

## REPORTS TO THE DIOCESAN CONVENTION

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### REPORTS OF THE GENERAL OFFICERS:

#### SECRETARY

Report forthcoming

#### STANDING COMMITTEE

Report forthcoming

#### COMMISSION ON FINANCE

Report forthcoming

#### REGISTRAR – HISTORIOGRAPHER

The duty of the Registrar-Historiographer is to “gather, receive and safeguard all materials of historical significance in the Diocese and the several Parishes and Missions and shall present to each Convention a report of all such events as may be deemed to be of permanent interest and importance.” (Diocesan Canon 8)

Early in 2020, the COVID-19 virus slowed the work to a crawl. Later, Hurricane Sally delivered a gut punch to many of us, although thankfully not to the archives room.

Work in the Duvall Center archives room focused on settling into additional storage: two more water/fire safe filing cabinets plus a new desk. The additional file drawers provides space for our irreplaceable collection of diocesan journals from Alabama, Florida, and the Central Gulf Coast, and for our print photograph and oral history collections.

I gave assistance to the Jubilee Committee for the production of a brief video presentation of our diocesan history in the 2020 annual convention.

Progress continued in digitizing our oral history collection of 31 cassette tapes. About half of them have been digitized so far. The goal is to digitize all of them.

The print photograph collection is now accessibly arranged in archival box-albums. Beginning steps have been made in saving and organizing digital photographs although there is much more to be done. Persons wishing to use our photographs are reminded that requirements of copyright apply to many of them.

As 2020 began, my friend, June Linke of Christ Church, Pensacola, chair of the history sub-committee of the Jubilee Committee, and I continued our efforts to assemble material for producing an in-depth video history of our diocese. COVID-19 stopped us. God willing, we hope to resume our effort when we can.

On June 13, 2020, our Diocesan School for Ministry graduated its first students. At our Bishop’s request, I have created a file for collecting materials about this School and its service in our diocese. For this, I wrote a paper recording the history of formation for Holy Orders in the Episcopal Church in Alabama and Florida in ways other than residential seminaries.

On October 8, 2020, friends and neighbors in our diocese and beyond were saddened to learn of the death in South Carolina of the Rt. Rev. Charles Farmer Duvall, our second bishop. At Bishop Kendrick’s request, and with the valuable contributions of 12 of his friends and colleagues, I wrote and edited a memorial article which

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was published in the "Coastline" and also conveyed to his family. Bishop Kendrick was homilist at his funeral in Cheraw, South Carolina. These and other items will be added to our files.

I participated in the recorded service of Evening Prayer which was shown on December 3, 2020, from Christ Church, Pensacola, on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Primary Convention of our Diocese there. Participants included others who were delegates or otherwise connected with the founding of our diocese. Bishop Kendrick read the sermon preached in that service by the Rt. Rev. E. Hamilton West, then Bishop of Florida.

On September 14-15, 2020, Hurricane Sally dramatically reminded us of the importance of protecting our lives, our property, and our most important church documents. As best I know, historic records survived in our congregations.

I note the death in 2020 of two friends and companions who made history and safeguarded materials of historical significance.

The Most Reverend Oscar Hugh Lipscomb, Archbishop Emeritus of Mobile, died peacefully in Mobile on October 14. This Mobile native had a heart for ecumenical and interfaith friendships. In January of 2000, he and Bishop Duvall led Celebration 2000, an event which brought together some 4,000 Mobilians of many denominations to mark the beginning of the third Christian millennium. He was a historian and writer and story teller, and a former trustee of the Alabama Department of Archives and History. My wife and I were privileged to attend his funeral.

Ms. Carolyn Levensailor of St. Paul's, Mobile, died peacefully in her home on December 30. She was a member of St. Paul's, Mobile, for 60 years and active in the Episcopal Churchwomen of our Diocese from the beginning when it was first called the Committee on Women's Work – a term which did not last long! She had a singular memory of this ministry from her parish to Blue Lake to Beckwith, from diocese to the Triennial

During the tenure of my predecessor *emerita*, Kit Caffey, framed photographs of all parishes, missions, and agencies of our Diocese were mounted on the corridor wall in the Duvall Center. After Hurricane Ivan damaged the Duvall Center in 2004, Carolyn and a friend took to the highways to take new photos which are there for us now.

Carolyn did major work in organizing and safe-guarding storing the archives of Christ Church Cathedral and St. Paul's Church, Mobile. She convinced clergy, vestries, and others to provide work space and funds. Knowing that not everyone would talk into a tape recorder, she invited parishioners to write letters with their stories. These letters make up a valuable collection. She regularly displayed photos and other materials from the archives on parish house bulletin boards to help make local history enjoyable.

I am blessed to have known Bishop Duvall, Archbishop Lipscomb, and Carolyn Levensailor as cherished friends and fellow keepers and tellers of our story.

I express enduring thanks to my friend and predecessor *emerita*, Kit Caffey, who did the big work after Hurricane Ivan in creating the archive room now entrusted to me.

I also thank the diocesan staff who work in the Duvall Center. A pile of work is always on their desks, but they always have time for a friendly chat or a helping hand.

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I am thankful for the friendship and support of our Bishop, especially when he calls to ask me for a quick answer about some obscure antiquity – always in the best of bonds.

Respectfully submitted,  
The Rev. S. Albert Kennington, Registrar-Historiographer

### COMMISSION ON MINISTRY

The Commission on Ministry has two primary responsibilities. The first is to assist individuals in their response to God's call to ministry. In particular, the Commission seeks to support those who are discerning a call to ordained ministry. The second responsibility is to advise the Bishop, when requested, in matters concerning discernment and formation.

#### **COM Mission Statement**

The COM seeks to prayerfully ascertain, discriminate, and discern a sense of God's call in a person's life and in the life of the church for his/her *lay or ordained vocation and ministry*.

*The Commission on Ministry will*

- *be a resource for aspirants for ordination*
- *be an advisor to the bishop concerning aspirants, postulants, and candidates*
- *be a shepherd and advocate for those being prepared for ordination, providing pastoral care and guidance on an individual basis*
- *assist the bishop in developing and furthering continuing education for the clergy of the Diocese.*

In this diocese, individuals called to ordained ministry may follow one of two separate paths. One path is for those who are called to the Priesthood. We had five (5) individuals accepted as Postulants to attend Seminary (Pam Christian, John Fountain, Jen Leahey, Stephen Pecot, and Joe Taylor). At present, seminarians from this diocese are enrolled at Virginia Theological Seminary (Craig Doshier, Amanda Doshier, Jen Leahey, and Stephen Pecot); at Yale (Ansley Walker); and Seminary of the Southwest (John Fountain, and Kenneth White-Spinner).

Our Diocesan School for Ministry has now begun its second class with two (2) postulants enrolled in the Diaconate track (Brad Clark and Deborah Knight-Epps). We had eight (8) individuals that completed their course of study as the first graduating class. Six (6) were ordained Transitional Deacons (Mike Ballard, David Chatel, David Clothier, Bob Donnell, Lydia Johnson, and John Talbert); two (2) were ordained Deacons (Rachel Iversen and John Kendall).

Discernment for those called to the Priesthood and for those called to the Diaconate requires participation by many from the community, as the individuals prayerfully seek God's direction for their lives. The Commission is grateful for the willingness of so many within this diocese to support and assist those who are examining their call to ordained ministry.

Respectfully submitted,  
The Rev. Al Pruitt, Chair/mrp

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### BECKWITH BOARD OF DIRECTORS

2020 has certainly been a challenging year. COVID-19 prevented Beckwith from holding summer camp sessions for the first time in our 48 year history. The camp closure combined with the inability to host retreat groups, resulted in a 70 percent loss of revenue compared to the preceding year. In this time of adversity, our team came together and met the challenges. It was a year of sacrifice, furloughs, introspection and ultimately – progress.

Beckwith was extremely quiet beginning in March through the fall. We recognized that we could use the extra time to improve the grounds and facilities. With plenty of time on their hands, but with a shortage of funds, the crew banded together, rolled up their sleeves, and got to work. This time was used to paint the exterior of Odom, paint the interiors of the buildings on campus, pressure-wash buildings, paint fences, replace and repair plumbing issues, make general repairs, renovations, and generally improve the grounds.

John has worked tirelessly maintaining his role as Operations Manager and also covering the grounds and maintenance.

Rachel has used this time to work on Beckwith's accreditation with American Camp Association. She is refining camp policies and procedures to comply with the ACA's strict standards while refining the camp structure to reflect the changing needs of camp.

Rhona has done a great job taking care of our existing groups and maintaining our longstanding relationships. She has been in continued communication with our group leaders; adjusting the schedule and filling the calendar for 2021 and 2022.

Eleanor has been amazing in her ability to keep morale high while making the tough budgeting decisions that have kept us afloat. Her tireless fundraising has expanded the donor base and almost doubled our donation income from the previous year. Without her leadership, I don't think we would have made it.

The fall gave us Hurricanes Sally and Zeta both leaving devastation to our campus and shoreline. Beckwith was blessed with the help of the Cursillo community who showed up in mass to do a day of cleanup. Two weeks later the men of St. Paul's Daphne and St. James Fairhope came to campus with chain saws, trailers, and other equipment to continue the clean-up efforts. It took several months to get the campus back in order, but we couldn't have gotten there without the help and support from our volunteers and donors.

I am happy to report that Beckwith continues to manage through COVID-19. As we prepare for 2021- we may be financially weak, but our team is stronger than ever. What we lack in funding, we more than make up for it in planning and preparation.

We are truly blessed and looking forward to the opportunities to serve you in 2021.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jubal Hamil, Board Chair

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### MURRAY HOUSE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Greetings from the residents and staff at Murray House!

As I reflect back over the events of this past year, my heart is bursting with pride and admiration for the residents at Murray House. They have persevered through this last year with courage and faith. I know we have all had to make changes in our lifestyle but keep in mind; these residents have not left the building for almost a year. The isolation from their family and friends seems almost unbearable at times.

Mail has become the highlight of their day. They eagerly await the daily mail delivery. Last Christmas several churches sent Christmas cards to every resident. They were thrilled to get those cards and most of them still have them sitting out in their room. Who would have thought that such a small thing as sending a card or note could bring such joy and happiness?

This time last year we had 38 residents. Due to the pandemic we were not able to admit new residents from March - September. Our census went down to 26.

Even though we have not had a case of COVID-19 we lost 12 residents to natural causes. We are now cautiously admitting new residents and hopeful that we will be able to safely bring our census up soon. We are scheduled to have our first COVID-19 immunization January 25th.

Today our census is 29 residents. Our treasurer tells me that our break even number is 34 residents, so we have a way to go. I'm sure most of you know that unlike Wilmer Hall and Beckwith, Murray House is a self-funded non-profit entity. While we truly appreciate the \$10,000 that the Diocese gives us each year, we sincerely hope for a little more generosity during this crisis.

Respectfully submitted,

Connie Anderson, Executive Director

The Rev. Dr. Ken Cumbie, Board Chair

### WILMER HALL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Wilmer Hall, an agency of the Diocese located in Mobile, Alabama, has been serving young people in need since 1864. It was founded by Bishop Richard Hooker Wilmer, the second Bishop of Alabama. We currently have six programs: Residential, Transitional Living (TLP), Transitional Family (TFP), Education4Life, the Philippa Stirling Hamilton Education Center, and the Max Miller Education Program.

In 2020, we were challenged by the Covid-19 Pandemic, as well as two hurricanes, but we persevered, just as we have for these last 157 years. In 2020, we had a total of 51 residents in our three residential programs (Residential, TLP, TFP). In 2020, we have served 52 students in our on-site Education Program and 120 students in our two community-based education programs (the Hamilton Education Center and the Max Miller Education Program). Much of this was done through online platforms due to the pandemic. **Our total number of children and young adults served in 2020 was 223.**

We currently serve 41 students in our on-campus education program, called Education4Life. In the 11 years since its inception, the students in the program have a 100% graduation/promotion rate. We expanded our successful education model into other areas of our community in 2018 and 2019. The Hamilton Education Center serves students in the Maysville Community at Williamson Prep Middle School and the Max Miller

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Education Program serves students at Pillans Middle School, Mobile County Training School, and Scarborough Middle School. Much of the community-based tutoring has been on hold and we expect it to be back up to 100% in August.

We launched a delivery-based food pantry in 2019. In 2020, we delivered groceries to roughly 250 individuals and families, including many of the families of our education program students this past summer.

Our staff and board continue to be good stewards of our resources as we recently passed a balanced budget as we care for our historic campus. We charge no fees for our services, of course, and receive funding from the Diocese, the United Way, and from many donations and grants. We greatly appreciate the support from the Diocese, its churches, and their congregants.

We welcome visitors from around the diocese for a visit to campus, and we are also happy to come talk to your parish or group about our mission and ministry. Please contact Pratt Paterson ([ppaterson@wilmerhall.org](mailto:ppaterson@wilmerhall.org)) or Mae Dennis ([mdennis@wilmerhall.org](mailto:mdennis@wilmerhall.org)) for more information.

Respectfully submitted,  
Pratt Paterson, Executive Director

George P. Shedd, Jr., Ph.D., Board President

*The mission of Wilmer Hall Children's Home is to provide a safe home and educational resources for children and young adults in need due to poverty, abuse, neglect, and homelessness. We serve all children and young adults without regard to race, ethnicity, or religion.*

*Wilmer Hall extends warm and nurturing care to every child and young adult in its care, ensuring they are surrounded by people who love and support them. Our goal is to help children succeed in four areas: physical health, emotional stability, academic achievement, and spiritual maturity.*

*Wilmer Hall serves children and young adults through five programs: the Residential Living Program, the Transitional Living Program, the Transitional Family Program, the on-campus Education Program, and the Community-Based Education Programs.*

### CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL

#### **Christ Church Cathedral Prayer**

*Gracious God, today we give thanks for the ministry you have entrusted to us as the cathedral church of our diocese. Help us to be faithful in answering the sacred calling to be ministers of hospitality for your people and leaders of worship to your honor and glory. May this place be a beacon of your light and love for the world. All this we ask through your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.*

Our year at Christ Church Cathedral began with a great deal of hustle and bustle. We prepared for and hosted the 49th Diocesan Convention, Life Together, Our Jubilee, on February 7 and 8, and we completed Phase II of our capital restoration and construction project.

The 2020 Diocesan Convention was planned as a two-day event on Friday, February 7 and Saturday, February 8. The new concept was planned to help delegates minimize time away from the office, to cut costs for parishes, and to hold all of the convention events on-site. Registration began on Friday morning, and after lunch the convention began with the opening service. The afternoon was dedicated to business and everyone

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stayed for supper in the courtyard and a Mardi Gras parade. Business was concluded on Saturday at noon. The members of the Cathedral family were excited to open our renovated spaces to the diocese and to enjoy using them for the first time. We upgraded Wifi so that everyone could be connected and the diocese live-streamed the entire convention from the Opening Service. We are grateful to the Cathedral Family for their hard work in preparing for and executing a successful convention. We gratefully thank Audrey Cunningham, and Caroline Etherton, Chairs, Ginny Behlen, Carolyn Eichold, Cammie Israel, Lucy Wright, and all of the Cathedral Family volunteers.

Lent began with the Ash Wednesday Liturgy officiated by Bishop Russell Kendrick. We were well into the Lenten season when our nation went on lock down because of the novel coronavirus, COVID-19. We, like all places of worship, were forced to move our worship and communications immediately to on-line platforms. We are grateful for the preparations from the convention that helped us transition to our new ways of worship. We moved up plans for live-streaming all services, we changed to a new website that includes many aspects of parish life, and we upgraded our Zoom account. We made plans to return to our regular worship in time for Easter, and after that we were forced to rely on faith and not make any plans.

During the summer Dean Beverly Gibson was able to complete her work on deepening her own spiritual life and for leading the Cathedral Family in spiritual growth. She completed an 18-month clergy spiritual life and leadership program through the Shalem Institute designed to help clergy live more deeply into the rich Christian tradition of contemplative spirituality. The work involved intentional deepening in prayer, reading and study, and meeting regularly with an ongoing clergy peer group as well as a lay listening group within the parish. The focus of Shalem on prayer and listening, not on developing any new programs, was a guiding principle that helped Dean Gibson and Cathedral leadership minister to the Cathedral Family through the global pandemic.

The Cathedral Family participates, as one of three churches in our diocese, in the Baptized for Life initiative sponsored by the Lilly Foundation and administered through Virginia Theological Seminary. Our project proposal had been approved in late 2019 and we were meeting regularly to implement the vision outlined in our proposal. Once the pandemic hit, BFL administrators quickly understood the need to refocus all of the projects. Carl Cunningham, Jr., a member of the BFL Leadership Team, grew a daily walk into an organized walk with purpose. The MOB Pacers has proven that walking with others can keep you motivated, make you accountable, and meet new people with similar goals. BFL saw the MOB Pacers as a group that had grown organically in our neighborhood. We hoped that by partnering with them we could bring new people to campus and use the opportunity to welcome them into our home. We refocused our project on the MOB Pacers and they began gathering in our newly refurbished buildings and courtyard. We look forward to gathering the Cathedral Family with the MOB Pacers when it is safe to gather.

Our Organist and Music Director, Christopher Powell began the busy year as we all did. He and the Cathedral choir provided the music for all of the convention liturgies. He composed Jubilee Hymn in commemoration of the 50th Jubilee. He hosted an evening concert for the American Choral Directors Association service on March 20. Once the lockdown occurred he and soprano Mollie Adams have provided music for Cathedral services each Sunday since March 22. He and Mollie recorded music for the diocesan Good Friday email, for the Diaconate Ordination, for the Jubilee Evensong, and for the Christmas I Diocesan service on December 27. Lydia Johnson and Mike Ballard, both students at the diocesan School for Ministry, were assigned to Christ Church Cathedral for their field work. Although the pandemic cut their work short, we were able to celebrate their ordination to the diaconate on July 28 with a socially distanced and masked congregation in-person and many more virtually. There were eight ordinands that day: Michael Eugene Lewis Ballard, David Richard

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Chatel, David Michael Clothier, Robert Mark Donnell, Rachel Shannon Iversen, Lydia Knizley Johnson, John Thomas Kendall, John Keith Talbert.

Bishop Russell Kendrick joined us in the virtual Cathedral Celebration Eucharist on Sunday, April 26. It was the celebration of our 15-year anniversary of being named the Cathedral of the Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast. While Bishop Kendrick was not in residence in the new apartment this year, we were pleased to open the space to The Rev. Marshall Carver and his wife Jan after their home was damaged during Hurricane Sally on September 16. Marshall Craver teaches Contemplative Prayer classes at the cathedral and he meets here with local clergy in his position as Diocesan Clergy Spiritual Director.

Cathedral leaders continue to serve in a number of capacities within the diocese. Dean Gibson and Christopher Powell both served on the 50th Anniversary Committee. Ron Snider serves as Treasurer of the Diocese, and as Chair of the Commission on Finance, Meg McGovern serves on the Commission for Episcopal Church Women. Laura Rutherford and Clayton Ryan serve on the board for Murray House. Cart Blackwell, Will Gamble, Stephen McNair and Bragg Van Antwerp serve on the Wilmer Hall board. Carl Cunningham, Jr. and Jubal Hamil serve on the Beckwith board. Jill Chow serves on the Diocesan Youth Ministry Leadership Team and the Commission on Racial Justice and Reconciliation. We are grateful for the members who serve on the Cathedral Chapter, The Rev. John Riggin, St. Paul's, Mobile, Hayden Tirey, St. John's, Monroeville, The Rev. Dee Freeman, St. James, Fairhope.

This report ended last year with these sentences, "Our true focus in the year ahead will be on the 'why' of our shared life that supports this 'how' —the Love of God that dwells within us and moves among and around us and draws us into deeper and richer lives of prayer and service." 2020 was not the year we had planned, but we did indeed work toward this goal.

As we continue to grow into our ministry as Cathedral, it remains a joy for us as we serve the diocese.

### **Cathedral Mission Statement**

*Christ Church Cathedral lovingly welcomes all people to traditional Episcopal worship, to deepen our relationships, serve our community, and grow closer to God.*

### **Institution Statement for the Cathedral Church of the Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast**

*The Cathedral is the spiritual center of the Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast. The Cathedral is a dynamic and evolving church that serves as a liturgical, educational, and pastoral center for Diocesan life. It serves as a visible symbol of unity and promotes growth, hope, and a deepening trust in the Lord. The Cathedral is a place where the Gospel of Jesus Christ will be faithfully preached and responded to, and it will model new concepts and ideas for education, evangelism, and outreach to which the Gospel calls us.*

Respectfully submitted,  
The Very Reverend Beverly F. Gibson, Dean  
Carolyn S. Jeffers, Provost

### **MISSIONER FOR DEVELOPMENT: EVANGELISM AND MISSION ENGAGEMENT**

The purpose of the Episcopal Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast's Missional Office of Development is to develop God's power and love through congregations as they more fully extend their mission beyond the status quo. We do this primarily through Evangelism and Mission Engagement as integral aspects of living our Baptismal Covenant



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and of our diocesan life and vision, recognizing that together, we are the body of Christ. The following describes just some of the signs of development in our life together for which we are grateful during our 50<sup>th</sup> Jubilee Anniversary year.

**Evangelism: Seeking. Naming. Celebrating. Inviting.** Even now, in the midst of a pandemic, the Holy Spirit enabled us to encourage 768 people and to develop \$11,203 in resources for the diocese to move ahead with the spiritual practice of evangelism during this past year.

- Spiritual practice of evangelism encouraged diocesan-wide in 2020 = 768 people
  - 2020 Evangelism Task force members met monthly for ongoing leadership development and for an annual retreat at the Tirey Cabin in Lillian (22)
  - During the diocesan-wide October 2020 Jubilee 50<sup>th</sup> Evangelism focus, convocational evangelism catalysts offered Storytelling Workshops to train diocesan leaders (both virtual and small group in-person in each convocation) and sponsored *Invite a Friend to More Sunday* on October 25, 2020 (32)
  - Exploring online evangelism during and after our Jubilee 50<sup>th</sup> Revival “Just Mercy, Just Jesus” using SimpleTexting tool to connect with online participants in real time during the Revival and follow up with invitations to Revival Round-Up, four weekly meetings to discussion and Go Forward Together on Zoom and to invite to Christmas virtual worship throughout the diocese (114 subscribers)
  - National Episcopal Prayer Hotline open during the Revival (trained 11 diocesan clergy, with 4 contacts during Revival)
  - Social media advertising to targeted population for ‘Just Mercy, Just Jesus’ - over 25,000 people in diocesan zip codes viewed our advertisement to join and 187 of these new people (described as “Opens” because they are *not* church-goers but *are open* to conversation on faith and justice) indicated attending the Revival (187)
  - Local “Justice is Faith” Facebook page developed to follow up relationship development with Opens in the Central Gulf Coast - Connecting people in the Central Gulf Coast through stories and actions that transform this world with love and justice (356)
  - “Free Listening” pop-up opportunities in Mobile and Resilience in 2020 StorySharing Tree opportunities for spiritual practice of evangelism throughout Mobile hosted by the Rev. Lydia Johnson and the Mary Alice Mathison (42)
- New resources developed = \$11,203
  - Invite Welcome Connect is a ministry of relational evangelism and congregational empowerment. The Rev. Mary Alice Mathison was trained in 2020 to be our in-house diocesan trainer for Invite Welcome Connect worships and congregational training with fee covered by a Beecken Center Lilly Endowment grant (\$2,500).
  - Episcopal Evangelism Grants were submitted and awarded to the Rev. John Talbert for *Free Grace/Living Water* Evangelism Project (\$4,500) and to the Rev. Mary Alice Mathison for *Easter in the Wild* Evangelism Project (\$1,353)
  - TryTank investments in diocesan evangelism experiments: Prayer hotline (\$250), social media advertising for Revival (\$1,100) and following up with them through new diocesan Facebook page (\$1,500)

**Mission Engagement: Joining God in the Neighborhood.** Even now, in the midst of a pandemic, the Holy Spirit was at work in the church and the world to offer expanding missional engagement opportunities for over 614 people and develop \$138,579 in new resources for the diocese going forward.

- Leadership development for expanding mission engagement = 614 people

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- Lay worship leader and preaching team from among 21 of the smaller diocesan congregations with a combined average worship attendance of 561 people developed a weekly Sunday Morning Prayer community throughout the diocese meeting via audio and video conference during the coronavirus crisis in order to see each other's faces and hear and respond to each other's voices in "real time" as another expression of the real presence of God's love among from March 22, 2020 until present (36)
- The Beloved Community Outreach Center of Mobile has grown out of the work of the DataStory for Faith Communities Diocesan Missional Strategic Plan (10)
- Freeport Way of Love mission enterprise zone teamwork continues with leadership from Christ the King, Santa Rosa Beach, St. Jude's, Niceville, and St. Agatha's, De Funiak Springs (20)
- Between the Bridges Panama City shared ministry team and missional enterprise zone teamwork development of a shared ministry covenant for going forward together (50) and [A New Day](#) community transitional resource center launched (150)
- Scholar Champions enabled launch of Central Gulf Coast Children's Defense Fund Freedom Schools® 2020 summer program which resulted in an average increase of nine months in instructional reading levels, with all children (100%) maintaining or gaining in instructional reading levels and experiencing no summer learning loss (140)
- Diocesan Episcopal leaders participated in the Justice United Seeking Transformation in Pensacola (J.U.S.T. Pensacola) Nehemiah Action of over 700 people of faith assembling virtually to reduce unnecessary arrests and increase early learning opportunities for at risk children in Escambia county (174)
- Supporting 57 of 61 diocesan worshipping communities participating in the U.S. Congregational Vitality Survey, Discover Your Strengths and began follow up for Revisioning and Renewal work to develop the seven marks of vitality with two congregations in Apalachicola and Monroeville (16)
- Development for offering congregational teams a two-year program in courageous, resilient, and faithful leadership for the sake of the world through Excellence in Leadership project (5)
- Teamwork exploring potential New Episcopal Community in Pace with Holy Cross in Pensacola, St. Christopher's in Pensacola, and St. Mary's in Milton (7)
- Development of leadership to explore launch of an Episcopal Service Corps program in the Central Gulf Coast (6)
- Note: Baptized for Life teamwork of Holy Cross Episcopal Church, Christ Church Cathedral and Good Shepherd Episcopal Church shifted to being part of the Missional Office of Discipleship, with the Rev. Dr. Joy Blaylock as their diocesan sponsor (*see Discipleship report for update*)
- New resources developed = \$138,579
  - Beloved Community Outreach Center of Mobile United Thank Offering (UTO) grant - 2020 BLESS (\$50,000)
  - New Episcopal Communities/Mission Enterprise Zone Seed Grant for Community Outreach Center of Mobile (\$30,000)
  - Central Gulf Coast Children's Defense Fund Freedom Schools® program (\$58,579)

Each one of those numbers above represents people and stories for which I am honored to share with the Rev. Lydia Knizley Johnson, our next diocesan Missioner for Development. I am confident in our future as we go forward in our life together with her leadership and that of our Bishop and diocesan staff as more and more of God's people in the Central Gulf Coast discern the fresh expressions of our faith to which God is calling us.

Respectfully submitted,

The Rev. Kammy Young, 2018-2020 Canon Missioner for Development

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### MISSIONER FOR DISCIPLESHIP

Given the unprecedented nature of the year 2020, I submit this report acknowledging that much of what we hoped for either changed or had to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the destruction wrought by Hurricane Sally in many areas of the diocese.

The highlights from this year include the following:

- Coordination with the Bishop to implement and expand The Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast School's provision of educational offerings for the formation of deacons, priests and lay persons. We successfully crafted three new avenues of education for lay persons to be certified as Lay Worship Leaders, Lay Preachers, and Lay Pastoral Care Providers. Such classes and curriculum are currently providing the necessary framework to better equip lay leaders in a variety of settings. The three main instructors in this endeavor are the Rt. Rev. J. Russell Kendrick, the Rev. Joy H. Blaylock, Ph.D, and the Rev. Deacon Clelia Garrity.
- Attendance and preacher at the diaconal ordinations for the first eight graduates of our local School for Ministry. Continued collaboration with the Rev. Deacon Clelia Garrity on the curriculum and start of the first year of studies for two diaconal candidates along with ongoing evaluation of those seeking the Lay Pastoral Care certificate.
- Oversight of diocesan formation events: presentation at our annual clergy conference in January about the real challenges of discipleship. Planned for the annual Discipleship Day that was scheduled to include Dr. Lisa Kimball of Virginia Theological Seminary and a special focus on our Baptized for Life congregations, i.e., deeper discussions of our baptismal identity. Unfortunately, this day had to be cancelled due to the arrival of Hurricane Sally in many of the areas of the diocese and the subsequent cleanup and restoration that was required. Other formative events included: listening sessions regarding racial reconciliation and a consideration of response by St. Cyprian's Episcopal Church; provision of resources regarding sabbath and mental health challenges.
- Consultation: led conversations with clergy about wellness during the pandemic and began training for the provision of mutual ministry reviews as needed. Attended VTS seminars on the reimagining of Formation. As Dean of The School for Ministry, I continued to meet with many students or inquirers who are considering a call to one or more of the various avenues we are offering. I also met with the Rev. Kammy Young and Mr. Ben Linder regarding the possibility of an Episcopal Service Corps in our diocese. I served on the board of directors for the first Freedom School in Pensacola and support the JUST Pensacola social justice initiative. I consulted with Bishop Kendrick on significant develops in society and sought to be of service regarding the provision of resources and ways to address events in a helpful way.
- Curriculum & Resource Development:
  - After a long-extended consultation period with Ministry Architects, a rough-draft Confirmation curriculum was produced and we have scheduled further exploration of how best to introduce this resource to our diocese. A committee was formed to discuss the importance of Confirmation and to reinvigorate clergy commitment to the priority of formation in parishes just prior to the renewal of clergy vows.
  - I attended the first Jesus 2020 umbrella seminar in Atlanta, GA, where we explored ministry, evangelism, education, and justice issues for several days with dynamic speakers like Bishop Curry, the Rev. Dr. William J. Barber, and many leaders and publishers in the Episcopal Church.

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- I also attended the Atlanta revival with Bishop Curry and Bishop Rob Wright. Such events served to help us stay connected as a diocese and to be open to the creative and imaginative ministry offerings of others throughout our nation.
- In an effort to assist smaller congregations in transition, I solicited a group of priests who would be willing to provide sermons for congregations without a regular minister. Similarly, I created a Discipleship Commission made up of lay leaders and ministers in our diocese who will help to shape the future of our Lay School for Ministry and other discipleship initiatives.
  - Jubilee Revival Year:
    - I served on the committee for planning our revival in December of 2020 and beyond. Again, the pandemic changed our initial planning and thoughts and we prepared for an online revival.
    - I served on the Discipleship Committee and helped in the provision of resources for Discipleship month and Sabbath/Mental Health month for the toolkit for parishes.
    - I also collaborated with the Bishop, Jenn Johnson, and others to provide a 50 day devotion count-down to our revival with weekly themes and devotions aimed at preparing us for the “Just Jesus/Just Mercy” revival with Bishop Curry and Bryan Stevenson in December.
    - I also then participated with the Rev. Kammy Young in the “Go Forward” groups which were created after the revival as a way of continuing the conversation. We are still mining those interactions for ways in which we might further the idea of “Going Forward” as a diocese situated in a fractured society.
  - As the Rev. Kammy Young prepared to retire, I took over the lead with the Baptized for Life program and Congregational Vitality connections and future. I began with consultations for the future of these programs with their respective leaders and helped to discern the way they can remain vital in our diocese. I remain grateful for all the congregations who are exercising resilience and determination in their chosen projects with the Baptized for Life Program even though the pandemic has put a considerable strain on moving forward.

Like many of us who crossed the threshold of 2021, with great hope for a relief from the perils wrought by a raging pandemic along with the contentious election of November 2020, I remain committed to holding our lament, longing and hope side by side. We cannot abandon our commitment to love, respect, dignity, unity, justice, and spiritual growth in spite of all we have endured. As we seek to find a common language again, I pray we can return to the wisdom of Philippians 4:8—

*Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.*

Respectfully submitted by:

The Rev. Joy H. Blaylock, Ph.D, Dean, The DCGC School for Ministry and Missioner for Discipleship

## REPORTS OF THE COMMISSIONS

### AFFIRMATIVE AGING

The Commission met during January and February of 2020 to prepare for two workshops on dementia, “The Silver Tsunami.” The first of these workshops was presented on February 7, 2020 at St. James’ Episcopal

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Church in Fairhope, AL and the second on Saturday, March 7, 2020 at St. Agatha's Episcopal Church in DeFuniak Springs, FL. The workshops were attended, evaluated, and offered 4 CEU credits for clergy and health care providers.

With the advent of COVID-19 in our diocese, the Commission did not meet in person after that time, but communicated via email and phone conversations.

We paid tribute in the Coastline to our deceased and much missed member, the Rev. Deacon Ann Johnson. A future workshop on "Adventurous Aging: Staying young at Heart" is planned for the future, hopefully in the fall of 2021. Our plans include making this workshop experiential and interactive as well as educational.

The Commission offers the following thoughts:

"It is not true that people stop pursuing dreams because they grow old; they grow old because they stop pursuing dreams." Gabriel Garcia Marquez

"No one can avoid aging. But aging productively is something else." C.S. Lewis, Nov. 29, 1898-Nov. 22, 1963.

"I'm young at heart. I'm young in spirit, and I'm still adventurous." Sonia Sotomayor

Respectfully submitted,  
The Rev. Sara D. Phillips, Chair

### CURSILLO

The Cursillo ministry has been somewhat on hold due to the pandemic. However, we have done a few things to try and keep the movement alive.

1. We have had to cancel the weekends this year due to the pandemic. Cursillo is such an intimate weekend we have been unable to figure out how to create a similar experience with social distance. We are very committed to the Cursillo process and sharing a similar experience to each Pilgrim.
2. We have offered 2 virtual Zoom Ultreyas which many have signed on to and shared thoughts and feeling with one another. We have plans to offer this again soon and to try to develop some sort of schedule for consistency.
3. The Cursillo community offered support with approximately 50 people with manpower to help clean up at Camp Beckwith after the Hurricane damage.
4. This year Cursillo honored the monetary sponsorship commitment to the Saturday night diner and party at BayLights. Even though the event was not held the contribution was honored. The Cursillo community values our relationship with Beckwith and tries to help whenever possible!
5. We for the first time awarded two Mark Wilson Scholarships to first-year seminarian to Stephen Pecot and Jen Leahey. We are proud of them and their commitment and contributions to Cursillo movement and we look forward to their return to our diocese.

We pray we will as a proven successful Christian movement be able to gather and once again spread the Love of Christ soon! 2020 has certainly had it challenges in our lives and the Cursillo movement has been no exception. We are looking ahead and hope to a bright future as soon as it is safe to do so!

Respectfully Submitted,  
Lori Bates, Chair

## REPORTS TO THE DIOCESAN CONVENTION

### GLOBAL MISSION ENGAGEMENT

In 2019 the Commission made significant strides in carrying out its commitment to change its' philosophical approach to mission ministry. Instead of sponsoring mission trips that are singular in nature the Commission's focus was aimed at mission engagement that will aid local citizenry become self-sustaining in providing their own medical care, potable water, church support, education programs, salaries for teachers, and training in vocational skills. We invite you to look at our report to the February 2020 Convention to see the scope of this global ministry.

We had plans to continue this trend in 2020, however, COVID-19 altered those plans as it did those of so many. This report will therefore be focused on the aspects of this ministry we had planned, what we had to postpone, what we were actually able to accomplish, and what we hope to accomplish in 2021.

We hope that 2020 proves to be merely a pause in our ministry and that in 2021 we will make progress in getting back on track.

#### **I. Baluba, Zambia, Africa:**

1. In 2019 we assisted with an exploratory trip to Baluba, Zambia (translated "lost community"). On the continent of Africa, Baluba was found to be a remote village with no electricity, no potable water, no sanitation facilities, and no access to basic medical needs. Many of the locals practiced witchcraft and had never heard of Jesus Christ. The local people, however had an eagerness to learn. We also learned that the community and surrounding area consisted of 70 tribes who spoke 18 dialects, and that there are multiple resources, including the Zambian Ministry of Health, with which we can partner on this project.

We decided it would be feasible to work with the Baluba community and existing resources to partner in the development of a project that includes sex education, primary health care, health education, midwifery, sanitation facilities, a small pharmacy to dispense "over-the-counter" medications, a source of potable water, and to raise up local leaders. Our principal contact was to be a local minister, Victor Chimfwembe.

#### **2. Ongoing Ministry Established in Zambia:**

Although a 2020 follow up trip to Baluba had to be canceled due to COVID to date we have undertaken the following in furtherance of our commitment to accept the community of Baluba and its' surrounding area as a mission project:

- a. Helped in the establishment of a medication formulary for Baluba and its' surrounding area and the establishment of a pharmacy to dispense medications and for the building of a storage building for the medicines.
- b. Committed funds from our Diocesan budget to provide non-prescription over-the-counter medication for the community of Baluba and surrounding area for two months.
- c. Worked with others to raise funds necessary to provide medication for a year to the area of Baluba and surrounding area.
- d. Made a commitment to help raise a team of medical professionals with a dermatologist, an OBGYN MD and nurses to travel to Baluba and hold medical clinics in late June 2020. Unfortunately this has been postponed due to COVID-19.
- e. Worked toward having a trained nurse go to Baluba one day each month once the pharmacy was operational.
- f. Committed funds from our Diocesan budget to provide a full tuition scholarship of \$1500 per year to a Zambian woman, Raechel Chimfwembe, the wife of the Baluba's pastor, to attend a local accredited

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nursing school to obtain a bachelor of science degree in nursing including midwifery. In return she has made the commitment that upon graduation she will provide nursing and midwife services to the Baluba and surrounding area free of charge. She will also be responsible for all incidental costs of attending school and obtaining her education.

**This scholarship of \$1500 per year was continued for 2020 and has been renewed for 2021.**

- g. From our Diocesan budget we agreed to contribute toward the expenses to make it possible for Victor Chimfwembe, the Baluba pastor, to travel from Zambia to our Diocese with a view to his speaking at various churches to explain the conditions in Baluba, our involvement there and generate interest for support of his and our ministry there. Victor is our local contact in Zambia and is committed to this ministry.

**This was in fact accomplished and Victor came to the USA in February 2020 and met with our Commission and other groups to give firsthand insight into the people of Baluba and his (and our) work there.**

- h. With funds provided by Bishop Russell Victor was successful in finishing a building in Baluba for storing the medicines and for use as a birthing clinic and to contract with the Zambian Ministry of Health to provide medical and technical assistance.
  - i. With our assistance Baluba now has storage for pharmaceuticals, a refrigerator and freezer and a generator powered by solar power, funding necessary for the government to send training, and to have monthly clinics containing health education.
  - ii. We funded additional medical clinics not covered by the Zambian government
- i. The Commission approved a grant of \$500 to cover expenses for Baluba to have running water for its' new birthing suite.

### 3. Our Expectations for Mission Ministry in Zambia for 2021:

Assuming the Convention approves our budget request the Commission expects to fulfill its commitment to the 70 tribes in the Baluba and surrounding area to do the following:

- a. Continue to provide the nursing/midwife tuition scholarship so long as Raechel fulfills her commitment to maintain a good academic standing and personally obtain other sources for all expenses incidental to her schooling.
- b. In addition to our financial support for the pharmacy we will work to obtain funding to continue to supply medications for the pharmacy established in Zambia for the entire year.
- c. Work with local government officials to identify and help implement available government programs to help the people in this impoverished area.
- d. Continue to support all aspects of our ministry outlined above and seek ways to aid the Baluba community to become self-sufficient in these matters.

## **II. Education Mission Ministry to the Dominican Republic –College Scholarships, Professional Workshops, Four Year Episcopal College:**

Since 2017 we have sponsored a team of doctorate level educators from Mobile, our partners from the University of Monterey, Mexico and the University of Nebraska – Lincoln where this team organized, wrote the curriculum for and then lead a program of professional workshops and retreats for the teachers, clergy and administrators in the Episcopal parochial schools throughout the Dominican Republic.

Prior to COVID-19 the Episcopal parochial school system in the Dominican Republic consisted of 26 schools and approximately 6,400 students. These workshops and retreats were prepared based on the express needs of the teachers and administrators and are aimed at helping them become better teachers and educators.

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Dominican Bishop Moises has stated that in his travels around the diocese he is convinced that “improvement is happening in a major way (in the school system)” and our team “has made considerable contributions to these changes”.

For 2020 our goal had been to continue support this Education Ministry. Unfortunately, COVID-19 travel restrictions made this impossible and as this ministry requires that our team be present in the DR these activities had to be postponed.

### **For 2021 our goal for this Education Ministry is to:**

1. Write and staff at least one additional week of workshops/retreats for teachers, administrators and clergy in the Dominican Republic Episcopal School system in the fall.
2. Our discussions with Dominican Bishop Moises to establish a vocational school in the DR evolved into Bishop Moises desiring to establish an Episcopal four-year college. We will work with the Dominican Diocese and other professional educators in an effort to lay the groundwork for this to become a reality.
3. Continue with the official formal relationship between the Episcopal schools in the Dominican Republic and the University of South Alabama whereby the University will offer scholarships to graduates of the Dominican Episcopal schools. The memorandum of agreement was officially signed in a ceremony during our December 2019 mission visit to the DR.
4. In 2019 we approved a grant of \$1200 from our Diocesan budget to purchase 2 computers (out of a need for 4) for use in “pilot” programs for the Dominican Episcopal schools to explore (with our team’s guidance) the use of today’s technology in the classroom.
5. We challenged Missionary Dr. Tom McGowan and the University of Nebraska team members to match our grant of two computers and they accepted the challenge so that the need for 4 computers for this pilot program was met.
6. Travel conditions permitting we hope to include computer-in-education workshops for the DR teachers and administrators in 2021.
7. We have made a commitment to continue to support this ministry throughout 2021.

### **III. Construction of Church Furniture for the Episcopal Churches in the Dominican Republic:**

Since 2006 we have sponsored annual construction missions to the Dominican Republic. Our mission team has built all of the church furniture necessary for an empty room to become a comfortable, attractive and functional house of worship. Our team typically builds 20 to 26 pews along with clergy chairs, a bishop’s chair, acolyte benches, an altar, pulpit, lectern, baptismal font, credence table and bookcases each year.

During this time our team has earned the reputation of building durable and attractive church furniture and our furniture is in high demand.

In March 2019 we sponsored our 16<sup>th</sup> such Construction Mission and built furniture for Iglesia Santisma Trinidad (church of the Holy Trinity) in Santo Domingo.

Our 17<sup>th</sup> construction mission that was planned for March 2020 had to be cancelled due to COVID-19 travel restrictions. Depending on COVID-19 and/or travel conditions we plan to resume this church furniture mission later in 2021 or, if not then, certainly in 2022 and have been asked to build the furniture necessary to convert a room in the Dominican Diocesan office into a chapel.



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### IV. Haiti: Potable Water, Nursing, Medical Care, Education:

In 2019 we concluded our 3-year commitment to help the village of Martel, Haiti become self-sufficient in providing medical care, education in areas of community health and personal hygiene, and maintaining a sustainable source of potable water.

Unfortunately, even before COVID-19, the discord of Haiti's national government has made it impossible for us to safely return to Haiti but our local contacts have reported that programs we helped put in place are still serving the community.

### V. Mission to Meaningfully Minister to Refugees at Our Border

1. In a series of discussions, the Commission considered the challenges faced by those seeking asylum in the United States and the backlog of individuals and families at our Mexican border as a result of the newly enacted Migration Protection Policy (MPP), also known as the Remain in Mexico program.
2. We participated in sponsoring a "fact finding" trip to the border in early August 2019 in order to see firsthand what was happening there and to be better informed as to how we could become meaningfully involved in a Christian way.
3. Upon receiving a report from the "fact finding" group we met with Bishop Russell and accepted his suggestion that the Diocese form a Coalition Task Force to Address the Border Crisis and that such Task Force be organized under the umbrella of the Commission on Global Mission Engagement.
4. In September 2019 an organizational meeting was held for this Task Force and was attended by fifteen individuals representing nine congregations from throughout the Diocese.
5. Following this organizational meeting the Task Force has sponsored a second team of 13 individuals to the US-Mexican Border.
6. **In mid-February 2020 a third team of 16 individuals traveled to the US/Mexican border.** While there they were engaged in the following:
  - a. Preparation and serving of approximately one thousand meals per day to those awaiting their Immigration Court Dates.
  - b. Distributed several hundred Spanish language New Testament Bibles.
  - c. The team returned home committed to this boarder ministry and the displaced people it serves.
  - d. **The team met with the newly created Task Force and 14 individuals had signed up for a fourth trip to the US/Mexican border for later in 2020. This fourth trip was to include youth as well as adults and also participants from the Dioceses of Mississippi and Alabama as well as the Central Gulf Coast. Unfortunately, the fourth trip was cancelled due to COVID-19.**
7. In 2021 we plan to monitor conditions at the border and to evaluate human conditions as they may exist as there is some belief that a change in US administrations may have an effect on mission needs there.

### VII. Summer of 2021 – Youth Mission Trip:

Youth missions for 2020 had to be cancelled due to COVID-19. In 2021 the Commission will continue to work with the Diocesan Youth Commission with the hope of having missions that involve our young churchmen.

### VIII. 2021 – Potable Water for Iglesia San Marcos, Haina, Dominican Republic:

In 2021 we plan to maintain contact with the church and school system at San Marcos de Haina, Dominican Republic, to confirm the fresh water well and osmosis water purification system we previously installed were still functioning and providing the church and school of approximately 900 students with potable water. We will undertake to insure such repairs and/or maintenance as may be indicated.

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### **XIV. Throughout 2021 – “Home Team and Go Team”:**

We plan to continue with our program of having a “Home Team” and a “Go Team” for our mission ministries. The “Go Team” being the individual missionaries actually going on the trips. The “Home Team” being the people at home who pray for the mission and help with financial support. Home Team support is essential for our mission ministries to be successful.

### **XV. Throughout 2021 – Within Our Diocese:**

We plan to continue ongoing efforts to learn of mission work being done by congregations throughout the Diocese and to offer the Commission’s help and support.

### **XVI. Looking Forward to 2021:**

Although most of our global ministries had to be postponed in 2020 due to COVID-19 we consider that they were “postponed” and not discontinued. We also consider that many of the above ministries are ongoing and will continue into 2021 to the extent COVID-19 and travel restrictions will allow.

The Commission has a commitment to not only continue with these ministries to conclusion but also to actively seek out new opportunities in the ministry of global mission engagement.

The Commission stresses that the mission ministries sponsored by the Commission are open to all adult communicants of the Diocese and that an ability to speak a foreign language is not necessary in order to be a contributing member of these mission ministries.

**In summary** the Commission on Global Mission Engagement is an active, involved, passionate, dedicated and hard-working Commission with a commitment to continue the expansion of our global mission ministry to the extent that prayer, manpower and finances will permit. We pray that we shall continue to be led by the Holy Spirit as this exciting ministry continues to unfold.

However, mission ministry cannot exist without the prayerful and financial support from the Diocese and the “Home Team.” We ask for your prayers as this exciting and rewarding ministry continues to grow and affect the lives of so many in need.

Respectfully submitted,  
Geary Gaston, Chair

### **PRISON MINISTRY**

Throughout 2020, the Commission on Prison Ministry continued its efforts to reach out to those who are incarcerated, support their families, increase awareness of reentry programs, and address the challenges in the prison systems of Alabama and Florida. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has severely impacted these activities, and Commission members were limited in their ability to interact with inmates or family members. As with many other diocesan endeavors, the Prison Commission utilized Zoom for virtual meetings. While we miss the personal camaraderie, this has proven to be an effective method to conduct our meetings. A Prayer Request for the challenge of COVID-19 inside prisons was communicated to all church families. Our new Prison Commission webpage is now available through a link on the Commission’s site on the diocesan website, [www.diocgc.org/prison-ministry](http://www.diocgc.org/prison-ministry).

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The Commission continued to recognize the importance of reentry efforts, because inmates receive very little guidance, training, or resources to prepare them for life on the outside. We acknowledged that there is a major need to educate and assist our church families – and the general public – to understand and address this challenging aspect of our judicial system.

Respectfully submitted,  
Wayne E. Verry, Chair

### RACIAL JUSTICE AND RECONCILIATION

On behalf of the Commission on Racial Justice and Reconciliation (the “Commission”) of the Episcopal Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast (“CGC”), we present the following information about our ministry’s activities over the past year. As a result of your prayerful, physical and fiscal support – and with God’s help- the holy work of racial reconciliation and healing is showing tremendous signs of engagement and progress in our Diocese.

We began the 2020 year with an invitation for a diocesan-wide book read of *Just Mercy*, by Bryan Stevenson. This book read was scheduled in advance of his visit later in the year to the Central Gulf Coast’s 50<sup>th</sup> Jubilee Anniversary Celebration. We also created a downloadable study guide <https://tinyurl.com/yhnn5stg>. Many parishes and small groups formed throughout the diocese to read, learn, pray about and discuss the book.

Our first workshop of the year, Racial Reconciliation Sacred Conversations, was conducted on Saturday, January 18, 2020, at St. Mary’s Episcopal Church, Milton, FL.

During that same weekend, members of the Commission, along with parishioners participated in marches, attended speeches at various points around the Diocese to celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, which was Monday, January 20, 2020.

In February, the Commission, in collaboration with the Rev. Dr. Robert E. Dubose Chapter of the Union of Black Episcopalians (the “DuBose Chapter of the UBE”), celebrated the Feast Day of Absalom Jones. The celebration took place on Saturday, February 15, 2020, at St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church, Birmingham, AL.

On Tuesday, February 18, 2020, and on Wednesday, February 20, 2020, the Commission hosted an “Evening of Conversation with Mrs. Josephine Bolling McCall,” author of “The Penalty for Success: My Father Was Lynched in Lowndes County, AL” and the president of The Elmore Bolling Foundation. The events took place at St. John’s Episcopal Church, Pensacola, FL, and at St. James Episcopal Church, Fairhope, AL. The following day, after each presentation, the Commission welcomed the audience members for “Holy Grounds and Rounds” (coffee & donuts) conversations with Mrs. McCall. These events allowed for more personalized conversations with Mrs. McCall and discussions about what we heard the evening before, what it can mean for our community, and what are some next steps.

Our next workshop of Racial Reconciliation Sacred Conversations was on Saturday, February 22, 2020, at St. Paul’s Episcopal Chapel, Magnolia Springs, AL.

On Sunday, March 1, 2020, Commission members and other parishioners from the Diocese of the CGC made a pilgrimage to Selma, AL. The pilgrimage was made to commemorate the anniversary of what is known as “Bloody Sunday.” (When about 600 people started a planned march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, on

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Sunday March 7, 1965, it was called a demonstration. When state troopers met the demonstrators at the edge of the city by the Edmund Pettus Bridge, that day became known as "Bloody Sunday.")

The Commission then conducted the second of several pre-planned in-person speaker events, entitled "An Evening with the Rev. Nibs Stroupe," co-author of "Passionate for Justice-Ida B. Wells" on Friday, March 6, 2020 from 6pm-7:30pm. The event was held at St. Christopher's Episcopal Church, Pensacola, FL. Then on the next morning, the Commission welcomed the audience members for "Holy Grounds and Rounds" (coffee & donuts) conversations with Rev. Stroupe. The event allowed for more personalized conversations with Rev. Stroupe and discussions about what we heard the evening before, what it can mean for our community, and what are some next steps.

It was at this point that the pandemic forced a shutdown of all in person gatherings in the diocese. Events that had been planned for the year and that were cancelled include:

- An Evening with Ms. Elizabeth Eckford, member of the Little Rock Nine, with Dr. Eurydice and Grace Stanley, co-authors of "The Worst First Day: Bullied While Desegregating Central High."
- Three separate planned pilgrimages to the Equal Justice Initiative National Memorial for Peace & Justice and Legacy Museum, which are located in Montgomery, AL.
- Five Racial Reconciliation Sacred Conversations workshops.
- Four in-person meetings of the Commission.
- A pilgrimage to The Whitney Plantation, which is located in Edgard, LA.
- In person participation in the Episcopal Church's Becoming Beloved Community Summit, which was to be hosted by Diocese of Minnesota Twin Cities.
- In person attendance at The Union of Black Episcopalians Annual Conference, which was scheduled for Monday, June 29 through Friday, July 3, 2020 in Montgomery, AL.
- In person attendance at the Jonathan Myrick Daniels Pilgrimage, which was scheduled for Saturday, August 15, 2020 in Hayneville, AL.

The pandemic took an immediate toll on the work we had planned to do with the \$12,000 Becoming Beloved Community Grant that we were awarded. We proposed to partner with The DuBose Chapter of the UBE, Alabama Arise, and the Alabama Institute for Social Justice to introduce the Beloved Community curriculum to their constituent groups. This is made possible because one of the beauties of the Becoming Beloved Community curriculum is that it can be used as a platform for discussion among believers of many faith traditions and can also be modified for civic groups. Unfortunately, all our efforts at introduction were planned for in-person gatherings, which had to be abandoned because of the pandemic.

Not wanting to lose the momentum that was evident in the Commission's work, we pivoted our work to online virtual presentations. Thus, it began this process with a series of four speakers:

1. May 6th – Ms. Robyn Hyden - Alabama Arise  
Ms. Hyden is the Executive Director of Alabama Arise which is a statewide nonprofit, nonpartisan coalition of congregations, organizations, and individuals united in their belief that people in poverty are suffering because of state policy decisions. Through Arise, groups and individuals join together to promote policies to improve the lives of Alabamians with low incomes. Arise provides a structure in which Alabamians can engage in public debates to promote the common good. Arise accomplishes this through policy analysis, statewide organizing, and citizen advocacy.
2. May 20th – Ms. Carla Crowder - Alabama Appleseed Center for Law & Justice  
Ms. Crowder directs the organization's policy advocacy agenda centered on the intersection of poverty and the criminal justice system. Appleseed's campaigns challenge policing for profit, laws that needlessly ensnare Alabamians in jails and prisons, and a court system funded on the backs of the poor.

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3. June 3<sup>rd</sup> – Dr. Carlos E Alemán - Hispanic Interest Coalition of Alabama  
¡HICA! is a community development and advocacy organization that champions economic equality, civic engagement, and social justice for Latino and immigrant families in Alabama. ¡HICA! envisions an Alabama in which everyone has full and equal participation in our state's civic, cultural, social, and economic life. Hispanic and immigrant families are empowered to integrate, engage, and lead their communities to reach their families' aspirations.
4. June 17<sup>th</sup> – Rev. Deacon Carolyn Foster - Poor People's Campaign  
The Rev. Deacon Foster is a leader of the Alabama Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival, a movement that continues the work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and works to dismantle the unjust systems of racism, poverty, ecological devastation and the war economy which adversely impact poor and low-income people.

However, the need for Commission's ministry was made more evident by the national racial re-awakening following the May 25, 2020 killing of George Floyd. The Commission needed to find a way to connect the Diocese to create a brave space for grieving, sacred conversation, and prayer, whose necessity was brought about by this visceral example of systematic racism playing out in the streets of America. In response, the Commission conducted a Virtual Diocesan Prayer Vigil for Racial Healing on June 19, 2020. This brave space included prayer, personal witness statements, sacred music and blessings. By all measures, the vigil brought people together in deep and meaningful ways.

In furtherance of its commitment to engage the diocese in its work and inspired by the words of the Presiding Bishop, the Commission compiled an extensive list of resources entitled "Learn | Pray | Act" to help us continue to:

- Learn - "Go and Learn what this means"
- Pray - "They devoted themselves to prayer"
- Act - Let your "yes" be "YES"

This extensive list includes titles of books, videos, interviews, and movies - all with brief annotations. This is another endeavor to encourage parishioners of the diocese to commit to being about the work of Becoming Beloved Community. The resource is available at: <https://www.diocgc.org/learn-pray-act>.

As earlier indicated, 2020 marked the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary for the creation of the Episcopal Diocese of the CGC. To commemorate the 50th Jubilee Celebration, the month of August was designated with the theme: Justice and Reconciliation. Therefore, we invited Dr. Catherine Meeks, the executive director of the Absalom Jones Episcopal Center for Racial Healing to conduct a three-part virtual presentation. The purpose of the series was to take a deeper dive into our "Learn-Pray-Act" commitment by exploring systemic, institutional, and personal racism, and learn what we can do to dismantle it. Breakout sessions for further conversations were facilitated by members of the Commission.

Using the four quadrants of the Becoming Beloved Community curriculum used by the Episcopal Church (Telling the Truth, Proclaiming the Dream, Practicing the Way and Repairing the Breach) the Commission continued in its long way to address exigent circumstances in our society.

The three sessions were led by Dr. Meeks on the following evenings:

1. August 12<sup>th</sup> – Truth Telling – We explored diocesan and local convening of public truth telling, confession and racial violence and oppression, and explored ways in which society, our church, and institutions have been complicit. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rm7lhRHZwck>

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2. August 19<sup>th</sup> – Healing – We sought ways to accelerate local and regional efforts for reconciliation and healing, especially via anti-racism and racial healing and formation. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ohUY0CsPEOA>
3. August 26<sup>th</sup> – Justice – We sought ways to equip local leaders with resources for racial justice action and repair, particularly focusing on reimagining policing, criminal justice reform, and the racially disparate impact of the pandemic on persons of color. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WXR2I6P0Yi8>

The Diocese of the CGC ended its Jubilee Celebration with a “Just Mercy, Just Jesus Virtual Revival” with the presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church, Michael B. Curry, and Bryan Stevenson, author of “Just Mercy” and the executive director of the Equal Justice Initiative. The event was held on Friday, December 4. It was a special celebration devoted to remembering who Jesus is for us, reorienting ourselves to mercy and renewing hope as we go forward. The event featured music, prayer, personal testimonies from people from around our diocese and featured meaningful conversation between the prophetic voices of Presiding Bishop Curry and Mr. Stevenson. By all metrics, it was a rousing success, as over 10,000 individuals, national and internationally tuned in for the presentation.

The following morning, Commission members served as facilitators to audience members for a virtual “Revival Roundup Coffee Hour” discussion. The goal was to engage the audience members in discussions about what they heard the evening before, what it can mean for our community, and what are some next steps.

Commission members have participated in virtual racial reconciliation workshops sponsored by both the Diocese of Atlanta and the Diocese of Alabama in an attempt to acquire the necessary knowledge for smoothly transforming the Commission’s workshops from in-person gatherings to virtual ones. Our first virtual workshop is scheduled for January 16, 2021.

We have also scheduled, for the month of February 2021, an in-service training with Conversation Starters, a cultural competency and equity consultation firm that specializes in diversity and facilitation training. The 15 hours of training will occur over a three-week period and is broken into five-hour blocks. The goal of such training is to enhance the Commission members’ ability to engage courageously in difficult conversations, thereby further enabling their abilities to create inclusive spaces where authentic relationships can build, thereby laying the groundwork for sustainable change.

The Commission also plans to introduce the Dismantling Racism Youth Curriculum in the CGC sometime in 2021. A Commission member has participated in the required Youth Curriculum training that is a prerequisite to being able to use the curriculum. There are plans for other Commission members and CGC youth ministers to take the training, thereby expanding the reach of the youth curriculum within the CGC.

Plans for the first half of 2021 include nearly all virtual events, with the second half including a concentration of pilgrimages, in-person workshops and speaker series and the full use of the grant funding by the Presiding Bishop’s Advisory Committee on Implementing Becoming Beloved Community.

For more information go to <https://www.diocgc.org/racial-justice-and-reconciliation>, like our Facebook Page Commission on Racial Justice and Reconciliation, and check out Eventbrite.

Respectfully submitted,  
Joe McDaniel, Jr. & Gary A. Moore, Co-Chairs

## REPORTS TO THE DIOCESAN CONVENTION

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### REPORTS OF THE DIOCESAN COORDINATORS

#### BROTHERHOOD OF ST. ANDREW

Report forthcoming

#### CHAPLAINS TO RETIRED CLERGY & CLERGY SPOUSES

COVID-19 restricted the ministry of the diocesan chaplains to the retired in 2020, making several events and outreach efforts of previous years either more difficult or impossible. The six chaplains continued to contact retirees on a one-to-one basis, sometimes in person, sometimes over the telephone, and sometimes through written notes.

Chaplains to the retired serve at the pleasure of the bishop. During 2020, they were the Rev. John and Ann Phillips, the Rev. Joe Hagberg, Ms. Sheila Campbell, and the Rev. Richard and Pamela Schmidt. The Schmidts serve as coordinators for the group.

“The Geezer Gazette” is an occasional newsletter for retirees of the diocese containing meditations, personal narratives, and opinion pieces on topics pertaining to retirement and aging, written by the retired clergy and clergy spouses of the diocese. Three issues were published in 2021.

Due to COVID-19, the annual luncheon for retirees, hosted by the bishop each fall, was not held, nor was the annual provincial meeting of chaplains from Province IV, usually held each spring. Informal luncheons for retirees and spouses, normally held six times a year at Baldwin House, a retirement facility in Spanish Fort, were also not held in 2020.

The chaplains hope that as the nation gets the pandemic under control and it is once again safe to gather in groups, ministries to and for the retired of the diocese can be resumed and expanded for 2021.

Respectfully submitted,

The Rev. Dr. Richard H. Schmidt and Ms. Pamela H. Schmidt, Chaplains

#### DAUGHTERS OF THE KING

The Central Gulf Coast Diocesan Assembly of The Order of the Daughters of the King® currently has 215 members in 23 parish chapters, and 29 members called Daughters at Large who are in parishes without chapters. Early in 2020 an informational meeting about the Order took place at St. Paul’s in Daphne, AL, and there is a chapter in formation there with 16 interested women.

Members of The Order undertake a Rule of Life, incorporating two Rules:

1. Rule of Prayer: praying daily for the extension of Christ’s Kingdom, their clergy, the spiritual growth of their parish, needs brought to their attention, and for members of the Order;
2. Rule of Service: participating regularly in the worship, study and work of the Church, assisting their priests in the ministry of the Church, and bringing others to a knowledge and love of Christ.

The Central Gulf Coast Assembly meets twice a year in the spring and fall. Last spring’s assembly took place in early March at St. James, Fairhope, immediately before the pandemic shutdown. The keynote speaker was

## **REPORTS TO THE DIOCESAN CONVENTION**

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Krisita Jackson, the National President of the Order. Bishop Russell was the celebrant and homilist at the Eucharist.

Last fall the Assembly held a virtual Quiet Day led by the Rev. Donna Gerold who held a workshop titled "The Gifts of Imperfection," based on the works of Brené Brown.

Diocesan Daughters organized and attended a prayer chapel during the Diocesan Annual Church Convention at Christ Church Cathedral in February, providing prayer support throughout the proceedings, both on site and electronically. This is traditionally an annual event.

Respectfully submitted,  
Beth Moore, President

### **DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE COORDINATOR**

Report forthcoming

### **ECUMENICAL OFFICER FOR ALABAMA AND FLORIDA**

Apart from nominal engagements in Mobile, Alabama, early in 2020, there is nothing further to report due to the COVID-19 deprivations and precautions this year.

Respectfully submitted,  
Joseph Hagberg, Ecumenical and Interfaith Officer for Florida  
Thomas Heard, Ecumenical and Interfaith Officer for Alabama

### **EDUCATION FOR MINISTRY (EfM)**

As with so many activities in our diocese this past year, Education for Ministry was severely curtailed in 2020. As the program is based upon small groups of people gathered to study and discuss Scripture, church history, theology and spirituality, the limitations placed on all of us in regards to in-person meetings has made this process difficult at best.

In January 2020, there were six active groups, with 47 participants and 11 active mentors. After COVID-19-related limits on gatherings began to take effect, most went to Zoom meetings, while others, unfortunately, saw participation drastically drop. There were seven participants who completed the four-year course and graduated in May.

With hope for improvements in COVID-19 numbers by September (the traditional starting point for EfM each year), each group planned to start again last fall. However, as we know, the numbers did not improve, and other plans were made. At least one group planned to start in January in hopes that the situation would improve by then (which it did not). Others attempted to continue with Zoom or similar online platforms.

Due to both COVID-19 and new software adopted by the University of the South (Sewanee), the statistics usually compiled by the EfM staff at Sewanee in November were not gathered, so the numbers reported here were gathered by contacting the known groups from the previous year. From these contacts, I can report that three groups are currently active (St. Andrew's, Panama City; Christ Church Parish, Pensacola; and St. Christopher's, Pensacola). There are 23 participants and four active mentors meeting via Zoom.



## REPORTS TO THE DIOCESAN CONVENTION

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Mentors reported challenges in both retaining participants and recruiting new ones. Negative responses were primarily centered around virus concerns or not wanting to meet via Zoom. (One of the great benefits of EfM groups is developing new friendships during the weekly gatherings around a table or in a parish parlor.) On the positive side, most of the groups remained in touch, even if they were not having weekly group meetings. There were Zoom book clubs, periodic catching-up by text or emails, and even an ugly sweater party. There is also continued interest going forward. Many current and potential participants are anxiously awaiting the wide-spread availability of vaccines, when the restrictions on meeting in-person will hopefully be lifted.

There are also a number of new mentors who were trained at Beckwith Camp and Convention Center a year ago. At that event, 10 mentors from the diocese were either trained or recertified. At least another three mentors were trained elsewhere last year, before Sewanee closed down in-person training. Sewanee continues to offer online training. (Mentors, who lead each EfM group, must receive training at least every 18 months to maintain their certification).

The future is bright for Education for Ministry. There are many parish leaders and others across the diocese who want to offer EfM in their congregations. I am hopeful that by this time next year, our numbers will be even greater than they were this time last year.

Respectfully submitted,  
The Rev. David M. Clothier, Coordinator

### THE EPISCOPAL COMMUNITY

Report forthcoming

### EPISCOPAL RELIEF AND DEVELOPMENT

The 2020 year was a challenging year for Episcopal Relief & Development. The year started out with great promise. The One Thousand Days of Love campaign was hitting its stride in raising money for improving the lives of children up to age six. Data shows that these are very important years in the development of a person's life. Data also shows that those who receive assistance during this time are much less likely to need support in later life.

Also early in the year, time was spent informing people about the 2020 Lenten Meditations and Episcopal Relief Sunday. Lent was officially designated at the 2009 General Convention of The Episcopal Church as a time for dioceses, congregations and individuals to remember and support the work of Episcopal Relief & Development. Although the first Sunday in Lent is the official day of observance, churches may hold a special service on any Sunday. Liturgical resources to help congregations observe Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday are available at [episcopalrelief.org/sunday](http://episcopalrelief.org/sunday).

In March of last year, Episcopal Relief & Development representatives began to cease visitation to all parishes and diocesan conventions all across the country. While visits stopped the needs did not. The organization responded to those in need due to COVID-19 and to those affected by natural disasters. Go to [2020 PRESS RELEASES](#) to see some activities during 2020.

As things begin to return to normal in 2021 and 2022 Episcopal Relief & Development will again be more engaged parishes around the diocese and across the country.

Respectfully submitted,  
Eugene Johnston, Coordinator

## REPORTS TO THE DIOCESAN CONVENTION

### MEN'S CONFERENCE

Fifty-one men from 19 parishes of the Central Gulf Coast, plus two visitors from other Episcopal dioceses, enjoyed learning, prayer and fellowship at the 39<sup>th</sup> annual Men's Conference. The Very Rev. Ian Markham, dean of the Virginia Seminary, led the discussion on "Politics and Religion: Can Christians Still Render Unto Caesar?" Under Dr. Markham's skillful direction, the group explored such controversial topics as immigration, gun control, and capitalism and concluded by discovering how Christian civility can be a means of bridging honest differences. Of course, the conference was not all work, as the participants enjoyed their annual oyster shuck, a delicious outdoor fish fry, and great singing led by the able Charlie Roose. Worship included the Saturday night candlelight Taizé service and the final Sunday Eucharist officiated by Dr. Markham.

At the Eucharist a generous offering was raised for the VTS capital fund drive, and Dr. Markham said the conference would be honored in the seminary roles as a donor.

The pandemic has led to the postponement 2021 conference until September 17, 18 and 19 when Rev. Canon Scott Gunn, executive director of the Forward Movement, will lead a discussion of his book "Walk in Love." The fall should be a beautiful time to meet at Beckwith and renew old friendships and meet new friends from all over our diocese. Men, mark it on your calendar, come and by part of our 40<sup>th</sup> conference...and enjoy.

Respectfully submitted,  
Dick Hooper, Coordinator

### UNITED THANK OFFERING REPORT

This past year has been a challenging year. The COVID-19 pandemic is still creating substantial health and financial concerns all around the world. In order to respond to this crisis, The United Thank Offering deferred our planned 2021 grant focus of creation care to COVID-19 response. We will continue with the creation care focus for the 2022 granting cycle.

The good news is our diocese received its' 26<sup>th</sup> UTO grant in 2020. The grant for \$50,000 is supporting a missionary to coordinate the congregations in the Mobile area to strengthen our evangelism efforts. I believe this important position will result in bringing new people into the Christian life and I look forward to seeing the fruits of this project.

The total ingathering for our diocese is down significantly. The total 2020 ingathering was \$6,818.27 and 2019 was \$12,861.12. I know that we have all suffered financial challenges this year. A significant decrease in in-person worship has hurt our efforts to hold ingatherings. As in all difficult times, we need to find new ways to continue conducting our business. Anyone can send in a check to the address found on the boxes and our website.

UTO

DFMS

PO Box 958983

St. Louis, Mo 63195-8983

You can also donate online at: <mailto:https://unitedthankoffering.com/give/>

## REPORTS TO THE DIOCESAN CONVENTION

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As always, you will receive an IRS approved confirmation of your donation. You can also donate in honor or memory of someone and you can opt to have a note sent to that person informing them of your contribution. You will be asked to list our diocese and your parish so that they will receive credit for your gift.

It is more important than ever for us to practice thankfulness every day. If you cannot add money to your box at this time, write your prayers of thanksgiving on a slip of paper and place those in your blue box. The important thing to remember is to live a grateful life.

The ingathering information is:

St. Matthew's	Chipley, Fl	\$274.10
Christ Cathedral	Mobile, Al	\$506.09
Holy Trinity	Pensacola, FL	\$68.63
St. Patrick's	Panama City, Fl	\$118.96
St. Paul's	Daphne, Al	\$141.91
Christ Church	Pensacola, Fl	\$200.00
St. John's	Mobile, Al	\$18.94
St. Jude's	Niceville, Al	\$428.55
St. Thomas	Greenville, Al	\$301.50
St. Mary's	Coden, Al	\$587.09
St. Marks's	Troy, Al	\$100.00
St. James	Port St. Joe, Fl	\$466.65
St. James	Fairhope, Al	\$271.82
St. Augustine's	Navarre, Al	\$128.50
St. Francis of Assisi	Gulf Breeze, Fl	\$700.48
St. Monica's	Cantonment, Fl	\$10.05
St. Paul's	Mobile, Al	\$2400.00
Misc individual donors		\$95.00

If you or your congregation needs any assistance with ordering materials, hosting an ingathering or writing an application do not hesitate to contact me at [jlanderscgc@gmail.com](mailto:jlanderscgc@gmail.com).

Respectfully submitted,

Joyce Landers, Diocesan UTO Coordinator and UTO Vice President

### YOUTH MINISTRY

In December of 2019, Rachel Gilliam stepped in to head up the Committee. We began holding monthly meetings in January of 2020.

In February of 2020, the Youth Ministry Committee hosted the Convention Youth Lock-In at St. Luke's in Mobile, AL. We had 16 youth attend the lock-in.

In March, we ceased our in-person meetings and continued via Zoom. Most of what we had calendared out back in January ended up being cancelled, including Worship on the Water.

In April, the Youth Ministry Committee released a resource guide for Youth Ministers, providing creative options for engaging youth virtually during lock-down.

## REPORTS TO THE DIOCESAN CONVENTION

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In September, the Committee consulted on the Confirmation Curriculum that Ministry Architects has been working on for the Diocese.

The Committee put together a video of youth around the Diocese reading the different parts of an Evening Prayer service that was published on Facebook Live in October as "Pizza and Prayer."

We attempted to host a virtual Tacky Christmas Sweater Sing-A-Long in December for youth groups to participate in, but we did not have anyone register, so we had to cancel that.

2020 was obviously a hard year for so many. Plans were thwarted and events were cancelled. The youth, especially, were robbed of many things in the past year. With Zoom being the only safe option, Zoom fatigue soon became a real issue that the Youth Ministry Committee was very aware of. With the inability to meet safely in person, and the popularity of Zoom activities waning, our hope was to be a resource to Youth Ministers, as well as provide virtual engagement to youth diocesan-wide. As we turn to 2021, and the pandemic still not under control, we are turning our focus to connecting local churches, and resourcing parishes who are going to have to rebuild their youth programs once in-person programming may resume diocesan-wide.

Respectfully submitted,  
Rachel Gilliam, Coordinator