



Rev. G. Todd Williams, Interim Senior Minister

Webster Presbyterian Church PC(USA)

201 West Nasa Parkway, Webster, Texas 77598

Office: 281-332-1251

Cell: 713-922-6599

Report to Session November 19, 2024

Dear Friends, who love Webster Presbyterian Church,

Since being called to serve as the Interim Senior Minister, I have been present for three services, including Moderating a Congregational Meeting on November 17 following worship. I provided the sermon for two services; the first on Ruth and the relationship that she and her mother-in-law had, including advice provided by Naomi to Ruth as to how to make a good impression and eventually, Ruth became the wife of Boas and grandmother to King David.

The second Sunday included a brief description of "Interim 101," acknowledging my role and creating initial boundaries with the faith community that will help to offer support, while realizing that my role is to maneuver through the journey ahead that will address a number of opportunities for change, and to affirm the many things that the church is doing to ensure that it remains a viable and loving presence in Webster.

Regarding the charge that was given to the search committee for both a Parish Associate and an Interim Senior Minister, a cohesive and highly effective team was organized that operated with the utmost of discretion. Details of meetings were kept confidential, while interviews were conducted, references checked, and contracts created and offered to Rev. Kathy Sebring and me, Rev. G. Todd Williams, MDiv, APC, an ordained minister within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), as well as, standing with the Presbytery of New Covenant.

Just prior to being called to serve WPC, I attended the Boundaries Training provided by the Presbytery, and will continue to pursue all requirements, including continuing education, while fulfilling all requirements necessary to continue my standing with the DOC and Presbytery.

I was ordained on June 20, 1999, in Salem, IN at the First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). I hold a Master of Divinity from Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary (1999) and a bachelor's in business from Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, 1986. I completed 5 units of Clinical Pastoral Education. 1 while in seminary, the other 4 at M D Anderson Cancer Center.

With a strong social justice background, I was awarded the Todd Brakovitch Peace Fellowship Award by the Peace Fellowship of the Christian Church and was completing my research for my dissertation when I was diagnosed with cancer 14 years ago. I had just completed following 6 unsheltered men who traveled along the 110 Corridor (A nomadic thoroughfare for sex workers and those who have been victims of human trafficking) for four years. Meeting them in West Hollywood during the winter, New Orleans in the spring at the time of Mardi Gras, and Houston for major sporting events, these men lived "the hustle." In the four years, two of the six died. A reminder that the life expectancy of these "workers," is dramatically less than the average life expectancy of men in America.

While I am still getting to know the many wonderful people, ministries, and staff that make up the WPC faith community, there have been many opportunities to experience grace, forgiveness, as well as open hearts and minds to possibilities, and change as I settle into my role as the Interim.

I was especially touched by the unanimous vote to receive me by the Session as the Interim, and for the welcome my spouse, Quincy, daughter, Emily, and her family have received. My cousin, Maureen, as well as several friends and former colleagues were present in worship, including Kathy and Andy Mayo this past Sunday. Kathy is a social worker at Houston Hospice (she and I worked beside one another for several years), and Andy, who is the Executive Director in partnership with the Presbyterian Church USA, Medical Benevolence Foundation (MBF) supports the medical ministries of worldwide partners with particular emphasis in D.R. Congo, Kenya, Malawi, and Haiti. MBF's focus is raising the necessary resources to provide compassionate and sustainable healthcare for the poor with concentration on supporting PCUSA missionaries, construction of buildings (i.e. nursing schools), providing medicines, equipment and other resources towards the operation of hospitals and community health clinics.

Besides attending several gatherings at the church, I also attended the Presbytery meeting this past Saturday. I will be working with staff to ensure that the church's Operating Manual is up to date, including policies required by the Presbytery.

Elizabeth Guyer continues to serve the church as the Administrative Assistant in the office. She is currently beginning the process of updating the staff index, while reviewing information currently available for members. She is also helping to organize and clean office space, while maintaining communication with staff. She has learned of a health issue in recent weeks that will require medical procedures and treatment for cancer. As a staff member, I reminded her that I want to honor guidelines set forth by the State of Texas and current labor laws. I have asked her to lock the office doors and not answer the phone during her lunch break, which she will take at noon. We will update the phones to convey that the office will be closed for lunch.

I attended the Arts program in the Sanctuary, Men's group, several studies, and the amazing Men's breakfast. I am grateful to Dennis for the videos he created to provide for instructions on how to utilize the shared drive, and for resetting the office phones.

I have met with both former clergy Richard and Tom, and our relationship has very clear boundaries, and we have decided that once a month we will gather for lunch.

I'm still getting to know Kathy and appreciate the effort that she has made on getting to those people who need support, as well as providing leadership for several funerals that are planned in the coming weeks.

In the coming weeks, we will enter the season of Advent. I have already placed the gospel lessons on the white board in the office, including the sermon titles. We will continue to utilize this board for communication. I have already discovered that our calendar for the church often contains wrong dates or times for events / meetings. Creating a cohesive, consistent, line of communication, including any last-minute changes, will ensure that we respect the time required for the gatherings, and that we honor those who attend, by ensuring that they do not arrive to discover an event was either cancelled, moved to another time, or even another day.

As I draw this sharing to a close, I would like to include a prayer that I often pray when I arrive at the church. It was written by Thomas Merton and is often referred to as the "Merton Prayer." The prayer is about surrendering to the will of God with complete trust. It acknowledges uncertainty and the need for guidance, expressing a willingness to follow God's path even when it is not clear. The prayer emphasizes trust and the belief that God is always near, even in difficult times.

*My Lord God,
I have no idea where I am going.
I do not see the road ahead of me.
I cannot know for certain where it will end.
nor do I really know myself,
and the fact that I think I am following your will
does not mean that I am actually doing so.
But I believe that the desire to please you
does in fact please you.
And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing.
I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.
And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road,
though I may know nothing about it.
Therefore will I trust you always though
I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death.
I will not fear, for you are ever with me,
and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.*

Looking to the next two months...

A new member's class will be provided during the second weekend in December.

I would like to schedule training for all incoming officers, elders and deacons, including a shortened form of Boundaries Training (suggested by the Presbytery.) We need to schedule this so that it will be on the calendar for January.

As an Interim, my role is one of transition. While years ago, the thought of being a change agent provided for many experiences that created change, I now realize the importance of this role, while celebrating and honoring the rich history of the church and its people at WPC. I consider my journey with you as one in partnership and a blessing to my life.

Stay in God's grip!

Rev. G. Todd Williams, MDiv., APC
Interim Senior Minister

I have included Rev. Sebring's with this report.

Webster Presbyterian Church

Session Meeting – Parish Associate Report

November 17, 2024

Parish Associate, Rev. Kathy Sebring, Reporting

Activities Report:

1. Care for members and friends of congregation: significant support for Paul and Kim Haran and Sarah (Kim on hospice); Carrie McRay (granddaughter Heidi brain tumor); Jackie Hart (caregiver fatigue) and Ardene Martin (hospitalized); Reese Terry (find caregiver); Irene Stanley, Missy Rorrer, Bill & Sherry Straight.
2. Funerals: Graveside for Cleo Ward Jones; Memorial for Ronald Sass (former member of Webster)

In planning stages: for Cleo Jones Memorial on November 23, 2024; Brenda Emery's Memorial on December 15th, 2024.

1. Grief support: Lesli Hurt and sister Lori; Ken Emery and daughters, Katherine and Kim; Andria Varsos (Ronald Sass's daughter)
1. Visitors follow up cards- 9
1. Assisted with worship November 10th and attended Congregational Meeting.
1. Other support: tried to find housing for Trevon Solomon and Byrum (working with James)

Result – no shelters or hotel vouchers available in Webster area.

1. Working with Glenn Foster in planning of Service of Worship and Healing- The Longest Night. (during Advent December 20th)
1. Fellowship: attended Pink Flamingo's dinner and meeting where I had an opportunity to meet and get to know the ladies who were there. Discovered some bereavement needs.

Several meetings and visits in the office. Met and visited with members after church 11/10 @ Holy Grounds. Attended the Shrimp Boil and Wednesday night dinners.

1. Other: Presbytery involvement – Monthly Presbytery of New Covenant Administration Meeting.

Attended Presbytery Meeting in Galveston 11/16 participated in worship leadership.