

# Options for Repurposing Church Property



Presented By:  
Olanda Carr, Jr. and Robert Hay, Jr.  
Senior Ministry Relations Officers of the Presbyterian Foundation

# Introductions

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**Olanda Carr, Jr.**  
Senior Ministry Relations Officer  
East Region  
Presbyterian Foundation



**Robert Hay, Jr.**  
Senior Ministry Relations Officer  
East Region  
Presbyterian Foundation

# Objectives for Today

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- I. Overview of Project Regeneration
- II. Various Options to Consider When Repurposing Church Property
- III. Brief Overview of Case Studies Involving Partnerships, Reinventions, etc.
- IV. Discernment Process for Church Property

# Project Regeneration

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A bit of historical context....

- Began in 2013
- Focused primarily on property transactions (mergers, property sales, etc.)



# Project Regeneration

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What's changed . . .

- 2020 Revised Model
- Discernment-based
- Continued assistance with matters of property



# Options for YOUR CHURCH

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- Project Regeneration seeks to partner with congregations to determine “what’s next”
- Often, decisions made by churches fall into one of seven categories



# Option 1 - Dissolution

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The congregation gracefully dies a well-planned and well-organized death. Members transfer their membership to other congregations. Property sale proceeds fund a legacy endowment in the church's name to fund designated ministry in perpetuity.

- *Energy required: low*
- *Financial resources required: low*
- *Spiritual challenge: varies*

*Energy Required: Low*

*Financial Resources Required: Low*

*Spiritual Challenge: Varies*

# Option 2 - Merger

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Two or more congregations of the PCUSA join together to become one, new congregation. Ministry model must be developed and venue must be selected. New leadership of the new congregation will be representative of the predecessor congregations.

*Energy Required: High to Very High*

*Financial Resources Required: Low*

*Spiritual Challenge: High to Very High*

# Option 3 – Sell Campus

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Models vary and include the congregation becoming a tenant in its former location or relocating and renting space elsewhere. Property sale proceeds fund ongoing operations, mission, and ministry locally and beyond.

*Energy required: Low to Medium*

*Financial resources required: Very Low*

*Spiritual challenge: Varies Depending on Model*

# Option 4 – Share Campus

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Models vary, from allowing another congregation to "nest" in your space while the host congregation's ministry continues largely unchanged ... to offering the bulk of the campus to other charitable organizations and hosting another congregation which becomes the dominant worshipping community on the site. Income derived helps to fund the host congregation's ministry.

*Energy required: Medium*

*Financial resources required: Medium/High*

*Spiritual challenge: Low*

# Option 5 – Death and Restart

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Death and resurrection: the church "goes dark" for a period of time and then "re-opens" as something new and different. Popular among non-denominational churches, this model involves new leadership, a new format, a new name ... a new approach to ministry. Few current members would return.

*Energy required: Very High*

*Financial resources required: High*

*Spiritual challenge: Very, Very High*

# Option 6 – Reinvention

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Make a change. Changes may be minor or dramatic and may include targeting a new audience. A revised ministry plan must be developed to include strategic and tactical considerations.

*Energy Required: High*

*Financial Resources Required: High*

*Spiritual Challenge: High*

# Option 7 – Age In Place

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Do nothing significantly different. Cut expenses as needed through significantly reduced pastoral services (move to weekly pulpit supply and/or chaplain model) to extend life of congregation until it cannot be extended any further due to lack of funds.

*Energy required: Low*

*Financial resources required: Low*

*Spiritual challenge: Low*

# So How Do We Choose?

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- Determining the best option for your congregation can be challenging
- Requires consistent prayer
- Requires analytical data

Our Ministry Relations Officers guide congregations through a process of prayerful discernment through a series of meetings, held on site or virtually, to help churches consider a strategic approach for the future.



# Discernment Process

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Let's start with scripture:

*“If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. “*

James 1:5

New International Version



# The Process (continued)

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## First Meeting with Congregational Leaders:

- Introductions
- Review Process and adjust as needed
- Share Concerns



# The Process (continued)

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## Between 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting and 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting:

- Financial Analysis
  - Church to provide financial information to the Presbyterian Foundation
  - Presbyterian Foundation will perform an analysis and create a report
- Sailboat Church
  - Session members to read *Sailboat Church* through page 110
  - Session members to answer questions presented in *Sailboat Church*

# The Process (continued)

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## Second Meeting:

- Review of Financial Analysis Report
- Review of *Sailboat Church*
- Introductions on the possible outcomes for the church
- Instructions on Prayerful Discernment process

# Prayerful Discernment

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*Sailboat Church: Helping Your Church Rethink Its Mission and Practice*

– Joan S. Gray

“Is your church a rowboat church or a sailboat church? Rowboat churches depend largely on human effort. In a time of often shrinking budgets and membership, rowboat churches frantically row harder against a current, often frustrated and disappointed at their efforts. Sailboat churches, on the other hand, take up the oars, hoist sails, and rely on the Holy Spirit to guide them”

# Rowing Versus Sailing

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- ‘Rowboat Church’ – our vision is asked to by blessed by God versus a church that, through prayers, listens to where God wants to lead the church. A rowing church has a **high need** of control
- The power of a ‘Sailboat Church’ comes from God, the power of a ‘Rowboat Church’ is human power. When we sail, we give up control to God.
- Sailing is a partnership with the wind, i.e., Holy Spirit – church is a partnership between the people and God

# 40 Days of Prayer

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- Prayer is the most important element of equipping the church for a new/revised direction
- Church leaders commit to participate in the “Guide to Forty Days of Prayer” found on Page 111 of *Sailboat Church*



# The Process Resumes

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- 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting – Approximately 45 Days After 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting:
- Session members share what they heard during their individual prayers and discernment exercises
- Discussion about next steps and how to move forward



# The Process Looks Ahead

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- Does a particular option seem to stand out?

OR

- Are there some options that can definitely be eliminated?

The church leaders continue to devote time, energy, and resources to the identified option(s)



# Thoughts???

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Reactions

Responses



Questions

# Presbyterian FOUNDATION



Olanda Carr, Jr.  
Ministry Relations Officer  
East Region  
[Olanda.Carr@PresbyterianFoundation.org](mailto:Olanda.Carr@PresbyterianFoundation.org)



Robert Hay, Jr.  
Senior Ministry Relations Officer  
East Region  
Presbyterian Foundation