



ST. JOHN UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

1010 South Park Boulevard • Freeport, Illinois 61032

July 20, 2016

Dear Friend,

I am delighted to write about Jim Molina with whom I worked closely for over two years and with whom I share a close friendship today.

Jim was the Minister of Music and Media at First Congregational Church of Downers Grove, IL, a congregation of 800 members with an active congregational life, where I served as Interim Sr. Minister. The congregation held music as a central value and held contemporary and traditional services. Jim had responsibility for the contemporary service and participated in the traditional service when needed.

During the interim transitional journey many changes took place, among them was a single summer worship service where traditional and contemporary were merged under Jim's leadership. The experience was so transforming and inspiring that since that autumn one eclectic/pluralistic service continues to be the source of growth and spiritual nurture for the congregation.

On any given Sunday our worship experience was enriched with a variety of musical expressions including choirs, classical pieces, ethnic hymns and contemporary songs, drums and band, reflecting the true eclectic hues of our world. We reveled in worship experiences that integrated word and music, liturgy and song, silence and sound.

Jim is a visionary who looks at the big picture. As the church shifted during the interim journey so did his job description. He accepted the challenge and grew with it, and brought the music ministry along with him. Our voice choir received voice training, our bells received additional instruction. The music ministry continued to grow. The Arts, including a contemporary band and drama, visual arts as well as technology and media, all part of Jim's responsibility, thrived.

Jim's ministry is transformational and he does not have "a box." If plan A does not work, he will come up with an equally effective plan B. If an idea has never been tried Jim will give it his best and most excellent. The two years of my interim transitional ministry, especially in worship revitalization, were a success because of Jim's gift in creating integrated experiences of worship.

A superb musician, classically trained pianist with remarkable gifts for piano, sound, harmony and composition, Jim led our music ministry with excellence, spirit and joy. During his tenure the music

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To be a Sacred Place to Inspire Faith and Nurture Compassion

ministry not only grew but also diversified reaching beyond just traditional choirs, and a contemporary band to a variety of ensembles, including visual arts as well as creation of sacred space.

With a keen eye for aesthetics and a deep sense for the vision and mission of the church Jim recreated the congregation's website. With collaboration and a team spirit he continued to refashion worship space. Guided by the vision for the future of the church Jim his most excellent, in his eyes, the only appropriate response to God's gifts to him.

A person of deep spiritual commitment and a sense of calling, Jim's leadership is filled with true spirit and exuberant energy. He is blessed with a bright mind, a generous heart, a creative spirit, and a vast compassionate worldview. He is truly a minister who works hard and smart, he is organized and dependable, with excellent work ethic and personal integrity.

Among the many ministers of music with whom I have worked, I can say without a hint of reservation that Jim the best. You will be blessed by his ministry with and among you.

Sincerely,

Nayiri Karjian,
Interim Sr. Minister
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