



South Congregational Church  
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[www.southcongregationalchurch.org](http://www.southcongregationalchurch.org)

November 21, 2011

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

I greet you in the name of the Living God, in whose name we have been brought together to serve and worship.

I am truly humbled by your faith in calling me to be the next settled pastor of South Congregational Church. The church has a long tradition of strong pastoral leadership and I am honored to have the opportunity to carry on this tradition. I am eager to begin our ministry together as we discern how best we might serve God and the community where God has planted us. I know that South Congregational Church has gone through a lengthy period of transition; some have called it a time of traveling through the wilderness. I appreciate that during such times people become frustrated and discouraged. Many decide to withdraw from the community and wait until a settled pastor is called. That time has finally come, and I hope that you will join us for worship on Sunday November 27 as we usher in a new phase in the life of South Congregational Church.

We begin our new ministry together entering the blessed season of Advent. Advent is the beginning of the liturgical year which guides us, as we remember and celebrate the life and ministry of One we call Lord and Savior, Christ Jesus. Advent includes the four Sundays preceding Christmas Day, that holiest of times when we celebrate the birth of our Messiah. It is a time to prepare our hearts and minds for the coming of the One long promised by a loving faithful God, a season filled with hope, joy, peace, and love. It is a time of year when the world seems a little kinder; when people seem more generous and caring about those whose lives are not as fortunate. It is also a time when people feel a real desire to hear the stories and sing the songs that are so much a part of Advent. There is nothing so moving as hearing the words of the Prophet Isaiah proclaiming the coming of the One who is Emmanuel, God with us. The haunting words and melody of "O Come O Come, Emmanuel" can move the soul to feel the anguish and hope of a people waiting for the promises of God to be fulfilled. There is a longing to be with other people of faith, to share in the preparation of Advent and the mystery and joyous wonder of the Christmas season.

As we enter the season of Advent I hope that you will make plans for yourself and your family and friends to join us in worship, as we begin a new liturgical year and a new ministry together. It will be a time for sharing, when you can get to know me and my wife, Kathy, and we can get

to know you, as well. It might be a time to get reacquainted with old friends and welcome new ones into the life of South Congregational.

I am really excited about starting my time as Pastor and Teacher with the people of South Congregational Church . I truly believe that a spirit of joy and celebration is the foundation upon which the church should, and must be built. All the works of the church (worship, prayer, study, stewardship, and mission) should be done joyfully. To put it very plainly – CHURCH SHOULD BE FUN! We can do the work to which are called; we can strive to follow the teachings of our Savior; we can live lives that exhibit who we are, and more importantly, whose we are; and we can do all this with hearts filled with joy. The church must be a place where people want to be, not a place where people feel they have to be. If you have not done so I would encourage you to view the sermon I delivered as a candidate for the position of pastor of South Congregational Church (on line at [www.southcongregationalchurch.org](http://www.southcongregationalchurch.org)). I hope that you will get a sense of how I view ministry and service to God and the Church.

I look forward to meeting each of you in the upcoming weeks as we begin what I pray will be a long and faithful ministry together.

Blessings and Peace,

Rev. Mark Milligan