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THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN MICHIGAN Office of the Bishop

A Letter to the Clergy, People, and Congregations of the Diocese of Michigan

Advent 2025

My beloved siblings in Christ,

Grace to you and peace from God our Creator and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I write with both ecclesiastical importance and considerable merriment. The Right Reverend Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, has requested permission to visit our diocese during Advent and Christmas.

Bishop Nicholas has impeccable credentials: fourth-century pastoral experience, radical generosity, and a distribution network that would make Amazon jealous. Therefore, with great joy, I grant him full permission to exercise his ministry throughout the Diocese of Michigan during this holy season.

Bishop Nicholas, you are welcome in all our congregations—from Lake St. Clair to Ann Arbor, from Monroe to the Thumb. A few local notes: Try Detroit-style pizza (Buddy's or Loui's). The Lions are actually doing well this year—an Advent miracle itself. And yes, there's a fierce debate between Lafayette and American Coney Island; as Episcopalians, we believe in the *via media*, so try both.

More seriously: You come with a reputation that precedes you—not the commercialized version, but the real you. The bishop who gave away his inheritance, defended the vulnerable, stood up to emperors, and allegedly punched a heretic at Nicaea. (We don't endorse the punching, but we appreciate the conviction.)

Your secret gift-giving and rescue of desperate families weren't heartwarming tales—they were radical Gospel witness that cost you something. So while I grant permission to visit, I ask you to challenge us. In a region that has known economic hardship and systemic racism, we need Bishop Nicholas, not Santa Claus. We need the saint who emptied his pockets for the poor, not the figure who asks, "Have you been good?"

I encourage all congregations to celebrate your feast day on December 6th—leave out shoes for treats, tell your real stories, and then get to work. Serve at soup kitchens. Support ministries for the unhoused. Advocate for justice. Be Secret Santas in the truest sense—anonymous, generous, focused on those who need it most.

Bishop Nicholas, we welcome you with open hearts. Inspire us to be generous. Remind us that Christ's coming is not about consumption but compassion, not about getting but giving, not about comfort but making room for the vulnerable, just as Mary and Joseph needed room in Bethlehem.

May this Advent season transform us all into people who follow your example and, more importantly, the example of Jesus Christ, whose birth we eagerly await.

Your sister in Christ,

The Right Reverend Dr. Bonnie A. Perry XI Bishop of Michigan

P.S. - If you see the Stanley Cup on your travels, could you redirect it back to Detroit? Consider it an ecumenical favor.

"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me." — Matthew 25:35

