

The Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh



April 16, 2020

Dear friends in Christ,

Due to the extraordinary circumstances brought on by the pandemic, and after much thought and prayer, I have decided to postpone my retirement until September 18, 2021. I have asked the Presiding Bishop to authorize the consecration of my successor on that date. Pursuant to this time frame, at my request the Standing Committee has consented to a new date of April 24, 2021, for a special convention to elect the ninth Bishop of Pittsburgh.

We don't know how long we will be unable to meet together due to the pandemic, nor can we foresee the full impact on our parishes of the economic and personal stresses we will likely be experiencing for some time to come. Extending my tenure by a few months will allow some continuity of pastoral care as we all try to get back on our feet once the worst has past.

This revised schedule will also benefit our discernment process. It may allow some clergy, who sense a call to be the next bishop but are reluctant to leave their parishes so soon after this crisis, to be more willing to be considered given a bit more time for everyone to heal. And, assuming that larger, in-person meetings may be possible in the coming months, there would be opportunities for you in the diocese to gather to express your dreams and wishes concerning the next bishop, and eventually to meet and hear from the nominees at walkabouts shortly before the election.

Finally, this new calendar will give the Nominating Committee more time, under less pressure, to complete their mission. I know from the chair, Michael Braxton, that work is progressing – currently they are collecting information for a diocesan profile – and that they will report in more detail to the diocese in the very near future.

I am very grateful for the support of the Standing Committee. I am especially grateful for its president, Russ Ayres, and for our consultant to the election process, Judy Stark, for their counsel and encouragement as I came to this decision.

I am honored to be able to continue a little longer as your bishop in a time of such great need. As always, I ask for your prayers, as I assure you of my own.

Faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dorsey", with a stylized flourish at the end.

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