

Presbytery of Lake Michigan
Commission on Ministry
Recommendation for Joint Witness Ministry
Jackson Westminster/UCC
June 11, 2024

The Commission on Ministry is bringing forward a motion to approve the Joint Witness between Jackson Westminster Presbyterian Church of Jackson, MI and St. John's United Church of Christ of Jackson, MI. The two congregations are entering into this relationship after a two and a half year process of discernment with the Commission on Ministry and an extensive mission study. Through their hard work and prayer, the congregations have concluded that they feel called to form a partnership that will enable them to fulfill God's purpose: sharing the good news of the Gospel, being God's voice, hands, and feet in the world today, being God's light that shines through the darkness, and loving, living, & sharing with, and caring for their neighbors. The judiciary organization for St. John's United Church of Christ has approved this relationship with enthusiasm and full support.

They have developed a Joint Witness Agreement and Cost Sharing Agreement, both of which have been approved by COM and the Presbytry of Lake Michigan Trustees. As outlined in these agreements, the congregations will have one worship service on Sundays that are led by the pastors of both congregations. Each congregation will have a part-time pastor who will be responsible for collaborating in worship leadership and provide pastoral care and missional leadership to their respective congregations. Westminster Presbyterian Church has called the Rev. Jake Kaufman to be their interim minister during this transition period. Rev. Kaufman is an experienced interim minister who is excited and open to working with the pastor of St. John's United Church of Christ as they form and live into the new ministry between the congregations.

Additionally, Westminster plans to sell their building and move into the building of St. John's UCC. Westminster has had discussions with the Presbytery's Board of Trustees about this sale. The COM's understanding is that the proceeds of the sale of the building is to be used for mission, ministry, outreach, and staffing for Westminster. No monies are to be spent on capital improvements for the building of St. John's United Church of Christ of Jackson, MI except for possible purchase of signage. A request for monies by the congregation will be submitted to the Commission on Ministry.

The motion on the floor is to approve the Joint Witness between Westminster Presbyterian Church of Jackson, MI and St. John's United Church of Christ of Jackson, MI.

A motion prevailed to recommend to the Presbytery at the stated meeting of June 11, 2024 that the Joint Witness between Westminster Presbyterian Church of Jackson, MI and St. John's United Church of Christ of Jackson, MI be approved.