

First Reformed UCC Sunbury Lights Up with an inSPIREd campaign

As Sunbury First Reformed UCC looked at future planning and journeying forward, Pastor Janna Born Larsen knew the congregation needed inspiration. During an April meeting with long time congregant Donna Ross, they began bouncing ideas and thinking of First Reformed's Vision statement: *"Inviting all on a revealing journey toward the light of Christ."* Donna had always felt comforted and inspired by the spire, which is part of the Sunbury skyline and can be seen for at least 3 miles. Pastor Janna had longed to see the spire lighted since coming to the church in 2015. The steeple was lit, but faintly. During their conversation, they suddenly realized how lighting the spire (and brightening the steeple light) could serve as a rich and inspiring symbol of the light of Christ.

From there it was clear, they needed to light that spire.

Together Donna and Pastor Janna worked together to present the idea to Consistory, who unanimously voted that the steeple-spire should be lit. The congregation agreed. From there, First Reformed's inSPIREd! project/movement began. Many disciples engaged in planning and accomplishing the Oct. 28 "Lighting of the Spire" event. An anonymous donor even came forward and offered to fund the project.

On October 28, the steeple and spire were lit and First Reformed UCC hosted a celebration. People came from the community and other churches as well as former First Reformed UCC pastors and Sunbury's mayor, David Persing. The steeple-spire was finally lit and the lighting was an awesome sight. Afterward, all were invited to a reception.

Oct. 29 worship services wove in some of the history of Martin Luther and focused on the importance of Reformation Day. To cap off the weekend of celebration, that Sunday evening included a very moving concert with piano, cello, violin, the bell choir, and the Chancel choir.

First Reformed UCC's steeple-spire was "a symbol of welcome to Sunbury, a symbol of hope and faith for all people and for Christians, it's a symbol for the light of Christ." For the First Reformed UCC congregation, "It's a way of saying we're here. We're in Sunbury. We're welcoming. We're a beacon. We hope people see us across the river and know this is a place where they are welcome."

Now that the spire is lit, Pastor Janna is quick to note that this is part of First Reformed's journey. inSPIREd! is meant to be just the beginning of a new chapter in the life of the church. This new chapter brings before the congregation new opportunities to affirm and share their gifts of creativity, playfulness, friendship, joy, and a welcoming spirit.

