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# The Episcopal Diocese of Olympia

The Episcopal Church in Western Washington

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

## Resignation Statement from Bishop Greg Rickel

Greetings Diocese of Olympia and all who may be watching.

I come to you today to share some of my personal plans for the future but they are plans that will definitely affect all of you. Of course, I'd like to be sitting right with every one of you when I tell you this, but alas we know that's not possible.

Most of you will remember the Walk Againsts we did a few years ago as I discerned, and then we together discerned if it was time for me to go. That year was absolutely life changing to me and enlightening. I was humbled and called by the answer I received from that process and I'm so glad we did it. Back then little did we know that we would face a global pandemic, a long overdue racial reckoning, a refugee crisis like never before, and of course, all of that has changed us as a people and as a church. Changed me too. I said to you, after my decision to stay, that I wouldn't do that to you again. We would take it one day at a time and one year at a time. But since that time I've been in constant discernment as to what is right.

In the past few months I've been in serious self discernment again. Both friend and foe alike have helped in this giving me signs knowingly and unknowingly that the time has come for me to go. And I feel that as well. So today I come to you this way to a people and a place I love very much to announce my resignation from the office of Bishop effective the end of this calendar year. The plan now is that the fourth Sunday of Advent will be my last liturgical act. If the Standing Committee and other leadership agree, I'll also see the January Holy Land Pilgrimage through as the real ending, as that still stands as unfinished business from the pandemic.

Until that time I plan to keep serving as your Bishop, something I've always taken very seriously and tried to do well. I've failed at much of it and will continue to, but always, always I've been so honored to fill the office for you and even though I didn't always make the mark, I can assure you for you I was always trying my best. I've come to a decision that my best is no longer enough and that it changes exactly what you and quite frankly I need.

Now, I'm quite sure some of you have many questions. I'm not gonna try to answer all of those now and some I may never be able to answer but I do wanna address a few here. First, you may be wondering what I will be doing. Well, I'm heading to some different things, not totally firmed up and not totally disclosable at this time. However, when they are, I will be as transparent as

possible. I can tell you, I will be physically leaving the diocese which I've always promised. You may remember in the WalkABOUTs when asked about leaving at 12 years and me being so young which I'm not totally feeling right now and someone would ask, what will you do? I would often reply. There's always bartending in Key West. Not gonna quite get there, but I'm going to get close.

Another question would be why not stay until the new Bishop is here? And yes, that was a big decision. Several points on that, first, I'm going to something else and I have to get to that. But also, and I really think this is primary, I'm not sure I believe in the long goodbye and the lame duck weight that that portends. I think there's a lot of health in you. And when that's true, having the interim and a transitional time, totally without me present I believe will be a very good thing. I know not all agree with that, but it's one of the final decisions I've made. 15 years has been a good run and it is 15 year mark that is about the time many episcopacies start heading South or start getting stale and uncreative. A few have suggested that's already happened. So instead of waiting for that I'm gonna literally head South. It's also a time where the danger of coasting which I've always told you, I do not want to do nor do I want that for you, can start. I also said I would leave if I ever stopped having fun. And I want you to hear this and I wanna state it as clearly as I can. I have not stopped having fun but I'm having a bit less energy for some of the tasks than I once did. When I felt that coming on I really thought it was better for you to have someone that doesn't lack that. In short, I've always wanted to leave long before we were all waiting for it to happen. I think that time has come.

I've already informed your Standing Committee as it now becomes their task to oversee on your behalf this transition. At that meeting, which occurred last week when I announced this to them, we had Bishop Todd Ousley present with us. Bishop Ousley is the Presiding Bishop for Pastoral Development and the one in charge of transitions such as this. And he is already been working with me and with them on the work ahead for transition. Additionally, Bishop Ousley is already at work on an interim Bishop and coverage for the future. In short, you are in very good hands and in a very good place.

I told my executive staff on June 30th and then the rest of the staff, the clergy and the governing bodies yesterday. And now I tell all of you. I just wanna say here that this is the greatest staff I've ever had the honor to work with. And I include all of those I've worked with since the very beginning. Every one of them, talented, faithful, committed. And the clergy we have here, which I have truly grown to love, admire and be in awe of will be indeed hard to leave. We have some of the best leadership in this entire church. They all taught me much. I'll miss them all very much and I will miss all of you. We didn't always get it right, no one does. But I do believe we did some good work in ministry in this last 15 years. And those memories, those learnings, those accomplishments will always be some of the most cherish years in my life. This transition will be hardest, I think on the staff and clergy so I ask that you take care of them now and always.

So thank you, Diocese of Olympia bless you. And I urge you to start your prayers for a smooth transition and for your next Bishop who's out there somewhere, even now. I'm convinced they are praying about, and for you I hope you will do the same for them. If you have space in there, pray for us too as we will for you. This is a new adventure for Marti and me. We are sad and nervous and excited. You and I will share those feelings together in the months to come. I look forward to it. Thank you all and bless each and every one of you.