

Administrative Commission for the Lake Shore Church
John R. Ragsdale, Chair

Report for Presbytery
October 4, 2022

Organizational and First Meetings

The commission was elected by the presbytery on May 3. We held our organizational meeting and training with the stated clerk on May 16 and held our first business meeting on June 6 at the Lake Shore Church. We toured the campus, saw the interiors of all the buildings, and assessed the deferred maintenance, which is considerable.

We also heard histories from the two commissioners who are elders at Lake Shore and from former member Ed Kelly. We reviewed the church's current financial position, which is secure for the near-term, discussed possibilities for moving forward, and made plans for a congregational listening session.

Congregational Listening Session

We conducted a congregational listening session on June 26th at the Lake Shore Church. We gave each of the 17 members present an opportunity to introduce themselves and tell us how long they had been a member. Over 80% of those present have been there for 20 years or longer. This is a loyal and long-tenured congregation. We then invited any who wanted to share what Lake Shore means to them, and it became clear that the church occupies a central and impactful place in their lives.

We then presented some options for the future:

1. Continue in place, gathering and worshiping as long as resources permit. The presbytery can help with revitalization resources and identifying community needs.
2. Sell the southern portion of the property, retaining the fellowship hall or the fellowship hall and the sanctuary building. Use the sale proceeds for deferred maintenance and continuing operating expenses.
3. Sell all of the property and continue worshiping in another location. Invest the sale proceeds to provide income for continuing operating expenses.
4. Sell the property. Reopen discussions with the St. Andrew's Church about:
 - a. Using a part of their space to continue worshiping as a separate fellowship, or
 - b. Combining resources with St. Andrew's in some fashion.
5. Dissolution.

We then received congregational feedback and questions. There were several questions about how a sale of property would be handled. While no one wants to see the church close, there is realism about that possibility and how worship and fellowship might continue in new ways.

The commission met to discuss the results of the listening session on July 11th. The members of the congregation are not distressed but are accepting the reality about what the future may hold, the options before them, the need to process those options, and are welcoming the input of the AC. At this point, all options remain on the table.

Property

The church property consists of 1.8 acres in three contiguous parcels at the southwest corner of Blanding Boulevard and Sunderland Road in Jacksonville with a combined assessed value of \$707,000. There are four buildings: a sanctuary and music-rehearsal space, a fellowship hall and office space, and two classroom buildings.

The Commission met by Zoom on August 17. Commissioner John Higbe and Assistant Stated Clerk Ed Kelly will meet with commercial realtor Jack Garnett, who has represented the presbytery successfully on numerous property sales. They will investigate the sales potential and values of the various parcels of the church property. Ed has obtained the property appraiser's parcel numbers and zoning designations. They also are authorized to obtain a survey.

The commission will meet again when this information is obtained.