



AT THE INTERSECTION  
OF HERITAGE, FAITH,  
& COMMUNITY

**Partners for Sacred Places**

# Still Open to Serve: How to Stay Engaged and Continue to Serve Community during Social Distancing

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**Joshua Castaño, Dir., Community Engagement**

**Sarah Jones, Project Manager**

**&**

**The Rev. Christopher Johnson,**

**Rector for All Saints' Episcopal Church**

# WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS



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# Introductions

- **A. Robert Jaeger**, President
- **Joshua Castaño**, Dir., Community Engagement
- **Sarah Jones**, Project Manager & Consulting Services Coordinator
- **Rev. Christopher Johnson**, Rector at All Saints' Episcopal Church (Pontiac, MI)



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# *about* Partners for Sacred Places



- Working at the intersection of heritage, faith and community
- Dedicated to supporting America's historic houses of worship and strengthening the communities that they serve
- Partners was founded in 1989, with seed funding from the Lilly Endowment and J.M. Kaplan Fund. We set to work to
  - **Network** with congregations and judicatories
  - Curate a **clearinghouse** of resources
  - Develop **best practices for building maintenance**



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# Partners' Consulting Services

## Partners' Consulting Services Help Congregations:

- Tell their story and build a network of civic partners
- Engage community leaders and stakeholders through asset-mapping and community advisory committees
- Develop visions for adapting their historic buildings to new opportunities through design charettes with architects
- Raise funds from a community-wide approach



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# STILL OPEN TO SERVE

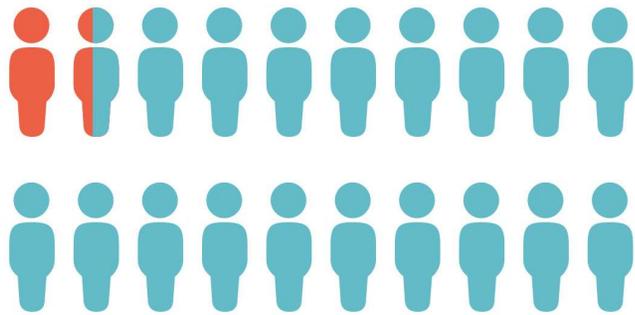


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# Economic Halo Effect of Sacred Places: Invisible Safety Net

## Beneficiaries of Community Programs; Members vs. Non-Members



**13%**  
Congregation **members**

**87%**  
**Non-member** beneficiaries  
of community programs

**Invisible Safety  
Net accounted  
for 6% of the  
total at \$100,296  
per congregation**



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# As Congregations Close Their Buildings

- Initial survey data reveals:
  - most churches were still using the building for online services (livestreamed or recorded and broadcast later)
  - 66% said buildings *were not* being used for community-serving ministries and programs
  - most congregations (63%) are in touch with their partner programs as they adapt or clients are served elsewhere
  - Only a few respondents have been in touch with FEMA or a medical system to provide emergency



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services.

# Staying Open to Serve

- *Be present*
- *Stay engaged*
- *Know your assets*
- *Follow new opportunities*
- *Consider the long-term*
- *Be open to change*



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# BE PRESENT & STAY ENGAGED



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# We're Still Here!

- Find creative ways to tell your community that you're still active, even if the building is closed
  - Affirm you are still “present” to serve
  - Signage is still important!
  - Use your website and social media platforms
  - Communicate with friends of the congregation



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# Stay Engaged

- What can you learn about your communities needs?
- Are there civic leaders or friends of the congregation that you can contact?
- *Other tools:*
  - community bulletin boards
  - Facebook groups,
  - Nextdoor app, etc.,
  - newsletters,
  - email lists for other community orgs and sacred places



# NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE



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# Know Your Assets

## *What unique assets do you have for new opportunities?*

- *Physical Assets*
  - Consider large open spaces that allow for social-distancing
  - Custodial/janitorial staff
  - Outdoor spaces, including green space, parking lots, etc.
- *Other kinds of assets*
  - Staff, volunteers
  - Organizations and groups within the church (volunteers connected with specific ministries)
  - Financial resources



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# Other opportunities to serve

*Are there other uses, or opportunities to leverage your building in service to the community?*

- Are there community-service programs or nonprofit organizations that could use your building?
- Is it possible to adapt some community-serving ministries?
- How could the building accommodate this

# Responding to Need with Your Assets

**Mars Hill Baptist Church,  
Mars Hill, NC**



**Broad Street Ministry, Philadelphia**



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# Other Ways to Support

- If you can't do --- can you give?
- If you can't host ministry, you can still organize people and service (think about collaboration with mutual aid and other resources)
- Remember to let others know what you have to offer.
- And listen -- to uncover new ways to look at your own assets!



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# All Saints, Pontiac, MI

**Rev. Chris Johnson,**  
Rector, tells the story of  
how their parish  
responded to the crisis  
with generosity and action



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# AFTER COVID-19



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# A New Future

***As the world continues to change, with lasting impacts for:***

- public health
- long-term economic recovery
- arts and culture
- social and human services
- religious institutions
- and many more...

***How can we keep our ministry thriving in this new set of circumstances?***

Our congregations will need to:

- *connect and partner*
- *use our buildings and assets to serve others*
- *listen to and engage our neighbors and community*



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# Q&A



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THANK YOU!



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