

**Annual Conference 2018 Narrative Experience
Equipping Vital Congregations
Friday, June 1, 2018**

**Jason Moore, Technical Director
Diane K, Floor Director**

:20-30 Bumper Video

*(Unveil new logo, new center name, & introduce metaphor)
Include how GEC started, two conferences coming together, Missional Board*
[Graphic of logo on screen]

1:30 Drama – stage left

(Friends sitting fireside building a fire with the tinderbox)
[Graphic of Pennsylvania wilderness on screen]

[Three friends sitting in camp chairs surround what will become a campfire. They have backpacks, camping gear, hot dogs, marshmallows, and other camp items with them.]

Daniel: Ah...gotta love the great outdoors! Can't wait to get this fire going. I love the smell of fire, the warmth it gives off, and I'm ready for some roasted hot dogs and marshmallows.

Jen: I'm right there with you on all counts, but I can't help but remember the last time you tried to start the fire, you needed a can of gasoline and a flame thrower, and you still couldn't get it going.

Kris: Yeah, and prior to that you were rubbing two sticks together for an hour and a half, disproving the saying "where there's smoke, there're fire."

Daniel: Alright... I'm not a firebug. You don't have to rub it in.

Jen: Well, you're not as bad as Kris. The last time we were out here, he was trying to start the fire with a magnifying glass... wait for it... AT NIGHT... with a flashlight.

Kris: True... so true. I guess I'm not on Smokey the Bear's most wanted list.

Daniel: Yeah me neither, but Jen, you're not exactly an Eagle Scout yourself.

Jen: This is true... but since the last time we were out here, I've done my homework. I've learned that getting a fire going requires certain tools and conditions. With a little effort, it's not so hard to get a fire started, keep it going and maintained AND even make it bigger - in a safe way of course.

Daniel: Kris, Call Smokey the Bear, we've got an expert here.

Kris: On it!

Jen: I'm serious. Tonight is going to be different. No more struggling to get the fire going. I've got a secret weapon.

[Jen goes to her backpack and pulls out a tinderbox. Daniel & Kris look on with eager anticipation]

Kris: Woah, what's that?

Daniel: A shoe box? Did you bring special shoes to start the fire?

Jen: No... This.... this is a tinderbox. It's a toolbox for starting fires. Everything we need is contained within. I've studied, practiced, and now it's time to get this fire going.

[All three approach the fire ring, and get down on their knees around the fire. One adds kindling, the others adds larger wood. Jen pulls flint from the tinderbox, and strikes it. The fire (fan with fabric) is turned on.]

Jen: ...And we have fire.

Daniel & Kris: Impressive (in Unison)

[Lights down stage left]

2:00 Spoken Intro TINDER BOX 1 – center stage

(Introduce Tinder Box)

[Graphic of Tinderbox logo on screen]

Good morning, friends. I'm Kay Kotan, **[Graphic of Kay with name on screen]** director for the newly named "Office for Equipping Vital Congregations", formerly Growing Effective Churches, and I'm excited to tell you about all of the great opportunities we have to set our ministries here in the Susquehanna Conference on fire.

How many of you have been on a campout like our friends over there and when it's time to start the fire, you just can't get it going? Or how many of you got it going, only to see it fade out to nothing after a time? How many of you saw your fire stay lit and even grow to the point where you had to back off because the heat was so intense?

Over the next hour, we're going to stoke the fire and share with you how the Equipping Vital Congregations can help you set your ministry ablaze.

We didn't have experienced fire builders.... Not all fires are built the same (spirit/permission of experimentation piece)

We, like our friends over at camp, have developed what we're calling a tinderbox. A tinderbox as you learned, is a toolbox for building fires. I've got one right here.

There are various compartments, all of which contain different tools to help you build a fire that will keep burning for a good long while. I want to share with you five tools that are contained within our Equipping Vital Congregations tinderbox.

Let's take a look at what's in the first compartment. We call this one **Consultation [Graphic on screen]**.

(Say a few words about what the consultation process looks like, what it is etc. This might also be where you introduce the idea of "the tinderbox process")

We are developing a robust consultation process that is having an incredible impact on the churches that are taking part in it. But you don't have to take my word for it.

[Kay walks over to stage left where two camp chairs are set up. The interviewee is already seated at the "camp".]

Let me introduce you to my friend Jan.

3:00 Interview – stage right
(one who experienced positive consultation)
[Rev Jan Hughes]

We'll conduct a pre-interview with questions prepared ahead of time and lightly scripted. Images of ministry being featured will appear on screen periodically throughout the interview.

Kay thanks Jan and asks audience to give a hand of thanks for what God's doing and gets up and walks back to center stage as left stage goes dark.

2:00 Spoken Intro to Coaching TINDER BOX 2 – stage right
(Introduce Tinder Box Tool Two: Coaching)

The second tool in the tinderbox is **Coaching**. **[Graphic on screen]**

(Say some things about coaching, how it works, what it looks like in Susquehanna Conference, etc.)

You might be thinking, "I'm pretty good at what I do. My church is healthy. It's growing. Why do I need a coach?"

Simply put, everyone needs a coach. Even the best of the best benefit from having coach. Let me invite you to listen to some of the most successful entrepreneurs reflect on the power and need for coaching.

2:00 Video – screen [video on screen]
(Power & Need for Coaching i.e. Bill Gates and others)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sx8Lhu8PVXs>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XLF90uwll1k>

1:00 Spoken Intro to small group curriculum TINDER BOX 3 – center stage
(Introduce Small Group Curriculum)

Did you know that as part of the Susquehanna Conference, you have access to a number of wonderful **Small Group Resources and Curricula**? **[Graphic on screen]** An important part of the work you all do happens at the small group level and we want to help you keep those fires burning as well.

Take a look at some of these great resources that are available at no cost to you, right now.

5:00 Spoken word intro to Small Group Curricula videos
[Videos on screen] – Screen
(Video of small group curriculum, Unpacking Faith Stories, and listing of other resources)

We are excited about offering these resources, and we hope you'll take advantage of them.

(spoken setups should be written/adlibbed before each video)

1:00 Workshops & General Tools B-Roll with Spoken Piece TINDERBOX 4 – /Center Stage
(Setting up Workshops and tools)

As we experienced in those opening moments, starting, maintaining and growing a fire isn't always easy. It's certainly not automatic.

As we peer into our tinderbox again, we find our fifth tool; **Workshops and General Tools [Graphic on screen]**.

The Office for Equipping Vital Congregations is pleased to offer many training opportunities and workshops throughout the year. We bring in a combination of outside speakers and in-conferences practitioners to bring you the best practices available.

Together we can learn how to better build, stoke, maintain and grow our fires.

3:00 Workshops & General Tools B-Roll with Spoken Piece TINDERBOX 5 – Screen/Center Stage

(Listing of workshops and tools and Jason's worship series)

On the screen behind me, you'll see video of some of the training events we've offered over the last year or so.

By a show of hands how many of you have been to an event in the last 12 months? That's great. If your hand didn't go up, I hope you'll make time this year to join us for a training event in your area.

Here are some of the opportunities we've offered in the last year and what's coming up this year:

List of events with brief descriptions:

- Simplified, Accountable Structure
- Necessary Nine
- Gear Up
- M3
- Coach Training

2:00 Spoken intro to New Places/People TINDERBOX 6 – Screen/Center Stage

(Introduction of Tinder Box Tool Five: New Places/People Four Strategies: fresh expressions, vital mergers, re-starts, and multi-site w/ three levels of interaction: Kindle, Spark & Ignite)

Anyone who loves to spend time in the great outdoors, knows the thrill of starting a new fire. We here in the Susquehanna Conference have a lot of excitement around the next tool in our Tinderbox. We call it **New Places for New People** **[Graphic on screen]**.

Four different strategies have been identified as our primary avenues to reach new people. We again are about trying new things and experimenting with new ideas. It's a new day and ministry happens in a variety of ways and contexts. We have to be flexible, adaptive and contextual in today's culture to reach new people. We can't be afraid to try. Failure is not bad, it is a wonderful learning opportunity.

This tool is all about starting new faith communities. We hope to set the area our conference represents ablaze with new faith communities, and people "on fire" for Jesus.

This tray within our tinderbox is divided into four sections - or strategies.

They are:

- 1.) **Fresh Expressions (starting an entirely new faith community from scratch)**
[Graphic build]
- 2.) **vital mergers (two or more churches coming together as one)** **[Graphic build]**
- 2.) **re-starts (a new faith community emerging from a congregation that has come to the end of its cycle)** **[Graphic build]**
- 3.) **multi-site (an existing congregation starting something new in other locations)**
[Graphic build]

There are three levels of engagement (or interaction with these three categories).

They are:

- 1.) **Kindle (learning what the possibilities are)**
- 2.) **Spark (deciding on which strategy is best for your congregation)**
- 3.) **Ignite (actively participating in the strategy)**

Let's return to campground for a moment and see how each of these scenarios might play out.

3:30 Fresh Expressions – Stage left

(new fire, trained, have resources)

[Three campers (not the same campers as before) are gathered around what will become a fire]

Daniel (with a different look): I can't believe we're doing this. It's finally time to make it happen!

Mindi: Yeah, and from the looks of it, nobody has ever built a fire here before. At least not like the one we're going to make.

Tim: As we hiked in, I noticed a few people who looked like they were cold and hungry. They need this fire we're about to build as much as we do. Can't wait to invite them over.

Mindi: No doubt!

Daniel: You know, it's crazy to think it, but we picked this very spot out six months ago to build our camp. I have to admit, I was so excited about starting a new fire, I was just about to start it in the very first place we found.

Tim: Yeah you pyro... take the matches away from him!

Mindi: He's not that bad... just eager to get things going.

Daniel: Thanks for having my back! Yeah, I was eager, but I realized somewhere along the way, that we had to find the right place to build the fire. And if the purpose is to share this fire with others, we had to build it somewhere where people would be.

Mindi: That's why building it near this path was so important.

Tim: It took a lot of hikes, scouting and research to find the right place.

Daniel: It paid off. And let's not forget all that we learned about fire making before we got here.

Mindi: The tinderbox is your friend!

Tim: You love that thing, don't you?

Mindi: Ha! Yeah, it's kind of amazing.

Daniel: Are you ready to do this?

Mindi: Yes. While this may be a new thing, we've done the work, practiced, prepared and even put together a little group to make this fire amazing.

Tim: I can't wait any longer. Let's go!

[The three move over to the fire area on their knees, assemble the fire components, and "start the fire". Once the fire is going, a few other "new people" enter and join the fire. Everyone shakes hands and greet on another. Lights down. Lights up center stage.]

1:00 Fresh Expressions Segue – Center Stage
(Segue from fresh expressions to vital mergers)

Some of the fires we're starting here are what we'd call Fresh Expressions. One of the ways we'll reach new people in new places is to walk the paths of our communities to find the best places and practices to invite people in to the warmth of the Spirit in their lives.

As we saw with our fresh expressions friends, our tendency is to want to jump in head first and start something new, but an intentional process, a time of preparation is needed to get a new fire going. As you reflect on what you've experienced today, some of you may be feeling called to start a *Fresh Expression* in your community.

Not all fires are started from scratch. Some fires burn brighter when they're brought together. Let's take a look at what else is happening around the fire tonight.

4:30 Fresh Expressions – Stage right
(Vital merger-leave 2 fires to start a new one)

[Two fires are burning next to each other each with two people surrounding each fire.]

Greg (fire one – on left): This has been a great fire. It has been going for a very long time. It's allowed us to stay warm, to keep our bellies full and provided a great place for people to gather.

Anna (fire one – on left): Yes, it has. I've been here almost the entire time the fire has been going here. Many people have come and gone, and this fire has served us well.

Greg: While the coals are still pretty warm, we're low on firewood and many of our friends aren't around to help us keep it going.

Anna: Yeah, I'm afraid if we don't get some more wood on that fire, it won't be long before this fire is gone.

Greg: I agree. It was a great fire, and I'd hate to see it go out, but I'm not sure what else we can do now.

Anna: Who knew one could have such deep feelings and thoughts about a fire?

Greg: Just go with it my friend! (becoming slightly self-aware of the fact that it's drama)

Anna: Truth is, we simply don't have the resources to keep this fire going anymore.

Greg: It's been a great fire and I don't think it has to die out. The coals are really good and hot.

[Greg & Anna freeze in place for a moment, as our focus shifts to Jeff and Hannah.]

Jeff: (fire two – right): Brrr... it is cold out here. This fire just isn't doing it anymore.

Hannah (fire two – right): Right. I have on two pairs of thermal underwear on under these clothes, and I'm freezing.

Jeff: The funny thing is, when we built this fire, it was so hot, I was nearly sweating to death. I couldn't get close.

Hannah: Layers my friend... you must layer when you go camping.

Jeff: Says the person wearing two pairs of thermal underwear. How do you shed those layers? On second thought, never mind.

Hannah: Where did everyone go by the way? I think this fire was much warmer when we had other people to help feed the fire.

Jeff: It wasn't too long ago that it was crowded around here. We expanded the ring at least a couple of times.

Hannah: Yes we did. The thing is, we have plenty of firewood, we just don't have anyone to help us keep this fire going. I mean... I'm nearly frozen solid, and don't move too fast.

Jeff: And some of our best fire stokers are gone. I'm not sure how much longer this thing can hold out.

[Anna & Greg overhear the conversation of Hannah & Jeff and approach them.]

Anna: Hello friends! Brisk night out here isn't it?

Jeff: Sure is. We were just saying how cold we were.

Greg: We had an amazing fire going, and while we've got hot coals, we're pretty much out of wood.

Hannah: We have the opposite problem. Our fire is nearly gone. Our coals aren't sustaining what we've built, and while we have plenty of firewood, we just can't seem to bring it back.

Anna: (to camper 1) Are you thinking what I'm thinking?

Greg: That we should have gone to a hotel?

Anna: No silly. Between the four of us, we could have a pretty amazing fire.

Hannah: (to Jeff) I have an idea.

Jeff: You want to put on a third pair of thermal underwear?

Hannah: No. We have what they lack, and we have what they need.

Jeff: Ohhhh...

All 4 say in unison: We were thinking...

How about we....

Jeff: What we mean to say is, what if we were to combine our efforts and make a new fire from what we both have right now.

Greg: Great minds think alike! Let's do it.

[Greg & Anna return to their fire with a shovel, and campers Hannah & Jeff pick up some logs and all four place the elements in a third space in the middle. The fire ignites. Additional campers come over to join the fire.]

1:00 Spoken word segue from Vital Mergers to Re-starts – Center Stage
(Segue from vital merger to re-start)

Some of us can remember the glory days when our sanctuaries were fill almost to capacity, and there was an energy and excitement each Sunday when it was time for worship. There are many reasons that a fire might begin to go out.

In our conference, we've taken the coals, firewood, and other elements from different congregations to create new vital ministries that burn brightly.

Still there are some situations where the fire has completed its cycle. The winds change, the paths become overgrown, and sometimes a once flourishing fire may completely go out.

Like a phoenix rising from the ashes, so are the churches we refer to as re-starts.

Let's return to the campground to see what that might look like.

3:00 Drama, Re-starts – Stage Left
(Re-start – ashes, seasoned wood)

[Two campers sit near what will become a fire. They have all of the materials to start a new fire.]

Tim: I'm itching to get this fire started. We've sat for what seemed like a very long time to build this fire here in this space.

Peggy: We have waited a while, but it was really important to let this place, and more importantly the wood rest so it could be seasoned.

Tim: Seasoned? I'd like to eat those seasoned bratwursts I brought along... like right now. But I need a fire for that.

Peggy: Not that kind of seasoning. Firewood, needs time to sit and rest in order to be receptive to the fire. A brand new tree and the wood from it won't burn.

Tim: Is your favorite holiday Arbor day? Who knows that kind of stuff?

Peggy: When the time came, I wanted to make sure this fire would ignite and stay lit for a very long time. This place has history. We didn't place these stones here. Someone else built the fires that have burned here for a very long time.

Tim: Yeah, this stone here has a date scratched onto it with some names. It's kind of cool to think that we are sitting here building a fire in this place where others have felt the warmth of previous fires.

Peggy: Yes, it is. The work of the people who prepared this place has saved us a lot of time and effort. In a way, they're part of what we're about to do here.

[While the previous line is spoken, Greg casually picks up a log.]

Tim: This is heavy (spoken as if it's a response to the previous line).

Peggy: What do you mean?

Tim: This log... it's heavy.

Peggy: Oh, I thought you meant... never mind.

Tim: Are you ready to restart this fire?

Peggy: Yes. Let's do it.

[The campers get on their knees, place logs in the fire and it ignites]

3:00 Spoken word Segue to Multi-site – Center Stage
(Segue from restart to multi-site)

It is hard to see one of our fires go out, but God has a way of doing a new thing in sacred spaces. We mourn those faith communities that come to the end of their lifecycle, but we honor and celebrate the ministries they make possible. New fires burn in places where old ones once thrived.

Our final strategy for making new fires is what we call multi-site. Let's see what that looks like:

4:00 drama, multi-site – stage right
(Multi-site- raging, hot fire w/fire carrier starting new fire)

[A fire is burning with 2-3 people standing around it feeling its warmth. It's almost too hot. Elsewhere on the stage are others who appear to be cold and hungry.]

Greg: Man, this fire is so hot, I can hardly stand it.

Anna: You said it. When you said bon fire you meant it. You could have maybe pulled back on the intensity a little?

Greg: Well it didn't always burn like this. It started off strong, and burned both brightly and dimly, but we've gotten pretty intentional about keeping it stoked. It's just taken off.

Anna: I'll say. I tried to roast a marshmallow and it liquefied in about 2 seconds.

Greg: Sorry about that.

Anna: Have you noticed that there are other people in the area that seem to be feeling the chill in the air? Others who look like they may be hungry?

Greg: Yeah. I have noticed that. We pretty much told everyone they can come over here and join us. Not sure what the holdup is.

Anna: Well some people may not feel comfortable with joining our camp. It's intimidating to jump right in, especially if this isn't their vibe.

Greg: Their vibe?

Anna: Have you heard Joe over there playing Kumbaya on his guitar? Some people are not going to join our fire with that kind of stuff going on.

Greg: I kind of like Joe's campy songs.

Anna: Of course, you do. I'm just saying it could be that or any number of other things that might keep people from joining us. Maybe instead of expecting them to come join us... we can take the fire to them. Maybe start another one somewhere else.

Greg: That's a great idea. We could find a vibe that works for them.

Anna: Seems to me that this fire is burning so brightly, there's no harm done in taking a log or two somewhere else to start a new fire.

Greg: Let's do it.

[Greg and Anna pick up a log with tongs and approach the cold/hungry folks and set the log down starting a new fire.]

1:00 Spoken Segue to four strategies conversation – center stage

(Wrap up the four strategies and introduce video clip)

Four strategies – may be more, introduce shark tank/Incubator and First Twelve

Some of our ministries are burning so brightly, that we can launch new ministries from them. If your church is feeling the call to start something new, please come find us at the expo area and let's talk about it.

Let's be honest, creating a new fire isn't easy... but once we get it going, it feels pretty amazing. Here's a moment that captures that pretty perfectly.

2:00 Cast Away, "I Made Fire" – Screen

(Tom Hanks makes fire for the first time in the movie Cast Away)

5:00 Four Strategies conversation with Paul Nixon and Vision Team Member, Hannah – stage left

*(Kay transitions over to interview area and is sitting next to **Paul and Hannah.**)*

Have you ever felt that good about getting a fire going? You may be wondering how we came up with these strategies and how we interact with them. I so pleased to introduce you to our guide and collaborator on this process Paul Nixon.

Along with Paul is Hannah Sledge who is a part of the Vision Team.

Conduct interview (Pre-interview Paul and Hannah ahead of time)

3:00 Signing of Covenant with Path One – Stage Left

(Vision Team member exits, Bishop Park enters, and covenant is signed)

Thank you, **Paul** and **Hannah** for giving us a glimpse into how we came up with those strategies.

We are so excited about our work with Path One, and we are ready to set the conference on fire for Jesus. We're so excited about this relationship that we've decided to sign a covenant agreement with Path One as a sign of our commitment to one another on these efforts to reach new people in new places.

(Introduce Bishop Park)

(Bishop Park says a few words)

(Covenant is signed)

(Thank Bishop and Paul)

3:00 District Vitality teams intro – Center stage

(How to get access to "Fire Carriers" aka District Vitality Teams. Describe. Talk about postcard and matches they received/will receive.)

Friends, you too can make fire. If your fire feels like it's about to flicker out, you have access to our entire tinderbox of resources.

In ancient times when tribes would roam from place to place, there were what was known as "Fire Carriers". These tribespeople had one of the most important jobs of all. They carried the embers of the fire from one location to the next in special pouches. Fire was life. It kept the tribe going.

In a sense, we have "Fire Carriers" in our conference in what we call District Vitality Teams. They are ready to bring the fire to your church through resources, training, coaching and other opportunities.

Today when you came in you received a matchbook and a postcard...

(explain those things).

4:00 Light the Fire, song – Center stage
(congregational sing along led by **Matt Verstraeten**)

And now we want to give you an opportunity to let the Spirit move. We want to give you a chance to respond. Maybe somewhere within you, you've felt a spark. Let that spark build into a blaze within your hearts.

I'd like to invite you to join us in song as we worship the God who lights the fire within our souls.

2:00 Ignite us, prayer – Center Stage
(responsive prayer?)

1:00 Invitation

(Meet Paul N. & Audrey Warren Fireside chat ready to go Come to booth for opportunities to live into starting your fire?)

Finally, I'd love to have the chance to chat with you one on one for a little fireside chat. You'll also have the chance to come and meet and speak with Paul Nixon, whom you met earlier. And I also want to introduce you to our special guest Audrey Warren who is joining us from the Florida Conference who chairs their Fresh Expressions movement.

If you're looking for opportunities to ignite a new fire, let's chat about it.

Thank you!

