



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP OF PENNSYLVANIA

For this reason, my joy has been fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease. John 3:29-30

My Siblings in Christ,

Since the beginning of this year, I have had 131 meetings with our churches, with you. I spend every waking hour and many sleepless nights thinking about how we can strengthen our churches, deepen our faith, and make our prayers a reality. At each visitation, I deeply listen to your dreams, fears, and challenges.

The number one question I am asked is: How can we grow?

Beginning this Advent, and continuing for the next three to four years, the diocesan offices will not launch new initiatives. Once again, all our financial, spiritual, and physical resources will be used to grow our churches, empower your ministries, connect churches, and build up the resources you need to meet the challenges ahead. (See the list of resources we have and are continuing to build for you: <https://www.diopa.org/help>.) I believe our parishes and their ministries are the direct connection between the world and the Gospel.

The purpose of the diocese is to walk with you on your journey, to make sure you know you are not alone, to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ, together. As your Bishop, my ministry among you has been to provide connections: to one another, to support, to resources, and to partners. Since the beginning, my commitment has been supporting you, and I will redouble that effort.

We are one family of 136 churches – some small, some large. Some in between. Like a family, we come together to help those with greater need. When one church helps another church with greater challenges, we prove that we are one. In a divided society, that unity can be a beacon of light. We are stronger together.

Each parish does ministry in its own context, and it is those parish ministries that the Holy Spirit uses to draw people to Jesus Christ. You are the most critical disciples in spreading the Gospel. I trust each of you to know your communities and how to minister to them. We want to help you grow your ministries so you can continue to reach those who are vulnerable. When we empower you, we grow stronger together. When churches work together, that connectedness is amplified.

This Advent is the season of preparation for the present and the future. It is a Season of Care and Connection of our Churches. Let us keep our eyes on Christ and prepare.

Also, please invite someone to church during Advent and Christmas. Share the hope of Jesus Christ and the hope of our churches.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David G. Hunter" with "BISHOP" written in small letters above the name. The signature is stylized and includes a flourish at the end.