



Rev. Dr. Philip Hirsch Elected Bishop of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod, ELCA

The Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is pleased to announce the election of Rev. Dr. Philip Hirsch as its next bishop. Rev. Dr. Hirsch returns to the synod following years of local, national, and international leadership within the ELCA, bringing deep pastoral experience, a passion for justice, and a vision for a vibrant and welcoming church.

Rev. Dr. Hirsch previously served the Metro D.C. Synod as Director for Evangelical Mission for a decade, during which time he led strategic initiatives that supported congregational growth, encouraged cultural diversity, and raised more than \$1 million to launch and expand ministries throughout the synod.

Currently, he serves as Executive Director, Christian Community and Leadership at the ELCA, helping guide the church's work for the past six years. His pastoral ministry includes nearly 20 years of service as Pastor of Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Fairfax, Virginia, and Christus Evangelical Lutheran Church and Epiphany Lutheran Church in Camden, New Jersey.

Rev. Dr. Hirsch received his Bachelor of Arts from Susquehanna University in Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania, in 1986 and his Master of Divinity degree from the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, Illinois, in 1990. He earned his Doctor of Ministry in homiletics focused on Violence Prevention Among Youth from United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio, in 1997.

"Above all things, I believe my faith in Christ is a gift that is central to who I am, and it informs everything I hope to share and do," said Rev. Dr. Hirsch.

Throughout his ministry, Rev. Dr. Hirsch has demonstrated a deep commitment to serving the marginalized and underserved. This work includes:

- Coaching youth at the Fairfax Juvenile Detention Center
- Serving on the board of the Inside Out Network, which supports returning citizens
- Participating in the Reframing the Dialogue on Race initiative for the National Council of Churches
- Presiding over Dooley House in Camden, New Jersey, which built and operated homes for infants and children with HIV/AIDS

- Organizing with Camden Churches Organized for People to invest in housing, safety, and job creation in under-resourced communities

As bishop, Rev. Dr. Hirsch plans to focus on congregational renewal and mission, saying, “We will work together to bring great life and vitality to our congregations and members by prioritizing the church’s ability to engage with new people, young people, and more diverse communities. We will help our congregations become places where people more easily find belonging and safety. Together, we will work to create a movement in the Metro D.C. area that begins to bring hope to each other, to the world, and to the church as a whole.”

Rev. Dr. Hirsch will begin his term as bishop on Monday, September 1, and his installation will be on Sunday, November 9, at 3:00 PM at the National Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C.

The Metro D.C. Synod warmly welcomes Rev. Dr. Philip Hirsch as Bishop-Elect and looks forward to the faithful leadership and vision he will bring to our shared ministry. We are eager to begin nurturing vibrant, inclusive communities grounded in the bold and boundless gospel of Jesus Christ.

