



The Rt. Rev. Gregory H. Rickel
Bishop of Olympia

January 31, 2010

Dear Ones,

What a year this has been! I commend all of you on not only weathering this year, but graciously being the Body of Christ we are called to be. It has been inspiring for me to watch you. That said, I have had a few people ask me things that go something like this, “What are we doing?” “Why aren’t we moving forward?” When I inquire further this typically revolves around the notion that, because we don’t have someone called a “Dean” we are somehow not “whole.” That is a natural response, but it is also one I would challenge and ask a bit of introspection on as well. No community of faith is its leader. Yes, the leader has a tremendous impact on the character and ministry of a congregation, but the congregation is so much more. We say we believe that, and yet we often act in a totally opposite manner.

I did not hide my intent when asking Rebecca McClain to be Canon Missioner. Her role was, working with all of you, to build, and in some cases rebuild, the foundations within the St. Mark’s community so that we could be on the most solid footing when we finally do enter into a search for our new Dean. I was clear this would take time. I, for one, think she has done exactly what I have asked her to do. From my perspective, we have been moving at an amazing pace, and LOTS is going on; much of that you will find in this publication, but it could never capture it all. To say that all of that has been smooth and easy would be to live in denial, but the necessary movement would have been the same no matter who we called to lead it. I think we are all blessed that Rebecca is that person.

This year provided some daunting challenges. Knowing life as we do, those will not end. But Rebecca, your Vestry, the staff, have done a most admirable job in working with all we were dealt. You, as a congregation, are to be commended for the great trust and patience you have had with that, and for your amazing generosity you offer in time, talent, and prayer.

We have bright days ahead. Be gentle with one another always remembering the One we serve.

Blessings,

Greg Rickel
Bishop of Olympia