



Northeastern Ohio Synod Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

September 9, 2019

Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you."

So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.

[Genesis 12:1, 4]

Dear people of God of the Northeastern Ohio Synod,

Greetings in the name of our crucified and risen Savior Jesus Christ!

I write to announce that I will retire as Bishop of the Northeastern Ohio Synod at the end of my current term on August 31, 2020. I will not stand for re-election at the 2020 synod assembly.

I am making this announcement now to allow adequate time for preparation for the process of electing a bishop, to allow me to discuss it openly as I travel around the synod; and so that you will have sufficient time to pray, to engage in open conversation together, and then to discern whom God is preparing to be your next bishop.

Five years ago, the Holy Spirit spoke and called me as your bishop.

The memory of that day will forever be indelibly etched in my brain. I vividly recall when the election results were announced. The assembly stood, the thunderous applause rang like cannon blasts in my ears, and I sat there among you, stunned and rendered nearly speechless.

Words cannot sufficiently express the joy, honor, and gratitude I feel for having had the opportunity to lead and guide you on Christ's behalf, to pray for you, and to learn from you for the past five years.

However, in the rapidly-changing mission field around us, I believe that it is time for a fresh perspective and new leadership and imagination to carry this work forward in the face of never-ending challenges.

I have often read the words of God's call to Abram in the above passage as if it were my story. But every story has a conclusion and I believe it is time to begin writing the final chapter of this blessed call.

In the meantime, we still have nearly a year to continue the work we have begun. I pray that this may be a time of joy and hope as we live toward living out our common mission into God's future.

We end our Vespers (Evening Prayer) with the following prayer, which is fitting for this occasion:

O God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Peace and blessings,

+Bishop Abraham Allende