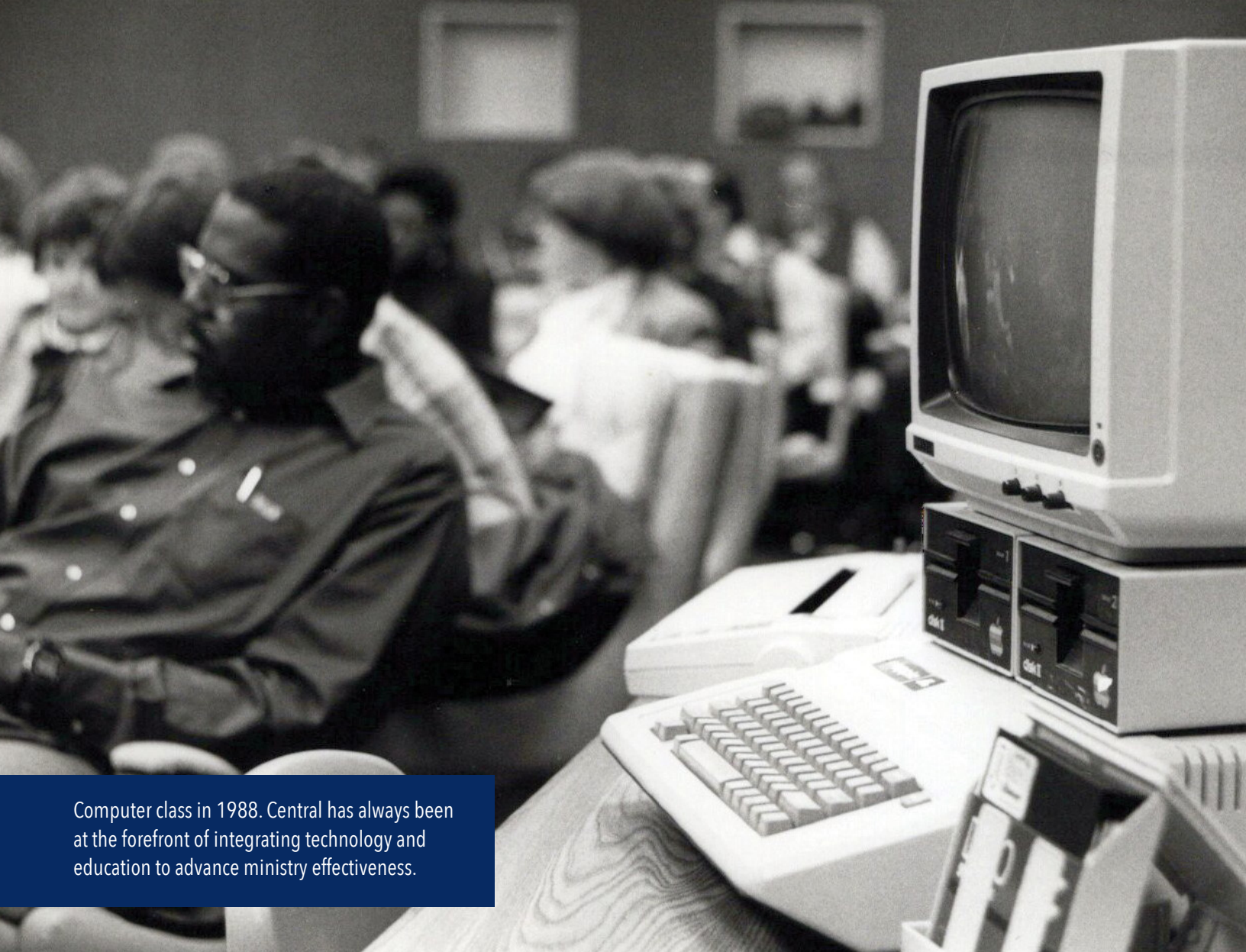


THE VOICE



*125th Anniversary
Commemorative Issue*



Computer class in 1988. Central has always been at the forefront of integrating technology and education to advance ministry effectiveness.

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A Word from the President

리더십의 중심 센트럴, 센트럴에서 리더십으로

As Central Seminary celebrates its 125th anniversary, we find ourselves reflecting not only on our history but also on the enduring values that have shaped our mission from the very beginning.

In 1905, the Kansas City Baptist Seminary, as our seminary was then known, published an article titled “Whom Is the Seminary Designed to Help?”

At the dawn of the twentieth century, theological education was often reserved for college graduates, but Central’s founders advocated for a “wider welcome.” They recognized that many people called to ministry could not pursue traditional academic pathways because of age, financial realities, or family responsibilities. Yet their calling and their need for theological formation was no less important.

Central today continues to be radically welcoming. We serve students whose lives do not fit the traditional seminary mold. Many balance ministry with full-time careers. Others are raising families, caring for loved ones, or serving congregations. Our students also come from diverse cultural, linguistic, and geographic contexts.

In response, we have built educational pathways that are accessible and transformative. Our programs are designed to be flexible, allowing students to remain rooted in their communities while they learn. We combine academic rigor with practical ministry preparation, create opportunities for multilingual learning, and cultivate classrooms where diverse experiences and perspectives are welcomed and valued. We also prioritize affordability so students can pursue their calling without overwhelming financial burden.

As we mark 125 years of theological education, we celebrate more than our history. We celebrate a legacy of opening doors to all who want to learn with us. 🌱

센트럴신학대학원(Central Seminary)이 창립 125 주년을 맞이하여, 우리는 지나온 역사를 되돌아볼 뿐만 아니라 시작된 그 순간부터 우리의 사명을 형성해 온 변함없는 가치들을 다시 한번 되새기게 됩니다.

1905년, 당시 ‘캔자스시티 침례신학교(Kansas City Baptist Seminary)’로 불리던 시절 본교는 “신학교는 누구를 돕기 위해 세워졌는가?”라는 제목의 글을 발표한 바 있습니다.

20세기 초반만 해도 신학 교육은 대개 대학 졸업자들의 전유물이었습니다. 하지만 센트럴신학대학원의 설립자들은 ‘더 넓은 환대(wider welcome)’를 주창했습니다. 그들은 사역으로 부르심을 받은 많은 이들이 나이, 재정적 현실, 혹은 가족에 대한 책임 등으로 인해 전통적인 학업의 길을 걷기 어렵다는 사실을 잘 알고 있었습니다. 그럼에도 그들의 부르심과 신학적 양성을 향한 필요성은 결코 가볍지 않았습니다.

오늘날의 센트럴신학대학원 역시 이러한 ‘적극적인 환대(radically welcoming)’를 지속해 나가고 있습니다. 우리는 전통적인 신학교의 틀에 얽매이지 않는 삶을 살아가는 학생들을 섬깁니다. 많은 이들이 풀타임 직장 생활과 사역을 병행하고 있으며, 어떤 이들은 가정을 꾸리거나 사랑하는 가족을 돌보고, 또 어떤 이들은 이미 지역 교회를 섬기고 있습니다. 아울러 우리 학생들은 매우 다양한 문화적, 언어적, 지리적 배경을 지니고 있습니다.

이에 발맞추어 우리는 접근성이 높으면서도 삶을 변화시키는 교육 과정을 구축해 왔습니다. 우리의 프로그램은 유연하게 설계되어 학생들이 배움의 과정 중에도 자신이 속한 지역사회에 계속해서 뿌리내릴 수 있도록 돕습니다. 우리는 학문적 엄격함과 실천적인 사역 준비를 결합하고, 다국어 학습 기회를 제공하며, 다양한 경험과 관점이 환영받고 존중받는 교실 환경을 조성합니다. 아울러 학생들이 과도한 재정적 부담 없이 소명을 좇을 수 있도록 학비 부담을 낮추는 일을 최우선 과제로 삼고 있습니다.

신학 교육 125주년을 맞이하는 지금, 우리는 단순히 지나온 역사만을 기념하는 것이 아닙니다. 우리와 함께 배우고자 하는 모든 이들에게 문을 활짝 열어 주었던 그 고귀한 유산을 축하하는 것입니다. 🌱

Pamela R. Durso



OUR STORY

A PLACE AT THE TABLE

At the turn of the twentieth century, there was no Baptist seminary west of the Mississippi River. Recognizing the need for trained ministers, Baptist leaders—guided by Rev. Evan B. Meredith of the Kansas Baptist State Convention—set out to change that. A \$2,000 pledge from Joanna Barber Lovelace helped turn their vision into reality.

On August 20, 1901, Meredith and five others filed a charter with the state of Kansas, establishing the Kansas City Baptist Theological Seminary. Its first home was the Fowler mansion, overlooking the Missouri and Kansas Rivers. The school was renamed Central Baptist Theological Seminary in 1941.

Classes began on October 21, 1902, with four faculty members and five students. There was no library, no housing, and little financial support—but there was a clear mission: to prepare leaders for thoughtful, responsive ministry in a changing world. Within a year, enrollment grew to forty-four students.

From the beginning, the seminary embraced a broad and inclusive vision.

By 1903, it welcomed students from other denominations, and by 1920, students from twenty-three states and eleven countries had enrolled. Women joined the student body as early as 1903, and a Women's Training School was

established in 1913. Today, women make up more than half of Central's students.

While affirming the value of a college education, Central's founders recognized that many called to ministry could not pursue traditional academic paths due to age or circumstance. Rather than exclude them, the seminary opened its doors—offering rigorous training in scripture, theology, church history, preaching, and pastoral leadership, and affirming that those called to serve should also be prepared to lead.

As the seminary grew, so did its need for space. In 1922, the seminary secured a new campus in Kansas City, Kansas—nearly twenty acres with room to expand. The seminary relocated there in May 1923, beginning a new chapter of growth.

Progress, however, came with significant challenges. Financial strain marked the early decades, with unpaid salaries and mounting debt emerging within just a few years of founding. Faculty often continued teaching without pay, sustained by their commitment to the mission. The strain deepened after World War I and worsened during the Great Depression, when promised support fell short. By 1934, debts had risen sharply, and the seminary was forced to mortgage property to survive.

These hardships were followed by seasons of internal tension. In the early 1970s, debates over the theological direction of the seminary led to public disagreement among the students, faculty, and Board of Directors and resulted in the resignation of three faculty members. Yet through financial uncertainty and institutional conflict, the seminary endured—carried forward by the resilience and conviction of those who believed in its mission.

Central's global engagement expanded in the mid-twentieth century. In 1955, the seminary partnered with the Myanmar Institute of Theology, then known as Burma Seminary, creating opportunities for shared theological education. Although political changes ended the formal agreement, the relationship continued through scholarships and exchanges well into the twenty-first century.

In 2011, Central launched a Korean-language program to serve a growing student population, eventually reaching more than 1,000 students across multiple locations. A 2020 partnership with Calvin University in South Korea added a Doctor of Ministry program, further extending its international reach.

The seminary also faced modern financial challenges. In 2005, difficult decisions led to reductions in faculty and staff. The following year, Central sold its longtime campus in Kansas City and relocated to Shawnee, Kansas, positioning itself for a more sustainable future.

In April 2011, the Baugh-Marshall Chapel was dedicated, made possible by a \$2 million gift from the John and Eula Mae Baugh Foundation, and in 2016, the library was renamed the Shumaker Library in honor of Diane Shumaker, a longtime friend and supporter of the seminary.

Innovation has remained a defining strength. Central began exploring distance education in the late 1980s and introduced online courses by 1999. In 2016, it received

approval to offer a fully online Master of Divinity degree, expanding access to students regardless of location.

In 2023, the seminary embraced its identity as a majority-virtual institution. To support this shift, Central sold its building in Shawnee and moved its headquarters in 2025 to a right-sized facility in Overland Park, Kansas—creating a more efficient, flexible space while investing more deeply in students and programs.

Today, Central offers academic and continuing education in multiple languages, including English, Korean, Chin, and Kachin. Areas of study include theology, scripture, leadership, chaplaincy, counseling, peace and justice ministry.

Grounded in the Christian faith and rooted in its Baptist heritage, Central Seminary is affiliated with the American Baptist Churches USA and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. Guided by the teachings of Jesus Christ and a commitment to thoughtful, compassionate service, the seminary welcomes students from a wide range of denominations and faith traditions. Its learning community reflects a rich diversity of backgrounds, perspectives, and callings, united in a shared pursuit of love, faith, and purpose. More than a century after its founding, Central continues to prepare leaders for thoughtful, responsive ministry in a changing world. 🌱

More images and stories from Central's history are available at www.central125.com and on Central's Facebook page.



www.central125.com

Central's
Facebook page



Attendees of the Women In Ministry Gathering, 1985

My Central Journey

by Angela Lowe

Rev. Angela Lowe is a 1999 Master of Divinity graduate from Central. Since graduation, she has remained involved as a dedicated volunteer, supporter, and board member.



My Central Seminary journey began twenty-eight years ago when I completed and mailed my application forms for the 1998 fall semester. Then, I anxiously waited to hear if I had been accepted by Central, which was then located on Minnesota Street. By mid-June, I received a phone call telling me that I had been accepted,

had a newly renovated apartment on campus reserved in my name, and was already enrolled in required courses for the fall and spring semesters. I thought, “WOW, Central has already given me a warm welcome, and I have not even been on campus yet.”

In August, with the help of my parents, my furniture and belongings were moved from Little Rock, Arkansas, to my parent’s house in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Then, we loaded a few items of furniture into a small U-Haul trailer and headed north to Kansas City. I graciously remember that Dr. Bob Johnson rounded up a few students, and they helped us move the furniture and boxes into my apartment.

The next morning Orientation began at 8:00 a.m. As I walked across the campus, I wondered if I would be one of the older students. I was in my early forties, having completed my first seminary degree, a Master of Religious Education, thirteen years prior. I wondered if I could concentrate and study diligently again. In my heart and soul, I knew I had been called to chaplaincy ministry, and I would trust the Spirit who had called me. So, I followed the Orientation signs and joined the new students. I heard someone behind me and turned around and introduced myself to this woman who was full of smiles and so wide awake for being so early in the morning. That cheery woman was Day Lane. We have been friends ever since those early morning introductions.

Throughout the day, my qualms of being the oldest seminarian subsided. Many of the students were also in the second or third career category. I immediately became aware of the diversity in ages, ethnicities, accents, and cultures, and I loved this new community. As the fall semester progressed along, I embraced the rigorous study regimen and looked forward to the Tuesday evening’s potluck dinners and Wednesday morning chapel services. I enjoyed becoming more acquainted with my classmates, hearing their stories, praying, and sharing together. In the spring semester, I sat beside Janie Fickle in a church history class, and we completed a project together on the Book of Common Prayer. She became another new friend that I continue to stay in touch with.

I was fortunate that the seminary hours from my previous degree were combined with the Master of Divinity requirements, so I was able to graduate with the Class of 1999. The next two years, I completed two Clinical Pastoral



Angela Lowe (front row, left) with her Central student peer group in 1998. Students include Yuko Indo (middle) and Day Lane (front row, right).



Angela Lowe (front row, third from right) with other members of the Board of Directors at their annual meeting in May 2026.

Education residencies at the Veteran's Administration Hospital in Kansas City and a year of hospice chaplaincy before being hired by LMH Health in Lawrence, Kansas, where I worked for more than 16 years. I will always be grateful to Central for equipping me with a solid theological education.

Speed forward to 2017, when I began serving on Central's Board of Directors. The seminary was now located on Monticello Road in Shawnee, Kansas. I served on the Governance Committee and was Chair of that committee for a few years. I also served on the Executive Committee, and in 2020, I met with presidential candidates during the seminary's search for a new leader. I'm so grateful to God that Dr. Pam Durso was called and voted to be our President and leader.

It has been a genuine honor to serve on the Board. I've attempted to give back what was given to me as a student. It has also been an honor to meet our faculty, staff members, and of course, all the Board members.

As a Board, we have embraced our new home base in Overland Park, Kansas. As President Durso says, we are a working board, not just fluff. As I rotate off the Board in July, I will miss my friends and miss the May and November meetings. I'm grateful for Gail Ashby and Jim Cook, with whom I have served alongside these past nine years. We have all made our contributions to this beloved board to the best of our abilities. All three of us will still support Central in prayer and through our financial gifts, but we are not irreplaceable. Three new outstanding Board members with unique gifts and abilities will join the board in November. My prayer is that they are embraced with the warmth and hospitality that characterizes this working board and become part of this community that feels like an extended family. We need them, and we need their innovative ideas to keep us on the forefront of seminary education in our nation and global communities.

Our forefathers and foremothers dreamed big 125 years ago. Long before automobiles, telephones, airlines, computers, Zoom meetings, and smartphones were even imagined and invented, the seminary's early leaders had the vision and courage to begin a theological school for Christ and the church that would be located in the central part of our nation. They laid the foundation for ministry that would expand around the globe. Among those early leaders was Joann Lovelace, a generous donor and supporter. Today, her legacy lives on, and our Board Room is named in honor of her. All those early leaders were faithful to the mission. May all those who come behind them be faithful as well. 🙏



Central's campus in the 1990s was busy with students who attended classes in-person.

Who Central is Today

Guided by the teachings of Jesus Christ and a commitment to thoughtful, compassionate service, Central Seminary is affiliated with the American Baptist Churches USA and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. We welcome students from a wide range of denominations and faith traditions, forming a diverse learning community united in the pursuit of faith, love, and truth.

Grounded in the Christian faith and rooted in our Baptist heritage, we affirm the following commitments:

- We believe in beginning with empathy—listening deeply to students and prospective students in order to discern and respond to their greatest educational and spiritual formation needs.
- We believe in embracing our identity as a multicultural, multilingual community, where listening, learning, and growing together—intellectually, spiritually, and vocationally—are essential to our shared life.
- We believe in honoring our legacy of adaptive change by strengthening current programs and developing new, relevant programs that serve the evolving needs of the Church and the world.
- We believe in cultivating a collaborative community among faculty, staff, students, alumni, board members, and friends, grounded in mutual trust, respect, and shared purpose.



2026 graduating class with President Pamela Durso and Dean Kathy Maxwell.

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Students study in the following academic programs:

Doctor of Ministry *(English and Korean)*

Master of Divinity *(English and Korean)*

Master of Arts in Counseling *(English)*

Master of Arts in Christian Care and Counseling *(Korean)*

Master of Arts in Ministry
(English, Chin, Kachin)

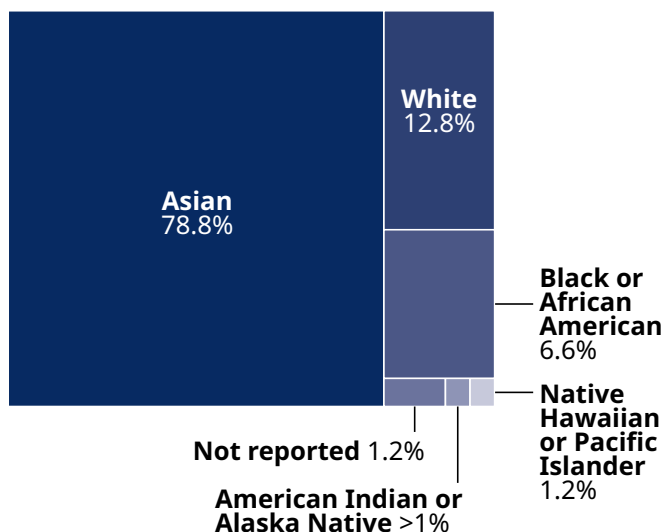
Master of Arts in Theological Studies
(English)

Diploma in Christian Formation
(Korean)

Certificate in Chaplaincy *(English)*

Certificate in Peace and Justice
Ministry *(English)*

RACE/ETHNICITY



77 current students are already ordained or licensed and serving in ministry

GENDER

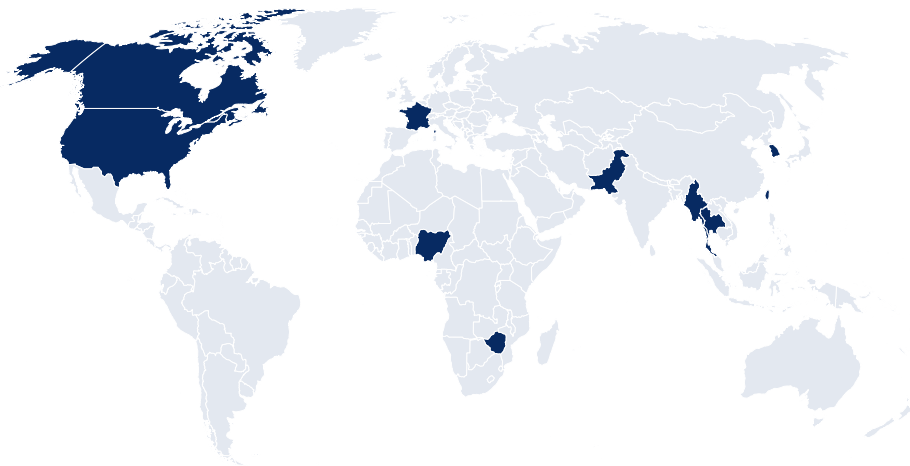


RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION



STUDENTS LIVE IN

37
STATES
&
11
COUNTRIES



COUNTRY OF RESIDENCE

Canada
France
Korea
Myanmar
Nigeria
Pakistan
Singapore
Taiwan
Thailand
United States
Zimbabwe



Celebrate with us!

In 2026, Central Seminary celebrates 125 years of providing theological education and training for those called to learn and serve.

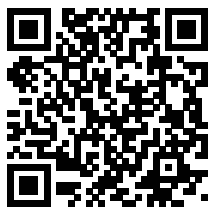
**Thursday,
August 20**

Birthday Party

Central's Overland Park,
Kansas campus

4:30–6:00 pm

*Refreshments and
a short program at 5:30 pm*



RSVP
for our
birthday
party



Learn more, share your Central story and get additional event details at www.central125.com

Contact 125@cbts.edu with questions.

**Saturday,
November 7**

Celebration

Worship Service

Metropolitan Missionary

Baptist Church

Kansas City, Missouri

10:00 am

Where Mission and Ministry Continue

Central has occupied four locations in the Kansas City area as our academic and administrative headquarters. Each location has played a significant role in Central's story, and each has gone on to serve a valuable purpose of education, mission, or ministry.



1901 – 1922 | 400 Troup Avenue, Kansas City, KS

In 1901, George Fowler sold his family mansion and surrounding land to Baptist leaders for a newly established seminary. On this site, the Kansas City Baptist Theological Seminary grew from an inaugural class of four students into a thriving institution within two decades. After the seminary relocated in 1922, the mansion was demolished, and the local school district constructed Northeast Junior High School on the property. The school served African American students during the era of segregation, operating from 1923 to 1977. After standing vacant for more than two decades, the building was renovated into affordable housing. Today, it is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

1923 – 2005 | 741 N. 31st Street, Kansas City, KS

In 1923, the seminary purchased a 19.7-acre site located between State and Barnett Streets and Twenty-Ninth, and Thirty-First Streets, where it developed a sprawling campus that served as its home for more than 80 years. The campus supported decades of growth, education, and ministry before being repurposed for new community uses. Today, the site is home to three ministry organizations: Mercy and Truth Healthcare Ministry, Hillcrest Transitional Housing, and Kidane Mehret Ethiopian Orthodox Church.



2006 – 2024 | 6601 Monticello Road, Shawnee, KS

Central's third campus was located on Monticello Road in Shawnee, Kansas. The seminary purchased the property from Westside Family Church after the congregation outgrew the space. For nearly 20 years, the campus served as Central's home, guiding the seminary through a new era that included the transition to virtual learning. As the seminary embraced a new model of education, it chose to right-size its physical footprint. Central sold the property to Immanuel Bible Church (formerly Mission Road Baptist Church), ensuring its continued use for ministry.

2025 – Present | 8620 W. 110th Street, Overland Park, KS

In January 2025, Central relocated its campus to 110th Street in Overland Park, Kansas. The 9,000-square-foot, technology-equipped facility reflects the seminary's evolution as a primarily virtual institution while providing flexible space for administrative offices, meetings, and student services. From this location, Central continues to equip Christian leaders for ministry around the world. 🌍





8620 W. 110th Street, Suite 200
Overland Park, KS 66210

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

*"In an ever-changing world,
Central is the leader
in expanding and sharing
the love of Christ to all people.
Central prepares leaders
from all walks of life and
backgrounds across
the globe to pursue God
and serve all creation."*

Htee Shee
Master of Divinity, Class of 2024



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