

## Historic downtown church sells for \$1.2 million

A new congregation is set to move into the historic former home of First Christian Church at NW 10 and Robinson just one century after the landmark was originally built.

BY STEVE LACKMEYER [slackmeyer@opubco.com](mailto:slackmeyer@opubco.com)  4  
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A new congregation is set to move into the historic former home of First Christian Church at NW 10 and Robinson just one century after the landmark was originally built.

Frontline Church, a rapidly growing congregation of 1,200 currently meeting along Automobile Alley, bought the property for \$1.2 million.

David Adair, pastor of Frontline Church's downtown campus, said Tuesday the congregation will hold its first service on Dec. 4 — a date he later discovered coincides with centennial of the church's original opening of Dec. 3, 1911.

“That building is significant — there is a rich history there,” Adair said. “We're excited. We're humbled to have the opportunity to use this tool that God has been using the last 100 years.”

Adair said the former owner, CityChurch, moved out on Aug. 7. The congregation, led by longtime pastor Richard Hogue, owned the building since 1992 and oversaw repairs after it was damaged by the 1995 bombing of the nearby Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building. Hogue's congregation recently moved to new location in northwest Oklahoma City and closed the sale of the building to Frontline on Sept. 26.

Adair said Frontline members already are at work doing renovations and cleaning. Adair said contractors will be hired to do work on the roof and front steps, both of which he said are in immediate need of repair.

“Our heart and desire is to restore that church as much as we can,” Adair said. “We want to get it back to its original majestic state. We want to change and preserve as much as we can. It's incredible. We're a young state, and to have a building like that is a gift from God.”

The growth of Frontline Church mirrors the continued revival of downtown.

The congregation began small, meeting at a house in 2005 and then had 85 members when it moved into a building at NW 8 and Broadway on Easter Sunday, 2006.

The church now has about 1,200 members downtown, about 200 attending in downtown Shawnee, and will soon be opening a south campus at SW 44 and Interstate 35 on Oct. 23.

Adair said much of the old First Christian Church has not been renovated since the original congregation moved out in the 1950s. He said Frontline is committed to growing and fixing up their new home.

Renovations meanwhile are under way at the neighboring Packard Building, Guardian Garage and Cline Hotel with conversions into retail, offices and housing. The same developers, Bob Howard, Mickey Clagg and Chris Fleming, recently completed the renovation of another neighboring old building, Hadden Hall, into apartments.

Katie Friddle, director of Preservation Oklahoma, said she was encouraged to hear of the sale and the congregation's plans to preserve much of the old church.

“It's rare in this day and age with so many churches moving out to places where they can have easier access and more parking, or just shrinking and not have a congregations able to maintain it, to have a group like this be able to move and used it as intended,” Friddle said. “As an organization, we're thrilled to hear of a congregation coming in with those kinds of goals for a church.”



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