

To: Commissioners at the October 16, 2018 Seattle Presbytery Meeting

From: FPCS AC/Session

Re: Vacant Property Resolution

As a Session, we have worked for almost three years to discern God's future for the congregation of First Presbyterian Church of Seattle, including its property. We have spent thousands of hours attending to the church's ministry, looking at its history, and learning about our neighborhood. More recently, we participated in a number of listening sessions that followed the July Presbytery meeting.

For a comprehensive review of our work, please [read our FAQ](#).

Our work did not start with a blank slate; the former Session and congregation had decided that continuing the congregation within its current physical structures would not be sustainable and was not wise stewardship, and sought and received Presbytery approval to sell the property. We carefully considered many options, and prayerfully concluded that the property should be sold unencumbered and brought this resolution to the July meeting.

The Presbytery approved this most recent motion. Relying on that authorization, the FPCS AC/Session contracted with a real estate brokerage firm to sell the property and that process is underway. Any change at this stage to this Presbytery action could jeopardize the sale of the property.

The attempt to amend the July action interferes with our rights, responsibilities, and authority under the Book of Order as a duly constituted Session of a congregation to wisely manage the affairs of the church. For this reason, we oppose any motion to place conditions upon, amend, or rescind the Presbytery's approval of our decision to sell the property. In particular, we oppose the attempt to require the adoption of a vacant property policy as a condition for selling the property. The congregation is not closed, the property is not vacant, and so a vacant property policy does not apply to us.

We agree that a vacant property policy could be a positive addition to the current policies and practices that have created the strong position we are in as a presbytery. We have no objection to the development of such a policy, but that is a separate issue from our authority to act as the FPCS AC/Session.

Again, we urge you to [read the FPCS AC/Session FAQ](#).

Yours in Christ,

FPCS AC/Session

Heidi Husted Armstrong (TE, Seattle First PC)
J. P. Kang (TE, Japanese PC)
Bill Longbrake (RE, Seattle First PC)
Will Mason (TE, Steel Lake PC)

Ben McConaughy (RE, Mercer Island PC)
Jonathan Siehl (TE, Honorably Retired)
Kathy Smith (CLP, Seattle First PC)
Bob Wallace (RE, Bellevue PC)