

From the Desk of Rev. Tara Spuhler McCabe
Director of Congregational Development and Mission
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Greetings People,

This summer I participated in Wind-Down Wednesdays at the National Cathedral in Washington, DC. I admit it, I first thought I heard wine-down Wednesday. There was no wine. There were spiritual encounters throughout the Cathedral that was open to the public (for a small entrance fee). I hope to share more formally what this whole experience was like but for now, I was deeply moved by how the Cathedral was able to take advantage of their strengths and cultivate an evening for four weeks straight so that ANYONE could engage in spiritual practices as a community. We all started out as strangers and in our breath came together as one. It was attended very well (and they made some money)!

My biggest take-a-way is that each congregation **DESERVES** to stretch with their **STRENGTHS** by cultivating “warm friendly encounters.” (This is the top ministry recommendation out of MissionInsite - American Beliefs Study). Your Presbytery, the Equipping Congregations Committee, and my desk have the resources you can utilize so that your congregations can grow...in spirit, in practice, in discipleship, and in membership.

Grants have been utilized to strengthen the impact of our congregations in Northern Virginia as a community through Virginians Organized for Interfaith Community Engagement (aka VOICE). Their collective actions and witness are deepening the supports needed to curtail the teen mental health crisis we are in the midst of today (see Act on Addiction Summit flyer in this TM).

Grants have been utilized to support Geneva Presbyterian Church as they strengthened a playground ministry to welcome families with children of differing abilities into the church and connect to outside organizations as safe spaces that can build up trust and faith! These grants did not only come out of a good idea. They have been organized, practiced, and discerned out of authentic strengths within each congregation.

Whether it is Wind-Down or Wind-Up, the resources are available to support your leadership to stretch with your **STRENGTHS**: small, medium, and big. You deserve to be energized as leaders in our churches so that you are able to encounter the amazing presence of Jesus Christ and invite others to join you! Take advantage of the Ministry Incubator sessions. Look for the up-coming webinars on Congregational Vitality. Most importantly join us in-person at our upcoming Presbytery Meeting as we engage with one another on prayer, discussion, and discernment.

Peace and Courage,

Rev. Tara Spuhler McCabe
