

# 2019 Professional Leaders Retreat

## Special Presenter

### The Rev. Javier (Jay) Alanis, PhD JD



The Rev. Dr. Alanis is the Executive director of the Lutheran Seminary Program in the Southwest (LSPS), located on the campus of the Seminary of the Southwest in Austin, Texas. He coordinates the seminary program and serves as the Associate Professor of Theology, Culture and Mission. Dr. Alanis joined the faculty in January 2000. LSPS, with a beginning in 1975, is a joint program of Wartburg Theological Seminary (WTS) and The Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (LSTC). He was appointed as the Executive Director of LSPS in 2009.

Deeply rooted Texas culture and faith, and the youngest of six siblings, Dr. Alanis was born in the Rio Grande Valley in the city of San Juan, Texas. His mother was a charter member of St. John Lutheran Church in San Juan. The congregation was founded in 1925 by a German family. Jay's sister, Sylvia de la Garza, also served as an ELCA pastor.

Academic interests include contextual borderland theology, Latin@ spirituality, and the social ethics of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr. Alanis' doctoral dissertation explored the Hebrew doctrine of the *imago Dei* (image of God) as a way to understand welcoming the stranger.

Rev. Alanis participated in an international conference held in Berlin, Germany and at the Lutheran Center in Wittenberg, Germany, in 2006, examining the issue of border walls. He was also the keynote speaker at the 2008 Rocky Mountain Synod Assembly, in El Paso, Texas; and a guest preacher at the opening worship service of the 2009 Southwestern Texas Synod Assembly which focused on the theme that year, "assembly without walls."

In 2013 he received the Distinguished Alumnus Award, "Witness to the World", from LSTC

From 1992-1996 Dr. Alanis served as the pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in San Antonio, Texas.

Dr. Alanis provides Word and Sacrament ministry in Austin community with the Spanish-speaking community at St. James Episcopal Church and at Casa Marianella, a shelter for displaced immigrants. He also serves as a spiritual director of students at the Seminary of the Southwest. He says: "I am a bridge-builder...to build bridges of understanding with our neighbors...especially along the U.S. - Mexico border".

He holds a BA degree from Washington University and the University of Madrid, Spain; a Master's degree in international management from the American Graduate School of International Management; a Juris Doctor degree from the University of Texas (Austin); and a Master of Divinity degree, a Master of Theology degree, and a Ph.D. from LSTC.