



Sacristy Sense

PROVINCE IV ALTAR GUILD NEWSLETTER

January
2026



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

When, as President, I decided that PROV IV must move from Kanuga to other states within our Province, I found the above prayer. I'm using it again because we are moving again. Our visit to Solomon Episcopal Conference Center was a big success with new members that we dearly hope will continue this journey with us. However, none of our dear friends who have journeyed to Kanuga joined us there, and we missed their energy.

When we chose Tennessee for our 2026 meeting at Sewanee, our Vice President, Joyce, was thrilled. She lives in Tennessee not far from the campus. Joyce has worked diligently to find local speakers and I'm sure you'll be delighted with them. Surely, you've heard about the University of the South, also known as Sewanee. More about the program is covered on later pages. We have discovered that having friends in the local area is a win. The All Saint's Altar Guild has been so very helpful in suggesting resources for local speakers.

With the many changes we've made, PROV IV still works to further the sharing among altar guilds in our multi-state province. Please renew your membership with us, even when you cannot attend a specific meeting. the renewal form is included in this newsletter. Without your continuing support, there will be no more PROV IV.

Here are a few things your memberships support:

- Create and send out our email bi-annual "Sacristy Sense" newsletter;
- Conduct events and workshops within the province;
- Hire quality speakers for our educational programs;
- Provide munchies and libations at our annual meetings; and
- Find and provide meeting spaces for our annual meetings.
- Visit other altar guilds within the province.

With God's grace, I hope to see you there!

Phyllis Bruce, President



Annual PROV IV Altar Guild Conference

Sewanee, Tennessee

Sunday May 31 – Wednesday June 3, 2026

Rooted in Tradition, Serving with Joy!

Province IV Altar Guild is delighted to gather this year at St. Mary's Conference Center in Sewanee, Tennessee. With Sewanee's rich heritage of theological learning at the University of the South, along with the presence of St. Mary's Convent, this setting offers a deeply fitting environment for our time together.

Keynote Speaker

We are honored to welcome The Reverend John A. Runkle, RA as our keynote speaker. Fr. Runkle is both an Episcopal priest and a historical architect, bringing a unique blend of spiritual insight and architectural understanding to our gathering.

Meeting Chaplain

We are also blessed to have Sister Egeria Mark serving as our chaplain. Sister Egeria is an ordained Episcopal priest and novice Sister at the Community of St. Mary, an Episcopal Benedictine convent in Sewanee, Tennessee. She serves as sacristan, preacher, and presider in the convent's chapel, and we look forward to her spiritual leadership throughout our meeting. She will offer a Monday morning presentation that will spiritually feed our Altar Guild members.

Deconsecration and burning of linens

Please bring any linens from your parish that are worn beyond use and need to be reverently retired.

All Saints' Chapel Tour

There will also be a demonstration by Ken Taylor, of Taylor's Mercantile. Taylor's Mercan-

tile is located on the campus of the University of the South. It is a locally owned flower and gift shop that designs and provides fresh flowers for all occasions to the residents of Sewanee and every year "greens" All Saints' for Lessons and Carols during Advent. Ken will give us a tour of the cathedral. The All Saints' chapel tour will tell us about its Gothic Revival architecture and the beautiful rose window inspired by Notre Dame cathedral in Paris.

Blessings of the Hands

During one of our services, we will share a meaningful "Blessing of the Hands"—a moment of renewal and recommitment to the quiet, faithful ministry of preparing the Lord's Table. This blessing sends us back to our churches refreshed, strengthened, and ready to continue our behind-the-scenes service with joy.

Evenings of Fellowship

In addition to our scheduled sessions, we look forward to casual evenings of fellowship and sharing. These after-hours gatherings are always a cherished part of our Annual Meeting---a time to relax, enjoy one another's company, exchange stories from our parishes, and deepen the friendships that sustain our ministry. Whether you prefer quiet conversation, laughter among friends, or simply being present in community, these evenings offer a gentle space to unwind and connect.

Joyce Edwards

Vice President, Province IV Altar Guild



Sister Egeria Mark

Sister Egeria Mark is an ordained Episcopal priest and a novice Sister at the Community of St. Mary, an Episcopal Benedictine convent in Sewanee, Tennessee. Her religious name is in honor of the fourth century pilgrim writer and the earliest gospel and is pronounced "EH-jeer-ee-ah Mark" although "Hey Sister" works well too!

Originally hailing from New Hampshire, Sister Egeria moved to Sewanee, Tennessee in 2021 to attend seminary. During her time at the School of Theology, Sister Egeria Mark felt an increasingly strong call to St. Mary's Convent and began her monastic postulancy following her seminary graduation in May 2024.

In addition to her formation as a novice Sister, she serves as sacristan, preacher, and presider in the convent's chapel and is a group leader in the local undergraduate ministry at the University of the South. She has also enjoyed serving as a guest preacher, presider, and Quiet Day leader at various parishes. Passion projects of Sister Egeria Mark are typically centered around reading and writing.



The Rev. John Ander Runkle, RA

The Rev. John Ander Runkle, RA is both an Episcopal priest and a historical architect.

As an Episcopal priest, he has served the church in Virginia, Washington, DC, North Carolina and Tennessee since being ordained in 1999. As an historical architect, his career represents a devotion to the care and interpretation of architectural and cultural landmarks. From serving as an architect on staff with the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, to surveying archaeological sites of medieval Islamic settlements in the Sahara Desert of North Africa, to preserving, restoring and revitalizing historic worship space in the Anglican tradition, his architectural experience spans more than forty years. He consults with numerous churches, chapels and dioceses in the care of their buildings, including the Episcopal Church Center, who retained him as the Consulting Project Manager guiding the efforts to reconstruct Holy Trinity Cathedral in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, that was destroyed in the

2010 earthquake. From 2005 to 2010, he served as the Cathedral Conservator at Washington National Cathedral, where he was responsible for the care of the Cathedral's building fabric, along with managing its fine arts collections. In 2017, he established John RunkleArchitects, PLLC, a firm specializing in historic structures with a focus on churches and memorials.

John's book, *Searching for Sacred Space: Essays on Architecture and Liturgical Design in the Episcopal Church*, is a collection of thought-provoking essays that focus on liturgical space and its proper support of common worship. He regularly speaks at conferences and retreats on the theology of sacred space and history of religious architecture, as well as teaches at several seminaries. John serves on the boards of the Historical Society of the Episcopal Church, Historic St. John's Church, Ashwood, TN, and chairs the Architectural Committee of the Diocese of TN.



Board Members

June 2023 – June 2026

Current Executive Committee members (President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer) are due to step down in June 2026. We currently do not have a search committee, so we are asking for volunteers to take office. **Without volunteers, there will be no PROV IV after this June.** For more information, email Phyllis Bruce.

We must fill out a slate of officers at the June meeting and install a new Executive Committee.

President
Phyllis Bruce
Fairhope, Alabama
St. Pauls, Daphne
pobruce46@gmail.com

Vice-President
Joyce Edwards
Gallatin, Tennessee
Church of Our Savior, Gallatin
joycedwards@bellsouth.net

Historian
Judy Henderson
Palm Bay, Florida
Holy Trinity, Melbourne
jem2415@earthlink.net

Secretary
Kathy Shearer
Belle Isle, Florida
St. Michael's, Belle Isle
wwdassoc@gmail.com

Treasurer
Jay Walters
Enterprise, Alabama
Nativity, Dothan
retdds23@gmail.com

SEARCHING
President
Vice-President
Treasurer
Secretary
Historian
Parliamentarian
Hospitality Committee
Newsletter Editor

Newsletter Editor: Meagan Brady



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.

PROV IV Conference Registration Form

May 31-June 3, 2026
Anna House at St. Mary's Sewanee
770 St. Mary's Lane, Sewanee, TN 37375

FULLY PAID REGISTRATION MUST BE RECEIVED BY MAY 7, 2026

PROV IV Dues

If you have **not** paid your 2026 membership dues, please add:

Individual \$25 Parish \$25
Household \$30 Diocese \$30

Parish and Diocese may name an attending representative below.

Rooms at Sewanee include 3 nights. Price listed is per room:

\$270.00 Adult Double Occupancy
Request a Roommate _____ or
Name of Roommate _____
\$397.50 Single Occupancy

All Guests are required to pay for meals they consume. **Day Guests** are urged to attend dinner (and registration) on May 31st and on June 2nd. **Residents - 8 meals are \$97.** Prices are below; please enter the **CODE** next to the date(s) you wish to attend: **(B)** breakfast \$17, **(L)** lunch \$19, **(D)** dinner \$22.

Day Guest (5/31/2026) - _____

Day Guest (6/1/2026) - _____

Day Guest (6/2/2026) - _____

Day Guest (6/3/2026) - _____

Total Meals _____

Total Due

General Registration \$ 60.00

PROV IV Dues \$ _____

Room \$ _____

Meals \$ _____

TOTAL DUE \$ _____

Full Name _____

Phone (cell preferred) (H)(C) _____

E-mail _____

Mailing Address _____

Parish _____

Diocese _____

*Please send your completed registration form along with a check made out to
"Province IV Altar Guild" to:*

Jay Walters, Treasurer, 407 Lake Oliver Drive, Enterprise, AL 36330



It is necessary that all paid members vote on a change to the PROV IV Altar Guild bylaws. These bylaws were last amended in 2020 to exclude meetings in the year of the National Church meeting, which is held every three years. We call it the “Triennial.” The proposed changes and rationale for those changes are in red below. Voting on the bylaws will occur at the Sewanee meeting in June 2026 by a quorum of attending members.

The current Executive Committee was installed in June 2023 and will be replaced in June 2026. That means we have a lot of business to cover. Please read these bylaws carefully and consider volunteering for an office. The current President and Secretary will act as advisors so that there is continuity and institutional memory available for the new Executive Committee. Advisors have a voice, but no vote.

PROVINCE IV ALTAR GUILD BYLAWS

Amended June 24, 2020

ARTICLE I. – NAME

The name of this organization shall be Province IV Altar Guild. Province IV Altar Guild is an affiliate of the National Altar Guild Association of the Episcopal Church.

ARTICLE II. PURPOSE

The purpose of Province IV Altar Guild shall be:

- A. To unite all altar guilds in Province IV, encouraging and deepening the spiritual life of all the members so that public worship to Almighty God in His church may be offered in the beauty of His holiness for the extension of His kingdom;
- B. To assist in the communication between the National Altar Guild and the membership of Province IV Altar Guild;
- C. To foster educational programs throughout Province IV Altar Guilds and to sponsor an annual conference. (Removing clause “except in the years when Triennial meets.” Rationale: The 2020 change did not have the desired effect of making attendance at the Triennial increase. Only the Executive Committee attended the Triennial. In addition, now that PROV IV meetings are in a different state annually, the absence of a meeting might discourage new members from continuing their membership.)
- D. To encourage and assist in the organization of diocesan altar guilds and to strengthen the work of parish/mission altar guilds within Province IV.

ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Membership is open to any diocesan, parish, mission group or individual in Province IV.

Section 2. Payment of annual dues entitles a member or representative to attend the annual meeting with voting privileges and to receive any Province IV communication.

ARTICLE IV. OFFICERS, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND BOARD

Section 1. Officers shall be president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. They shall constitute the Executive Committee.

Section 2. The Board shall consist of the Executive Committee, the chairman of the nominating committee and the chairmen of committees appointed by the president or Executive Committee. The immediate former president shall also serve on the board, acting as chairman of the advisory committee. Other former presidents and the president-elect are included as advisors and may attend board meetings, at their discretion. Advisors have voice, but no vote.

ARTICLE V. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Section 1. A slate of officers, including president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer, shall be presented by the Nominating Committee at the annual meeting prior to Triennial. (Adding clause, "Nominations will be accepted from the floor with prior acceptance of the nominee." Rationale: As PROV IV meetings are going to a different state every year, the committee has not had time to canvas new members. The Newsletter prior to that meeting must be used to promote volunteers.)

Section 2. The officers shall be elected and installed at the annual meeting prior to Triennial, and serve for a three-year term.

ARTICLE VI. DUTIES OF OFFICERS

Section 1. The president shall be responsible for meetings, agenda, newsletter and activities and shall preside at all meetings. She/he is the administrative head of Province IV Altar Guild and as such shall represent Province IV at the National Altar Guild Association's Triennial meeting. (Adding clause, "The President shall also attend the annual board meetings of NAGA." Rationale: It's what we do, so let's codify it.)

Section 2. The vice-president shall plan the program for the annual meetings and serve in the absence of the president.

Section 3. The secretary shall keep minutes of all meetings and is responsible for necessary correspondence of the organization. Section 4. The treasurer shall keep an accurate record of funds received and disbursed, prepare a budget and collect all monies.

ARTICLE VII. MEETINGS

Section 1. Province IV shall meet at a time and place at the discretion of the Executive Committee. Under extenuating circumstances, the meeting may be held electronically.

Section 2. Meetings of the Executive Committee and the Board shall be held at the call of the Province IV president. They may be held electronically.

ARTICLE VIII. VACANCIES

The Executive Committee shall fill by appointment any vacancies that may occur.

ARTICLE IX. FINANCES

Section 1. Membership dues shall be paid annually toward the expenses of Province IV Altar Guild.

Section 2. The amount of dues shall be determined by the Executive Committee. Dues are payable by February 1 of each year, with membership concurring with the fiscal year of January 1 to December 31.

Section 3. Financial accounts shall be reviewed by an audit committee appointed by the outgoing president prior to the conclusion of the treasurer's term in office.

Section 4. In the event of the dissolution of Province IV Altar Guild, all assets remaining after payment of all liabilities shall be transferred to the National Altar Guild Association, which is tax exempt with the meaning of Section (c) 3 of the Internal Revenue Code.

ARTICLE X. PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

The rules in *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, shall govern this organization where applicable and not inconsistent with these Bylaws.

ARTICLE XI. AMENDMENTS

Section 1. The Bylaws may be amended at any meeting of Province IV Altar Guild by two thirds vote of those present and authorized to vote, written notice having been submitted no less than sixty days before the meeting.

Section 2. The Executive Committee shall review the Bylaws at the beginning of their terms of office and are authorized to edit the same during their terms, as adopted and amended, such editing to include renumbering, title revision, rearranging and other non-substantive changes as deemed necessary by the committee.

Adopted: June 8, 1988

Amended: June 5, 2012

Amended: June 4, 2018

Amended June 24, 2020 by email vote

Proposed in January 2026 newsletter



2026 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 \$ 25 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 \$25

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 2026
CONFERENCE May 31-Jun 3