

**OFFICES OF THE BISHOP**

1210 Locust Street  
3rd Floor  
St. Louis, Missouri 63103

tel: 314.231.1220  
fax: 314.231.3373  
DioceseMo.org



*Diocese of Missouri*  
THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

April 27, 2018

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

It is with a whirlwind of emotions that I write this letter, for no ministry have I loved more than serving as the Tenth Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Missouri. Even so, the time has come for me to set in motion a process for electing and calling the Eleventh Bishop. In a lengthy meeting yesterday, I announced this decision to the Standing Committee, who from this time forward will have complete responsibility for the process. The Rt. Rev. Todd Ousley, Bishop for the Office for Pastoral Development, was present to present a framework for this season ahead. I have called for the election of my successor during the 2019 meeting of Diocesan Convention, November 15-16. The ordination of the new bishop will be sometime in the spring 2020, probably in April. My resignation will become effective on that date.

I am young and healthy, and I am not at all certain that my active ministry will come to an end with my retirement from Missouri. I am indeed open to new possibilities. It is clear to me, nonetheless, that it is time for a transition in episcopal ministry in this venue. Conversation with my wife, Debbie Smith, and our family, consultation with colleagues in this Diocese and with other bishops, and extensive pondering and praying have brought me to this point. I am at ease with the decision.

It is usual and customary for a bishop, writing this sort of letter, to claim that his or her tenure as bishop is not over, that there is still time left (in my case, two years) for the ministry to continue. This much is true, and I pledge to remain faithful in my duties in providing oversight for the Diocese of Missouri, and to take my place in the councils of the wider Church. I realize, however, that this announcement alters the trajectory of our work together, and that emotionally, spiritually, and realistically, attention turns to the next chapter in the Diocese's life, both in its continuities and its necessary changes. I pledge to honor that shift, and support your work in making it.

I write this letter with some sadness and some relief—but most of all with deep gratitude for the privilege of serving as your bishop these past sixteen years—with a couple more yet to come.

Ever faithfully, in Christ,

The Rt. Rev. George Wayne Smith  
Bishop of Missouri