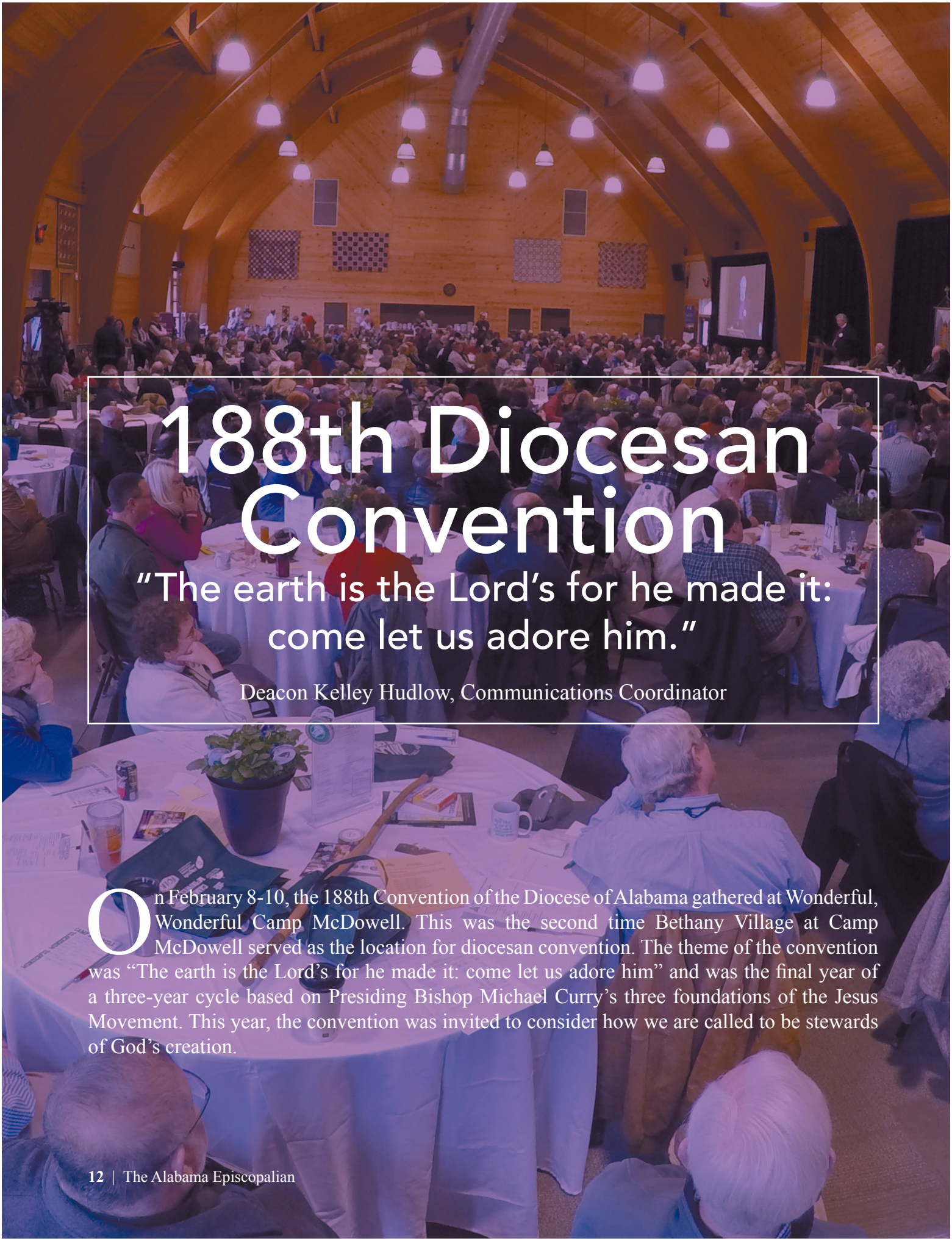


188th Diocesan Convention

"The earth is the Lord's for he made it: come let us adore him."

Deacon Kelley Hudlow, Communications Coordinator

On February 8-10, the 188th Convention of the Diocese of Alabama gathered at Wonderful, Wonderful Camp McDowell. This was the second time Bethany Village at Camp McDowell served as the location for diocesan convention. The theme of the convention was "The earth is the Lord's for he made it: come let us adore him" and was the final year of a three-year cycle based on Presiding Bishop Michael Curry's three foundations of the Jesus Movement. This year, the convention was invited to consider how we are called to be stewards of God's creation.



Convention meeting in Doug Carpenter Hall.

Day One

Friday morning, delegates were greeted at registration at St. Francis Chapel by volunteers from St. Mary's in Jasper. To help people better get around Camp, a fleet of golf carts and buses – many driven by Camp McDowell staff—stood ready to get folks from point A to point B and anywhere in between. Delegates were invited to attend workshops on a variety of topics, including the Episcopal Asset Map, Confirmation, Soap Making, team building, and "Living the Way of Love," as well as going on a Farm Tour or a Holy Hike.

The first business session began following lunch and was held in Doug Carpenter Hall. The session was opened in song and with prayers led by Kathy Whatley, Diocesan President of the Daughters of the King. The session began with introductions of those seated at the dais with Bishop Sloan — Rip Britton, Chancellor and appointed parliamentarian; the Rev. John Mark Ford, diocesan Secretary; and the Rev. Candice Burk Frazer; appointed Chair Dispatch of Business. With 69 parishes and 106 canonical clergy present, a quorum was had and business could proceed.

The Convention was welcomed by Whitney Moore-Shea, interim Executive Director of Camp. She was joined around the dais by the staff of Camp McDowell. In her opening remarks, Moore-Shea stated that the staff gathered had "made your beds, planned your meals, and prepared for months" for this weekend and that everyone was excited to welcome the Convention to Camp McDowell. In lieu of a video report, various staff members shared information about Camp McDowell in 2018, including that with 775 beds it is the largest Episcopal camp and conference center in the United States. In 2018, Camp employed 153 full-time, part-time, or seasonal staff, and is one of the largest employers in Winston County. Camp hosted 345 groups, served 133,102 meals, and hosted over 1,400 summer campers. The Camp Store had income of over $189,000, and over $100,000 was raised for Summer Camp Scholarships. Moore-Shea then welcomed Mary Yancey, Chair of the Department of Camp McDowell. Yancey thanked Moore-Shea for her work as the interim director and introduced the fifth executive director of Camp McDowell, the Rev. Corey Jones.

Following this welcome, Bishop Sloan introduced diocesan staff. He noted that a familiar face was missing due to the retirement of Denise Servant after 34 years of service. Additionally, Bishop Sloan recognized Diocesan Council members, members of the Standing Committee, non-canonical licensed clergy present, retired clergy, those in formation for ordination, and delegates from the Youth Department — KK Ray, Canterbury Chapel, and Jacob Raulerson, Epiphany Guntersville. Visiting clergy from the Virgin Islands, the Rt. Rev. Ambrose Gumbs and the Rev. Sandra Malone were also recognized.



Kirby Pool, with Danielle Dunbar and Charles Scribner, leads the discussion on ways parishes can engage with creation care theology and actions.



DioAla Youth participate in a lock-in at Lower Camp on Clear Creek.

Bishop Sloan designated four worshipping communities, each allowed one delegate and alternate: St. Dunstan's Auburn, The Abbey Birmingham, Christ the Redeemer Montgomery, and St. Martin's in the Pines Birmingham. Sloan also recognized the campus ministries, also allowed one delegate: Birmingham Episcopal Campus Ministries (Trinity Commons), Canterbury Chapel Tuscaloosa, UNA Campus Ministries Florence, St. Dunstan's Auburn, and Jacksonville State. Bishop Sloan introduced the deans of the convocations and invited the deans to introduce new clergy in their convocation. Two new convocation deans were announced: the Rev. Mollie Roberts, Cheaha, and the Rev. Carl Saxton, Mountain.

Keynote Address

Bishop Sloan introduced the keynote speaker, Dr. James B. McClintock, the Endowed University Professor of Polar and Marine Biology at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Dr. McClintock's research has been funded continuously over the past 30 years by the National Science Foundation and focuses on aspects of marine invertebrate nutrition, reproduction, and primarily, Antarctic marine chemical ecology. Over the past decade, his research has also encompassed studies of the impacts of rapid climate change and ocean acidification on Antarctic marine algae and invertebrates. Dr. McClintock shared his research and experiences to describe the effects of climate change on the environment in Antarctica. In answering the question of "what can I do?", he listed ten ways to impact climate change: vote – call, write, talk to your elected officials; invest in companies with sustainable practices; insulate your business or house; turn off power; smart consumption (avoid items heavily packaged); adjust the temperature of your thermostat; change driving habits; plant a tree; conserve water; recycle; change a light bulb; and educate your friends and family. He also invited folks to learn more about The Nature Conservancy "We Need to Talk" Pledge available at *https://bit.ly/2I4X7sQ*.

Following Dr. McClintock's address, convention was adjourned for caucus elections. Dinner was hosted in Doug Carpenter Hall, and attendees were invited to attend a concert in Hall Hall featuring The Red Mountain Yellowhammers, a folk band led by Joyce and Jim Cauthen who are regular contributors to the Alabama Folk School. Hospitality was offered in Phifer Hall by St. Thomas Huntsville.



The bread used at the Closing Eucharist was made at the diocesan Altar Guild conference.

Day 2

The second business session began with the ratification of the caucus elections of representatives to Diocesan Council, followed by the Diocesan Council Report made by Jeff McCormack and Shari Harrison. Phyllis Hall, Diocesan Treasurer, presented on the budgets for the diocese and Camp McDowell. Following this presentation, both budgets (Resolutions 1-2) were approved by convention.



Kate Murphy and Tina Sloan attend the Clergy Spouse Luncheon at Phifer Hall. (Photo by Jess Lingle)



Camp Staff wait ready to get folks where they need to go. (Photo by Jess Lingle)

The convention approved the chairs of the Departments, Commissions, and Agencies of the Diocese (*https://bit.ly/2TNa2W3*). The Convention also approved the Nominations from the Chair, which included positions such as the chancellor, treasurer, secretary, and Commission on Ministry (*https://bit.ly/2tlKOTa*).

Bishop Sloan addressed the convention and called for the election of a Bishop Coadjutor. Bishop Sloan will serve as Bishop Diocesan until the end of 2020. Following the Bishop's address, members of the Taskforce of the Stewardship of Creation—Kirby Pool, St. Mary's-on-the-Highlands Birmingham; Charles Scribner, Cathedral Church of the Advent Birmingham; and Danielle Dunbar, Diocesan Staff Liaison—led the delegates in discussion and reflection on ways their parishes could engage in the theology and work of creation care. As the Convention adjourned for lunch, the clergy spouses were invited to Phifer Hall for the Clergy Spouse Luncheon.

As Convention resumed, the youth attending the Lock-in at Lower Camp on Clear Creek energized the gathering through dance for the final business session. The final session centered on the election of clergy and lay representatives to the Standing Committee and the Disciplinary Board, as well as introduction and discussion of proposed resolutions. Convention approved Resolution 3, which continues the companion relationship with the Diocese of the Virgin Islands. A discussion was had concerning Resolution 4, which sought to eliminate the requirement from Standing Resolution #12 that Diocesan Convention is held in Birmingham at every third year. After discussion and an amendment to ensure that parishes continued to have a role in hosting convention, the resolution passed. Convention also approved Resolution 5 that approved Bishop Sloan's call for a coadjutor and directs the Standing Committee to begin preparations for the election.

As the business of convention closed, those present were invited to additional workshops, including a presentation about a sustainable energy plan for Camp, a behind the scenes look at how Camp works, farm to table cooking, an up-close encounter with native birds of prey and reptiles, and a relaxing Holy Hike to Sloan Lake. Throughout the sessions of convention, artist Linda Munoz, another regular with the Alabama Folk School, worked on a mosaic commemorating convention, and delegates were invited to bring pieces of pottery, glass, porcelain, or other items to be incorporated into the mosaic. A gala event was held at Stough Lodge, which provided time for fellowship, celebration, and some funny photos in the photo booth.

Day 3

Convention was brought to a close with a service of Holy Eucharist on Sunday morning at St. Francis Chapel. Bishop Sloan was the celebrant and the Rev. Danny Whitehead, Rector of St. Bartholomew Florence, offered the sermon. Music was provided by a "pop-up" choir, as well as by Vera Britton, piano; Marianne Griffin, violin; Melanie



Clergy of the Diocese of Alabama in St. Francis Chapel, February 8, 2019.



Deacon Jeannie Randall presents Resolution 3, which calls for continuing our companion relationship with the Diocese of the Virgin Islands.



Bishop Sloan offer the blessing at the Closing Eucharist at St. Francis Chapel.

Rodgers, viola; and Patty Pilon, cello. The liturgy utilized prayers to remind those worshiping of their call to be stewards of God's creation. The bread used for communion was made at the Diocesan Altar Guild Festival by members of parish Altar Guilds. The altar frontal was the work of those attending a workshop at convention on the art of leaf pounding led by Brian Denton-Trujillo. The offering was designated for the Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast and the Diocese of the Virgin Islands for hurricane relief.

Special thanks to the staff of Camp McDowell, to the volunteers from St. Mary's Jasper, and to all those that worked so hard to make convention a success. Also special thanks to Gene Lawson and McKee Sloan for running the video and sound production.

New Clergy Introductions

Birmingham Convocation: the Rev. Jeremy Carlson, St. Mary's-on-the-Highlands Birmingham
Black Belt Convocation: the Rev. Richelle Thompson, St. Michael's Fayette
Montgomery Convocation: the Rev. Dr. Deonna D. Neal, St. John's Montgomery; the Rev. Nate Darville, Grace, Pike Road
East Alabama: the Rev. Gail Goldsmith, Holy Trinity Auburn
Tennessee Valley Convocation: the Rev. Jay Gardner, Grace Cullman

Election Results

Diocesan Council
Northern District
The Rev. Robin Hinkle, St. Mary's Jasper (2022)
Luke Slaton, St. John's Decatur, (2022)
Middle District
The Rev. Jack Alvey, Ascension Birmingham (2022)
Eva Kendrick, Birmingham (2022)
Southern District -
The Rev. Jamie Osborne St. John's Montgomery (2022)
The Rev. Richelle Thompson, St. Michael's Fayette (2021)
Jim Jolly, Christ Church Tuscaloosa (2022)

Standing Committee
The Rev. Dr. Tommie Watkins, Jr., St. Andrew's Birmingham (2023)
Anne Burruss, St. Stephen's Birmingham (2023)
Heyward Gould, Christ Church Tuscaloosa (2020)

Disciplinary Board
The Rev. Bob Henderson, Trinity Wetumpka (2022)
Rusty Boylan, St. Luke's Birmingham (2022)
The Rev. Cameron Nations, St. Luke's Birmingham (2021)
The Rev. Robin Hinkle, St. Mary's Jasper (2020)

Resolutions

Resolution 1: Diocesan Budget (Approved)
Resolution 2: Camp McDowell Budget (Approved)
Resolution 3: Continued Companion Relationship (Approved)
Resolution 4: Standing Resolution # 12 Amendment (Approved with Amendment)
Resolution 5: Call to Elect Bishop Coadjutor (Approved)

For complete coverage of the 188th Diocesan Convention, including video reports, live stream, Closing Eucharist sermon, and photos, visit *https://www.dioala.org/dfc/newsdetail_2/3195982.*