

COMPREHENSIVE POSITION POSTING

SOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC KENNEBUNKPORT, MAINE

185-year-old church seeks a travel companion and guide to learn and grow spiritually with a congregation of New Englanders. Located in a vibrant and beautiful community, we are an active congregation searching for balance between comfortable traditions and the need to grow and change. We seek a minister to join with us to fulfill God's purpose both as individuals and as a community of believers.

- ◆ The congregation desires a minister who can inspire and challenge us with sermons that are spiritually based and relevant to our lives as Christians. The ability of our new minister to create a worship experience of celebration, music, community, and reverence is very important to us. There is a desire to stretch beyond what is safe and comfortable.
- ◆ South Church is committed to being an open, welcoming, and affirming community whose words and actions are aligned with the mission statement we have formally adopted. We have opened the door to inclusivity but have not yet explored the depths of what is required. We are searching for a minister who will help us to fully understand and live up to our stated mission.
- ◆ We are dedicated to learning and growing spiritually. Our settled minister must be able to work in partnership with staff and volunteers to nurture and expand religious and spiritual education. Our youth ministry is an urgent priority and will require reinvigorating programs for children, teens, and families. Meanwhile, our adult members thirst for opportunities for spiritual growth and knowledge.
- ◆ South Church has a history of reaching outward locally, nationally, and internationally. We are looking for three areas of competency in a minister:
 - Ability to value and support the work of individual members who are responding to neighbors in need and/or who are working on social justice issues;
 - Ability to identify areas of need or injustice and initiate a response;
 - Willingness to work as an interfaith collaborator.
- ◆ It is an expectation that our minister will be an active and visible member of the larger community. Our church family is broader than our membership. Therefore, we look to the minister to continue our long-term tradition of providing wise counsel, visitations, or other support in times of need to all those in our community, not just our members.
- ◆ Our ideal candidate will have experience as a skilled administrator and supervisor. Applicant must possess a willingness to work within South Church's organizational

framework: a structure that relies on dedicated and skilled committee members and democratic processes.

- ◆ Communication with members and use of technology is a work in progress. Our settled minister will need to be committed to leveraging electronic tools and more contemporary approaches to communication internally and externally.

We welcome applicants from anywhere, although it's important to know that in Maine we are blessed with four seasons. Our new minister need not love all four, but must be willing and able to appreciate the beauty and challenges each season has to offer.

PROSPECTUS

The Community

Kennebunk and Kennebunkport are distinct coastal communities both separated and joined by the Kennebunk River that runs between them. We are small towns of about 11,500 and 4,000, respectively. While sharing churches, schools, and community resources, each town has its own character and government. Both towns are largely suburban with some rural sections, but we are not far from large metropolitan areas. Portland is 25 miles to the north with a metro population of over 250,000. Boston is 85 miles south.

Kennebunk was first settled in 1621 and Kennebunkport was founded in 1653. Rivers and the ocean have always been central to the well-being of our communities. Shipbuilding, shipping, fishing, and manufacturing built the early wealth in our towns. Tourism - based on the overall beauty of the area, art galleries, beaches, and restaurants - has taken its place. There is an active small business community.

Our towns have very strong communities. The school system is known for academic excellence. There is a K-5 elementary school in Kennebunkport and two elementary schools, a middle school, and high school in Kennebunk. Both towns contain fine examples of early American architecture and offer many opportunities to enjoy music and the arts. Two parks and recreation departments offer programs for toddlers to seniors. There are opportunities for walking on sidewalks, wooded pathways, and



South Congregational Church & Kennebunkport Village

sandy beaches. Swimming, boating, surfing, and fishing are popular activities and are easily accessible. The newly built Waterhouse Center on Main Street in Kennebunk has an outdoor ice-skating rink in winter and space for concerts, craft fairs, and pickle ball in spring, summer, and early fall.

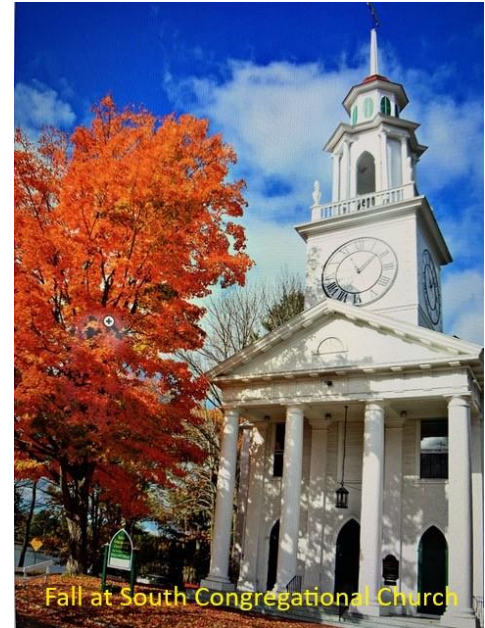
While a near-idyllic place to live, there are concerns and challenges here too. As part-time residents and retirees have moved in from more expensive areas, housing prices have risen, and lack of affordable housing has become an issue.

Younger families are finding it financially challenging to live here. Many families who have lived here for generations can no longer keep their family homes or pass them on to their children. Consequently, our population has greyed and enrollment in our schools has been declining. While average incomes in the area are high for Maine, there are a significant number of residents living in poverty and too many families experience food insecurity.

Our two towns are almost entirely white. We have been insulated from the rich opportunities and challenges experienced by more racially and culturally diverse communities. Our school district was recently shocked by a few racially motivated incidences at the middle and high schools. As a result, the school and wider community have worked with the Department of Justice and with the Center for Restorative Justice. Residents, including many from the faith communities, are working with the school system and within the wider community to address the impact of white privilege, racism, and other injustices. Becoming a more open and welcoming community for potential residents and tourists has been a focus.

Congregation and Building

Our church was founded largely by women in 1820. The church was constructed by shipbuilders in 1824. On the river green adjoining the church, ships were built and launched to sail to faraway places. Our church building can be easily seen across the



tidal basin of the Kennebunk River and is an architectural gem. Its steeple presents a powerful message that we are a beacon of light, safety, and spirituality.

Additional properties include two other structures: The Community House across the street from the church houses our Sunday school and is a gathering place for all kinds of church and community activity. The parsonage, a traditional Federal style New England home, is a five-minute walk from the church. Having a parsonage ensures comfortable and spacious housing for our settled minister in an area where housing can be expensive.



Our Profile Report provided us with a snapshot of our past and present. We look forward to working collaboratively with a settled minister skilled in creating a shared vision and realizing our potential as a congregation.

Common threads and themes from the Profile Report reflect what we value:

- meaningful worship on Sunday;
- opportunities for creating relevant connections between the Word of God and personal experiences and complex issues;
- education and spiritual growth for all ages (with children and teens a priority);
- alignment with our mission statement;
- outreach and commitment to social justice;
- maintaining traditions and honoring history.



Music is also highly valued and central to church life. We enjoy a full choir, chime choir, talented music director, young musicians, guest musicians, and a magnificent organ. There is a desire for more musical diversity and inclusive language. The church values a collaborative relationship between the music director and minister.



Characteristics of the Congregation: Our Profile Report reflects commonality in many areas, as well as significant diversity of thought. The largest group of respondents is older members who regularly attend worship services on Sunday and have generously volunteered over the years. Collectively, these respondents provide historical insight and wisdom and shine a light on the richness and rewards of the traditions that have served us well. Some within our congregational have preferences that are weighted towards tradition more than change. Others yearn for more diversity in all areas of church life and seek alignment with our mission. We celebrate this diversity of thought and recognize the importance of having a settled minister with the skills and experience to help us navigate these inherent challenges and opportunities.

Our Minister: Gifts and Skills / Qualities and Character

Since 1955, two full-time ministers (1955-1989 and 1991-2018) worked in partnership with members to carry out the work of the Church. While there have been inevitable differences and challenges, we have been profoundly grateful for this 65-year journey as we worked together through prayer, patience, talent, collaboration, and love.

The congregation values the ability of the minister to attract new members and broaden connections to the larger community, while supporting existing relationships within the Church. In addition, we desire a settled minister who will be a wise counselor and guide, as well as a teacher and skilled preacher. Qualities that are important include: integrity, compassion, warmth, sense of humor, and alignment in thought and action with South Church's mission statement. Strong administration skills coupled with a respect for our democratic processes within the Church are also important.



The church is less united with where it wants to go and what changes are needed than it is with where it has been. The settled minister will be instrumental in helping us build a bridge from the past to our future so that we can fulfill God's purpose for us as individuals and as a community.

Other Points of Interest and Resources

- South Congregational Church, Kennebunkport, Maine, [website](#).
- The book [Whence We Came: A History of the South Congregational Church in Kennebunkport](#) by Jacques M. Downs provides a comprehensive history of our Church.
- Chamber of Commerce of Kennebunk/Kennebunkport/Arundel [website](#) has useful information for tourists and potential residents.
- [Kennebunk Farmers' Market](#).

- Each town has a public library that offers a range of services: [Kennebunk Free Library](#) and [Kennebunkport Graves Memorial Public Library](#)
- Numerous local and regional banks and credit unions have branches in the area, such as: [Camden National Bank](#), [Kennebunk Savings](#), [Northeast Credit Union](#), [People's United Bank](#) and [TD Bank](#)
- Kennebunk is the headquarters for [Tom's of Maine](#).
- [The University of New England](#) has a campus in Biddeford, a bordering community, which includes an osteopathic medical school.
- There is significant public open space in our towns. [Wells Reserve at Laudholm](#), [Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge](#), [Kennebunk Land Trust](#), and [Kennebunkport Conservation Trust](#) are open to the public and are local gems.
- Thousands of visitors come to the area from spring through mid-December.
- [Kennebunkport's Christmas Prelude is among the top-rated community events in the country](#).
- York County has been enriched by the addition of immigrants, primarily from the Middle East and Africa. A local church has formed care teams to welcome and support these neighbors. Some members of South Church are actively involved in [Welcoming Immigrants Our New Neighbors](#).
- Political affiliations are as follows:

	% Democrat	% Green	% Republican	% Unenrolled
Kennebunk	27	2	29	42
Kennebunkport	29	2	37	31

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