

## 2007 DIOCESAN ECW REPORT

Rt. Rev. Sirs, Clergy, Delegates, and Visitors, Good Morning!

Thank you Bishop Parsley for this time to report to the convention the work of the Episcopal Church Women of our Diocese in 2007. On behalf of the ECW, I congratulate our new Bishop Suffragan, and we want you to know that we are very excited that we will be working with you, and we hope for a long time.

2007 was an active and productive year thanks in part to the outstanding leadership of our president, Alleen Cater. Our theme "And all shall be well", the words of Julian of Norwich, were heard and seen all year long, either in words of hope, comfort, or support, in homilies, or inscribed on a ring a board member received as a gift. And, what a gift Julian gave us all, and we of the ECW heard and believed her words, "And all shall be well".

I like to think of the ECW as an energy force serving God and carrying out our mission: to empower, motivate, and nurture the women of the diocese of Alabama in utilizing their gifts and talents to serve Christ in this world. And, we used our gifts and talents to raise funds to support our many ministries, we also cooked countless meals, made hundreds of cheese balls, knitted prayer shawls, made Moses baskets for newborns, collected items for Sawyerville, held teas, provided bible studies, volunteered at free clinics, held bazaars, took mission trips, and much, much more. And, we had fun too. The gift of fellowship for women of all ages was shared and welcomed, and made others feel that all shall be well in their lives.

Imagine, 97 women of all ages, from their 20's to their 80's, enjoying a Women's Weekend at Camp McDowell, "Celebrating Sisterhood". We laughed, sang, talked, sipped a little wine, and had a variety of fun activities thanks to the women of the Tennessee Valley Convocation. Did you know that a priest in our diocese could sing karioke? She did, and was a hit. We took a yoga class, and we belly danced, which produced lots of belly laughs. Julian also wrote "God delights in each and every one of us". Surely He was delighted with us that weekend, and all was well at Camp McDowell.

Not long ago, I talked to my priest about the Church Periodical Club. He pointed out several rows of books in his office that he had purchased with his CPC money and he feels these books made him a better priest so that all would be well in our church. Because of the generosity of those churches who support CPC, the ECW sent each seminarian from our diocese \$214 for books. Please, support a CPC Sunday in your church.

I know you are familiar with the United Thank Offering blue boxes on the tables. The United Thank Offering has been around for over 120 years and women and men are still filling their boxes in thanksgiving. In 2007, the Diocese of Alabama contributed over \$42,000. Every penny you give to the UTO is given in grants to organizations worldwide. Yes, every penny. Zona Tounsley, of St. Luke's in Scottsboro, is the Province IV representative to the National UTO Committee. Ask her about the granting process. Alabama was awarded two grants last year: the Jubilee Center of Montgomery for an after school arts program, and Safeplace, of Florence, for an after school non-violence program, so that all will be well for those children. The blue boxes on the table are here for you to fill at this convention. Please, be generous.

Many of you here today have someone in your family or know of someone in your parish who has received an ECW College Scholarship. Nancy Thompson of the Advent and her committee, after careful consideration and prayer, awarded \$12,750 to 20 deserving applicants. This is an example of the ECW working to help the students of our diocese so that they and their families will feel that all will be well. Thank you for your generosity and please, continue supporting the ECW College Scholarship Fund.

Are you aware that there are five hundred eighty women of this diocese who pray for you? Some are praying at this very minute. The Daughters of the King, an order of prayer and service, have in our diocese,

thirty seven chapters, two junior chapters, and forty three daughters at large. If you want more information on the DOK, please contact the Rev. Alison Carmody, the DOK Chaplain.

Another way of helping all to be well is the ECW involvement in the ACTS2 campaign with a pledge of sixty five thousand dollars over five years toward the new sacristy for the St. Frances Chapel at Camp McDowell. Fundraising is underway in parishes across the diocese and individuals are also contributing to the ECW pledge. Olivia Weingarten of St. Thomas and Fiona Watts of St. Stephen's in Birmingham are planning our first major event- a Wine and Cheese Silent Auction to be held April 17th from 6:00-9:00 p.m. at All Saints in Birmingham. Admission is only \$5.00. Please, mark your calendars. Come, enjoy a glass of wine, good food, and bid on fabulous auction items. You will certainly have a great time. Your ECW is working to make all things well for all who visit and worship at Camp McDowell.

I hope you have noticed this beautiful scarf. It was a gift from the women of the East Alabama Convocation who hosted our Fall Conference in Auburn. The women of Tuskegee, Smith Station, Seale, Roanoke, Opelika, Auburn, and Alex City knitted scarves for all the attendees, plus extras for shut-ins and the needy. Tana Branch, convocation coordinator, and her committee wanted to do something special, and what an idea! Think about this, women of all ages coming together in their parishes, sharing their talents, knitting all those scarves, and enjoying wonderful fellowship. This is what ECW is all about. During the conference we shared our works through out the year, enjoyed meals together, were led in Compline by the students at St. Dunsden's, Bishop Parsley installed the new ECW Diocesan Board, and we also heard from Dr. Julia Gatta from Sewanee. She gave us insights into Julian of Norwich that helped all of us appreciate and understand Julian and how in the time in which she lived with war, famine, plague and horrible conditions, that because of her belief in God's deep love for everyone, she could write that "all shall be well". I thank the women of the East Alabama Convocation for a most enjoyable conference and for making all things well in auburn.

All of the activities I have mentioned here today can be found on our website designed by our webmaster, Sally Sinclair of St. Stephen's in Birmingham. Sally keeps it all up to date so that you will know what is going on in parishes across the diocese. We greatly appreciate Sally's talent and service, and invite you to all visit the ECW website at [www.alabamaecw.org](http://www.alabamaecw.org).

In keeping with the theme of this convention, Tending the Garden: Our Stewardship of Creation, I am pleased that Lisa Gruner of St. Stephen's, Huntsville will act as liaison between the ECW Board and the Diocesan Task Force for the Stewardship of Creation. Let us all actively participate in this important ministry and "green" our homes and churches.

I want to thank you Bishop Parsley and tell you how much we appreciate the support you give to the Episcopal Church Women. And, we also thank the clergy for their interest and support. The Episcopal Church Women of the Diocese of Alabama are here to serve our Lord and do our part to make all things well for our diocese.

Please take home the ECW bookmark to use and note the website. Also, look at the ECW page on your table listing all the women who serve in some capacity on the ECW Board for 2008. Now, enjoy our short video presentation created by Lisa Gruner of St. Stephen's in Huntsville.

Thank you and please continue to support the ECW.

Dee Buzby  
President