

# SACRED PLACES

THE MAGAZINE OF PARTNERS FOR SACRED PLACES • FALL 2009



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## ABOUT PARTNERS

Partners for Sacred Places is the only national, nonsectarian, non-profit 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, Texas, and Chicago Offices.
- **Workshops and Conferences.** Partners' staff speaks on a variety of topics at national and regional conferences.
- **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\\_center.htm](http://www.sacredplaces.org/information_center.htm))
- **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.

COVER: Gianfranco Grande and Archbishop of Chicago Francis Cardinal George share a laugh.

Photo by Brian Morowczynski.  
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## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



One year ago, Andrew Edwards, the energetic and entrepreneurial director of the National Churches Trust (NCT) in Great Britain, came to America to see how Partners encourages the care and active use of historic religious properties. Edwards spent a day in Philadelphia to meet our staff and see some of the congregations we serve, and spoke to a gathering of Partners' friends and supporters.

He left with a very favorable impression of Partners' innovative approach to helping congregations sustain their "public value," i.e., their outreach programs and cultural significance. And we, in turn, were struck by NCT's work on several fronts. The Trust encourages congregations to undertake repair and maintenance planning, and makes capital grants to some of Britain's most significant sacred places. NCT also encourages churches to find creative ways to keep their doors open during the week, knowing that when visitors and neighbors gain ready access to historic worship spaces, they become advocates for the preservation of those sacred places.

Of course NCT does so much more than I can summarize here, as does Partners. So we are very pleased to announce that Edwards has invited a delegation from Partners to travel to London to compare notes with leaders in the field, and see the results of NCT's work with historic sacred places. We'll also be meeting with Canon Reiss at Westminster Abbey, who spent time with Partners' staff during a recent visit to America. We hope and trust that an enduring cross-Atlantic collaboration will emerge from this trip.

We have another example of international exchange and learning that is closer at hand: a growing relationship with preservation groups in Canada, including the Ontario Heritage Trust (OHT), Conseil du patrimoine religieux du Québec, Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland & Labrador and the Heritage Canada Foundation. Our connection grows out of conferences held in Toronto, Montreal and Newfoundland over the last several years, where we were invited to present our training approach and other outreach. We, in turn, have been very impressed by their work to inventory sacred places and support the reuse of vacant church properties. We have invited their staff members to "audit" *New Dollars*, and expect that we will compare notes and learn from each other in the years to come.

These new relationships are suggesting that all national organizations with a commitment to helping older religious properties need to find ways to confer from time to time. We have much to share, and much to learn.

BOB JAEGER

Celebrating



AT THE INTERSECTION  
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# UPDATE on Partners: Working with Candler to Serve Methodist Churches

PARTNERS CONTINUES ITS INNOVATIVE PROGRAM to integrate *New Dollars/New Partners* training into seminary curricula, this time at the Candler School of Theology at Emory University. The project links, for the first time, students and a denominational office – the North Georgia Conference of the United Methodist Church; ten students in the *Contextual Education II* class will work for a year with eight Atlanta-area United Methodist churches. This *New Dollars/New Partners* program is supported by a grant from the Carpenter Foundation.

During the two-semester course, taught by the Rev. Dr. Philip Schroeder, Associate Director of Connectional Ministries for the North Georgia Conference, *New Dollars/New Partners* training and resource materials will be used to help seminarians think theologically about congregational life and ministry. As described in their course syllabus, students will “discern what God is doing in, through, and in spite of a particular people in a particular place, and develop ways to respond as ministers to what God has already begun” as they coach their congregations through the *New Dollars/New Partners* process.

Because seminarians and pastors were anxious to begin work before the actual training began in November, Dr. Alice Rogers, Candler’s Director of Contextual Education and staff mentor to the program, convened an introductory session in September. Partners’ staff provided an overview of the training and what it will accomplish, and challenged them to find materials and information that they will need to work with the Public Value Tool, which helps a congregation calculate the dollar value of the resources it provides to outreach programs housed in its building.



Seminary students listen to Sarah Peveler, Partners’ Senior Trainer, describe the *New Dollars/New Partners* program.

# JOIN PARTNERS

## Partners for Sacred Places Celebrates 20 Years of Service

Sacred places do so much to anchor and strengthen communities, dignify and stabilize streetscapes, preserve cultural heritage, and serve people in need.

Yet, congregations with historic buildings are vulnerable, too. To answer this call, Partners has developed and offered innovative programs and creative ways to provide assistance. This year alone, Partners is working with over 500 congregational leaders in dozens of locales.

This critical work could not be done without your dedication. Your membership in Partners has brought tangible results in the health and sustainability of America's sacred places. However, there is still more to accomplish. So, please join Partners, or renew your membership!

This year, when you join at the **Donor Circle Level of \$125**, you may choose either:

- “*Why Should We Spend Money on Our Building When There is So Much Need in the World?*” a 25-minute audio-CD that gives perspectives from different faith traditions, or
- “*After Sunday*” a 25-minute DVD illustrating how congregations serve their communities.

When you join at the **Donor Circle Level of \$200**, you will receive the

*Maintenance Manual*, a workbook that includes checklists, organizers and information for you to maintain your sacred property.

Your basic membership will give you *Sacred Places* magazine, the Professional Alliance directory, monthly e-zines, discounts on publications and entrance to regional workshops.

Thank you.



During a recent trip to Philadelphia, the Reverend Robert Reiss, Canon of Westminster Abbey (middle) met with Partners' Bob Jaeger (l.) and Tuomi Forrest (r.) to learn more about our work.

We look forward to watching the students' progress and seeing how they help us deliver *New Dollars/New Partners* training to their congregations.

### Social Media

Partners is on Facebook! Visit our Page to find links to news stories, workshop and event listings, discussion boards and recent photos. Become a Fan of our Page to share your stories with us.

## Many Thanks to

- Nevin Hedlund Architects, Inc., a Professional Alliance member Chicago, IL: William Gamble, AIA, Nevin Hedlund, AIA
- Jaeger, Nickola & Associates, Ltd., a Professional Alliance member, Park Ridge, IL: David Kuhlman, AIA
- Kelly/Maiello Inc., Emanuel Kelly, FAIA, a Professional Alliance member, Philadelphia, PA
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- Jeremiah Beach Parker Restoration & Construction Management Corp., Shoreham, VT: Jeremiah Beach Parker
- Young Goldstein Architects, Atlanta, GA: Randy Young

who have made presentations as part of *New Dollars/New Partners for Your Sacred Place* training in the past four months.

# UPDATE on Partners: New Dollars/New Partners Success Story

The Church of Holy Cross-Immaculata in Cincinnati, OH, was one of the first parishes to participate in *New Dollars/New Partners for Your Sacred Place* training, in 2003. Five years later the parish has successfully raised funds for several projects and is celebrating its sesquicentennial anniversary.

The cornerstone for the Church of the Immaculate Conception, now Holy Cross-Immaculata, was laid in August 1859 in Cincinnati's Mount Airy neighborhood. Sixteen months later, in December 1860, the completed church was dedicated with a High Mass. The parish was renamed Holy Cross-Immaculata when the Church of the Immaculate Conception and the smaller Holy Cross Catholic parish merged in 1970.

Since its 1860 dedication the church has had a positive impact on the community immediately surrounding it. The establishment of a soup kitchen and monthly food, clothing, and toiletries collections are just some of the programs the parish uses to help those in Cincinnati neighborhoods. The church has a strong religious tradition in the community as well, including a Holy Week pilgrimage that leads worshippers uphill to the church and then up the 90 steps leading to the church doors. The ritual has become so well known that thousands of pilgrims from across the country and around the world come to participate.

In 2003 the Church of Holy Cross-Immaculata (HCI) began having major structural problems with the roof, with an estimated repair cost of \$500,000. The leaders of the parish knew that it was not possible for all of the funds to come from the parish and turned to Partners for Sacred Places' *New Dollars/New Partners* training program for guidance.

*New Dollars/New Partners* provided a wealth of information to the clergy and lay leaders: from grant availability, to the importance of telling the parish's history, to the benefit of creating relationships with community organizations and businesses. Bill Frantz, Pastoral Administrator for HCI, explains, "The *New Dollars/New Partners* program helped us realize that if we want to keep our church viable, we need to connect with others outside of the parish." Although the neighborhood had always felt the presence of the parish, it was time for the greater Cincinnati area to learn how the church contributed to the city's history and spiritual well being.



Photo courtesy of Mark Bowen Photography

Archbishop of Cincinnati Daniel E. Pilarczyk blessing the steps of Holy Cross-Immaculata.

Newsletters, an active and frequently updated website, press releases, and interviews with the press all contributed to the church's increased profile citywide. As *New Dollars/New Partners* training teaches, once the larger community is reached, people see the church more as a community asset than a place of worship. And of course, a larger audience will ultimately help raise more money. By following these principles, the parish's fundraising efforts were successful and the roof repair was completed.

*New Dollars/New Partners* training also taught the parish's leaders that a reactive approach to building care was not appropriate for their 100-year-old structure; proactive monitoring and maintenance would help catch problems while they were small rather than allowing them to develop into large and costly issues. One such step was the establishment of a building- and -grounds committee, which created a repair schedule for all buildings on the property.

Encouraged by their success, the parish began searching for more grants to help them focus on both current and future needs. One grant allowed the parish to fund a building assessment, which informed their long-term maintenance plan. A second grant rescued a stained glass window from another church that was



Photo courtesy of Mark Bowen Photography

The restored bells being rung for the first time. Left to right: HCI Pastoral Administrator Bill Frantz; HCI Reverend Martin Moran; City Councilman Chris Bortz; Archbishop Pilarczyk.

about to be demolished, and installed it at HCI, where a stained glass window had been missing since the 1940s. These grant writing and fundraising experiences gave the church leaders the foundation needed to fund their next unanticipated project: the repairing of the church's three bells.

A routine examination by the Verdin Company, a Cincinnati-based caster and restorer of bells, found that the bells' hardware had severely deteriorated to the point that it was unsafe to ring the bells and they had to be silenced immediately. The ring of the bells was an expected and welcome daily occurrence in the neighborhood; the silence was quickly noticed. The parish and surrounding community began searching for ways to fund the bell restoration. The religious and lay leaders of the church used their past fundraising experience along with the lessons from the *New Dollars/New Partners* training to generate several creative and successful fundraising ideas.

In addition to grant writing, Holy Cross-Immaculata leaders created new partnerships with area businesses. A local restaurant threw a Saint Patrick's Day party and donated half the proceeds to the bell restoration fund. A Cincinnati business guild held a neighborhood sidewalk sale and the parish received the table rent income. The leaders of the church also embraced Internet fundraising, recognizing it as a way to reach donors far beyond Cincinnati, and were thrilled to receive contributions to the restoration fund from across the country.

The Verdin Company assisted the parish by creating an educational brochure about the bell restoration process. President Jim Verdin encourages such informational material as it spurs community involvement, generates enthusiasm, and ultimately results in donations. Money for the bells' restoration was raised in about three months as a result of this flurry of fundraising. An estimated 75% of the funding came from those who were not members of the parish. The parish was actually able to raise more money than was necessary for restoration and, following the guidance of the *New Dollars/New Partners* training, has created a fund for ongoing bell maintenance.

*New Dollars/New Partners* training taught Holy Cross-Immaculata to look for the resources that both their parish and the surrounding community provide. "Because of [*New Dollars/New Partners*] we have made other partners and gotten our name out there. We don't have to keep going back to the same well of resources for funding," says Bill Frantz. Most importantly, the parish has learned to depend on itself as a powerful asset. "We have learned from these fundraising experiences to keep our eyes open to the gifts and talents of the parishioners," Frantz continues. "We have a great parish full of good-hearted people who want to help the community." It is their passion for church and community that has kept the parish of Holy Cross-Immaculata a landmark in the neighborhood for over 100 years.



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# UPDATE on Partners: The Philadelphia Regional Fund

## Exemplars Project

Since its groundbreaking *Sacred Places at Risk* study was published in 1998, Partners for Sacred Places has made the case for the quantity and diversity of community services and programs that congregations provide. Now, with an increasing recognition of the need to articulate the *quality* of those programs as well, Partners staff has launched the Exemplars Project with funding from the William Penn Foundation. This initiative seeks to identify, spotlight, and call attention to congregation-hosted programs and social services that are particularly innovative, affordable and effective.

The recommendations from the project's working group and the resultant profile pieces—on programs ranging from Broad Street Ministry's Breaking Bread program to Neighborhood Bike Works at St. Mary's, Hamilton Village—will help to support Partners' ongoing advocacy efforts with government officials and civic leaders. See facing page for the profile of Kinder Academy, hosted by Bustleton United Methodist Church.

## Commercial Corridors Project

Partners continues to convene two coalitions of congregations and organizations along Baltimore and Germantown Avenues, hosting conversations and helping to define goals for the revitalization of these commercial corridors. Each group has begun to implement the projects that were supported by seed grants from the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia in May—a Baltimore Avenue Venue Menu which will list congregation space available for community use, and "Germantown Speaks," an intergenerational series of events in which local high school students will collect oral histories of Germantown from older residents.

## Philadelphia Regional Fund for Sacred Places Advisory Committee

The Rev. Dr. Roy G. Almquist	Catherine Lynch
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Julia Chapman	Anne Pizzoli
J. Randall Cotton	The Rev. Aidan Rooney, C.M.
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Dr. Ira Harkavy	Geraldine Wang
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Detail of St. Marks Episcopal Church, a new Philadelphia Fund grantee.

The design process for the Venue Menu is currently underway, with publication planned for late 2009; "Germantown Speaks" community events were held at multiple sites throughout Germantown in November.

## Capital Grants

This was a productive summer for the Philadelphia Regional Fund's grantees, with seven congregations completing their grant-funded projects in recent months. To date, thirteen grants from the Fund have been fully disbursed, with thirteen projects still underway.

In September 2009, the Fund's Grant Review Panel met to evaluate this year's applications and determine awards. Congratulations go to the newest congregations that the Fund is proud to support: St. Paul's Episcopal Church of Chestnut Hill (\$62,500 for roofing and masonry repairs); St. Mark's Episcopal Church (\$62,500 for masonry repairs and restoration); the Church of St. James the Less (\$40,000 for roof repairs); and Temple Beth Zion-Beth Israel (\$35,000 for roof truss repairs).

## Training

Three special rounds of *New Dollars* training are taking place in the Philadelphia area: a Presbyterian class of training will be sponsored by the Presbytery of Philadelphia; a round will be sponsored by the Eastern Pennsylvania United Methodist Conference; and the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia will co-host a third round which focuses on African-American congregations, and includes a supplementary module designed to help them nominate their significant buildings to the National Register. The next round of interfaith training is expected to start in the winter or spring of 2010.

# EXEMPLARY SOCIAL SERVICES HOSTED BY SACRED PLACES

## Kinder Academy at Bustleton United Methodist Church

by Ann DeForest

The Bustleton neighborhood of Northeast Philadelphia looks at first glance like a tidy suburban enclave of modest brick homes and well-kept yards. With its white spire and wide-columned portico, Bustleton United Methodist Church reinforces that first impression. But this neighborhood of working-class families, home to a growing number of immigrants newly arrived from India, Russia, and Eastern Europe, has been hard hit by the current economic crisis. And the Bustleton United Methodist Church child care center, run by Kinder Academy, Inc., sees the economic impact in the children it cares for and educates.

“We serve the working poor,” says Leslie Spina, director of the Bustleton child care center and founder and administrator of six other Kinder Academies throughout Northeast Philadelphia. “Seventy-five percent of our children come from single-parent homes; 56% are receiving subsidy. The majority are struggling.”

Nicole Spellman was certainly struggling when she moved to Philadelphia four years ago, newly single, with two young children, no job, and no friends or family nearby. The Bustleton child care center offered her an unexpected lifeline. Any time she had a job interview scheduled, she could drop off her kids at the day care for a few hours, free of charge. The Bustleton Kinder Care became much more than the place her children spent their days. It was an anchor for Nicole as she adjusted to her new situation and neighborhood. “People would give me directions, help me get to the places I needed to go - all the little things that make you feel welcome,” she recalls today.

While many day care centers that serve poorer constituencies provide the minimum services and facilities required for state licensing, Kinder Academy was founded to offer an alternative to the warehouse model of child care. Kinder Academy boasts of “quality childcare that provides a structured preschool program with the convenience of daycare hours.” And the child care center at Bustleton United Methodist Church is the jewel in Kinder Care’s crown, made possible with the space and support offered by the congregation. The day care center,



Children demonstrate newly-gained self-help skills as they open their box lunches.

preschool and after-school program has earned Keystone STARS’ highest rating— 4 stars—as well as accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children in 2005.

Keystone STARS is an initiative of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania’s Office of Child Development and Early Learning, created in 2002 to improve, support, and recognize the continuous quality improvement efforts of early learning programs in the state. From home day care centers to facilities serving hundreds of young children, any program choosing to participate in Keystone STARS demonstrates a commitment to quality childcare, explains Keystone STARS Program Manager Zachary Cohen. The STAR ratings are based on strict performance standards, with four STAR levels that build on each other to encourage continuous quality improvement in staff professional development, curriculum standards, and facility environment and sensory stimulation. The system even assesses how well a preschool assists children in making the transition to kindergarten.

For Spina, the STAR ratings also affirm her decision to house her Kinder Academy programs in churches and other older, underused facilities. As she puts it, Keystone STARS values a challenging program above a “brand new, shiny” facility. “If that’s what you’re looking for, we’re not it,” she says. Instead, Kinder Academy has made vibrant

**The Exemplars Project is funded by a grant from the William Penn Foundation**

For more on this project, see the Philadelphia Update on the facing page

## EXEMPLARY PROJECTS AT SACRED SPACES (cont.)



The Butterflies group waits for lunch.

reuse of the church's underused space by repainting, restructuring and retrofitting old auditoriums and screening rooms at Bustleton United Methodist Church to serve as bright yellow classrooms for "Caterpillars" and "Butterflies," the oldest preschoolers. At Bustleton, the center and church co-exist in a mutually beneficial (and mutually dependent) relationship. Several in the aging congregation volunteer their time as tutors or donate art supplies. One congregant, Al—better known to the children and staff as "Pop-Pop"—serves as resident tinkerer and fix-it man. "This is what a retro-fitted program looks like," says Spina, waving her hand down a corridor of rooms that perform double-duty nights and weekends for Sunday School, scout troops, and AA meetings. "It's more about the families [than the facility]. We make connections with the families."

For Nicole Spellman, that connection continues to make a difference in her children's lives. Now 7 and 9, Chloe and Caleb still start their day at Bustleton's day care so Nicole can get to work at 8:00. And when she picks them up there at the end of her work day, she often lingers with them at the center, making sure all homework is done before they go home, where there are television and other distractions. Besides, laughs Nicole, "they always seem to have the supplies – those glue sticks and scissors – I can never seem to find at home."

With many more families suffering economically, the Bustleton Day Care Center has gone well beyond what Keystone STARS requires. Enrollment has dropped, and Spina is concerned that children are being placed in sub-standard care or sitting home watching television. She understands that parents find themselves in a bind. Without work, they can't afford child care; without child care, they can't look for a job. The free half-day drop-off service Spina offered to Nicole Spellman four years ago has become standard for enrolled families whose parents have job interviews.

The Kinder Academy program at Bustleton United Methodist Church has long been equally responsive to children with special needs and their families, mainstreaming them into the classroom and accommodating their aides or individual assistants. With 15 years experience in child care, Spina knows how to help parents with special-needs children navigate the bureaucratic maze and learn what services the state offers them. Her base at the congregation gives her a willing volunteer network to tap into as well. When Nicole's son Caleb was struggling with reading in school, Spina quickly arranged for an after-school tutor, a volunteer from the church, at no extra charge.

Such extraordinary attention and responsiveness to families' needs is the ultimate mark of a day care center's commitment to quality. "It's all about relationship building," says Cohen. Whether caring for infants or providing a safe and stimulating environment for elementary schoolchildren at the beginning or end of the day, the best day care centers are "like a second home for the child." As Nicole Spellman – and Chloe and Caleb – attest, that is exactly the environment that Spina and her staff have worked hard to create at Bustleton United Methodist Day Care Center. "They made us feel welcome when we knew nobody. We're all very comfortable there."

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# UPDATE on Partners: Texas Office

THE TEXAS OFFICE OF Partners for Sacred Places continues to grow and expand its reach throughout the state. In addition to the work of the Texas Sacred Places Project (see article on page 11), the office continues to provide technical assistance and training to congregations ranging from North Central Texas to the Gulf Coast.

## Galveston Update

Galveston continues to be a place of resiliency. On the night of August 30, 2009, a twister came through the island damaging several homes and businesses. Despite the work remaining to be done on the one-year anniversary of Hurricane Ike, Galveston residents continue to rebuild and remain hopeful. Partners staff was honored to attend the rededication of Reedy Chapel African Methodist Episcopal, the oldest AME Church in Texas. Reedy is a significant institution on the island and has for a number of years provided many services to the Galveston community. We were fortunate to witness the rebuilding of this historical gem.

The *New Dollars/New Partners* training program has started for the ten congregations impacted by the hurricane that received an initial grant from Partners. Luther Snow conducted a workshop on asset mapping that helped congregations identify internal and external resources to support their efforts. Additional modules will be offered in January and March of 2010. We are currently seeking funding to provide additional training sessions for congregations throughout Galveston County.

The Texas Office is grateful to the Galveston Recovery Fund and Galveston Historical Foundation for their support as well as the architects who have provided assessments and offered their services to the congregations in this area. We



Chris Tarantola photographs the First Baptist Church in O'Donnell, TX, for the Texas Sacred Places Project (see story on page 11). Photo by Stephen Montalvo

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are also thankful for the assistance of Church Restoration Group, which provided two disaster preparedness workshops in San Leon (near Galveston) and in Houston last June.

## Training Opportunities

Toni Turner of the Texas Historical Commission provided a workshop for congregations in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex at Texas Christian University in August. "Modern Manna" provided comprehensive information regarding fundraising opportunities specifically for congregations. Another workshop will be held in East Texas in February 2010. Partners and the Texas Historical Commission will offer these workshops jointly throughout the state in February and March of 2010.

The office has recently held workshops on "Social Media for Congregations," "Real Estate Development," and "Marketing 101 for Congregations." Upcoming offerings include "Fit for Service," a workshop that instructs congregations on designing efficient operations in order to save money, which can then be used to fund building expenses or outreach.

## Outreach and Publicity

The Texas Office collaborated with the Volunteer Center of North Texas on "Make A Difference Day," ([www.usaweekend.com/diffday](http://www.usaweekend.com/diffday)) in October, a nationwide celebration of neighbors helping neighbors. Partners, Jack and Jill (an African-American organization of mothers who nurture future leaders) and other sponsors, which included Citigroup and local radio station KHVN, worked with volunteers from across the area and the Keystone Community Outreach Church to host a community fair.

The Texas Office has been featured in the Fort Worth Business Press, and we provided a commentary piece about our work in Galveston, which aired on local National Public Radio affiliate KERA during *All Things Considered* and *Morning Edition*. Texas Office Director Froswa Booker-Drew was a panelist in a webinar hosted by the Administration of Children and Families during its Tri-Regional Human Services and Disasters Virtual Leadership Forum, a collaborative effort between three regional federal offices that cover twelve states.

# UPDATE on Partners:

## Texas Sacred Places Project

IN THE SPRING OF 2009 Texas Tech University Professor Gary Smith led his *Conservation Policies* class in a new direction. Instead of examining the roles of local, state and Federal government in historic preservation, Smith and his 12 students rolled up their sleeves and embarked on a field study of historic religious buildings. Smith's idea was born out of a relationship with Partners' Texas Sacred Places Project - a collaborative initiative to strengthen the public's understanding of the importance of sacred places through the development of an interactive website, a documentary survey, heritage tourism plans, and a publicly-accessible database of sacred places in Texas. The professor and his students prepared to lay a foundation for the project by identifying, visiting and documenting all historic religious structures in 16 counties of western Texas.

Many counties within the study area consist of small towns with only one functioning religious structure. Says Smith, "The population of some of these towns is small, some less than 1,000 residents... some of these areas of Texas have a shrinking population." As a result, congregations are shifting and combining, leaving once flourishing houses of worship in a state of abandonment or neglect. In some cases, students searched for structures that could not be found; they had been obliterated from the landscape.

Leigh Ann Couch and Whitney Stewart are two architecture students who enrolled in the course as part of a complementary certification in Community Design and Development. "We didn't know what to expect when starting the class," explains Stewart, "but it was refreshing to see how architecture influences individual lives." In comparison with their many theory and studio courses, the *Conservation Policies* course reminded Couch and Stewart of the impact architecture leaves on a community and its ability to connect people to the past. "In [the studio], we pretend what we're designing affects people... it's nice to see it in action," says Couch. "We met a lot of people through our fieldwork who often had unique pieces of information about the structure to offer. We met one man whose father was the architect of a church and [had] the original blueprints at his house."

The project also connected students to communities, and communities to the field of historic preservation. "We ran into a lot of people [who] were interested in what we were doing. Many of them had no idea that their religious structure was significant," said Couch. "People were flattered when they learned we had driven a long way to document their [structures]. Some were even a little surprised," added Stewart.

As for the students who participated in the class, they have gained a more complex understanding of how buildings



Whitney Stewart takes notes on the Afton Baptist Church in Afton, TX. Photo by Leigh Ann Couch

and people rely on each other. "This class helped us with both our city planning and architecture backgrounds," said Couch. "We were able to see first-hand how cities and neighborhoods work together as a community and how just one building impacts that community." The focus on historic architecture combined with a parallel study of modern design synthesized a new point of view on the past, present and future of city architecture. Couch perhaps explained it best when she said, "This class helped us learn to incorporate the historic with the modern. They complement one another and we can make sure that one doesn't get overlooked for the other. We have learned how to let the two co-exist."

Couch and Stewart hope that their participation in this pilot project helps the Texas Sacred Places Project succeed. "I really want this program to restore faith back in the communities. These times have been tough with the bad economy and hurricanes and tornadoes. I hope it will teach people that they still have community assets, and help people appreciate what they have both architecturally and community wise," says Couch. Stewart agrees with her classmate and adds, "I hope this project increases awareness within the communities. Many people don't realize how special their church is. These churches provide so much more than just worship services."

The interaction between students and communities through the Texas Sacred Places Project has excited a new interest in preservation, and created a culture of collaboration and learning that suggests a brighter future for Texas' historic religious buildings and the communities they inspire. Professor Smith is thrilled with what his students were able to accomplish in just a semester and hopes that their work might serve as a model for other areas in Texas as well as other states across the country.

# UPDATE on Partners: Chicago Office

## Workshops

The Chicago Office has added free workshops to its spectrum of services. Last September, Rolf Achilles, co-Chair of the Chicago Advisory Board and Curator of the Smith Museum of Stained Glass at Navy Pier, spoke about “Stained Glass Windows of Our Sacred Places” at St. James United Methodist Church. A second stained glass workshop is currently being planned for early 2010.

Two additional workshops have been planned for 2009: “The Bare Necessities of Life – Why Development is Fundamental for Congregations” will be presented by Gianfranco Grande, Director of the Chicago office in November, and in December, architect George Halik, Director and Principal of Booth Hansen & Associates, will lead “How to Choose an Architect for Your Sacred Place.” (For details check the Chicago office website [www.sacredplaces.org/offices\\_chicago.htm](http://www.sacredplaces.org/offices_chicago.htm))

Workshops and a lecture series being planned for 2010 include “Sustainability and Green Issues for Older Sacred Places;” “What to Know About Structural Engineers – What They Do, How to Choose One, How to Use Some



Architect and Advisory Board member Nevin Hedlund, sponsor of an interfaith *New Dollars/New Partners* training that is taking place in Chicago, explains masonry care and maintenance to participants at Olivet Baptist Church (formerly known as First Baptist).

## Chicago Advisory Board

Rolf Achilles, Co-Chair	T. Gunny Harboe, AIA
Corlis Moody, Co-Chair	Nevin Hedlund, AIA
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of their Jargon;” “Don’t Jeopardize Your Not-for-Profit Status or Your Property-Tax-Exempt Status – A Legal Workshop;” and “The History of Religious Art in Chicago.”

## *New Dollars/New Partners*

Advisory Board member Nevin Hedlund of Nevin Hedlund Architects, Inc., ([www.HedlundArchitects.com](http://www.HedlundArchitects.com)) has generously agreed to underwrite an interfaith *New Dollars/New Partners* training that will begin in November 2009. This past September nearly 50 people attended an Orientation Session for interested congregations at the historic Grant Memorial African Methodist Episcopal Church. Participants will be selected from those who apply to join this round of training.

The Archdiocese of Chicago is sponsoring a second *New Dollars/New Partners* training for 12 parishes. The Information Session for this group was held in October at the Archbishop Quigley Center in downtown Chicago.

## Spreading Out

To date, our trainings and site visits have all been in the Chicago metro area. As information about Partners’ Chicago Office spreads, we have been advising church leaders farther away. We’ve been working with church and community leaders in the historic community of Galesburg, IL, close to the Illinois-Iowa border, and in Sycamore, IL, about two hours northwest of Chicago. Partners’ Chicago staff has also been providing technical assistance to leaders of a synagogue in Kenosha in southeast Wisconsin.

## Advisory Board

Second Presbyterian Church was the site for the most recent Chicago Advisory Board meeting. The Development Task Force, headed by Lisa Klein, reported that it has been busy with major outreach to individual supporters. Program Task Force Chair Rolf Achilles outlined how his team members are conceptualizing topics and speakers for workshops, including creating a 501(c)(3) organization, working with architects and contractors, and accessibility

## UPDATE: Chicago Office (cont.)

requirements and solutions for older sacred places. Following the Advisory Board meeting, the expert docents of Friends of the Historic Second Church led a tour of the beautiful church interior, which features stained glass by artists such as Louis C. Tiffany, William Fair Kline and Sir Edward Burne-Jones. ([www.2ndpresbyterian.org/windows.html](http://www.2ndpresbyterian.org/windows.html))

Advisory Board Member Father George A. Lane, SJ, President of Loyola University Press, was honored with the President's Award from Landmarks Illinois at the 2009 Richard H. Driehaus Foundation Preservation Awards in October.

### New People

Mary Ottoson, who recently received a Master of Science degree in Historic Preservation from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, is a consultant recently hired by the Chicago Office to develop a comprehensive database of historic sacred places in Chicago, including photographs. She has catalogued nearly 1,500 entries to date.

The Chicago Office has recruited Sally Cocjin, a junior at DePaul University, as a volunteer and now an intern. One of her many tasks is assisting with information collection for the historic sacred places database by carrying out site visits and photographing churches.

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Photo by Brian Morowczynski; copyright 2009 VIAphotos.com

# AN INTERVIEW WITH FRANCIS CARDINAL GEORGE

## INTRODUCTION

As readers of *Sacred Places* will recall, Partners has worked over the past three years to establish an office in Chicago, providing a range of training and technical assistance to congregations of all faiths in Chicagoland. As part of the process of networking with Chicago's religious leaders, Bob Jaeger and Tuomi Forrest met with the Reverend John Canary, Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Chicago, in the spring of 2008. He quickly expressed an interest in the *New Dollars/New Partners* program and subsequently arranged a meeting with Archbishop of Chicago Francis Cardinal George, O.M.I.

Cardinal George was installed as the sixth archbishop of Chicago in May of 1997 to lead Chicago's 2.3 million Catholics; he is the first native of Chicago to do so. Cardinal George also serves as president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

After a positive meeting with Cardinal George, his six auxiliary bishops, and the vicar general, the archdiocese sponsored a round of *New Dollars* training for eleven parishes. Through the course of that training, which took place this past year, Chicago Office Director Gianfranco Grande has strengthened the relationship with Cardinal George and with Father Canary, who now serves on the Advisory Board of the Chicago Office. The archdiocese has also recently sponsored a second round of training for another twelve parishes.

Cardinal George does not grant many interviews, and Partners is grateful to have been given this opportunity to speak with him on matters ranging from his and Gianfranco's common love of Rome, to his interest in Chicago architecture, to effective ways to care for the hundreds of older parish buildings in the archdiocese.

# CARDINAL GEORGE (cont.)

Cardinal George (CG) and Gianfranco Grande (PFSP) were joined by Colleen Dolan (CD), Director of Communications & Public Relations at the Archdiocese of Chicago.

**PFSP:** Your Eminence, one thing you and I have in common is... Rome. I know you are the Cardinal Priest of San Bartolomeo all'Isola<sup>1</sup>, why in particular did you choose this gorgeous church? Maybe because it is an ideal bridge between the Jewish community of Rome and the Christian side of the city?

**CG:** Well, it was for many reasons, and all of them related to the bridge. It's the oldest bridge in Rome that connects the mainland to the island and it is a place where the Jewish community has had its Synagogue; but probably the first reason why I choose it is because the bones of St. Adalbert are there - and he is the Saint patron of Poland - and also because it was built at the end of the first millennium and I was receiving it at the end of the second millennium.

**PFSP:** It is in one of my favorite parts of Rome. My favorite restaurant is there!

**CG:** Spoken like a true Roman!

**PFSP:** Indeed...but let's go back to Chicago where you were born and raised.

**CG:** Yes, I was born on the West side and raised on the North side.

**PFSP:** St. Paschal was your parish. Tell me about your first memory of the church, not only from a spiritual point of view, but also from an architectural and community focus.

**CG:** Well, St. Paschal is a very dark church, built in the Spanish style. When I was a young boy, I would go in with my mother, holding her hand. As I got older, the windows started to interest me because of the choice of the scenes - and they are very beautiful. The other feature I liked was the sanctuary. At times the pastor would light it up and nothing else because he wanted the people to look at the sanctuary and those are the two things that impressed me - the windows and the sanctuary. As

I got older, I started to appreciate more the whole architecture of the building. The school formed the community and a lot of us went to the school so it was the center of our social life.

**PFSP:** As a young man, which activities were you involved with at the church?

**CG:** I was an altar server! And I remember we had to wear tennis shoes when we served because the pastor didn't want us to scratch the marble floors. The church was a very particular place and everyone knew it, although my neighborhood, unlike some of the neighborhoods, especially on the South side of Chicago, was not overwhelmingly Catholic. It was as much Lutheran as it was Catholic.

**PFSP:** Being from Chicago you must feel proud of the architecture of this amazing city...

*We will do our best to keep every single one of [our parishes] open and to keep them as parishes. If, however, to keep them open we need help because the local parish community can't take care of their church anymore, then it would be helpful if we could find a group of people who could raise the money necessary to repair the churches.... It could be a more ecumenical endeavor....*

**CG:** Oh, yes! Because everything here burned down in 1871, so it's a museum of contemporary and modern art. After all, we invented the skyscraper and the steel frame. If you go down Dearborn Street every building is a prototype; every modern architect has a building here. In Chicago you can see the history of modern architecture. That's why people visit Chicago. You know it was Mies van der Rohe that was part of this renaissance. No buildings were built between the beginning of the Depression and the end of the Second World War. The first major building to be built after the war was the Prudential Building and we all thought that was very tall, but then was dwarfed by the Hancock and the Sears Tower [The Sears Tower is now known as the Willis Tower. *Ed.*]. I think van der Rohe is

kind of classical. People think it's very modern, but it's not! His work is based on Classics...the pillars are there, the rectangular forms. It's not decorative, but the structures are classical. We have now some post-modernism here but it's not as extreme as in other parts of the country - it's contained and cohesive with the inner city and the Loop.

Here the building stock is good! The Germans came after the fire and they were very good builders. The housing stock in the oldest part of the city is very, very good, with lovely design. In some streets like Armitage and Center you could think you were in a German town. You know, when I grew up here, no building was more than one hundred years old; now Chicago is old enough to have its own history of modern architecture, and I think we should be proud of it. We really have a beautiful city, no question about it!

**PFSP:** The Catholic Church is arguably the owner of more historic properties than any other institution in the world. What is your feeling on how the Catholic Church is taking care of this special patrimony?

**CG:** I think we are doing our best to preserve older churches here, except when we can't afford it. Here in this country, the government doesn't give us any money to keep up historic churches. Some of those are endangered because they are now too old to continue without repair and they are either without a parish or with a very poor parish.

**PFSP:** What do you think of the work done by the Commission for the Preservation of the Artistic and Historical Patrimony of the Church?



Archbishop of Chicago Francis Cardinal George and Partners' Chicago Office Director Gianfranco Grande. Photo by Brian Morowczynski; copyright 2009 VIAphotos.com

**CG:** There is now a greater sense of awareness. Awareness of how the faith was involved in these buildings that were built by people of faith, for people of faith. You know, if we had the money we would keep them all. You mention here the Commission for the Preservation of Existing Patrimony of the Church, they have done very good work in analyzing the situation and cataloguing it, in saying, "Here is what we have." But of course they don't have any money to give us!

**PFSP:** What could be done to inform people better that the Catholic Church cares about preservation?

**CG:** I suppose you could have a lecture series or bring over a few people from that commission and sponsor a public lecture. That could be a good idea.

**PFSP:** Some people say the Catholic Church never changes, that it's always the same.

**CG:** Well, yes... and no. It depends what the things are. Some things we are supposed to do the same. A lot of others we don't. You have to keep changing to adjust. I think in a place like Chicago there is a general sense that, architecturally, this is an important place; church architecture is part of that. So it would be nice to have somebody other than the archdiocese to

take the initiative to say what we can do to support the church. And not only the Catholic Church but also other churches too; these that are part of the artistic patrimony of the community. For example the windows of this building [the Archbishop Quigley Center *ed.*] were saved basically by an association of people, most of whom weren't Catholic. The "Friends of the Windows" saw this as an artistic treasure.

**PFSP:** So you do think that the creation of non-profit organizations to help save the churches could be a solution?

**CG:** Yes. That's how things are done in this country! You create a non-profit organization that has a specific goal and then you raise money to meet it. I think it would be easier when you have a specific project, like with the windows.

**PFSP:** So this model would be good also for Catholic Churches?

**CG:** You have to be careful but it might be helpful! You know, five years ago I would say "Oh, great idea," but I've been burned often enough...but I think it's a good idea in itself. I really don't see why not. And it might be good to make it ecumenical. You have to create a board that would be generally open and could just look at it from its architectural standpoint.

**PFSP:** Yes, I like this idea.

**CG:** Yes, I thought you did. It's your idea! (laughs)

**PFSP:** It's my idea and you like it, too, I guess, because you didn't say you didn't like it!

**CG:** No, I didn't!

**CD:** These are the kinds of moments that are nice for the Cardinal to have during the day, because you come with ideas and nice thoughts and not headaches.

**CG:** There is something else I would like to say and that is that Chicago is a very important place architecturally. Our Catholic parishes, especially those built before the Second World War and even after in the Fifties are very important. We will do our best to keep every single one of them open and to keep them as parishes, not to preserve them as museums. And if, however, to keep them open we need help because the local parish community can't take care of their church anymore, then it would be helpful if we could find a group of people who could raise the money necessary to repair the churches...but you are talking about fairly big sums. If it could be a more ecumenical endeavor, where it isn't just the Church going out saying "give us some money to repair our churches," but rather a group saying we need funds to sustain the architectural patrimony of the city, that would be a good way to go. Provided, of course, that when you start looking at how the funds are distributed there must be some way of seeing that it was done in a fair way.

**PFSP:** Indeed...and we at Partners, are very excited to be in Chicago.

**CG:** I've heard good things about your training! The lay people are very enthused. You've helped them see things they wouldn't have seen otherwise. That's important. So thank you very much!

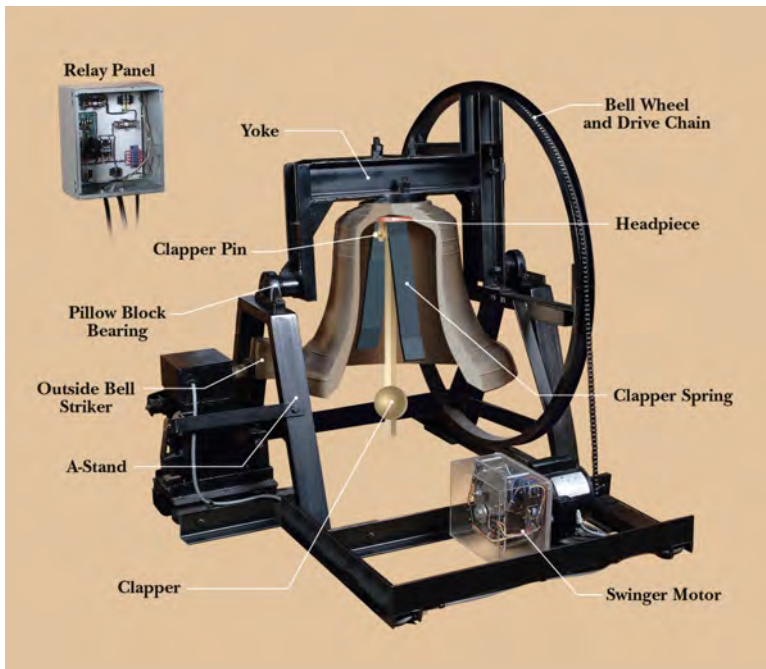
**PFSP:** Thank you for your time, your Eminence, and...Grazie!

<sup>1</sup> *The Basilica of St. Bartholomew on Tiber Island in Rome is a titular minor basilica, founded at the end of the 10th century.*

## BUILDING BRIEF

# BELL MAINTENANCE: OUT OF SIGHT SHOULDN'T MEAN OUT OF MIND

Since the establishment of religious freedom in America, thousands of congregations have used bells to call congregants to worship, to mark the passing hours, or to call attention to celebrations. Even today the ringing of church bells is a familiar sound in many neighborhoods.



A diagram identifying the key parts of a bell and its stand. Courtesy of Verdin Bells.

Most American bell foundries, where new bells are cast, were established in the early 1900s, and very few still exist as the demand for bells has greatly declined. The need for bell maintenance and repair, however, has significantly increased. Many bells are reaching a point in their life where maintenance, or in some cases major repairs, is essential for the bell to remain functional.

Regular care will often keep a bell ringing for up to 70 years before any repairs are needed. Unfortunately, bells are located high in towers and are generally difficult to access; maintenance is often out of mind since the bell is out of sight. Many congregations do not realize their bell is in need of assistance until there is a crisis. Only when the bell ceases to function does a congregation think to check its condition and that of its components. Often times it is not the bell itself but the hardware associated with it that has deteriorated. A cracked yoke, rusted clapper pin, or rusted bolts that hold the bell to the yoke impair ringing and pose serious safety hazards. Rusty bolts are usually the greatest hazard because the untrained eye does not easily see this condition. Should this problem go unnoticed and unresolved the bell could swing off its yoke while ringing, causing structural damage to the bell tower and injury to anyone nearby.

Bells and bell towers in this unsafe state cost more and take longer to fix than a minor problem

## WHAT TO LOOK FOR DURING ROUTINE BELL MAINTENANCE

- Both the bell tower and bell hardware should be checked for water damage and wood rot.
- Openings in steeples should be screened to prevent bats and pigeons from living inside the structure. These animals and their droppings are harmful to the bell, its hardware, and the health of the congregation.
- All nuts and bolts should be checked for tightness and rusting.
- The bell wheel and drive chain should be checked for smooth movement. Any ropes meant for ringing should be checked for rot and fraying.
- Bell clappers and the strike point of the bell should be checked annually for the bell's proper ring tone to stay constant.
- Bell bolts, which secure the bell to its frame, must be checked for rust as they may be dangerously corroded. These critical components are hidden from plain sight and require the services of a professional to properly assess their condition.

Though a properly trained staff member can certainly perform some of these steps, it is advised that congregations hire a professional bell repair company or engineering firm to conduct a structural stability analysis of the steeple and bell hardware. More information on bell maintenance and restoration can be found in the Information Center on Partners for Sacred Places' website.

detected at its initial stages. Performing routine maintenance checks every year prevents these safety hazards and keeps a congregation's bell ringing. According to Jim Verdin, president of the Verdin Company, which has been producing, servicing, and restoring bells, clocks, and carillons since 1842, congregations should have at least one maintenance staff member educated on bell construction and what to look for during annual inspections.


Even with routine maintenance, most bells across the country that are close to or over 100 years old need repairs. Depending upon the number of bells and the amount of damage found during an initial survey, Verdin estimates that bell repairs and restoration can take 60 to 120 days. This does not include any repairs that might have to be made to the bell tower, which may also be deteriorating or have been damaged by an unsecured bell. The restoration of a bell tower is a separate project that should be headed by an architecture and/or engineering firm familiar with the challenges posed by historic structures.

Congregations are faced with several choices when determining a restoration plan for their bells and

hardware. Many congregations prefer to restore their historic bells and supporting components while also installing a carillon, a musical instrument consisting of a set of fixed bells rung by hammers that are controlled from a small computer. Some bell towers may not be structurally sound enough to handle the swing of a bell. In cases like these the bell will be immobilized and a stationary bell ringer will be installed. Bell restoration companies like the Verdin Company give congregations the option to add bells to their existing stock or re-tune their bell during the restoration process. Once the repairs have been made the bell will typically last for another 50 to 100 years, depending on the continued maintenance plan of each congregation.

Though the ringing of bells might be taken for granted, the moment the bells become silent the community notices. Bell restoration can be a costly process but one that both a congregation and its surrounding neighborhood recognize is well worth the time and money. Verdin explains, "Unlike general maintenance, like putting in pavement for a parking lot or landscaping, for example, this is something everyone is excited about. People want to make something that will last for the next 100 years."

*"Victory of Life" Tiffany Studios, Circa 1911, First Presbyterian, Germantown, PA*



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# STAYING ON COURSE WITH CAPITAL CAMPAIGN CONSULTANTS

## What should you do if your campaign gets off track?

Remember the early 1970's television program *The Dating Game*? One contestant sat behind a screen and asked questions to three unknown individuals – hoping that the ensuing date would result in magic.

Well, your selection of a capital campaign consultant is a little like that show. You and your campaign committee ask prospective firms questions and then try to pick “the right one.” Once selected, you hope that the chosen consultant brings desired results.

It is important that your committee interview several firms, assess their services, and try to rate your congregation's compatibility with them. Capital campaign consultants offer a wide range of resources, including conducting a feasibility study to assess your funding capacity; defining the roles of key leaders; providing strategies and organization to the campaign; training volunteers and staff to ask for contributions; developing communication materials, and collaborating with the congregation's committee to ensure everything is done to reach your goal.

Such services range in cost from approximately \$40,000 to \$60,000, depending on the scope and timeframe of a campaign. Typically, consultants work in six-month periods. You and your committee can expect to meet with them frequently as the campaign takes shape.

Certainly, your collaboration should result in increased funding and a successful campaign. However, what should you do if the campaign gets off track? First, step back to get perspective. Were your expectations realistic? Did you believe that the consultant's participation would ensure a million-dollar gift? It's important to know that capital campaign consultants don't bring a list of philanthropists to the table.

Consultants will help you review and rate your list of members, both current and past. They will help your committee conduct a “rating” meeting so that members' true capacities for gifts are assessed. They can guide your committee in brainstorming about other connections as sources of support.

Capital campaign consultants may draft some foundation proposals, though this is not typical. Foundations have specific guidelines; visit your central library's reference department to read the latest Foundation Center Directory – your library may also have access to the Foundation Center's online services, which

include sample proposals. If so, then you can also check regional foundations' tax returns for information on past recipients, typical grant ranges and contact information.

Keep in mind, if your congregation's mailing list has not been updated with address or telephone corrections, there is little the consultant can do except recommend firms that offer address look-up services for a fee. Consider having your volunteers do this task using the white page listings available on the Internet. Also, be sure to routinely request address corrections in your congregation's regular communications.

As your campaign moves along, what happens if there is a glitch? Maybe some members of your congregation feel the demeanor of the consultant is not their style. Or the consultant's time commitment is less than anticipated. The key staff/volunteer leader will need to step up and address these issues.

Check your contract and see if the consultant is providing everything that was listed. Be proactive and create your own timeline of when expected services are due. Remind them that a service is expected by this juncture. Your diligence will ensure that corrections or adjustments can be made to keep to your campaign's timetable.

Talk with the consultant if the “chemistry” with the congregation is lacking. As fundraising professionals, they know how to adapt their presentation for an audience. Since you know your community best, share your insider's view with the consultant. They will welcome the information and be able to adjust their strategy for the next volunteer training or campaign event. Trust your instincts – if you believe that the last training session was dry and volunteers were not engaged – ask the consultant to pick up the energy level and add some humor.

Ultimately, you must steer the campaign and keep everyone motivated so that your congregation's financial goals are met. The capital campaign consultant serves as an invaluable guide, but you need to lead. As the Reverend Nancy Muth, pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Germantown and an experienced fundraiser, explains, “Ask the person, ‘Is there more we can be doing?’ . . . ‘How can we put a positive spin on this?’ Sometimes ‘the course’ needs to be altered to fit certain circumstances.” You are entrusted with the success of the campaign – so be bold and raise the roof!

## PROFESSIONAL ALLIANCE SPOTLIGHT

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Lining the walls of Francis J. Atkinson & Sons Steeplejack in Philadelphia, PA, are photographs of 95 years of family history. While other families take sedate pictures of holidays and vacations, the Atkinsons proudly display photographs of a son's first ascent to the top of a steeple and a grandfather's work on a soaring, gold-leafed dome. For four generations, the Atkinson family has helped congregations preserve the steeples, towers, and domes of sacred places that serve as landmarks in their communities. With projects from Washington, D.C., to Pittsburgh, PA, Atkinson & Sons has a strong commitment to thoughtful preservation, on-site problem solving, and long-term relationships with congregations. Francis Atkinson, III, is convinced that the company's longevity stems from their family-oriented philosophy. "Our success comes from our good people," he explains.

From matching the color on a batch of mortar to repairing a damaged lightning rod, Atkinson relishes the daily puzzles that emerge from being a steeplejack. Materials in a steeple project can range from gold leaf, wood, and terracotta to masonry, porcelain, and sheet metal, and employees at Atkinson & Sons go through apprenticeships to master an array of traditional building techniques that provide the foundation for their work. "I don't find a steeplejack - I make them," Atkinson says. In addition to restoration projects in the workshop, the steeplejacks climb towers with equipment that protects historic materials while allowing them to perform maintenance and repairs.

Although the company also works on industrial sites and skyscrapers, Atkinson gets the most enjoyment from his many projects involving congregations. He remarks that sacred places offer "a little more coziness. People are

more concerned about their house of worship" than typical construction projects. Steeples are landmarks in their communities, with bells and clocks that people set their days by. From ensuring the safety of employees, to working with congregations to financing restorations, Atkinson recognizes that community involvement is key to the success of a steeple project. Atkinson's photographs of hard-to-access areas of steeples provide congregations with new views of their sacred places and frequently become the foundation for fundraising efforts for the preservation of these historic structures. By providing congregations with detailed explanations of their options and priorities for fundraising, Atkinson & Sons becomes long-term partners with congregations.

A project in the tower of Memorial Presbyterian Church of Fox Chase (a recent *New Dollars/New Partners* participant) in Philadelphia, PA, allowed Atkinson & Sons to help a congregation with more than just building rehabilitation. The steeplejacks had to remove a two-thousand-pound bell resting on a rotting wooden floor and a shaky weathervane on the church's tower for the congregation's safety. The weathervane returned to Atkinson & Sons' workshop for repair, but storage of the bell posed a problem. Rather than hiding the bell away as the congregation raised funds for the tower's restoration, Atkinson suggested that they simply leave the bell with its supports on the church's front lawn. The very visible presence of the bell sparked community interest in the tower restoration and allowed the congregation to tap into the generosity of their neighbors. As a result, the project is moving ahead with the replacement of the flooring and access ladders in the historic tower. Soon, the bell and weathervane will be returned to their places as community landmarks.

With any steeple project, Atkinson encourages congregations to think about the long-term health of their buildings. Annual checkups prevent disasters from overwhelming congregations and allow them to set attainable goals for the protection of their steeple. Atkinson explains, "Not everything is an emergency, but usually [congregations] call when something's going on. People don't realize that general building maintenance is the most important part of preservation." Regular inspections check for water infiltration and storm damage, and should be performed by a professional in hard-to-access steeples. If a congregation has not conducted an inspection for some time, the initial assessment will provide a baseline of conditions to monitor any changes in the steeple. Atkinson also urges congregations to prioritize their needs and to think beyond the cosmetic aspects of the project. "Paint is the icing [on the cake]. There's a lot that needs to be done to make [the steeple] safe, sound, watertight."

Dedication to community landmarks drives the work at Francis J. Atkinson & Sons Steeplejack. As Francis Atkinson surveys the company's workshop with his son, he remarks, "When the community believes, that's the best thing for the project."



Three generations of the Atkinson family, surrounded by photos of some of the many steeples they've worked on. Photo by Marissa Moshier.

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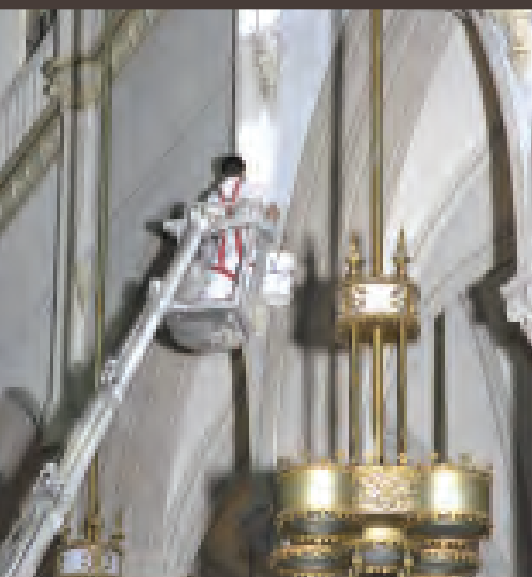
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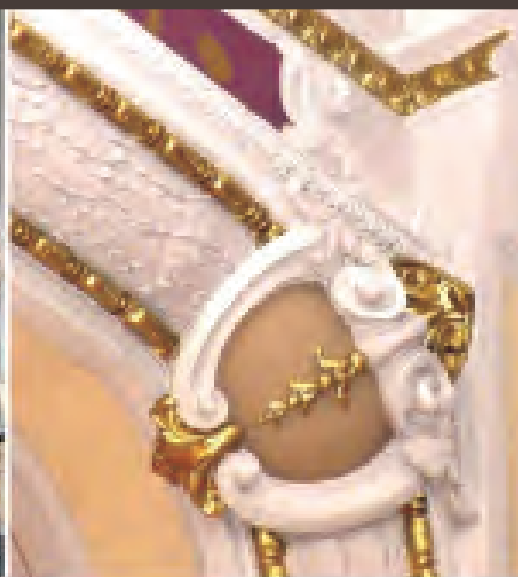
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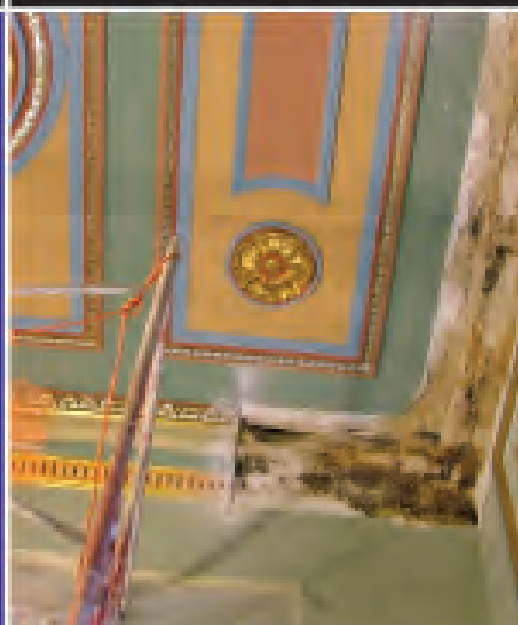


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WAS COMPLETELY RESTORED AFTER BEING  
SEVERELY DAMAGED BY A TORNADO. LARGE  
AREAS REQUIRED TOTAL REPLICATION



ST. TERESA OF AVILA - SLEEPY HOLLOW, NY.