

The Rt. Rev'd John C. Bauerschmidt

BISHOP OF TENNESSEE

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Dear Clergy and Parishioners of the Diocese of Tennessee,

I write to let you know that earlier this year I informed the Presiding Bishop that I intend to resign as Bishop of Tennessee in January 2027.

Serving as your diocesan bishop has been the singular privilege of my ordained ministry, and a personal joy. I am grateful to all of you for your support and encouragement in this work. I am especially grateful to my wife Caroline, who has accompanied me in this ministry. No one can be a bishop in isolation. In this ministry, as in all else, Christians depend upon each other. Thank you for sustaining me in this ministry we share.

In January of 2027, I will have served as Bishop of Tennessee for twenty years. At that point I will have served my entire professional life in ordained ministry and have been in holy orders for over forty-two years. This seems like a long time, but I promise you it has passed quickly! I look forward to more time for theological researching and writing: things that I trained for as a priest and doctoral student several decades ago but which I have had scant time to practice. It will be good to be involved in a different way in the life of the Church.

My announcement begins the process for the election and consecration of our next diocesan bishop, sometime before the end of January 2027. I have worked with the Presiding Bishop and his staff, and with our own diocesan Standing Committee, in planning this announcement. The Standing Committee of our diocese oversees the process of election and consecration, and I refer you to the accompanying letter from them for more information as to next steps. This will be a time of renewed commitment and discernment. I have complete confidence in the leadership of our diocese in guiding us through the election process. Good things are ahead for us.

In the meantime, the life of the Diocese of Tennessee continues. I will continue to serve as diocesan bishop until such time as the House of Bishops consents to my resignation and my successor is consecrated. Between now and then, there are a couple of budgetary cycles to engage in; ordinations to be carried out; visitations to be celebrated. My focus will continue to be the mission and ministry of the Diocese of Tennessee.

Let me recall for you the words of St. Paul in the Letter to the Romans, which I think bear on this time of transition: "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect" (Romans 12:2).

Thank you for your prayers and support in the months ahead. The people of our diocese are precious to me, and I love you all. In this time of particular discernment of a choice of a new bishop, please remember to pray for the Diocese of Tennessee.

Yours faithfully,

*+ John Bauerschmidt*

The Rt. Rev'd John Bauerschmidt, Bishop of Tennessee