



Reverend Stanley Jenkins
and his wife, Reverend Leslie Mott

*"I believe that in Grace
we are set free to be the people
God created us to be . . .
and that this freedom calls us
to seek the freedom of all
God's children, to guard and
protect their dignity,
both materially and spiritually,
as creatures created
in the image of God."*

—Rev. Stanley Jenkins

*"I believe deeply that the Word
blossoms in us and delivers us
from the paralysis which keeps us
silent in the face of oppression,
injustice, and indifference."*

—Rev. Stanley Jenkins



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Faith • Community • Compassion • Justice • Service

Your Pastor Nominating Committee
is pleased (*thrilled!*)
to present its candidate for
Senior Pastor/Head of Staff
at Market Square Presbyterian Church



*The Reverend
Stanley Jenkins*



Who is Rev. Jenkins?

Education and Experience

A Minister of Word and Sacrament ordained by the PC(USA) in 1988, Rev. Jenkins holds a BA from Oberlin College and a Master's of Divinity from Union Theological Seminary in New York City. He has also pursued graduate work in theology at the University of Chicago Divinity School.

Rev. Jenkins currently serves as the Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Lansing, Michigan. Like Market Square, his current church is located in its state's capital city, and its membership numbers are in the same general category as ours (251-400 members). Prior to going to Lansing in 2013, he served (at different times) four other churches as Pastor in settings that ranged from the town of Waterloo, New York, to suburban churches in New Jersey and Illinois, to 15 years in the very urban setting of Elmhurst (Queens), New York.

His service to the greater church includes committee work in the Presbyteries of New York and of Lake Michigan. In his current work in Lansing, he is active in several organizations engaged in community work with pastors and congregations from both predominately white and predominately African-American churches.

Pastoral Interests and Accomplishments

Preaching, Teaching, and Worship

- Rev. Jenkins loves preaching and teaching, and in fact develops his weekly sermons after in-depth, weekly Bible study discussions with a group of parishioners. In his words, **"I value preaching as an ongoing three-way conversation between the preacher, the congregation, and the Holy Spirit."**
- Asked how to build a healthy congregational community, he said that **"Worship is the bedrock. The purpose of worship is to help facilitate an encounter with God, to put us in the presence of the holy."** And within worship, he feels that music - which he calls a form of prayer - is foundational.

- His preferred worship style is traditional, like ours. Citing the turmoil of our times, he believes that in periods of change there's a need for stability and the rootedness of tradition. He is quick to point out, though, that tradition is a resource, not an end to itself, and should never be rote.

Community Outreach and Social Justice

- In Queens, in a neighborhood considered "the most diverse zip code in America," his church, which had members from every continent but Antarctica, operated a community garden to feed the hungry in the community.
- In Lansing, he and his church were involved in lobbying against gun violence.
- He arranged a public apology to the Black community for American slavery.
- He established ties with the Black clergy community, which eventually led to the creation of a half-million dollar fund comprising donations from white churches for the purpose of grants and scholarships to Black recipients, as a symbolic and tangible attempt at reparations.
- His church houses an organization that provides programs for former convicts, and another that holds classes to help immigrants who have aged out of high school to achieve high school diplomas.
- He has established ties with clergy from a wide array of denominations and religions.
- During the pandemic, the church allowed its building, a trusted place in a skeptical community, to be used for the administration of vaccines.
- He personally and successfully lobbied the Michigan legislature for \$500,000 to renovate the church for greater community service, in recognition of the ongoing value of its mission work.

How did we choose him?

Rev. Jenkins was on our short list from the beginning of the discernment process, when we quickly identified him out of the 46 candidates we considered over the last year. We were impressed by his credentials - his education and experience - on the first pass, and were intrigued by the social activism so evident in his work in Lansing.

So we went online and listened to his sermons - and found them both challenging and eloquent. We twice interviewed him via Zoom, and asked hard questions. We talked about theology, how to build community in a congregation, how prayer works, what we are called to do, and how to respond to the call.

We brought him and his wife, the Rev. Leslie Mott, to Harrisburg after the second Zoom interview. Leslie, who currently serves as the interim executive of the Detroit Presbytery, feels called to serve in interim pastoral and administrative settings, of which there is generally no shortage in our area of the country. In addition, our location suits their desire to be closer to Leslie's family in Washington and Philadelphia.

For their visit, we planned a whirlwind of activities over a two-day period: one-on-one interviews for Rev. Jenkins with staff, two long group dinners with all eight of us on the PNC, a two-hour "fit review" meeting for him and PNC members with representatives of the Presbytery's Committee on Ministry, a full tour of the church building, and opportunities to interact with us in small groups. Some of us walked with him and his wife along the river. Others drove them to and from our dinners. Three of our group accompanied him on a tour of the Capitol.

In other words, we looked at Rev. Jenkins from every angle we could, and we liked what we saw.

Why did we choose him?

Our initial attraction to Rev. Jenkins was based on his strong sermons, which move fluidly from scriptural text to the circumstances in which we live; his ability to inspire and join his congregation in social ministries relevant to God's call, through Christ; and his respect for the kind of worship service and music ministry that are such a part of MSPC's culture.

As we got to know him, we appreciated his personal openness and lack of pretense, his intellect, a love of life and people, his sense of humor, and his ability to meet with people and put them at ease, which we saw through his interactions with staff as well as ourselves.

We believe he will challenge us, and love us, and bring us to better love one another.