

Bishop Greg Rickel: Church Pension Group Trustee

Gregory Rickel, eighth and current bishop to the Episcopal Diocese of Olympia, Washington, has been connected with the Church Pension Group (CPG) ever since his ordination close to 25 years ago. “I’m currently in the last part of what I hope will be my first term on The Church Pension Fund Board of Trustees. Before that, I was on The Church Pension Fund General Convention Committee,” he says.

Bishop Rickel appreciates CPG’s close relationship with the Episcopal Church. “As trite as it might sound, we’re all part of the same family, which makes everything about the relationship easier. CPG is really focused on the Church; they know what it means to be a part of it. It’s a totally unique situation.”

He adds, “Any interfaith ecumenical discussion I have leaves me feeling blessed by the Episcopal Church’s relationship with CPG and Church Insurance. We have one of the best pension and insurance setups, and the people at CPG are there for us every day. The interference CPG and Church Insurance runs for us is so incredible. Some of us underestimate that because it’s all we’ve known—but it’s wonderful not to have those kinds of administrative worries.”

The Rewards of Serving

When asked what aspects of his job he finds most rewarding, Bishop Rickel replies, “All of it.” He particularly enjoys writing, having just produced an article for *The Rubric*, a publication of St. Mark’s Cathedral, his seat. He also composed an introduction for Greg Garrett’s book *My Church Is Not Dying*, which was published by Church Publishing Incorporated.

But what he finds most remarkable is confirmation. “Being the one who’s blessed to look into the eyes of people when they take that step is one of the greatest honors,” he says. “I can have the worst week, but if I get to Sunday and see that, everything falls away.”

Social Media and Connection

Places of worship have been faced lately with a new challenge, forging and fortifying connections while not gathering because of the coronavirus. The efforts he and his staff put into social media prior to the start of the pandemic, notably the posting of his **sermons** and **blog posts**, have supported his community.

“Like anything else, social media is a double-edged sword and can be misused, but it’s also an amazing thing we have at our disposal. There’s so much to discover through virtual worship,” Bishop Rickel says. An unexpected boon has been seeing not only “the usual suspects,” as he puts it, but also a whole bunch of new people attending virtual services. It’s his goal to continue engaging the newcomers.

That is only one way Bishop Rickel embraces a message of hope. “We’ll keep going,” he says. “And we’ll find a way to keep making connections.”