



The Episcopal Diocese of Olympia

The Episcopal Church in Western Washington

www.ecww.org

Procedures for Closure of a Church

Board of Directors, Diocese of Olympia, Inc.

When the Diocese of Olympia has decided to close a church, the Diocese must decide the future of the church property. This is typically a mission-driven strategic and programmatic decision of the Bishop and Council. If the Diocese decides not to retain the ownership of the church building and the land on which it is located for Diocesan purposes, then a decision must be made regarding the disposition of the property.

Policy

The Diocese is the owner of all of the real and personal property of the Church to be closed. This means that the Diocese owns all of the buildings on the Church property as well as the land. It also owns all of the contents of the church and other buildings, including, but not limited to the organ, altar, pews, furniture, etc. As the governing board of the corporation that holds title to all of the Diocesan property, the Board of Directors, in consultation with the Bishop's office, shall decide how to dispose of all such property. It is the policy of the Diocese that proceeds from the sale of real and personal property shall be used for a capital purpose.

Procedures for the sale or other disposition of the Church property

1. If there is a congregation remaining after the church closure that will be combining with another Diocesan congregation or a congregation of the ELCA, or that is going to a new location, such as sharing space with another church, then such congregation may keep possession of the holy vessels and other property of the mission used in worship and other sacred services. All such property must be moved out of the church within 30 days of the decision to close the church.
2. The congregation remaining after the closure may also make a written request to the Board of Directors for other property or for the proceeds from the sale of the property, which request shall describe the proposed use of the property and/or proceeds. Please note the policy of the Diocese, stated above, requiring that all proceeds from the sale of property must be used for a capital purpose.
3. The Board of Directors may distribute property to other churches or facilities

in the Diocese for their use.

4. If a piece or pieces of property in the church to be closed were gifts of one or more members or former members of the congregation, they or their families may submit a written request for such property. Such request shall include the plans for such property and a promise to pay all costs associated with removal and restoration. Any tax issues raised by a request that such property be given to the family shall be addressed with the family or representatives thereof.

5. The Board of Directors may sell any remaining property for fair market value in a manner it deems most appropriate.

6. The proceeds of the sale or other disposition of the real and personal property shall be deposited in the Mission Development Fund.

7. The Property Representative for the Diocese shall be responsible for managing the sale or other disposition of the property of the church to be closed. The Property Representative shall prepare the Documentation for Sale or Other Disposal of Property for submittal to the Joint Finance Panel for review and recommendation to the Board of Directors for its deliberation and decision.

8. Once a church is de-consecrated, the Diocese shall have control of the church facilities. Reasonable access by representatives of the congregation shall be permitted by the Diocese for a reasonable period of time. This access shall be under the direction of the Property Manager.