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

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WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS
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)
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
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 charrettes with architects
• **Raise funds** from a community-wide approach
STILL OPEN TO SERVE
Economic Halo Effect of Sacred Places: Invisible Safety Net

Invisible Safety Net accounted for 6% of the total at $100,296 per congregation
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 services.
Staying Open to Serve

- Be present
- Stay engaged
- Know your assets
- Follow new opportunities
- Consider the long-term
- Be open to change
BE PRESENT & STAY ENGAGED
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
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
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
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 safely?
Responding to Need with Your Assets

Mars Hill Baptist Church, Mars Hill, NC

Broad Street Ministry, Philadelphia
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!
All Saints, Pontiac, MI

Rev. Chris Johnson, Rector, tells the story of how their parish responded to the crisis with generosity and action.
AFTER COVID-19
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
Q&A
THANK YOU!