



Northern Texas - Northern Louisiana Synod Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Bp. Erik Gronberg

BpGronberg@ntnl.org

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Trinity Lutheran Church
3621 Tulsa Way
Fort Worth, TX 76107

Dear Linda, Stephen, Kelly, James, Kent, David, Charlotte, other family members, friends, Rev. Mohn, Rev. Schroeder, and the Trinity Lutheran Church community:

I bring you greetings, prayers, sympathy, and gratitude from the 105 other worshipping communities of the Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and from our presiding bishop, the Rev. Elizabeth Eaton.

The bishop of the synod does not commonly speak at a lay person's funeral. That task is for the local pastors. But for those who knew him well, we know Doug was not a common lay leader.

First off, Doug was a Vermonter. The people of Vermont are independent. This was one of only four states to be an independent nation at one time. Yet they are also deeply committed to community and town meetings are still the primary form of local decision making. This commitment to community would mark Doug's leadership at Trinity and in the synod. He was someone you could count on to both get the job done, but also do it while building community.

When the newly formed ELCA decided to hold its second ever national youth gathering in Dallas in 1991 Doug was called upon to manage transportation and did so admirably, building a team to handle the challenges in pre-cell phone days. For three decades he managed facilities for NT-NL synod assemblies. He handled the constantly changing schedules and the emotional highs and lows of three different bishops with New England fortitude and stoicism.

Eight years ago Doug was council president when Kendra and I were called to serve this congregation together. Trinity had suffered a great many losses over the previous years. Some questioned if the congregation should just close. Yet rather than give up and walk away, Doug, Linda, and a small group of committed members decided they valued this community and committed themselves to working towards a hopeful future. I will ever be grateful for the leaders here and particularly for Doug and Linda, both as former pastor and also now as bishop.

Throughout all of this, Doug was a faithful husband, father, grandfather, and friend. He took great joy in his sons and their families. Although I have no doubt that you all, his family, saw him at his best and worst, I can tell you from my experience he was so very proud of you and loved you all deeply and unconditionally.

Doug served his family, our nation both as a reservist and in professional life, and he served the church he loved. His death marks a great loss for us all and today I am in a state of grief and loss.

Grief and loss because our church, our world, my family and I, have lost a dear and beloved friend and brother in Christ and fellow laborer in the kingdom of God.

But that grief is not for Doug. For he now knows the joy of the promises give to those who are baptized into the death and resurrection of Christ. His suffering is at an end. I grieve for myself, for our church, and for us all. I grieve that this person who, living his baptismal vocation, gave so much to us and who served faithfully and with excellence is gone.

Yet despite this loss and the sense of vulnerability I feel without him here, a sentiment no doubt shared by many, I am hopeful. Hopeful because of the promises of God into which we will commend Doug. Hopeful because I trust the Holy Spirit to raise up new leaders who will serve this church and continue the work Doug carried on from those who came before him.

Today is a day to grieve but also to celebrate. To give thanks for a life lived fully and for promises made real and whole. Linda, Stephen, and James, thank you for sharing Doug with us. On behalf of a grateful church, I extend to you deep sympathy, gratitude and love.

Know you are in my prayers daily as we are, and Doug understood...

#InMissionTogether,



Bishop Erik K.J. Gronberg, PhD