



# The Episcopal Diocese of Olympia

The Episcopal Church in Western Washington

[www.ecww.org](http://www.ecww.org)

The Rt. Rev. Gregory H. Rickel  
Bishop of Olympia  
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April 23, 2012

Dear Ones:

At the very end of Matthew's Gospel, the Risen Christ urges his disciples to "go and teach all nations." Episcopal parishes and missions have long attended to this admonition by creating schools intended to meet the larger educational needs of the congregation and community within the Episcopal traditions of the church. This has meant that many parishes and missions offer pre-school, elementary, and even secondary education programs to the wider community. Moreover, a number of parishes and missions rent church-owned space to non-profit schools ranging from child care centers to elementary schools.

In the Diocese of Olympia, there are currently twenty-one parishes or missions that operate schools at some level or rent space to a school. In addition, we enjoy the presence of one independent school that is affiliated with the Episcopal Church. As the primary agent for the existence of these schools, either through direct support and operation or through the responsibility of being the owner of the property or through historical connections, it is imperative that these schools operate in a manner consistent with the beliefs and ethics of the Episcopal Church.

After becoming your bishop I became a bit concerned that no standards existed within the diocese to oversee our schools, and even more to connect them or to share information regarding their operation across the diocese. So, roughly 18 months ago I appointed a task force to consider all of this. This included a diocesan wide summit, held at St. Mark's Cathedral, to which all of the schools were invited to give comment and share concerns. The Task Force took that feedback, and working closely with me, crafted the attached document, "To Teach All Nations".

These standards were presented to Diocesan Council at its last meeting and the Council adopted them as the standard by which we will govern the operation of these schools. Moreover, Council has established a Commission on Schools that will over-see the certification process and report back to Diocesan Council and to me on a regular basis regarding the operation of these schools.

Enclosed with this letter, please find a copy of the standards adopted by Diocesan Council. The process for responding to these standards is included in the standards document and is further amplified by the accompanying manual. I have also included our most updated list of parishes or missions or schools that are affected by the adoption of these standards.

This information is also available on the diocesan website, [www.ecww.org](http://www.ecww.org). Two workshops, hosted by the Commission on Schools, will be offered this spring to assist you with the implantation of these standards. Those trainings will be,

Friday, May 4, 2012, Good Shepherd Episcopal Church, Vancouver WA, 1:00 to 4:00 pm

Wednesday, May 16, 2012, Saint Mark's Cathedral, Bloedel Hall, Seattle, WA 9:00 to Noon.

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206 325 4200 *telephone* | 206 325 4631 *fax* | 800 488 4978 *wa* | *online at* [www.ecww.org](http://www.ecww.org)

To RSVP please contact the Rev Dennis Tierney at [dtierney@stbbi.org](mailto:dtierney@stbbi.org).

While I understand that all of you have many pressing duties, I believe that it is essential that all schools that function under the umbrella of the Episcopal Church meet these adopted standards. I am confident that all will find this process helpful and informative as we continue in our gospel imperative to “teach all nations.”

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gregory H. Rickel". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Gregory" being the most prominent.

The Rt. Rev. Gregory H. Rickel, D. Min.  
Bishop of Olympia