

December 11, 2017

Dear sisters and brothers,

It is my joy to inform you that Rev. Denise Donato has been elected to assist me as an auxiliary bishop. Denise is the Pastor of Mary Magdalene Church in Rochester, NY, and is a founding member of the ECC. She and her husband Phil have three adult children and four grandchildren. 2018 is a big year for Denise and Phil. "Phil and I actually celebrate 40 years of marriage this year! It's a huge year for us! I celebrate my 60th birthday Feb 7, on Feb 22 I celebrate 15 years as priest. Our oldest son is getting married in April (he's 38 and never been married). Phil retires on May 1, and we celebrate 40 years of marriage June 17!!," Denise said. And now she's being ordained a bishop on February 9th!

The Process

In August of this year, I spoke with the Episcopal Council and the Leadership Council about my need to have some help in my episcopal duties. We determined to poll the synod delegates of the Communion from the areas that would be affected.

Calling forth an auxiliary bishop to assist me in my duties was affirmed in September of this year by 90% of all the national synod delegates who represent regions where I serve as "Ordinary" (local bishop). The proposed bishop was to assist me in my episcopal duties (namely sacramental and pastoral oversight-and-care functions), not my presiding functions.

Denise's subsequent nomination in October was put forward by a nominating committee specifically called for this process; this committee was made up of co-chairs Rev. Kate Lehman, President of the House of Pastors, Tom Wilding, Vice Chair of the House of Laity, and the following members: Revs. Rick Klaich and Teri Harroun of the HOP, and ; HOL members Jackie Lemmerhirt and Leo Champagne.

Also in October a special appeals commission was called by the Episcopal Council because a member of the Communion had asked for a clarification on whether Canon 67 was to be interpreted to mean that the election must be confirmed by the 2018 Synod before the bishop-elect could be ordained. The commission decided that Canon 67 did not apply to an auxiliary bishop. The commission members were George von Stamwitz, chair, Bishops Raphael and Peter, Revs. Len Schreiner and Marisa Werner, and Paula Hayford.

Denise's nomination was overwhelmingly affirmed in an election this month by members of the communities in the affected regions; it is these same communities that Denise will serve as Auxiliary Bishop for a term of six years. The affected regions do not include the Pacific Northwest region, the Diocese of California, nor the Mid-America Diocese. They do include the Rocky Mountain Region, the Southwest Region, all of our communities in the eastern part of the US and in Europe, and territories in the US where we do not have an ECC presence at this time, but where requests for dialogue are ongoing.

Ordination/Consecration

Bishop-elect Denise will be ordained a bishop
On Friday, February 9 at 6:00 PM
At Downtown United Presbyterian Church,
121 Fitzhugh Street North, Rochester, NY 14614.

The ordination/consecration mass will be followed by a light reception.

Information about hotel reservations will be forthcoming. There are also accommodations with parishioners available on a first come first served basis. For more information about accommodations please contact Lynne Hamilton: equalrall@aol.com.

For those who stay through the weekend we will provide more information about additional plans.

Join with me in giving thanks to God for this great gift. Denise is a remarkable person, with whom I have had the pleasure to collaborate on many occasions over the years. I look forward to serving collaboratively with her as my colleague in episcopal service!

Your brother,

+Francis

Francis E. Krebs
Presiding Bishop