Episcopalians elect new bishop

Episcopal delegates elected a new bishop from “an inclusive, multicultural, historically African-American church” on May 12 at Saint Mark’s Cathedral.

The Rev. Dr. Gregory Rickel, rector since 2001 of St. James’ Episcopal Church in Austin, Texas, will become Bishop of Olympia in September. He will lead 32,000 members in 96 congregations of the Episcopal Church in Western Washington.

Rickel, 43, will succeed the Rt. Rev. Vincent W. Warner, 66, who will retire after 18 years as bishop diocesan.

Rickel was elected on the third ballot from a slate of five nominees, with 224 lay votes and 106 clergy votes, according to a news release from the diocese.


Other nominees were the Rev. Richard A. Burnett, rector of Trinity Episcopal Church in Columbus, Ohio, and the Rev. Angela F. Shepherd, rector of St. Philip’s Episcopal Church in Annapolis, Md. Rickel has worked as a consultant for the Stewardship Office of the Episcopal Church Center in New York since 1997. His areas of expertise include comprehensive stewardship programs, working better as a team, diversity, communications and evangelism. Rickel and his wife, Marti, have a son, Austin, age 11.

“My core ideology stems from my hope of being fully alive and in being honest, authentic, and vulnerable enough to listen,” Rickel wrote in response to questions from the diocese. “I want to be a person who lives each day in the tension of it possibly being my last, and the excitement of it being my first, seeing the eyes of Christ in the eyes of all I meet.”

Rickel’s role as spiritual leader of the diocese will begin when he is consecrated Sept. 15 at Meydenbauer Center in Bellevue. The diocese, named for the state capital, is located in Seattle next to Saint Mark’s Cathedral.

Local churches pledge sanctuary for immigrants

By Denise Holley, Source editor

One by one, religious leaders stepped to the podium to add their voices to the rising call for action on behalf of immigrants in the United States.

“Our congregations are preparing to recover from the ancient tradition of sanctuary … to welcome the stranger as next of kin,” said Michael Ramos, director of Social Justice Ministries for the Church Council of Greater Seattle.

He spoke at a press conference held May 9 at Saint Mark’s Cathedral to launch the New Sanctuary Movement, described as an “interfaith public, moral stand for immigrant rights.” The Seattle event coincided with declarations in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles and San Diego.

The new initiative echoes the “old” Sanctuary Movement of the 1980s, when churches sheltered refugees fleeing political violence in Central America. The current movement is a reaction to increased arrests and deportations of immigrants, especially actions that split families apart.

Alarmed by raids at workplaces in Auburn, several groups met in February at St. Mary’s Catholic Church to express their concern, Ramos said. In some cases, immigrants have been arrested and separated from their children and many have been detained without due process.

But the stranger that dwells with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.” Lev. 19:34

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Jorge Quiroga, president of the Comité Pro-Amnistía General y Justicia Social (Committee for General Amnesty and Social Justice), announced that a woman and two young children had been picked up by Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents in Lynnwood that same morning.

“A family in legal limbo

René Martínez cradles his son, Rodrigo, at a May 9 press conference at Saint Mark’s Episcopal Cathedral while his wife, María Riveles, holds a banner of the Episcopal Hispanic ministry. Martínez was arrested by immigration agents in March at his job at Emerald Downs, lost his work permit and may face a deportation hearing in the future unless he can verify his application for permanent residency. See story, page 12.

A FAMILY IN LEGAL LIMBO

The Very Rev. Robert Haycock, surrounded by staff and members of St. Mary’s Catholic Church, expressed his dismay with congressional inaction.

“We’ve prayed, met with members of Congress and marched in the streets of Seattle,” Haycock said. “Nothing is happening.

“We believe it is our Christian mandate to speak and act here in solidarity with the sentiment being announced today across this country,” he said.

Lutherans are “a church of immigrants,” said Bishop Chris Boerger of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. “(Current) immigrants do the jobs we refuse to do. Until it [immigration reform] happens, the church is bound to take care of the stranger at the gate.”

One synagogue, Temple Beth Am of Seattle, joined the Christians and Unitarians at the conference.

“There is something terribly broken in this country,” said Rabbi Jonathan Singer, referring to current immi- Continued on page 12

The Source will take a break for July and August. For the September issue, send submissions to thesource@thechurchcouncil.org by Aug. 10.
Auburn church steps to forefront of sanctuary movement

By Denise Holley, Source editor

Join the new sanctuary movement?
For St. Matthew/San Mateo Episcopal Church in Auburn, it was a natural step.

In March, two of its own were arrested by Immigration and Customs agents at Emerald Downs. The church’s Jubilee Center rallied to raise bail money and now educates immigrants about their rights if questioned by ICE, said its coordinator, Dianne Aid.

She serves as Hispanic missionary and coordinates the center, a ministry of the Episcopal Church that connects faith with justice in the community, Aid said. To her, this means to protect and empower the Latino community, “but more of an organic presence,” she said. Aid describes herself as “a day-by-day agent for God.” She is a member of the Third Order Society of St. Francis of Assisi, an international Anglican order whose members live under vows but not in a community.

Sanctuary continued from page 1...

the documents for his wife’s signature, but they never arrived. ICE agents detained another church member, mother of a 2-year-old who was applying for work at Emerald Downs, Aid said. The church and Comité Pro-Amnistía, an immigrant rights organization, paid her bail.

Her court date is a year away and they haven’t scheduled one yet for Martinez, Aid said. She thinks he could qualify for a pardon [for illegal entry] because he has a clean record.

Martinez spent six days at the Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma. His employer raised the $15,000 bail, he said.

“It’s an experience no one wants to go through,” Martinez said. He and others “who simply want to work in the U.S.” were thrown in with inmates for work at Emerald Downs, Aid said. The church and Comité Pro-Amnistía, an immigrant rights organization, paid her bail.

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“It’s an experience no one wants to go through,” Martinez said. He and others “who simply want to work in the U.S.” were thrown in with inmates brought in under criminal warrants.

Now back home in Auburn, Martinez frets that he can’t help his wife, a restaurant employee, support their U.S.-born children, Mayre, 7, and Rodrigo, 4.

ICE agents took his driver’s license and racetrack permit, Martinez said.

“I can’t work for anybody.” He hopes Citizenship and Immigration Services will send proof of his application.

“This is a situation that can happen to any immigrant,” he said.

ICE agents have reportedly knocked on doors at apartment buildings in Auburn and facades. Aid said. Jubilee Center holds legal clinics to educate people about their rights if approached by ICE and keeps an account for legal aid, and commodity and telephone cards for detainees. Parents can fill out temporary custody papers so if they are arrested in a raid, their children can be brought to the center for the guardian to pick up.

Aid described the operation as “a new underground railroad, how we’re having to operate in the church, to give people some ways to stay safe.”

The national debate about illegal immigration gets her dander up, Aid said. She believes the economic impact of immigration, overall, is positive. She challenged Americans to “go for three days without buying any products or services that have gone through immigrant hands.”

She would like to “remove [immigration] from the political arena and bring it into human relationships first.”

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Seattle-area immigrants march May 1 for a chance to belong

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The Rev. Sandy Brown, executive director of the Church Council of Greater Seattle, closed the conference with an appeal for a change in laws.

“Through our sanctuaries, we can build momentum for real and comprehensive immigration reform to create policies that are effective and humane,” Brown said.

Until there is such an answer, congregations will offer legal, material and spiritual support to immigrants in danger, Ramos said. They will try to “open the American people’s eyes to the suffering of immigrant families under current policies and protect immigrants against hate, workplace discrimination and unjust deportation.”

Rev. Susan Armor with Rene Martinez and his son Rodrigo, at a May 12 press conference.

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