

The Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh



August 31, 2021

Dear friends in Christ,

This will be my last message to you as your bishop. My retirement takes effect officially tomorrow, and our Standing Committee will be the Ecclesiastical Authority of the diocese until Bishop-elect Dr. Ketlen Solak+ is consecrated on November 13. I will, however, be among you for another two weeks, advising the Standing Committee and the Bishop-elect. I am grateful for the opportunity to ordain the Reverend Bonnie-Marie Yager-Wiggan at Trinity Cathedral this coming Saturday, the 47th ordination during my time in Pittsburgh. I rejoice to leave such a legacy of gifted clergy who serve this diocese and the wider Church, as well as for the many dozens of lay people who have answered the call to leadership and ministry during our time together.



When I first considered the call to become your 8th bishop, I remembered a moment from my childhood, in which my mother taught me about reconciliation and healing summarized in these words: *life is long, darling, and we need each other*. Back in 2012, I thought I might bring my gifts in this pursuit for the benefit of this diocese. However, some nine years later I am fully cognizant that it is you who have gifted me. You have done so by showing your resolve to rebuild and heal through the pain that was so deep in the years after the split. You embraced a reconciling agreement with those who left us, so that our respective work for the Gospel of Jesus Christ would not be hampered by further division. You have reached beyond the walls of your churches by engaging with others who do not look like you, so that in steps large and small, racial reconciliation may move closer to becoming a reality. You have carried the love of Jesus Christ into your immediate neighborhoods and cared for your fellow parishioners, even through a pandemic that still poses a risk to our health and safety. In all this, and much more, you have echoed the words of my mother, that we absolutely need — and cannot dismiss each other — because, as the apostle Paul writes, *we are one body and drink of one Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:12-13)*.



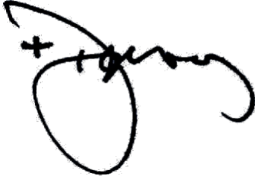
This unity is not only a matter of the present time. It transcends the generations, and is embodied in the Office of the Bishop. Recently, the family of the Right Reverend Robert Appleyard, the fifth Bishop of Pittsburgh, made the generous gift to our diocese of his pectoral cross and ring. They did so because they see, in the work God has done through us all over the years, the same fruits of the Spirit for which their father labored. They want you to know the entire family — Bishop Bob's eldest son, the Reverend Robert Appleyard (pictured here with me), and his siblings Jonathan+, Jane and Daniel — offers this gift as an encouragement, a sign of confidence in your future, and a sign of the continuity and unity of this diocese. I rejoice, knowing that Ketlen+ will build beautifully on this legacy.

325 Oliver Avenue, Suite 300, Pittsburgh, PA 15222
412-721-0853 www.episcopalpgh.org

Betsy and I would like to thank you, but there are not enough words. Our gratitude for all of you is immeasurable: for the hundreds who came to say goodbye personally this past Saturday; for the many others who have written or called with their best wishes; and for all of you who have been so welcoming, supportive, and (at times) forgiving in our encounters over the past nine years, we give God glory and praise. You will remain in our prayers in the years to come.

So now, as we say goodbye, one last time I take my leave with words it has been my honor to use:

Faithfully, your bishop,

A handwritten signature in black ink, featuring a large, stylized initial 'D' and a cross symbol at the beginning of the name.

(The Right Reverend) Dorsey W.M. McConnell, D.D.
VIII Bishop of Pittsburgh