

**Lecia E. Diaz Brannon**



April 16, 2025

**Mr. Sean Burt, Chair, Search Committee**  
Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota

Dear Mr. Burt and Members of the Search Committee,

I write to you today from a place of deep listening and holy curiosity. As I've prayed with the profile of the Diocese of North Dakota and the Native Sovereignty Ministry Task Force report, God is inviting me into discernment with the diocese, not as someone with all the answers, as one who is grounded in presence, guided by faith, and committed to joy.

Over the course of my ministry as a parish priest, seminary leader, and a companion to the diverse and marginalized, I have learned that spiritual vitality is less about programs and more about presence, trust, and belonging. I've served faithfully in parish ministry and currently lead as Director of Donor Relations at the Seminary of the Southwest. My ministry is grounded in building relationships and connections within the seminary community, across the church and the communities we serve.

The profile and report reflect a diocese with a resilient heart, where people are working hard, often over-stretched, to sustain community and witness. I believe I can bring care and encouragement by creating space for joy, spiritual reflection, and a share in the work. I will walk alongside you as a bishop who listens, asks thoughtful questions, celebrates the gifts already present, and helps clarify what to hold onto and what to let go.

I envision a ministry rooted in presence: celebrating Holy Eucharist across the prairies and reservations, offering daily and weekly encouragements through prayer and digital connection, and making the body of Christ more visible and joyful in everyday ways. With your existing leadership and strategic vision, especially through the work of the NSMTF, I see my role not as architect, but as shepherd and accompanist in God's will for the diocese.

It would be my pleasure to explore this discernment further with the committee. I am grateful for your faithful and hopeful work, and I pray alongside the Diocese of North Dakota in this search for your next bishop.

Faithfully,



Rev. Lecia E. Diaz Brannon



Office for  
Transition  
Ministry

# Ministry Portfolio

*Full Portfolio (last updated Apr 15, 2025)*

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Reverend Lecia Diaz Brannon, Texas

Priest, Since Dec 9, 2016

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Preferred Contact Information



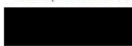
*"I'm hanging onto love to save my life." Surprisingly & gratefully, this line from a country song expresses my personal ministry. Jesus is the love I'm hanging onto, the love that saves me, the world and the love I strive to "worthily magnify."*

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Current Compensation



Required for New Position



Negotiable

Yes

Healthcare Needed

Clergy+1

Housing/Rectory

Housing Allowance

Housing/Rectory Detail



Housing Required for

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Education

Associate of Arts, Liberal Studies, Allan Hancock College

Bachelors of Science, Business Administration, Western Governors University

2013-2016 Master of Divinity, Theology, Seminary of the Southwest

2020 May 2021, Leadership for the future of, Missional Leadership Cohort f

2018 Curacy Program, Parish Ministry Leadership ad, Diocese of Texas

2017 2 CEU's, Preaching conference and work, Festival of Homiletics

2016 5 Day Training, Leadership Skills for Communi, IAF Community Organizing

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Position Preferences

Bishop Diocesan

Bishop Suffragan

Canon for Congregational Development

Canon to the Ordinary

Diocesan/Regional Staff

Open to Consider New Position

Full time

Interim - not certified

## Reverend Lecia Diaz Brannon, Texas

Priest, Since Dec 9, 2016

### Work History and Skills

Director	Nov 2022	Seminary of the Southwest	Austin, Texas	<p>Donor relations, alumni relations, fundraising, presiding/preaching</p> <p><i>My role in this position is relationship building with donors and alumni of all programs for engagement with the seminary. In conversations, close attention to the values and desires of donors and alumni brings focus to the engagement. These relationships are crucial to gifts toward the Annual Fund, volunteers, event planning and continuing education. It is a joy to make connections between our alumni, our donors and the mission of the seminary.</i></p>
Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge	Sep 2020 to Oct 2022	St. Mary's Episcopal Church	Cypress, Texas	<p>Liturgy, preaching, formation, administration</p> <p><i>Served as pastor, priest for the parish, presider of Eucharist, preacher, teacher and pastoral caregiver. Presided Rite I, Rite II on Sunday, seasonal services, preaching weekly &amp; special services. Staff, Vestry, ancillary committees, ministry leaders, volunteers, finances, property management and a strategic plan were under my care &amp; management. Guiding new leadership was a continuing goal. Appointed to EDOT Disciplinary Board by Rt. Rev. C. Andrew Doyle in July 2022.</i></p>
Interim	Jul 2019 to Aug 2020	Calvary Episcopal Church	Richmond, Texas	<p>Liturgy, preaching, formation, administration</p> <p><i>As Locum Tenens, I preside all liturgical services on Sundays, weekdays, school eucharistic services, baptisms, weddings and funerals. Christian Formation, confirmation, Pastoral Care, and support the ministry projects in community outreach and engagement. I manage the church staff and the day-to-day operations of the church office along with sharing the church governance with the Sr. Warden. I serve on the school board, both school and church finance committees and the church foundation board.</i></p>
Assistant / Associate / Curate	Jul 2016 to Jun 2019	Calvary Episcopal Church	Richmond, Texas	
Seminararian	Sep 2014 to May 2016	St. David's Episcopal Church		
Seminararian	Aug 2013 to May 2016	Seminary of the Southwest	Austin, Texas	



# Ministry Portfolio

Full Portfolio  
(last updated Apr 15, 2025)

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Reverend Lecia Diaz Brannon, Texas

Priest, Since Dec 9, 2016

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Other Contact Information



Date of Last Background Check  
Nov 1, 2022

Company performing check  
Oxford Document Management Co., Inc.

Diocese requesting  
Texas

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Sermons Preached:  
[www.youtube.com/c/LeciaDiazBrannon](https://www.youtube.com/c/LeciaDiazBrannon)  
[www.facebook.com/stmaryscypress/videos](https://www.facebook.com/stmaryscypress/videos)

Resources Created:

Online References:  
[www.ssw.edu](https://www.ssw.edu)

What Others Have Written:  
> <https://www.texasobserver.org/trans-children-gods-gifts>

Groups and Associations:

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Languages Written  
English

Languages Spoken  
English

Languages in which you are able to Lead Worship  
English, Spanish

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## Reverend Lecia Diaz Brannon, Texas

Priest, Since Dec 9, 2016

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Describe a moment in your recent ministry that you recognize as one of success and fulfillment.

During my tenure as rector, I served a member family with a gender transitioning teenager. Many of the parish knew this family from when the teenager was a baby and the transition of gender was hard for some to accept. Upon the teenager's high school graduation, the family approached me about having a renaming service. I readily agreed to a service and asked if they wanted to have Eucharist. They didn't even think that was possible. I will always remember their smiles when I told them of course it is possible. This service was attended by family and friends, old and young, church and not, LGBTQ+ and straight, neighboring priests and college campus ministry leaders. The energy was high with incredible joy and love. A rainbow drape was placed on the cross outside the building as a sign of our commitment to inclusivity. Presiding this service is the most sacred moment of my liturgical ministry. Sharing in this family's celebration of their child's naming and new life remains for me a reminder of what the fullness of Christ's presence and love is to the marginalized and despised. This family knew I would support them amidst judgment. I did knowing it was what Jesus would do.

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Describe your liturgical style and practice.

Liturgy is the work of the people. My liturgical style comes alongside the people, their context and their desire to worship. I have discovered my place in this over the past two years as I serve three parishes as a supply priest and my role in presiding at Christ Chapel at the seminary. One parish is Anglo-Catholic with their worship enjoying Rite 1, sometimes with chanting, service music and hymns from Hymnal 1982 and wearing of a chasuble. Another one is Rite II and EOW, music from Lift Every Voice and Sing and I wear an alb and stole. The third is a blend of each, contemporary rites, traditional music and an occasional chasuble. Christ Chapel at the seminary is a teaching chapel where the depth and breadth of our liturgical resources are utilized. Every worshipping community has their unique context even within our Episcopal tradition. My style and practice are to be well versed in our varied rites giving voice to the word and sacrament with confidence and joy. I strive to join each and every worshipping community ready to serve, lead and join the people in their work.

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How do you practice incorporating others in ministry?

I'm called to curiosity about who people are and what they love. I engage them in conversations to learn and discern. These conversations often lead to an invitation into a ministry or place of leadership. In 2022 I invited someone to serve as my Sr. Warden who did not see herself in a parish leadership role. She had grown up in this parish though didn't always agree with the inclusive theology of the Episcopal Church. She did, however, love the parish and the people who shared in her life for many years. She agreed to serve though still doubtful. As Sr. Warden, she rose to leadership by navigating faithfully and thoughtfully with her beliefs as she encountered serving our gay community, our transgender member & family and newcomers. Her faith deepened by attending worship regularly and as a reader in worship. Alongside me, she led the vestry and oversaw a renovation project. She attended the renaming service held for our transgender member, praised the power of the service even while challenged by its purpose and defended the renaming liturgy to the naysayers. She referred to this time as an exhausting blessing and gift with gratitude for the invitation to serve.

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How do you care for your spiritual, emotional and physical well-being?

Towards the end of the pandemic lockdown, my parish leadership and I decided to engage in worship outdoors while waiting for a return into the building. A worship space created by an Eagle Scout project several years prior was rarely used. After some clean-up we held our first service on a clear spring morning. Worshipping outdoors was a new experience for me and for many. I presided and preached to the rustling of trees, singing birds and fresh cool air I breathed in deeply. Everything was simple and casual. We sang mostly acapella and within a few weeks had a full crowd of people. Some in lawn chairs for distance, children played nearby and eventually dogs joined us, too. It was glorious! Offering worship in an outdoor space amongst the trees, birds, squirrels and even the traffic with people who wanted to be part of the same left me refreshed and renewed every week. I continue this experience in my daily devotion and prayer on my patio with the trees, birds and morning coffee. Yearly, I serve a week at Camp Allen in Navasota, TX as Chaplain affording time to sit by the lake watching the water. Having the care of two dogs who need daily walks is good for the body and spirit, too.

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Describe your involvement in either the wider Church or geographical community.

In 1996, my 15 yr. old daughter was shot and killed by a young man she no longer wanted friendship with. He also killed himself. The next year I was approached by our city's women's shelter to participate in the local chapter of a national movement bringing attention to abusive relationships, Silent Witness. I was skeptical and agreed to offer my daughter's story to be represented by a stand-up red silhouette with her story on a gold shield. I began speaking at awareness events and was invited to a march in Washington, DC representing California on the capitol steps with her silhouette. There were 1500 silhouettes around the Reflecting pool that day from across the country. The grief shared with other families was at times excruciating. Yet, my faith strengthened each time I spoke. This led me through my grief and to forgiveness of my daughter's killer. This movement and my willingness to be present and speak helped our local women's shelter raise attention to abuse within families that too often is lethal due to silence. In reflection this was the first time my faith was in action to help others. This was the spark of my discernment toward ordination.

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How do you engage in pastoral care for others?

Being present, attentive, observant and ready to listen are how I engage in pastoral care. Pastoral care comes in many forms, surprising ways and at different times, but its essence begins in being with. Pastoral engagement for me is a constant ebb and flow. Since being at the seminary I've come to appreciate the daily ways of pastoral care within this community. A bookstore transaction with a student moved to sharing about her potential Clinical Pastoral Education dilemma. A casual phone conversation with an alumni moved to listening as he shared his failings in his family life. A former faculty member sharing her doubts about her impact on students now that she is reflecting in retirement. Each of these moments of trust in me come from my curious and open heart. I often use the phrases tell me more, go on and what else from author Kelly Corrigan. These simple phrases offer the chance for me to listen and the other to be heard and seen. Jesus sometimes said, what would you like me to do for you? It's a great question to ask someone in pain or grief or indecision. These never fail to connect me with those who need care.



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Tell about a ministry project that exists because of your leadership. What was your role in its creation? Who can be contacted?

Upon coming to Calvary in July 2016, I observed pastoral care being done within the parish by individuals with little structure as to who needed what type of care and no clear process for the clergy to share appropriate information. In talking with members, I learned there was an unsuccessful attempt to organize previously. Praying for guidance to understand the needs and how to serve them, I called a meeting of all interested in providing pastoral care. This meeting initiated the Calvary Care Team launching a series of additions and improvements to care. After our first meeting, a new member approached me, and our conversation led to her accepting the role of lay leader and liaison between clergy and the team. Having this organization allowed for every member of the parish to be called at the initiation of the pandemic lockdown and regularly. They are creative and energetic in their ability to serve and care for the parish as well as extended family members and neighbors. The clergy and the parish coordinate care with the team. They offer a Blue Christmas Service each Advent and Walking the Mourners Path grief groups. Please contact Rev. Nancy Wilkes, [REDACTED].

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How are you preparing yourself for the Church of the future?

At the Episcopal Parish Network in February, our Presiding Bishop Sean Rowe was interviewed at a Keynote session. Seeing him and hearing his articulation of the gifts he brings and the challenges facing him for the future of The Episcopal Church is inspiring to my own leadership. Admittedly, PB Rowe knows these are trying times for staff reduction and restructuring saying, "The timing couldn't be worse." I am inspired by this humility and pastoral grounding alongside his business acumen. He is acting in response to the needs of our changing church faithfully and thoughtfully. Recently pastoral ministry and business acumen are being treated as separate ways of leadership. Business skills are being valued above pastoral as a saving grace for parishes with diminishing financial resources. PB Rowe affirmed for me that my business skills can be useful in leadership. They aren't however the saving grace. Leadership begins with humility. Our saving grace is freely given by God, not earned. I am preparing myself for the church of the future by being humble to the changing times, praying and being open to using all my skills, pastoral and business to faithfully respond.

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What is your personal practice of stewardship and how do you utilize it to influence your ministry in your worshipping community?

Stewardship comes in many forms for me. Sometimes it is treasure and talent, but mostly it comes in time. To give my time is the highest form of generosity for those I serve offering acceptance, grace and love. Each Monday, the seminary has a Community Hour for anyone on campus who wants to join. The time is 5:15pm which for most staff and faculty is the workdays end. I committed myself to attending to be with our students in a social and fellowship setting. Recently, I noticed that the students speak very freely amongst each other while I am at the table. They are not concerned with any separation of my role of staff and students. They know I am worthy of their trust not just because I am a priest, but because I am present, listening and alongside them. They often have questions and ask about my experiences in parish ministry. One student said to me how glad he was I was doing this because he'll know who to come to when he is an Alumni. I'm not just a staff person, I'm Lecia. Knowing the students and being known by them is stewardship that provides connections into the future. With a church that is ever changing in dynamic and size, connections are vital for ministry and life.

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What is your experience of conflict involving the church? And what is your experience in addressing it?

After some painting and refresh of the sanctuary and nave at St. Mary's I requested, and the Jr. Warden agreed that the Episcopal and American flags not be replaced behind the altar. We placed them at the doorway of the nave temporarily. Before the next Vestry meeting to discuss the flags placement, I learned a member of the parish, veteran and patriarch, was threatening to leave the parish if the flags weren't returned. He was not alone in readying for a fight. At service on Sunday, I offered him the peace, looked him in the eye and said, "We need to talk." He agreed. In our conversation he shared that he could not tolerate his back to the American flag. In his voice and words, I heard his love for country, service and church. I shared the recommendations from Veterans Affairs first. Then, why those flags behind the altar are a mixed message to our liturgy, our worship and our baptismal covenant. Being a disciple is our highest calling. His reply was no one had ever explained this to him before. We crossed a barrier and together brainstormed a location for the flags that met his concern and good theology. In saying goodbye, he thanked me said he loved me. I loved him, too

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What is your experience leading/addressing change in the church? When has it gone well? When has it gone poorly? And what did you learn?

St. Mary's E.C. was gifted a large bell that was once in the tower of an old church. The church building architecture is modern without a traditional bell tower. For years it rested on some bricks waiting for the time to enact the construction plan. This plan included a brick platform for the bell, new landscaping and benches to complete the courtyard. It would be dedicated to a beloved parishioner of recent passing. Her family was ready to fund the project. As the new rector, I was eager to see this plan come to fruition. As the project was underway, I learned that the bell was broken. I gathered the planning committee and asked why we would plan all this for a broken bell. No one had a good answer. I told them they were worth a bell that worked. With my question & comment the mood and trajectory of the project shifted. Now the energy was in repairing the bell, too. Inquiring with the contractors about repair a worker who enjoyed metal work generously agreed to do it at no cost. The bell arrived beautifully restored and completely workable. The bell is a joy for all to ring, especially for the children. Don't be afraid to ask for the best God wants for us.