

Lifeway building in downtown Nashville under contract

January 27, 2021

NASHVILLE (BP)—Lifeway Christian Resources has entered into a contract for the sale of its building in downtown Nashville. Contract terms, including the sale price, have not been disclosed.

Lifeway President and CEO Ben Mandrell said he is excited about Lifeway's future workplace and the prospects of settling into a new work environment.

"Lifeway is moving forward, building fresh vision, and getting prepared for a new season of ministry to churches," Mandrell said. "This has led us to think strategically about selling our large building downtown, fully embracing remote work as the norm and moving into a new era of creative and collaborative work."

Mandrell said he and other Lifeway leaders have been looking at options for their headquarters since the summer of 2019, well before the COVID-19 pandemic.

"One of the first questions I asked when I took this role was: 'What should we do with this building?' A study completed last year showed we were using the building at only 60 percent occupancy on a daily basis," Mandrell said.

"We want to be wise stewards, so it makes sense for us to do all we can to make the best use of our resources, including our corporate office building. The decision to sell our building is a strategic one."

Lifeway will continue to occupy a portion of the building over the near term

until it determines a location for its new headquarters.

Increasingly mobile workforce

“We’re definitely moving to a new work environment,” Mandrell said. “Our new space will be designed specifically around a healthy blend of strategic meetings and team collaboration, as well as the flexibility of working from home. Like other companies are doing as a result of COVID, we’re re-imagining the corporate office for the future of work.

“We are moving away from the idea of a ‘headquarters’ to a fully mobile and agile workforce that intentionally gathers to build strong relationships, celebrate what God is doing and share ideas.”

In March, Lifeway’s Nashville-based employees moved to fully remote work as the city implemented a number of restrictions due to COVID-19.

Connia Nelson, Lifeway’s chief human resources officer, said Lifeway was well prepared for the remote work model.

“Before Lifeway moved to Capitol View, we saw the need to support an increasingly mobile workforce,” Nelson said. “We’ve had a robust work-from-anywhere strategy for the last few years, which positioned us well for Nashville’s safer at home orders put in place in March.

“Our employees have told us they have a better work-life balance and are still highly productive in this new work environment. We have a number of employees juggling work with caring for family members and helping their kids with distance learning. We want to make sure they have the flexibility to still perform at their best while juggling these responsibilities.”

Employees will continue to work remotely the majority of the time and will come to the building for strategic meetings, Mandrell said. The new work environment will offer a mix of conference rooms, casual meeting spaces

and drop-in workstations.

Lifeway began a feasibility study of its corporate office building in downtown Nashville in April 2020. The study explored multiple options including leasing several floors to external occupants, selling the building and leasing back office space, or moving to another location.

Based on the positive results of that feasibility study, Lifeway's board of trustees authorized a resolution for the organization's executive team to pursue viable options for the sale of its corporate headquarters. The action taken by trustees in October allows the entity's leaders to move forward with a sale of the property without further board approval.

Lifeway has not announced a timeline for closing on the current building or for moving to a new facility.