



Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts

Office of the Bishop *The Rt. Rev. Alan M. Gates, Bishop*

May 10, 2023

*For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, ... to give you a future and hope.
~Jeremiah 29:11*

Dear People of the Diocese of Massachusetts,

Sometimes the plans we discern for a point still in the future require preparation in the present. So it is that I have communicated to the Standing Committee of our diocese my intention to retire at the end of 2024, and have asked the Committee to undertake the process leading to the election next year of my successor as bishop diocesan.

It has been and remains my profound honor to serve as your bishop. Our life together is full of both joys and challenges as we strive to deepen our Christian community with one another and act as agents of God's mission in the world. To do so with such faithful colleagues as you – clergy and lay people alike – is a privilege beyond the telling.

At the end of 2024 I will have been bishop for over a decade, and will have marked thirty-seven years of ordained ministry. That will be the right time for me to turn my sights toward personal and family pursuits, and to make way for new episcopal leadership. It has been nearly forty years since our diocese has had an episcopal transition unmarked by significant tragedy or grief. It is my earnest desire that we effect a smooth and joyful transition, from a place of gratitude and eagerness.

The Standing Committee will communicate with you soon, sharing initial word of upcoming process. The Rt. Rev. Todd Ousley, who heads the church's Office of Pastoral Development, will meet later this week with our Standing Committee and diocesan staff to provide guidance for the work ahead. Please hold your Standing Committee and staff in prayer!

Meanwhile – I remain your bishop, and we have plenty to do in our corner of the vineyard! Discerning priorities for mission; reimagining congregational life in response to a changing world; promoting deeper collaborations; engaging broadly with anti-racism; serving as more faithful stewards of creation; all of this demands our best efforts, empowered by the Holy Spirit, and will not be put on hold. I am profoundly grateful to the Rt. Rev. Carol Gallagher for joining me as assistant bishop to provide episcopal leadership in our diocese in these two years. We are blessed by Bishop Gallagher's experience, joy, and devotion.

As is my wont, I conclude with Paul's affirmation: *Glory to God, whose power working in us can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine: Glory to God from generation to generation in the church, and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever.* [Ephesians 3:20-21]

I remain yours, faithfully and fondly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "+ Alan".

The Rt. Rev. Alan M. Gates