



# Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Northern Great Lakes Synod

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Companion Relationships:  
**Eastern & Coastal Diocese**  
Evangelical Lutheran Church  
in Tanzania

**Delaware-Maryland Synod**  
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**Rev. Dale R. Skogman**  
Bishop Emeritus  
1991-1999

**Rev. Harry S. Andersen**  
Bishop Emeritus  
1987-1991

June 9, 2016

Dear Sisters and Brothers in the Northern Great Lakes Synod:

As I write these lines the words of St. Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians come to me, "I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus..." Friends, it has been my privilege to serve you since 1999 when God called me to the office of bishop. Re-elected by this synod in 2005 and in 2011, I will have served 18 years in this episcopal office when my current term ends on August 31, 2017. It is important for me to tell you that, after prayerful consideration, and with the support of my wife Luanne and our family, I announce to you that I will not be available for another term as your bishop. Within a few days of the end of my current term I will become 63 years of age. I will retire from the office of bishop. It is time.

With this sufficient notice, your synod council will be able to make the necessary preparations to elect another pastor to serve as bishop at the 2017 Synod Assembly, May 21-23. A number of decisions will need to be made by the synod leadership over the next year. This time will be needed to study the process for the election of a bishop and to give our congregations opportunity to prepare for the necessary leadership changes ahead.

It has been an experience of a lifetime to serve as this synod's pastor—your bishop. I have seen both the joy of the Gospel and the power of human sinfulness in this work. I have traveled the world on behalf of the Church and spent hours upon hours in every congregation in this synod over these twenty-five years as a part of the synod executive staff. In 1986, I began my work with the wider church when as a pastor of the Northern Wisconsin District-American Lutheran Church I was asked to serve on the Synod 5-G Transition Team in preparation for the 1988 merger. In 1987, I was elected the first Northern Great Lakes Synod Secretary and in the summer of 1992, I was asked by then Bishop Dale Skogman to serve as Assistant to the Bishop. Seven years later, in 1999, I was elected bishop.

There is much more to be said but there is time for all of that. For now, please pray for me that I might serve God and God's people faithfully in this work until my last day in office. Please pray that God's will be done in the Northern Great Lakes Synod. Again St. Paul, "The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. My love be with all of you in Christ Jesus."

Sincerely,

+Thomas A. Skrenes  
Bishop