

## **THE RT. REV. GREGORY H. RICKEL, D.MIN.**

The Rt. Rev. Gregory H. Rickel comes to the Episcopal Diocese of Olympia from Austin, Texas, where he served as rector of St. James' Episcopal Church, "an inclusive, multicultural community," from 2001-2007. Rickel has a passion for youth and young adults, and believes the Episcopal Church must make itself appealing and relevant to that demographic as it has in the past. Bridging this gap will be a major focus of his episcopate along with congregational development, stewardship of resources and improving communication and interconnectedness throughout the diocese, both inside and outside the church.

"I strongly believe the Diocese of Olympia can serve as a model for the rest of the church as we navigate this unique part of the country where church affiliation is at its lowest," Rickel said. He asserts the Episcopal Church in Western Washington should claim its minority status as an asset that offers a home for those in search of a unique faith expression, adding, "Christianity may well have been at its best when it was not in the majority." Rickel intends to be bishop for 12-15 years, leaving the diocese in a state of solid health.

Rickel is a trained presenter for the Climate Project ([www.theclimateproject.org](http://www.theclimateproject.org)), was the Episcopal representative to the Earth Charter discussions in Geneva, Switzerland in the late 1990s and has been an outspoken advocate of environmental issues for years. A consultant for the Stewardship Office of the Episcopal Church Center in New York since 1997, Rickel has worked with Episcopal groups and other denominations in Texas, Mississippi, Arkansas, Alabama, Michigan, Oregon and Kentucky on such topics as initiating comprehensive stewardship programs, working better as a team, diversity, communications and evangelism. While in Austin, Rickel chaired both the Board of Trustees of St. James' Episcopal School and the Seton Clinical Pastoral Education Advisory Committee, and was a member of the Board of Trustees of the Quin Foundation Board and the People's Clinic. He currently serves on the Board of Trustees at the Seminary of the Southwest. He is a past member of the Episcopal Church's Budgetary Funding Task Force and is active in the work of the Ecumenical Stewardship Center.

Rickel received his Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville in 1984. He received his Master of Health Services Administration in 1987 and his Master of Arts in Interpersonal and Organizational Communication in 1993, both from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. In 1996 he received his Master of Divinity from the Episcopal Seminary of the Southwest in Austin, Texas, and in 2001 he received the Doctor of Ministry from the University of the South School of Theology in Sewanee, Tenn.

Rickel and his wife, Marti, have been married for 24 years and are the proud parents of Austin Morris, 11.