

Catch the Spark 3  
Ken McFayden  
March 6-7, 2015

# **Are You on Fire?**

## **Leading Adaptively in a New Day**

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# Reflections on Friday Evening

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# **When the Fire has Died Down: A New Mourning**

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# Family Campground at Presbyterian Point

The morning after...

- Fire replaced with charred wood, deadened coals, and ashes
- A few pieces of wood in the area of the fire circle
- The fire circle has lost the energy from the previous night... the fire, the people
- An emptier place

# Family Campground at Presbyterian Point

- Will we have another campfire tonight?
- Will people come back?
- Can we re-create the experience from last night? Maybe it will be *even* better...

# The Morning After: What to Sing?

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(song, *Babylon*)

# The Morning After: What to Sing?

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(song, *This is the Day*)

# A Smoldering Church?: Where's the Fire Now?

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# When the Fire has Died Down: So Many Losses...

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From membership growth to  
stagnant or declining membership

# When the Fire has Died Down: So Many Losses...

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From new buildings to  
deteriorating facilities,  
or out of date with our needs

# When the Fire has Died Down: So Many Losses...

From growing programs to  
programs looking for people,  
especially “young” people

# When the Fire has Died Down: So Many Losses...

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From growing numbers of pastors and staff,  
to part-time positions...  
and eliminated positions

# When the Fire has Died Down: So Many Losses...

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From an abundance of energetic volunteers to  
a shortage of people to fill existing needs,  
much less to start new things

# When the Fire has Died Down: So Many Losses...

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Where have the children, teens,  
and families gone?

# When the Fire has Died Down: So Many Losses...

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Involvement and commitment  
of members: the church  
as second choice?

# When the Fire has Died Down: So Many Losses...

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Money... for buildings and personnel  
and programs and missions...



# When the Fire has Died Down: So Many Losses...

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Mission—a lack of funding, personnel,  
and connection

# When the Fire has Died Down: So Many Losses...

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Our presence in the community:  
How confident do we feel?  
How confident do we look?

# When the Fire has Died Down: So Many Losses...

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From healthy church communities  
to congregations that struggle and  
often experience more conflict

# The Mourning After...

- Fire replaced with charred wood, deadened coals, and ashes
- A few pieces of wood in the area of the fire circle
- The fire circle has lost the energy from the previous night... the fire, the people
- An emptier place

# The Mourning After...

- Can we recapture the fire from last night?
- Will people come back?
- Can we re-create the experience from the past? [Maybe it will be *even* better...?]

# The Mourning After: What to Sing?

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(song, *Babylon*)

# The Mourning After: What to Sing?

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(song, *This is the Day*)

# In Small Groups

- What losses are having the most significant impact on your congregation?
- What effects are these losses having on your congregation? On its members? On its leaders?
- What song is your congregation most likely to sing at this time in its life?



# Time for a Break

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# Church: It is Mo(u)rning

Some signs of unhealthy mourning

# Some Signs of Unhealthy Mourning

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Discounting the value of the past,  
or acting as if the past is irrelevant

# Some Signs of Unhealthy Mourning

Ignoring the impact of these losses  
on our lives, individually and  
congregationally

# Some Signs of Unhealthy Mourning

Displacing the anger that naturally comes with these losses, and our grieving, onto members and leaders

# Some Signs of Unhealthy Mourning

Holding on tightly to what we have left,  
and circling the wagons  
(or enclosing the campfire circle)

# Some Signs of Unhealthy Mourning

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Threatening to leave if  
we do not get our way

# Some Signs of Unhealthy Mourning

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Clinging to what is lost and gone



# Some Signs of Unhealthy Mourning

Trying to re-light “ashes”  
*(or attempting to reincarnate our  
beloved leaders and programs of the past  
in our current leaders and programs)*

# Some Signs of Unhealthy Mourning

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Blaming culture for the struggles  
the church is facing

# Some Signs of Unhealthy Mourning

Blaming weather conditions for the challenges we are experiencing in starting (or sustaining) a fire

# Some Signs of Unhealthy Mourning

Fantasizing that if only we can find the right leaders, we can rebuild the “fires” of the past and those good “campfire” feelings

# Some Signs of Unhealthy Mourning

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Blaming members for not being involved or committed enough

# Some Signs of Unhealthy Mourning

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Thinking we can find new firewood  
right next to the fire circle

# Some Signs of Unhealthy Mourning

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Being stuck, afraid to venture into unknown areas in search of new firewood

# Some Signs of Unhealthy Mourning

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Grieving as those who have no hope



# Church: It is Mo(u)rning

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Some signs of healthy mourning

# Some Signs of Healthy Mourning

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Appreciating the value of the past, and  
understanding the attachments  
people have to the past

# Some Signs of Healthy Mourning

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Inviting people to name their losses,  
and honoring the impact these losses  
have had and are having on them

# Some Signs of Healthy Mourning

Accepting the anger, and a wide range of feelings, that come with loss, particularly in relation to those people, places and things to which we are attached

# Some Signs of Healthy Mourning

Working intently to let go of those things  
over which we have no control,  
and resisting the temptation to live in  
a survival mode that closes us to others  
(*and closes others to us*)

# Some Signs of Healthy Mourning

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Accepting that, with changing circumstances,  
the church will change

# Some Signs of Healthy Mourning

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Letting go of what is lost and gone—  
It is lost; it is gone

# Some Signs of Healthy Mourning

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Exploring ways in which we may relate to our cultural contexts differently



# Some Signs of Healthy Mourning

Understanding and accepting the complexities of leadership—  
and of followership—and  
being willing to learn new ways together

# Some Signs of Healthy Mourning

Appreciating that members,  
and friends of the church,  
have many commitments—  
And exploring together how to  
nurture faith and discipleship

# Some Signs of Healthy Mourning

Being willing to go out,  
further away from our comfort zones,  
in order to build relationships  
with others  
*(not, if we build it, they will come)*

# Some Signs of Healthy Mourning

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Grieving as those who **have** hope

# Some Signs of Healthy Mourning

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With hope, the capacity to dream again

# Some Signs of Healthy Mourning

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With hope, the emergence of  
new sources of energy

# The Crux of Healthy Mourning

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The capacity to attach anew

# In Small Groups

- How would you describe the state of your congregation as it experiences losses and mourning?
- How are congregational leaders and members caring for each other amid loss and mourning?
- How and where do you perceive God at work in the midst of your losses and mourning?



# A New Mourning?

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(song, *Kum ba yah*)