting Alabama Campaign for Sewanee and typing “Lessons & Carols Tickets” or “Underwriting Donation” in the memo line. Call or email Danielle Dunbar, Director of Mission Funding, with questions at (205) 358-9234 or ddunbar@dioala.org.
The **Episcopal Diocese** of Alabama
521 North 20th Street
Birmingham, AL 35203–2682

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CAMP MCDOWELL

2019 SUMMER CAMP & RETREATS

Camp McDowell is a ministry of the Episcopal Churches in the Diocese of Alabama.

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**SUMMER CAMP REGISTRATION OPENS**

DECEMBER 1

CAMPMCDOWELL.COM

205.387.1806