



Northwest Synod of Wisconsin
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

October 5, 2017

Dear Sisters and Brothers of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin,

I am writing to inform you that I will be ending my service as the bishop of our synod on June 30, 2018. As you may be aware, my six year term as bishop is scheduled to end in 2019, but I am choosing to retire one year early.

This decision comes after much prayer, conversations between my wife Diane and I, talking with our amazing synod staff, synod Vice President Lynn Fering and Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton.

Serving as the bishop of our synod has been one of the greatest honors and privileges of my ministry. The joy of being with you on Sunday mornings and most other days of the week has both fed me and inspired me. I have been blessed to get to know each of our Rostered Ministers and Synodically Authorized Ministers far more deeply than I ever would have had I not been called to this office. We have laughed together, cried together and prayed together, and each of those moments has been sacred.

But, it is time for me to move toward a new chapter in my life and in my call as a baptized child of God. Diane and I will be moving to our new lake home in Minnesota this next summer, and then be calling Arizona our home in the winter months.

Why now and not wait another year?

I have been fortunate in my ministry to have served five calls. In each of the first four, I have had a clear sense when the call from God and the community was ending and it was time to move on. I have learned to trust that sense of call and when that call was ending. That is the best I can give to you. I am ready, as of June 30, 2018 to move on to where God can use me. I have no doubts that this is the right thing to do.

What does this mean for our synod?

It means you will be electing a new bishop in June of 2018. We have rescheduled our 2018 Synod Assembly from April to **Saturday-Sunday, June 2-3** at the Davies Center at the **University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire**. With the Synod Council's approval, Vice President Lynn Fering and Assistants to the Bishop Greg Kaufmann and Liz Bartsch have begun to call together a Bishop Election Team. This team will, together, choose the format of the next Bishop Election.

Walking together † for the sake of mission † in God's world

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What else does this mean?

It means it is time for you to begin a prayerful process of calling forward potential candidates for the Office of Bishop. Talk with each other, ask questions, seek out gifted pastors, and pray. I will be available to answer questions about the role and responsibilities of a bishop, but I cannot and will not bring opinions about who should serve in that role.

Although nine plus months remain in my serving as bishop, it is not too soon to thank you for the opportunity you have given me when you called me to this office. I have treasured the time I have been given and will do my best to serve you faithfully until that time is ended. The Northwest Synod of Wisconsin has been kind and caring to both Diane and me, and we be forever grateful. Thank you.

Now, let's get back to work.

Reverend Richard N. Hoyme, Bishop
Northwest Synod of Wisconsin