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Racial Healing: A Part of Spiritual Formation

In this issue, we explore the formative power of liturgy, the invite to practicing forgiveness, and examine why Christian formation is crucial. We also look at recent events and initiatives from our parishes and shared ministries, including support for Racial Healing, GraceWorks, and more.

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, October 1. Postmaster, parishes, and individuals, please send all address changes or additions to Circulation Secretary Georganne Perrine at gperrine@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 the 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.

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POSTMASTER: Please send address corrections to Georganne Perrine, Circulation Secretary, The Alabama Episcopalian, 521 North 20th Street, Birmingham, AL 35203-2682.
So we’re excited to introduce another opportunity for deepening in Christian spiritual practice, either individually or in small groups. Beginning on September 15, the Commission will offer Living Compass’ Four-Week Devotional: “Practicing Forgiveness With All Your Heart, Soul, Strength, and Mind.” I think the whole business of forgiving needs to be much more a part of our life in faith: forgiving others and forgiving ourselves. I wonder if we ever listen to what we say in the Lord’s Prayer, when we ask our Father God to forgive us “as we forgive those who trespass against us.” If God really does forgive us in the same way as we forgive others, surely we all need to do a better job of forgiving!

The material will be available for free either as a daily email or a downloadable pdf. A facilitator’s guide will be available for small groups, and there will be a closed Facebook group provided for participants to connect with others around the diocese. Members of smaller parishes who feel isolated have been asking for ways to communicate with others with similar interests, and we hope this helps. The “Practicing Forgiveness” resources were made available nationally through Living Compass last Lent and the response was overwhelmingly positive. Participants really liked the accessibility of the material and the depth of spiritual experience. Over 25,000 copies were distributed and over 1,000 participated in the Living Compass Lenten closed groups.

Additionally, the Rev. Dr. D. Scott Stoner, co-founder and co-director of Living Compass will be the Pre-Advent Day of Reflection speaker on November 23. Scott will be addressing the topic of “Peace,” at St. Stephen’s in Birmingham. His talk will also be shown simultaneously at St. John’s Montgomery, St. Martin’s in the Pines, St. Thomas Huntsville and Christ Church Tuscaloosa. This will be the third time our Commission on Spirituality will offer a Reflection Day both on-site and online. Strategic use of this technology has doubled the number of participants for these programs.

Living Compass’ mission is “Outfitting individuals, families, congregations, and organizations with tools and training for the journey toward wellness and wholeness.” They have programs available for teens, parents, and adults. On Friday, November 22, Scott Stoner will conduct a one-day Living Compass leadership training to be held at St. Luke’s in Birmingham, focused on equipping leaders with the church to be a resource for the greater community for programs concerning wholeness and wellness for people of all ages. This training will prepare participants to lead Living Compass Wellness Initiatives within the parish. For more information about Living Compass, please contact Kathy Graham, Mary Bee Sullivan, and Danielle Thompson, or go to www.livingcompass.org.

I want to thank the Commission on Spirituality for this and all their work, and I want to invite and encourage all of you to participate in “Practicing Forgiveness With All Your Heart, Soul, Strength, and Mind.”

To register for the study beginning September 15, http://bit.ly/2XDpCcP.


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This past Lent the Commission on Spirituality invited people from around the Diocese into a diocesan-wide study, Living the Way of Love: A Forty Day Devotional. There was a kick-off for the study at a Lenten Retreat held at Saint Luke’s Birmingham, which was also live-streamed at St. Thomas Huntsville, St. John’s Montgomery, and St. Martin’s in the Pines.

Many small groups were formed throughout the diocese and the feedback was positive regarding a shared study within congregations. A recurring question for members of the Commission on Spirituality has been “What’s next?”

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An Invitation to Practicing Forgiveness

The Rt. Rev. John McKee Sloan

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Why Christian Formation?
Kathy Graham, Diocesan Lifelong Christian Formation Coordinator

In years past we heard programs in church called church school, Sunday school, and Christian Education. Today we hear Christian Formation. Why the shift in language and what’s the difference? When we use the term education we think of school, studying, brain power, and learning. Formation refers to forming a calling, a passion, a seeking, and instead of brain power, listening and responding to the heart. So, Christian formation is both the education part of learning, knowledge and brain power, as well as the formation part of seeking, following and listening. It is a combination of the head and heart, connecting the two. Education + Formation = Transformation. We are called to be followers of Jesus and we are formed in Christ’s image. So, the term Sunday school is not enough because so much of our formation as Christians happens in so many ways other than Sunday school on Sunday mornings at the church.

We have learned that formation is also not completed at any certain milestone like Confirmation, or graduation, or even adulthood. Formation is lifelong, cradle to grave. We need more than facts, dates, and quotes. We also need to be able to understand, question, engage, listen, seek, share, and serve. In order to do so, we must learn to adapt and adjust our ways in which we learn and spread the Gospel. It is not a one size fits all. We need to provide opportunities for all generations to learn, play, worship, and serve together. Our focus should be on people and forming relationships. Within these relationships we need to help people engage in their faith and relate their story and life to the biblical story. We need to find the best ways to help provide space to understand, engage and question in age appropriate ways. It is not all about the program or the methodology. It is about asking the questions. Are we forming following of Jesus or just passing on information about the faith? Do we use the church help and equip parents to be the primary formers of faith in their homes? What does it take to fulfill our baptismal vows? And what are we doing to provide tools to fulfill them? Are we providing space for sanctuaries of spirit and spiritual formation or just adding options to add to the busyness of life? Relationships and community will have a much greater impact than any given program or methodology.

So instead of “passing on the faith” what about “living into the faith?” Instead of building and promoting more programs, what about building and promoting more relationships across all generations? Instead of serving families and individuals, what about empowering and equipping families and individuals, providing resources and tools to create their own play list for their faith formation and that of their families? Instead of congregational centered ministries, what about we create community centered ministries?

Think of the questions that are the building blocks of faith formation. Do I belong? Do I know God’s story and want to know more? Can I seek to find ways my story connects to God’s story? Am I called and equipped to serve? In what ways can we share our stories, learn spiritual practices, nurture each other’s faith formation and share the Gospel?

Let’s celebrate milestones in our churches, provide storytelling opportunities, provide space for all the generations to serve, worship, learn, and play together. But these must happen in different ways than we have done in the past. Regular church attendance in 2019 is once or twice a month. If this is the only time we are focused on forming followers of Jesus then we will fall short. The formation ministries of our diocese are committed to providing resources and opportunities around the diocese and in individual parishes. These opportunities and resources are provided by The Department of Christian Formation, The Commission on Spirituality, The Department of Recovery Ministries, and The Department of Liturgy and Music. Within these ministries there are resources and people to provide information about programs and research. For more information or to connect with any of these diocesan ministries contact Kathy Graham, kgraham@dioala.org.


We are featuring Lifelong Christian Formation. The following pages allow a glimpse of the diverse way that Christian formation can be done with children, including intergenerational formation, interfaith experiences, and Vacation Bible School.

All Saints Vacation Bible School Journey
Jeannie Feldman

Israel is beautiful this time of year! Just ask All Saints children who travel there for Vacation Bible School. Every June 130 VBS children “live” in a different 1st century city just as Jesus did. They rotate in a four-year cycle of Nazareth, Bethlehem, Galilee, and Jerusalem. Children 4 years old - 5th grade are divided into the 12 tribes of Israel: Asher, Benjamin, Dan, Gad, Issachar, Joseph, Judah, Levi, Naphtali, Reuben, Simeon, and Zebulon. These multi-age tribes live as a family. They spend time in a decorated tent, wear typical tribal clothing, eat food Jesus ate, and spend the day just as Jesus did. They enjoy Family Time, Snack, Music, Jewish dancing, and most of all – Marketplace! In addition, the Elder Tribe (made up of 6th graders) takes a field trip to Nabéel’s Restaurant to taste authentic Mediterranean food and to the Ave Maria Grotto at the St. Bernard Abbey in Cullman to visit miniature replicas of the important cities of Israel.

In the Marketplace, children can visit shops that would have been popular in the cities during Jesus’ life. Every year, regardless of the city, children make money in the Coin Pounding Shop, bake bread in the Bakery, create Za’atar in the Spice Shop, play authentic Jewish games in the Game Shop, make works of art in the Pottery Shop, and create their own Batik masterpieces.

When they travel to Nazareth, the children make an Annunciation scene out of wood complete with Mary’s house, Gabriel, Mary, and a dove. In Bethlehem, they create a nativity scene out of wood. The fishing village of Galilee is all about water and fish, and the children decorate a real fishing pole made from bamboo. Lastly, in Jerusalem, the children make all the pieces to the Last Supper out of wood. In addition, they decorate their own Mezuzah and Shema.

A Mezuzah is a special container hung on the doorpost of Jewish homes and it holds the Shema. A Shema is a scroll with the scripture Deuteronomy 6:4-5 (Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.) The Marketplace is everyone’s favorite!!

All Saints has been using the Marketplace approach since 2004. It creates many hands to create such a meaningful experience. We are incredibly fortunate to have so many volunteers who help us each year. These special saints range from 7th grade students to men and women in their late 70s. It really does take a village!!
Students from All Saints’ and St. Mary’s visit Islamic Center

Kathleen Busbee, Director of Children’s Christian Formation at All Saints’, Homewood

On Sunday April 28, the fourth, fifth and sixth grade children and parents from All Saints Homewood and St. Mary’s-on-the-Highlands Birmingham were invited to come to the Hoover Crescent Islamic Center to observe Prayer Time in the Mosque, to enjoy lunch with the Islamic children, and to participate in an open forum about the two faiths. The two different faith groups shared a meal together and participated in an open discussion. While children and adults asked deep, meaningful questions, both children and adults gave thoughtful, respectful responses. Much was learned about the differences and similarities of these two faiths. All Saints and St. Mary’s utilize the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd approach to faith formation. These students in Catechesis Level III have been studying salvation history; through this collaboration with the Hoover Crescent Islamic Center, participants have benefitted from the opportunity to learn more about another Abrahamic religion. The children look forward to hosting our Islamic friends next year at All Saints for another positive and informative connection between these two groups.

Intergenerational Faith Formation

Jennifer Jones, Director of Children’s Ministry, St. Stephen’s Birmingham

Realizing that faith should be formed and shared in community across all generations, Saint Stephen’s in Birmingham has taken a new approach to Wednesday night parish dinners and formational programming. Many of the Wednesday night events planned this year were designed to encourage relationship building across generational lines. Our community engaged in intergenerational faith experiences of worship, learning, prayer, service and play. Members of all ages made Lego creations depicting Gospel readings, created rhythm together in a drum circle, solved a mystery in a parish-wide game of Clue, put together blessing bags, blessed pets in our community and experienced prayer in new ways. Bringing the generations together affirms each person’s value in a church community, regardless of age and encourages connections and relationships that might not otherwise be developed. Providing occasions of intentional intergenerational experiences strengthens the church family.

Footprints of St. Paul Vacation Bible School

Linda W. Nichols, Director of Children’s Ministry, St. Luke’s Birmingham

St. Luke’s, Birmingham, is currently using the marketplace model under the direction of Linda Nichols and Meredith Tracy, in Children’s Ministries. This year’s theme was Footprints of St. Paul with students divided into early churches and/or epistles i.e. Corinthians, Romans, and others. They were visited by Paul, Timothy & Lydia who told their story in the first person. T-shirts included the map of Paul’s three journeys to assist children in learning of his travels. The interactive learning centers in the marketplace included: baking bread, making jelly, batik, mixing spices, and more. A frequently visited “shop” was writing letters to the active military on our prayer list; the basket of letters was then blessed in Sunday’s worship before being mailed. Next year’s theme is Pilgrims for Christ which will center on Celtic spirituality, making use of our outdoor labyrinth, and learning about the saints.

Speed Faithing at Christ Church

Katherine Gould, Christian Formation Director at Christ Church Tuscaloosa

In my experience, Episcopalians aren’t always excited to try new things. I have discovered that being at Camp McDowell will loosen us up a bit and we are more willing to step out of our comfort zone—especially if you don’t warn them what they are about to do! A few years ago at our parish retreat, I was in charge of the program. I directed everyone to create two circles facing each other where people sitting in them would be knee to knee. In the inner circle was a list of questions ranging from silly to deep. I used the timer on my phone and gave each group 3 minutes to answer one of the questions. Once the timer buzzed, the folks sitting in the outer circle were instructed to move to the left and repeat the process. 30 minutes is usually plenty of time even though we don’t get all the way around the circle. It’s nice to allow time afterwards for folks to continue a conversation if they made a connection. We have done Speed Faithing two more times at Christ Church as part of our GIFT (Generations in Faith Together) Sundays. Here are my suggestions to make it go smoothly. Allow people to sit in either of the circles—don’t base it on age like I did the first two times. People like getting to interact with all ages. Provide donuts to lure them in! Have a variety of questions to choose from. I’m happy to provide a list to anyone interested.

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Katherine Gould, Christian Formation Director at Christ Church Tuscaloosa
What are the best ways to cultivate faith in young teens? The Confirmation Project has been studying. The Episcopal Church joined a multi-year interdenomination-al and international effort to study this question. The findings reveal not only some misconceptions about what the rite of confirmation is but also where dioceses should focus their efforts to strengthen young persons’ life-long commitment to a journey of faith.

Too often, confirmation is thought of as a kind of graduation at church. This is a problem. Historically, confirmation was contiguous with the sacrament of baptism and considered to be the very beginning of one’s life in Christ. Although the two grew apart in the liturgy of the Church, confirmation’s attachment to baptism remains. As our Book of Common Prayer states, “In the course of their Christian development, those baptized at an early age are expected, when they are ready and have been duly prepared, to make a mature public affirmation of their faith and commitment to the responsibilities of their Baptism and to receive the laying on of hands by the bishop.” (BCP 412)

Confirmation is realizing one’s baptism. It is about affirming faith and committing to Christ.

The Project researched and named five best practices in how to lead and carry out Confirmation “classes,” and its resulting book, Cultivating Teen Faith, gives ministry leaders, parents, mentors, congregations, and diocesan camps helpful guidelines on how young people might “hear the gospel anew and commit their lives to following Jesus amid the complexities of modern life.”

What are the five key takeaways?

1. Classes must be Relational—grounded in our creation in God’s image
   Parishes need faithful, engaged leaders who inspire curiosity in students, teach contextually, and have fun.

2. Mentoring—this is easier than you think, and incredibly renewing for the whole church
   Parishes that connect students with mentors (persons in the congregation who can walk alongside confirmands on their journey) create life-long disciples.

3. Sharing Roles in Faith Formation—confirmation is not just a class for kids or newbies
   Parents/families share in success of confirmation, and so does the whole parish; confirmation should be connected to the ministries of the parish and involve confirmands participating in the life and vision of the parish.

4. Practicing Theology—Anglican theology is rooted in the understanding that we are all theologians and we need to practice this together.
   Keeping Faith Ablaze involves helping students discover what they believe and how they belong to Christ.

5. Taking Time for a Retreat—important to learning, is combining belief with action
   Unplugging confirmands and getting them away from their homes into a camp or retreat setting allows for collaborative discussions and deepens faith.

As part of an ongoing effort to take the Project’s findings and put them into action, the Episcopal Church has convened a national working group, and several representatives from the diocese of Alabama are involved. Our diocese already leads Confirmation Retreat weekends which other dioceses are interested in starting. Themed, “I have called you by name, you are mine.” (Isaiah 43:1), Alabama’s retreats are designed to be an evocative experience where teens can connect with other teens across the diocese to discuss their beliefs and discover what distinguishes them as Episcopalians. And they are held in the heart of our diocese at beautiful Camp McDowell.

Planning for the 2020 Confirmation retreat will be underway soon. In addition, a diocesan group is gathering those interested in hearing more about what we’ve learned and to share ideas in order to enrich the way we approach Confirmation across the diocese.

Please contact Kathy Graham at kgraham@dioala.org if you are interested and SAVE the DATE: Meeting to discuss Best Practices in Confirmation – August 29th at 10 am, Carpenter House.
Recently, a friend was reflecting on how meaningful the Episcopal liturgy is to the rhythm of the week. In the midst of life’s chaos, liturgy – the public worship of God – follows a peaceful, predictable routine that provides a calming joy that their family can carry into the days ahead.

What causes the transformation from frenetic to serene? Do our communal acts of worship change us? Perhaps it is not the liturgy itself that makes us act more loving or feel better about life, according to Jennifer Herdt, Professor of Christian Ethics at Yale Divinity School. Rather, liturgy is a doorway or discipline that “allows us to tap into the right sources of power” (“The Virtue of Liturgy”, 2011).

There is a formative power of liturgy that forms and informs us as the body of Christ. Liturgy forms us by the habits or behaviors that worship teaches, like gathering in community to offer prayers and praise to God; engaging in study of holy scriptures; repenting of wrongs we have done and being reconciled with God, ourselves, and one another; and, practicing the divine rhythm of generosity – giving the best of what we have as we make offerings to God, and receiving the bread and wine during Holy Communion. In other words, worship trains our desires. Liturgy also informs us as we reflect on what it means to live as followers of Jesus, both during worship and when we are out in the world. Said differently, worship shapes our imagination of living as Christians.

In these many weeks between the seasons of Easter and Advent, the routine of our liturgy in this season after Pentecost invites us to meditate upon how we are formed and informed through worship. The green altar hangings and stoles remind us of this time of growing, when we are called to practice our Christian faith and reflect upon what it means to live more closely in God’s presence. In doing so, liturgy can also prepare us for improvisation in life when we face the unexpected.

So, when we experience the liturgy – whether Rite I, Rite II, or Rite III – we are more likely to pray, show generosity, be reconciled, and give thanks in all parts of our daily lives. Give it a try – and see you in church!
AIMS to offer courses for whole diocese this fall

Dr. Joshua Davis, Dean of the Alabama Integrative Ministry School

When I was completing my doctoral program in religion, my friends often asked me what I planned to do with my degree. I always responded that I’d really love to teach theology at the parish or diocesan level but, apart from EFM, I didn’t know what that sort of ministry looked like in the Episcopal Church.

Fast-forward a decade later, and that’s exactly what I get to do in my role as Dean of the Alabama Integrative Ministry School (AIMS).

AIMS was founded by Bishop Sloan and the Commission on Ministry in 2015 in order to meet the needs of numerous parishes in our diocese who are in need of part-time clergy support. AIMS is a non-traditional formation program created to prepare both priests and deacons for ministry in these and other congregations in our Diocese. Because most of the seminarians who enroll in AIMS will continue in their current profession once they are ordained, we call them “bi-vocational.”

Our first graduating class completed their studies in December of 2018 and are currently serving throughout the Diocese: Paul Goldman is at Christ Church in Fairfield; Mark Likos is at Trinity Church in Clanton; and Pam Long is at Todos Santos, a largely Hispanic congregation, in Montgomery.

A key part of our school is that we train deacons and priests side by side for their ministries. Traditionally, those training for the priesthood would attend a three-year residential seminary, while candidates for the diaconate attended local ministry schools. At AIMS, deacons and priests work together, learning to appreciate what is distinctive and important about the other right from the beginning, and nurturing a spirit of collaboration that has been truly transformative. When I attended the recent annual conference of the Association of Episcopal Deacons with Archdeacon Marti Holmes, I was struck by just how well-situated AIMS is to meet the current needs and concerns of our diaconate—which is one of the most vibrant and active in the entire country.

It has always been a special concern of mine that laypersons (like me) have available to them all the support and learning resources that they need for their ministries. With our clergy formation programs securely established, AIMS is now well-positioned to help the people of the Diocese of Alabama explore their faith and ministries in new and exciting ways. Beginning this Fall, AIMS will offer a series of courses to the entire diocese. Some of these classes will be 4 weeks, some 6 weeks, and some 8 weeks long.

In August, I will offer a class entitled “Paul’s Apocalyptic Gospel,” in which we will read Paul’s letters and discuss his proclamation of the Good News of Jesus Christ. In the fall, the Rev. Thomas Joyner will offer “Holy Places: Liturgy in Space and Time.” This class will explore the meaning and significance of the places where we pray and worship; the sanctification of time; and sacred architecture, art, and furniture. In November, we will introduce two courses by the New Testament scholar, Deirdre Good (emeritus, the General Theological Seminary). Dr. Good will teach “The Gospel of Matthew,” coinciding with our lectionary readings for 2020. She will also offer “Greek for Bible Study,” which is designed to help all learners realize the benefits of knowing basic Greek for exploring the Scriptures.

On January 19, 2019, a service of commencement was held for the first graduating class of AIMS. Pictured are Bishop Kee Sloan; the Rev. Mark Likos (‘19); the Rev. Monica Carlson, Faculty; the Rev. Paul Goldman (‘19); Dr. Joshua Davis, Dean; the Rev. Pam Long (‘19); the Rev. Kelley Hudlow, Associate Dean; the Rev. Thomas Joyner, Faculty.

On behalf of AIMS faculty, students, and Advisory Council, I thank you for your support of our ministry over the last four years. We look forward to fully engaging with our whole Diocese as our programs for lay formation and clergy formation continue to grow!

To receive updates about courses and other opportunities, please sign up for our email list (http://eepurl.com/gw2K_P). To register for a course and see upcoming courses, please visit aims.dioala.org/register-now.html.
The Commission on Race Relations in the Church has been responsible for facilitating anti-racism workshops for over 18 years. The Commission also coordinates the Annual Jonathan Daniels and the Martyrs of Alabama Pilgrimage in Hayneville, AL. A lot has been learned about race, racial justice and the need for transformation by the anti-racism trainers and members of the Commission. As the work of the Commission has evolved and expanded, members recently affirmed the need for a name change to reflect the work today. Now called Commission on Truth, Justice and Racial Reconciliation, which more accurately reflects the work of the commission, which includes truth-telling, education, pilgrimages to sacred sites of racial injustice to learn from the past and seek healing for the future. Racial healing is an important part of spiritual formation. Jonathan Daniels and the Martyrs of Alabama Pilgrimage is an opportunity to experience truth-telling, education and sacred pilgrimage. Joining us this year as sponsors are the Diocese of Central Gulf Coast and the Episcopal Peace Fellowship. The Pilgrimage begins with a gathering on Friday, August 9 with a visit to the Legacy Museum and Memorial in Montgomery at 2:15 pm, followed by a healing Eucharist at 4:30 pm. This event is open to a limited number of participants. To add your name on the list and obtain a ticket, visit [http://bit.ly/2YKC2vK](http://bit.ly/2YKC2vK).

The Annual Jonathan Daniels and the Martyrs of Alabama Pilgrimage in Hayneville AL is Saturday, August 10th at 11 am. The keynote speaker is Kenyen Brown, former U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Alabama, becoming the first African American US. Attorney in the history of Alabama. Under his leadership, some of the largest civil rights cases in the Department of Justice were resolved in favor of victims of discrimination and permanently changed the conduct of those who discriminated.

For young pilgrims, a lock-in will be hosted by the Church of the Ascension, 316 Clinton Avenue, Montgomery AL, 36104, phone, 334-263-5529. The Rev. Candice Frazier is the contact person. Check in is at 6 pm, Friday, August 9. The young people will leave Montgomery on Saturday morning for a breakfast sponsored by the Hayneville Board of Education at 9 am and join the pilgrimage at 11 am.

Whether this will be your first time attending the Pilgrimage or you attend annually, this is a very moving, inspirational and vulnerable experience which is necessary for racial healing and transformation – an important part of Christian spiritual formation.

Racial Healing: A Part of Spiritual Formation

Deacon Carolyn Foster
Generosity Begins with the First Laugh

By Danielle Dunbar, Director of Mission Funding

The Navajo “First Laugh” ceremony is something I learned about from Terry Parsons, a previous stewardship officer of The Episcopal Church. What does a laughing ceremony have to do with stewardship? Parsons said the point was to both feed the community and ensure the baby will learn to be generous; the host of the ceremony and the baby serve every guest a plate of delicious food. She said the ceremony is tied to the baby’s first laugh because the baby is beginning to be aware of his or her surroundings. If the child grows up and acts stingy, Parsons pointed out, community members ask if he or she missed their First Laugh ceremony. For the Navajo, learning generosity is an important part of the child’s spiritual formation.

The idea that generosity can also be part of our formation as Episcopalians is wonderful news. We can encourage and teach each other how to be more generous, growing our faith and deepening our relationship with God. This is true for all ages from pre-K to adult. After all, God loves a cheerful giver (2 Corinthians 9:6-7). If you are looking for stewardship education resources, these links might be a good place to start:

- www.ecfvp.org/search/?q=stewardship
- www.tens.org
- www.tens.org/search/?q=stewardship

For more information, please contact Danielle Dunbar, Director of Mission Funding at (205) 358-9234 or ddunbar@dioala.org.

News from our Parishes

Seven years of GraceWorks

Kay Williams, Director of GraceWorks

GraceWorks will be completing its seventh year of summer adventures, painting, gardening, building, as well as exploring nature and God’s presence. The seven-week ministry is designed to provide inner city youth (ages 10-14) with opportunities to participate in service projects, educational enrichment activities and spiritual exploration. All the program’s activities nurture positive character development, encourage career interests, and cultivate a strong work ethic. Through the daily hands-on experiences and educational environment GraceWorks provides each child with the basic skill sets needed for competitive employment, while encouraging work ethic, team building and practical opportunities to explore personal interests and discover new talents and abilities. The GraceWorks ministry encourages inner city youth to experience and share the Gospel of Christ’s love with everyone.

Each year GraceWorks has expanded in the number of participants, mentors, partners and community partners. Three years ago, GraceWorks’ expansion included the acquisition of a 5,000 square foot church building, and two lots donated to the ministry. The building is directly adjacent to the green space used by GraceWorks attendees and other churches, as well as several other community efforts of staff and parishioners of Grace Episcopal Church, St. Stephen’s, St. Luke’s, St. Mary’s on the Highlands, Adams Place,” is undergoing a thorough renovation through the efforts of staff and parishioners of Grace Episcopal Church, St. Stephen’s, St. Luke’s, St. Mary’s on the Highlands, Ad- vent, and other churches, as well as several other community volunteers. GraceWorks attendees and other youth groups have also contributed to the renovation.

The vision for the future of Grace Place is that it will house a wide range of service efforts and programs designed to benefit the neighborhood. In addition to allowing GraceWorks to expand in size and scope of programming, it will serve as a place of worship and celebration. The sanctu-
News from our Parishes

Lee County Episcopal Churches Unite to Rebuild Tornado-Stricken Communities

Deacon Judy Quick, Deacon, St. Stephen’s Smiths Station & Emmanuel Opelika

G
od, through the power of the Holy Spirit, has been ever present in Lee County since the violent tornadoes of March 3, 2019 which killed 23 people and uprooted hundreds of lives.

The four Episcopal Churches in Lee County – Emmanuel Opelika, Holy Trinity Auburn, St. Dunstan’s Auburn, and St. Stephen’s Smiths Station – have joined forces for the immediate and long-term recovery needs of the Beauregard and Smiths Station communities which were devasted by those tornadoes.

In the chaos immediately after the tornadoes, the churches, in their individual ways, fed first responders, provided meals to volunteers, provided gift cards, offered pastoral care, helped a family find a trailer, fed first responders, provided meals to volunteers, provided assistance.

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In the chaos immediately after the tornadoes, the churches, in their individual ways, fed first responders, provided meals to volunteers, provided gift cards, offered pastoral care, helped a family find a trailer, and began to engage in the community response. Deacons Andrea Peacock (Diocesan Disaster Coordinator), David Whetstone (Diocesan Disaster Coordinator), and Elaine Clements (Episcopal Relief & Development Partner in Response) offered their presence, wisdom, and assistance.

After Holy Week and Easter, the four churches met to decide how to coordinate their efforts. They agreed on the best use of the $5,000 emergency funds from Episcopal Relief & Development and discerned a long-term response. The Episcopal Relief & Development Emergency Funds provided Visa Gift Cards for 20 families. Stacy Lipscomb, parishioner at St. Dunstan’s, had been on the ground in Beauregard and Smiths Station and had developed relationships with the community leaders there. These Community Advocates helped identify the families who would benefit from a Visa Gift Card for a variety of expenses (telephone, utilities, medical, rent, etc). Stacy and Deacon Judy Quick handed these gift cards ranging from $200-$400 personally to each recipient. The recipients expressed profound gratitude and opened up about their particular stories of living through the horror of the storm, some alone, some protecting their children and their pets, some losing loved ones to the tornado. They also professed a deep faith and hope that they will eventually recover, rebuild, and begin a new life.

A meeting with Chaplain Laura Eason at the East Alabama Medical Center helped the team discern the most effective long-term recovery response. Chaplain Eason was instrumental in forming Mend, the Lee County Long Term Recovery Group, which coordinates gifts and talents among church, civic, medical, governmental, and volunteer organizations. Their holistic approach honors the dignity of every one, caring for the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of individual families and their communities.

The Spirit led the Lee County Episcopal Church Tornado Recovery team to choose to partner with a family to move into temporary housing at the Oak Park Apartments (owned by the EAMC) with the long-term dream of providing a Fuller Center home (like a Habitat home) for this family.

The Lee County Episcopal Churches are in the process of securing resources to sponsor the Fuller Center home for $50,000. The building of this home this September/October 2019, would offer a wonderful opportunity for volunteers from throughout the diocese to participate. Yes, it’s football season, but fans might find some time to wield a hammer or paint trim or have conversations with our Lee County family.

The team welcomes your prayers for the Smiths Station and Beauregard communities and for all who are actively engaged in the recovery and rebuilding of their homes and of their lives.

For more information on the Lee County Episcopal Church Tornado Team Response, contact the Deacon Judy Quick at jquick@bellsouth.net.

In October 2017, St. Mary’s Jasper committed to partner with St. Mary’s Virgin Gorda in their recovery. While St. Mary’s Jasper waited for the necessary infrastructure to be replaced in the Virgin Islands, they prayed for their partner church every Sunday. This summer a team of 15 people was able to travel to the Virgin Islands. The team was led by Dowell Freeman, who has 40 years of construction experience.

St. Mary’s Virgin Gorda provided materials, ground transportation, and meals. The team initially planned on installing sheet rock, but upon arrival it was determined that the team should put on a new roof and seal the interior vaulted ceiling. In the seven days of work, the team was able to put the roof on the church and over the office and started the roof over two restrooms. The team worked with local church and community members. In addition to the roof work, the team painted the outside of the parish hall, remediated the mold within the church building, re-finished the floor of the altar, cleaned up the cemetery, dismantled wooden scaffolding, and installed new landscaping. As the team left, the electrician and air conditioning installer were set to finish their work in the nave. This work was completed, and St. Mary’s Virgin Gorda held its first services in their church on June 16.

The recovery work in the Virgin Islands is complicated by the scope of the damage, the need to remediate mold, logistical issues for obtaining supplies and personnel, as well as insurance issues and deductibles. The team from St. Mary’s Jasper brought a skilled contractor to work on the project, and through their volunteer work, freed up funds for other purposes.

The Rev. Robin Hinkley, rector of St. Mary’s Jasper and team member, reflected on her time in Virgin Gorda: “Our wonderful God was all over this project. Through His Grace and guidance and miraculous provision, we were able to work with our sisters and brothers in Virgin Gorda to accomplish a highly visible work for Him. St. Mary’s sits atop of a hill in Spanish Town on one of its main thoroughfares, and so the people were able to drive by and witness the revitalization of this beautiful church building. The new galvanized roof shines like a light on a hill.”
Metagem Institute Announces the 2019-2021 Cohort for Spiritual Direction Certification Program

A new cohort recently entered Metagem Institute’s two-year certification program for the formation of spiritual directors in the Christian tradition and for our time. This cohort is the fourth cohort to enter the program since its inception in 2016 and includes participants from three states and three denominations.

Metagem Institute is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization founded for the purpose of teaching spiritual and integrative practices that all may be transformed in our risen life in Christ. For more information about spiritual direction in general and this program in particular, please visit metageminstitute.org.

1st Row: Rev. M.C. Akamatsu, Core Faculty (Metagem Institute); Rev. Monica Carlson, Core Faculty (Epiphany, Leeds); Linda Kennedy (Advent, Birmingham); Rev. Trey Kennedy (Resurrection, Rainbow City); Leslie Nolan (St. Luke’s UMC, Shreveport, LA); Katie Gray (St. Stephen’s Huntsville); Jeff Akamatsu, Core Faculty (Metagem Institute); Rev. Eric Rieger, Faculty (Jones Memorial UMC, East Ridge, TN)

2nd Row: Rev. Sharon Bowers (Stanley UMC Chattanooga, TN); Theron Swader (Church at Brook Hills, Leeds); Kate Tremblay (St. Stephen’s, Birmingham); Sedberry Murphy (St. Mark’s Birmingham); Brenda Mayhall (Christ Church Alabaster); Pat Flowers (All Saints’ Homewood); Nancy Gaudrin, Faculty (St. Luke’s, Scottsboro)

3rd Row: Jeannine Pope-Carter (Liberal Protestant, Gardendale); Detta Goodman (St. Luke’s, Jacksonville); Patti Whitsaker (St. Timothy’s Athens); Kendra Allen (St. Bartholomew’s, Nashville, TN); Kirby Pool (St. Mary’s on the Highlands, Birmingham); Dr. Shauntice Allen, PhD, an Associate Professor in the Department of Environmental Health Sciences at the UAB School of Public Health; Dr. Allen recently published a first author paper on the history of North Birmingham and the environmental justice issues there, along with participating as an expert panelist supporting citizen science activities in North Birmingham.

I am grateful for Dr. Allen expanding my own understanding of the importance for our care of creation in how calls for justice have empowered and given voice to people whose voice needs to be heard. May we have the courage to hear those voices as we work together to care for the world where God has placed us.

Christ the Redeemer supports Special Session with prayers and backpacks

The worshipping community of Christ The Redeemer in Montgomery provided 10 camper backpacks filled with hygiene articles for Special Session Campers in June. Being such a small community, there was some uncertainty that the idea would find support. Immediately one avid supporter purchased some wonderful backpacks and other members provided the contents for the packs. The Rev. David Peoples blessed them and the community of Christ the Redeemer prayed for the success of both Special Sessions!
News from Our Shared Ministries

“There’s a place for everyone at Camp McDowell.”
Eva Kendrick, McDowell Conference and Retreat Center Director

As the new director of the McDowell Conference and Retreat Center, one of my highest priorities is to ensure our team makes this phrase a reality for the thousands of people who travel down Delong Road and into belonging at McDowell every year.

Our team doesn’t do this work alone, and we want to take a moment to thank you all -- our Diocesan partners and friends -- for the ways in which your willingness to imagine “the way the world could be” and invest in McDowell’s growth has led to the creation of sacred spaces for many people you will never know.

Your faithfulness in furthering the expansion of conference and retreat facilities at McDowell -- from Stough Lodge in 1978 to Miller Commons in 1995 and Bethany Village in 2015 -- has created a place uniquely suited to serve ministries like Hope Heals Camp and Joni and Friends Family Retreat.

Both ministries serve families affected by disability and collectively book all of Bethany Village for four weeks of each summer with more than 300 campers and staff at each session.

Each year the McDowell Conference and Retreat Center also plays host to camps for youth and young adults from other denominations and faith traditions, collegiate and organizational retreats, family reunions, weddings, international gatherings of Sacred Harp singers, and the list goes on.

What never fails to stop me in my tracks is to witness the joy in the eyes of each guest. The next morning as we were cleaning up breakfast, a woman approached Jeremy with tears in her eyes, saying, “That was not only the best meal I’ve had in my entire life, but it’s the one meal a year I look forward to.” She went on to explain that she and her family never go out to eat due to the physical and financial limitations they face, so the special meal at McDowell is the one time a year she is able to take a night off and enjoy being served.

As part of Joni and Friends weeks, Jeremy Peltz, Executive Chef here at McDowell, and his team serve a special meal in Phifer Hall to parents whose families are affected by disabilities. Not only does Jeremy go out of his way to serve a high-end meal, he does so with an infectious joy that ripples through the room and enlivens the spirits of each guest. The next morning as we were cleaning up breakfast, a woman approached Jeremy with tears in her eyes, saying, “That was not only the best meal I’ve had in my entire life, but it’s the one meal a year I look forward to.” She went on to explain that she and her family never go out to eat due to the physical and financial limitations they face, so the special meal at McDowell is the one time a year she is able to take a night off and enjoy being served.

Jeremy Peltz, Executive Chef at McDowell since 2015, oversees the dining staff across three dining halls and catering for special events.

The focus for the 2018 grant cycle which is: “Go -- crossing boundaries created by race, culture, and economics to create communities that listen deeply and learn to live like Jesus.”

UTO grants are awarded annually. Funds are raised by UTO ingatherings in individual churches.

For more information about UTO and ECW, contact Maggie Noland, UTO Chair, at maggienoland@hotmail.com or visit the Diocese of Alabama UTO website at www.alabamaecw.org.
The Alabama Episcopalian
dioala.org

Treat. Father Ed told us about the aftermath of hurricane Maria, which caused widespread destruction throughout the area. In particular, Father Ed spoke about the community’s response to the disaster, highlighting the ingenuity and resilience of the people. He mentioned how the traditional stuffed masa flatbread similar to tortillas, was a delicious and wholesome food that continued to be a source of sustenance during the recovery process.

Gomez hosted us for lunch at St. Paul's San Pablo Episcopal Church. Our meal of pupusas, a Salvadoran/Honduran cornmeal flatbread, was a delightful treat. Father Ed told us about the aftermath of hurricane Harvey in 2017 and how it affected his congregation and the neighborhood, and how they were helping in the recovery efforts. There is still much work left to be done.

We took a field trip to Little Cambodia, a community in the farming town of Rosharon, just 30 miles from downtown Houston. The community’s main economic engine is water spinach, which supplies the region’s restaurants and markets. When Hurricane Harvey blew through, it wiped out not only their homes, but the green houses they used to grow the crop. Water spinach is considered an invasive species, farmers must obtain a license from the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, and one of the stipulations is that the crop must be grown in a greenhouse. We were able to tour the area and see the rebuilding of homes and greenhouses that is happening with the help of the area Episcopal Churches and funds from Episcopal Relief & Development. The important thing to remember is that recovery and rebuilding are happening, but it is marathon, not a sprint. They still need our help. Please keep the survivors of all disasters in your prayers and help support them with your donations to Episcopal Relief & Development; www.episcopalrelief.org.

Please join the Diocesan Task Force for Stewardship of Creation in our new Stewardship of Creation Book Study Group! We are on Goodreads and will read and facilitate discussions on matters concerning all who share this wonder of Creation – today and in the future, upstream and downstream. We will begin discussion with selections from Wendell Berry’s essay collection, Our Only World. Feel free to respond to any questions or post your own August 1–October 1. Join the group for details and future book selections! To find the group, sign into your Goodreads account (or create one) and search in the Groups section for “Stewardship of Creation” – or feel free to use the following link: bit.ly/StewardshipOfCreation.

Stewardship of Creation Book Study Group
Jason Conklin, St. Thomas, Huntsville

Episcopal Relief & Development held their Annual 2019 Network Meeting in Houston, Texas, May 2-4. When sites are chosen to host these conferences, they look for areas where the work of Episcopal Relief & Development and Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) are being utilized. So we are shown just where your donations and the Episcopal Church is working. We also learn more about their many programs, campaigns, disaster response and preparedness information.

Houston is the 4th largest city in the nation, with a population of 2.19 million and a huge international population as well. Our meetings were informative, educational, with hands on experiences throughout the Houston area. We enjoyed a Tex-Mex dinner our first night in beautiful Christ Church Cathedral, downtown Houston, after an evening Eucharist. The following day, Reverend Ed Gomez hosted us for lunch at St. Paul’s San Pablo Episcopal Church. Our meal of pupusas, a Salvadoran/Honduran stuffed masa flatbread similar to tortillas, was a delicious treat. Father Ed told us about the aftermath of hurricane Harvey in 2017 and how it affected his congregation and the neighborhood, and how they were helping in the recovery efforts. There is still much work left to be done.

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Report on Episcopal Relief & Developments annual Network Meeting
Deacon Andrea Peacock

Special Session 2019 was filled with yellow submarines, strawberry fields, and lots and lots of love. With the music of the Beatles as our guiding theme, we created a camp community that reflected the joy and diversity of all of God’s vibrant children.

After camp, I heard from the parent of one of our first time campers:

“Thank you. Please let everyone that had a hand in making a very special week for Anita, how appreciative we are. Every volunteer, every counselor, cooks and all those that put together the welcome packs. Anita did not want to come back home and she kept kissing and thanking me for making it possible for her to go to camp. She returned a more gentle person.”

Anita is not the only person who returned from camp a more gentle person. I am always amazed by the authentic and earnest gentleness that our teenage counselors bring to the care of our campers. I’m amazed at the tenderness each parish puts into creating welcome packs to give to our campers, or snacks they prepare for our happy hours. I’m amazed at the kindness that our campers show to our staff as we learn to care for each other throughout the week.

My experience of the work of Special Session is that when we are formed in a community where care is the central focus, we see Jesus in one another in a different way. We see the Jesus who needs to be lifted from her chair. Jesus who is weeping because he is lonely. Jesus who is overwhelmed and needs a hug. In this community, we are formed by Jesus who calls us to gentle and persistent care for one another. We leave this space with wider eyes and more open hearts, carrying this experience into our homes and home communities.

THANK YOU TO EVERY CHURCH AND ORGANIZATION WHO MADE SPECIAL SESSION POSSIBLE BY:

• Hosting a happy hour
• Creating Welcome Packs for our Campers
• Donating Supplies
• Contributing to Our Camper Scholarship Fund
• Coming out to Volunteer

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News from Our Shared Ministries

And it was good.

Claire Cotton, Sawyerville Executive Director for Development & Communications

Sawyerville Summer Camp’s theme was “…And It Is Good.” Campers learned the creation story and how God is always creating, always making something good. Each day, campers heard Bible stories, created artwork, made music, played games, and learned to swim. Campers were shepherded by their volunteer counselors, ages 16+. All volunteer counselors received a beaded prayer bracelet made by a friend of Sawyerville. These bracelets were a reminder that every moment of Sawyerville Summer Camp was wrapped in prayer.

Sawyerville Summer Learning served thirty rising third- and fourth-grade students from Greensboro Elementary School. Each morning, students studied reading, math, science, and character building. In the afternoons, they either learned to swim or participated in enrichment activities like creative writing, independent reading, and engineering challenges.

Sawyerville partnered with the United Way of West Alabama to launch an additional component of Summer Learning for rising Kindergarten students. Fourteen children completed the program where they not only learned their letters and numbers, but also how to eat lunch in the cafeteria and how to ride home on the school bus. These students will begin Kindergarten with confidence in all aspects of the school day.

Clergy News

Deacon Carolyn Foster receives St. Stephen’s Award

I n June 2019, Deacon Carolyn Foster was awarded the “Recognition of Diocesan Ministry in the tradition of St. Stephen” by the Association for Episcopal Deacons. This award was given in recognition of Foster’s leadership in issues of poverty, interfaith relationships and racial reconciliation through her work with our diocesan Truth, Justice and Racial Reconciliation Commission, anti-racism training, the Jonathan Daniels Pilgrimage, the Alabama Faith Council, Greater Birmingham Ministries, and the Poor People’s Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival. Because of an injury, Foster was not able to travel to the triennial gathering of AED to receive the award. She was presented the award a few weeks later while participating in the Poor People’s Campaign Moral Action Congress in Washington DC.

Transitions

- The Rev. Eric Mancil has accepted a call to serve as Rector for Holy Spirit, Alabaster. He began his ministry at Holy Spirit on June 1.
- The Rev. Chase Ackerman has accepted a call to serve as Rector for St. John’s, Decatur. He will begin his ministry at St. John’s in July.
- The Rev. Jamie McAdams has accepted a call to serve as Rector for St. Francis of Assisi, Indian Springs. His first Sunday at St. Francis will be August 11.

Ordinations

- Randy Sellers was ordained to the transitional diaconate at St. Luke’s, Birmingham, on May 18.
- Polly Robb was ordained to the transitional diaconate at St. Thomas, Huntsville, on May 22. She serves as deacon-in-charge at St. Luke’s, Scottsboro.
- Paul Goldman was ordained to the transitional diaconate at Christ Church, Fairfield.

Bishop’s Visitation Schedule

September 1, 10:30 am, Epiphany, Leeds
September 8, 10:30 am, Trinity, Bessemer
September 15, 10 am, St. Stephen’s, Smith Station
September 22, 9 am, Good Shepherd, Montgomery
September 29, 10 am, St. Michael’s, Fayette
October 13, 10:30 am, All Saints, Montgomery
October 13, 4 pm, St. Andrew’s, Prichard
October 20, 10:30 am, St. Luke’s, Jacksonville
October 27, 9:30 am, St. Simon Peter, Pell City
November 3, 9:30 am, St. Francis, Indian Springs
November 6, 11 am, St. Martin’s-in-the-Pines, Birmingham
November 10, 9:30 am, St. Bartholomew’s, Florence
November 17, 10:30 am, Trinity, Clanton
November 24, 10:30 am, St. Andrew’s, Tuskegee
Upcoming Events

August 10 Jonathan Daniels Pilgrimage
The 23rd annual Jonathan Daniels Pilgrimage will be held in Hayneville, AL. The pilgrimage will begin at 11 am and conclude with a Eucharist in the Lowndes County Courthouse. For more information, please visit www.dioala.org/digital_faith/events/3180776.

September 6 A Gathering of Elders: Conversation, Hope, and Relaxing Together
Are you age 65 or older and wishing for some special time at Camp McDowell this Fall? Come to discuss what is important in our lives as we all get older, and share stories, fun and prayers with friends, old and new! For more information, please visit https://dioala.org/digital_faith/events/3181316.

September 11-15 Cursillo #219
Cursillo is an opportunity to grow in faith and in spirituality. To learn more, please visit www.alabamacursillo.org.

September 12, 10-3 pm Diocesan Youth Ministers Meeting
This meeting will be at St. Luke’s, Birmingham, and is for all youth ministers/workers/volunteers. We will gather for professional and personal development, networking, and idea sharing. For more information, contact Kathleen Lynch, klynch@dioala.org.

September 14 The Journey: A Day on Addiction & Recovery
The Journey will be held at St. Stephen’s Birmingham. Lila Weaver will be the keynote speaker, and the day will also offer presentations on issues of addiction and recovery. For more information, please visit https://dioala.org/digital_faith/events/3181101.

September 14 Daughters of the King Fall Assembly
The 2019 Fall Assembly will be held at the Episcopal Church of the Holy Apostles, 424 Emery Dr., Hoover, AL 35244. Registration forms will be emailed to members of the Order. Please contact Kathy Whaley at kwrollide@gmail.com for more information.

September 15, 2-4 pm Youth Department District Day
All 6th-12th grade youth are to gather in their district for this event. More information will be announced on DioAla Youth Department social media and at dioala.org/youthevents.html.

September 15-October 12 Practicing Forgiveness With All Your Heart, Soul, Strength, and Mind
The Commission on Spirituality will offer resources for small group and online study of Living Compass 4-week devotional: “Practicing Forgiveness.” For more information, please visit https://dioala.org/digital_faith/events/3181432.

September 28, 7 pm Birmingham’s Got Potential
Special Session at Camp McDowell invites you to Birmingham’s most stupendous, most marvelous, and most fantastically wonderful talent competition in the history of the city! All proceeds from this event will be going toward Special Session at Camp McDowell. For more information, please visit http://bit.ly/2ApQMV5.

October 3 Catfish and Karaoke Fundraiser for GraceWorks
This fundraiser will be held at Willow Wood Recreation Center, 5312 Georgia Rd, Birmingham, AL 35212. It will feature food, games, and a karaoke contest. All proceeds will benefit GraceWorks, a ministry of Grace Episcopal Church, Woodlawn.

October 11-12 ECW Fall Conference
The ECW Fall Conference will be hosted by the Mountain Convocation at Noccalula Falls. For more information visit www.alabamacew.org.

October 24-27 Cursillo #220
Cursillo is an opportunity to grow in faith and in spirituality. To learn more, please visit www.alabamacursillo.org.

November 8-10 Clergy Spouse Retreat
This retreat is for the spouses of the clergy within the Episcopal Diocese of Alabama in appreciation for their diligent support of our clergy. Clergy spouses can attend this retreat at no cost (room and board are covered). This retreat provides time to relax and has no agenda. For more information, please visit http://bit.ly/2IHaV8u.

November 15-17 Unbound: A Fall Retreat for People of All Abilities
Unbound is a program of Special Session and offers a retreat for people of all abilities, especially adults who are physically impaired to a degree that they experience social and physical barriers that impact their means of functioning and connecting to the world around them. For more information, please visit www.specialsessionalabama.org/unbound.html.

Upcoming Events

November 23 Pre-Advent Quiet Day
The Commission on Spirituality presents a day of reflection featuring the Rev. Dr. D. Scott Stoner, co-founder and co-director of Living Compass, at St. Stephen’s Birmingham. For more information, please visit https://dioala.org/digital_faith/events/3181433.

CAMP MCDOWELL RETREATS AND SUMMER CAMP
Visit www.campmcdowell.com for more information and registration for Camp McDowell events.

September 6-8 Father/Son Retreat
Quality time and camp activities for all combinations and interpretations of fathers and sons. Recommended for 1st grade and up.

October 11-13 Women’s Retreat
This is a weekend for all adult women.

November 11-12 ECW Fall Conference
The Episcopal Church Women’s Conference will be at the Mountain Convocation at Noccalula Falls. For more information visit www.alabamacursillo.org.

November 12-13 Acoustic Guitar and Crafts
Featuring workshops on blacksmithing, bird house building, finger style guitar, and more. This is a weekend for all adult women.

November 22-24 Family Farm to Table
All combinations of families are invited for a special weekend of fresh air, farm food, and quality time at McDowell! This is a beautiful and fun way to reconnect with the land and each other!

ALABAMA FOLK SCHOOL
To register or for more information on any of these sessions, visit www.alfolschool.com.

September 13-15 Acoustic Guitar and Crafts
Featuring workshops on blacksmithing, bird house building, finger style guitar.

September 27-29 Fiber Arts Workshop
Featuring workshops on spinning and knitting without needles, dying with cochineal and onion skins.

October 10-13 Old Time Music & Gee’s Bend Quilting
Featuring workshops on fiddle, old time guitar, banjo, old time repertoire, cast iron cooking, Gee’s Bend Quilting, harmony singing, ukulele, backsmilling.

November 8-10 November Session
Featuring workshops on blacksmithing and watercolors.
Do you want to learn more about the ministry of deacons?

Want to learn what deacons do? Or how someone becomes a deacon?

You are invited to attend an information session where we will explore the ministry of deacons, and the process of discernment and formation for ordination to the diaconate. These sessions are open to all clergy and lay people interested in learning more, and especially those that may be considering a call to ordained ministry as a deacon.

**September 4, 6:30 pm - St. Thomas, Huntsville**
**September 25, 7 pm - Holy Apostles, Hoover**
**October 2, 6 pm - St. John’s, Montgomery**

If you have questions, please contact Archdeacon Marti Holmes (mholmes@holyapostleshoover.org) or visit www.dioala.org/deacons.