



# The Diocese of New Jersey

THE RIGHT REVEREND WILLIAM H. STOKES, BISHOP OF NEW JERSEY

September 2, 2021

Dear People of the Diocese of New Jersey,

*For everything there is a season... Ecclesiastes 3:1*

I am writing to let you know that, following prayer and consultation with family, trusted friends and trusted advisors, I have determined that the time has come for me to call for the election of the 13<sup>th</sup> Bishop of the Diocese of New Jersey and to notify you of my intention to resign and retire as the 12<sup>th</sup> Bishop in June 2023. At that time, God-willing, I will be 66 years old and will have served the diocese for almost ten years. My intention is not to call for a bishop co-adjutor, but to call for the election of the next diocesan bishop. Prayer, discernment and a recognition of the changing needs and demands of The Episcopal Church and the Diocese of New Jersey all indicate it is time for me to “step aside” and allow a new generation to step forward.

I have notified The Most Reverend Michael B. Curry, our Presiding Bishop, of my intentions and he wants me to assure you of his love and support of our diocese as we enter this time of transition. The Right Reverend Todd Ousley who serves the Presiding Bishop’s office as Bishop for Pastoral Development will be working with the Diocese throughout the process that will lead to the election and consecration of the next bishop. I am grateful to Fr. Ed Zelle and the members of The Standing Committee for their support in this. Governed by the Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church and the Diocese of New Jersey, they will have general oversight responsibility for the election process and are already working on retaining a consultant to advise them and the wider diocesan community.

I am also deeply grateful to Ms. Valaida Guerrero, member of St. Andrew’s Church in New Providence and a Trustee of the Diocese, who has agreed to serve as the Chair of the Episcopal Search and Nomination Committee for the election of the 13<sup>th</sup> bishop. I have appointed her to this role with the advice and consent of The Standing Committee in accordance with Diocesan Canon 9, Section 3(c). She is an exceptional person and faithful leader who I feel confident will guide this process prayerfully with tremendous skill and grace.

I cannot express the profound gratitude I feel for the sacred honor and privilege I have had in serving as your bishop. By God’s grace, we still have nearly two years to walk together in this work. I look forward to journeying with you and trust that the Holy Spirit will continue to lead, sustain and guide us through it all.

May God bless you and those you love.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "W. Stokes", with a cross symbol to the left.

The Right Reverend William H. Stokes  
12<sup>th</sup> Bishop of the Diocese of New Jersey

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