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### **MAN FOUND GUILTY OF BURGLARY AFTER BREAKING INTO CHURCH PROPERTY**

State Attorney Melissa Nelson announces that Christopher Bell was found guilty of Burglary to a Structure/Conveyance, and Possession of Burglary Tools. With the verdict, Bell faces up to 20 years in Florida State Prison. The Honorable Anthony Salem will sentence Bell at a later date.

On Oct. 29, 2025, officers with the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office responded to a Prospect Street church after receiving a call about a possible burglary in progress. A witness said he saw a utility garage door open and a man with a flashlight looking around inside. The witness kept his eyes on the man by following him down the street until officers arrived on scene.

When officers made contact with Bell, they saw him on the side of the street with a red bucket that contained power tools, ropes, and other various belongings, and a backpack on top with a crowbar in it. The church's pastor arrived and said that outside of the backpack and crowbar, the red bin containing tools, ropes, etc. belonged to the church and were housed in the utility garage. The pastor confirmed he had not given Bell permission to enter the building or take anything from the property. Officers saw the garage door was lifted up, the locking mechanism was broken off, and pry marks were on the door that were consistent with the Bell's crowbar use.

The case was investigated by the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office and prosecuted by Assistant State Attorneys Fallon Hinkley and Kelli Shobe.