

# SACRED PLACES

THE MAGAZINE OF PARTNERS FOR SACRED PLACES • 2005 NUMBER 1

## *Reusing Religious Properties*

**The McColl Center  
for Visual Art, in  
Charlotte, NC, Was  
Built in the Shell of an  
Abandoned Church**



Saint Peter's Episcopal Church  
Westfield, New York

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## Architectural Glass

## Contents

- 4 **Update on Partners**  
Evaluating New Dollars/New Partners for Your Sacred Place  
Building a Model Fund  
Traditional Building Exhibition and Conference a Success
- 7 **Feature**  
Reusing Religious Properties
- 10 **News Clearinghouse**  
Boston's Endangered Catholic Churches  
Book Review: *The Power of Asset Mapping*
- 12 **Funding Brief**  
Small Montana Synagogue Attracts International Support
- 14 **Building Brief**  
How Strong is Your Spire
- 16 **Professional Alliance Spotlight**  
Conrad Schmitt Studios Helps Restore Holy Hill
- 18 **Professional Alliance Directory**

## About Partners

**Partners for Sacred Places** is the only national, non-sectarian, nonprofit 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.
- ❖ **Workshops and Conferences.** Partners' staff speaks on a variety of topics at national and regional conferences throughout the country.
- ❖ **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\\_clearinghouse.html](http://www.sacredplaces.org/information_clearinghouse.html))
- ❖ **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.

## from the Executive Director



For any non-profit organization to obtain strong, sustained interest from the media in its outreach, the story has to be compelling. Of course, all of us in the non-profit world consider our work to be highly significant and worthy of coverage! However, persuading the press to see it that way can be very difficult. Now, however, the media is finding something very compelling in Partners' model Regional

Fund for Sacred Places being pioneered in the Philadelphia area (see the story on page 6).

In only a few months' time, the Fund has been covered three times in the region's flagship newspaper, received front-page treatment in the regional business journal, major coverage in the main paper serving the African American community, and in-depth stories in a half dozen suburban and neighborhood papers.

Why have we received so much coverage, and why now? There are several factors at work:

- **The story is big.** Once the foundation match is made, the Fund will start with \$2 million. Clearly, it will make a difference for a critical mass of sacred places. Grants may average \$100,000 each, and over 20 historic sacred places will benefit in the first year or two alone.
- **The story is urgent.** Partners' research has shown that the average inner-city church is facing \$1 million to \$2 million in deferred repair needs. Moreover, a major stone church tower, 17 stories tall, collapsed last summer, dramatizing the risks faced by many other sacred places.
- **The story is inclusive.** Congregations of all faiths and communities are affected, including some of the older, less affluent cities and towns in suburban counties.
- **The Fund has the imprimatur of one of the largest and most respected foundation in the region.** The William Penn Foundation has committed several hundred thousand dollars to help Partners design, manage and promote the Fund, and given a \$1 million challenge grant to begin the Fund itself, which must be matched by another \$1 million from other donors.
- **The story is grounded in specifics.** Partners can cite good examples of congregations that have been helped by Partners, and point to congregations that are strong candidates for Fund assistance in the future.
- **The story of Partners' outreach has depth.** We can talk not just about grants we want to give, but also about the training and technical assistance we will give congregations to maximize the value of the money they receive.

All this is not to suggest that our story has entirely sold itself. Partners had strong, professional help — particularly Ceisler Jubelirer, a highly effective firm specializing in communications and issues advocacy. Plus, many friends of Partners' cause have opened doors and spoken out in favor of the Fund.

Now Partners' work is cut out for us: to continue raising funds to get the Fund up and running, and to encourage other communities to work with Partners to develop funds that help save their community-serving sacred places.

Bob Jaeger





# Evaluating New Dollars/New Partners For Your Sacred Place

## Partners for Sacred Places

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As readers of *Sacred Places* know, the *New Dollars/New Partners* program continues to expand, offering a unique in-depth training experience to groups of congregations from coast to coast. Early response from both organizational sponsors (denominational offices, preservation/community organizations) and from participants has been very positive and congregations are moving ahead with their work to raise funds and develop new programs.

Partners, though, is not resting on its laurels. We know that any good program can be made better, and that a thorough, professional evaluation is one of the best ways to find out what works well and what needs some improvement. With support from the Lilly Endowment, Partners has engaged the TCC Group to assess *New Dollars*. TCC is a national firm with a very strong reputation for assessing ways the non-profit sector can build the capacity and outreach of community groups — exactly what *New Dollars* does with congregations.

TCC is still collecting data through surveys and in-depth interviews with training participants, sponsoring organizations, and consultants who are part of the program. However, some interesting trends have started to emerge. To date TCC has conducted interviews with a sampling of 10 congregations. Here are some highlights:

- A significant majority (85%) of respondents has reported an **increase in energy and vision**

within their congregation as a result of the *New Dollars* program.

- Opinion leaders of the congregations — even those who did not participate directly in training — have a **renewed commitment to mission**.
- Eight of ten congregations have **strengthened existing — or begun new — partnerships with community organizations**.
- These successes have, in turn, helped congregations achieve one of the final goals of the training — **new funding for community ministries and the religious properties that house them**. About one third of the respondents indicate that they have made significant progress in this area, with the remainder about to implement plans for fundraising.

*We've definitely turned the corner as an institution. By and large there is a sense of energy, urgency, and cohesion among a significant part of the congregation that is hopeful.*

— a minister, Boston

Interviewees very much liked the structure and content of the training. Still, they expressed a desire for even **more interaction with Partners' staff and consultants, and the sponsor's staff** — during the training and after the final training module had concluded. Partners has already



Participants in *New Dollars/New Partners* listen to architect Jeffrey Harbinson explain the repair plans for the Cathedral of the Incarnation, Episcopal Diocese of Long Island.

## Update on Partners



Sarah Peveler, Partners, Director of Training, leads an exercise in a New Dollars/New Partners program sponsored by the Episcopal Diocese of Long Island.

started to look at ways to accommodate these needs — first, by working with new sponsors to find additional “on-the-ground” coaching assistance and second, by structuring a formal way for congregations, the sponsor, and Partners to meet and learn from each other after the training concludes.

Please look to future issues of *Sacred Places* for more information on the final evaluation results of *New Dollars*. If you have any questions about the program or interest in bringing it to your community, please contact Sarah Peveler, Director of Training, at 215-567-3234, ext 14 or [speveler@sacredplaces.org](mailto:speveler@sacredplaces.org) or visit [sacredplaces.org/training.html](http://sacredplaces.org/training.html).

*The fact that we participated in the program and that we have made a start toward pursuing funds has had a very positive effect on our congregation.*

— a lay leader, Cincinnati

*One of the things that a lot of us hadn't thought about was the value of the church to the surrounding community ... New Dollars definitely helped us to look outward some more and realize the value we had to the community.*

— a deacon, Pittsburgh

## New Staff

In June, Partners welcomed two new members to its staff. **Dan Tomko, Director of Development**, comes to Partners after a decade of leading development work for Philadelphia's Calcutta House, a locally and nationally recognized leader in providing housing and supportive services to vulnerable adults living with AIDS. **Elizabeth Ann Terry** joined Partners as its first **Senior Program Associate**, after some 20 years of working in the nonprofit sector conducting hundreds of workshops for organizations ranging from the Joseph Priestly District of the Unitarian Universalist Association to the United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania.

## New Dollars/New Partners Programs

### Current Programs

Location	Sponsor
New Jersey and New York	Palisades and Hudson River Presbyteries
North Carolina Piedmont	Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina
New York State	New York Conference of the United Church of Christ
Minneapolis	Minneapolis Area Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Brooklyn, Queens, and Long Island	Episcopal Diocese of Long Island

### Completed Programs

Vermont	Vermont Conference, United Church of Christ
Cincinnati	Cincinnati Preservation Association
Mid-Atlantic	Baltimore, National Capital, and New Castle Presbyteries
Pittsburgh Foundation	Pittsburgh History and Landmarks
San Francisco Bay	Episcopal Diocese of California
Greater Atlanta	Presbytery of Greater Atlanta
Boston	Historic Boston Inc.

## Conferences and Workshops

Partners staff will be speaking at the these upcoming conferences:

Portland, ME	Annual Conference, Maine Preservation	September 9
Portland, OR	Annual Conference, National Trust for Historic Preservation	September 30
Grand Isle, VT	Preservation Retreat (Churches), Preservation Trust of Vermont	October 18-19
Montreal, QE	What Future for What Churches? Université du Québec à Montréal	October 19 to 22
Indianapolis, IN	Sacred Space Conference, Indianapolis Center for Congregations	November 4-5

# BUILDING *a Model Fund*

Over the last fifteen years, preservation and religious leaders in several cities — including New York, Boston and Pittsburgh — have pioneered the creation of capital funds that have played a major role in supporting the preservation of important sacred places. Building on this important legacy, and in the hope of encouraging other regional funds, Partners is now creating a model Regional Fund for Sacred Places in Philadelphia.

What is special about this new Fund? First, it is expected to be the largest in America, starting with \$2 million but ultimately raising much more, providing major grants (typically \$75,000 to \$125,000) to qualifying sacred places in Southeastern Pennsylvania. Second, Partners is committed to building a broad constituency for the Fund, and therefore has launched an ambitious communications campaign reaching key audiences through print and other media.

Third, congregations receive more than capital grants. Congregations participate in Partners' acclaimed New Dollars/New Partners training program, and are provided technical assistance by Partners' staff and student interns from the University of Pennsylvania.

The Fund will serve as a national model because its design and management over the last year has been guided by the

experience of other local funds, including the Nonprofit Finance Fund, and Heritage Philadelphia, a regional program serving historic properties. A distinguished advisory committee of leaders from philanthropy, religion, architecture and other key disciplines has also provided guidance, and the entire Fund design process is being documented for future national dissemination.

The Fund was started with a \$1 million challenge grant from the William Penn Foundation, which is being matched by \$1 million from other sources by the end of 2005. To date, almost \$500,000 has been committed toward the match from foundations and Pennsylvania's Keystone Grant Program for historic buildings.

Congregations can qualify for a grant from the Fund if they demonstrate: 1) architectural and historical significance at the local, state and/or federal level; 2) a major role in community service provision and neighborhood stabilization; 3) high congregational capacity, including strong, stable and committed leadership; and 4) a comprehensive plan to address urgent repair needs.

For more information about the Fund, contact Erin Coryell, Fund Coordinator, at 215-567-3234, ext. 18; or [ecoryell@sacredplaces.org](mailto:ecoryell@sacredplaces.org)

## Traditional Building Exhibition and Conference a Success

Partners for Sacred Places and Restore Media have collaborated for several years, but April marked the first time that the national media company's eagerly-awaited, high caliber Traditional Building Exhibition and Conference was held in Philadelphia. Partners sponsored no less than seven sessions and joined over 200 exhibitors in the vast Pennsylvania Convention Center. The event was a great opportunity for Partners to visit with current Professional Alliance members and meet many other firms and businesses with experience and expertise in restoring and renovating historic religious properties. (See page 18 for Professional Alliance Directory) As the Professional Alliance grows in both numbers and scope, Partners can better assist congregations undertaking capital projects by connecting them to a wealth of qualified professionals.

If we missed you in April and you are interested in learning more about the Professional Alliance, contact Dan Tomko, (215) 567-3234, ext. 16 or [dtomko@sacredplaces.org](mailto:dtomko@sacredplaces.org). Meanwhile, Traditional Building travels to New Orleans from October 20-22, 2005 and next year to Chicago (we'll see you there) from April 5-8, 2006. Mark your calendar and for more information, visit [www.traditionalbuildingshow.com](http://www.traditionalbuildingshow.com).

### Get the word out! Advertise in Sacred Places

**Do you need to reach an audience that includes caretakers of sacred places, preservation leaders, building trades professionals and religious leaders? Advertise in Sacred Places!**

**For rates and further information, contact Dan Tomko at (215) 567-3234, ext. 16 or [dtomko@sacredplaces.org](mailto:dtomko@sacredplaces.org).**

1:16 Consulting  
PICK UP AD from last issue



The former Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church stood as a ruin along the Charlotte Beltway in North Carolina after a 1985 fire destroyed everything but its exterior walls. For 15 years, the ghostly remains of the church symbolized the blight and abandonment of Charlotte's downtown core. Now, through the vision and determination of local residents and the CEO of a bank, the shell has been transformed into a state-of-the-art facility for artists-in-residence. McColl Center for Visual Art stands as a testament to the redevelopment potential of downtown Charlotte and a model for the innovative reuse that is possible for a house of worship after its religious use has ended.

The story of McColl Center for Visual Art is one of 11 adaptive use case studies featured on "Historic Houses of Worship," a new web page developed by The National Trust for Historic Places and Partners for Sacred Places. Highlighting successful stories of adaptive use from around the country, the web page grew out of Partner's long history of assisting community organizations and faith groups to make the most effective use of historic religious properties after their congregations moved on. When the Archdiocese of Detroit announced the closing of 30 inner city parishes in 1989, Partners worked with denominational leaders, clergy, laypeople, historic preservationists and community leaders there to develop adaptive use ideas for several key historic churches affected by the closings. Drawing on the lessons learned from that unprecedented process, Partners published *Sacred Places in Transition* in 1994 as a practical guide to the adaptive use process.

As growing numbers of churches and synagogues across the country face closure due to shrinking congregations, a shortage of priests in Catholic parishes, and deferred maintenance of buildings, Partners continues to encourage the sensitive adaptation of sacred spaces by providing technical assistance to community and faith groups. Joining forces with the National Trust to launch "Historic Houses of Worship," Partners hopes the case studies will encourage faith groups and communities to think creatively about reuse and advocate for alternatives to demolition and less preservation-sensitive reuses.

The Trust sought out Partners as collaborators on this project because "it is the primary organization we look to for assistance with preservation of historic religious properties," says Adrian Scott Fine, Director of the Trust's Northeast Field

Office, who managed the project. "Partners shares our goal of inspiring communities to make good use of these properties."

The case studies demonstrate viable reuse alternatives that preserve the architectural integrity of historic sacred places and continue to allow the public to benefit from these landmark buildings. Adaptive use examples range from residential to retail, urban and rural, and include religious properties representing multiple denominations. The case studies detail the process that community organizations, preservation groups and denominational offices went through to successfully transition to adaptive use. The web page also provides

practical project details such as cost and scope, as well as contact information for the organizations that spearheaded the projects and the architects who designed the renovations.



Artists-in-residence enjoy state-of-the-art facilities with pointed-arched windows and plenty of natural light at McColl Center for Visual Art, Charlotte, NC, built in the shell of an abandoned church.

MARK FISHER/OFMFK ARCHITECTS

# REUSING RELIGIOUS PROPERTIES

*continued on  
next page*



**A group of ladies in front of Congregational Chinese Mission, circa. 1930. The mission was saved from demolition and transformed into the San Diego Chinese Historical Museum.**

While the project was already under discussion at the time, last year's announcement by the Archdiocese of Boston to close more than 80 Catholic parishes made it clear to The Trust and Partners how critical it was to offer a clearinghouse of practical information on reuse, says Wendy Nicholas, Director of the Northeast Office of The Trust. (See News Clearinghouse on page 10.)

"The sheer magnitude of these closings in Boston is overwhelming," Nicholas says. "Imagine 80-something churches and their attendant schools, rectories and convents all coming on the market at the same time. Churches are really single-purpose structures: the best use of a church is as a church. The next best use is as a performance space or auditorium-type use. Beyond those, adapting churches for new uses is very challenging. It takes time, funding, partnership and imagination. And communities have to be proactive," Nicholas says. "We hope these case studies will be an inspiration to communities that it is possible to reuse these structures after the congregation is gone."

## **When Adaptive Use Sparks Neighborhood Revitalization**

Because religious properties are often the largest, most prominent buildings in a neighborhood, their restoration for a new use can help to revitalize a whole community. Famicos Notre Dame Academy in Cleveland, OH, is a prime example. This Gothic Revival style Catholic girls school sat vacant for 20 years after rising poverty and suburban flight hastened its closing and rapid deterioration. It was sold by the Sisters of Notre Dame to the Cleveland Board of Education and operated briefly as a junior high school but was abandoned in 1978. The city tried many times to attract investors but it wasn't until the late 1990s that the Famicos Foundation, a local community development corporation with Catholic roots, stepped in and began a restoration that not only brought the academy back to life as affordable senior housing, but also fueled a neighborhood rebirth.

Famicos and hundreds of donors assembled \$9.7 million in federal, city and private funds to turn the former school into 73 affordable senior housing units as well as a community services center and the Famicos headquarters. While years of neglect and vandalism had destroyed much of the building, Famicos was able to preserve important architectural features such as pink marble floors and decorative columns supporting expansive vaulted ceilings. The spirit of renewal was infectious: By the time the project was completed in 1999, twelve of the houses across the street from the school had undergone their own renovation and upgrades.

Another example of a reuse that sparked community revitalization is the Chinese Historical Museum in San Diego, CA. Built in 1927 in the California Mission Revival style, the former Chinese Congregation Mission was slated for demolition by a developer in 1986 when the Chinese Historical Society organized to save the building. When the group met with the developer and explained the building's historical significance (it represents an important period of Chinese immigration to the US), the developer donated the building to the group. The Chinese Historical Museum now anchors the newly created Asian Pacific Historic District in downtown San Diego, which has blossomed into an eight-block neighborhood of businesses, cultural centers and historic sites featuring the diversity of the Filipino, Japanese, Hawaiian and Chinese immigrants in the US.



## Meeting the Design Challenge of Sensitive Reuse

Preserving the architectural integrity of sacred spaces during adaptive use projects can be a considerable design challenge. Graduate Health System's Corporate Headquarters\* in Philadelphia is an excellent example of a congregation that used a proactive and thoughtful process to develop a design that respects the historic interior but makes room for high tech offices. When the Swendenborgian congregation knew that the sale of their English Gothic Revival style church was imminent in the mid 1980s, they enlisted the help of the Preservation Fund of Pennsylvania (now Preservation Pennsylvania) to find a developer who would sensitively adapt their building to a new use. The congregation worked closely with the buyer of the property, the Preservation Fund and the Philadelphia Historical Commission to devise a plan that would retain the historic fabric of the building.

The building was structurally stable and much of its architectural features were in good condition, including ornately carved wood work, carved stone tracery, granite floors, arched stained glass windows and sixty-five-foot-high vaulted barrel ceilings supported by carved granite buttresses. The church was converted to executive offices. Since the office required additional floor space, two balconies were added in four of the six bays, leaving the chancel area unchanged as a space for receptions. A glass wall was inserted in the interior to define the space and muffle noise. The transparent floor-to-ceiling wall encases the chancel framed by granite arches, an altar chiseled from stone and stained glass windows. Significantly, all changes are reversible. Light funnels through the stained glass windows and is supplemented with soft, indirect overhead lighting, giving a uniquely ephemeral quality to this non-traditional office space.

## Mobilizing a Community to Transform a Defunct Church into a Vital Community Center

"It's a huge challenge for neighborhoods, the preservation community and the development community to plan what to do with historic structures when they face closure," says Fine. "Sometimes it's hard for the community to sit down with [a denominational office] and work together," he says. The case studies highlight powerful collaborations that developed between community groups, denominational offices and preservationists to develop reuses that serve the neighborhood and preserve the building's integrity.

When St. Vitus Catholic Church in Chicago's Pilsen neighborhood closed in the 1990's, the large complex of buildings that consisted of a church, rectory and school left a gaping hole in the fabric of this community of Slavic and Mexican immigrants.

The community mobilized and successfully negotiated with the Archdiocese of Chicago to purchase the complex and transform it into

a state-of-the-art day care and after-school program serving more than 200 children. A community task force collaborated with area interfaith organizations to develop a non-profit community development corporation called The Resurrection Project to oversee the reuse effort. Since galvanizing to save the church complex, The Resurrection Project has become one of the most active grass-roots non-profits in Chicago, developing 130 single family residencies and 150 units of affordable housing in 15 buildings. From its office in the rectory of the former St. Vitus Church, the non-profit offers bi-lingual counseling and assistance for first-time homebuyers.


To read the reuse case studies and see photos of the projects, visit [www.nationaltrust.org](http://www.nationaltrust.org), go to "Historic Places," then go to "Issues and Initiatives" and then click on "Historic Houses of Worship." ( or directly at [www.nationaltrust.org/issues/houses\\_of\\_worship/success/\\_index.html](http://www.nationaltrust.org/issues/houses_of_worship/success/_index.html)) For additional resources on funding and adaptive use of sacred spaces, visit Partners on-line Information Clearinghouse: [www.sacredplaces.org/information\\_clearinghouse.html](http://www.sacredplaces.org/information_clearinghouse.html). Partners and the National Trust will continue to add case studies throughout the summer and fall.

\* The offices have since been used by an advertising agency and other tenants.



THE RESURRECTION PROJECT

Faith groups from Chicago's Pilsen neighborhood formed The Resurrection Project, a non-profit community development corporation to oversee the development of St. Vitus Catholic Church into a day care and after school program for more than 200 children.



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## **Boston Catholic Churches Named to Endangered Historic Places List**

To highlight the threat to a vital piece of American heritage, the National Trust for Historic Preservation recently named the Historic Catholic Churches of Greater Boston to its 2005 list of *America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places*.

Dating back to the 1800s, Catholic churches in the Boston area embody the spiritual and artistic achievements of generations of the faithful. These noble houses of worship — representing a wide range of styles from High Victorian Gothic to Arts and Crafts — are intertwined with the development of many historic and ethnic neighborhoods across Boston and eastern Massachusetts. In 2004, the Boston Archdiocese began the process of closing, consolidating and disposing of properties in more than 80 of its 357 parishes — a process leading to the sale, redevelopment and possible demolition of an unprecedented number of historically and architecturally significant churches, rectories and convents. Preservation leaders have called for local government, community leaders, developers, architects, realtors and the Archdiocese to work together to find viable and appropriate new uses for these buildings.

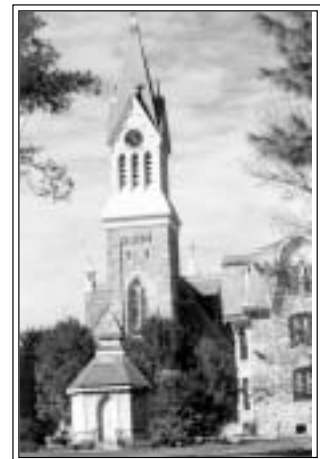
“Because of the many roles they play in community life — as centers of faith, neighborhood anchors and, in many cases, artistic and architectural treasures — historic churches deserve exemplary stewardship,” said Richard Moe, president of the National Trust. “As these landmarks face a new future, community leaders and the Archdiocese must work together to ensure that they are placed in the hands of owners who will treat them with sensitivity and convert them to appropriate new uses.”

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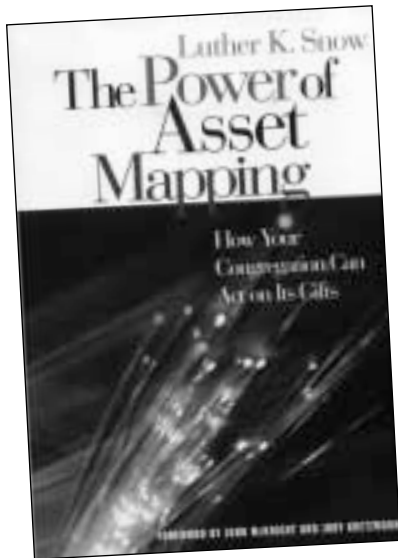
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## News Clearinghouse



### Book Review: *The Power of Asset Mapping*

*The Power of Asset Mapping: How Your Congregation Can Act on Its Gifts*, written by veteran community organizer Luther K. Snow, is an essential tool for tapping into the strength of your congregation. Snow notes that oftentimes, a

congregation is all-too willing to focus on its needs rather than its assets, perceiving the proverbial glass as half-empty rather than seeing the strengths and resources that keep it half-full. As Snow explains, asset mapping is “tool to support planning, relationship building, conflict resolution, project development, problem solving, partnership negotiation, stewardship, evangelism, worship and congregational growth.” It is also an “open-sum way of thinking that sparks, nurtures, and renews mission.”

Snow begins with the basic process of asset mapping, including what questions to ask and an outline of how to go about it. Snow focuses on how the process actually works, addressing a range of practical topics such as where to begin mapping and who should be involved, as well as helpful tips on making the process run smoothly and effectively.

Snow ends his guide with the “whys” of asset mapping: why asset mapping is fundamental to leveraging the power of the cup half-full, and why asset mapping can be the key to helping solve a congregation’s woes. He incorporates “Frequently Shared Lessons” garnered from his 25 years of leading asset mapping workshops with a wide variety of faith communities across the country.

Although literature about community mapping is abundant, *The Power of Asset Mapping* is unique in that it focuses solely on religious communities. Congregations of any faith, location or size will find this a powerful resource to help them recognize their own potential and utilize the gifts they have to share.

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Packer Chapel,  
Lehigh University, PA

First Presbyterian Church, Walnut Street, PA

Christ Church, Georgetown, Washington, DC

Trinity Episcopal, Princeton, NJ

*“We are committed to preserving the great art glass treasures of the past. Our goal is to maintain the original aesthetic while enhancing the structural integrity of the original art work.”*



(Pictured)  
“Victory of Life”  
Tiffany Studios,  
Circa 1911,  
First Presbyterian,  
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synagogue at the time, performed the initial conditions survey and provided the cost estimate. He also led interviews with architects, guided the committee in selecting Tekton Architects and oversaw the project. The time and talents of other members of the congregation also proved vital to the success of the project. Janet Cornish, a member and cantorial soloist for the synagogue, had worked in local government, once directing the Urban Revitalization Agency. This city agency administers a tax increment finance fund for projects that enhance the quality of the historic district. While the fund was not set up for religious properties, Cornish knew there was a precedent — a Catholic church and school in the historic district had previously secured funding for external renovations to their building. So Cornish and Blumenthal made the case for funding repairs to the synagogue's façade and sidewalk in order to preserve the building as an anchor in the historic district. The Urban Revitalization Agency made a grant for \$90,000 — half the cost of the renovations. The synagogue would need to continue to think creatively to raise the remaining half.

### Organizing a Campaign

Before kicking off its capital campaign, the temple formed a steering committee of members with professional ties to the community and purchased Partners' *Complete Guide to Capital Campaigns in Historic Churches and Synagogues*. Rather than produce a traditional case statement, the group opted for a fundraising letter that described the restoration needs of B'nai Israel and promoted the 100th anniversary celebration and reunion that was planned for two years later. The committee assembled a database of target donors, including current members, past members and people throughout the country (and beyond) whose ancestors had some connection to the synagogue.

### Going National and International

It was a slow process, conducted by word of mouth, recalls Pam Rudolph, who chaired the capital campaign. But it was well worth the effort: The



# Small Montana Synagogue Attracts International Support

As B'nai Israel Temple approached its 100th anniversary several years ago, it faced a significant challenge and an even more significant opportunity. The Butte, MT synagogue, a Moorish-style red brick building with an onion dome roof, was in dire need of repair. A previous patch job on the roof had left the dome with little room for ventilation and the build up of condensation caused severe water damage. The external brick work was deteriorating, interior walls needed attention and additional moisture was penetrating the basement. While the synagogue is an anchor of the Butte Historic District (a National Register District) and has the distinction of being the oldest

synagogue in continuous use in Montana, the temple's congregation had dwindled to only 25 families (from a high of 500 in 1940). Initial estimates indicated that repairs would cost \$180,000. For this tiny congregation, mounting a successful capital campaign would require a combination of faith, hard work and ingenuity.

### Using Congregational Talent and Connections

Fortunately, one of the members of B'nai Israel Temple is an architect and project manager for the state of Montana. Paul Blumenthal, who also happened to be president of the

congregation compiled a database of 150 names of people from around the country and the world. “Families in our congregation would say ‘My uncle used to live in Butte and hasn’t been back in 65 years but I know he still cares deeply,’” Rudolph says. Every letter included a handwritten, personal note based on the conversation Rudolph had had with the contact person, mentioning that contact’s name, reminding the reader of their connection to B’nai Israel Temple and inviting them to attend the upcoming reunion.

It was this personal, individualized attention that made all the difference, Rudolph says. “So many people wrote back to me like I was a friend asking if ‘so and so’ still lives in Butte. It started a dialogue,” she recalls. “People saw a connection to their past and they really paid attention.”

In one year, B’nai Israel Temple raised \$28,000 from over 90 individuals from as far away as Israel and England and from nearly every state in the country. The remaining funds came from the congregation’s own funds and through the sale of land. The synagogue is part of a cemetery with Jewish and Christian sections and sold a portion of their section to the Christian section that wanted to build a mausoleum, Cornish explains.

### Success

When the synagogue reopened its doors, complete with shiny new copper flashing, restored brick work, and new lighting, paint and doors, nearly 200 people attended the 100th anniversary celebration and reunion from as far away as Florida, New York and California. “For a tiny congregation of 25 people to be able to reach out and generate that kind of national support is really neat,” Rudolph says. “We have a lot to be proud of.”

## B’nai Israel’s Keys to Success

- **Used 100th anniversary as impetus for building campaign**
- **Building condition survey and cost estimate donated by architect and Temple President Paul Blumenthal**
- **Connected to community revitalization funding**
- **Used *Partners’ Complete Guide to Capital Campaigns in Historic Churches and Synagogues***
- **Established database of past members**
- **Solicited donations from international contributors**
- **Held anniversary reunion event to celebrate success**



## Synagogues in the Wild West

**L**ike most early immigrants to Montana, the first Jewish settlers were drawn West by dreams of carving out their fortunes from the gold trail and copper mines. Jewish immigrants from Germany and Eastern Europe helped settle Montana’s urban centers like Butte and Helena, providing a service economy to the mines as entrepreneurs operating dry goods stores, freighters who owned mule teams that transported copper from the mines, as well as journalists and lawyers, explains Sam Gruber, director of the Jewish Heritage Research Center in Syracuse, NY.

The first Jews arrived in Montana in 1862, and by the beginning of the 20th Century, several hundred thousand Jews were living in the West, establishing substantial Jewish communities in many Western towns, Gruber says. They built synagogues and their communities thrived. At the turn of the century, Butte supported three Jewish congregations: Reform, Conservative and Orthodox, each with its own synagogue. Butte’s first Mayor, Henry Jacobs, was Jewish, elected in 1879.

In the 1920’s, as industries and farming dried up in the heartland, the grandchildren of Jewish immigrants joined the mass migration of young people leaving Western towns to go to college, join the army or search for better jobs and economic opportunity, Gruber says. Today, Butte’s Jewish community has shrunk to 25 families and one synagogue — B’nai Israel Temple, which survives as the oldest continually functioning synagogue in Montana.

# How Strong is Your Spire: *A Steward's Guide to Steeple and Tower Maintenance*

by Clive Copping



Clive Copping RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects), is a Senior Associate with DPK&A Architects, LLP, a firm of architects, architectural conservators and planners who specialize in historic restoration, adaptive reuse, transportation facilities and office design. Mr. Copping has worked with the firm since 1994 on a number of major projects including the restoration of Saint John the Baptist Cathedral in Savannah, GA.

*Last year, Sacred Places reported the loss of a number of church towers all within Philadelphia. One such church spire made national news. Last August, Christ Memorial Reformed Episcopal Church's tower collapsed after a particularly heavy summer downpour. The sudden crumbling of the tower dealt a devastating blow to the congregation, as they could not hope to rebuild it without major funding. Sympathy was far-reaching, and media coverage helped to bring attention to the need. However, the news stories often failed to acknowledge the greater issue linked to this disaster: how to stem the continuing loss of our nation's historic sacred places and the impact this loss has on the fabric of our communities.*

**W**hen performing condition assessments on historic places, DPK&A Architects has found it common for spires to fall into disrepair, simply because they are very hard to see and even harder to reach — at least without good mountaineering equipment! Religious property stewards — quite rightly! — will not risk scaling the sides of the tower, and often take an “out of sight, out of mind” approach to assessing maintenance priorities. Unfortunately, the consequences of such an approach often result in “demolition (or even disaster) through neglect.” Because so many spire structural problems go unnoticed, what may have been a simple fix becomes a much more expensive project down the road.

It's important to remember that buildings are not permanent. They are vulnerable, and their relative durability depends on the quality of materials and construction. In the case of Christ Memorial, poor façade stone played a critical role in the tower's downfall. And though many sacred buildings were constructed with high quality materials such as stone, brick and copper or slate roofing, these materials have a limited life — some no more than seventy-five years. **Even the strongest structures can fail, especially when a lack of maintenance accelerates the process. Every congregation needs to implement a methodical assessment and maintenance plan for their religious property.**

## **Get to Know Your Steeple and Spire**

Understanding the building system is the first step toward pinpointing potential problems. In the case of the tower or spire, it may be constructed out of stone that inclines back from the square tower to form an octagonal spire. Or it may be a stone or brick tower with a wood or steel frame and slate or tile covering. Or it could be a metal roof with wood sheathing.

**A lot about a spire's condition can be learned from examining the interior.** If it is possible to access the spire interior by ladder or stairs, this will allow an up-close view of the masonry or other



components of the exterior skin. It may even be possible to look out of upper louvers or windows at the exterior roofing material. (Be sure to secure yourself and any window or removable louver back to the interior prior to attempting to access the exterior.) When examining a part of the building that is not used frequently, assess for pigeon, bat and vermin excrement. Use extreme caution when dealing with droppings because the inhalation of the organisms found in the dropping of pigeons and bats can lead to potentially fatal illnesses. Contact with rat urine can result in the spread of disease as well. Use a respirator that conforms to OSHA standards and exercise the proper safety precautions and rigorous post inspection clean up.

**In cases where close examination of the exterior surfaces may not be possible, a general scan of the tower or spire with binoculars can turn up many potential problems.** Slipping or missing slates should be visible from the ground, and may signify problems with the slate anchorage system or a weakness in certain slates. In these instances, isolated slate repairs can be made if the slate is in generally good condition.

**The following suggestions outline an approach for accessing and reviewing the condition of the tower or spire:**

- From the top down on the interior, **review the masonry of the tower for cracks.** Record the width, length and location of any cracks for monitoring purposes. Install tell-tails — plastic devices that monitor and record the movement of the building. Pay close attention to the junction where the tower changes from a square to an octagonal spire, or at the location of the buttress, as it is one of the transition points where the load of the structure is transferred from eight sides to four. Any problems should be referred to a design professional immediately.
- Perform the same survey for slate or metal roofing, and **locate and record any moisture penetration.** If appropriate, use a moisture meter — an instrument that when applied to the surface of a wall measures the percentage of water content at the surface of the wall. By taking select readings across the surface of the wall, you can determine which areas are most moist. This information can help identifying the source of moisture penetration.
- If the slate or metal roof is hung from a metal frame, **inspect the frame for rust.**
- **Check for any broken slate hangers or wire ties.**
- **Clean out gutters and check flashings for fractures** or pulled out sections. Make sure that mortar joints or reglets (the junction between the masonry and the flashing) are sound.
- **Check around windows for water penetration.**
- All of the above **should be performed on a regular basis, but particularly after a heavy**

**rainstorm.** Some issues may not present themselves until a few days after a heavy rain. To assess a storm's full impact, it is worth repeating the survey again after a few days.

- The best-case scenario, of course, is for congregations to **obtain a comprehensive condition assessment from a design professional** (i.e. a restoration architect) before beginning their maintenance plan. This ensures that any major problems are detected, as well as any issues that could lead to problems in the future. A professional assessment also makes it much easier to perform reviews on a regular and methodical basis, because a congregation will know exactly what to measure any changes against.

If a problem is suspected while conducting a regular maintenance review, consider hiring a *reliable* steeple jack. It is essential to get someone with experience and respect for the historic building, as well as someone trustworthy. The average layman will not be able to see the scope of the damage for himself. A steeple jack is best called in to manage minor issues, such as the replacement or reinstallation of a failing piece of flashing, or they can execute work specified by an architect.

If a major structural problem is found, the best bet is to recruit preservation architects, since they have access to conservators or structural engineers who can provide added professional advice and help stave off any potential disasters.

Today, stewards of our historic religious properties are charged with the awesome task of preserving these structures. And this responsibility is more important than ever. The religious property spire remains an important neighborhood icon — serving as a beacon for community residents. The gradual loss of these proudly-standing steeples promotes and intensifies the disintegration of the urban environment. Therefore, a regular maintenance plan not only benefits the congregation, but also helps the larger community and preserves our historic American legacy.



**Spire of Saint John the Baptist Cathedral in Savannah, GA, restored by DPK&A Architects.**

# Conrad Schmitt Studios Helps Restore

# Holy

Situated atop eastern Wisconsin's highest hill, Holy Hill, National Shrine of Mary, Help of Christians, draws thousands of pilgrims from across the nation each year. A wall of abandoned crutches attests to miraculous cures at Holy Hill. The Shrine was built in 1929 on what has been considered holy ground since the first settlers arrived in Hubertus and built a log chapel there in the 1860s. Holy Hill's twin spires rise majestically above a wooded hilltop, visible from hundreds of miles away.

Perched in this dramatic but exposed position, the Shrine suffered from years of bitterly cold winters, scorching summers and severe thunderstorms. Leaks in the roof, steeples and stained glass windows caused significant water damage to the Shrine's sanctuary ceiling, walls, altar, pews and floor. To restore the Shrine to glory, Holy Hill's Carmelite caretakers launched a two-phase renovation project. Completed in 2002, phase one replaced the slate roof, tuck-pointed the walls and installed new gutters, downspouts and laminated glass to protect the stained glass windows.

With the "building envelope" sealed, the Carmelites embarked on phase two — a complete renovation of the water-damaged sanctuary, the largest restoration project in the Shrine's history. For this project, they called on Conrad Schmitt Studios (CSS), one of the oldest and most respected studios providing decorative finishes, painting and stained and etched glass to churches around the country.

Founded in 1889 in Milwaukee by Conrad Schmitt, the son of Bavarian immigrants and a talented artisan and businessman, CSS quickly built a reputation as one of the few studios — along with Tiffany — that provided both decorating services and stained glass. CSS was purchased by artist Bernard O. Gruenke in 1953 and is now directed by three generations of the Gruenke family. It boasts 60 full-time artisans whose talents range from technical craftsmanship to fine arts. CSS has provided artwork, decoration and stained glass to Holy Hill since the 1920s.



CONRAD SCHMITT STUDIOS

"Before" and "after" Conrad Schmitt Studio's restoration and new decorative painting scheme for Holy Hill Shrine in Hubertus, WI.

# Hill



CONRAD SCHMITT STUDIOS

CSS Project Director Rick Statz began meeting with the Carmelites in 1997 to plan the renovation project and “totally new decorative painting scheme that would enhance the Shrine’s Romanesque architecture and give the interior the same awe-inspiring feel that the exterior has had for pilgrims for many years,” Statz explains. Work began in October 2004 and finished in May 2005.

While Shrines are usually more lavish than churches, the Carmelites are known for their simple interiors. So CSS eliminated the use of 24-karat gold leaf in the new painting scheme and, instead, used a 16-karat pale gold that almost looks like silver. To lend the interior nobility and strength, all the arches were meticulously painted to look like cut stone. Painted faux stone and marble give the impression that the Shrine has brand new marble columns, stone block work on the walls, and marble and mosaic inlay on the proscenium over the altar.

Flaking plaster was repaired and painted; damaged stone columns and wainscoting, terrazzo floors and marble shrines were cleaned and repaired; water-damaged pews were repaired and refinished; and massive pendant light fixtures and other ornamental metalwork, black with soot, were restored to a handsome bronze.

Statz also worked with sound and lighting consultants to create and install a new sound system and state-of-the-art theatrical lighting that highlights the Shrine’s architectural features and improves ambient light for visibility.

**Conrad Schmitt Studios is a member of Partners’ Professional Alliance. For more information on this membership resource for congregations and design professionals, please see page 18 or visit Partners’ website: [www.sacredplaces.org/professionals.html](http://www.sacredplaces.org/professionals.html).**



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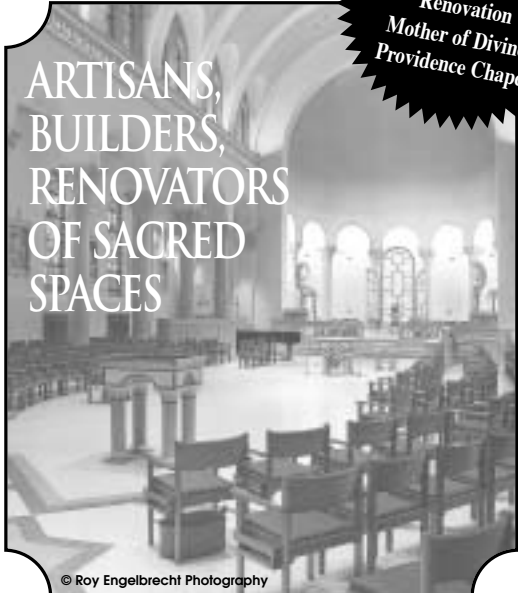
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#### **MASONRY RESTORATION**

deGruchy Masonry  
Restoration, Inc.  
Quakertown, PA  
(215) 536-4482  
www.degruchymasonry.com

Keystone Waterproofing  
Greensburg, PA  
(800) 888-5924  
www.keystonewaterproofing.com

Masonry Preservation  
Group, Inc.  
Merchantville, NJ  
(856) 663-4158

Structural Preservation Systems  
Elkridge, MD  
(410) 796-5000  
www.structural.net

#### **METAL CASTING**

M-Boss Inc.  
Cuyahoga Heights, OH  
(216) 441-6080  
www.mbossinc.com

Torry Metals Corporation  
Spanish Fork, UT  
(801) 798-6750  
joan@torrymetals.com

Valley Bronze of Oregon  
Joseph, OR  
(541) 432-7551  
www.valleybronze.com

#### **ORGAN RESTORATION**

Fowler Organ Company  
Lansing, MI  
(517) 485-3748  
www.fowlerorgan.com

Patrick J. Murphy  
& Associates, Inc.  
Stowe, PA  
(610) 970-9817  
www.pjmorgans.com

#### **ROOFING CONTRACTORS**

Alluvium Construction  
Marlton, NJ  
(856) 767-2700  
www.historicroofs.com

ARMM Associates, Inc.  
Cherry Hill, NJ  
1-866-337-4803  
www.armmramm.com

The Durable Slate Company  
Columbus, OH  
(614) 299-5522  
info@durablestone.com  
www.durablestone.com

Farrell Group  
Easton, PA  
(610) 258-3984  
farrellgroup@fast.net

Leeland Slate Roof Repair  
Ephrata, PA  
(717) 733-7663  
www.leelands.com

Martech Associates, Inc.  
Millheim, PA  
(814) 349-8270  
www.martechassoc.com

#### **STAINED GLASS RESTORATION/ CONSULTATION**

The Art of Glass Inc.  
Media, PA  
(610) 891-7813  
www.theartofglassinc.com

Beyer Stained Glass  
Philadelphia, PA  
(215) 848-3502  
www.beyerstudio.com

Castle Studio, Inc.  
Willow Grove, PA  
(215) 657-5090  
www.castlestudioinc.com

Cathedral Stained Glass  
Studios Inc.  
Cheltenham, PA  
(215) 379-5360  
www.CathedralStainedGlassInc.  
com

Cumberland Stained Glass  
Mechanicsburg, PA  
(717) 691-8290  
www.cumberlandstainedglass.  
com

Cummings Stained Glass  
Studios, Inc.  
North Adams, MA  
(413) 664-6578  
www.cummingsstudio.com

Farrell Group  
Easton, PA  
(610) 258-3984  
farrellgroup@fast.net

Hauser/Willet Stained Glass  
Winona, MN, and  
Philadelphia, PA  
(877) 709-4106  
www.hauserglass.com

Lyn Hovey Studio, Ince.  
Hyde Park, MA  
(617) 333-9445  
www.lynhoveystudio.com

Judson Studios  
Los Angeles, CA  
(800) 445-8376  
www.judsonstudios.com

J & R Lamb Studios  
Clifton, NJ  
(877) 700-LAMB  
www.lambstudios.com

Mezalick Design Studio, LLC  
Philadelphia, PA  
(215) 744-5490  
www.mezalick.com

Pike Stained Glass Studio Inc.  
Rochester, NY  
(585) 546-7570

Reinarts Stained Glass  
Winona, MN  
(507) 452-4465  
www.reinarts.com  
www.reinartspanels.com

Victor Rothman for  
Stained Glass, Inc.  
Bronxville, NY  
(914) 969-0919  
(212) 255-2551  
vrothman@iwon.com

Rohlf's Stained &  
Leaded Glass Studio, Inc.  
Mount Vernon, NY  
(800) 969-4106  
www.rohlfstudio.com

Conrad Schmitt Studios Inc.  
New Berlin, WI  
(800) 969-3033  
www.conradschmitt.com

Julie L. Sloan  
Stained Glass Consulting  
North Adams, MA  
(413) 663-5512  
www.jlsloan.com

Stained Glass Resources, Inc.  
Hampden, MA  
(413) 566-5053  
www.stainedglassresources.com

St. Jude Liturgical Art Studio  
Havertown, PA  
(610) 789-1300  
www.stjudeshop.com

#### **STEEPLE REPAIR**

Alluvium Construction  
Marlton, NJ  
(856) 767-2700  
www.thesteeplepeople.com

Atkinson & Sons Steeple Jack  
Philadelphia, PA  
(215) 677-2747  
www.atkinsonsteeplejack.com

Keystone Waterproofing  
Greensburg, PA  
(800) 888-5924  
www.keystonewaterproofing.com