



## **Appleton Episcopal Ministries**

*Celebrating the Dignity of All God's People*

# 2018 Annual Report

As the oldest community ministry in the Diocese of Atlanta, Appleton Episcopal Ministries has served children and families for nearly fifteen decades. Appleton's mission is *Sharing God's love by partnering as parishes in the Middle Georgia Convocation to promote the health, education, safety and well-being of children and families*. Operating within the Middle Georgia Convocation, Appleton's Board of Governors includes a representative from each parish: All Angels, Eatonton; St. Stephen's, Milledgeville; Christ Church, Macon; St. Paul, Macon; St. Francis, Macon; All Saints, Warner Robins; St. Christopher, Perry; St. Andrew's, Fort Valley; St. Luke's, Fort Valley; and St. Mary's, Montezuma. Our lay-driven structure promotes communication, cooperation, and creative thinking to expand outreach opportunities throughout the convocation. Together, we are able to leverage multiple resources to make a much larger impact in our communities.

This has been an exciting year for Appleton, and we have been blessed in so many ways. After last year's Annual Report was printed, the Episcopal Church designated Appleton as one of three new Mission Enterprise Zones in recognition of our innovative convocational approach to community ministry, including our common support of the Macon CDF Freedom School. This designation came with \$20,000 in financial support of our Freedom School. In 2018, Appleton received funding from Episcopal Community Foundation to purchase a 15-passenger van for use in programming all around the convocation. This has allowed Appleton to offer much-needed transportation for after-school tutoring programs, Freedom School, youth activities, campus ministry, and attendance by parishioners at diocesan trainings and workshops. This means both Appleton and its associated programs can now shift cash previously devoted to renting vehicles to other aspects of program delivery, including expansion of services. Appleton will pay to insure and maintain the vehicle and has developed procedures so that parishes can check out the van for approved uses.

In late 2017, many parishes in the Diocese contributed as directed in Canon 24 to the annual Thanksgiving offering for Appleton, and we have put this generosity to work in 2018. The Thanksgiving Offering has taken place since 1880 and is pivotal to Appleton's ability to operate since this ministry receives no funds through the Diocesan budget. By combining these Offering collection gifts with the assessments paid by the parishes of the Middle Georgia Convocation and quarterly distributions from our endowment, the Board of Governors awarded \$28,168 in program grants and \$1,500 in discretionary grants during the last 12 months to parishes throughout the Middle Georgia Convocation. These projects have impacted almost 25,000 people and leveraged more than \$245,000 in cash and in-kind investment. Grants currently support a protein food bank in Eatonton; campus ministry programs at Fort Valley State University and at Georgia College and State University; three Path to Shine after-school programs in Macon, Warner Robins, and Perry; a Saturday soup/sandwich project and a summer reading project in Milledgeville; a weekend downtown feeding program in Macon; a domestic violence shelter for women and children in Macon; a tutorial and mentoring program in Fort Valley; a diaper bank in Macon; an arts enrichment program for K-12 students in Macon; holiday food distributions in Milledgeville and Fort Valley; the construction and maintenance of nine Little Free Libraries in Fort Valley; an after-school gardening and nutritional program for children in Montezuma; and emergency assistance for families in crisis around the convocation.

In February, Appleton Missioner Julie Groce participated in the Diocesan Ministry Innovations Task Force's GO Summit as part of a break-out session on Freedom Schools with Emmaus House's Ann Fowler. Together, Julie and Ann presented attendees with information on how Children's Defense Fund developed the Freedom School program and shared resources used in the programs at Emmaus House and at Appleton.

In addition to partnering with parishes to develop and support community ministries around the convocation, Appleton sponsored its second Children's Defense Fund (CDF) Freedom School during the summer of 2018. Begun more than 20 years ago, this intensive six-week summer reading program targets children living in poverty who need to improve their reading skills. Freedom School is offered free of charge to attendees at sites located across the country, but comes to Macon at a delivery cost of nearly \$95,000 in cash and in-kind resources, not including volunteer hours. At the recommendation of the Macon-Bibb School System, Appleton's program emphasized improved third grade reading scores and the pivotal switch by the end of that grade from learning-to-read to reading-to-learn. For the second year, Appleton hosted fifty 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> graders and delivered a curriculum rich in culturally-appropriate books that explore history, civic engagement, and social justice. Nearly half of this year's scholars were returning attendees from last summer, and this continuity helped to strengthen the feeling of family that binds together everyone who works in this program. The Integrated Reading Curriculum was augmented with afternoon classes in studio art, weather science, African dance, music, grocery store math, step, ceramic art, drama, origami, Gullah-Geechee culture, creative writing, and field trips to the public library, the fire station, and a local television station. The new passenger van was used every day of the program to transport our scholars to activities around the community, and over the six-week program, our scholars learned how to make a difference in themselves, their families, and in their community. Freedom School Macon 2018 was delivered with the assistance of college and graduate interns, enrichment teachers, and nearly one hundred volunteers and would not have been possible without generous support from the Mission Initiatives Fund of The Episcopal Church, Diocesan Ministry Innovations Fund, Episcopal Community Foundation, the Bibb Public School District, the USDA Summer Food Service Program, The Community Foundation of Central Georgia, private donations from individuals, churches, and clergy groups, and the use of facilities at St. Paul's Episcopal Church and the St. Francis Art Center. Planning for Freedom School 2019 is currently underway.

In November 2017, at the 110<sup>th</sup> Diocesan Annual Council, delegates voted to recognize the deaconesses of the Order of St. Katherine as the first saints in the Diocese of Atlanta and to commemorate the deaconesses by The Episcopal Church. This year, the resolution was forwarded by the Diocese for initial action at General Convention 2018, and in July, Missioner Julie Groce went to Austin, Texas, to help shepherd the resolution to commemorate the deaconesses through initial review and assignment to the Standing Committee on Liturgy. Prior to General Convention, on June 6, 2018, Appleton held its fourth annual celebration and worship service to commemorate the lives of our now-sainted deaconesses. The afternoon began, as always, with a procession to the Appleton plot at Rose Hill Cemetery in Macon. Board members and clergy of the Middle Georgia Convocation gathered as Rev. Bryan Hinson of St. Paul's blessed the graves of five Appleton deaconesses, four orphan girls, and a teacher, all of whom had lived or worked at the Appleton Church Home. The group then joined additional clergy and members of the diocesan community for a special Eucharist service at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, adjacent to the original Appleton campus. This year's homily was delivered by Canon John Thompson-Quartey.

Since 2015, Appleton has served as a community ministry partner with the Diocese of Atlanta's EYC. Each year, Missioner Julie Groce joins members of EYC to share the activities of Appleton and how diocesan youth can support efforts that benefit disadvantaged children and families all over middle Georgia. This August, Mrs. Groce was again a featured speaker at the Annual Service Retreat Day, where she shared the story of Freedom School and its impact all over the middle Georgia community. She reminded everyone of the joy of reading and the gifts we take for grants by sharing one of her favorite books, *The Librarian of Basra*, a true story

of how people saved an entire library during the Iraqi War. She then joined attendees in assembling hygiene kits for Church of the Common Ground and completing a sandwich build for Crossroads Ministries. Attendees collected canned goods and books for distribution by Appleton to hungry children and families. Appleton used these generous gifts to augment the inventories of several local food pantries across the convocation with canned goods and day shelters and stock up to nine Free Little Libraries in Fort Valley with books for all ages.

Appleton strives to bring the Middle Georgia Convocation together to foster a spirit of closeness and cooperation among the parishes. To that end, Appleton again co-sponsored and co-hosted the Convocation's Pre-Council meeting on September 30<sup>th</sup> at St. Paul's, Macon. Canon for Administration and Finance Bonnie Burgess presented the Diocese's proposed budget and gave a brief overview of diocesan operations and funding. In addition to discussing the budget, delegates had an opportunity to review how Annual Council works and to suggest nominees for election to Diocesan committees and trusteeships prior to October and November deadlines. Throughout the year, Appleton has offered certified trainings for SafeGuarding God's Children and disseminated information about diocesan programs and training sessions available to parishioners.

For more than 149 years, Appleton has shared God's love with children and families, serving the most vulnerable among us. As we go forward together, we can have confidence that God will continue to powerfully use us to spread God's love through this ministry. We look forward to another year of service with God's grace and generosity.

Members of the 2018 Appleton Board of Governors have been:

|                                |                   |                   |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Dr. Michael Webb, Chair        | St. Paul's        |                   |
| Dr. Tracie Jenkins, Vice-Chair | St. Francis       |                   |
| Martha Ray, Secretary          | All Angels        |                   |
| Linda Plowden, Treasurer       | St. Stephen's     |                   |
| Rev. Brian Davy                | St. Luke's        |                   |
| Dixie Henning                  | All Saints        |                   |
| Debbie Liipfert                | St. Andrew's      |                   |
| Mariann Overton                | St. Christopher's |                   |
| Katie Powers                   | Christ Church     |                   |
| Position Vacant                | St. Mary's        |                   |
| Julie C. Groce                 | Missioner         | <i>Ex Officio</i> |

Respectfully submitted,

Julie C. Groce, Missioner  
Appleton Episcopal Ministries  
missioner@appletonepiscopal.org