Katrina’s Fifth Anniversary Marks the Close of a Season in Coast Recovery

By Elizabeth Wheatley-Jones

Last month I was privileged to invite collaboration on new projects through Lutheran Episcopal Services in Mississippi’s Mission on the Bay. This month the thrust has taken what seems to be a dramatic turn for the worse, or perhaps the inevitable and timely in many ways.

A few years back, the Diocese of Virginia donated a fleet of trucks to Camp Coast Care sporting the phrase: “A Time to Build.” It is to this charge- “a time to build” - that LESM has responded through the prayers, support, energies, resources and presence of throngs of volunteers, staff members and partners in mission and ministry from across the Diocese and around the world. With God’s help, we have attended to a time for distribution, a time for medical care, a time to muck out, a time for hospitality, a time for construction and a time to serve and love the people of God suffering great loss and devastation from Hurricane Katrina.

As expressed in Ecclesiastes, it is our Biblical pattern of life and ministry. “For everything there is a season, a time to every matter under heaven.” And, as time would have it, although many of LESM’s other ministries will continue, this “time to build” has been found “suitable for its time” and this season of Coast recovery camps will draw to a close at the end of August, suitably marked by the Fifth Anniversary of Hurricane Katrina.

It seems like just yesterday when trucks of all sizes made the long haul to Coast Episcopal School to deliver loads of water, food, clothes, generators, building materials and medical supplies. The air was hot and teeming with love-bugs, everything green had been defoliated by the storm and washed in muddy water, debris was strewn across the land and people were lining up at every door seeking to be served and to serve, seeking to be consoled and to console.

Today, the work begun in that Hurricane-torn gymnasium has morphed many times from school floors to tents to a new building and from Christ Church to Quonset huts to Mission on the Bay’s current facility in Bay St. Louis. Our sister camp, Camp Victor Ministries, has undergone similar transitions. Yet through and through the mission has prevailed in hosting volunteers who have been about the business of “hope and love” and joining hands to restore life and communities on the Coast.

Although the wrath of Katrina wreaked one of our darkest times, the strength of the Divine life and the light of Christ have shone forth in ways beyond words. Numbers cannot begin to tell the story, yet they provide a gracious glimpse: 60,000 volunteers, 3500 homes marched gutted, 550 homes rehabbed built anew. 2200 individuals/families case managed, 1.250,000 meals served, 2,400 volunteers service hours valued at $45 million, and $15 million cash input into Coast economies. That is creative response and a job well done: participation in the ways of God, the transformation of lives, one family and one home at a time, day in and day out for five years.

Thus, this season of ministry will come to a close as it began: Bishop Gray will journey to the Coast to be present with the people. All are invited to join in a Celebration of Thanksgiving for Recovery and Rebuilding ministries on the Coast on Saturday, August 14th at 5:00pm at Mission on the Bay, 647 DeMonteux Street, Bay St. Louis. Please notify us if you plan to join us by contacting Lindsay Asker, our volunteer coordinator, at lasker@lesm.org or (228) 466-2900. For those unable to join us, know that these ministries could not have happened without many hands, many hearts and many lives working together to rise to the Challenge of Mission in this “time to build.”

Thank you to each and to all, and thanks be to God!

The Rev. Elizabeth Wheatley-Jones is the Director and Chaplain of Mission on the Bay in Bay St. Louis.
Notes & Quotes
By Maria Watson

Today is the Fourth of July. I don’t remember the last time it fell on Sunday – 2004, I suppose. But I can’t recall any other Independence Day service being as emotional as today’s was – for so many. In the opening procession, singing My Country ‘tis of Thee, I suddenly felt tears welling up in my eyes. Later, as we sang America the Beautiful, I’m sure I couldn’t have found an alabaster city gleam. At first I was overwhelmed. Why is it I wondered, that many in this country take for granted this uniquely American holiday as a time for picnicking and pleasure without thought for its real meaning? Even the culminating fireworks seemed merely a time for celebrating summer.

At the end of the service, I found that I wasn’t the only one who’d been moved to tears by the music and the service in general. Almost everyone I spoke to said the same thing. It is a time to celebrate certainly, but why today, of all Fourth, was it so much more emotional for so many people? Whence came this sudden rush of meaning? Even the culminating fireworks seemed merely a time for celebrating summer.

From Church of the Incarnation, West Point, this note on the Fourth of July: “An observance (of Independence Day) was first proposed in the draft Prayer Book of 1786, but General Convention in 1789 voted this down, based in advance (of Independence Day) was first proposed. Point ice that I shan’t soon forget.

Whatever the reason, it was a serv-

ing process which the majority of clergy had been loyal to the British crown through the War of Independence. The Fourth of July was not included in the church calendar until the 1928 Prayer Book.”

Even though it is mid-summer and many are vacationing, our churches seem filled with activity. A sampling: Lots of VBSes out there with various themes. St. Peter’s, Oxford, chose Tricks, Lies & Holy Scriptures as its adventure with Jacob, Joseph and their interesting families, while St. Peter’s by-the-Sea, Gulfport, set sail as pirates, Seeking God’s Treasures, ending with the first-ever “Pirate Mass” at the Sunday service. All Saints, Tupelo, plans a “High Seas Expedition” for July 19-23; St. Mark’s, Gulfport, had its own High Seas Expedition in June. VBSes at St. Paul’s, Columbus, went to the Egyptian Marketplace.

St. Columb’s, Jackson, is reestablishing its Junior Daughters of the King prayer ministry, for girls 7-18 years old.

St. John’s, Pascagoula’s, Outreach Mobile Pantry in June was a big success for the parish and the community with an 18-wheeler bringing in 5,000 pounds of food and 3,441 pounds of bread and pastry.

St. Paul’s, Columbus’ Youth Mission trip this year was to Pensacola where they worked at a thrift store, joined Habitat for Humanity in roofing and painting a house and put in some time at the Emerald Coast Wildlife Refuge which is rehabbing wildlife affected by the Gulf oil disaster. Eleven youth and four chaperones from Mediator and St. Paul’s, Meridian, are traveling to Taint, France, for a two-week pilgrimage this month.

Holy Cross, Olive Branch, is planning its 50th anniversary celebration. Holy Trinity, Vicksburg, will hold its annual golf tournament Friday, July 23, with a 1 p.m. shotgun start. Proceeds benefit Service over Self mission work.

St. Andrew’s Cathedral (Trinity, Yazoo City)....(Mediator/Redeemer, McComb). The Beehive...modern Christian symbol represents the church and its many, varied ‘workers.’ A multitude of people, each with different tasks and gifts, works to build up the body of Christ. Often, nine bees are pictured near the hive to represent the nine fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23)”... (Trinity, Yazoo City)....(Mediator/Redeemer, McComb).... (Mediator/Redeemer, McComb)....(Mediator/Redeemer, McComb)

Col. Ray Clifford Smithers, 83, (USAF, ret.) communicant of Christ Church, Holly Springs where he served as a worship leader for over 35 years, died May 7, 2010.


Evelyn Bruntlett, 83, communicant of St. James, Jackson, died June 3, 2010.

Peggy Joyce Randall, 75, communicant of St. Paul’s, Meridian, died June 8, 2010.


Dr. Bill Edison, 74, communicant of St. James’, Jackson, died June 12, 2010.


Warren Lyon Roper, 81, communicant of St. James, Jackson, died on June 22, 2010.

Joseph (Joe) Musick Warwick, 76, communicant of St. James, Jackson, died June 26, 2010.
May 24 – Day off. In the evening, Kathy and I, and my parents, our children and spouses join in celebrating Tabitha’s graduation from high school. It has been a long journey from the civil war in Sudan to a refugee camp to resettlement in Mississippi, but she gives witness to the Nobel Prize speech of William Faulkner that said mankind will not merely endure, but prevail. It is a joyous occasion celebrated by a large number of Sudanese young adults.

May 25 – Leave Jackson early for a flight to Asheville, North Carolina where I will serve as faculty for the College for Bishops. This 3 year program that includes a one week residential component is the primary training for newly elected bishops.

May 26 – College for Bishops - Lake Logan, North Carolina.

May 27 – College for Bishops - Lake Logan, North Carolina.

May 28 – College for Bishops concludes. Return home in the evening.

May 29 – Join with hundreds of Episcopalians from around the diocese at the Bishop’s Barbeque festivities at Gray Center. Beautiful weather brings out record crowds. Major increase in young children and their young parents, the age group that is now the driving energy behind the event.

My personal highlight was to finish the 5,000 meter run/walk. Though I finished second in my age category, my celebration was tempered by the fact that there were only 3 competitors in my age division and one was a walker!

May 30 – Kathy and I drive to the coast for the beautiful space.

June 1 – Early morning breakfast with our chancellor and staff. Staff meeting in morning. Dean’s meeting takes most of the middle of the day. Afternoon appointment with member of the Gray Center board.

June 2 – Morning appointments with aspirants for holy orders followed by session with the Rev. Elizabeth Wheatley Jones. Much of the rest of the day is spent with the Executive Committee of the diocese. In the late afternoon, I drive to Greenwood to bless and dedicate a glorious new parish hall and youth facility at the church of the Nativity. Happy and joyous occasion as this congregation and its rector challenge each other to think of new and innovative ways to use this beautiful space.

June 3 – Staff appointments in morning. Meet with the Deacons’ Council during the middle of the day.

June 4 – In office for most of the day except for an extended session with Canons McCormick and Johnson and postulants preparing to enter seminary in the fall. We have found this pre-seminary gathering a very helpful time for seminarians-to-be and their spouses.

June 5 – Vacation begins. Beginning today, we will spend a week with children and grandchildren in Destin. Long drive is rewarded with clear water - no oil in sight.

June 6 – Destin vacation.

June 7 – Destin vacation.

June 8 – Destin vacation.

June 9 – Destin vacation.

June 10 – Destin vacation.

June 11 – Destin vacation.

June 12 – Return home from the beach tired, but refreshed.

Great banquet of hamburgers, hot dogs and seafood in assorted shapes and sizes follows.

Overnight in Gulfport.

June 31 – Kathy and I have breakfast with the Rev. Liz Jones to discuss our plans for the fall presbytery spouse retreat where Liz will be our leader. We are delighted to hear of Liz’s appointment as head of Coast Episcopal School.

Lunch on the coast, then home to Jackson.

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Home to Jackson late.

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Newcomers to the Episcopal Church: how to welcome them

By Janet Nail

You have seen them many times. They have just moved into town. They have been married about three years, and they are not in the habit of going to church. But she is pregnant, and they feel that they need a church home for the baby. So they are shopping for a church.

Or maybe they are newlyweds. She is Roman Catholic, he is Baptist. Neither wants to convert, so they are looking for a compromise. Or maybe they are just curious. They have a friend who goes to church here, and that friend is someone they admire. Hershe has invited them to church, and they have decided to check it out.

They are somewhat bewildered, juggling the Book of Common Prayer and the Hymnal. And that standing and kneeling! They are glad they sat in the back, so that they could just do what everyone else is doing. They glance at one another when people respond or when the congregation joins in a prayer or a Canticle.

I was one of these people. I was unhappy in my childhood denomination, and I needed something else. I was fortunate, though, I had an English sister-in-law who invited me to go to church with her. She helped me with the prayer book and the hymnal, told me about kneeling and responsive reading. I wasn’t too lost.

But I felt as though I had come home. You want all those bewildered seekers to feel that they have come home, don’t you? You reach out to them, you smile, you are friendly, you help them with the unfamiliar parts of our worship. And you try to help them to understand why we do what we do.

The A-V Center has acquired a program called THE NEWCOMER COLLECTION to make welcoming newcomers to the Episcopal Church. This is a collection of six programs on two DVDs that will surely enrich an Inquirers’ Class.

First of all is that wonderful overview, WELCOME TO THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH. In approximately seventeen minutes viewers are treated to an overview of the church that is warm and witty, and will help visitors become part of the family.

The program WHAT IT MEANS TO BE AN EPISCOPALIAN has been around for a long time, but it is still one of the most comprehensive programs about our faith. The Rev. Charles Winters, sitting on the ugliest sofa ever to escape a furniture store, simply talks about the church, its history, its tradition, its beliefs—and we are enthralled. This program has six parts, approximately 25 minutes each. Inquirers’ Classes will be fully informed at the end of this one!

About that prayer book: many evangelical denominations are suspicious of our Book of Common Prayer, feeling that we Episcopalians have denounced the Bible in favor of the prayer book. (In fact, at Annual Council this year, I overheard a gentleman tell of a friend who went into a Lifeway bookstore and asked if they had the Book of Common Prayer; the clerk was shocked: Certainly not! This is a Christian book store!) Maybe our visitors (and our youth) would appreciate AN INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER. This is also very brief (11 minutes) but it leads the viewer to an appreciation of that beautiful book, which does not repudiate the Bible, but rather embraces it!

But one hears those Episcopalians talk so much about sacraments! What are sacraments, anyway? Are they a secret rite found only in this Episcopal Church?

Well, no. Sacraments are defined in the catechism as “outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual grace, given by Christ as sure and certain means by which we receive that grace.”

Say what?

Well, you will understand later. For now, watch the program SACRAMENTS: PARTICIPATING IN SIGNS OF GOD’S GRACE. This overview of the meaning of sacraments in general and of specific sacraments will introduce you to the richness of the sacraments.

The program opens with lovely scenes of water-still water, flowing waters, rivers, lakes—and a voice over of the prayer over water in the Baptismal service. Both the Spouse and I said, “That sounds like Joe Robinson!” Cut to the speaker: The Rev. Joseph O. Robinson, indeed. Father Joe is a natural teacher, and he does a brilliant job of explaining the sacraments and what they mean.

One of the most eye-opening statements in the program is that we are to represent the sacraments to the world, to be sacraments. Well, that really calls us to live into our baptism, doesn’t it?

Of course, the greatest sacraments (the sacraments again) are baptism and the Eucharist. Why?

In BAPTISM: SACRAMENT OF NEW BIRTH you will learn a complete history of baptism and what it means to us, from the days when candidates were immersed, naked, into the large bodies of water, and brought up to be clothed in a pure white robe, symbolizing the death to sin and rebirth as a new creation in Christ. This is a videostrip, not an active presentation, but it is certainly informative.

Finally, we encounter the Eucharist. DO THIS IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME is another older program that shows how the Eucharist is not an isolated service in the church, but rather a part of life. We follow a working mother who is juggling her child and her job, a young man who is evidently unemployed and struggling with alcoholism, a business man who is well-to-do and very busy, an elderly woman who seems to be dealing with something like Parkinson’s. They walk through their days, dealing with the everyday problems: a dawdling child makes the mother late for work; the young man picks up his unemployment check and buys a bottle of wine, but after hesitating over opening it, smashes it against a post; children play, elderly people go about their day. But they all gather at the Eucharist, a sung Eucharist in the Easter season, and as they come to the altar rail, they “do this in remembrance of me.”

Pair this program with THE STORY OF ANGLICANISM, and THE STORY OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

THE STORY OF ANGLICANISM is hosted by Michael York—and I could watch him stand in front of a brick wall reading the Akron, Ohio, telephone directory—and it present the history of the Anglican church in three programs.

THE STORY OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH is hosted by David Morse (where did he buy that suit?) and it takes us from Jamestown to the present in two programs.

To borrow either of these programs, e-mail me at grandstruck1994@yahoo.com or call me at 662-998-2327.

Almighty God, we entrust all who are dear to us to thy never-failing care and love, for this life and the life to come, knowing that thou art doing for them better things than we can desire or pray for; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

BCP pg. 831

10% over cost for weddings, fundraisers, and altar wine.

MADISON CELLARS

(601) 856-0931
Madison, MS
Our Diocese

Ring Around the Collar

By Denny Allman

We Episcopalians love our liturgy. We especially love those that encompass great pageantry (think the closing Eucharist of Annual Council). The liturgy which provides perhaps the greatest pageantry is that of the ordination of a Bishop. But no matter how great the pageantry, we need to be mindful of what is happening within that liturgy. The recent ordination and consecration of the Rev. Morris Thompson to be Bishop of Louisiana caused the Rev. Paul Stephens, Rector of All Saints, Tupelo, to pen these reflections.

An ordination is always a festive event and last Saturday’s service was no exception. Many bishops (including the Most Reverend Katherine Jefferts Schori, our Presiding Bishop and Primate and our own bishop, Duncan Gray, III), priests and deacons from the Episcopal Church, as well as representatives from other denominations and faith communities were present and vested. These bishops, priests and deacons were joined by three masters of ceremonies, multiple vergers, droves of acolytes, and banner bearers representing every parish, mission and school in the diocese so as to form a procession that snaked down St. Charles Ave. and then around the corner almost as far as the eye could see. The combined diocesan choir led us in beautiful hymns and their voices soared as anthems and chants reverberated inside the cathedral. Using Isaiah 61:1-6 as his primary text (“The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me...”) Bishop Sauls, diocesan bishop of Lexington, preached one of the top five sermons I’ve ever heard (I have a copy; let me know if you’d like one). His inspiring words still ring in my ears. The “picture postcard moment” occurred when all the bishops gathered around Morris as he knelt at the transept, laid their hands upon his head and together said “Father, make Morris a bishop in your Church.” The Holy Spirit indeed was present at that moment.

As I stood outside of Christ Church Cathedral waiting to process into the nave, the words of the opening anthem written by Cantique de Jean Racine pulled me up short:
O Redeemer divine, our sole hope of salvation, Eternal Light of the earth and the sky, we kneel in adoration, O Savior, turn on us Thy loving eye! Send down on us the fire of Thy grace all-consuming, these gifts we return unto Thee.

These words reminded me that while 1,000 or so people had gathered amidst great pageantry to make Morris a bishop in the church, our celebration was about much, much more. Indeed, the assembled had been called together to open our hearts to the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, made known to us in Word and Sacrament, and to be set on fire so that we might undertake the work God has given us to do: “to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; [and] to comfort all who mourn.”

That was the call to those assembled last Saturday. It is also the call God has entrusted to All Saints— to do justice and to proclaim the good news of Christ. May our souls daily be awakened and inspired by the power and abundance of the Holy Spirit so that we might embrace and revel in a life of perfect service to and in Christ our Savior.

Paul +

Diocesan Altar Guild

Bishop Duncan M. Gray, Jr. called together a group of outstanding women from all over the Mississippi diocese for the purpose of forming a Diocesan Altar Guild. The group met at the Cathedral of St. Andrew in Jackson in the summer of 1981. Under Bishop Gray’s strong leadership, these ladies were as follows: Mrs. J. W. Karpf of St. Francis of Assisi, Philadelphia, recording secretary-treasurer; Mrs. Jerrald Nations of Redeemer, Brookhaven, recording secretary; Mrs. R. H. Wells of St. Columb’s, Jackson. Convocation representatives were Mrs. Marvin Cutler of All Saints’, Gretna; Northern, Mrs. W. W. Ramsey of Holy Trinity, Vicksburg, Old River; Mrs. C. N. Cannon of St. Francis of Assisi, Philadelphia, Tombigbee; Mrs. George Lingle of St. John’s, Ocean Springs, Coast; and Mrs. E. S. Van Cleve of St. Stephen’s, Indianola, Delta.

Thus, a Board of Directors was formed. It immediately acted upon several matters. A set of by-laws was adopted, to be approved by Bishop Gray, and a date for a Diocesan Altar Guild annual meeting (the Feast of the Annunciation) which was actually chosen by Bishop Gray.

So this worthy enterprise became a reality; thanks to Bishop Gray’s hard work (imagine being able to ask women to drive to Jackson in the heat of summer!). They came out of devotion to Bishop Gray, Jr.

Look for more about the Diocesan altar Guild in later issues of the Mississippi Episcopalian. You’ll be surprised when you learn what these ladies have done and continue to do.

A date to remember: Tuesday, August 3
Deadline for The Mississippi Episcopalian.
Send stories and photos to slenoir1@comcast.net

LESM Fundraiser gathers again at the Cedars

By Molly Wade

Let’s Eat Shrimp Mississippi is well on its way to being the best LESM celebration ever! It will be held on the 5th Anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, August 29th. We will gather at The Cedars in Jackson to eat homemade Shrimp Creole, fresh salad, and dessert, to listen to the music of some of our finest Mississippi musicians, and kids of all ages will have the opportunity to have their faces painted by our own Packer and Mary Loftin McBride. There will be beer and wine for sale and there will plenty of iced tea and cold water to keep us all comfortable. Our Chairwomen are artists, Miriam Weems, and Cleta Ellington, and Portia Ballard Epsy, a social activist in Jackson and around the state. We will have several surprises in store for those who attend. The tickets are $20 and include the meal and non-alcoholic drinks, amazing music, and fun for everyone.

This year’s proceeds from Let’s Eat Shrimp will go to support our four programs for children of incarcerated parents and for non-violent juvenile offenders. “Breaking the Cycle” is our theme for the event. These ministries are making a difference, one-child-at-a-time, throughout the state of Mississippi.

Come join us for this special occasion. Tickets are available by calling LESM (601-352-7125).
VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

At St. James’, Jackson, Anna Jubert places a gift in the center of a labyrinth which all the children walked. The gift was something representative of having a beginning, a middle and an end. Anna offered a wooden log, once a part of a tree.

A few of St. Peter’s Pirates in Gulfport take a break to scowl for the camera with Rector Melanie Lemburg during the parish’s VBS week.

“Admiral One-Eyed Bo” (center), along with “Ship Captain” Ruthie Wilder (left), ship’s parrot Vicki Miller (Center) and “Anna Bandana - The Wandering Minstral” presented a joint invitation one Sunday to all children to join them on a “High Seas Expedition”.

Fr. Alston Johnson, rector of Chapel of the Cross, Madison, helps lead the morning worship for Meet God on the Mountain while wearing an ancient pith helmet protects him from rocks that may happen to fall during the week’s climbing adventure.

A shaving cream event at St. Columb’s Ridgeland was a part of play time at VBS.
CCCD Release for Diocesan Media

Thirteen leaders from the Diocese of Mississippi explored approaches to enlivening parish ministry at the inaugural Cooperative College for Congregational Development from June 25 to July 3 at Gray Center.

The conference was a joint effort of six southern dioceses-Alabama, Arkansas, East Carolina, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Upper South Carolina. The eight-day training was led by the Reverend Canon Melissa Skelton, director of the College for Congregational Development in the Episcopal Diocese of Olympia.

The intensive training was attended by 70 lay and ordained leaders from the six dioceses and was the first installment of two conferences, the second planned for late June and early July 2011. During the conference, participants learned and experienced various approaches to enlivening parish life and ministries.

Representing the Diocese of Mississippi were Dr. Ben Carmichael, Beth Callahan, and the Reverend Marian Fortner from Trinity Church, Hattiesburg; Dr. Edwin Graham, Dr. Helen Graham, Sue Cassady, and the Reverend Melanie Lemburg from St. Peter’s-by-the-Sea, Gulfport; Tommie Moore, Stacy Carroll, Albert White, and the Reverend Paul Stephens from All Saints’ Church, Tupelo; the Reverend Billie Abraham from St. Alban’s Church, Bovina; and the Reverend Canon David Johnson from the diocesan staff.

The CCCD has been in the planning stages for 18 months as senior staff members from each diocese consulted with Canon Skelton to develop the program. The six sponsoring dioceses contributed seed money to support the conference, partially underwriting the costs for each participant.

Bishop Duncan Gray, III, welcomed the conference participants to Gray Center.

“We are delighted to have you here in Mississippi,” he said. “We believe this conference is an excellent example of how different dioceses can collaborate, cooperate, and work together for the mission and ministry of the broader church.”

The diocesan staff members who oversaw conference planning were the Reverend Canon Pat Wingo, Alabama; the Reverend Canon Jason Alexander, Arkansas; the Reverend Canon Matthew Stockard, East Carolina; the Reverend Canon David Johnson, Mississippi; the Reverend Canon Pamela Snare, Tennessee; and the Reverend Canon Michael Bullock, Upper South Carolina. The Reverend Dennis Campbell of Arkansas and the Reverend Paul Stephens from Mississippi joined the staff as the conference approached.

Spiritual, structural, interpersonal and educational aspects of organizational development for congregations were the focus of the conference. Each participant was given opportunities to exercise leadership in a small group, developing facilitation skills which would prove useful in the parish. They also engaged various models of how to assess and respond to congregational life, gaining tools to help a parish move forward in mission and ministry.

Each participant is expected to design and complete a congregational development project in the months between the 2010 and 2011 conference.

One person from each diocese is being trained in the facilitation of the curriculum and, after the two-year course, will be able to lead a similar program in his or her home diocese.
Racial reconciliation service hosted by three Jackson churches

By Judy Barnes

On Sunday, June 13th a “Liturgy of Racial Reconciliation Commemorating the Life and Legacy of Medgar Wiley Evers” was held at St. Mark’s Episcopal Church in Jackson. Each year alternating churches (St. Mark’s, St. Christopher’s, All Saints’ and St. Alexis’) host the event on the Sunday nearest the date of Evers’ murder, June 12. The racial reconciliation liturgy was developed by Hank Holmes of All Saints’. The civil rights movement’s anthem “We Shall Overcome” was sung in the service that included a choir of singers from the various churches.

Ironically, the church’s air conditioning was not working that day. The 200+ attendees were given “funeral parlor” fans to stir up a bit of breeze. I kept thinking, “This is how church in the South once was every summer Sunday.” It was a funny, forced step back in time. I recalled many a voter’s rights rally was held in small sweltering black churches all across the south, often at great risk to the attendees. Somehow the oppressive heat added to the experience, a minor physical discomfort as we remembered so many who truly suffered and died serving the causes of desegregation and voting rights.

The guest speaker was Pulitzer nominee and recipient of numerous awards, Jerry Mitchell, a writer/investigative reporter with The Clarion-Ledger newspaper in Jackson. He related the details of several brutal murders that never resulted in convictions until he began to delve below the surface to find lost or suppressed evidence. His tale of tenacity in pursuit of justice for some of the victims of hate crimes in the 60’s was inspiring. His work directly led to trials and convictions of several murderers. Mitchell was portrayed in the movie, “Ghosts of Mississippi” about the trial and conviction of Byron De La Beckwith for the murder of Medgar Evers.

Previous speakers at the Racial Reconciliation services include the Rt. Rev. Duncan M. Gray, Jr., and former Gov. William Winter and Rev. Johnny Barbour.

Bishop Gray, III has re-formed the diocesan Racial Reconciliation Committee to develop ways to communication with Mississippi Episcopalians on the sin of racism, to find effective actions to address continuing racism in our culture and to acknowledge the sacrifices of the heroes of the movement who through blood and sacrifice won rights previously denied to a large portion of our state’s population. The first meeting in April convened at St. Andrew’s Cathedral. Prior to that meeting many of the committee members attended the Mayor’s Prayer Luncheon hosted by Mission Mississippi, an organization that seeks “To encourage and demonstrate unity in the Body of Christ across racial and denominational lines...” The second meeting of the Racial Reconciliation Committee convened on June 24 and more concrete actions were plotted out. Look for information to be coming out about some very exciting plans.

Judy Barnes is a member of the new Racial Reconciliation Committee and attends St. Alexis’ Episcopal Church in Jackson.

The Center for Formation and Mission of the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi invites you to be Rooted in Prayer

Crossing Thresholds, co-sponsored with Journey Partners
September 23-25
At this silent retreat for men and women, participants will be welcomed into a rhythm of prayer and meditation, exploring the ways in which God is inviting them across thresholds in their lives. Jane Watts and Gay Yerger will serve as spiritual directors for the weekend. Cost: $210

Benedict’s Sacred Reading
December 3-4
Having some sense of a roadmap by which we might negotiate our efforts in prayer is often helpful, and the ancient Benedictine practice of Sacred Reading offers just such a template both for beginners and for those well-seasoned in the religious life. Join other participants for an exploration of Benedictine thought and practice. The Reverend Alston Johnson will coordinate the weekend. Cost: TBA

Knitting and Crocheting
December 3-5
Knitters and crocheters (beginners welcome!) gather for prayer and reflection, to marvel with Mary over God’s promise to become Emmanuel, God-with-us. As we prepare our hearts for the Advent of Christ, we will also share techniques and tips for stitching and preparing last-minute gifts. Susan Nix and Jennifer Deaton will coordinate the weekend. Cost: TBA

For more information about these events, or to share your thoughts and hopes for future CfFM events, please contact The Reverend Jennifer Deaton, Chair of the CfFM Program Committee, at deatonj@gosaints.org

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Ascension rummages for Masereka Foundation

By Susan Bear

Inspired by the Bishop Masereka Christian Foundation presentation given at Council in Tupelo, the Vestry of the Church of the Ascension in Hattiesburg voted to hold a “Heavenly Rummage” Sale on May 1st to raise funds for the Foundation. Parishioners donated everything from clothing, appliances, and furniture, to a used pickup truck and 2 boats. Proceeds have enabled Ascension to adopt three Ugandan students for the remaining 3-4 years of their secondary education.

In April, Marybeth Marchbanks (St. Peters, Oxford), Diocesan Coordinator for the Foundation, made an excellent presentation at Sunday services that helped to educate and engage parishioners. In the process of child selection, Ascension has established correspondence with An Nyagoma of the Foundation in Uganda and with Bishop Masereka, who said he would like to visit Ascension when he comes to the Diocese.

The Rev. Susan Bear is the rector of Ascension, Hattiesburg.
ERD holds meeting in the mission field of Belize

By Cathy Halford

Many people who travel to Belize choose to spend their time on the lovely beaches, dive near the second largest coral reef in the world, and visit other beautiful areas in Belize. There’s absolutely nothing wrong with that! However, I felt very privileged not only to get a chance to walk through incredible rainforests and travel to some of the ancient Mayan ruins but to see first-hand how Episcopal Relief & Development has made a difference in helping those who are willing to help themselves.

As your diocesan coordinator, I attended the 2010 Episcopal Relief & Development (ERD) Network Coordinators meeting in Belize, June 27-30. Approximately 65 coordinators met to discuss the work of Episcopal Relief & Development which takes place in 46 countries and to observe specifically how the micro-loan enterprise program has helped several small businesses in Belize to take off along with seeing how our support has strengthened HIV/AIDS education to the children in 21 Anglican schools in the Diocese of Belize.

Micro-loans, usually in the amount of $1000-$5000 are ERD funded and administered by the diocesan partner. ERD micro-loans are given to small businesses that are not able to get a loan from a bank along with technical assistance from ERD. Supervision is necessary to ensure that the businesses are using the money properly and moving in a positive direction. In Belize, the percentage of repayment is 98-100%.

Included in the four businesses was Julia Gonzalez, who had just been named 2010 female farmer of the year. She and her family moved to Belize from El Salvador. With two loans from ERD and much hard work, Julia’s farm now has a tilapia pond, rows and rows of tomatoes (on which too much rain had taken a toll), a large green house filled with green pepper plants which she sells to hotels in the Belize area, a small herd of cattle, and a variety of other vegetables.

Several miles later, we came to the home of Alan Jones, a wood carver. He was given a loan of $4000 to purchase wood and necessary tools to build a business around his creations of beautiful bowls, crosses, and animals. All were hand tools since there is no electricity in the area. Because he alone is supporting his five children, he was a happy man by the time we left. We all but cleaned him out!

In addition to these businesses, the diocesan coordinators and members of the Episcopal Relief & Development staff visited two schools, one in a rural area and a second in Belize City. Because I stayed an extra two days, I had the opportunity of spending time in a class at a special needs school. Stella Maris is a government aided school with assistance from the Rotary Club. Along with work in the classroom, Stella Maris has a vegetable garden, a small greenhouse, a tilapia pond in the making, and a chicken coop from which the chickens are killed and eaten weekly. From the large donation of school supplies brought to Belize by ERD coordinators, I gave some of the supplies to this school with hopes of bringing more down in the future.

There is much poverty and disease in this world. However, each time you donate to Episcopal Relief & Development, the chance of diminishing the percentage of each takes place. Please remember specifically how the micro-loan enterprise program has helped several small businesses in Belize to take off along with seeing how our support has strengthened HIV/AIDS education to the children in 21 Anglican schools in the Diocese of Belize.

The Rev. Cathy Halford is a deacon at All Saints’, Jackson and the diocesan ERD representative.

St. John’s Distributes 5000 Pounds of Food

By Mary Bet Evans

Standing behind tables overflowing with food, fifty-three volunteers hold hands outstretched, palms up, as Fr. Dennis Ryan sprinkles them with holy water, blessing the hands that worked to sort and set up the food tables, blessing the food that will be given and blessing those who will receive it.

This was the scene at St. John’s, Pascagoula, on Saturday, June 5, when 5000 pounds of food was given to around 100 families in the community who have previously visited the Monday morning food pantry in need of assistance. Using the service of the Mobile Pantry from the Bay Area Food Bank, St. John’s Outreach Commission purchased the food at a nominal price, sent out letters to prospective families, and enlisted volunteers to help in the give-away program.

The church’s food pantry normally feeds between 20 and 50 families a week, but this is the first time that they have tried food distribution of this magnitude. Outreach commissioner, Connie Belk, states, “We are just happy to have the opportunity through Bay Area Food Bank to get this much food distributed in a short period of time.” The whole process was accomplished in about three hours. Each family received over 50 pounds of canned and dry goods plus a large box of bread and pastries. The bread and pastries (which were donated in addition to that purchased portion) overflowed the parish hall and the excess was distributed to other organizations and feeding programs in the area.

The volunteers, made up of all ages, including some families (even three generations) were filled with the joy of giving and shared some touching stories. A cadre of men carried heavy boxes to the cars, and one tells about the fragile older woman who put three dollar bills in his palm. At first he thought she was giving him a tip, but she said, “It’s not for you. Put this in your collection plate.”

As they waited for their number to be called, a teenager thought to serve a glass of sweet tea to those seated. Ladies helping them select the canned goods suggested recipes and ways to use some of the food. As one man led his blind friend around the food tables, a woman assisted them by telling him what food was available, asking “Do you like fruit cocktail, or would you rather have applesauce?” There was a spirit of sharing that filled the parish hall. Biblical lessons were brought to life that day. Some even thought that huge pile of bread had begun to multiply.

Mary Bet Evans is a communicant of St. John’s, Pascagoula.

Marines are Looking for “Just A Few Good Men”

We’re Not So Picky

Look at Some of the Characteristics You Could Find in Our Next Guest Services Attendant:


Whew! That’s just a few of the traits we would find attractive in a new Guest Services Attendant. If you think you might fill the bill for this much-sought-after position, email your résumé to bhorne@graycenter.org. Application deadline is August 1, 2010.

Details of this position may be found on our website, www.graycenter.org. Click on the “News” page button on the left of the home screen and look for Employment Opportunities at Gray Center.

If there are questions please call me, Bill Horne, at 601-859-1556, M-F, 7am - 5pm.

Have you remembered

The Church

In your will?
The Mississippi Episcopalian

The Center for Formation and Mission of the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi offers

A Pilgrimage to Israel and Jordan

February 14-24, 2011

Hosted by the Reverend Canon David H. Johnson

For more information, contact canonjohnson@gmail.com

Prayers for the Oil Spill

By Cathy Halford

On the evening of June 17, Episcopalians gathered together at the shoefly at St. Peter’s By-the-Sea in Gulfport to pray for the people and our environment affected by the oil spill. For those of you who think “shoefly” is the name of a pie, you are correct. However, a shoefly is also a raised area with seating where people thought they would be able to stay away from the flies or other bothersome insects. In this case, this shoefly is a beautiful deck built around a magnificent old oak tree standing beside St. Peter’s and facing the beach. The Rev. Scott Williams, deacon at St. Peter’s; the Rev. Bill Hanna and the Rev. Cathy Halford, deacons at All Saints, Jackson, officiated at the vigil.

The idea for this vigil came from St. John’s Episcopal Church, Charlotte, North Carolina. St. John’s made plans for their vigil to take place that same evening and invited everyone wherever they were to participate. Some of the liturgy used came from St. John’s service; however, the litany of confession was made available by the Rev. David Knight, Long Beach and the rest and the rest was put together by the deacons.

We often take God’s gifts of nature for granted until a catastrophic event, such as the oil spill, takes place. It is in times like these when we become very conscious of how precious God’s creation is and how easily it can be harmed.

Please continue to pray for the people affected by yet another catastrophe - not a natural one but a man-made one. Please be ready to volunteer for clean-up when the time comes. In the meantime, if you don’t already live there, make your way south to enjoy a beautiful part of our state - a gift from our Heavenly Father.

The Rev. Cathy Halford is a Deacon at All Saints’ Episcopal Church in Jackson.

So we wait and watch....again

By David Knight

[The Coast] It’s hard to describe to folks who are not from here, haven’t been through the post-Katrina years. In August we will pass the five year mark since the storm-who-must-not-be-named. And here we sit, anxious and worried, confused and angry, puzzled and pretty helpless as oil pours into the Gulf of Mexico and drifts our way, showing up on our beaches and in our wetlands. The nasty, smelly blobs bring with them the great unknowns - do they really have a CLUE how to stop the leak and clean this up? Do they know what the environmental impact will even be? How will our poor fishermen, shrimpers and others, ever survive this hit? How will our tourism industry survive this? What will happen to all those people who are connected to those industries yet, for now, have no recourse through BP or the government?

What have we done? Why isn’t more done? How could this happen? WHY IS THIS FAIR?

I kind of lost it a bit with someone the other day, someone who doesn’t live here, who hasn’t even seen “here”, other than watching the news reporters that would, on occasion, wander over from New Orleans to show where Katrina actually made landfall. His comment was something about “can you believe this oil spill mess? I mean, people just don’t understand what it will mean to our nation and our economy and how much it’s going to cost me in seafood price increases and gasoline price increases.”

Really? That’s the concern? It might impact the pocketbook and bank account of people far away, who only get their news in the sound bites they are fed and who for the most part are shocked to learn just how ravaged the coast of Mississippi was by that unspeakable hurricane?

I was not kind in my response.....

I am not one to panic. I know that there is much to be done and much I don’t understand about how this stuff works. I don’t think anyone knows enough to scream that this is the end of the world as we know it - it’s all guesswork. But common sense tells us, even if they stop the leak tomorrow, there are huge, long lasting ramifications on both fishing and tourism industries that absolutely cannot take such a hit.

And they really don’t know for sure when they can stop it, which is what the little voice in my head keeps reminding me. I think, like Katrina, this is something no one had really prepared for (although in this case THAT is inexcusable). We live in a world where we expect our government to snap it’s huge, money-printing fingers and fix all our ills overnight: friends that’s just not reality. But for the love of God, we are desperate for some real leadership to step up, take charge, and put every possible resource into action NOW.

Meanwhile, as usual, there is another side, another story to be told. Thousands of people have already signed up to volunteer to help with cleanup. Many, many local folks already have gone through training on beach and animal cleanup procedures. And most of all, thanks be to God, the people of the Coast are amazingly strong. As I told my parishioners recently - don’t forget you are incredibly resilient - you KNOW you ARE. You CAN get through this. God is with us, in the faces and voices and hands and feet of our neighbors.

We can pray, and then we can dig in when it’s time. And we will, of that I have no doubt. In some ways the anxiety and the “it’s so unfair-ness” is more distressing than the smell of oil or the gross blobs of tar we wash up on our beaches.

It triggers something in folks who have been here, it weighs on us, it haunts us. This is the part I pray would go away, and the part I don’t think anyone else really understands. A friend called it a “tipping point”. Perhaps that is the best way to describe it. Friends - pray we don’t tip. That may be the best thing you can do for us, for now, as we wait and watch again.

The Rev. David Knight is the rector of St. Patrick’s Episcopal Church, Long Beach.
### DIOCESAN CALENDAR

<table>
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JULY</td>
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<tr>
<td>12-17</td>
<td>Camp Bratton Green Regular Session 5 (grades 3-4)</td>
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<td>19-24</td>
<td>Camp Bratton Green Regular Session 6 (grades 5-6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>20-25</td>
<td>Mississippi Church Music &amp; Liturgy Conference, Gray Center, Canton</td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Clergy Day at the Mississippi Church Music &amp; Liturgy Conference, St. Philip’s, Jackson</td>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Bishop Gray visits: St. Alban’s, Bovina - 10:00 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>27-August 1</td>
<td>Camp Bratton Green Special Session 2 (age 39 and under)</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>Gray Center Board of Managers - 9:00 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>AUGUST</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Bishop Gray visits: Redeemer, Brookhaven - 10:00 a.m. with Celebration of New Ministry</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Bishop Gray visits: Good Shepherd, Terry - 5:00 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Bishop Gray visits: St. Mark’s, Jackson - 10:30 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11-14</td>
<td>Commission on Ministry, Gray Center</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Standing Committee - 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., Gray Center, Canton</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Bishop Gray visits: Redeemer, Biloxi - 10:15 a.m.</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>Bishop Gray visits: Chapel of the Cross, Rolling Fork - 6:00 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Diocesan Finance Committee - 11:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., St. Andrew’s Cathedral, Jackson</td>
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<td>20-21</td>
<td>Adults Working With Youth (AWWY), Gray Center</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>Trustees of the Diocese - 2:00 p.m., Allin House, Jackson</td>
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<tr>
<td>27-29</td>
<td>“Thus Far, By Faith - A Conversation on Partnering with God” Spiritual Renewal Retreat for LGBT Persons, Gray Center, Canton</td>
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<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Bishop Gray visits: St. Mary’s, Enterprise - 5:00 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEPTEMBER</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Allin House closed in observance of Labor Day</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Deadline for submittal to the Mississippi Episcopalian - 12:00 noon</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Bishop Gray visits: Coast Episcopal School, Long Beach - 8:00 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Bishop Gray visits: St. Paul’s, Meridian - 10:30 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10-11</td>
<td>Gray Center Work Weekend, Canton</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Bishop Gray visits: St. John’s, Passacagoula - 10:30 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Trustees of the Diocese - 2:00 p.m., Malaga House, Jackson</td>
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<tr>
<td>17-19</td>
<td>St. High DOY, Camp Bratton Green, Canton</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Fresh Start, South - 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m., Trinity, Hattiesburg</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Fresh Start, North - 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m., All Saints’, Tupelo</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>Planning for Tomorrow Conference for Lay Employees</td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Bishop Gray visits: Mediator/Redeemer, McComb/Magnolia - 10:30 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Gray Center Executive Committee - 5:00 p.m., Canton</td>
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**Financial Gift Received to Promote the Annual Spiritual Renewal Retreat**

The Diocesan Committee on Ministry with LGBT Persons has received a substantial financial gift that has been designated to help persons, needing assistance, attend this year’s retreat. The gift was made by Betty Melton, of St. Paul’s Meridian in memory of her long time partner, Becky Luke. Becky Luke and Betty have attended the retreat since its inception in 2006.

The retreat will be at Gray Center, 27-29 August 2010 and conducted by The Rev. Dr. Sam Portaro, who has chosen the theme for this year’s retreat: **THUS FAR, BY FAITH: Conversation on Partnering with God**. Fr. Portaro is widely known in the Church as a leader of quiet days, retreats and has served as a consultant and preacher nationwide and in the United Kingdom. He has also served on the faculties of both Seabury Western Theological Seminary and The University of Chicago Divinity School. Fr. Portaro is also a widely published author. Among some of his works are: Crossing the Jordan: Meditations on Vocation; Daysprings: Meditations for the Weekdays of Advent, Lent and Easter; and Brightest and Best: A Companion to Lesser Feasts and Fasts.

This very special offering is open to any person who wishes to attend. For further information please contact: John Lever/ jlever@live.com / 601-362-2792 or Emily Everett in the Diocesan Office/ info@dioms.org / 601-948-5994.

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**Delta Convocation training event open to all lay worship leaders**

The Delta Convocation will host a continuing education event for all lay worship leaders on Saturday, August 21st at the Church of the Nativity, Greenwood. The session will convene at 10:00 a.m. and adjourn at 2:00 p.m. Attendance will satisfy the requirements for renewal of diocesan license. Non-licensed worship leaders are also urged to attend.

The topics to be covered are:

- Leading Children’s Chapel – Matt Rowe
- How To Be A Grown Acolyte – Bill Richter
- Having A Regular LEM Program – Bailey Norman

Lunch will be served. Other than the cost of lunch, no other fee will be charged.

While the session is primarily for the Delta worship leaders those from other convocations are cordially invited to attend.

If you do plan to come please notify the Church of the Nativity by e-mail, office@nativitygreenwood.org or phone, 662.453.7786, EXT 101.
Editor’s note: Below is the first in a series of three articles about a Sudanese Mission trip from which Bishop Gray III and Dr. Gregg Miller recently returned.

**Sudanese Mission Trip: The Political Situation**

*By Greg Miller*

Traveling with Bishop Ezekiel Diing to our companion diocese of Twic East, Sudan, with our driver and armed guard, Bishop Duncan Gray III and I saw evidence of the war that first brought young Sudanese refugees to Mississippi in 2000: a downed MIG fighter plane, a burned-out tank, and an overturned personnel carrier beside the road.

The effects of war and violence are far from over. Armed soldiers of the Sudanese People’s Liberation Army stopped our car at frequent check points. Nor is travel on the Nile River, which our road roughly paralleled, safe. Within the last year, there have been massacres and attacks on civilians. Many suspect that the Government of Sudan has conscripted members of groups in Southern Sudan with historical animosities to attack one another and undermine the fragile peace. Divide and conquer has been the Khartoum regime’s mode of operation in Darfur, leading to the deaths of hundreds of thousands and the displacement of millions to displacement camps in Sudan as well as neighboring Chad.

In the Cathedral Compound in Bor Town, literally a stone’s throw from the Nile River, we visited Bishop Nathaniel Garang and his community. Small children greeted us laughing. We learned that a priest and parishioners were killed during a wartime government attack. Bishop Garang showed us bullets still lodged in the walls of the church. During the civil war, Bishop Garang hid in the bush, as did many. An older woman of the church, Magdalena, took my hand as we were leaving and asked me the names of the Dinka refugee children who fled to Mississippi, and as I rattled off as many as I could before we left, she was close to tears in happiness. Many still do not know the fates of their family members.

National elections took place this spring in Sudan, and they were, thank God, relatively peaceful. Only one candidate took arms to protest the results. There were serious irregularities in the national elections, however, and most opposition candidates, including those of the Sudanese People’s Liberation Movement that has governed Southern Sudan since the 2005 Peace Accords, withdrew their candidates from the national elections.

Everyone’s eyes now are on the 2011 referendum in the South. The Southern Sudanese will decide whether to secede from Sudan and form an independent country. Bishop Gray and I both had the strong impression that the vast majority of Southerners will vote for independence. The oil reserves in Sudan, however, on which the wealth of Khartoum and the North depend, are in the South, and many fear a vote for independence will lead to renewed war. The Episcopal Church of Sudan has chosen to remain neutral on this question and to allow individuals to choose according to their consciences.

Presiding Bishop Schori urges all Episcopalians to pray for peace in Sudan. The American Friends of the Episcopal Church of Sudan ask that we write to President Obama, Secretary of State Clinton, our senators and congressmen to demand that the Government of Sudan abide by the provisions of the 2005 Peace Accords and refrain from violence. The Addis Ababa Accords of 1972, like the 2005 Peace Accords, granted Southern Sudan autonomy and called for a referendum for independence, but in 1981 the Southern Legislature was disbanded, and in 1983 harsh Shar’ia Law was imposed on all Sudanese, including Christians. The Civil War that followed resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands and the displacement of millions. We must do all we can, through prayer and advocacy, to prevent the resumption of that catastrophic war.

Dr. Greg Miller is a professor at Millsaps College and the chairman of the Sudanese ministry in the diocese.

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*After a peaceful election in April the people of Southern Sudan hold their collective breath as the referendum on independence is scheduled for February 2011. SPLM stands for Sudan Peoples’ Liberation Movement. “They will remain in our prayers,” said Bishop Gray.*

*Bishop Diing points to the crash site of a Russian MIG shot down during the 25 year long Sudan Civil War.*

*Bishops Garang and Gray in front of the Bor Cathedral.*