

**The Rev. Canon Kathryn ‘Kai’ Ryan**  
**Canon to the Ordinary and Chief Operating Officer**  
**Episcopal Diocese of Texas**



I came out of the delivery room at the Miners’ Hospital in Raton, New Mexico and into the font at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church. Life in the Church reveals the rhythms of God’s grace and guidance for me. The youngest of four daughters, I attended public schools in Albuquerque. Enjoying athletics, I competed in gymnastics, track, and cross country. My life in Christ and my leadership gifts were nurtured, while a youth, in camping ministry, the Happening movement, and parish committees, including one that resettled a refugee family. On receiving my B.A. at Sewanee, I returned to Albuquerque to gain employment

experience required before seeking ordination. At Sewanee, I met Tim Ryan, and we married in 1989. We have two children, Ned, 22, and Eleanor, 16. After an MDiv at Seminary of the Southwest in Austin, I spent 20 years in parish ministry, including 14 years as rector of Ascension, Dallas. There I learned from brothers and sisters of other cultures how to lead a multi-ethnic community. Since 2014, I have served as Canon to the Ordinary of the Diocese of Texas, leading the ministry staff in its work to implement the diocesan vision.



**Statement from the Search Committee**

A keen observer of the moment we are experiencing as a diocese and a region filled with diverse and rapidly changing communities, Canon Ryan writes in her letter of intent, “Our Church needs bishops who will guide us as we pursue disciplined habits of connection, prayer, and strategy.” As a Search Committee, we believe that Canon Ryan would be just such a bishop, if elected, because her own disciplined habits of connection, prayer, and strategy are evident in her ministry.

Kai would be a helpful guide as the diocese pursues disciplined habits of connection. For Kai, these habits of connection are deeply rooted in the life of Jesus Christ, a compassionate Savior with an awe-inspiring capacity “to love so fully all those he met.” These habits of connection are taught and strengthened in the eucharistic community “drawn together by a Holy Spirit, who disrupts our agendas and gathers vulnerable people around one table to try to figure out together what the Church could be.” Kai’s experience working with the multicultural congregation of Ascension, Dallas, as they sought to welcome a growing community of Dinka brothers and sisters taught her that naïve good intentions are not enough to hold people

together. Only mature resolve and habits of respectful listening, diligent seeking, covenanted accountability, and sacrificial solidarity can bring diverse community together for the common good. As a Search Committee, we believe that Kai would bring these habits of connection into her work with congregations in changing communities, into the dynamic work of diocesan institutions like El Buen Samaritano, St. Stephen's School and the Seminary of the Southwest, and into her pastoral work with clergy and congregations.

As bishop, Kai would guide us as we pursue disciplined habits of prayer. For Kai, the praying of the Daily Office and the Eucharistic liturgy, as well as reflective study of Scripture, invite us into clarity of mission and hopefulness as we go out to meet our neighbor. Kai notes that prayer and the study of Scripture also "hold up a mirror to my life to reveal, with grace and mercy, the opportunity I still have to grow into the form of Christ." Throughout the discernment process, Kai was most excited about the opportunity that the Bishop Suffragan would have to show up to know, encourage, learn from, pray and celebrate with clergy, congregations, and communities, because praying together and listening for God's voice together transforms us.

Finally, Kai would offer leadership for the Church in disciplined habits of strategy. This is an area where she excels. As Canon to the Ordinary, Kai led the reorganization of the diocesan staff, adapted the Traction system "for the timely implementation of the diocesan vision," and led the Executive Team in its implementation. This work has bridged over into the development of a new congregational engagement strategy to strengthen connections with congregations and communities in order to help them work through challenges and thrive. We believe that, if elected, Kai would continue to share these strategic gifts and habits with the Executive team, with institutions and boards, with the communities and congregations of the West Region, and with the House of Bishops.

### **Letter of Intent**

My service to Jesus Christ through the Episcopal Church counts as the privilege of my life. Our common prayer speaks accountability into my soul as the Church forms me into Christ's image. Through 25 years of ordained ministry, the Diocese of Texas has called me to my best self as a Christian and a priest, even when I was ministering in other dioceses. I am fortunate to serve the Diocese as Canon to the Ordinary. I now pass on to others God's love and grace and the hopefulness for the Church's future I have known through the Diocese of Texas and the Episcopal Church.



Within the work assigned to the Suffragan, I am most excited to know more deeply the clergy and lay people of the Diocese, to stand alongside them to help bear their burdens and share their delights. Showing up to know, encourage, learn from, and pray with our congregations and people would be the priority on which I, if Bishop Suffragan, would fill my schedule. Our clergy and laity serve courageously to build up Christ's Body. I am eager to be there to celebrate God's manifestation in their midst.

My ministry experience as a parish priest included immersion in cross-cultural relationships. I continue to learn ways cultural biases injure our sisters and brothers, and to repent of my own complicity. I seek to equip the Church with tools to heal divisions both internally and externally. My strategy for reconciliation includes incorporating people of multiple cultures as partners and leaders in our mission.

Prior responsibilities for vocational discernment and institutional governance, elements of the Suffragan's portfolio, have prepared me to undertake similar tasks as a bishop. More importantly, a breadth of roles demonstrates my flexibility and willingness to embrace the work that arises as assignments emerge or change.

Our Church needs bishops who will guide us as we pursue disciplined habits of connection, prayer, and strategy. The changes in Texas – population growth, migration, the increase in diversity and disparity – call us to join with God and each other for good. The sacramental ministry of the Episcopacy provides God's people essential solace and strength as gifts for this journey. I can partner with Bishop Doyle, the other Bishops, clergy, and people, to help the Diocese creatively, prayerfully, and collaboratively meet these realities with the promise of the Gospel.

## Kathryn McCrossen Ryan

### MINISTRY COMMITMENTS

Collaboration of lay and ordained persons toward the goal of extending Christ's reconciling work into communities; diversification of leadership, membership, and culturally rich worship; empowerment of all the baptized through spiritual maturity, skill, and knowledge to join God on mission in the world.

### EXPERIENCE

Episcopal Diocese of Texas, Canon to the Ordinary and COO 2014-Present

- Served diocesan bishop and Diocese
- Coordinated Executive Team to implement diocesan vision
- Envisioned and implemented major staff reorganization to serve diocesan goals
- Led Ministry Department, with Directors of Mission Amplification, Communications, Wellness, and Transition Minister as direct reports
- Aligned staff, initiatives, budgets, and boards, working with Bishop Diocesan and CFO, to help existing and new Christian communities to extend Christ's ministry locally
- Recruited key staff
- Handled all clergy transitions, prior to calling a Transition Minister
- Assisted with Title IV and work related to legal matters
- Coached clergy and congregations
- Led Council Management Committee
- Preached, taught, and presented across Diocese

Episcopal Church of the Ascension, Dallas, Texas, Rector 1999- 2013

- Maintained unity and growth of 300+ ASA multicultural congregation in a time of significant change and denominational strife
- Moved congregation to comprehensive externally focused ministry to the community
- Integrated Dinka refugees and supported development of ethnic specific ministries
- Collaborated with lay leaders in vision work that resulted in community connections, diversity in worship, programs, and leadership
- Built up and managed lay and clergy staff
- Developed and led creative prayer book liturgy.
- Oversaw two capital campaigns, with building expansions and renovations
- Implemented two rounds of structural changes to enhance communication, collaboration, and accountability among ministries, staff members and unpaid lay leaders

St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Mobile, Alabama, Assistant 1993-1999

- Assisted in all aspects of pastoral ministry at 750-member congregation
- Served pastoral needs, taught Ethics, designed and led chapel for K-8 day school
- Planned and implemented program for Christian Education and Youth Ministry
- Selected and trained unpaid lay ministers to lead and serve in parish ministries
- Served as Interim following Rector's retirement

All Saints' Episcopal Church, Austin, Texas, Youth Minister and Deacon 1991-1993

Camp Stoney Episcopal Camp; Santa Fe, New Mexico, Director 1988-1989

#### SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

"Moon Launch", Iona Graduation, Diocese of Texas, 2015 – Sermon became Forward for *Small Batch: Local, Organic, and Sustainable Church*, C. Andrew Doyle

Convention Speaker, Diocese of Dallas, 2013

"Cross-cultural Competency for Parish Leadership", Seminary of the Southwest, February 2012

Preacher, Various Ordinations and Installations, Dioceses of Dallas, Fort Worth, Central Gulf Coast

Preacher, Installation of 9th Bishop of Texas, Andrew Doyle, Christ Church Cathedral, Houston, June 2009

Lenten Speaker, St. Michael's and All Angels Episcopal Church, 2009, 2006; other congregations in various dioceses, 1991-present

Diocese of Texas Curate Camp, Panel on Priestly Power, 2008- 2011

#### DIOCESAN and EPISCOPAL CHURCH MINISTRIES

Seminary of the Southwest: Board of Trustees, November 2004 – 2014, 2018-present, Chair of the Governance Committee, May 2009 – 2014; Chair of Strategic Planning Committee 2018-present, member 2004-2009

Field Education Supervisor, Seminary of the Southwest, 2009-2011

Spiritual Director for Camps, Happenings, and other Youth Events, Dioceses of Dallas and Central Gulf Coast

Cook for Happening, Diocese of Texas, 2018

Diocese of Dallas Election Committee for Suffragan Bishop, 2007-2008

Diocese of Dallas Reconciliation Commission, 2005-2006

Camp Boards, Dioceses of Dallas and Rio Grande

Diocese of Central Gulf Coast Commission on Ministry: 1995 – 1998, Chair 1997-1998

Diocese of Central Gulf Coast Standing Committee: 1999

Wilmer Hall Children's Home: Board, 1994-1998

#### COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

ProjectCurate cohort, Houston, TX, 2018

Mentor Pastor, Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University Internship Program, 2008-2012

Lake Highlands YMCA, Dallas, Texas: Board of Management, May 2006- 2013

Richardson Independent School District: Mentor, September 2005 – 2013

Girl Scouts of the Deep South Council: Board, 1994-1998

#### ORDINATION

Canonical Residence: Diocese of Texas

Priesthood: June 25, 1993 Episcopal Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast

Diaconate: June 27, 1992 Episcopal Diocese of the Rio Grande

#### EDUCATION

Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas; Coursework in D.Min. Program (Degree was left incomplete when I transitioned to CTO position)

Project Title: Building Up the Body: Preparing Lay Persons for Ministries of Leadership in a Multicultural Episcopal Congregation

M.Div.: Episcopal Theological Seminary of the Southwest, Austin, Texas May 1992

B.A., Philosophy, cum laude: The University of the South, Sewanee, Tennessee May 1986