

# **Stewardship Triage & Recovery**

*Strengthening giving during  
and after a crisis*

**Gianfranco Grande**  
**Sarah Jones**  
**Joshua Castaño**



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OF HERITAGE, FAITH,  
& COMMUNITY

**Partners for Sacred Places**

# Welcome & Introductions

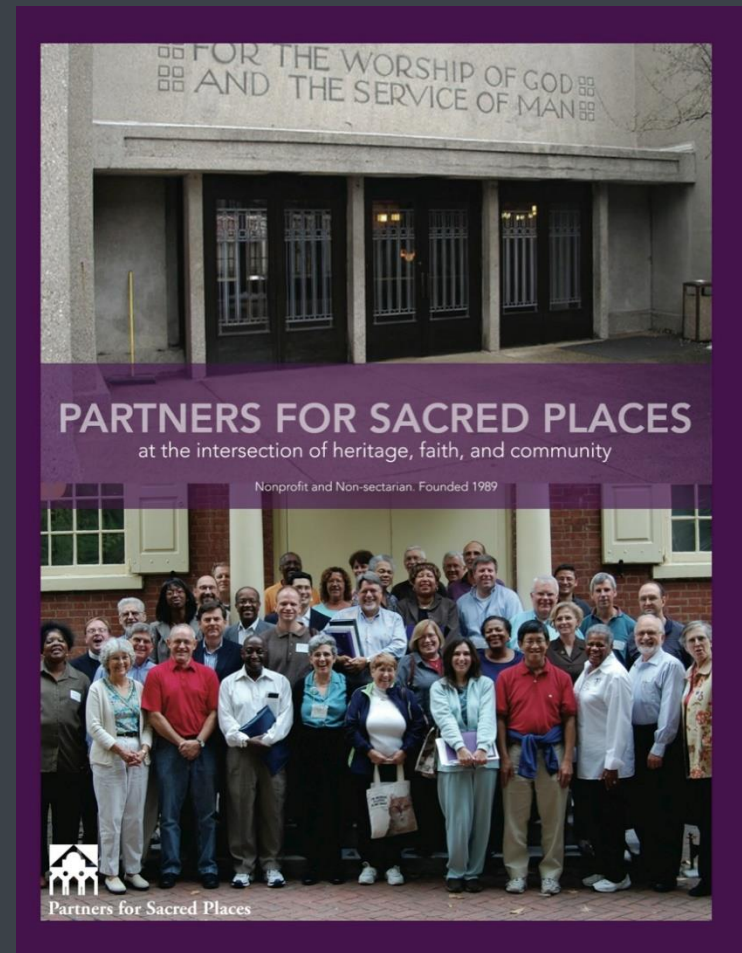


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# Today's Speakers

- **Gianfranco Grande**  
*Executive Vice President*
- **Sarah Jones**  
*Project Manager and  
Consulting Service  
Coordinator*
- **Joshua Castaño**  
*Director, Community  
Engagement Services*



# Partners for Sacred Places



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



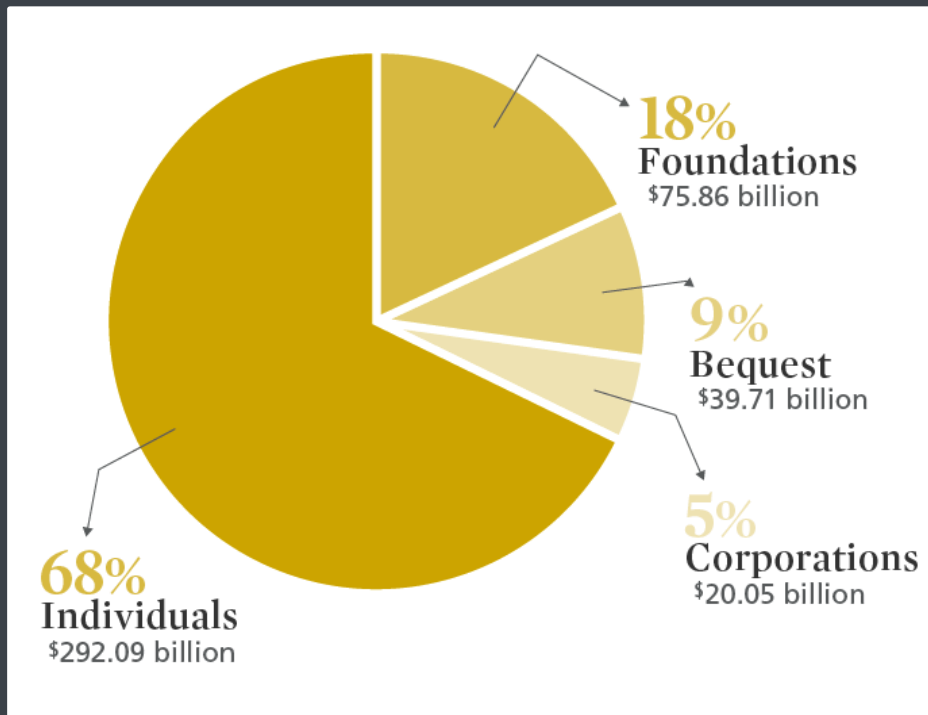
# Giving in the Time of COVID-19



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# 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



*“I ask you to ensure that humanity is served by wealth and not ruled by it.”*

*- Address to WEF, 2014 -*

- **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

# 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



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# 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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