



## Annual Report 2015

Appleton Episcopal Ministries has had a busy and successful year. As the oldest outreach ministry in the Diocese of Atlanta and one of the first Episcopal ministries in the state of Georgia, Appleton evolved during the period 1870 to 1991 from an orphanage for daughters of Confederate soldiers to a home for young girls from financially-challenged families, to a residential home for teenaged girls, to integrated group homes and an outdoor therapy program for troubled teenaged girls. After 1991, Appleton moved to a coed model that supported after-school, weekend, and summer programs for underserved boys and girls in Macon and middle Georgia. In late 2013, Appleton restructured the make-up of the Board of Governors with approval by Annual Council of Canon 9 and refined its mission to:

*Sharing God's love by partnering as parishes in the Macon Convocation to promote the health, education, safety and well-being of children and families.*

With those changes, Appleton has forged ahead to support and expand outreach ministry by all of the parishes in the Macon Convocation. The Appleton board is now composed of one representative from each parish in the Convocation, with no more than three clergy members at any one time. (One additional clergy member, elected under the old system, will roll off of the board at the end of 2015.) The Convocation includes All Angels, Eatonton; St. Stephen's, Milledgeville; Christ Church, Macon; St. Paul's, Macon; St. Francis, Macon; St. James, Macon; All Saints, Warner Robins; St. Christopher's, Perry; St. Andrew's, Fort Valley; St. Luke's, Fort Valley; and St. Mary's, Montezuma. Our primarily lay-driven structure promotes communication, cooperation, and creative thinking as we consider ways to expand outreach opportunities throughout the convocation. We're able to leverage multiple resources to make a much larger impact in our communities. The board meets monthly, rotating meetings among the parishes. We have found this helps to spread the challenge of traveling around the convocation, allows board members to witness first-hand the conditions and facilities at each church, and encourages camaraderie and inspiration.

In late 2014, many parishes in the diocese contributed to the annual Thanksgiving Offering for Appleton as directed in Canon 24, and we put this generosity to work in the new year. Combining these gifts with the assessments paid by the parishes of the Macon Convocation, as well as quarterly distributions from our endowment that is invested in the Common Fund, moved the Board of Governors to operate with a **spirit of abundance** rather than one of scarcity toward outreach activities and funding.

On January 25, Missioner Julie Groce, held a grant writing workshop for interested parishioners and parish representatives and issued grant instructions and applications for Appleton's first project grants. On April 1, Appleton Episcopal Ministries awarded five grants totaling \$21,127.30 to four parishes. St. Mary's, Montezuma, received \$10,929 for Phase I of a community garden designed to provide healthy food for undernourished citizens; Christ Church, Macon, received \$5,902 for food purchases for the Weekend Lunch Program, allowing them to hire a part-time program coordinator; St. Luke's, Fort Valley received \$1,350 to support the Canterbury Club tutoring program with an enrichment field trip to the Georgia Aquarium and the Martin Luther King Historic Site for students and 15 college tutors; and St. James, Macon, received \$2,405.30 for after-school and weekend tutoring and mentoring programs for elementary and middle school students in the Cherokee Heights neighborhood. An additional \$500 was given in May to the St. Luke's tutoring program for the purchase of books for children of color. Just as important as the financial support provided by Appleton is the partnering of our parishes with other churches, community organizations, and governmental programs to expand overall resources for outreach ministry.

On May 31, Appleton held a special celebration and worship service to rededicate our ministry. The afternoon began with a procession to the Appleton plot at Rose Hill Cemetery in Macon. Cleaned and re-landscaped for this occasion, the plot was used between 1880 and 1967. Bishop Keith Whitmore 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. From there, board members joined clergy and members of the diocesan community for a special Eucharist service in Beckwith Chapel, built as part of the Appleton Church Home and now a part of the campus of St. Paul's Episcopal Church. During that service, Bishop Whitmore challenged the Appleton Board and members of the Macon Convocation to recognize the enormous contributions of the deaconesses of the Order of St. Katherine who administered and operated the Appleton Church from its inception to 1937 by nominating them for sainthood in the Episcopal Church. To accomplish this task, we will hold an annual recognition service to honor the deaconesses and put forth their story in a formal process with General Convention. Missioner Julie Groce has already begun to document the lives of these dedicated and visionary women and will continue archival research around the country in order to bring this important project to fruition.

On August 30 at St. James, Macon, Bishop Wright and members of his staff joined clergy from the Macon Convocation and around the diocese, along with parishioners and members of the middle Georgia community, to celebrate more than 100 years of worship and service in Macon as the parish closed its doors for weekly worship. For

several years, Appleton had supported an after school program at St. James, and in recognition of this relationship, members of the Appleton Board helped to host the reception following the worship service.

On September 2 Appleton and the entire Diocese of Atlanta lost a dear friend and dedicated Episcopalian – W.C. Wyatt of St. Andrew's, Fort Valley. W.C. served as parish representative and treasurer of Appleton Episcopal Ministries and worked tirelessly to raise both good will and financial resources to support our mission. His deep faith, his steady friendship, his eagerness to serve, and his steadfast commitment to better the lives of undernourished, undereducated and underserved children and families, made Appleton and all of us more sensitive and more devoted to the mission of our ministry.

One of the goals of Appleton is to bring the Macon Convocation together to foster a spirit of closeness and cooperation among the parishes. To that end, Appleton sponsored and hosted this year's Pre-Council meeting on September 27 at St. Christopher's, Perry. This meeting was scheduled to outline to all Council representatives how Annual Council works, to allow timely development and discussion of potential resolutions, and to encourage representatives to run for election to diocesan committees and trusteeships prior to October and November deadlines.

Appleton continues to be an active participant in the Community Ministries Collaborative, and in October hosted members of the committee in Macon. Attendees learned about the mission and projects of Appleton and toured portions of the historic 1870 orphanage building, now part of the St. Paul's Church campus, where Appleton's offices are located.

Throughout the summer, Missioner Julie Groce and parish representatives met with nearly all of the parishes in the convocation to discuss potential projects for 2016 funding. Interested parishioners, clergy and local citizens gathered at these meetings to dream about ideas and plan ways they could utilize Appleton funding and expertise to partner with other churches and community service organizations to initiate new outreach projects or expand existing programs to serve families and children. This has resulted in an abundance of well-developed project ideas that parishes submitted in late September as grant proposals for 2016 funding. During the annual retreat on October 3, the Appleton Board of Governors voted to award a total of \$37,600 to seven parishes beginning January 1, 2016, and in addition, to establish a grant of \$1,000 in memory of W.C. Wyatt to add to one of the projects given funding each year. The 2016 Appleton grants will be announced at Annual Council.

To increase awareness of and participation in the diocesan 2015 Thanksgiving Offering for Appleton, youth attending the Annual Council Lock-In will bring canned and dried food items for delivery to The Place in Forsyth in the name of Appleton and the Diocese of Atlanta. This collection helps to commemorate the annual delivery for more than 120 years by churches in middle Georgia of food, clothing, and supplies to the Appleton Church Home at Thanksgiving to take care of those less fortunate. Parishes in the Macon Convocation will hold food drives throughout the month of November to help stock local food banks of their choice to celebrate this same spirit of giving.

For more than 145 years, Appleton has shared God's love with children and families. We look forward to another year of service with God's grace and generosity.

Members of the 2015 Appleton Board of Governors have been:

The Rev. Joseph Shippen, Chair  
Ann Eubanks, Vice Chair  
Mariann Overton, Secretary  
W.C. Wyatt, Treasurer  
Dr. Michael Webb  
The Rev. Ben Wells  
Linda Plowden  
Alfred Ellis  
Stuart Rumph  
Deacon Barbara Windom  
The Rev. Julia Mitchener

Respectfully submitted,

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