

# SACRED PLACES

THE MAGAZINE OF PARTNERS FOR SACRED PLACES • SPRING 2008



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### About Partners

**Partners for Sacred Places** is the only national, non-sectarian, nonprofit organization dedicated to the sound stewardship and active community use of America's older religious properties. Founded in 1989 by religious, historic preservation and philanthropic leaders, Partners provides assistance to the people who care for sacred places and promotes a greater understanding of how these places sustain communities.

#### PARTNERS' PROGRAMS AND SERVICES INCLUDE:

- ❖ **Training.** *New Dollars/New Partners for Your Sacred Place* is an intensive program that gives congregations with older buildings the skills and resources to broaden their base of support.
- ❖ **Regional Offices.** Partners' offers training, technical assistance and capital improvement grants through its Pennsylvania and Texas Regional Offices.
- ❖ **Workshops and Conferences.** Partners' staff speaks on a variety of topics at national and regional conferences throughout the country.
- ❖ **Publications.** Some of Partners' books include:
  - *Your Sacred Place Is a Community Asset: A Tool Kit to Attract New Resources and Partners*
  - *The Complete Guide to Capital Campaigns for Historic Churches and Synagogues*
- ❖ **Information Clearinghouse.** This web-based resource provides information related to the care and use of older sacred places.  
([www.sacredplaces.org/information\\_clearinghouse.html](http://www.sacredplaces.org/information_clearinghouse.html))
- ❖ **Advocacy Initiatives.** Partners works with civic leaders, funders and policymakers, urging them to adopt policies and practices that provide new resources to older religious properties.

## from the Executive Director



What makes Chicago different, you might even say extraordinarily different, than most other cities? It's a question that naturally emerged when Partners first considered the establishment of a regional office there. Since Partners' offices in Pennsylvania and Texas provide a comprehensive array of training, technical assistance and capital grantmaking, we knew that these resources would be of great value to congregations in Chicago as well. But we also recognized that Chicago stands

out in some important ways, and that our outreach there should respect and reflect these distinctions.

It would take a tome to explore all the differences, but here are a few that come to mind:

- The people of Chicago are highly aware—and proud—of their architecture, perhaps more so than in any other city. The downtown Loop area is laced with magnificent buildings by luminaries such as Louis Sullivan, Daniel Burnham and Mies van der Rohe, and Chicago's neighborhoods are marked by countless domes and steeples built by waves of immigrants and migrants alike.
- Chicago's sacred places were served with distinction for many years by Inspired Partnerships, once the largest and best-funded non-profit of its kind in America. After it closed its doors, the vacuum in services was painfully evident to all.
- Chicago's Millennium Park, already a huge success, is only the latest example of a major civic improvement encouraged and led by leaders from both the public and private sectors. The city's civic leadership is forward-thinking and energetic, and some have already shown a keen interest in Partners' mission and goals for Chicago.
- Chicago's distinguished history of community organizing makes it a natural place to support and strengthen the role of sacred places as engines of community growth and health. Partners' message about the "public value" of sacred places—the way they share space to house social service programs, and the way they stabilize their immediate neighborhoods—resonates strongly here.

Given all this, you can imagine how exciting it is for us to build a major, sustainable presence in Chicago (more details are on page 10). We are well on our way, and of course will keep you posted on the impact we have in the months and years to come. 🏠



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**Update on Partners**



*Marianna Thomas, principal at Marianna Thomas Architects, leads a tour of Lansdowne Baptist Church in Delaware County, Penn. during the Greater Lansdowne Civic Association-sponsored New Dollars/New Partners training.*

**New Face in the Texas Office**

Partners welcomes **Elizabeth “Libby” Willis** to the Texas Regional Office to expand Partners programming and development in the state. Ms. Willis has seven years of independent consulting experience in historic preservation as well as fundraising and organizational development. In the 18 years prior, Ms. Willis served in significant leadership roles in the field of preservation, as Executive Director of Historic Fort Worth, Inc. and Preservation Texas, Inc., as well as the Director of the Southwest Regional Office of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Ms. Willis is on the board of the Fort Worth League of Neighborhood Associations, a member of the Vision North Texas Advisory Committee, and Chair of the City Council District 2 Riverside Subcommittee.

**Photo, at right: Director of Training Elizabeth Terry and the Rev. Bryan Feille, Partners Seminary Advisory Committee Member and Associate Dean of Student Affairs at Brite Divinity School, during their workshop at the Association of Theological Schools’ DIAP Conference.**



PHOTO COURTESY OF MARY MCMILLAN

**THANK YOU**

Many thanks to the following architects who have donated their time to *New Dollars/New Partners for Your Sacred Place* Module I training in the past six months:

**HISTORIC YORK, INC. AND YORK COUNTY COUNCIL OF CHURCHES**  
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www.SAAarchitects.com

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www.architecture4everyone.com

**PHILADELPHIA REGIONAL FUND, WINTER SESSION**  
Linda O’Gwynn, AIA and Tom Purdy, AIA  
Purdy O’Gwynn Architects  
www.pobarch.com

## Update on Partners

### Get Involved with Partners

#### Over the last 5 years, Partners for Sacred Places has:

- ❖ Trained 1,200 clergy and lay leaders
- ❖ Worked with nearly 400 congregations nationwide
- ❖ Partnered with 35 denominational offices, ecumenical councils, historic preservation and planning organizations
- ❖ Awarded over \$1,845,980 grants to Sacred Places

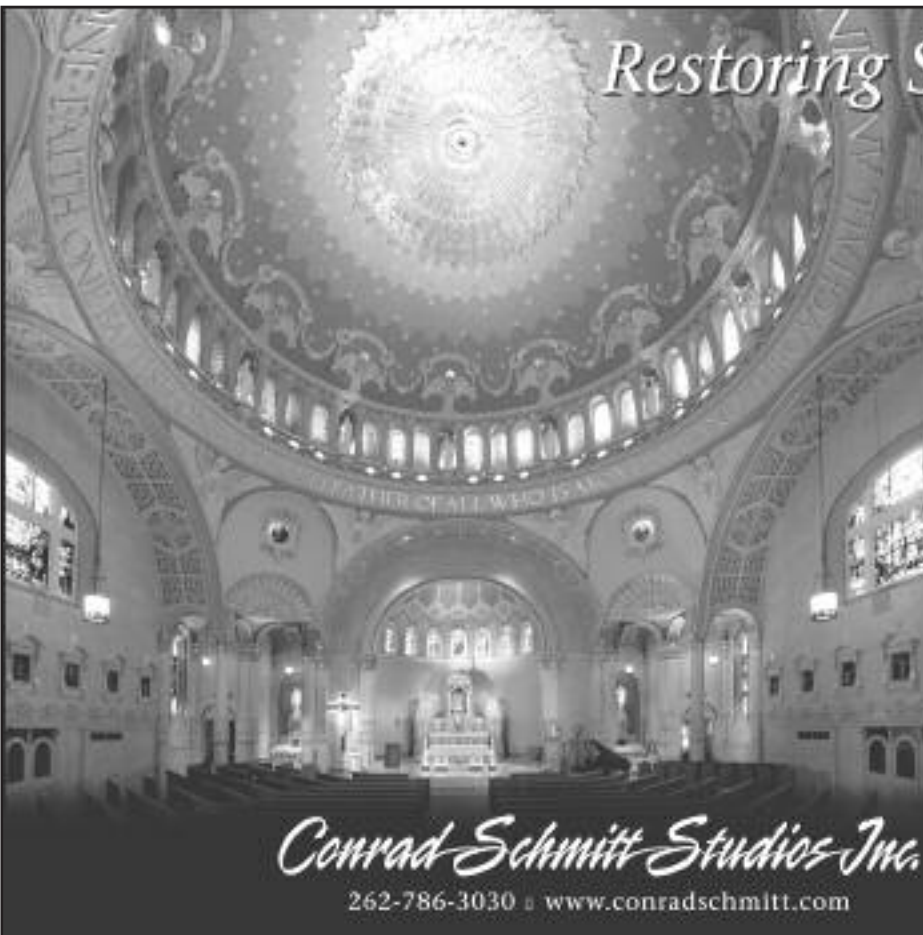
#### How can I help?

- ❖ Make a donation to Partners for Sacred Places. Your support broadens and strengthens Partners' programs.
- ❖ Tell us about a historic sacred place in your community that needs help.
- ❖ Tell your local religious and historic preservation leaders about the *New Dollars/New Partners* training program so that they can gain new resources and skills to broaden their base of support and community partnership.
- ❖ Direct congregations to our Professional Alliance directory and Information Clearinghouse so that they gain invaluable contacts and information about restoring their properties.
- ❖ Purchase a congregational membership for a church, synagogue, meetinghouse or mosque so that they can receive *Sacred Places* magazine and discounts to other publications.

Inspired to be a part of this mission? You can make a difference in communities through Partners! Visit [www.sacredplaces.org](http://www.sacredplaces.org), and click "Donate Now" to visit Partners' secure Network for Good donation page. *Thank you for your interest in our work and for your support of Partners for Sacred Places.* 🏠



Partners Board Member Dr. Thomas Frank, Seminary Advisory Committee Member Dr. Jeffery Tribble, and Senior Trainer Sarah Peveler gather at a *New Dollars/New Partners* orientation in Atlanta.



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## Update on Partners

PHOTO COURTESY OF HISTORIC LANDMARKS FOUNDATION OF INDIANA.



Despite snow and icy conditions, more than 220 people filled Reid Memorial Presbyterian Church to attend a Tiffany Symposium in Richmond, IN. Executive Director Bob Jaeger (standing) educated the intrepid attendees on Partners programming and resources. The 1906 Gothic Revival building features 62 Louis Comfort Tiffany stained glass windows.

# THANK YOU

## Thank you to Partners of the Pennsylvania Office

The Pennsylvania Office thanks the following organizations who have provided pro-bono support or project assistance:

The Athenaeum of Philadelphia

The City of Philadelphia Mural Arts Project

The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission

# THANK YOU

Photo, below: Partners and the City of Philadelphia Mural Arts Program are hosting the Sacred Places Mural Arts Tour Series to highlight public art in historic religious buildings and a sample of the city's 2800 outdoor murals. The spring tour series visits North Philadelphia April 19, Center City Philadelphia May 17, and West Philadelphia June 21. For more information visit [www.sacredplaces.org/SacredPlacesMuralArtsSeries.htm](http://www.sacredplaces.org/SacredPlacesMuralArtsSeries.htm)

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# The Pennsylvania Office and the Philadelphia Regional Fund

## Developing Partnerships

The Pennsylvania Office is developing new partnerships with community organizations (see page 6), and providing more training for Philadelphia-area congregations. Slots for the 2008 Fund-sponsored *New Dollars/New Partners for Your Sacred Place* filled quickly, and the first two modules are set for May 21-22. The office is planning several supplementary training workshops on fundraising for late spring, open to all congregations in Southeastern Pennsylvania. To find out more about workshop subjects, dates, and locations, visit the Pennsylvania Office page on the Partners website, [www.sacredplaces.org/offices\\_pa.htm](http://www.sacredplaces.org/offices_pa.htm) under "Peer Learning Workshops."

## Mural Arts Tour

The pilot Sacred Sites Mural Arts Tour kicked off the new year with a bang for the Pennsylvania Office. Partners collaborated with the City of Philadelphia Mural Arts Program for this sold-out effort January 12. The three-hour trolley tour brought visitors to renowned outdoor murals and into two Philadelphia Regional Fund grantee churches.

Richard Kirk, president of the Calvary Center for Community and Culture, led the tour at Calvary United Methodist Church in University City. Tour members viewed murals painted by H. Hanley Parker and Richard Watson as well as Louis Comfort Tiffany stained glass windows. Volunteer docent Susan Weiler welcomed tour members at St. Francis de Sales Roman Catholic Church two blocks away, and provided a history of the congregation, the mosaics, and the Guastavino tile dome.

Erin Coryell awards a *New Dollars/New Partners* graduation certificate to Harvey Friedrich and Emily Cooperman from Beth Shalom Congregation.



Tour members view mosaics at St. Francis de Sales in January.

One hundred percent of attendees indicated they would recommend the tour to others, and 87 percent added they would take another tour in a different area of the city. The success of the pilot event is leading to a new Sacred Places Mural Arts Series and possible implementation of statewide cultural arts tours.

## Micozzie Supports Lansdowne Congregations

A partnership with the state is resulting in a groundbreaking *New Dollars/New Partners* project serving congregations in an older, "inner-ring" suburb. Pennsylvania Representative Nicholas Micozzie (R-Delaware) financed support and the Greater Lansdowne Civic Association is sponsoring the training to build community cohesion.

The first training kicked off March 1 at First Baptist Church of Lansdowne. Eight congregations are working together in this Delaware County town of 11,000. The Rev. David Braneky, First Baptist's pastor, states, "We trust that this will be a great resource for us to expand our partnerships, and a way to get the necessary training to improve how our church, internally and structurally, works together as a team to become an asset to community."

## Philadelphia Regional Fund for Sacred Places Advisory Committee

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# Texas Regional Office Update

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**Dr. Gaynor Yancey**

*Ex Officio*

**Fernando Costa**

**William J. Thornton, Jr.**



*New Dollars/New Partners* team member Emma Gardner points out vintage photographs displayed in the “history hallway” of First Christian Church, Fort Worth, to community partners and representatives of the Texas Advisory Board.

A backward glance at the work of the Texas Regional Office of Partners for Sacred Places reveals a year of congregations in renewal, community partnerships in progress, and learning on many levels. The common thread running through Partners’ first full year of operation in Texas is the exceptional support received from the people who believe in Partners’ work. Volunteers, architects, technical professionals, seminaries, universities, denominational offices, state and local government entities, history and preservation organizations, foundations, and individual donors continue to support Partners’ work in Texas.

As more churches complete the *New Dollars/New Partners for Your Sacred Place* training, more are applying for and receiving \$5,000 planning grants. In most cases, these grants funds help defray the expense of a professional building assessment conducted by an experienced architect. The assessment informs the congregation about building conditions and repair costs in an objective written document, and is an essential tool for fundraising. The Texas Regional Office is working with a handful of local architects who are actively producing building assessments for our participants, for a deeply discounted fee.

The coming months will bring exciting opportunities to broaden the reach of Partners in the second largest state in the union. The Texas Regional Office started in one county and is now recruiting congregations from over 30 counties for the next *New Dollars/New Partners* program.

One of the most exciting milestones in the first year of the Texas Regional Office was the beginning of our congregation-architect relationships. During 2007 the office initiated four professional building assessments with Texas churches that completed the *New Dollars/New Partners* training. Today each congregation is preparing to receive the results of a thorough facility evaluation and assessment, to help plan the next steps to preservation of their historic houses of worship. Partners is grateful to the architects who contributed not only their expertise but also their encouragement.

**West Mount Moriah Baptist Church, Fort Worth, Texas**

**CM Architecture, Fort Worth, Texas**

**Architects:**  
**Bruce M. Carlson**                      **Cory Potts**  
**Kris Calvert**                            **Mike McIlraith**  
**Catherine Harvey**                    **Ken Randall**

**Grace United Methodist Church, Fort Worth, Texas**

**Hanfeld Hoffer and Stanford, Fort Worth, Texas**

**Architects:**  
**Jason Adams**                            **Paul Lundstro**  
**Aaron Vorwek**                         **Michael Hoffer**  
**Ken Randall**

**St. Andrews United Methodist Church, Fort Worth, Texas**

**Komatsu Architecture, Fort Worth, Texas**

**Architects:**  
**Karl Komatsu**                            **Eugene Dominguez**  
**Kelli Dilday**                              **Gordon Marchant**

**Central United Methodist Church, Brownwood, Texas**

**Parkhill, Smith and Cooper, Odessa, Texas**

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**Joe Vincent**



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*“(Partners) has a lot of appeal because these buildings bring out emotions in people, and these are the toughest buildings to preserve.”*

*– Joan Pomaranc, AIA Chicago*

Participants in Chicago’s 2006 *New Dollars/New Partners* training tour the Episcopal Church of the Epiphany.

# Partners for Sacred Places is Coming to Chicago

**Partners for Sacred Places is excited to bring its comprehensive array of resources to a city famous for its influential architects, landmark buildings, and diverse faith community. With the help of a \$125,000 challenge grant from the Richard H. Driehaus Foundation, Partners is opening a Chicago Regional Office in 2008.**

“Partners invests its expertise to sustain religious buildings that are essential to the health of our neighborhoods and Chicago communities need this help,” states Sunny Fischer, Executive Director of the Driehaus Foundation. The foundation’s recently awarded grant to Partners reflects its interest in preserving and enhancing the built environment, as well as in supporting programs benefiting economically disadvantaged communities.

Following the successful examples of the Pennsylvania Office and the Texas Regional Office, the Chicago Regional Office will provide training, technical assistance, advocacy, and seed grants to stewards of religious buildings in the Chicagoland area. The work in Chicago will be guided by a strong and diverse Advisory Board made up of leaders from the faith, architecture, education, community development, and philanthropic sectors.

The opening of the office builds upon many years of collaborative work in the city. For example, Partners assisted in the creation of Inspired Partnerships, a nonprofit organization that provided technical assistance in property care and management to Chicago congregations from 1990 to 2004. Chicago was also included in the groundbreaking national Partners study *Sacred Places at Risk*, which revealed that congregations house an average of four ongoing community service programs, and that 81 percent of the beneficiaries of these programs are not congregation members. Partners is building upon this experience and exploring new community partnerships with architects, educators, foundations, clergy and congregational leaders.

American Institute of Architects (AIA) Chicago Program Director Joan Pomaranc notes, “(Partners) has a lot of appeal because these buildings bring out emotions in people, and these are the toughest buildings to preserve.”

Pomaranc participated in a *New Dollars/New Partners for Your Sacred Place* training program that Partners offered jointly with Landmarks Illinois in 2006. Pomaranc, a member of KAM Isaiah Israel in Hyde Park, noted that attending the program with an interfaith gathering of congregations—including Quinn Chapel A.M.E., First Presbyterian Church, and First Congregational Baptist Church—was beneficial.

“Congregations can learn that other people have the same problems. They can learn techniques they can use that help them think about themselves in a slightly different way which can help them move forward in meeting their goals.”

The *New Dollars/New Partners* training will be the centerpiece of the Chicago office’s programs. Once additional funding and staffing are in place — by mid 2008 — the office will provide a range of services including:

- Resource center of published materials
- Clearinghouse of experts and resource organizations that provide architectural, financial, and organization assistance to congregations
- Presentations and workshops
- Matching grants for technical assistance (e.g., for building repair plans)

Partners will also work with other technical assistance organizations and public agencies to leverage and maximize the resources available to community-serving congregations.

The Holy Trinity Orthodox Cathedral, in the heart of Chicago’s Ukrainian village, also gained from the 2006 *New*



PHOTO COURTESY OF KAM ISAIAH ISRAEL CONGREGATION.

The confirmation class of 1973 poses before KAM Isaiah Israel.

*Dollars/New Partners* training experience. Dean John Adamcio states, “We were able to utilize the resources, and we are up for a \$150,000 grant that actually came looking for us. If we did not have the information from Partners for Sacred Places, we would not be in the position to make this presentation. The call would have fallen on deaf ears.”

Pomaranc thinks the broader community can benefit from Partners’ presence as well. “There’s an interest in these (religious) buildings. They are community keystones, and we hear about them (only) when they have burned down or been threatened by demolition. I feel the more resources we have, the better.” She notes that Chicago’s architectural community has several professional organizations, but there are no resources for those who own religious buildings.

She notes that while Chicago can learn from the success of Partners’ first two regional offices, she hopes the rest of the country can benefit from the lessons learned from the diverse religious community in Chicago. 🏠

Congregation members Jim Nesbit, Sandy Wiatr, and the Rev. Brian Covell celebrate at a Third Unitarian Church block party. Third Unitarian graduated from *New Dollars/New Partners* in 2007.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THIRD UNITARIAN CHURCH

## Thank You to Our Members

### 2007 Supporters to Partners for Sacred Places

We gratefully acknowledge the many individuals, congregations and organizations that supported Partners for Sacred Places in 2007. Thanks to your generosity, we helped congregations throughout the country preserve their historic sacred properties. (Note: We apologize for any errors or omissions. Please do not hesitate to contact Rana McNamara, Director of Membership, for any corrections at [rmcnamara@sacredplaces.org](mailto:rmcnamara@sacredplaces.org))

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PHOTO COURTESY OF CALVARY EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF TARBORO



Calvary Episcopal Church of Tarboro's spire.

# CAPITAL CAMPAIGNS:

## A New Dollars/New Partners Success Story in North Carolina

*A 141-year-old Gothic Revival church stands proudly among ancient live oak and incense cedar trees in a small North Carolina town. Calvary Episcopal Church, which anchors a 45-block historic district in Tarboro, appears solid, but the roof and exterior of the building and the 1922 parish house are in need of repair.*

Following *New Dollars/New Partners for Your Sacred Place*, Calvary successfully completed a capital campaign in 2007, raising 31 percent more than the \$563,000 goal necessary for repairs. “Frequently, people within a church give far more than they first believe they will give when you organize a campaign effectively,” explains Whitney Jones, President of Whitney Jones, Inc., a fundraising firm in Winston-Salem, N.C.

Jones teamed with Partners for Sacred Places to introduce capital campaign strategies to congregations during the *New Dollars/New Partners* program in 2006. Sponsored by the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina, the training encouraged ten congregations to discover resources within themselves and in their greater communities.

### A Strong Identity

The congregation’s embrace of its heritage and its role as a community anchor provided a solid foundation for fundraising. Calvary’s historic grounds and William Percival-designed church are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The churchyard, classified as an arboretum, attracts genealogists from across the nation to research the burial monuments dating

to the eighteenth century. But the exterior masonry of the church and Hobart Upjohn-designed parish house must be re-pointed, and the gutters must be replaced. Additionally, the congregation plans to install ramps to make the parish house and All Saints Chapel accessible, in a manner complementing the architecture.

The buildings and the congregation are also an asset to the community because of their ministries. A generation ago, Calvary was a founding organizer for the local men’s shelter, soup kitchen, and women’s domestic violence refuge. Calvary continues to support arts and culture programs and even provides outreach to the local court system. Additionally, Calvary welcomes other congregations to use its kitchen, gymnasium, and parlor space in Memorial Hall.

Calvary’s rector, the Rev. William Smyth, states that Partners has helped the congregation in taking that level of hospitality one step further. Following *New Dollars/New Partners*, the congregation invited a local community advocacy group to use the office space in Memorial Hall. “It is routine stuff,” Rev. Smyth modestly suggests, “but for us in a small town it is a big deal. This kind of hospitality is important to us, and we are not just a passive historic site.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF WHITNEY JONES, INC.

**Whitney Jones teamed with Partners for Sacred Places during the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina-sponsored *New Dollars/New Partners* training.**



The congregation enjoys a bluegrass worship service in the churchyard.

*“Frequently, people within a church give far more than they first believe they will give when you organize a campaign effectively,”*

*—Fundraising Consultant Whitney Jones*

Additionally, Rev. Smyth credits Partners for his decision to join the Tarboro and Edgecombe County Chamber of Commerce, as well as approaching additional community organizations like the arts council and the community theater group. “After the Partners weekend (training), we redoubled (our outreach efforts), and tried to be more conscious of how we can be responsive to the community’s needs.”

### **Energizing a Congregation for a Capital Campaign**

As a fundraising consultant, Jones has been assisting nonprofit organizations and congregations throughout the southeastern United States since 1981. In Jones’ experience, volunteers within congregations are more committed to lead and give of time and funds. “A campaign for a church builds the church, builds unity, and connects the church to the outside community in a stronger way.”

The Rev. Smyth cites Jones’ *New Dollars/New Partners* presentation about stewardship and capital campaigns as key to Calvary’s success. “He reminded us that one of the most important things was to work real hard on your advanced gifts. Get your most generous givers in place before you launch the campaign fully.”

Jones also indicated ways in which annual stewardship campaigns should differ from capital campaign efforts. Rev. Smyth found this valuable, since congregants need to know the gift ranges needed for a successful capital campaign, and the campaign should have a more strategic, four-phase approach. Jones adds, “When people give to an annual campaign they frequently give out of their annual income, whereas for a capital campaign they more frequently give out of assets.”

Echoing themes in the *New Dollars/New Partners* training, Jones also advises:

- approaching former members who have moved elsewhere.
- contacting townspeople who have a second home in the community and an attachment to the church. “They may not seem very active, but if they have a connection they will give,” states Jones.
- approaching members of organizations using the congregation’s buildings as a public meeting place.
- approaching preservationists or people with an interest in the architectural gems of the community.
- hosting benefit events; they may not yield a large amount of money, but can be helpful.
- getting to know foundations that give for historic preservation.





PHOTO COURTESY OF CALVARY EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF TARBORO

Calvary's congregation installed brick ramps (in background) complimentary to the design of the Gothic church a decade ago to make the building accessible. The congregation plans to apply a similar design ethic when installing the chapel and parish house accessibility ramps.

### Organizing a Successful Capital Campaign

Rev. Smyth credits his dedicated parishioners, as well as former members with strong family ties, to his congregation's success. "The real engine behind our capital campaign is the loyalty; first, of our own parishioners, for our buildings and the churchyard. Number two is the loyalty of the extended family of Calvary Church."

When organizing the capital campaign, Rev. Smyth strategically appointed two recognized parish leaders as co-chairs. The co-chairs visited a handful of parishioners for initial large gifts before announcing the campaign and selecting an additional nine committee members to be responsible for the broader parish effort.

The committee involved the entire congregation in the fundraising effort by hosting an information session during a church supper. Inspired by a Partners PowerPoint presentation, Calvary projected photographs showing the damage to the buildings, and detailed the repair and maintenance needs. "People walk by windows of the church all the time... but if you take a picture of them and put

them on screen, suddenly they see things in a way that they do not in their Sunday-by-Sunday experience."

Additionally, Calvary used its powerful case statement, created the following guidance from the first *New Dollars/New Partners* training, as a tool for motivation. "We emphasized to our congregation the importance of preserving our buildings — that it is not about us, but our service to the community. Anyone in our congregation would say, 'This is important to who we are.'"

Not only did Calvary exceed its goal from its own congregation, it managed to raise an additional \$5,100 from resources unrelated to the church. Rev. Smyth shares that the anonymous donors were members of the community who had friendships or business relationships with congregants.

"I think what was unusual to the campaign is our intense loyalty, and the experience of belonging to the thriving parish with a beautiful service, an excellent music program, strong lay leadership, and good involvement in education programs and outreach. It is just a wonderful place." 🏡

## 4 SUCCESSFUL FUNDRAISING STRATEGIES

What can other congregations learn from Calvary Episcopal Church's experience? The Rev. William E. Smyth suggests:

- Be strategic when organizing your capital campaign and choosing your leadership
- Engage the congregation through images and the case statement
- Reach out to your congregation's extended family
- Community outreach is fundamental to your congregation's vitality, and inspires giving. Rev. Smyth states, "It is the fundamental Partners idea of 'try to see yourself the way the community sees you, and remember the congregation wants to think of itself as vital to the community.'"



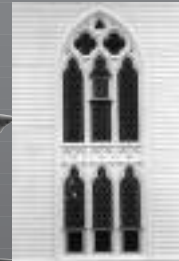
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SGH's five offices in Boston, Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, and Washington, DC have worked across 44 states and 19 countries. "We can offer a single door of service for a wide variety of multi-disciplinary engineering and technology issues found in religious buildings," explains Staff Consultant John Fidler, Royal British Institute of Architects (RIBA), an international preservation expert with experience conserving medieval churches.

The firm also boasts engineers who can view hidden areas of structures because of their training in rope access capabilities. "We have staff that does not mind hanging off ropes," Fidler comments. "We get up close and personal on high buildings."

This technique is especially useful when working on religious properties with domes. "Often, the domes have not been repainted because it is so hard to access them," states Senior Principal and Vice President Carolyn Searls. "We use industrial rope access to repel down the domes."

When water infiltrated the concrete and copper Byzantine dome at the Wilshire Boulevard Temple, a 135-foot tall Los Angeles landmark by architects S. Tilden Norton and A.M. Edelman listed on the National Register of Historic Places, SGH identified the cause and wrote the conservation master plan for the interior domed ceiling restoration.

"We pay more attention to the dome where it transitions to a more horizontal surface," explains Searls. "That is an area where we often find damage, because it is vulnerable for water to enter, freeze and expand, and cause spalling. We then recommend a small change to the design to prevent more damage in the future."

Water damage to exterior structures is not uncommon. Fidler finds that often the congregation that commissioned the religious building spent more money on heavy structures like towers and domes than the supporting foundation. "When the structures subside under the weight, the building is then limping in its environment. That causes stress."

Periodic inspections of structural conditions can help congregations spot these issues early (see "Inspecting Sacred Places," page 21). The firm then recommends short, medium and long-term remedial action to solve the problems and save future expenses.

Fidler stresses the necessity of communication between inspections. Properties and maintenance staff members and volunteers who discover leaks or evidence of water penetration should document the damage or report it to the staff and the property committee before cleaning or cosmetically sealing the evidence.

Most of the congregations who contact SGH deferred maintenance issues or small repairs to save money, which led to more expensive problems. Searls notes, "Unfortunately we do

not get called until the façade is cracking. By that time it's a very expensive problem to repair."

Once SGH completes the repair, the firm writes a maintenance manual for the building, detailing how often the congregation should inspect the building and decorative materials like stained glass, terra cotta, and masonry for the early detection of future issues.

SGH has an interest in preserving these historic structures. Fidler comments, "They are some of the finest building types in the world. Whether the building is classic, gothic, or a simple Quaker meetinghouse, there is peace, stillness, and calm.

"These buildings have an importance far beyond the religious. They are the landscape of villages, towns and cities, and lend to community use in a variety of ways. They are important to keep, use, and repair." 🏠

*Simpson Gumpertz & Heger is a member of Partners' Professional Alliance. For more information on this membership resource of design professionals, please see page 22 or contact Rana Gidumal McNamara at [rmcnamara@sacredplaces.org](mailto:rmcnamara@sacredplaces.org) or (215) 567-3234 ext. 15, or visit Partners' website: [www.sacredplaces.org/professionals.html](http://www.sacredplaces.org/professionals.html).*

### Simpson Gumpertz & Heger working on Wilshire Boulevard Temple in Los Angeles

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## Inspecting Sacred Places

How often should a historic religious building be inspected? Though there is no national standard, Senior Principal and Vice President Carolyn Searls and Staff Consultant John Fidler, RIBA of Simpson Gumpertz & Heger recommend a professional inspection every five years. These thorough inspections should be supplemented with examinations by a congregation's property committee.

The suggested frequency of regular assessments ranges from quarterly to annually, depending upon the age, condition, and regional location of the building. For example, measures like quarterly gutter cleaning are critical to the basic maintenance of the property, and can prevent larger masonry problems. 🏠

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