



Southwestern Minnesota Synod Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

+ Engaging Leaders + Equipping Congregations + Serving in God's World +

August 27, 2020

Dear Synod Council, Rostered and Baptized Ministers of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod,

For the past seventeen years I have been privileged and grateful to serve as the bishop of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod. I still feel surprised at this call to serve that came back in 2003. This call brings serious and intense challenges. It also is full of joys and moments where you see God's Church and people at their best. It has been an honor to serve in this call with so many people, congregations, leaders, rostered ministers, and institutional leaders.

Over the past six months I have been praying and thinking about the question, "Should I be open to serve another term as bishop, if I was called by the 2021 assembly?" I have asked, "What would best serve the mission of God and Jesus our Lord in the Southwestern Minnesota of the ELCA in the next chapter of its life?" Robyn and I have spent time discussing the journey we have lived through and this potential future. I have talked with my family. I have consulted with colleagues, friends, staff, and people who serve in our synod's leadership.

The COVID-19 Virus has disrupted this discernment. I planned to reach and share my decision by the time of our assembly in June. That did not happen as we worked in all the uncertainty of the virus. I adjusted my timeline to make and share this decision by the end of August to help our Bishop Election Committee plan its process regardless of my decision.

I have decided that I will not be open to serving another term as bishop after this term concludes in September 2021. After serving for 18 years, I believe it is time for new leadership for this synod.

I have joked for years saying, "I wonder what God will want me to do when I grow up?" I trust God has some new ways to serve in the future for me. I will strive to serve through this term faithfully and fruitfully until the transition time that will come on September 1, 2021. I look forward to continuing to serve with you all as we walk together following Christ, engaging important challenges and opportunities in the coming months.

Join me in praying that God will guide and call forth a new bishop to serve God and God's mission in our synod in the days ahead.

In Christ,

+Bishop Jon V. Anderson

Southwestern Minnesota Synod - ELCA

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