



September 12, 2024

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

Grace and peace to you from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

After much prayer and discernment, I have decided not to seek another term as your bishop and I have not made this decision lightly. In my discernment, here's what I've come to realize: by the end of my term as bishop, I will have served on synod staff for nine years—three years as Assistant to the Bishop and six years as Bishop. That is nine years without a church family through civil unrest, a global pandemic, denominational distress, deep grief and loss, along with the added weight and burden of white supremacy and patriarchy in our world and in our Church. It's time. It's time to heal, rest, and renew in community with church family. I am certain this is the right path forward for myself and, therefore, for the synod.

As such, we, the synod, are officially in a year of discernment!

As we enter this period of holy curiosity and prayer, I want to emphasize that this upcoming year will be a crucial time of discernment for all in our synod. I invite and encourage each of you to:

- Attend synod events throughout the year
- Engage fully and inquire about the opportunities we offer to learn more about the synod and the call to the Office of Bishop
- Use these experiences to inform your personal discernment

To all of you, I say, "Come and see!" Come and see who we are as a synod—church together—today for the sake of tomorrow, and be in prayer about how your leadership may guide the synod into further alignment with the Gospel of Jesus Christ for such a time as this. These engagements will provide valuable insights to help you determine if you are open to the Spirit's call to serve as the next bishop of The Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod of the ELCA, or if there is a colleague you'd like to encourage in their discernment to the call.

In the coming weeks, the transition team, chaired by Mr. Jackson Droney, will share information about what to expect in preparation for the election of a new bishop at the next Synod Assembly on June 6–7, 2025. In the meantime, I look forward to conversations with any who are interested and am open to questions about the call in its context.

Finally, dear Metro D.C. Synod colleagues and friends know that I will faithfully serve as your bishop until August 31, 2025. As such, I remain committed to our mission, “By the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, we are called to cultivate a bold and boundless love for Jesus and God’s beloved creation,” and pray it guides the future of our synod and those who are called to lead it beyond this term... with God’s help and in Jesus’ name. Amen.

En Cristo,



Rev. Leila M. Ortiz, Bishop