

July 23, 2009

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

I am confident that each of you joins with the Synod Council in celebrating the wonderful ministry of Bishop Jerry Knoche among us and in expressing sincere sadness that he must transition from this phase of his ministry. We respect and honor his decision to address his health concerns at this time so that he may continue to serve with us in the future.

As we develop plans to continue the vital work and mission underway in and among the people of the Delaware-Maryland Synod, the Synod Council has taken the following actions:

1. Communicated with the Office of the Presiding Bishop of the ELCA and scheduled an initial meeting with a member of Bishop Hanson's staff in early August, when we will discuss our request for the name of a recommended interim bishop to be called by the Synod Council and for other support for our synod.
2. Appointed committees to plan a special Synod Assembly tentatively targeted for January 15-16, 2010 (with a snow date of January 22-23), to plan an Appreciation Celebration for Bishop Knoche on November 8, 2009, at 4:00 p.m., and to develop preliminary plans for the installation of a new bishop in April, 2010.
3. Asked the synod's Personnel Committee to recommend a severance package, if necessary, for members of the bishop's staff.
4. Requested written updates from each ongoing Mission Team and Task Force to be incorporated into an informational manual to be transmitted to the new bishop.
5. Committed to maintaining regular and ongoing contact with you regarding this process, including utilizing the conference deans, synod website, and synod E-Letter.

This time of transition offers the synod an opportunity to develop new partnerships and provides each of you new opportunities to be involved in the life of the church. With prayer and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we can be led in paths that bring glory to God and health and healing to our friend Jerry.

In the meantime, the vibrant life of the synod continues, with Partners in Faith, Partners in Vision (the synod leadership event), the Bishop's Leadership Days for rostered leaders, the Leadership Academy and countless other ministries. Each member of the Synod Council prays that you will continue to dwell richly in the word of God as we journey together.

Your sister in Christ,

/s/Yolanda Tanner
Delaware-Maryland Synod Vice President