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Resources for: Effective Building Projects Prepared for Sacred Space Grants Initiative Session 1

The Sacred Space classes focus on three essential steps to linking a congregation's facility to their mission – reflection, planning and action. In the context of the Sacred Space program the reflection step consists of congregations thinking about who they are and what God calls them to be and do. This includes theological reflection, assessment both internally and externally, and strategic planning. The following resources are some of the best for undertaking the reflection stage of a congregational building program.

Callahan, Kennon. *Building for Effective Mission: A Complete Guide for Congregations on Bricks and Mortar Issue*. San Francisco: CA: Jossey-Bass, 1997.

Callahan asserts that although we are no longer living in a “churched culture,” we can rejoice that God now calls us to mission. The mission field is the world. A congregation is a mission outpost to the people beyond its walls. In accordance with these principles, this book describes concrete actions congregations may take to discover a mission and to plan for accomplishing it. Later chapters discuss the physical plant that furthers a chosen mission. Whether or not a congregation plans to move or renovate, it will find this book's emphasis on mission thought provoking.

Ford, Kevin and James P. Osterhaus. *The Thing in the Bushes: Turning Organizational Blind Spots into Competitive Advantage*. Colorado Springs, CO: Pinon Press, 2001.

“‘The thing in the bushes’ is the unidentified and often-denied problem that prevents an organization from achieving its goals.” Although a secular book, the concepts presented are highly pertinent for congregations. Ford and Osterhaus suggest that organizations can become successful by finding and addressing “the thing in the bushes” through the use of 9 principles; (1) live out your code (essence); (2) encourage personal excellence; (3) unleash leadership in everyone; (4) practice relational network thinking; (5) create dynamic boundaries; (6) nurture authentic communication; (7) balance trust and cynicism; (8) proactively manage change; and (9) focus beyond yourself.

Rendle, Gil and Alice Mann. *Holy Conversations: Strategic Planning as a Spiritual Practice for Congregations*. Bethesda, MD: The Alban Institute, 2003.

Gil Rendle and Alice Mann describe a “holy conversation” as a congregational discernment process that centers on three critical questions: Who are we? What has God called us to do or be? Who is our neighbor? Rendle and Mann equip congregational leaders with a broad and creative range of ideas, pathways, processes, and tools for planning. By choosing the resources that best suit their needs and context, congregations will shape their own strengthening, transforming, holy conversation.

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TAG is a consulting organization that can assist congregations with internal and external assessment, strategic planning, and coaching so that they can discover their hidden opportunities and make important

strategic decisions. TAG provides a unique congregational assessment tool, the Healthy Church Index.