

Office of the Bishop-West  
PO Box 70  
Salem, Virginia 24153  
Phone: 540-389-1000  
Fax: 540-389-5962



Office of the Bishop-East  
1301 Colley Avenue  
Norfolk, Virginia 23517  
Phone: 757-622-9421  
Fax: 757-623-5680

[www.vasynod.org](http://www.vasynod.org)

# The Virginia Synod

*of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*

**IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE ISLANDS DISTRICT, PAPUA NEW GUINEA**

August 3, 2017

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In the 10th chapter of John Jesus speaks to the good work of the loving shepherd, and he contrasts that loving shepherd with the hirelings and the thieves who instead of protecting the sheep abuse the sheep or even victimize and traumatize the sheep.

The church is to be a safe place, especially for broken, vulnerable people. We are called to be ambassadors for Christ, we are called for a lifelong, public witness in all that we do and say. There is no time in which we cease to be a rostered minister of this church. If you want to stop being a public witness and example of the faith at all times, then it is time to resign from the roster. We are shepherds of Christ, not hirelings in it for ourselves. We get to be shepherds, to willingly take up the privileges of our calling and the challenges of our calling and to seek to live the joyous life in following our Lord's way.

We have a wonderful ministerium within the Virginia Synod, and we are proud of the efforts we have made to be a more faithful and effective ministerium together. Our Synod Council wants to assist us with this desire and call of ours to continue to be strong and healthy and faithful.

We continue to provide a basic boundary training every year so that our congregations are safe. And we are looking to provide training in new areas of our living so that we are attentive in every way to our public call.

In this current year we are asking rostered ministers - active and those who are retired and actively serving; stated supply; those awaiting call; those on leave from call, as well as interns and seminarians to complete boundary training in the digital aspect of our lives. So often we can begin to forget our private messages in this digital age are not private at all. What we 'privately' express is very easily transformed into a worldwide comment in this new day. While we are concerned that a spoken word we shared may have a much longer life to it than we had hoped, our digital word never goes away. So we need some awareness training that will be helpful for us in our public witness as an ambassador of Christ to whom our people look for the gospel's welcome and compassion and care. As I enter retirement, I will complete this training. Having spoken with Bishop-elect Humphrey, I know he intends to do the same.

Yours in Christ,

*The Rev James F. Mauney*

Bishop

*We are Ambassadors for Christ, God making His appeal through us*  
*II Corinthians 5:20*