Stewardship Triage & Recovery
Strengthening giving during and after a crisis

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Partners for Sacred Places
Welcome & Introductions
Today’s Speakers

• **Gianfranco Grande**  
  *Executive Vice President*

• **Sarah Jones**  
  *Project Manager and Consulting Service Coordinator*

• **Joshua Castaño**  
  *Director, Community Engagement Services*
Partners for Sacred Places was founded in 1989 as the only national, non-profit, nonsectarian organization devoted to supporting America’s older religious properties and congregations and strengthening the communities they serve.
Key Themes of Partners’ Work

- Building Care and Stewardship
- Community Engagement
- Training and Capacity Building
- Community-Wide Fundraising
Giving in the Time of COVID–19
Giving USA 2019 – Donors

- Total 2018 Giving - $427.71 billion
- Foundations - 18%
- Corporate Giving - 5%
- Individuals and Charitable Bequests 77%

* “Individuals” remain the single most important source of donations
Principles of Healthy Stewardship

- **Transparency & Openness**
  - Congregations should know where the money comes from and where it goes
  - Increases comfort with “money talk”
  - Some Best Practices:
    - Publishing financials in newsletter
    - Printing giving updates in bulletin
    - Open Finance Committee meetings
Principles of Healthy Stewardship

- **Communicate your need, impact, and gratitude**
  - You won’t get milk from a cow by sending a letter
    - Give donors the opportunity to respond to an *ask*
    - Make *specific asks* in service, bulletins, and newsletters
  - A dollar is not just a dollar
    - Help donors see *how their gifts are transformed* into acts of responsibility, fellowship, and service
    - Use narrative budgets, celebrate milestones and impact during service
  - The more you love your donors, the more they love you back
    - Practice *gratitude* with your donors!
    - *Thank donors* publicly and privately – not just the ones with deep pockets
Principles of Healthy Stewardship

• Interpret Giving as a Spiritual Discipline
  ▪ The scriptures have a lot to say about money, specifically about how to use it
  ▪ Clergy and lay leaders should help congregation members see how much can be accomplished when they invest in mission and ministry

“I ask you to ensure that humanity is served by wealth and not ruled by it.”
- Address to WEF, 2014 -
Current Challenges

- The vast majority of individual donations are given during a worship service (78%)*; worship services have now moved online
- The unemployment rate is increasing rapidly, current estimate is over 20%
- The stock market is volatile and no one is certain what the long-term effects will be

*National Study of Congregations’ Economic Practices (Lake Institute, Lilly School of Philanthropy, 2019)
Emerging Best Practices
Be Transparent about the Situation

- Don’t panic; be honest and confident
- By knowing the urgency and extent of the need, members will be motivated to find ways to give now
- Publish the shortfall in giving since social-distancing began
- Let congregation members know the amount needed to ride out the pandemic
ASK for What You Need

• This is not the time to make veiled requests for offerings
• Tie asks to specific needs
  – Maintaining staff salaries and wages (including hourly workers)
  – Assistance for ministry partners who cannot currently provide services
  – Specific support for COVID-related assistance both in the congregation and the community

Support the Seminary Co-op: COVID-19 Relief

$134,047 raised of $250,000 goal

Donate now

Share
Get Comfortable with Digital Giving

• As of 2019, almost all congregations have online giving options, but only 22% of annual giving was received digitally.*
  — Only 24% of regularly-participating adults make a digital contribution to their congregation in a year.*

• Create virtual rituals around giving/offering in digital worship

• Make digital giving as easy as possible
  — Prominent button/link on website and in newsletter
  — “Mentoring” service for older members who are not familiar with online platforms to increase their comfort

*National Study of Congregations’ Economic Practices (Lake Institute, Lilly School of Philanthropy, 2019)
Emphasize Giving as a Response

- Many people feel powerless to respond to the enormous need – *their donation makes a difference!*
  - Commit to continuing support of ministry partners and congregational needs
  - Turn your general benevolence fund into a COVID-relief fund
  - Celebrate the impact people’s gifts have had for the congregation and the community during this time
Continue to Serve!!!

- Stewardship and fundraising is a ministry, and it supports other ministries.
- Communicate and celebrate the work that you are continuing to do both in and outside the congregation
- Don’t put ministries and programs “on hold;” adapt them to the current reality
  - Virtual Bible Study, children’s activities, small groups, etc.
  - Turn the knitting group into mask-making group
  - Turn the prayer tree into a check-in tree
  - Talk with your community partners; find ways for the congregation to support and promote their ongoing work
In Summary

• Keep following the best practices for healthy stewardship
  — Practice financial transparency
  — Clearly communicate need, impact, and gratitude
  — Emphasize giving as a faithful action

• Adapt to the new reality of online engagement
  — Fully integrate digital giving into your congregational culture
  — Make asks and celebrate generosity on every platform (newsletter, website, social media, etc.)

• Don’t Panic
  — Ask for what you need with the confidence that members will step up
  — Recruit lay people and existing committees to adapt stewardship strategies
  — Keep serving your congregation and community
Questions & Answers

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AT THE INTERSECTION
OF HERITAGE, FAITH,
& COMMUNITY