



**South-Central Synod of Wisconsin
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**
God's work. Our hands.

October 11, 2017

Message from Bishop Mary

Dear Partners in Ministry in the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin,



I am writing to inform you that I will be ending my service as the bishop of our synod next June, a year earlier than my full term.

As most of you know, on May 12, 2017, I suffered a heart attack. I was treated quickly with a coronary stent, and have received good medical care, effective medication and successfully completed cardiac rehab. What most of you do not know is at the same time I was diagnosed with thyroid cancer. The type of cancer I have is not aggressive, is contained, and easily treatable by removing the thyroid. The problem is that since I am on blood thinners for the coronary stent, I am unable to have my thyroid removed at this time. My doctors are monitoring the situation and everything is stable. They are not concerned. This really is not a big deal compared to what so many live with. I am doing well and feeling more fit and healthy than I have in years.

Nonetheless, these health scares have caused John and me to think about what is of ultimate importance in our lives and make decisions about how best to live fully and faithfully into the future. We have decided that it is time for us to move closer to home and family – including my parents and our grandchildren. To that end, we will be seeking our next calls in the Twin Cities.

This means our synod will be electing a new bishop at our next synod assembly, May 5-6, 2018. The synod council will be reviewing the Bishop's election process and assembling election and transition teams. More information will be shared with you as details are worked out.

This also means it is time for each of you to begin to identify potential candidates for the Office of Bishop. Talk with each other, ask questions, seek out gifted pastors, and pray. I will always 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.

Serving as your bishop has been one of the greatest honors and privileges of my ministry and I thank you for your call and trust. I have been blessed to share times of celebration and struggle with so many of you. I will miss gathering with you at synod events and in your congregations on Sunday mornings. You have touched my heart, fed my spirit, and given me hope as you live out your faith in Jesus. John joins me in expressing deep gratitude for your welcome, friendship, support and partnership in this good gospel work.

God's peace as we continue walking together in faith,

Bishop Mary Froiland