

# The Rev. Austin Keith Rios

## MINISTRY STATEMENT

I experience the love of Christ as a reconciling presence in the midst of division. Through worship, administration, prayer and pastoral care, I seek to encounter this love while drawing others into deeper relationships through and with Christ.

## MINISTRY EXPERIENCE

### **Rector, St. Paul's Within the Walls, Rome, Italy** **2012-Present**

Chief priest, pastor and administrator for historic parish in the heart of Rome and director of St. Paul's primary outreach ministry, The Joel Nafuma Refugee Center, a day refugee center for asylum seekers. St. Paul's was the first non-Roman Catholic church built within the city walls of Rome and is currently a multi-lingual and multi-cultural worshipping community with bi- and tri-lingual services in English, Spanish and Italian. Oversees a 12-person staff, including the Vicar to the Latin American Community and the staff of the Joel Nafuma Refugee Center, securing multiple income streams from parish stewardship efforts and business partnerships that fund an annual operating budget of \$430,000. Serves as primary representative of the Episcopal Church in ecumenical relations with the Vatican and other denominational presences in Rome. As a member of the Board of St. Paul's, navigates an on-going multi-million dollar restoration of our historic building. Mentors Young Adult Service Corps missionaries, various other ministry and music program interns, and has been involved in the discernment processes of several aspirants.

### **Executive Director, Joel Nafuma Refugee Center** **2012-Present**

Guests come from all over the world, including Afghanistan, Pakistan, Mali, Guinea, and the Ivory Coast. The JNRC provides basic services to guests (food, toiletries, clothing) and has expanded services to include counseling, education, and accompaniment of guests navigating the bureaucracy of asylum seeking. Responsible for oversight and administration of one of Rome's only day refugee centers, serving approximately 175-225 refugee guests daily, with an annual operating budget of \$290,000. The Director oversees a Managing Director, an Operations Coordinator, a Fundraising Coordinator who oversees grants and NGO participation, and a Program and Volunteer Coordinator, who recruits and equips a permanent volunteer corps of 50. The Director solicits grants and other support for the center and is the public relations face of the center.

### **Canon for Spanish Speaking Ministries, Diocese of Western North Carolina** **2007-2012**

Served as Missioner for Spanish speaking ministries in the Diocese, encouraging Spanish and English speaking Episcopalians to collaborate in ministry beyond the divide of language. Formed and chaired *Beyond Borders/Mas alla de las Fronteras*, a diocesan committee tasked with workshop development and implementation to carry out this bridge building work. Served as a resource and advisor to parishes discerning Spanish-speaking ministries. Provided language training for clergy to promote competency in leading worship in Spanish. Educated parishes on immigration issues and led advocacy efforts. As member of the Bishop's staff, provided counsel to the Bishop on these matters and more wide-ranging diocesan business.

### **Rector, La Capilla de Santa Maria, Hendersonville, NC** **2007-2012**

Chief priest, pastor and administrator of majority Spanish speaking congregation. Negotiated shared leadership models among different nationalities represented in parish and integrated diverse cultural rituals from throughout Latin America into Episcopal liturgical celebrations. Provided pastoral care to parishioners and families going through deportation and legal processes. Created a weekly contemplative bilingual Eucharist and connected Spanish speaking and English speaking members of the diocese through special events like Las Posadas and All Saints/Día de Los Muertos celebrations. Coordinated and supervised service learning and student internships with Warren Wilson College.

Curate, Grace Episcopal Church, Asheville, NC	2005-2007
Mission, Pilgrimage and Service Trip Leader, Diocese of Western North Carolina	2005-2010
YASC Missioner, Anglican Church of Mexico, Xalapa, Veracruz, Mexico	2004
Assistant Director, Camp Henry, Diocese of Western North Carolina, Canton, NC	2002

## EDUCATION

<b>M. Div., Episcopal Theological Seminary of the Southwest, Austin, TX</b>	<b>2000-2003</b>
Internship at Church of the Advocate, Asheville, NC. Intensive January term at Mexican American Cultural Center in San Antonio, TX. Two-week immersion course, <i>Christian Art and Architecture in Rome</i> . Clinical Pastoral Education at Mercy Hospital in Charlotte, NC.	
<b>B.A. English, Davidson College, Davidson NC</b>	<b>1995-1999</b>
Ecumenical reverse mission trip to Nicaragua with 6 months of team preparation. Summer work in professional equity theatre at Flat Rock Playhouse, Flat Rock, NC. Lead roles in various musicals and recipient of vocal/choral scholarship.	

## PUBLICATIONS

Current Sermon Text and Audio Archive: <http://www.stpaulsrome.it/category/sermons/>

Weekly Newsletter: <http://us3.campaign-archive2.com/home/?u=5727a33de112c5f765eab1534&id=9474eec2bb>

Zabriskie, Marek P., ed. *The Social Justice Bible Challenge*. "Day 31 Reflection: And who is my neighbor?" Austin K. Rios. Forward Movement: Cincinnati, OH, 2017.

"April Fools." Seminary of the Southwest. <http://ssw.edu/blog/april-fools/> April 1, 2014.

Butterfield, Rev. Jane, ed. *The Scripture of their Lives*. "Mutuality in Mission: The Teaching of Don Ricardo and his Cats." Austin Rios and Jill Rios. Morehouse Publications: Harrisburg, PA, 2006.

The Standing Commission on World Mission. *Companions in Transformation: The Episcopal Church's World Mission in a New Century*. Spanish translation: The Rev. Gabriela Reyes, Austin Rios, Jill Rios. The Episcopal Church Center: New York, 2005.

## DIOCESAN AND WIDER CHURCH LEADERSHIP

**Trustee, Church Pension Fund 2018-present.** Elected for 6-year term at GC 79 in 2018. Responsible for oversight of portfolio assets totaling 16 billion dollars, as well as stewardship of the investments, benefits, and programs that affect the lives of people who serve the Church. Currently Vice Chair of Investment Committee.

**General Convention Deputations 2009-present.** Elected Chair of Deputation for GC 76 in 2009 and GC 77 in 2012 by Diocese of Western North Carolina. Elected deputy for GC 78 in 2015, GC 79 in 2018, GC 80 in 2022, and GC 81 (scheduled for 2024) by Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe. Appointed to the legislative committees of Governance and Structure in 2015 and 2022 and Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations in 2018.

**Episcopal Search Committee 2017-2018.** Developed Convocational profile and helped steer search process for nominating Bishop candidates for Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe.

**Council of Advice 2013-2017.** The Standing Committee of the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe.  
Participated in structural reform leading to increased budgetary transparency and accountability. Connected work of JNRC to Convocation-wide local refugee mission projects.

**Joint Standing Committee on Nominations for the Episcopal Church 2009-2012.** Screened and selected members for consideration to Executive Council, Church Pension Fund, Board of Examining Chaplains and the Board of General Seminary.

**Diocesan Commissions, Diocese of Western North Carolina 2005-2012.** Served on Commission to Dismantle Racism, Architectural Commission, and Young Adult and College Commission.

**Chaplain, Kanuga Guest Periods 2009-2011.** Developed programming, offered pastoral care, and tailored liturgy to attendees.

**Gathering of Leaders 2011.** Selected to participate in gathering of Episcopal clergy leaders under age fifty designed to share best practices and innovative ideas for ministry.

**Design Team Member and Conference Presenter, Nuevo Amanecer 2010.** Annual Conference for those working among or discerning ministry among Latinos/Hispanics.

## ASSOCIATIONS AND BOARDS

**American Friends of the Anglican Centre in Rome, 2014-present.** Promotes the work of the Anglican Centre as the Anglican Communion's embassy to the Vatican.

**Board of St. Paul's, Rome/New York, 2012-present.** Oversees the preservation and restoration of St. Paul's historic building through management of the parish's endowment. Successfully restored all campus buildings including nave, campanile, Edward Burne Jones mosaics, and the Joel Nafuma Refugee Center.

**Malines Conversation Group, 2014-2016.** An international group of 16 prominent Anglican and Roman Catholic theologians and church leaders committed to dialogue and unity. The Malines Conversation Group has support from both the Vatican's Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity and the Archbishop of Canterbury at Lambeth Palace. Served as the first, and only, Episcopalian member.

**Children First/Communities in Schools, Asheville, NC 2009-2012.** Served on leadership team for coordinating local child poverty reduction efforts.

**Mountain Area Interfaith Forum, Asheville NC, 2006-2012.** Regional interfaith network providing shared educational, social and advocacy opportunities and events.

## PERSONAL

Practitioner of Tai Chi and Yoga. Has lived in Texas, Louisiana, Wisconsin, North Carolina, Spain, Mexico and Italy. Married with one daughter.

**Ordained Priest,** Grace Episcopal Church, Asheville, NC, July 16, 2005.

**Ordained Deacon.** St. James Episcopal Church, Black Mountain, NC, January 15, 2005.