Rebuilding projects set for House of Bishops meeting; Archbishop of Canterbury to join September gathering

When the House of Bishops meets in September in New Orleans, members and spouses will have hands-on opportunities to help rebuilding efforts in hurricane-affected areas.

While some join weekend work projects of “mucking and gutting” damaged structures, others will join in prayer and pastoral visits with congregations and individuals.

The House of Bishops is a gathering of all bishops in the Episcopal Church. With meetings held twice annually, the next, in the Diocese of Louisiana, will be Thursday, September 20 to Tuesday, September 25.

Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, visiting at the bishops’ invitation, will participate in a September 20 interfaith gathering to rededicate the Morial Convention Center in New Orleans.

Williams will join in dialogue with the bishops on subjects including the recently proposed Anglican Covenant and the Primates Meeting communiqué issued in February 2007 in Tanzania urging support for the communiqué’s requests by September 30.

“The planning committee of the House of Bishops and I believe this meeting will be a wonderful opportunity to

Almighty and everliving God, source of all wisdom and understanding, be present with those who take counsel in the House of Bishops for the renewal and mission of your church. Teach us in all things to seek first your honor and glory. Guide us to perceive what is right and grant us both the courage to pursue it and the grace to accomplish it; through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

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show further support to the Dioceses of Louisiana and Mississippi,” Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori wrote in a June letter to bishops, urging them to be in consultation with their dioceses about contributing to a purse for hurricane relief.

Each donor diocese is asked to consider a rough goal of $10,000, and the total purse is to be divided between the two dioceses of Louisiana and Mississippi, she noted. The purse would aid specific mission priorities enumerated in a list mailed to each bishop.

New Orleans, like the Mississippi Gulf Coast, has “become a place of pilgrimage,” Louisiana Bishop Charles Jenkins wrote in a June letter to bishops. “Many who journey here and to the Mississippi Coast on mission trips find their lives changed and return home with a deeper and more lively sense of God present and active in their lives.”

Mississippi Bishop Duncan Gray III joined Jenkins in identifying current projects including construction of housing, rebuilding churches, provision of clergy salaries, and support for ongoing relief initiatives.

Also invited by the Presiding Bishop to share in the bishops’ conversations with the Archbishop of Canterbury are House of Deputies President Bonnie Anderson and members of the Joint Standing Committee of the Anglican Consultative Council and the Primates.

Be sure to check daily coverage of the House of Bishops at Episcopal Life Online, www.episcopalchurch.org/elife

House of Bishops at a glance

All of the nearly 300 bishops in the Episcopal Church are members of the House of Bishops – diocesans, coadjutors, suffragans, assistants and retired.

Chairing the House of Bishops is Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori. Vice president is Bishop Richard Chang of Hawai’i (retired). Bishop Edward S. Little of Northern Indiana chairs the planning committee. Hosting the September House of Bishops meeting in New Orleans is Bishop Charles Jenkins of Louisiana.