

Frequently asked questions or comments about the Churches Learning Change renewal process (formerly known as “Ridder”) AND Faithwalking:

1. Our congregation doesn’t have any huge problems; most things are going really well, why would we want to go through Ridder? How would we benefit?

That’s great that things are going well, there are lots of ways that Churches Learning Change can benefit even the best-case scenarios. Do you want to raise your emotional maturity and that of others? Increase your capacity for living on mission as individuals and as a congregation? Have better relationships with others and build a more authentic congregational community?

Increase congregational awareness and ability to have important conversations about the things that really matter? Are you more interested in people coming alive in their faith and love for Jesus, more so than upholding the institution? Are you concerned about decline and disconnection in the wider church or in the culture around you? There are 100s of reasons to engage in the learning change and renewal process.

2. Our congregation has a lack of focus, isn’t sure about our vision, is in decline, doesn’t have “enough” (money, people, leaders, capacity), we’re not sure we are ready to do Ridder? Maybe now is not a good time for us, what do you think?

How are you currently addressing any of these matters? The Churches Learning Change renewal process (formerly known as “Ridder”) can be an excellent venue to help address vision, mission, capacity, perceived and actual values, perceived and actual deficits, and many other things. The great part of this process is that a team of people *from the congregation* are engaging it together and tailoring it for your own context. Imagine if more than just the pastor was engaged in thinking and leading in renewed vision and mission (both personally and corporately)!

Scholarship funding is available through the Regional Synod and may be available through your classis as well. *Funding should not be a reason for choosing not to engage.* You do need people willing, open, ready to commit to the process, and willing to do the “good-hard” personal and corporate work of engaging in change and transformation. “Willing” is the key word. You don’t have to know what engaging in personal and corporate change and transformation means at this point.

3. I really want to do it, but I don’t think our congregation would go for this.

Have you talked with them about it? Are you making the decision for others without having an honest conversation about it? Are you assuming a negative outcome without trying? We’d encourage you to stop telling others’ story for them, start sharing and listening honestly and authentically, and let the congregation/consistory wrestle for itself and tell its own story.

4. We are/I am just too busy and have too many things going on to consider something as intense as this process.

You are too busy NOT to seriously consider this. This process is meant to impact *everything* you do and can help you gain new and needed perspective and tools amidst all the busyness of ministry. This will take time, it will require commitment, and you will have to open yourself to a transformation process with the Holy Spirit that is uncertain and unknown. No doubt about it, it will not be easy, but true change and transformation will not be realized without our action into. Ridder can be the opportunity for the action and interaction we all long for in our churches.

5. What is the difference between Faithwalking and Ridder? Which one should we do?

Faithwalking is a personal spiritual transformation process focusing on emotional maturity that leads toward living fully alive on mission as a disciple of Christ.

CLC/"Ridder" is a corporate transformation process in which a team is working together for congregational and community renewal. Faithwalking is a part of the process. If you go through CLC, the team will all go through a part of Faithwalking. If you do not go through CLC, ANY individual can still choose to participate in Faithwalking and benefit from the personal transformation process! If you do not go through CLC, you will miss out on the congregational/system focused applications as well as the benefit and impact of a group of people sharing a personal and team experience.

6. What if we know right now we have a conflict with the set retreat schedule and cannot commit to one of the retreats?

This is a learning process where you are asked to take responsibility for your own learning and ask for what you need. If you already know a portion of your team cannot attend one of the retreats, you can let the leadership team know that ahead of time, so that we can make adequate accommodations for the absence. However, even if a few from the team can attend when others have other obligations, their learning and conversation are just as important as the entire team attending.

7. We really want to do this, but not right now because we cannot commit to 2.5 years, something might change.

Yes, a lot can change in 2.5 years, and a lot can remain unchanged. Life can sometimes throw us unexpected circumstances that we cannot currently predict. Do you have the tools to deal with change, whether you choose those changes or whether they are thrust upon you? Engaging any particular change process can bring out other changes that we weren't expecting.

While we ask you to enter in with a 2.5 year commitment, we recognize that changes may have to happen along the way. That is life. We invite you to make your decisions based on what you know now. There will be no shame placed on you if that changes along the way.

8. I am so cynical about the church (as a whole or specifically), it is just not worth it.

Nearly every pastoral participant at our November 2017 retreat when asked to name just one significant change in themselves because of their participation in the Learning Change/Ridder community named some version of newfound or sustaining "hope."

9. There is nothing wrong with our church, I don't see the point. Why bother?

See the answer to #1, plus: Change is inevitable. It surrounds us. While grief and loss are often a part of change; change is neutral. It is neither good, nor bad, it just is. Traditionally the church and its people have struggled to deal with change. Learning helpful skills for dealing with change is vitally important, regardless of the state of the church. Deepening our discipleship is also vitally important to the future of the church!

10. Now is not a good time for us, can we join next year? Next round?

Only you can discern what is best for your congregation, however, as you review the above and still are uncertain about timing, you need to know a few things. The 2.5 year cycle is based on

content and contract cycle with retreat centers and the topics named in the 'Learning Change Overview' document, which all build on each other and connect with one another. At this point, joining 'next year' is not an option. To be honest without alarmist, we have the funding now and "the next round" is never guaranteed to be sure. A whole lot of people and groups are dedicated to making sure things continue, but that continuation might look different. If you/your congregation can make it work, now is a very good time to go for it!

How can I get more information? Who can I talk to about Ridder or Faithwalking:

Faithwalking Circle website: www.nyfaithwalking.com

(note: this website is powered by the Schoharie Reformed Church website; you are at the right place!)

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