



Sacristy Sense

Fall 2023

PROVINCE IV ALTAR GUILD NEWSLETTER



Give me an open mind, O God, a mind ready to receive and to welcome such new light of knowledge as it is Thy will to reveal to me. Let not the past ever be so dear to me as to set a limit to the future. Give me courage to change my mind when that is needed. Let me be tolerant to the thoughts of others and hospitable to such light as may come to me through them. Amen.

By John Baillie, published in the New Altar Guild Book by Barbara Gent and Betty Sturges

What does the Altar Guild do?

What does the Altar Guild do? Setting the altar for mass, weddings, and funerals is not the full extent of what the Altar Guild can do. We also clean the linens and the brass, and wash the “dishes”. We set up for special services such as Easter and Christmas, Maundy Thursday, healing services, and any other services that require the Eucharist. Some altar guilds provide wedding and funeral coordinators. We work in the background to make worship an enriching and distraction-free experience.

But is that ALL that the altar guild does? In some churches the answer might be yes – though that can make for a very busy life.

Did you know there are groups within the altar guild that sew fair linens and the other items used on the altar, that create vestments and stoles for military chaplains, that champion supply closets, repurpose vestments and tatty linens, and do fund raisers for charity? The altar guild is an integral part of any ordination or large meeting that will include a Eucharist. The Flower guild is a part of the altar guild with many members in common. Have you noticed that flower arranging is a favorite program in altar guild meetings?

Do you have a church or church property with room to support a supply closet and church members who might want to support that effort? More about supply closets later in this newsletter. I think every Diocese should have one.

What about emergency communion kits? They can be made very inexpensively and provided to congregations in need. Maybe the cooking guild or youth groups would make communion bread to be sent with the kits?

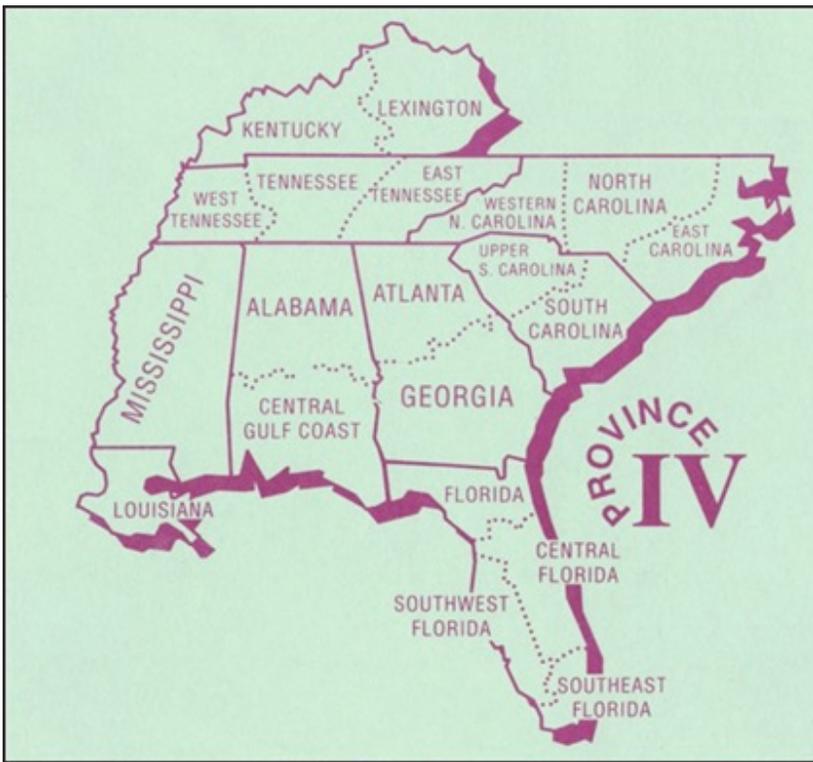
Almost everything I've mentioned requires cooperation among several churches, but first we need community.

PROV IV Altar Guild would like to be your promoter for projects your altar guilds support. If you have a service to share, we will publish it in our newsletters. If you love working on the internet, how about being a Zoom host or managing a Facebook page for PROV IV? Please join our community! A membership application is included in this newsletter.



Province IV of the Episcopal Church
Province of Sewanee





PURPOSE

- To encourage and assist in the organization of diocesan altar guilds and to strengthen the work of parish and mission altar guilds with Province IV.
- To bring into communion the altar guilds of Province IV, encouraging and deepening the spiritual life of their members in order that their public worship to Almighty God in His church may be offered in the beauty of holiness for the extension of His kingdom.
- To foster education programs throughout Province IV and to sponsor an annual conference and workshop.
- To serve as a communicator between the National Altar Guild Association and the membership of the Province IV Altar Guilds.

You are seeing our purpose statement again but why should YOU join us?

In some dioceses of PROV IV there is no diocesan altar guild. We all do things a little differently and should. Membership in a larger group can promote fresh ideas and provide alternative ways of serving the altar. Meeting new people and finding new friends is a benefit that has meant a great deal to me.

Each congregation has its own traditions, but sometimes they no longer serve. Having personal relationships with other altar guild members could provide a wider world-view that shows there are many ways to serve the altar. Sharing ideas can be energizing. My guess is that our rising sons and daughters think the altar guild is for old ladies, but we need younger people in our altar guilds. Maybe there is a guild that has been successful and could help us recruit?

Will you attend the 2024 General Convention in Louisville?

I attended a National Altar Guild (NAGA) meeting recently, at the St. Marguerite's Retreat House in Mendham, NJ. There was much business to discuss as NAGA prepares to attend and manage the three Eucharists and a booth in the exhibit hall.

If you have not attended a general convention, 2024 might be your year. The convention runs from June 20 to June 28. Members will have an opportunity, and training, to help with the three Eucharists that are planned. NAGA has activities, programs, and an optional field trip planned. The hotel has been selected and there will be 20 double rooms available to non-board members. Single applicants will be assigned a roommate. I attended the general convention in Austin, TX, and had a wonderful time meeting and working with people from guilds all over the country.

There is more detailed information coming in our next newsletter that will include a membership application for NAGA and registration for the convention. Or go online to <https://nationalaltarguildassociation.org/> and register with NAGA to receive their newsletter via email.

PROV IV is going to Louisiana in 2025

Folks in Louisiana and Mississippi will know about Solomon Episcopal Retreat Center just north of Covington, LA. It is a relatively small venue that can, nevertheless, house up to 48 participants in one single-story quad, and 44 in a two-story section. All rooms have two queen beds. There will be much more about this in the Fall 2024 newsletter. Visit <https://seccla.org/> for more information about Solomon.

Feast your eyes on the lovely chapel.



I hope you are as excited as we are to be going to Louisiana in 2025! Please become a member of PROV IV Altar Guild in 2024. Annual memberships are due in January of each year. There is a block at the bottom of the Membership Form for you to indicate interest in attending the annual meeting in 2025. We are in the planning stage and need your input. It is important that you register for 2024 so that we have a good idea of participation in 2025.

Meanwhile, we want to be planning for our 2026 meeting in either Kentucky or Tennessee. Can those of you in Tennessee or Kentucky tell me how you feel about St. Mary's at Sewanee, TN; St. Columba at Memphis, TN; or Cathedral Domain at Irvine, KY? Do you know of others we might explore? We do not have to go to an Episcopal retreat center.

Please respond to pobruce46@gmail.com

The Diocesan Supply Closet

An Awesome Ministry

By
Mary E. Jackson, Ph.D.

A Diocesan Supply Closet is an awesome gift to any diocese in which there are small parishes and missions as well as a few large congregations. Every community in the diocese has an opportunity to participate and to benefit, either in the giving or the receiving.

The Diocesan Supply Closet in the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi is a well-established entity. I am the second person to chair the Closet and I have held the position for about 22 years, so we are indeed well established. We were originally located in whichever church the chair of the supply closet belonged. Since I belonged to two sister churches, I started in one and, when we outgrew that one, we moved it to the larger one, St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Jackson. Finally, in 2021, the supply closet was moved to its current location, St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Bolton. As stated earlier, I am the current chair of the Diocesan Supply Closet, but this is not a one-person job in a diocese as large as ours. I could not possibly do this without the assistance of others and that currently means our Diocesan Altar Guild immediate past president, Judy Ketchens, and our treasurer, Harvey Smith, both of whom live closer than I to the Closet and are faithful and active participants in its operation.

The Diocesan Supply Closet of the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi began as one of the ways in which the diocese could address some of the needs of smaller churches that were not always financially able to purchase much-needed items such as altar hangings, altar linens, and clergy apparel. The other side of the process was to identify other larger and/or more financially able churches that had gently used items they no

longer used or needed. We knew that some items were already available so the challenge would be to make the diocese aware of the availability of those items, the need for more, and how to access the Closet to contribute or obtain the items. All of this was indeed quite challenging in the beginning but we learned how to utilize some existing information outlets and how to develop others. The diocese has a website and a monthly newsletter, so we began there with information and articles about the supply closet. Never underestimate the value of word of mouth. So in altar guild meetings, Annual Councils, ECW meetings, etc., we began to spread the word. Now we had to figure out how to get the items from churches who wished to donate and how to get some of those same items to churches who could use them. What I finally decided was to develop and distribute an inventory of the supply closet along with pictures of some of the items currently there. These items now include:

- Frontals
- Veils
- wooden lecterns
- Baptismal font
- albs
- prayer books and hymnals
- oil candles
- chalices
- wax candles
- priest's stoles
- choir robes
- lectern hangings
- priest's shirts

and whatever else a church might need that was no longer needed at another church. Now when

someone calls, we set a convenient date and time for them to come to the supply closet to pick up or deliver. Sometimes they simply want to come and look at the closet and perhaps find something they can use.

A supply closet can be an amazing gift to a diocese. However, it can be quite a burden if there are not people in the diocese who are willing to do what it takes to make it work. The support of the Bishop of the diocese is a big, big plus. This is one of the most rewarding ministries in which I have ever been involved.

God Bless.





**BOARD MEMBERS
JUNE 2023 – JUNE 2026**

President
Phyllis Bruce
402 Circle Drive
Fairhope, Alabama 36532
251-680-2764
pobruce46@gmail.com

Secretary
Kathleen Shearer
1627 Colleen Drive
Belle Isle, Florida 32809
407-230-4350
wwdassoc@gmail.com

Historian
Judy Henderson
1978 Red Bud Circle NW
Palm Bay, Florida 32907
321-536-3965
jem2415@earthlink.net

Vice-President
Joyce Edwards
1003 Cairo Road
Gallatin, Tennessee 37066
615-604-0840
joycedwards@bellsouth.net

Treasurer
Jay Walters
407 Lake Oliver Dr.
Enterprise, Alabama 36330
334-806-3420
retdds23@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor: Meagan Brady

Traveling Prayer

I know, O God, that wherever I travel, you will go with me. There is nowhere I can go, no situation I can face, which is outside your love and strength; and so I commit myself into your care and keeping on this journey, knowing that at all times I am in your hands.



2024 PROVINCE IV ALTAR GUILD

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP or MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

INDIVIDUAL OR HOUSEHOLD - Membership open to anyone interested in the ministry of serving the altar.

ANNUAL DUES Individual \$ 20 Household* \$ 30

Name(s): _____
Address: _____
City: _____
State: _____ Zip: _____
Telephone(s): _____ E-Mail: _____
Your Parish: _____ Your Diocese: _____
New: _____ Renewal: _____

** Household with spouse/partner or family member*

PARISH OR MISSION - Membership for any Episcopal parish or mission, or any associated Episcopal group at the parish level (AG, ECW, etc.). A recipient for Province IV Altar Guild mailing may be designated.

ANNUAL DUES \$20

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____
State: _____ Zip: _____
Telephone: _____ E-Mail: _____
Attn: _____
Diocese: _____
New: _____ Renewal: _____
Name of Newsletter Recipient if other than above: _____
Mailing Address: _____
Telephone: _____ E-Mail: _____
New: _____ Renewal: _____

DIOCESE - Membership for the Office of Bishop, Diocesan Altar Guild, Diocesan Episcopal Church Women or any other diocesan Episcopal group. A recipient for Province IV Altar Guild mailing may be designated.

ANNUAL DUES \$30

Name of Bishop or Group: _____
Address: _____
City: _____
State: _____ Zip: _____
Telephone: _____ E-Mail: _____
New: _____ Renewal: _____
Name of Newsletter Recipient if other than above: _____
Mailing Address: _____
Telephone: _____ E-Mail: _____
New: _____ Renewal: _____

Please make your check payable to:
Mail application and check to:

PROV IV ALTAR GUILD
Jay Walters, Treasurer
407 Lake Oliver Drive
Enterprise, AL 36330-1440

_____ **I AM INTERESTED IN**
ATTENDING THE 2025
CONFERENCE JUNE 8-11