

Claire L. (Wright) Brettell – Bio

I am a 57-year-old divorced mother of a twenty-two-year-old autistic daughter. I was born in Arizona and was raised in Southern California, I am the 5th of six children. I came to the Midwest in 1983 when I began Dental School at Washington University in Saint Louis, Missouri and then moved to Kansas City and was married in 1989.

After my retirement as a general dentist in 2011, I became a Stephen Minister with Village Presbyterian Church. In 2014, I completed one-unit of CPE and since then I have been a volunteer hospital chaplain at Saint Luke's Hospital-South. I have recently graduated with a Master of Divinity Degree from Saint Paul School of Theology and I am nearing graduation with the Benedictine Sisters in Atchison, Kansas as a Spiritual Director through their Souljourner's Program.

During my childhood, my family visited Church Services two to three times a year at Founder's Church of Religious Science in Los Angeles, where my Uncle Bill was pastor. As an older adult I was baptized and became a member of the Presbyterian Church. I consider myself to be a contemplative Presbyterian, with Centering Prayer and the Ignatian Examen Prayers as personal practices and Bible Study, Small Group Prayer and Community Worship Services as my communal support.

My first spiritual experience was at the age of about 7, during a church service. Tears came to my eyes with the Hymn "Open My Eyes, That I May See" and my heart skipped a beat. I knew something deep within me had been touched by God. I continued to cherish this memory and though I still do not understand this fully, I know this was of God. During elementary school at South Bay Christian Elementary School, I first heard the name of Jesus Christ and was given my first Holy Bible, a white King James Version. Then as a young adult, I began to hear the voice of the Lord in Scripture and in nature – the ocean's waves and its spray, the wind, and the birds captivated me. I still find myself listening to the whisper of the Lord in nature and through Scripture.

Over the years, I have been a part of several Bible Study Groups, Small Church Groups, and Prayer Groups. All of which have contributed to my ongoing transformation and I believe through this transformation I have been led to the Rule of Benedict and the Oblate group which I am now a part of. My Oblate group is like no other group I have experienced. Here I have a group of like hearted individuals who, like me are seeking a deeper and more devoted lifestyle. There is solace in knowing I am not alone, and the Rule is a concrete reminder that there is a way to live a peaceful life centered on Christ, and this is the life I choose to live.

I am seeking ordination in the Presbyterian Church as an affirmation of God's Call on my life and a way to minister to others in a more meaningful way. As a pastoral care provider, a hospital chaplain and spiritual director, I believe ordination with the Presbyterian Church will connect and direct me in my ministry opportunities. And through ordination by the Church and my congregation, I will be able to move forward from volunteer to vocational ministry as opportunities open and the Lord allows.