



THE COMMUNITY LEARNING CHANNEL

September 30, 2019

Dear friends on this journey,

We here at The Community Learning Channel have been blessed to work side by side with South Presbyterian Church (SPC) and Firebird Spirit for the last three years to build innovative models of ministry. Our role is to gather, curate and share knowledge emerging from the Acts of Faith – equipping leaders with community management tools and surfacing and sharing the creative capacity of communities we serve together.

Working with SPC and Firebird Spirit has grown my enthusiasm for the future of the church. As a colleague in ministry, over the last decade, I have watched with interest as this once “dying church” turned a corner and now bursts with energy and vitality. Their approach contains no gimmicks. They have been on a thoughtful, faithful and courageous journey – first intentionally deepening the spiritual life of the community, then listening to the voice of God (“put us where you want us and tell us what to do”) and ultimately embodying the gospel in the world – in lay led (and occasionally clergy led) Acts of Faith all over Rochester.

How is it that a church that once had a couple dozen people gathering weekly, now actively engages more than 1800 different individuals in a year? Come to a retreat or visioning session and you will find out. Spending time with this community is fun (yes, church meetings can be fun). Sit in a meeting and you will see that the members of South are on fire for their own callings because they are supported in discerning and achieving their own visions. In any SPC gathering, there is energy everywhere. People that sat in the pews for decades are bouncing out of their seats to share the ways they are bringing the life of the gospel to the world around them.

With them, I have learned that there is a pathway, rooted in the scriptures, to this kind of transformation. Having lived this path and experienced its fruits, I am not surprised that SPC leaders have now been called to share their approach, guidance and support with the larger church. They know the good news in their bones – that God is real and the church is alive. Responding to this call, they are now launching Firebird Spirit – a ministry to churches that are ready for their own transformation.

The truth is, if your community listens deeply to God, your transformation may look very different. Your calling is unique. Your context is unique. The experienced and visionary team at Firebird Spirit understands that. While your path will take its own turns, with God there is a path to life. The leaders at Firebird Spirit are ready to work with your reality and listen with you to God’s leading. In addition to wisdom and discernment, Firebird Spirit brings a treasure trove of tools and methods that help structure a way of moving forward into the unknown.

I am so glad that you have encountered this special team. Their energy is contagious. If you are ready to move to the next level, reach out to them. You will not find a better partner.

Your sister in beloved community,

Rev. Rachel A. McGuire, PhD

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The Community Learning Channel is a program of Innovative Models for Community Learning Inc.

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