



The Standing Committee

of The Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota

The Rev Dr John Floberg
The Very Rev Mark Strobel
The Rev Dn Terry Overbo

Mr. Robert Fox
Dr. Christie Iverson
Dr. Amy Phillips

January 2, 2020

Dear People of God in the Diocese of North Dakota:

With gratitude and joy, we write today to announce that the Rt. Rev. Thomas Ely, bishop of the Diocese of Vermont from 2001-2019, has agreed to join the Diocese of North Dakota in ministry. He will serve part-time beginning this month, and once the pandemic has eased, will be with us here in the diocese for one week each month.

For now, Bishop Ely will serve as our assisting bishop, appointed by the Standing Committee under the provisions of Title III, Canon 13, Section 2 of the Canons of the Episcopal Church. In consultation with Diocesan Council and Presiding Bishop Michael Curry's office, and pursuant to Title III, Canon 13, Section 1, the Standing Committee has also named him as our nominee for bishop provisional. **On February 6 at 10 a.m., we will gather online via Zoom for a special convention to vote on his nomination.** This will be the only item of business at this special convention, called under Canon 2 (d) of the Canons of the Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota.

Bishop Ely was ordained a priest in 1980 in Connecticut, where he was born and raised. He holds a bachelor's degree from Western Connecticut State University and a master of divinity from the School of Theology at the University of the South. Before becoming bishop of Vermont, he served as a missionary in two regional ministry clusters in Connecticut and as Director of Youth Ministries for the Diocese of Connecticut and as executive director of its diocesan camp. Long a leader in the House of Bishops, Bishop Ely is known for his commitment to peace and reconciliation, to interfaith and ecumenical ministry, local ministry development and to global mission. He is married to Ann, and they have two daughters and three grandchildren.

Once we have elected Bishop Ely as our transitional bishop provisional, he will serve as our diocese's ecclesiastical authority, sharing ministry with the Diocesan Council and the Standing Committee, coaching us and helping us to discern the possibilities offered by the findings of the Diocesan Discernment Task Force Report <https://ndepiscopal.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/A-DDTF-Final-Report-to-Convention-1.pdf> that we began to explore at our diocesan convention in October. His time with us will be transitional, not just for the role of bishop in our diocese, but also for all of us.

Together with Bishop Ely, the Standing Committee and the Diocesan Council will hire a full-time diocesan minister and administrative assistant, as recommended by the task force report. They will work closely with congregations and with leaders across the diocese to support congregations, invigorate communications, and build an administrative structure to maximize the impact of our ministries and resources.

The next issue of The Sheaf, which will be published early next week, will include an article about Bishop Ely and our hopes for his transitional ministry with us. We look forward to introducing him to you soon via Zoom, and in due time, to welcoming him to North Dakota. Until then, please pray for him, for your Standing Committee and Diocesan Council, and for all the leaders of the Episcopal Church in North Dakota as we continue discerning God's mission in our congregations and communities.

Faithfully,

The Standing Committee of the Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota