
**THE NEW YORK
LANDMARKS
CONSERVANCY**

**Suggestions for a Successful
Sacred Sites Open House
May 20th-21st**

“Congregations and Communities: 50 Years of Sacred Sites”

Thank you for participating in the New York Landmark Conservancy’s annual Sacred Sites Open House event. The following pages contain information and suggestions for hosting an Open House in hopes of supporting participants through the process.

Please contact Moira Gasior at sacredsites@nylandmarks.org or 212-995-5260 ex. 317 with additional questions. We look forward to your participation.

I. General Suggestions for Planning

- This year’s theme is *Congregations and Communities*. We are seeking to highlight how sacred sites create community connections through the services they offer, social ties they create, and spaces they provide for people from all walks of life. We encourage sites, if possible, to create programming for the day of the Open House. This could be a musical performance from the choir or youth group, a pot luck/food tasting, or other activities related to the congregational life. Or, you could invite staff or clients from outreach programs to talk about, or provide information on, these programs and public events, including youth and senior programming, community food or clothing pantries, theater or concert series. *Please note that it is not required for a participating site to create programming around the theme.*
- Typically, participating sites provide tours of the sanctuary, stained glass windows or other special features of the building, including comments on the founding, significance, historical and current cultural makeup of the congregation.
- If you need more historical information about your site and your religious institution is listed on the National and State Registers of Historic Places, or is located within a National or State Register Historic District, you can download a copy of the nomination form using the Cultural Resource Information System (CRIS) here: [New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation CRIS](#)
- Additionally, if your building is designated as a local, New York City landmark, either individually or as part of a district, you can locate a copy of the designation report here: [New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission Designation Records](#) , or via the [Discover New York City Landmarks Map](#).
- Host an orientation for volunteers who may have questions or need guidance. Provide them with the information they will need to conduct tours and/or greet visitors, or provide a hand-out for visitors.

- Use the following hashtags for all online promotion and posts related to the Open House weekend:
 - #nysacredsites23
 - #NewYorkSacredSitesOpenHouse
 - #sacredsitesofnewyork
 - #SacredSitesMonth
 - #CongregationsandCommunities
 - #50YearsofSacredSites
 - #nylandmarks

II. Promotion

- Announce the congregation's participation in the *Open House*. Encourage congregation members to attend, volunteer and spread the word to family, friends, and colleagues.
- Publicize the Open House on your congregation's web site, Facebook page, Twitter, Instagram account, newsletter, or any other publication/social media. Be sure to announce Open House on congregation's bulletin board and during services in weeks before May 20th and 21st. Be sure to include hashtags, located above, in postings.
- Like the [New York Landmarks Conservancy](#) on Facebook, and repost our Open House posts on your newsfeed.
- Send press releases/letters to the editor of local and denominational print, radio, TV stations and internet media outlets. Here's a [sample press release](#).
- Send flyers/calendar postings to local organizations – libraries, civic groups (i.e. Kiwanis, Lions, and Rotary Club), senior centers, local historic societies, colleges, etc.
- Invite local elected officials (Mayor, State Assembly and Senate members, community board, city council, etc.) to visit during Open House.
- Invite the clients of organizations that share/rent space with the congregation (day care, senior center, etc.) to participate.
- Coordinate activities with other Open House sites in your community for maximum impact so, if possible, guests can visit nearby sites on the same day. A list of participating sites is available on the Conservancy's [website](#)

III. Day of Open House

- Have signage (posters, balloons, signs, etc.) to indicate that you are participating in the Open House weekend. Use our [free downloadable flyer](#). Be sure to create additional signage for any special events taking place during the event.
- Make sure you mark the entrance for visitors with signage and balloons. We will mail

balloons to sites that register to participate by May 1st. Email us at sacredsites@nylandmarks.org to let us know the best address/contact for balloon mailing, so they reach you.

- Have volunteers greet visitors and act as docents in order to provide a positive visitor experience.
- Encourage participants to post pictures on your website, Facebook page, Instagram, etc., and use the hashtags listed on page 2. Anyone can participate in our [photo contest](#).
- If applicable, create or print blowup displays/exhibit of “before” and “after” pictures of the building’s restoration, or provide information about renovation or repair projects currently being planned.
- Visit other Open Houses in your community. A list of participating congregations will be available on the [Conservancy’s website](#).

IV. After the Event

- Post pictures of your Open House experience on your website, Facebook page, etc. (using hashtags) and share them with the Conservancy by emailing photos@nylandmarks.org.
- The Conservancy seeks to improve further Open House events using feedback from participants and visitors, so please be on the lookout for a follow up survey after the Open House weekend. Additionally, be on the lookout for the 2024 Sacred Sites Open House invitational email or post card Spring 2024 to participate again! Be sure to update us if contact information changes.