FEATURE STORY:
Vermont Churches Reclaim Their Role in the Community

Inspiration from Syracuse
— St. Paul’s reclaims its vacant space

News from the National Fund
— Serving 29 Sacred Places and counting

Faith on Germantown Avenue
— Congregations in a dynamic relationship with other community forces
What is your favorite older sacred place?
Does it have a regionally or nationally important story to tell in the religious history of America?
Is the building an architectural gem?
Does the congregation impact the common good in innovative and meaningful ways?
Is this sacred place embarking on major capital building improvements?

If YES, then tell the congregation about the National Fund for Sacred Places! Letters of Intent for 2018 will be accepted through April 17.
www.fundforsacredplaces.org
Of course, any nonprofit organization would like to have the ability to handle any issue or address any problem in its sector. For most of us, this is but an aspirational goal. Most of us hope we can make our tools and resources more comprehensive, more widely applicable and useful, while respecting our mission and capacity.

Thus, Partners has been endeavoring to move in the direction of comprehensiveness. One sign of this movement is the cover story on our Strategic Investment in Sacred Places (SISP) work in Vermont. This project brought to bear much of the knowledge and programming that Partners has developed over the last 15 years: building the capacity of congregations, helping them engage with their communities, measuring the Halo value of their properties, and positioning them to raise capital funds, among other things.

SISP represents a holistic and comprehensive approach to helping and guiding congregations make the most of their building assets in furtherance of mission and purpose. We have done this work in Texas and Pennsylvania, too.

You might say the entirety of this issue, too, reflects the larger, comprehensive nature of Partners’ work today:

• The National Fund for Sacred Places represents a major step forward in grantmaking and partnering, in this case with the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

• The story of St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Syracuse will tell you something about our work to help congregations engage with their communities.

• The interview with Dr. Katie Day will illustrate some of the scholarly questions being asked that relate to Partners’ work.

Today, Partners is more effective than ever in making the case for the civic value of sacred places at both the micro and macro levels. We endeavor to help congregations tell their stories of public value in their own communities, and we make the larger case to leaders at the regional and national level.

And we do so as comprehensively as we can.

—A. Robert Jaeger

PARTNERS FOR SACRED PLACES is the only national, nonsectarian, nonprofit organization dedicated to the sound stewardship and active community use of America’s older religious properties.

Partners builds the capability of congregational leadership for building care, shared use, capital fundraising through training programs, fundraising assistance, and organizational and facility assessments. In the process, Partners becomes a trusted resource and guide as congregations examine and weigh opportunities.

Partners engages with congregations to focus on critical areas such as:

• Asset-mapping and community engagement—assisting congregations to develop new relationships with neighbors and potential community partners.

• Strategic partnerships and space sharing—brokering agreements between sacred places and arts, food justice, health, education, and social service programs.

• Planning for capital campaigns to support repairs and renovations that preserve significant historic features and make spaces usable for new community programs.

• Collaborative initiatives among unrelated congregations in a neighborhood to encourage coordinated outreach, space usage, joint marketing and interpretive events, and coordinated work with public agencies for lighting, signage, and streetscape improvements.

ON THE COVER:
St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church, Middlebury, VT.

SACRED PLACES • AUTUMN/WINTER 2017-18 • 3
by Chad Martin

In the fall of 2016, Partners for Sacred Places launched The National Fund for Sacred Places, an innovative, new grant-making program to support the preservation of landmark religious buildings across the country. The National Fund for Sacred Places, a collaboration between Partners and the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and made possible by Lilly Endowment, provides:

• Training, capacity-building and technical assistance to ensure that grant-funded projects are successfully planned and implemented.
• Grants for the planning and execution of urgent capital projects at historic sacred places that are valued for their cultural importance as well as their role in providing human services, strengthening communities, and revitalizing neighborhoods.

The combined training, consulting, and financial resources will also help congregations make the most of their facilities as agents of community renewal, encouraging collaborations with outside groups to activate spaces in exciting and innovative ways that draw people to the sacred place and encourage investment in the community.

The National Fund will award grants of up to $250,000 to at least 50 projects. The National Fund for Sacred Places Expands Its Reach

First Church of Christ, also known as Center Church, Hartford, Connecticut. 2016-17 National Fund awardee using capital grant funds for major restoration project of the iconic steeple. Photo: Center Church.
Awardee Profile: Urban Grace

The building that is now home to Urban Grace was constructed in 1925 as First Baptist Church. It is the oldest, continuously occupied Christian church in Tacoma, Washington, the only church in Tacoma's downtown core, and is listed on the Tacoma Register of Historic Places. In 2005, First Baptist reincorporated as an ecumenical new church development called Urban Grace, a dynamic and growing congregation with broad support in the city for its active collaboration with many local organizations.

The building is architecturally significant as a fine Gothic Revival example, and is the only “skyscraper” church in the Northwest. It was designed with multiple stories of leasable space in addition to space for the congregation. Urban Grace regularly shares its space with more than 15 social service and arts organizations resulting in steady earned income and many opportunities for collaboration.

In 2017, Urban Grace launched a capital campaign for projects related to the preservation of the building and interior improvements to make the facility more accessible and usable by the community.

Services received as part of Urban Grace’s National Fund program package include:

- Capital Campaign training (which was delivered by Partners to a total of 9 Fund participants).
- $4,700 Planning Grant toward architectural and planning documents and campaign design/website development.
- Consulting Services and Campaign Coaching. Partners’ consultants conducted a feasibility study focused on community donors beyond the congregation’s membership. In this case, services are being coordinated with a local fundraising consultant hired by the congregation focusing on member donors. In addition, Partners consultants provided coaching regarding the campaign steering committee and other matters.
- A capital grant is being awarded later in 2018.

Congregations over four program years, beginning in 2016-17. An ideal National Fund candidate demonstrates:

- **National or Regional Significance:** buildings with architectural, historic, and cultural importance, or excellent examples of a building type (e.g., small town churches in New England, or Catholic churches that tell the story of immigrants in America) owned by an active congregation. Buildings must be listed or eligible for National Historic Landmark or National Register of Historic Places status.

- **Broad Community Engagement:** congregations with innovative programs that serve members and nonmembers, with special emphasis placed on congregations that share space and partner with other nonprofit organizations, and plan to make the most of the sacred place as a community asset.

- **Need for Funding:** urgent repair needs that require financial support beyond the internal capacity of the congregation. All projects must respect the historic character and materials of the building(s) and adhere to the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation.

- **Campaign Readiness:** the capacity to leverage this grant to raise matching funds, and the experience, energy, and opportunity to complete a significant capital fundraising campaign. Matching funds must be raised after being awarded participation in the National Fund.

- **Congregational Health:** congregations with strong clergy and lay leadership, financial health, and the energy and judicatory support for a vibrant future. Ideal candidates are prepared to learn and capitalize on resources and expertise provided by the National Fund.
For more information contact Chad Martin, Director of the National Fund, in Partners’ Philadelphia office. Or go online to: fundforsacredplaces.org. Complete eligibility requirements and application information are available online.

Frequently Asked Questions about the National Fund

**What is the application process?**

All applicants must complete an online Letter of Intent (LOI). LOIs for the 2018-19 funding cycle will be due April 17, 2018. Each year around 12 to 15 projects will be awarded participation in the National Fund.

**Can any faith tradition apply?**

Yes! While the majority of awardees will be Christian churches, the National Fund supports synagogues, temples, mosques, and houses of worship from any faith tradition.

**What do participants in the National Fund receive in addition to monetary grants?**

All participating congregations receive planning grants, training, and specialized consulting services in support of their projects. Partners for Sacred Places is a nationally recognized leader in training congregations for effective community partnerships, capital campaign consulting for congregations, preservation of religious properties, and effectively communicating the economic impact of congregations in their communities. The full breadth and depth of these resources are deployed to assist and support National Fund participants.

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2016-17 NATIONAL FUND AWARDEES

Broad Bay Congregational United Church of Christ (Waldoboro, ME)
The Basilica of Saint Josaphat (Milwaukee, WI)
Christ Church (Philadelphia, PA)
Christ Church Lutheran (Minneapolis, MN)
Divine Redeemer Presbyterian Church (San Antonio, TX)
First Christian Reformed Church (Grand Rapids, MI)
Center Church, First Church of Christ in Hartford (Hartford, CT)
Kadesh African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (Edenton, NC)
Mokuaiakaua Church (Kailua-Kona, HI)
North Christian Church (Columbus, IN)
Quinn Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church (Chicago, IL)
Trinity United Methodist Church (Idaho Falls, ID)
Trinity-St. Peter’s Episcopal Church (San Francisco, CA)
Urban Grace Church (Tacoma, WA)

2017-18 NATIONAL FUND AWARDEES

Church of the Epiphany (Los Angeles, CA)
Congregation Beth Ahabah (Richmond, VA)
Downtown Church (Memphis, TN)
Emanuel AME Church (Charleston, SC)
First Baptist Church (Boston, MA)
First Church In Oberlin United Church of Christ (Oberlin, OH)
First Presbyterian Church of Santa Fe (Santa Fe, NM)
Grace United Methodist Church (Dallas, TX)
The Church of Holy Ascension (Unalaska, AK)
Judson Memorial Church (New York, NY)
Lutheran Church of the Reformation (Washington, D.C.)
Mission Concepción (San Antonio, TX)
St. Joan of Arc Church (Indianapolis, IN)
St. Paul’s United Methodist Church (Cedar Rapids, IA)
Shrine of Christ the King Catholic Church (Chicago, IL)
United Baptist Church of Poultney (Poultney, VT)
Wesley AME Zion Church (Philadelphia, PA)
Three words epitomize a vision emerging at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Syracuse, New York: _intentional, bold, hopeful_.

A Church that Inspires Us

Adapted from an article by Krin J. Van Tatenhove
Founded in 1826, St. Paul’s is one of the earliest congregations in Syracuse and it is the oldest Episcopal parish. After decades of expansion and growth, the church erected its current building in 1885 – a stunning example of Victorian Gothic Revival architecture, designed by Henry Dudley (1813-1894). St. Paul’s 200-foot spire crowns the Syracuse skyline.

Throughout its nearly 200-year history, St. Paul’s has served Syracuse faithfully, particularly as an inclusive congregation that welcomes all people and champions the arts.

The parish was instrumental in founding and incubating the Samaritan Center, an interfaith program that feeds the hungry, in 1981. St. Paul’s housed the program until 2015, when it outgrew the space and moved to a larger site. The church has served the homeless, refugees, and immigrants, including a group of fellow Anglicans from South Sudan who hold a worship service in their Dinka language. St. Paul’s also provides space to a number of arts-related organizations, including the musician-led orchestra, Symphoria.

However, like many downtown mainline churches, St. Paul’s has experienced significant decline during the last half of the 20th century. Its magnificent building, a local and national treasure, became increasingly difficult to maintain. Recently, as parish leadership planned to call a new priest, their interim priest asked a prophetic question: Wouldn’t it be important for prospective applicants to know that there was a plan for the building? This immediately sparked the energy and imagination of Rebecca Livengood, a long-time leader at St. Paul’s. “I knew we were at the point where we needed to act,” she says. “And I knew the person to initiate this action was me. My background in planning and development, both with the City and nonprofits, gave me the contacts and skills we needed.”
FEATURE STORY:

Vermont Churches Reclaim Their Role in the Community

When the congregation of St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church in Middlebury, Vermont first caught wind of plans for a four-year railroad reconfiguration in their backyard, its leaders knew they needed to act. The project, led by the U.S. Department of Transportation and Vermont Transportation Authority, placed a blast site just 25 feet from the doors of their 190-year-old limestone church. Downtown Middlebury has nearly 86 historic buildings on the National Register of Historic Places and is the largest historic district in Vermont. As the project expanded from a simple bridge replacement to major rail infrastructure repairs, the threat of damage and disruption in Middlebury loomed over the town like a brewing storm.

Expecting the worst, the congregation began to take matters into its own hands. “We are clearly the most affected church and may be the most endangered institution in the whole community,” said The Rev. Susan McGary, rector of St. Stephen’s. “Once the scale of the project had expanded, no one was making any signs of revisiting the scope of possible damage to historic buildings and sites.”

As a participant in Partners for Sacred Places’ Strategic Investment in Sacred Places (SISP) program, funding was provided by Partners for an assessment of St. Stephen’s historic preservation needs. Partners connected McGary with the Preservation Trust of Vermont which assigned the church to field service specialist Scott Newman, the former Historic Preservation Officer for the Vermont Transportation Authority. “When we asked him for advice about the upcoming construction, he immediately gave us very detailed advice on what to demand in order to protect our building,” she said. Following that fateful meeting, St. Stephen’s would become a catalyst for community pushback and an active voice leading the charge for the protection of Middlebury’s historic district.

Resistance to the upcoming construction gathered momentum among Middlebury’s downtown business owners and so did the efforts of St. Stephen’s. “We had representa-
tion from St. Stephen’s at each key
meeting to keep attention on the pro-
tection of all of our downtown historic
buildings,” said McGary. Using SISP
funds and support from Partners, St.
Stephen’s organized four town hall
meetings with 11 different commu-
nity agencies to create and implement
a preservation plan and commercial
strategy that would circumvent com-
plexions caused by the town-wide
disruption. The partnership, called
Neighbors Together, helped trans-
form the church from a small, local
ministry into an influential commu-
nity participant. “The Neighbors To-
gether program certainly gave us a
higher profile with community lead-
ers and brought many people into the
church who received both a voice and
hospitality,” said McGary. “We were
gratified that so many local institu-
tions brought their support to bear on
the project.”

Collaborating with the Chamber
of Commerce, Better Middlebury
Business Association, and Middlebury
College, St. Stephen’s continues to
work to help mitigate the disruptive
effects of construction as the project
moves in phases over the next few
years. “St. Stephen’s became active
with the Town of Middlebury to safe-
guard our building and to help organ-
ize the community so we can face the
upcoming disruption with as much
positive energy, safety, and continued
success as possible,” said McGary.
“Our participation in SISP helped in
all these ways.”

Divine Intervention

Since 2014, Partners has worked
with congregations in Vermont to
help them meet the challenges of ag-
ing, historic buildings, dwindling
congregations, and the lingering ef-
teffects of local economic downturns.
Via a statewide interdenominational
model of SISP, Partners—led by Tuomi
Forrest, Executive Vice President and
Co-sponsored by the Episcopal Dio-
cese of Vermont and the Vermont
Conference of the United Church of
Christ, the program focused on con-
gregations anchored near or at the
center of small and medium-sized
towns. Participants in the program—
United Church of Dorset, First Con-
gregational in Brattleboro, United
Church of Underhill, First Congrega-
tional in Morrisville, Bethany Con-
gregational in Montpelier, Good
Shepherd in Barre, Christ Episcopal in
Montpelier, St. Stephen’s in Middle-
bury, and St. Paul’s in Vergennes—s-
panned the entire state. Equipped
with strategic planning tools provided
by SISP, these nine churches are writ-
ing the next chapter of their church’s
history through community partner-
ships and creative programming.

The goal for small congregations
was to begin thinking and acting “big-
ger” by reclaiming their roles as cen-
tral meeting places and organizers
within their communities. Through
partnerships, outreach services, and
leasing space, churches are energizing
their mission, supporting their budg-
ets, and renewing their presence as
hubs of social connection. Partners

Joshua Castaño, Senior Program
Manager—has provided training and
mentorship to nine congregations to
help evaluate and maximize the
community value of their churches.
conducted site visits with participating churches and conducted intensive discussions with church leaders on community engagement, public programming, congregational trends, and space sharing, revealing the potential for a re-evaluation and broadening of both revenue streams and institutional vision.

Over a two-year span, SISP participants worked with Partners staff to assess the challenges — be it changes in leadership, mergers, or deferred building maintenance — and short and long-term needs unique to each congregation. During the implementation phase of the program, four training sessions, led and designed by Partners staff, with additional support from the Preservation Trust of Vermont, Hunger Free Vermont, and the State Arts Council of Vermont, provided tools for understanding public value, determining institutional assets, collaborating with other local congregations, and supporting community development.

In addition to training and funding through the SISP program, eight of the nine participating congregations received planning grants through the Preservation Trust of Vermont from the Robert Sincerbeaux Fund. The grants were used to develop customized action plans that ranged from the expansion of food programs and other community-serving initiatives, to building preservation and facility maintenance, to reusing dormant space for leasing and public programming.

The individual outcomes that have taken shape in each Vermont congregation participating in SISP have been nothing short of surprising. The nine churches entered the program beset with unique sets of challenges, but with focus, resolve, and an eagerness for problem solving, each congregation has taken the tools provided by Partners to gain control of their futures and counter uncertainty with resourceful thinking.

### The Sincerest Form of Respect: United Church of Underhill

For one congregation in Vermont, learning to simply stop and listen to its community would prove to be its greatest strength. Life at United Church of Underhill was relatively calm when the congregation began working with Partners. Its finances were stable, membership was steady, and the church’s buildings were in good shape. Without any major pressing issues, the congregation was unsure how to best proceed with the skills it had acquired from the SISP training. With the guidance of Joshua Castañ o, leaders at Underhill decided to use a portion of its SISP seed grant to develop and conduct a “listening campaign.”

The congregation at Underhill conducted 60 face-to-face interviews with a diverse mix of 30 congregants and 30 community members. They spoke with food pantry clients, members of the arts community, school officials, senior services staff, and local police. At the end of the campaign, leaders at Underhill compiled the interview data and generated a report with their findings to serve as their roadmap. “With this report, we sat down again with the interviewers and made some decisions about how to apply the tools we learned from Partners for attracting New Dollars, New Partners,” said Kevin Goldenbogen, former pastor of
The Village Meetinghouse: Waitsfield United Church of Christ

One Vermont congregation’s success in following a community-based model for its major capital fundraising campaign—which went well over its initial goal and raised over a third of all funds from outside the congregation—can be an inspiration for other small town churches nationwide. Waitsfield United Church of Christ, whose white steeple pokes out among the surrounding village and green hills of the Mad River Valley in central Vermont, has become a hub for community gatherings, culture and arts events, and a place providing service and care for those in need.

Recently the congregation embraced a bold plan to renovate its historic meetinghouse, adding accessibility and improving the amount and quality of available space for programs, ministries, and events. Funding the congregation’s vision required launching a major capital campaign. Waitsfield turned to Partners for consulting services, recognizing Partners’ focus on raising funds from a wide variety of sources beyond congregation members.

Campaign chairman and congregation member, Jon Jamieson said of their challenges and how Partners helped them: “We are a United Church of Christ congregation located in the least religious state in the nation. We had a building that suffered from years of deferred maintenance and a congregation that could not afford to support upgrades to improve its efficiency and utility. Partners was the only consultant that understood that we would be reaching out to the larger community to achieve our goal. They help us define our mission and communicate it effectively. I don’t think we could have succeeded without PSP!”

Partners helped the congregation embrace a community-based fundraising model that leveraged support—and financial gifts—from a wide variety of neighbors, friends, civic leaders, and others outside the congregation’s current membership. As the congregation’s pastor, the Rev. Nancy McHugh shared, “We have this beautiful facility now—but the reason we have this beautiful facility now is because of the wider community that helped to make this happen. There were hundreds of people that participated in the capital campaign... We are so grateful and hope we can continue to be a greater and greater asset to the community.”

The steering committee for the campaign brought together leaders from both the congregation and beyond. Civic leaders and elected officials were also friends to the campaign and provided key guidance and advice about significant grant opportunities that the congregation successfully sought—including a six-figure award from a special, limited opportunity for flood remediation funds through the State of Vermont and FEMA, as well as a Cultural Facilities Grant. Other efforts, like a special campaign to reach out to the many second homeowners in this ski-focused region also yielded surprisingly strong responses and significant financial contributions.

Along the way, the congregation even changed its name—deciding to adopt “The Village Meetinghouse” in order to emphasize both its past as the town gathering place and house of worship, and its present and future as a vital, and irreplaceable civic asset serving people in need. We felt like Village Meetinghouse is exactly what we are. The new name embraced our history and helped us move into our future.”

United Church of Underhill. “We identified the need in our community for providing meals to children and families during school vacations along with the need for support for senior citizens. With that, we decided to go to the congregation with a plan to renovate our Gifford Building to be used in the winter months when our Clutter Barn program is not using the space.”

This past spring, Underhill moved forward with plans to renovate the Gifford Building, sending out a request for proposals to five local architects to plan renovation of the building. This fall, the congregation will meet with the architect they have selected for the job to refine plans and decide the best way to move forward with reusing the building for the food pantry, senior citizen outreach and other public programming.

“The Partners program has helped UCU in many ways,” said Pastor Goldenbogen. “For me, I think the biggest benefit has been to help the congregation to think bigger and to
Vermont Churches, continued:

think more deeply about the community we are embedded within. Churches so often think about programs they can offer to their communities. I think that the United Church of Underhill has begun to see the power of offering programs with the community for the benefit and vitality of all involved.”

The “Can Do” Congregation:
First Congregational Church of Morrisville

The members of First Congregational Church of Morrisville have a reputation around town for pulling up their sleeves to help those in need. For the last year and a half, they have run their Breakfast on Us program serving morning meals to hungry clients five days a week from 7 to 9 in the morning. Each month, the program attracts between 300 to 500 people, and is run by an army of church members and community volunteers. Breakfast on Us was the brainchild of three members who were inspired by the emphasis Partners places on community engagement through local partnerships. “The main way Partners’ has helped us is with asset mapping and community building,” said Dr. Marisa Laviola, pastor of First Congregational. “Our people who are willing to volunteer and to commit to helping folks who are most vulnerable in our greater community, that is our greatest asset.”

The breakfast program receives most of its food through donations from restaurants and grocery stores. Volunteers from the church and the greater community lend a hand with cooking, serving, and cleaning up each day. Laviola said Breakfast on Us began on a shoestring budget, but when the congregation learned more about the program, they mobilized to volunteer and seek out extra help by encouraging the surrounding community to lend a hand. The congregation also hosts a monthly community dinner that draw crowds of roughly 50 to 80 each meal.

But First Congregational’s outreach programming doesn’t end between breakfast and supper. The church is listed on Vermont 211, a public assistance resource managed by United Ways of Vermont, as a place to help those in need with food, gas, rent, and utility bills. Through a partnership with the local Catholic church in Morrisville, Most Holy Name of Jesus Parish, First Congregational provides clients with support through donations made almost entirely by their members.

Along with providing assistance through community partnerships, First Congregational runs a popular teen center in the basement of its church that was saved from the brink of closing a few years ago. “We decided to take over administratively and fiscally. We also manage the employees,” said Pastor Laviola.

The next project on First Congregational’s to-do list is to take the seed grant provided by Partners to hire an architect to help make the most of its 200-year-old church by providing even more space for programming and community development. “When we see a need, we work very hard to meet that need,” said Pastor Laviola. The main thing we learned from Partners is how to join together with the community. They encouraged us to reach out to the greater community and boldly ask for partnerships.”
Chad Martin, Director of the National Fund for Sacred Places, recently sat down with The Rev. Katie Day to discuss her book, Partners for Sacred Places’ Economic Halo Effect study, and the importance of understanding the relationship between congregations and their neighborhood contexts.

Katie Day:
Your book, *Faith on the Avenue: Religion on a City Street*, is a unique contribution to congregational studies and a deep dive into one particular place. Can you describe what you hoped to achieve with the project?

Katie Day:
Germantown Avenue is a historic street. It cuts through Philadelphia for eight and a half miles. It goes through the wealthiest neighborhoods and through some of the poorest in the city. The whole range of religious experience of Philadelphia is captured on this one street.

The project unofficially began when I grabbed a friend and said, “Let’s go take some photos and throw them together in a slideshow,” for a seminary student orientation. At that point I had gone up and down Germantown Avenue for years. I work there. I had lived off of Germantown Avenue. My kids’ school was on Germantown Avenue. I thought I knew it. And then, when we started capturing images, I started seeing things in a new way and realized that there was so much that I had missed. That led to my doing a deeper analysis.

The research, from the time I started until when the book was published, took 10 years. During that time I went...
Faith on the Avenue: Religion on a City Street (Oxford University Press, 2014) is the latest book by Katie Day.

Faith on the Avenue is a unique contribution to the sociological study of congregations. Author Katie Day spent years studying all of the religious congregations that border the length of Germantown Avenue in Philadelphia - over eight miles and roughly 90 Christian churches, meetinghouses, mosques, and syncretistic religious communities. Day employed a variety of research methods in her study, including much the same quantitative valuation tool, the Economic Halo Effect of Sacred Places, developed by Partners in collaboration with Dr. Ram Cnaan at the University of Pennsylvania. She also used qualitative analysis through interviews and observation. She also used documentary photography and census data. As a whole, her study provides a detailed cross-section of urban, religious experience in 21st century America.

Katie Day is the The Charles A. Schieren Professor of Church and Society at United Lutheran Theological Seminary where she has taught for over 30 years. She is ordained in the Presbyterian Church USA. She also serves on the Advisory Committee of the National Fund for Sacred Places (see page two), and has been a friend of Partners for many years.

up and down Germantown Avenue daily. In a complex, urban context, change is dynamic and subtle.

CM: In the book you write about what makes these places sacred. Could you talk a little more about this idea?

KD: Faith communities, both Christian and Muslim, have taken over very ordinary buildings on Germantown Avenue. A big warehouse, shoe stores, former liquor stores, theaters, funeral parlors. The oldest funeral home in America moved out to the suburbs after generations of being on the corner of Germantown and Washington. It was bought by a Jamaican Pentecostal congregation called Brand New Life. The irony was not lost on them.

The congregations that come into these ordinary, often dilapidated buildings make them sacred in different ways. For example, Brand New Life had a lot of exorcisms and “cleansings.” On Sunday mornings they still have prayer warriors that come and stand over each chair to bless it, cleanse it, and reestablish the place as sacred.

Across the street is Germantown Mennonite Church (the “mother” church of the denomination, founded in 1683). They took over what was an ironworks factory and warehouse. It is now this beautiful, open, and airy worship space. Mennonites don’t go in for a lot of iconography, stained glass windows, and some of the traditional trappings that we think make a place sacred. Rather, it was the sweat equity that they had put into it. The cleaning, renovating, and envisioning they undertook themselves. The space then became sacred because of their work, and remains sacred every time they are there.

CM: As you know well, the work of Partners is primarily focused on historic religious buildings. How does your research inform the kind of work we do?

KD: There are a number of Mainline Protestant churches that have had continually worshipping congregations for over 300 years. That is pretty amazing.
Neighborhoods have changed around them and they have offered stability, identity, and some sense of permanency.

And there are other congregations who function in much the same way. Al-Aqsa Islamic Society holds worship services in an old furniture warehouse. A few years ago it looked blighted, but it attracted a very vibrant group of 300 hundred families from the region. Following the September 11 attacks in 2001, the mosque was contacted by a synagogue and by a church. Both asked, “Are you alright?” They found that the congregation was shell-shocked and feeling vulnerable. The synagogue and a few Christian churches began meeting with the leadership at Al-Aqsa and decided to have an interfaith service to mark the first anniversary of 9/11.

Soon after, members of the Jewish and the Christian congregations said to Al-Aqsa, “No offense, but your mosque doesn’t look like a mosque. It looks like a plain, old, dumpy red building. Let’s see if we can help make it look like a mosque.” Now, this was scary for Muslims at the time because they didn’t want to draw attention to themselves, afraid that it would incite hateful push back.

With the support of the Mural Arts Program, Christian Sunday School students, Jewish kids, and Muslim kids began making ceramic tiles for the building’s facade. What once looked like a rundown industrial building was transformed into a beautiful, colorful, gleaming mosque. It went from being what some might see as a sign of blight to being a visually uplifting, neighborhood landmark.

**CM:** One of the narratives that can be told about historic sacred places is that there is a unique sense of the sacred that gets built over time. Some believe that there is no replacement for those layers of history. And yet, what you are describing is that, with intentionality, collaboration, and resources, there is a significant amount of sacredness that can be recreated and generated with vision for what a place can be.

**KD:** It is sort of preservation forward. It is restoring buildings into sacred purposes that serve the community. It gets to the same impact that Partners is so committed to, but with a different pool of sacred places that are not historic yet. But they will be.

**CM:** One of Partners’ primary target demographics is working with small churches, the kind that people drive by everyday without noticing. Your research shows that there is impact, sometimes arguably more per capita impact, in smaller congregations. Can you explain a little more?

**KD:** With my research, I wanted to see what the economic and social value of these places really was. The medium-sized churches and the larger churches had a number of programs. The smaller ones didn’t have any, but they had equal social value in their corners of the city. Smaller churches have contributed a lot in three particular areas: education, the performing arts and basic human services.

**CM:** What do you think some of the emerging research horizons are for Partners?

**KD:** I think there is a lot of what you have already done that can be built on. I can tell you that a cutting edge topic in urban religion studies is spatial approach. Sociologists of religion have either looked at megatrends or at congregations in isolation. There is a growing appreciation for understanding religion as an agent, as an actor, in producing urban space. It’s not just that religious groups happen to be living there. Communities of faith are in a dynamic, symbiotic relationship with other community forces in impacting the space of the neighborhood. Buildings that are being restored matter in how people engage the neighborhood and how they practice their faith. ☮
In late January 2017, St. Alban’s Episcopal Church in the San Francisco Bay Area celebrated the launch of St. Alban’s Serves, the public phase of its capital campaign to raise funding for church building upgrades and accessibility improvements. After 100 percent of the parish’s initial $400,000 goal was raised from congregation members, St. Alban’s expanded the project’s scope to introduce its campaign to the broader community in Albany, California. The launch was a resounding success, and the outpouring of support from neighbors, friends, and community leaders was clear.

Albany mayor Peggy McQuaid gave a speech in support of St. Alban’s to kick off an event that included performances by an Albany High School choral group and members of the Berkeley High School Orchestra. Testimonials and expressions of appreciation were given to St. Alban’s from outside groups that partner with the parish, including the Child Therapy Institute, Friends of Five Creeks, Or Zarua Reconstructionist Havurah (a Jewish spiritual community), and others.

“One really amazing thing that the campaign’s done is help the con-
The congregation see how invested the community is in the parish,” said Reverend Julie Wakelee-Lynch, rector of St. Alban’s.

A wave of interest in community partnerships has washed over St. Alban’s since the launch of its public campaign. From new requests to host events to offers from current partners to donate event proceeds to the campaign, “St. Alban’s Serves” is resonating with neighbors.

Following the launch, the parish introduced its Third Sunday Concert Series. The monthly chamber music series, featuring a diverse, rotating group of performers, has been both a financial victory and a community breakthrough for the parish, offering one of the few venues for live music in Albany.

St. Alban’s next step is to establish a separate, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization to support event programming and partnerships. Reverend Wakelee-Lynch hopes that the campaign and the church’s new nonprofit will continue to strengthen ties between the church and residents of Albany. “We’re not just here for ourselves but for the broader community,” she notes, echoing the inclusive spirit of St. Alban’s, the congregation’s greatest asset.

The success of St. Alban’s is a familiar story with congregations assisted by Partners’ Capital Campaign Consulting Services (CCCS) work. Partners’ CCCS projects are geographically and demographically diverse, with successful campaigns ranging from rural Vermont to Indianapolis to California.

Each of these campaigns are marked by a powerful new message—that historic, sacred places have the power and potential to serve the larger community. According to Partners’ new Economic Halo Effect research, 87 percent of the beneficiaries of community events and programs housed in sacred places are not members of the congregation.

Partners’ community-based capital campaign model is based on a rigorous feasibility study process that includes independent research and one-on-one conversations with current and former congregation members, elected and appointed government officials, local businesses, and foundation representatives. By reaching “beyond the pews,” Partners helps congregations diversify funding and identify new strategies for individual capital campaigns, while building community leaders into the fundraising process from the beginning. To date, campaigns managed by Partners have had a median campaign goal of $935,000; on average, 63% of the total goal for these campaigns has come from the wider community.

Photos: Rev. Julie Wakelee-Lynch and Marcia Hickman
Professional Alliance Directory

Membership in the Professional Alliance is an easy way for firms specializing in the restoration of historic sacred places to increase their visibility among a national audience of clergy, congregational leaders, and preservationists. For information on membership benefits, please contact Simon Kaufman at skaufman@sacredplaces.org or visit www.sacredplaces.org.

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