



THE RT. REV. STEVEN ANDREW MILLER, D. D.

BISHOP OF MILWAUKEE

April 29, 2020

Dear Friends in Christ,

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

When I first began to envision and plan for my last year and a half as Bishop of Milwaukee, I looked forward to a last convention with our Presiding Bishop as the preacher, presiding over the election of my successor, and, most especially, face to face gatherings with many of you to say goodbye and to thank you for the privilege and joy of being your bishop. Closed churches, social distancing, multiple weekly Zoom meetings, and online worship never even entered my imagination. Now they are very much part of my life, and I suspect the same will be true for the months ahead.

This new reality has also been the source of gifts. It has called us as the Church to reach out in new ways and embrace new technologies. It is inviting us to consider being the Church in a different way as we wait and see what will be in the days ahead. It is also asking us to consider how we gather and do business. I am already working with the chancellors and our parliamentarian on what this means for our Diocesan Convention this fall.

As I prayed and prepared for retirement, I began to wonder if this was the right time for this diocese to elect a Bishop Diocesan because it may be a year or even longer before we know what life in southern Wisconsin and our diocese will look like, let alone what type of skills and gifts will be needed for episcopal ministry at this time. Two things became clear to me. First, though I did not want the diocese to be without episcopal leadership, it was right for me and my family to continue the present timetable for my retirement on December 31, 2020. Second, it was not the right time to elect the 12th Bishop of Milwaukee. Circumstances make it difficult to do the necessary listening and visioning work to complete such a process. The current search process would need to be delayed by a number of months rather than weeks.

I believe that this time of pandemic provides an opportunity for the diocese. It gives space to ask deeper questions not only about our common life but that of the Episcopal Church in Wisconsin and what the shape of ministry will be in the future. It pushes us to ask questions that I and

others have been asking for many years about the number and configuration of dioceses in the state (a configuration first shaped by railroad lines and connections). I shared these concerns first with the Rt. Rev. Todd Ousley, Director of the Office of the Pastoral Development and then our Standing Committee and Diocesan Search Consultant. After much discussion, it was decided to embrace this opportunity.

I am grateful to the Standing Committee for hearing and acting on my concerns. I know they will do their best to lead this diocese in this time of leadership transition. So I will conclude my 17 years of ministry among you with a profound sense of gratitude and confident of God's blessing on the work to be done here in years to come.

May God continue to bless us all.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Steven Andrew Miller". The signature is written in dark ink and has a long, sweeping tail that extends downwards and to the right.

The Rt. Rev. Steven Andrew Miller
Bishop