

## Northeastern PA Synod Bishop Transition FAQs

[godslove.org/bishop-transition](https://godslove.org/bishop-transition)

Following the election of Bishop-Elect Jennifer Dee on June 6th, we as the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod entered into a time of transition. Until Bishop-Elect Dee takes office on September 1st, the Rev. Christopher deForest continues to serve as bishop. This Frequently Asked Questions page is meant to help answer common questions.

| SYNOD OPERATIONS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
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| <b>What changes, if any, should congregations expect during the transition?</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Congregations should expect day-to-day synod operations to continue as usual. Synod staff will continue serving congregations, rostered ministers, and ministry partners throughout the transition.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Will regular synod ministries and programs continue as usual?</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Yes. During the transition period, synod ministries, events, communications, and other scheduled activities will continue as planned. Also, any items on our synod calendar after September 1 <sup>st</sup> should be assumed to continue. This will allow Bishop Dee time in the first few months to move into this new role.                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Who should congregations contact if they have questions during the transition?</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| If the questions are about the transition or the installation service, email: <a href="mailto:bishoptransition@nepsynod.org">bishoptransition@nepsynod.org</a> . For all other questions or requests, you can continue to contact the Associate of the Bishop for your mission district. They can help you or connect you with the best person who can. You can find Associates' names and direct contact info at <a href="https://godslove.org/mission-districts">godslove.org/mission-districts</a>                          |
| <b>How can I contact Bishop-Elect Jennifer Dee?</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Bishop-Elect Jennifer Dee doesn't officially begin serving as bishop until September 1. Before then, synod-related questions, requests, and information should be directed to Bishop deForest or your Associate rather than to Bishop-Elect Dee directly. This allows time and space for her to finish up well in her role as pastor at Trinity in Robesonia, while ensuring that inquiries are handled promptly. If you would like to send her a card or note, mail to Bishop-Elect Dee at the Lutheran Center address below. |
| <b>Are there any staffing or leadership adjustments taking place?</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| No staffing or leadership changes are anticipated during the transition period. Synod staff will continue serving in their current roles and remain available to support congregations. Any future organizational decisions will be communicated as appropriate.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

| INSTALLATION & ACKNOWLEDGEMENT DETAILS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
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| <b>What can people expect from the installation service?</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Congregations, rostered ministers, ecumenical partners, and guests from across the church will gather for this special occasion of worship and celebration. Presiding Bishop Yehiel Curry will participate in the service. Additional details, including the schedule and location information, will be announced as they become available. Visit <a href="https://godslove.org/bishop-installation">godslove.org/bishop-installation</a> for the latest updates. |
| <b>Will the service be livestreamed?</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| The synod hopes to offer a livestream and recording of the installation service so those who are unable to attend in person can participate. Details will be confirmed once the                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

location and technical arrangements have been finalized. Please visit [godslove.org/bishop-installation](https://godslove.org/bishop-installation) for the latest updates.

**Will there be an opportunity to celebrate Bishop Christopher deForest's ministry?**

Yes. A separate gathering is being planned for Saturday, August 29 to celebrate and give thanks for Bishop deForest's years of faithful service. Additional details will be shared with the synod as they become available at [godslove.org/farewell-godspeed](https://godslove.org/farewell-godspeed)

**ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS**

**What does a bishop do?**

A synod bishop is the pastor and chief spiritual leader for the synod, called to preach, teach, and administer the sacraments while providing pastoral care and guidance to congregations and rostered ministers. The bishop oversees ordinations, attests and installs calls, leads the synod's mission, and ensures that preaching, teaching, and sacramental life are faithful to the gospel and the ELCA's Confession of Faith. In this ministry of oversight and service, the bishop works to strengthen the unity of the church, foster justice and compassion in the world, and remind God's people that Christ's grace holds us together in love.

**Why is there a period between election and start date?**

In ELCA practice, the time between a bishop's election and their start date is meant to be a prayerful transition, allowing for pastoral closure for the outgoing bishop and careful preparation for the new bishop's ministry. This period also gives space for practical matters—like moving, orientation with the churchwide organization, and planning the installation—so the new bishop can begin well and serve the synod faithfully. The specific duration of the transition is described in our NEPA Synod Constitution, S8.52. "The terms of the officers shall begin on the first day of the third month following election..."

**How can my congregation support the synod office?**

The most meaningful ways to support the synod office during this transition are through prayer, encouragement, and continued participation in our shared ministry. Please keep Bishop-Elect Jennifer Dee, Bishop Christopher deForest, synod staff, synod council and congregations across the NEPA Synod in your prayers. Continue sharing your ministry stories, participating in synod events and ministries, and communicating with the synod office so we can walk through this transition together.

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

| Questions and requests about the Bishop Transition or Installation               | Other questions about synod operations, Contact your Associate of the Bishop for your Mission District |
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| <a href="mailto:bishoptransition@nepsynod.org">bishoptransition@nepsynod.org</a> | <a href="https://godslove.org/mission-districts/">godslove.org/mission-districts/</a>                  |

**Lutheran Center**

2354 Grove Road, Allentown PA

Hours: 9:00am – 4:00pm (Monday-Friday)

610-266-5101 • [info@nepsynod.org](mailto:info@nepsynod.org)