



Sharing, Repurposing, and Selling Buildings





Emily Provance

epro Vance@hotmail.com

quakeremily.wordpress.com



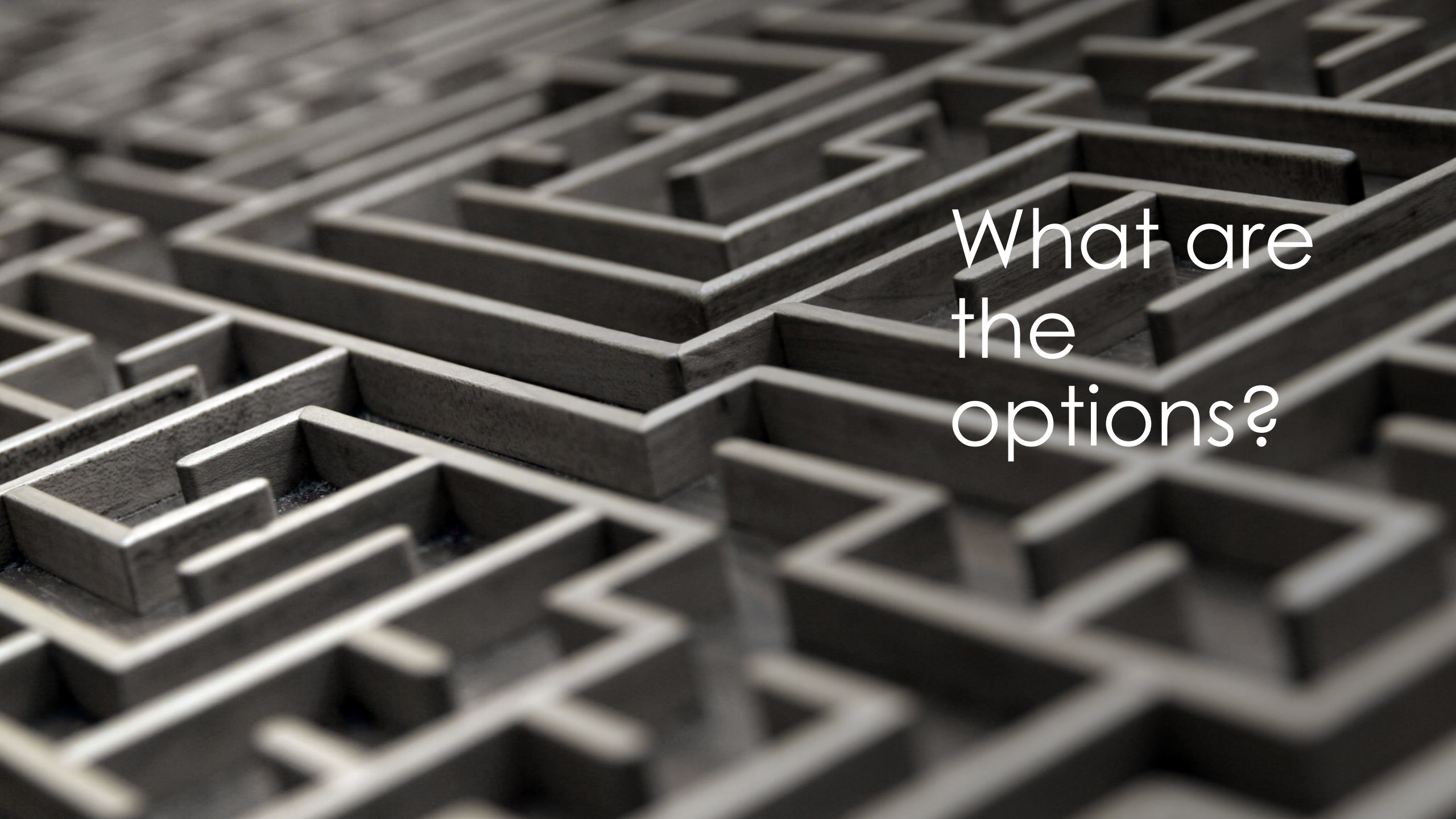


And so, I find it well to come
For deeper rest to this still room
For here the habit of the soul
Feels less the outer world's control:
The strength of mutual purpose pleads
More earnestly our common needs:
And from the silence multiplied
By these still forms on either side,
The world that time and sense have known
Falls off and leaves us God alone.

-- John Greenleaf Whittier

Signs we need to reassess:

- Loss of a sense of purpose, especially serving and engaging with the community
- A significant decline in building use
- A growing inability to keep up with the care and maintenance
- An ongoing decline in the congregation's focus on ministry and other priorities as building needs are attended to
- Inertia and pessimism that clouds decision-making
- Growing anxiety or fatalism about the future of the meeting
- A growing disconnect between the congregation and the surrounding community

A 3D maze constructed from dark grey, rectangular blocks. The maze is complex and winding, with many paths and dead ends. The perspective is from a low angle, looking into the maze. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights on the edges of the blocks and deep shadows in the recesses, creating a sense of depth and complexity. The overall tone is dark and moody.

What are
the
options?

Start with a Spirit-led (but expertise-advised) assessment.



Your meeting's priorities for ministry



Your building's characteristics



Your neighborhood community's needs and strengths



The local real estate market

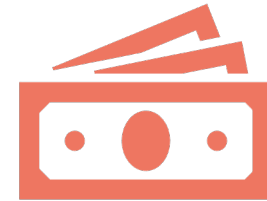
Stay and share.



Meets the neighborhood
community's condition and
supports relationship



May require investment in the
building



Probably will not solve financial
problems

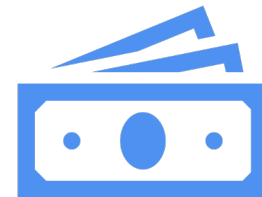
Stay but sell.



Can maintain relationship with same neighborhood community



Requires adaptability; the building and your use of it will change



Probably does solve financial problems

Stay and negotiate.



Development rights, ground leases, grants, financial incentives



Works if the only problem is finances but not if the meeting lacks vitality



Requires hiring experts

Transition and sell (or give), then move.



Can meet the condition of the neighborhood community



Helps the meeting have some control about use of the building after sale



Needs sufficient funding for slow transition

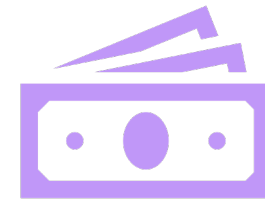
Sell and move.



Less control over whether the new use serves the neighborhood community

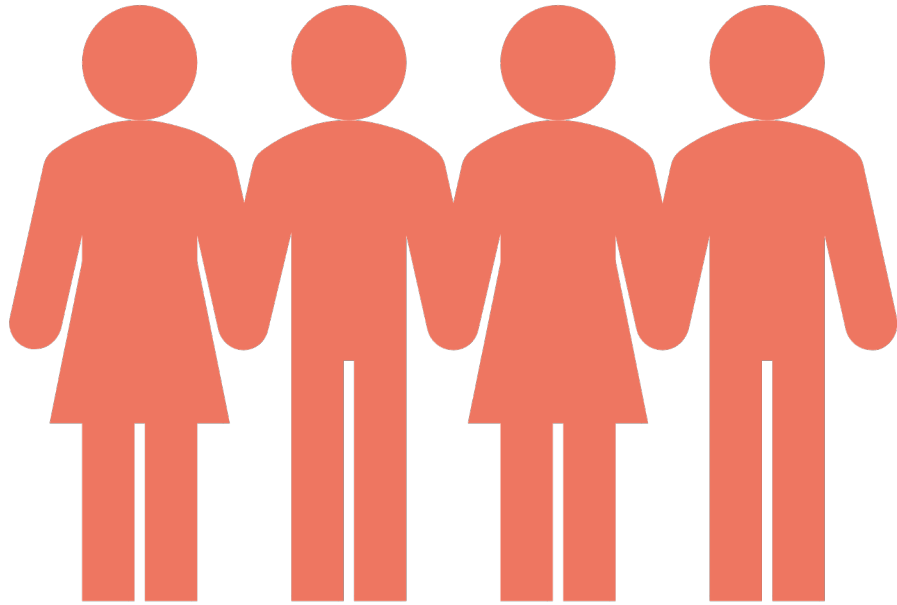


Less control over what happens to the building



Money from sale might fund a lot of ministry

Groups to involve in the discernment:



- Regular attenders
- Property committee members or equivalent
- Regional or yearly meeting
- Distant members
- Neighborhood community members
- Local nonprofits

The team of experts:



Realtors

Attorneys

Developers


Preservation and community organizations

NOT Aunt Judy (even if she's a professional)



Looking back at our meeting's history: what ministries have always been important to us?

Questions for Discussion:

- What does stewardship mean to you when you think about your property? How are we called to be in relationship with our physical space?
 - What have you heard today that feels either challenging or hopeful?
- 

Additional Resources

- [Transitioning Older and Historic Sacred Places: Community-Minded Approaches for Congregations and Judicatories](#) – highly recommended resource with practical tips toward approaching a variety of property-related matters
- [Charleston Fund and other funds](#) – grant support available for some meetinghouse-related purposes