



*I will lift up mine eyes
unto the hills ...*

Episcopal Appalachian Ministries

"... after all these years and everybody's hard work and dedication, EAM is still one of the best-kept secrets in the Church." —Sandy Elledge, EAM Executive Coordinator (retired)

The Appalachian region of the Eastern United States is a series of mountain ranges that runs from Canada to Alabama and Mississippi. It is home to many communities, some of which are prosperous, and others are struggling as industries and jobs leave the area. Other towns have fallen into deep poverty.

Episcopal Appalachia Ministries, a project of The Episcopal Church, offers assistance and friendship to many of these communities. EAM holds regular work weeks at which people from the sponsoring dioceses and other areas work with local residents to build bridges of understanding even as they build bridges across rivers, and help to repair lives as they repair crumbling houses.

With the support of its member dioceses—Bethlehem (Pennsylvania), Central Pennsylvania, Southern Ohio, Southwestern Virginia, Tennessee, West Virginia, East Tennessee and Maryland—EAM continues its work of education, advocacy and mission through local and community projects. It serves as an information resource, orga-

nizes conferences to address the needs of Appalachian communities, and serves as an advocate for the people of those communities with secular and religious leaders.

The Episcopal Church, at its 70th meeting of General Convention in Columbus, Ohio, in 2006 included \$50,000 for Episcopal Appalachian Ministries in its triennial budget, as well as a new line item of \$70,000 for the triennium for Appalachian Initiatives.



Volunteers construct bridge over creek during 2007 work week. Bridge connected elderly resident's home to road, making it easier to transport fuel and other supplies.



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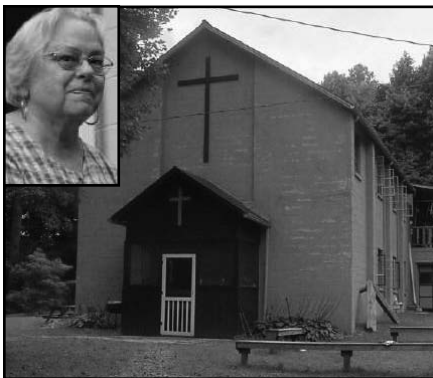


Some of the work done by EAM's teams is centered at Grace House on the Mountain, a learning and retreat center near St. Paul, Virginia, that seeks to be a place of social justice and advocacy for the welfare of Appalachian people. Like many other institutions of the Church, Grace House was founded in the early 20th century by deaconesses, an order of Episcopal women who were charged with ministry to the underserved of their day, including those in rural and mountain communities.

The long tradition of service at Grace House will go on this summer as EAM sponsors three work camps there: July 13 to 19; July 20 to 26; and July 27 to August 2. (The second week is already filled.)

Work camps are open for individuals and small groups (usually no more than 6 from any one congregation). Workers stay at Grace House, but work and eat with local families, repairing homes and properties and learning to appreciate the Appalachian culture, which is marked by deep faith in God and strong ties to family and community.

For more information about EAM, contact Michael Maloney, Interim Executive



Sandy Elledge, inset, recently retired as executive coordinator for EAM: Grace House, above, a center of ministry for Diocese of Southwest Virginia and Episcopal Appalachian Ministries, was built early in the 20th century: volunteer worker, right, helps build a ramp.



Director, 5829 Wyatt Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio 45313; or call 800-956-2776, or visit the website at www.visit-eam.org

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A Prayer for Appalachia

Gracious Creator God: We thank you for the rich texture of our land—for the hollows, rivers, tree covered mountains and rolling hills. We bring before you those who for reasons of injustice cannot share in the riches and bounty you provide in these hills. Send your spirit to nourish, strengthen and guide us to be helpful companions with those who thirst for righteousness, justice and peace. Where we can find the way, with whom we can make a difference we seek your guidance. All this we ask through Jesus on whom your spirit rested in all power to proclaim release for the captives, the recovery of sight for the blind, and freedom to the oppressed. And in all that is before us, help us to remember that this is the year of the Lord's favor. Amen.



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