

Dear Beloved of St. Timothy's,

I give thanks to God for each and every one of you. It is a privilege to journey alongside you at this time in your life. It is my pleasure to pray for you, and I appreciate your prayers for David and myself. I am grateful to be called to serve you as your priest. In a commitment to be my best and continue to serve you in the years to come, I am going on Sabbatical July - September. I will explain more of the details below. I am excited to witness the renewal God will bring us all in this Season of Sabbath Rest. Let us pray together for God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven, and that we get the most out of this time.

### **What is a Sabbatical?**

In the Diocese of Texas, Sabbaticals are a time for spiritual renewal for full-time clergy and the parish, to be taken once every seven years, for a three-month duration. It is not just a vacation; it is a time to go deeper with God and enjoy time with family. Bishop Kai Ryan explains it this way: "Clergy are like emergency response vehicles. Once all their first aid supplies are gone, they need to go get restocked to be able to care for others well."

David and I will be away from July through September 2025. While I am away, I am required not to be in contact with parish members, so I will not be responding to phone calls, texts or social media. To get the full benefit of this time away, I need to unplug from caregiving and rest. It is my hope and prayer that this will be a time of not only renewal but also growing in the practice of resting in Jesus for all of us.

### **How is it different from a vacation?**

I have been praying and preparing for this time away for some time. Though we will be taking a vacation, my overall focus will be on spending time resting and abiding in God. As I prayed about a Sabbatical theme, in one week God brought up John 15:4 five times: "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me." This scripture and the spiritual practice of resting in Christ will be my focus.

### **Who is paying for it?**

The Diocese of Texas has provided a grant to cover the sabbatical supply priest cost and some travel expenses for the priest. The priest will continue to be paid her salary while on Sabbatical.

### **Who will be in charge while she is gone?**

Angela McCabe, our current Senior Warden will be the go-to person if there is a pastoral need or death. You can reach her at 979-799-6999, or call the church office and Jackie will deliver your message. Angela will work closely with Rev. Paul Geisler, Jr., and a pastoral team is also being formed to be available for you when you need it.

The Rev. Paul Geisler, Jr. will be our sabbatical supply priest. Though Episcopal priests were sought, none were available this year. A vestry member suggested Rev. Geisler. The Bishop approved it since we are in full communion with the ELCA Lutherans. Rev. Geisler will be joining us July 1st through September 30. He will lead worship on Sundays and provide pastoral care as needed, mainly on Mondays. One Sunday a month lay members will lead morning prayer so Reverend Paul can visit his wife

in Ft. Worth where she is taking care of her mother. He will be putting together a grief group as well as meeting with those who are interested in helping with pastoral care in any way.

### **How can St. Timothy's use this time?**

As I prepare for this Sabbatical, it has become clear that to enter into rest, we must make space. We must lay down our burdens and worries at the foot of the cross. Thus, I invite you to do just that on Sunday, June 29th at 8:30 and 10:30, based on the scripture Mathew 11:28-30:

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

I encourage you all to find what gives you rest beyond sleep. You might consider Holy Yoga, Walking the Labyrinth, or taking a meditative walk. There will be spiritual tools posted on the bulletin board outside the Welcome Center each week to help you practice resting in God.

A Prayer of Loving Kindness from Pastor Robin.

May you experience God's love.  
May you be safe.  
May you belong.  
May you find Rest in Christ.  
May you be at peace, in Jesus' name.

Please join me in praying for God's best blessings as we seek His renewal this summer.

Love,  
Pastor Robin+