

**THE MINUTES OF THE 119TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE
EPISCOPAL CHURCH WOMEN – DIOCESE OF ALABAMA
ST. STEPHEN’S EPISCOPAL CHURCH, BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA
OCTOBER 9-10, 2008**

The Birmingham Convocation hosted the 119th Annual Conference of the Episcopal Church Women of the Diocese of Alabama at St. Stephen’s Church on October 9-10, 2008. The speaker was the Rev. Dr. Jo Bailey Wells, associate professor of the Practice of Christian Ministry and Bible at Duke University Divinity School. The Conference began with Noonday Prayers led by the Rev. Deacon Katy Smith.

Diocesan ECW President, Dee Buzby, called the Opening Session to order at 2:08 p.m. on October 9, and invited everyone to join together in saying the ECW Prayer. Dee introduced the Rev. Russell Kendrick, Rector of St. Stephen’s, who gave a warm welcome to everyone. Dee recognized Melville Newman, ECW President at St. Stephen’s, thanked her and all the ladies of St. Stephen’s for hosting us and also the ladies of St. John’s Deaf Church for hosting the Wine and Cheese. She also recognized Janet Robertshaw who made all the beautiful heart gifts in the goodie bags.

Dee introduced the clergy attending: The Rev. Deacon Katy Smith, The Venerable Louise R. Thibodaux, The Rev. Alison Carmody, The Rev. Fletcher Comer, The Rev. Marianne Stephens, The Rev. Joy Phipps and The Right Rev. and Mrs. Robert O. Miller.

Dee introduced special guest Marcie Cherau, Province IV Representative to the National ECW Board who brought greetings from the National Board. Marcie recognized Zona Tounsley who is the Province IV Representative to the National UTO Committee and introduced Kay Meyer, National ECW President. Kay encouraged us to pray for each other, our clergy and all the lay people.

Dee introduced the past presidents with us: Jo Walton, Mary Lou Johnston, Lucy Ware, Alice Tyson, Tora Johnson, Olivia Weingarten and Alleen Cater. Dee recognized and thanked the 43 ECW Board members and committee members.

Minutes: The minutes of the 118th Annual Conference were approved as presented on a motion by Bea Strong. The minutes are on the ECW website www.alabamaecw.org.

Treasurer’s Report: Carolyn Woodson, Treasurer, reported the ending balance in the Operating Fund as of 9/30/08 is \$9,630.13 and the summary of accounts is \$24,588.90. To date, over \$43,000.00 of the \$65,000.00 pledge for ACTS2 has been received. Bea Strong moved the 2009 ECW Budget be approved as presented. Motion carried. The complete Treasurer’s Report is on the website www.alabamaecw.org.

Corporate Gift: Sally Lowe moved the 2009 Corporate gift of \$2,000.00 go to the ACTS2 pledge. The motion carried.

Calendar Handbook: Gethryn Giles reminded everyone to pick up the 2009 *St. Anne, Grandmother of Our Savior* Calendar Handbooks. Each parish gets two free; extra copies are available for \$5.00 each. Gethryn asked all presidents to fill out and return the parish Mission and Ministry activity sheet as well as the ECW Information sheet.

Dee introduced and thanked the interpreters for the deaf, Nancy Hayes and Lynn Fulton.

Liz Ensey, Birmingham Convocation Coordinator, welcomed everyone saying it had truly been a joy working with the Birmingham group preparing for this event.

ACTS2 Fundraiser: Fiona Watts reported that in April, the Birmingham area hosted a Wine and Cheese, Silent and Live Auction fundraiser that exceeded our expectations by raising over \$25,000.00. Fiona thanked Alleen Cater for a great job saying it would not have been possible without Alleen overseeing the auction part of the fundraiser. She thanked Memily Colvin, and all the ladies from All Saints for hosting this event. Over 300 people attended, including all three bishops. Future fundraisers are being planned to be held in Montgomery in 2009 and Huntsville in 2010.

Lambeth Gift: A surprise gift from the Lambeth Conference is being raffled off. The gift is provided by the Right Rev. and Mrs. Henry N. Parsley, Jr. and the proceeds will go to ACTS2.

St. Claire's needle arts guild: Alleen Cater announced that details about this newly organized group will be on the website soon. It is designed to be an 'eguild', a resource for people who knit and do needle point, a place to find out what projects need helping hands and who is available to teach. The object is for people with like interests to find and help each other with their needle arts projects.

Nominations: Jane Dickson presented the proposed slate of officers for 2010-2011:
President-Elect, Fiona Watts
Secretary, Nancy Thompson
Treasurer, Jill Whitten
UTO Chairperson, Brenda Mayhall.

There being no nominations from the floor, Carolyn Woodson moved the slate be accepted. Motion carried. The proposed slate of delegates and alternate for Triennial, to be held in July, 2009 in Anaheim, CA, is:

Dee Buzby, president
Gethryn Giles, president-elect
Barbara Carpenter, UTO
Frances Lowe, missions;
Alternate, Marilyn Atkins, secretary

Cheri Blair moved the slate for Triennial be accepted. Motion carried.

Women's Weekend: Cathy Blackney invited every one to come to Women's Weekend May 15-17, 2009 at Camp McDowell. The speaker will be Sissy Wile, Interim Director of EFM at Sewanee. The theme is Grandmotherly love especially the love of *St. Anne, Grandmother of our Savior*.

Scholarship Committee: Dee announced that 15 scholarships were awarded this year and the recipient's pictures are in the October *Apostle*. Dee thanked Nancy Thompson for her committees' good work. Dee thanked everyone for their support of the scholarship fund.

Church Periodical Club (CPC): Dee announced that nine seminarians in our diocese will each receive \$246.14 this year. The first Sunday in May is CPC Sunday. If you would like to start a CPC fund in your parish please contact Brenda Mayhall for materials.

United Thank Offering (UTO): Barbara Carpenter gave a summary of 2008 UTO Grant awards. In Province IV, there were 31 grant applications submitted of which 20 grants were awarded for a total of \$608,294.00. Overall, 198 grant applications were submitted and of that number, 91 grants were awarded for a total of \$2,401,906.70.

Barbara introduced Zona Tounsley, Province IV Representative, on the UTO Board. Zona thanked the Diocese of Alabama for their continued support of United Thank Offering. For the past eight years, Alabama has given an average of \$44,000.00 a year to United Thank Offering. There aren't many dioceses in the entire Episcopal Church that give as much as the Diocese of Alabama.

Barbara announced that the Diocese of Alabama submitted two grant applications and received two grant awards in 2008. She encouraged more to apply for 2009 grants. Applications are available from Carpenter House now or you can download them from the UTO website. They must be returned to Carpenter House by December 15, 2008. Next year the rules will allow only one grant application from each diocese and one from a companion diocese (Haiti).

Barbara Carpenter presented certificates to representatives of the organizations receiving grants this year:

- \$5,500.00 to Bakers on Wheels, Inc., Moody, AL
To purchase and install a convection oven to equip Bakers on Wheels (BOW) with an oven, customized for bakers in wheelchairs, in order to expand their Basket Ministry. BOW makes and donates breads to the homeless, friendless, sick, hungry and disabled in two counties that are more than 70% women and children.
- \$23,000 to Shoals Family Success Center, Florence AL
Family Life University

To fund the salaries of facilitators, space and audio/visual equipment for anger management and life skills classes for incarcerated men and women who are in the Community Corrections Work Release program in order to improve their lives, to strengthen their families and reduce future court involvement.

Bakers on Wheels will receive their certificate by mail as they could not be present. They asked Barbara to share how blessed they have been with the new oven. They are able to double the amount of bread baked and thus spread God's love in more areas. They are very grateful.

Martha Jo Daniels accepted the certificate on behalf of the Shoals Family Success Center thanking UTO for this gift that has enabled them to reach out to many.

The blue United Thank Offering box was passed through the body of the 119th Annual Conference so all could thankfully and generously give to support the many grants given by UTO.

Corresponding Secretary: Lisa Gruner reminded everyone that the 2009 Parish Information sheet may be filled out online and submitted. For Fall Conference, 115 people registered of which 41 registered online. Lisa keeps a data base with contact information for all the ECW officers. She also does a clergy pictorial directory which will be updated this year. Please email any pictures of ECW activities to Lisa for a presentation at Convention and for the website.

Missions and Ministries: Fran Lowe reminded everyone to turn in the blue sheet in the calendar before they leave. Please list your activities, tell what you do with the money you make and give a contact person so others interested in doing similar projects will know who to consult.

Parish Leadership Training Event (PLTE): Gethryn Giles announced the PLTE event will be at St. Luke's, Birmingham, on March 28, 2009. There will be an ECW workshop where you will learn about programs and projects for your meetings. Please come and join us.

2009 Fall Conference Invitation: Joan East, Tennessee Valley Convocation Coordinator, invited everyone to come to St. Matthew's Church in Madison next October for Fall Conference.

Dee reminded everyone to visit the Episcopal Book Store and the display by the Camp McDowell Folk School.

The Alms committee will be Carolyn Woodson, Alice Daniel and Bethe Ensey. Please give them your suggestions for recipients of the alms offering before the Eucharist service on Friday.

Dee thanked St. Stephen's, St. John's Deaf Church and everyone in the Birmingham Convocation for a wonderful Fall Conference.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:14 p.m. After a 15 minute break, our speaker, the Rev. Dr. Jo Bailey Wells talked about the theme, *Blessed Is She Who Believes*.

At 4:45 p.m. everyone was invited to a Wine and Cheese Social at St. John's Deaf Church. It was hosted by St. John's Deaf, Grace Woodlawn, and Holy Cross ECW. A delicious dinner was served at St. Stephen's Church prepared by the ECW of St. Luke's, St. Mary's on the Highland, and Cathedral Church of the Advent, under the direction of Martha Black, food coordinator. Following dinner, the Rev. Dr. Jo Bailey Wells gave her second talk on the ECW theme. The evening closed with prayer.

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH WOMEN'S ANNUAL FALL CONFERENCE CONTINUED - OCTOBER 10, 2008

Diocesan President Dee Buzby called the meeting to order at 8:40 a.m. Dee presided over the ECW Parish Sharing Session inviting each representative to take up to two minutes to share the highlights of their year. Alleen Cater was the time-keeper.

Grace, Sheffield, Tennessee Valley Convocation, Caroline Bright –

Betty McCutchon organized a large fundraiser which included all Episcopal Churches and the whole community to benefit *Westminster Interfaith Caring Place*, an Adult Care Center for Alzheimer's Disease and related disorders. Part of the fundraiser was a silent auction. One item – a prayer shawl, sold for \$450.00. The total project to date has brought in \$49,500.00.

Trinity, Florence, Tennessee Valley Convocation, Lucy Ware –

They do cheese balls, prayer shawls and lots of outreach. They were a major supporter of the Shoals Family Success Center that received the UTO grant. June Nestle came up with the idea of a perpetual birthday calendar honoring a few couples who made a difference in the life of Trinity. The proceeds of the sale of calendars will go to the ECW projects.

St. Andrew's, Tuskegee, East Alabama Convocation, Jolai Jenkins –

They had a very successful Shrove Tuesday pancake supper which has become a community event. With advance sales they took in over \$3,000.00. Members of the ECW have reactivated a "Clothes Closet" during Hurricane Katrina and each Saturday morning the Closet is open for God's children in need to "shop" for the gently worn clothing donated to St. Andrew's.

St. Stephen's, Birmingham, Birmingham Convocation, Melville Newman –

Their goal is to have each woman at St. Stephen's feel a part of the ECW so they have Fellowship Ministries: First Monday luncheons/speakers, ECW Sunday, a Prayer Breakfast (to start Advent), a Christmas Wine and Cheese party and a no agenda Women's Weekend. For Service/Outreach Projects, they support Episcopal Place, Gate City School and UTO Sunday. For Fundraising Ministry they have a Spring Tea and Fashion Show in March.

Church of the Ascension, Montgomery, Montgomery Convocation, Emily Reid –

This past year they were very busy preparing for their 100th anniversary celebration at church. They published a beautiful coffee table book entitled, *A Resurrection Story*. They had an ECW Luncheon with the Rev. Mary Earle as the speaker and a dinner with Jon Meacham, Managing Editor at Newsweek, author and well known Episcopalian as speaker with 450 in attendance. They had a celebration luncheon the following Sunday and experienced the joy of giving \$100,000.00 to five local charities.

St. Luke's, Birmingham, Birmingham Convocation, Diane Weatherford –

They had Sister Shubert speak to the ECW in September. They are making advent wreaths which are for sale by pre order, \$15.00 each. They are available for pick-up the week of Sunday, November 23. They have a lot of young women that are new and feel that offering a nursery with a bag lunch for the children has helped their attendance.

Grace Woodlawn, Birmingham, Birmingham Convocation, Bethe Ensey –

Grace at the Table is the cookbook they have for sale for \$10.00. It contains the recipes of the delicious appetizers that were served at the Wine and Cheese. The proceeds will help replace their church pews. They are having their 6th annual St. Nicholas Day Bazaar, Dec. 6, 2008, 9 - 2 at Grace Church. There will be a silent auction, bake sale, and raffle. The money supports Grace's ECW outreach programs.

St. Andrew's, Montevallo, Birmingham Convocation, Helen Bunn –

They completed their building program for this year. As a part of their outreach ministry they are offering English as a second language and are excited to have over 60 in the class. They will install 12 new members of the Order of the Daughter's of the King on December 14. Their bazaar will be December 6, 9-noon. Their priest, Fr. Jim Tuohy will retire June 30, 2009.

Epiphany, Guntersville, Mountain Convocation, Joanna Brooks –

Their big project this year will be having a bazaar sponsored by the ECW held within the church's bazaar. The proceeds from the ECW booths will go to the Haiti project.

St. Matthew's, Madison, Tennessee Valley Convocation, Barbara Carpenter –

Last year their largest project was a yard sale which netted \$5,000.00 most of which went to their building fund pledge and some to outreach in the community. Their second project was to make and freeze soup and sell it with the proceeds of \$1,200.00 going to ACTS2. They do a lot of receptions, had a large "welcome back" for their rector, Fr. Steve when he returned from sabbatical. They do UTO ingathering in the Spring and

Fall. They will do the soup sale again, host a tea and have another yard sale in the Spring.

Grace, Anniston, Cheaha Convocation, Jane Wood –

This year marks the 12th annual Lobster Fest which will be held Nov. 1. Last year they raised \$10,000.00 for Habitat For Humanity, Calhoun County. The ECW concurrently has a bake sale for several outreach projects. This spring they had a white elephant sale with Tora Johnson having a silent auction on one of her paintings. They made \$5,000.00 and an anonymous donor matched this amount which will go to refurbish their King Parlor. On June 8, they installed the St. Anne chapter of the Order of the Daughter's of the King. They discovered that Grace Church had started a DOK chapter named St. Anne in 1913. As such, this makes them the oldest DOK chapter in the diocese.

Trinity, Wetumpka, Montgomery Convocation, Adelaide Cherry –

The cook book *Shall We Gather* was published about a year ago. They have sold 3,000 copies which has paid the debt on the printing of 6,000 cookbooks. The proceeds from the remaining 3,000 books will go to the building fund as they are breaking ground for a new worship area on October 12. The cookbook is \$25.00 and is available at the Episcopal Book Store. They visit other churches for coffee hour and will cook/bake some treats for tasting.

St. Paul's, Greensboro, Black Belt Convocation, Adelaide Cherry –

This church has shrunk in size and there are about 20 women now. The average attendance on Sunday is 26 – 29 people. The challenge is how to make a difference when there are so few. They recently started a new Sunday School program and have 11 children. They support a program that deals with domestic violence and the Sawyerville project. They would like ideas on how a small church can partner with other churches to make a difference in the community and would appreciate people sharing with them.

Christ Church, Albertville, Mountain Convocation, Brenda Mayhall –

They are raffling off a beautiful, large baby afghan with the proceeds going to ACTS2. The afghan will be made in the color choice of the winner. The drawing is October 12. Brenda says they have jumped on the cheese ball wagon. They had a cheese ball tasting contest at their coffee time after church. Twelve different cheese ball recipes were displayed. The parish voted, choosing the top four recipes. They will sell them during the holidays.

Holy Comforter, Montgomery, Montgomery Convocation, Frances Steele –

Their biggest event of the year was a rummage sale which they called "The Big Sale". Leading up to "The Big Sale", one guild sponsored a fun parish spaghetti supper in the fall. A second guild put on an elegant parish dinner in January called, *The Taste of St. Mary's*. In April, they had a silent auction followed by the "Big Sale". All events netted a profit of \$30,000.00.

St. Joseph's on-the-Mountain, Mentone, Mountain Convocation, Gethryn Giles –

There is no ECW at St. Joseph's. They have about 35 – 40 attendance on Sunday. They do cheese balls. Last year they made \$1,200.00 on the sale of cheese balls. Half the money went to ACTS2 and half went to build some cabinets in the church kitchen.

All Saints, Homewood, Birmingham Convocation, Memily Colvin –

While All Saints Church is 80 years old, there has not been an ECW for the past eleven years. It is just now taking hold again and they had 40 at their last monthly luncheon. Soon after they began in January, they hosted the ACTS2 auction fundraiser in April which was a much bigger event than they imagined. They are making meat and vegetarian casseroles, soups and breakfast items which will be on sale November 23 at All Saints. The proceeds will go to support the Love Lady Center that now houses about 300 women and 70 kids that are out of prison or off the street. They collect books, baby food, diapers etc. each month to send to them. They were one of the churches preparing lunch for the Conference today.

St. John's Deaf Church, Birmingham, Birmingham Convocation, Lynn Edge –

They do a pot luck lunch every 3rd Sunday which is one of their fundraisers. The money was spent on a new stove for the kitchen and other needs within the building. They did a Christmas Bazaar last year and have one coming up December 8. They had a yard sale last year and will repeat that on October 24. Their Christmas banquet will be December 20. They have a "Pink Sunday" to honor breast cancer survivors and to remember those who have died.

Holy Cross, Trussville, Birmingham Convocation, Fran Bramlette –

They had a yard sale/rummage sale which netted them \$1,200.00 in just six hours. They support the Trussville Ecumenical Assisted Ministries (TEAM) which has a clothes closet and food pantry for the needy. They donated the left over clothing from the rummage sale to TEAM. They had a family fun night with Bingo and an ice cream social that is a big intergenerational hit. They also have a lot of receptions.

Ascension, Vestavia, Birmingham Convocation, Carolyn Woodson –

In addition to knitting jackets for 300 bears, they host second Sunday lunches at church and have a silent auction in February and a fashion show in March. They have a freezer ministry; they take casseroles to families within the church who have need and they also take care of neighbors in the community. They have a bake sale in December. They have a Merry Players Puppet show that they do for parties for children. They also host many receptions. Some of the money goes for outreach projects including Haiti and some will be used to renovate the church kitchen.

Christ Church, Tuscaloosa, Black Belt Convocation, Bea Strong –

They have several younger gals in their ECW who sponsored a champagne brunch which was lots of fun. November 13, will be a wine and cheese tasting party. They have silver crosses for sale which will be on the website. The crosses are a replica of the gable crosses on their church roof that was built in 1838 and can be worn as a pendant or a pin.

They also have Christmas ornaments for sale on the website. One is a pewter replica of the gable cross.

Cathedral Church of the Advent, Birmingham, Bhm. Convo., Elizabeth Sharman -

One of the most important ministries that the Advent ECW participates in is the “Lenten Lunch Preaching Series.” There are between 350 and 400 women each year who spend more than six weeks preparing and serving lunch following the preaching service. The proceeds go to spreading the gospel all over the world. This is the 101st year of continuous preaching. The series begins on Ash Wednesday with the Bishop preaching and ends on Good Friday with Dean Frank Limehouse preaching. The Service begins at 12:05 p.m. and lunch is served at 12:30 p.m. It is a fun outing and you can hear world renowned speakers. Everyone is encouraged to come.

The Rev. Dr. Jo Bailey Wells presented the third segment of her talk which focused on six women priests in the Sudan, their struggles and their accomplishments.

Following Dr. Wells third talk, President Dee Buzby announced that one-half the alms offering will go to our speaker for the Sudan and the other half will go to our companion Diocese of Haiti for a nutrition program. Dr. Wells said she would like to give the money to the six women priests and let them use it as they see best. Dee announced that checks should be made payable to ECW, Birmingham Convocation.

The winner of the Lambeth surprise gift raffle was Joanna Brooks. The gift was a bronze token replicating a 14th century pilgrim souvenir and the Service booklet from the Conference’s Holy Eucharist signed by the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Rowan Williams. The gift was given by the Right Rev. and Mrs. Henry N. Parsley, Jr. The proceeds of the raffle were \$325.00 and will go to ACTS2.

Thanks were expressed to:

- St. Stephen’s – Lunch on Thursday
- All Saints and Ascension – Lunch on Friday
- St. Thomas, Olivia Weingarten - Registration
- Lynn Edge – Name tags and stationery design
- St. Mark’s, Sylvia McClain – Inspiration stones - Goodie bags
- Epiphany, Leeds; St. Alban’s, St. Andrew’s, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Michael’s, Trinity, Bessemer; and St. Andrew’s, Montevallo –
Cookies/snacks
- Milo’s – Donated 40 gallons of tea.

Dee Buzby encouraged everyone to attend next year’s Fall Conference in Madison, October 8 and 9, at St. Matthew’s.

The 119th Annual Conference closed with the Celebration of the Holy Eucharist. The alms offering was \$1,312.00. The participants were:

The Right Rev. Robert O. Miller, Celebrant

The Rev. Alison Carmody, Preacher
The Rev. Dr. Jo Bailey Wells
The Rev. Marianne Stephens
The Venerable Louise Thibodaux
The Rev. Deacon Kathryn Smith

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn D. Atkins, Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Dee Buzby, President

Gethryn Giles, President-Elect

Carolyn Woodson, Treasurer

Barbara Carpenter, UTO Chairperson