

## FIREBIRD SPIRIT WHITE PAPER:

# Origins and Founding

August 31, 2024

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### MISSION STATEMENT:

Sharing the transforming Spirit of the Firebird, we are an online network of hope bringing together individuals and groups as a Beloved Community in the evolving Way of Jesus and the first-century church.



### WHY A “FIREBIRD” SPIRIT ?...

The images conjured in thinking about the Spirit of the Firebird include:

- A Phoenix rising from the ashes into NEW LIFE and NEW POSSIBILITIES;
- A series of General Motors “concept cars” that started in the 1950’s as a means of presenting NEW and CREATIVE PROTOTYPES;
- The descending SPIRIT OF PENTECOST that was seen as “tongues of fire” BIRTHING the first century church in Acts 2.

Important in that last event, of course, is that everyone heard what was said, each in their own mother tongue, reminding us that Universal Presence (called by many different names) finds a way to speak to each one of us in a language or a way that we can understand.

Through the work of the Firebird Team, we are harbingers of NEW LIFE AND POSSIBILITIES, as well as initiators of NEW CONCEPTS and PROTOTYPES. Together, the Firebird Team helps others to embody the Spirit of Pentecost that BIRTHS A NEW BELOVED COMMUNITY with meaning for each person involved.

Our experienced Firebird Team of professionals is adept at underscoring all aspects of the Firebird to you. Whether you are a GROUP:

- Called to redefine who you are and maybe grow into something new ...
- To explore updated or new concepts of being a faith community in the 21st century.

Or you are an INDIVIDUAL:

- Looking for a personal connection to an evolving, progressive and organic community of hope (not necessarily in place of, but maybe in addition to, your current spiritual practices),

***Firebird Spirit is a movement that changes lives. It might just change yours.***

## THE ORIGIN OF THE FIREBIRD MOVEMENT ...

... lies in Rochester, NY – at least in this historical iteration of it – where the spirit of the Firebird first surfaced nearly twenty years ago as a recognition that what South Presbyterian Church had always been wasn't working anymore.

“If what we are doing is what God wants, we would still be growing,” said one parishioner. “We’re not,” she added, “so God must have something else in mind.”

With that simple statement, the Spirit that would become the Firebird Movement was born. Believing that when the Spirit is present there is infectious Energy & Excitement, South Presbyterian entered into a daring five-year conversation with God that culminated in their oft-repeated prayer, “Put us where you want us, and show us what to do.”

As a result of their discernment, they sold their church property and become a 100% Missional Church in 2014. Now, to be clear, that was THEIR calling; it may or may not be YOURS! But many of the processes, pitfalls and rewards from their journey with the Firebird Spirit have proven to be useful with other churches and judicatories (Presbyteries, Regions, Districts, Dioceses, etc.).

It's like being a mountain climber – each person takes their own journey, but guides help to interpret signs, point out dangers, and get you in the optimal position to see those memorable, breathtaking sunrise vistas.

That's the role of the Firebird Team as they accompany you on your journey ... whether you are traveling as an INDIVIDUAL seeking greater hope and clarity on your spiritual journey, or you are a GROUP such as a church (though we are not limited to working with churches) that is exploring how to become more of a Beloved Community in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Word of South Presbyterian's success spread. People around the country sought their expertise to help guide their own group journeys into the wilderness of discerning God's call. Thus began the ministry of this 501(c)3, not-for-profit NY charity: **Firebird Spirit, Inc.**

Today, post-COVID, with an ever-expanding team of professionals from various disciplines and theological backgrounds – what were originally regional in-person workshops, seminars, and consulting options have given birth to an online community of hope for both groups and individuals!

The result has been the development of two sets of offerings.

## GROUP OFFERINGS OF THE TEAM ...

... cover the areas of individual and group coaching for leaders at all levels and includes ongoing, compassionate care for participants. We work with church judicatories as well as individual congregations, providing technology consulting, leadership training, organizational development, and more.

## TEAM OFFERINGS FOR INDIVIDUALS ...

... have grown out of the organic needs surfacing since the pandemic and continuing today. It is often hard for individuals – especially those living in certain regions – to find others who also hold an evolving/progressive view of spirituality. Connecting with other members of our Beloved Community is both life-giving and expansive and Firebird's online presence provides a portal for those connections to be made.

As of the fall of 2024, Firebird Spirit offers weekly **Firebird Worship**, classes through our **Firebird Academy of Learning**, and in the near future will expand to include interviews and discussion groups, **Firebird Minutes, Moments** and more on the YouTube channel, [@FirebirdSpiritNY](#).

Firebird Spirit is the 24/7/365 presence of this organic, online Beloved Community.

## IT'S ALL ABOUT RELATIONSHIP ...

... and the Firebird Movement is growing every day. People are thirsty for a hopeful message as we seek to follow the Way in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Although we were birthed by a progressive Christian church, our practices and Guiding Values are not limited to those. We invite you to read our **White Paper: A Network of Faith, Hope and Love in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century** that includes our Guiding Principles.

The movement of the Firebird Spirit kindles the Energy, Excitement & Hope experienced by the first century followers of Jesus. That makes the Firebird Movement both fun and deeply satisfying. If there's one thing that the Firebird Team has learned in almost-twenty years of transforming lives and redefining what it means to be a follower of the Way in this millennium, it's that IT'S ALL ABOUT RELATIONSHIP ... our relationship with Universal Presence (called by many different names) ... our relationship with each other ... and our relationship with ourselves. And those all come together in the Beloved Community.

Whether you are reading this on behalf of a group or as a curious individual looking for something that speaks to you of HOPE in the midst of challenge... maybe you are meant to be part of this movement of NEW LIFE ... NEW CONCEPTS ... and being touched by the SPIRIT of NEW POSSIBILITIES that speaks to you in a language that you can understand. The Firebird Movement is all about "The Spirit of Emerging Hope" ... for groups and for individuals.

Let's talk ...