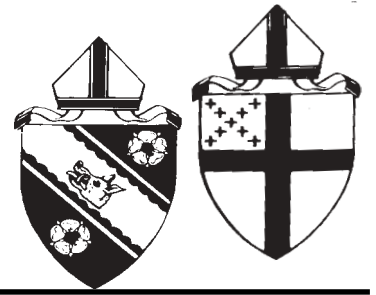




The Episcopal

# CHURCH IN GEORGIA

www.georgia.anglican.org Vol. 72 #5 May 2007



## Students Take Mission Work to Honey Creek

“Mission Honey Creek,” the high school work weekend at the diocesan Camp and Conference Center, attracted 20 teenagers and adults from around the diocese to Honey Creek to work March 2-4.

Their work ranged from establishing an outdoor Stations of the Cross, to painting dormitory commons areas, replacing flooring and some high-ladder cleaning of the chapel (as seen at left).

Among the participants were Kayleigh Chapman (Annunciation, Vidalia), Rachel Grenaker, Jessie Querin, Griff Holland, Phyllis Holland (Christ Church, Valdosta), Chance Hughes (St. Mark’s, Brunswick), Hannah Lancaster (St. Peter’s Catholic Church, Savannah), Macee Marcus (St. Paul’s, Albany), Will Reimsnider (Our Savior Martinez), Owen Richardson, Chris Westgate, Becca Westgate, Bobby Steinhauser and Sam Robinson (St. Francis’, Savannah), Brad Sandbach, Bradly Sandbach, Sarah Brittany Sandbach (St. Paul’s, Augusta), Hannah Jenkins, Oliver Jenkins and Gina Jenkins of Honey Creek.

- Photo & Information From  
Gina Jenkins, Director of  
Diocesan Youth Programs

## Ministry in Hawkinsville Community Makes Church Visible

From The Presentation By

The Rev. Gary Abbott, Vicar, St. Luke’s, Hawkinsville

**EDITOR’S NOTE:** This is the second in a series of the ministry presentations made at Diocesan Convention, which met Feb. 2-3 at Valdosta-Lowndes Convention Center.

“I live in the Northern Frontier of the Diocese of Georgia – four miles from the Diocese of Atlanta. We have more Baptists than people in Hawkinsville,” said the Rev. Gary Abbott, a former Baptist who is vicar at St. Luke’s, Hawkinsville.

His humorous introduction set the scene for those at Diocesan Convention to understand the reality in which the people of St. Luke’s live and minister. Theirs is a ministry of presence and visibility, a subtle evangelism.

St. Luke’s sends 250 newsletters – 55 for the church - to tell people what they are doing. They also use newspaper advertising at Christmas, Holy Week and Easter.

“People in our church are excited about what we’re doing,” he said. “Most new people are here because someone invited them.”

“We are engaged in the ministry of presence. Our people are involved in the life of the community.” Although that includes membership in the Chamber of Commerce and civic organizations such as Rotary Club, the people at St. Luke’s go beyond the obvious. Their community involvement is not expensive, but it pays large dividends.



During his presentation on ministry in the community, the Rev. Gary Abbott (vicar, St. Luke’s, Hawkinsville) shows those attending Diocesan Convention a chalice from the Church in a Box project.

- Photo By Julius Ariail  
Christ Church, Valdosta

As the only clergy person in the community with law enforcement certification, Father Abbott has a special way of being involved. He carries a badge and is chaplain for both the police and sheriff. That offers him the opportunity to be a special presence in many different situations.

St. Luke’s has an advantage many Episcopal churches in the diocese do not – the church is on Main Street.

To enhance its physical presence, the mission painted the building and, instead of relying on volunteers to find time to tend the church grounds as they formerly did, they pay for mowing, edging and other related maintenance. Flowers bloom year around.

“It looks like somebody lives there - and proud to live there,” Fr. Abbott said.

The church hopes to have a columbarium as an important outreach because the city cemetery is almost full.

Funerals also are occasions to mark the Episcopal

presence in the Hawkinsville. Since he is often asked to participate in funerals, Fr. Abbott always wears his vestments. “I’m the guy in a dress,” he said, adding that he wears his collar regularly because nobody else does, so he is a “walking billboard.”

At a recent funeral for a young woman who was very active in the church, St. Luke’s could not accommodate the 250 who attended.

“The church fits 150 if the fire marshal is out of the county,” he quipped. So the Parish Hall was fitted with sound and Communion was taken to those in the Parish Hall.

“The community came into our place,” he said. And it made a big impression on them. A woman saw him at the bank and commented what a powerful, moving, worship-filled funeral it was. He noted that their presence was felt throughout the community.

St. Luke’s members take advantage of many opportunities to be included and visible in the larger community. While Fr. Abbott is a regular walking billboard, others in the church family help when they wear vacation Bible school T-shirts.

The congregation opened its Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper to the community as a fundraiser, serving 200 meals. Then the paper ran a photo of the fire chief receiving a check for the \$1,200 the supper raised to help victims of fires.

The congregation has invested in other social capital. Because it has 12 members with military ties, they sent \$100 to each of the 12 families so that they could buy Easter surprises for their children.

In addition to having the only pancake supper in town, the church participates in the ecumenical blessing of the crops that included seven Baptist churches and 12 businesses. This year marked the first time a black congregation had participated. Fr. Abbott noted that is an exciting change.

As part of Central Convocation he has been involved in the Church in a Box project as its disaster relief coordinator. The project includes having a portable kit with the essentials for Communion to be offered if a church is destroyed.

This work includes helping churches prepare for disasters, and have essential records, etc. in safe-keeping.

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### Next Issue

*Worship on the Water*

## Rowland Ordination a First in Thomson

THOMSON – For the first time in the history of Holy Cross Episcopal Church, Thomson, an Episcopal priest was ordained at the church when Bishop Henry Louttit ordained Deacon Kenneth G. Rowland to the Sacred Order of Priests March 24. A reception followed in the Parish Hall.

A graduate of the State University of New York and New York University, the Rev. Mr. Rowland had many life experiences before answering God's call to ordained ministry.

Before entering the college teaching profession that included State University of New York, Morgan State University (Baltimore, MD) and New York City College (Brooklyn), he served as the first superintendent of Recreation, Parks and Beaches in the Town of Riverhead on Long Island and as first assistant superintendent of Recreation in Nassau County, Long Island.

His professional life included being the supervisory park ranger assigned to the Staten Unit of Gateway National Recreation Area (Staten Island, NY) and manager of quality assurance training for Ebasco Inc., an engineering company in the design and construction of nuclear facilities.

He moved to the South in 1990 as a quality assurance trainer for Westinghouse Savannah River Co. and retired in 2002.

After retiring and many discussions with Episcopal priests, his four children and his fiancée of 16 years, Chris Neal of Appling, he enrolled in an Education for Ministry course, went through the discernment process, became a postulant and then candidate for Holy Orders. He was ordained a deacon in September 2006.

In his seven years at Holy Cross, he has served as senior warden, a lay Eucharistic minister and a pastoral leader.

In his spare time, the avid deer hunter and golfer also enjoys traveling throughout the United States, reading and visiting his family in Boston, MA, Warrensburg, NY, Riverhead, NY, and Powder Springs.

He said his favorite verse of scripture, Matthew 7:7, sums up what his life is all about. "Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be open for you."

## Groundhog's Day is Revisited Here

By The Rev. David J. Somerville  
Associate for Episcopal Ministries in Brunswick

We all know the story of the groundhog. Scared by his own shadow, he retreats to his safe and familiar dark hole. He slips back into unconsciousness. And, as the magical thinking of folklore would have it, the dreary deadness of winter continues for another six weeks. So why go into this? After all, February is history. Now is the time of the Great 50 Days; Christ the Lord is risen and is among us!

The reason stems from my heartsickness over the tragedy at Virginia Tech. I am heartsick although I have never been to that campus, nor know anyone affiliated with the institution. But the enormity of Virginia Tech's carnage by the evil of one young man's blind rage and insanity has placed all of us in our local Christian communities into close proximity with neighbors and family members personally devastated by these random but horribly systematic killings. By whom? One of God's children who somehow became a nobody called "Question Mark."

tion Mark."

It will take a very long time for greater minds than mine to get any perspective on this. What's more, studying the event does not help me as I struggle for meaning. I fear my loitering around the CNN situation room and other similar media places like it does nothing to help me be responsible. The talking heads and video footage serve only to make me into something like a rubbernecker, that unhelpful kind of person who slows the already dangerous traffic of life.

What's more, by my being a chronic uninvolved watcher of the events, I expose myself to the temptation to run away from my commitments to be of healing service to others in the practice of my Christian faith. What I feel tempted to do is retreat to my dark hole of noninvolvement with life.

Did you ever wake up in the morning, exhausted by grief, and when you saw the light, you shuddered at it, harboring a wish to be unconscious? Those are the moments when the Shadow side of ourselves calls, and we have the option NOT to listen.

Therefore, I am thanking our God, risen and present in our midst, whose special strength is shared with me. It is brought to me through my fellow Christians here at St. Marks', St. Athanasius' and all the living Church.

I take the option NOT to listen to the spirit of despair.

Even now I am finding better things to do than rubberneck, and so does the rest of faith's household.

By the power of the risen Christ, it will only be the current, momentary wintriness of our souls that will die.

## Bishop Reports on Honey Creek

SAVANNAH - Long time Conference Center Director Deacon Jim Cox, who was to retire March 31, 2007, has been charged with violations of certain laws involving pornography. He has been barred from the Conference Center grounds.

As the Canons of the Episcopal Church provide, the bishop has suspended his right to present himself or serve as a deacon pending the resolution of the charges against him.

There is no indication of anyone involved with the Diocese of Georgia or the Episcopal Church having any involvement with the matter.

Harry Jenkins continues to serve as operations manager for the Conference Center, and all Episcopal programs and rentals to other groups are operating as usual.

## Rites of the Church

### Outward Visible Signs Of Inward Spiritual Grace

#### Baptisms

*We receive you into the household of God.*

**Annunciation**, Vidalia, 03/04: Dorothy Opal McDaniel; 04/22: Katelynn Elizabeth Green.

**Calvary Church**, Americus, 04/08: Piper Knox Boatright, Charles Robert Crisp.

**Christ Church**, Augusta, 04/06: Jesse E. Rodriguez.

**Christ Church**, Frederica, St. Simons Island, 04/15: Mary Doster Brown, McKenzie Kemp Brown; 04/22: Gunnar Alexander Lundin.

**Our Savior**, Martinez, 04/07: Tyler John Mann, Jordan Taylor Mann, Josie Lee Mann.

**St. Patrick's**, Albany, 04/22: Mallory Hunter Moss; 03/04: Robert Fleming Baranko; 02/18: Thomas Hardy Gay.

**St. Paul's**, Augusta, 04/15: Andrew Ross Bateman, Tanham Haltermann Boulus, Natalie Rose Heckathorn, Corinne Stewart Hessler, Blakely Lamar Peacock, William Carlton Scherer, Edward Austin Proubsky Jr.

#### Confirmations

*Empower them for your service.*

**All Saints**, Thomasville, with Bishop Henry Louttit officiating 12/10: Julie Biehl Carico, Minnie Webb Ivey, Audrey Simmons.

**Christ Church**, Augusta, 04/15 at St. Paul's Augusta: Jack W. Blackburn, Jesse E. Rodriguez, Christopher E. Wiley.

**Christ Church**, Frederica, St. Simons Island, with Bishop Henry Louttit officiating 04/29: Emily Finley Calhoun, Peggy Long Caudell, Clayton Moss Heery, Wanda Griffith (reception), Richard E. Casey (reaffirmation).

**Grace**, Waycross, with Bishop Henry Louttit officiating 04/25: Lonnie Michael Beasley, Aaron Michael Gillis, Neal Marchall Gillis III, Curtis Allen Hamilton.

**St. Alban's**, Augusta, with Bishop Henry Louttit officiating 03/25: Kayla Nashaun Brown, Olivia Laura Scott, Marcell Cyrano Williams.

**St. Mark & St. John's**, Albany, with Bishop Henry Louttit officiating 03/04: Andrea Thomas (Calvary Church, Americus).

**St. Patrick's**, Albany, with Bishop Henry Louttit officiating 04/22: Gil Gillespie, Samantha Hatley, Anne Lynne Christine Moreschi.

**St. Paul's**, Augusta, with Bishop Henry Louttit officiating 04/15: Hughes Mikell McGlone, Robert Bradly Sandbach, Zachary Grey NeSmith, Jonathan Alexander Baldwin, Bruce M. Stephens, Katelyn Elizabeth Snell, Carmel Michael Cheatham, Andrew Hill; receptions: Robert G. Nelson, Marla Ann Nelson, Julia Norwood Jackson.

**St. Philip's**, Hinesville, with Bishop Charles Keyser officiating 01/14: Charles Albert Wood.

#### Marriages

*Those whom God has joined together let no one put asunder.*

**Annunciation**, Vidalia, 04/21: Lillian "Betsy" Rice and Matthew Raben.

**Christ Church**, Augusta, 01/20: Jennifer Lynn Crouch and Clayton Davis Collins.

**Christ Church**, Frederica, St. Simons Island, 02/10: W. June Anderson and Norman Barrett Smith; 04/14: Chandler Marie Truax and Rufus Carrollton Harris IV; 04/22: Amanda Kathryn Mitchell and John Sherrill Elder.

**St. Anne's**, Tifton, 04/13: Thomasa Saye McDonald and Lee Tucker Branch.

#### Ordinations

*...Make him/her a deacon/priest in your Church.*

**St. Mark's**, Brunswick, 04/24: Marty Meuschke (deacon), who is assigned to St. Mark's.

#### Burials

*May light perpetual shine upon them.*

**Calvary Church**, Americus, 03/23: Zenona Drake Dillard.

**Christ Church**, Frederica, St. Simons Island, 04/09: Mary Ann Craighill; 04/16 LeRoy Gwyn (Lee) Stearns.

**Grace**, Waycross, 04/24: Jule Lambert Kerby.

## Meuschke Answers Call, Serves God in the World

BRUNSWICK – Having felt called most of his adult life, Marty Meuschke was ordained a deacon by Bishop Henry Louttit April 24 at St. Mark's, Brunswick, because "God won't take 'No' for an answer," the new deacon said.

He did not recognize the call until the Rev. Liam Collins (rector, St. Mark's) suggested his looking into the diaconate.

In addition God, the ordinand said his wife, Paula, who is a secretary, and Father Collins are the most significant features in recognizing the call and his growth.

The diocesan Deacon's School of Ministry (DSM) and Deacon Edward Williams are most responsible for his success in fulfilling this part of his call, which includes work in prison ministry, in Hospice and to shut-ins.

Baptized by Fr. Collins at Easter Vigil six years ago at age 56, Deacon Meuschke found the DSM to be pivotal in his success and confidence.

"My prayer is the DSM will help deacons finally achieve recognition and respect as an equal and separate order," he said.

The new deacon's family includes daughter, Angela, and her husband, Josh Giro, of Palm Beach, FL, and daughter, Christine Meuschke, and her fiancé, Kevin Bingham, of Nashville, TN.

## Spirituality Retreat Series Coming to Honey Creek

Looking for that next step on your spiritual journey but not sure what comes next? *Journey to Wholeness* may be what you are searching to deepen your relationship with God.

This series of retreats is offered by a group interested in furthering spirituality in the diocese. Each retreat will have a main theme with sessions tied to it and breakout sessions on spirituality that include centering prayer, the labyrinth and Anglican prayer beads and others.

All-inclusive costs are \$80/single room, \$60/double, \$45/dorm and \$35/commuters. The series lineup follows. Details and PDFs are available at [www.kingofpeace.org/journeytowholeness](http://www.kingofpeace.org/journeytowholeness).

**Power for the Forgiving (Aug. 24-25)** - Forgiveness is dynamite from a spiritual perspective. An almost selfish act because of its positive effects on the forgiver, forgiving others is the path toward discovering forgiveness for yourself. **Registration deadline is Aug. 10.**

**Light from the Shadows (Nov. 30-Dec. 1)** - At this Advent retreat discover how Jung's concept of your shadow can help you take the next step on your spiritual journey. **Registration deadline is Nov. 16.**

**Water in the Desert (Feb. 1-2)** - Desert spirituality is an important component of the Old and New Testaments as scripture was written for people living in a desert land. It used that imagery to teach how to find spiritual sustenance for the barren places in our lives. We will look to the mothers and fathers of spirituality who escaped to the Egyptian desert in the 4<sup>th</sup> century for additional inspiration as we consider the theme of water in the desert. **Registration deadline is Jan. 18.**

Facilitators are the Rev. Frank Logue (King of Peace, Kingsland) and his wife, Victoria, an author and trained facilitator. Retreat leadership and breakout session instruction also will be given by the Rev. Linda McCloud (Our Savior, Honey Creek), the Rev. Nancy Mills (Good Shepherd, Thomasville), Diocesan Communications Officer Jacqui Belcher and Nancy Byars (St. Thomas', Thomasville), among others.

## First Impressions Leave Lasting Memories

By Jacqui Belcher, Diocesan Communications Officer

Honey Creek holds fond memories for people in and out of our diocese. Some have experienced spiritual rites of passage through New Beginnings, Happening and Cursillo. Others have enriched their lives and expanded their knowledge through the eclectic conferences and retreats offered over the years. Many of us have visited and stayed at the conference center on several occasions. However, there's nothing like that first visit. Georgi Bates can attest to that.

Last fall, I invited Georgi, a member of St. George's in Savannah, to accompany me and Franciscan friar Robert Hugh to Honey Creek. Brother Robert Hugh was leading our fall conference, "Making Room." I asked Georgi, who calls herself a very private person, what made her decide to go.

"My walk with God had been stagnant for some time, and I was hoping that a conference might break the spell. I have to admit, being the ultimate introvert I am, as we neared Honey Creek I began feeling a mild dread at meeting all the other participants."

Did that feeling last?

"No! As if in response to my thoughts, I saw the most glorious gathering of butterflies fluttering through the plumbago. There were lots of butterflies, all different sizes and shapes, hovering and landing among the light blue flowers. The sight lightened my heart.

"Sure, I was still concerned I'd have to share a bathroom, but the silence was calming. There was also a sense of ... I'm not sure what ... I just know I felt more relaxed, more focused."

And in her motel-style room, Georgi found all the privacy she needed, complete with a private bathroom.

Br. Robert Hugh is an accomplished storyteller with a keen sense of humor. "There is such an inner cleansing in laughter," Georgi reflected. "Br. Robert Hugh delighted us with this gift several times during his talks. And the more 'serious stuff' was delivered with a depth and gentleness I can only hope to achieve in my life on this earth."

The intimacy and unexpected camaraderie of the smaller discussion group created for Georgi an air of enlightenment and sense of freedom. The closing liturgy in the chapel gave her goose bumps.

There were nearly 80 acolytes and chaperones attending their annual festival. Each congregation represented had a vested acolyte, holding the parish banner on high, to process from Bishop Reese Hall through the pines and into the chapel.

Leading the procession the thurifer swung the thurible full of smoking incense in a complete circle while dancing down the aisle.

As the young people processed in, I sensed the energy in the small chapel growing. The songs were uplifting, and the air around me seemed to get lighter. The voices resounded with joyfulness. The guitars and voices gave the music life as it drifted through the air. We all found ourselves clapping to the rhythm or tapping a foot. The air began to shimmer.

On the way home, I wondered whether Georgi had enjoyed the weekend. She had - both the place and the conference.

As we drove out of Honey Creek she reflected, "I realized a weight had been lifted, and my personal walk with Jesus Christ had been enlivened by a vibrancy only God's grace can bring."

More on her first impressions and Honey Creek conferences is at [www.georgia.anglican.org](http://www.georgia.anglican.org). Click on Honey Creek: Sacred Space, Sacred Journeys.

## Events

### IntegrityGA to Meet June 16

IntegrityGA network will meet Noon-2 p.m. June 16 at Annunciation, Vidalia. A light lunch will be served. Bruce Garner, long time member and coordinator of Integrity Atlanta and now a member of the Episcopal Church Executive Council, will be present for conversation.

All interested persons are invited to attend and are asked to respond for a lunch head count no later than June 12. Call Jamie Maury 912-234-5398 or email [snyderpc@bellsouth.net](mailto:snyderpc@bellsouth.net). Driving directions are at [www.visitors-expected.org](http://www.visitors-expected.org).

### Augusta Church to Host July 4 Event

The Riverwalk Series Inc. will present the annual "Star Spangled Concert" at 8 p.m. July 4 preceding the Riverwalk fireworks display. The concert will be at St. Paul's, Augusta, which also hosts other concerts during the year including those given by the Augusta Opera Association and Tuesday's Music Live Inc.

The Independence Day Chorus, which performs the July 4 concert accompanied by a large orchestra, is scheduling auditions for singers in the community who may be interested. Call Director Keith Shafer (706-724-2485) or email [keithshafer@comcast.net](mailto:keithshafer@comcast.net) to schedule an audition before May 30.

### Summer Camps Set

Register online at the diocesan website or from camp brochures available at your church.

**HIGH SCHOOL JUNE 10-16 \$350** - CAMPERS WHO HAVE COMPLETED GRADES 9-12

**ST. GREGORY JUNE 17-23 \$350** - CAMPERS WHO HAVE COMPLETED GRADES 3-6. MAIN FOCUS IS MUSIC, ESPECIALLY SINGING.

**ST. FRANCIS JUNE 24-30 \$350** - CAMPERS WHO HAVE COMPLETED GRADES 7-9.

**ST. JOSEPH & MARY JULY 8-14 \$350** - CAMPERS WHO HAVE COMPLETED GRADES 3-5.

**ST. PETER JULY 15-21 \$350** - CAMPERS WHO HAVE COMPLETED GRADES 6-8.

Camp fee pays for room and board, art supplies, special activities, camp photo and T-shirt. All sessions are coed. Arrival time is 3 p.m.-5:30 p.m. Campers depart 9 a.m.-Noon. A person trained in health care/first aid is present at each session. For security purposes all visitors must be cleared by the camp director before arrival. Campers may NOT bring electronic devices such as ipods, cell phones, Gameboys, boom boxes, etc.

Each camp will have a program for the week designed and led by a program team. Teams include clergy and lay persons. There is a different team each camp. This year's theme is the Sacraments. Each team will develop activities around it. All camps have traditional activities such as arts and crafts, singing, swimming, kayaking, sports, worship, campfires, ropes course.

Scholarships may be available. Consult your priest. A

limited number of scholarships is available from Episcopal Youth and Children's Services (EYCS) and Episcopal Church Women (ECW). Complete the EYCS application or have your pastor write the ECW convocation coordinator.

### Youth Events

For details on any youth event, contact Gina Jenkins (director, Diocesan Youth Programs) at 912-484-4844 or [ginajenk@aol.com](mailto:ginajenk@aol.com). Registration forms may be requested online.

**HIGH SCHOOL MISSION TRIP JULY 6-12 FOR GRADES 9-12**

**PYE MISSION TRIP TO GULFPORT, MS JULY 17-22 FOR GRADES 9-12**

**HAPPENING #79 AUG. 3-5 FOR GRADES 10-12**

### News Deadlines

Brief news, upcoming events and church rites are due 5 p.m. the last day of the month to be sent the 15th for publication. Features/opinions require direct contact by phone or email to the editor (229-248-4636 or [ciga2@bellsouth.net](mailto:ciga2@bellsouth.net)).

### On the Calendar

**MAY 26 NUTS AND BOLTS OF BIBLE STUDY**

CHARLES TWOMBLEY, TRINITY, COCHRAN

**25-27 CONTEMPLATIVE RETREAT**

BETTINA SCHULLER, HONEY CREEK

**29-31 GATHERING OF SPIRIT, RED TOP TABLE**

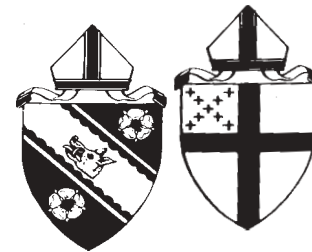
MOUNTAIN PARK

**AUGUST 3-5 HAPPENING #79, HONEY CREEK**

FOR MORE INFORMATION & EVENTS, VISIT THESE WEBSITES [www.georgia.anglican.org](http://www.georgia.anglican.org) or [www.honeycreek.org](http://www.honeycreek.org).



# The Episcopal CHURCH IN GEORGIA



## Recognize, Remember, Reconcile: A Call for Gathering of Spirit

Episcopal Bishops Henry Louttit, Neil Alexander (Atlanta) and Carol Gallagher (Newark) of the Cherokee Nation, OK, first Native American woman bishop of the Episcopal Church, invite you to gather with the peoples of all nations to recognize, remember, reconcile.

This gathering of spirit, May 29-31 at Red Top Mountain State Park and New Echota Historic Site, GA, will look at the attitudes and actions that led to and supported the forced exile (the trail where they cried) that caused the death and loss of the traditional ways of native peoples of Georgia. In addition, the attitudes and actions that continue to oppress, exclude and disrespect Indian peoples, their homelands and our Mother Earth will be probed.

Participants who "come to the circle" will have the opportunity to "express the sorrow, experience the healing, remember the tears, share the stories, hear the songs, feel the spirit and catch the dream."

For details visit [www.georgia.anglican.org](http://www.georgia.anglican.org) and click on A Gathering of Spirit.

### Together, We Grow

O Lord Our God, we give you thanks for the many gifts you have bestowed upon the Diocese of Georgia, for the faith and dedication of its clergy and laity, and for the gift of the talents abounding in its parishes and missions. Give us, we pray, the wit and the will to identify and use those talents to shape our diocese to be what you would have it be and to serve you ever better as together, we grow. We ask this in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ Our Lord. Amen.

## Give a Hand to Wring Ring Out the Good News!

*"Give them something to eat yourselves,"  
[Jesus] replied. - Luke 9:13*

The tiny avocado tree's stem, sprouting three minuscule green leaves ready to unfurl, rises from the seed as its maze of roots spreads through the water in the clear, old chipped glass that sits on the kitchen widow sill.

Suspended by toothpicks to keep it resting on top of the water, the seed took longer than most to send its first root down. Then weeks later it split as the stem emerged.

Before that first root was noticeable, we almost threw away the seed – something I have only had to do twice before in all the years of growing avocados bought at the grocery store. Only two seeds had no life in them. This one threatened to be Number 3.

The water turned opaque and slimy. The plant seemed to be rotting. My husband said it was time to pitch it since the others were well underway, one growing tall in a pot with soil.

Years ago I was pitching out one when I discovered it had a root. That tree grew and thrived. So I waited for this one. Added more water. Waited.

There was no need to wring my hands over it. That seed had all it needed. God had provided everything for it to become the tree it is intended to be, nourished by the sun and the water and tended by human hands.

The Diocese of Georgia is an avocado seed that can flourish as Together, We Grow.

But together, we do a lot of worrying that hinders our growth. I learned that in April at a conference in Virginia. An astute colleague from another diocese, a priest who knows our diocese well, and I chatted as we rode the bus to an event.

He said what a wonderful diocese Georgia is. "You really are a family that loves each other," he said, "But you do a lot of hand-wringing."

## Connections → a fall conference for all people

October 5-7, 2007  
HoneyCreekGA@aol.com

- I'm on the vestry ... now what?
- How can I best serve God as a layperson?
  - We'd like to set our youth programs on fire!
  - I want my soul to take flight.
- How can I respond with grace when I retire?
- Could God be calling me to ordained ministry?

We are family.  
We are connected.



**Bishop of Georgia**  
The Rt. Rev. Henry I. Louttit, 9th  
**Assisting Bishop**  
The Rt. Rev. Rodney R. Michel

**Bishops of Georgia (retired)**  
The Rt. Rev. Harry W. Shipp, 8th  
The Rt. Rev. Paul Reeves, 7th

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### The Last...Word!

By Marcía O. McRae, Editor

We worry about the what-ifs and overlook all that we do, have done and can do. We are fond of saying that when the Diocese of Atlanta was created, it got all the money and people and we kept the land and the history.

My brothers and sisters, it doesn't matter that any diocese has more than we. We have all we need. If we're not sure about that, we can look at the Episcopal Church in Cuba and Africa to see what can be achieved on less!

We may be like the lame man in Acts 3:2-11 who was carried daily to the Beautiful Gate to beg. Peter and John, who had no money, gave him what he really needed - healing. Perhaps they did not hesitate, worrying about what they lacked, because they had learned their lesson with the loaves and fishes.

They did not stand wringing their hands about resources or what to do. They acted in Jesus' name.

The Diocese of Georgia really is not a beggar waiting for a hand-out. We are the family of God ready to give a hand. If we wring our hands, they are closed and cannot hold the hand of another, nor can they receive.

We may need time and nourishment, but like the avocado, we can grow. Let's look at and be encouraged by the wonderful ministries we offer, such as at St. Luke's, Hawkinsville, that you can read about on page 1. They don't wring their hands. They keep them open, ready to hold a hand – and to ring out good news!

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