

With much pride and joy I'm announcing today that Open Door this year was granted the \$50 thousand sabbatical grant from the Lilly Foundation. This was a collaboration by Rev. Miller, Richard, Sara, Amy, and Jolene. Although we have had to decline accepting the grant because of my departure, this church can be very proud and gratified by the leadership and work that went into the submission and award of these funds. Furthermore, when Richard spoke to the Lilly Foundation program director Dr. Saler this week, he affirmed and complimented us both that our application had been so well put together, leading to the granting of the award, and also that we had been ethical and prompt in notifying them and declining the award, rather than using the award and then immediately having a change of leadership. This continues to demonstrate openly that Open Door is and is recognized as a body that models ethical choices and honest communication.

Dr. Saler wished us well in our transition and made it clear that declining the award this year makes the church immediately eligible to apply in the future, and he encouraged us to do so.

As we tend to ethical choices and honest communication, I want to respond to the many folks who have expressed concern over what relationship is possible between congregants and me as we transition. Of course, Corrine is available as ever as someone in relationship with each of you in her own right as a friend and support and as someone who values and will continue to want your love and support.

Some folks have suggested that no one may be in contact with me for a year after I step down, but if you read the material that was suggested by MCC and included in the notice of my departure, it will be clear that the primary concern is for appropriate bonding with and pastoring by the incoming leadership. I will no longer be your pastor, I will no longer advise or comment on the direction of the congregation, and those needs for spiritual support and companionship with you during crises and momentous life events will appropriately be provided by the new interims and settled pastors. And, the sabbath was made for the people, not the people for the sabbath. The guidelines are intended to support and strengthen the church, not to hurt us. There is no indication to me in the language provided, nor from consultation with my peers and colleagues that any moratorium will be required. I look forward to your kitten videos and song picks on Facebook.

The Board of Directors has been working between board meetings and between Sundays to talk and prepare for the changes ahead. Please bring your questions and needs and hopes to any of them and expect updates going forward. Please prayerfully consider becoming a board member or pastoral search committee member in the coming months.