

The assemblage of historic religious buildings – synagogues, churches, schools, rectories, convents, parish halls and related structures and landscapes – represent an extraordinary collection of historically and architecturally significant properties that are deeply associated with the social, cultural and demographic histories of scores of communities across the United States. The decision to close, consolidate and dispose of property often leads to a process of sale and redevelopment that directly threatens the future of an unprecedented number of historically and architecturally significant houses of worship.

Abandoned religious buildings have become a familiar sight in many communities. A vacant church building can quickly lead to advanced levels of physical deterioration. And in areas where the real estate market is tight, a former church is sometimes targeted for demolition and redevelopment of the site.

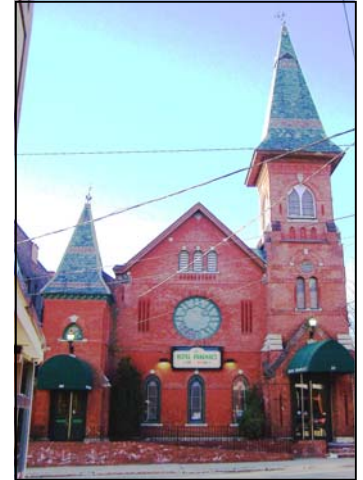
Instead, alternative approaches can keep these important community anchors and landmarks in active use. As some congregations die out, rather than letting church buildings go unused, they are being transferred to other immigrants of other faiths for continued use. And when the religious function no longer is viable, examples from across the country demonstrate how these buildings can be successfully adapted for new uses, including restaurants, retail and commercial space, professional offices, cultural and community centers, museums, hotels, and housing.

Share your story! The National Trust and Partners for Sacred Places are collecting additional examples of adaptively reusing historic religious properties. Contact us at the Northeast Office at nero@nthp.org to share your story.

National Trust for Historic Preservation and Partners for Sacred Places



Cincinnati, OH — converted for Urban Outfitters retail store.



Brattleboro, VT — converted for pharmacy.



Boston, MA — converted for 33 housing units.



Pittsburgh, PA — converted for European-style hotel.



Erie, PA — converted for senior housing.



Gladwyn, PA — converted for nonprofit use.