



The Right Reverend Kirk Stevan Smith, Ph.D., D.D.
BISHOP OF ARIZONA

November 9, 2017

Dear People of God,

This afternoon, I have met with the priests of the Diocese to let them know that I have announced my retirement and am calling for the election of my successor.

This was, of course, an announcement of mixed emotions for me. It has been the greatest honor and joy for me to serve as your bishop for almost 15 years. We have accomplished some great things together, and thanks to your hard work and prayers, the diocese overall is healthy and growing. By the time I retire, I will be almost 68 years old. It is time for the diocese to move on to a new mission with younger leadership. It is also time for me to enjoy some new adventures before I get too old to do so! I am excited to share with you that one of these first adventures will be as a visiting professor of church history at General Theological Seminary in New York for the fall of 2019. Teaching is something which I very much enjoy, and having my two kids (and grandson!) nearby will be an added pleasure.

What happens next? Bishop Todd Ousley, from the Presiding Bishop's Office of Pastoral Development who oversees the transition process for the Episcopal Church, was with us today to outline the next steps. The Standing Committee, with The Rev Canon Daniel Tantimonaco as President, will oversee the search and transition process for the diocese. The Standing Committee and others will be working with a consultant from Bishop Ousley's office throughout this process. The Diocesan Staff's responsibility will be to work hard to keep the diocese doing business as usual throughout this transition. Please know all of us will continue to be available to you when you need us.

The Search Committee is designated by our Canons. It will be composed of four members of the Standing Committee and four Deputies to General Convention (2 clergy and 2 lay from each). It will be their job in the coming months to find a list of final candidates to present to the whole diocese in a series of "walkabouts" before the election takes place at Diocesan Convention on October 19-20, 2018. The bishop-elect will then work with me for a few months before being consecrated as the Sixth Bishop of Arizona on March 9, 2019 by Presiding Bishop Michael Curry.

I still have almost 18 months to serve you. That will be used to further strengthen many existing programs and projects. I don't intend to be a lame duck! There is still much work to do! But it will also be a time of sharing memories and celebrating our work together. I look forward to that transition process and I especially ask your prayers for the Standing Committee, Search Committee, Diocesan staff, and our whole Diocese as we discern the future of our life together.

Faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kirk", is written below the word "Faithfully,".