

THE VOICE



SELLING THE ~~CHURCH~~

Rev. Melissa Newberry '03 MDiv
leads a new beginning for
Grandview Baptist Church

Building

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A Word from the President

리더십의 중심 센트럴, 센트럴에서 리더십으로

For 120 years, Central has been a seminary with a clear mission. Our original charter states the school's purpose as educating and training ministers of the gospel, missionaries, and teachers. While our mission statements have morphed and changed over the years, the foundational purpose has never wavered.

As a community, we at Central spent much of 2021 in conversation about our future, seeking together to know from whence we have come and dreaming together about the directions in which we want to go.

Collaboratively, we have crafted core values of COMMUNITY, EMPATHY, GROWTH, and TENACITY and a shared value proposition: *Central Seminary prepares students with the theological knowledge, spiritual insight, and practical skills needed to lead in an ever-changing world by cultivating an inclusive, cross-cultural community of reflection, critical thinking, and discernment.*

We step forward into our next season committed to providing needs-based, in-language, and contextualized theological education opportunities that are accessible and affordable and that facilitate intersecting educational experiences that transform and empower persons for diverse ministry practice.

지난 120년 동안 센트럴은 분명한 사명을 지닌 신학교였습니다. 센트럴 헌장원본에는 복음전도자, 선교사, 교사들을 교육하고 훈련하고자 했던 센트럴의 목적이 잘 명시되어 있습니다. 우리의 사명 선언문은 수년에 걸쳐 변형되고 변경되었지만, 센트럴이 지켜온 근본적인 목적은 결코 흔들리지 않았습니다.

한 공동체로서, 센트럴은 특별히 2021 한해 동안, 우리가 어디에서 출발했으며 앞으로 추구하며 나아가 할 방향에 대해 많은 대화를 나누었습니다.

우리가 협력하여 만든 **공동체, 공감대, 성장과 끈기**라는 핵심가치와 센트럴의 가치제안을 여러분과 공유하기 원합니다: 센트럴 신학대학원은 다문화를 포용하는 공동체로서 끊임없이 변화하는 세상을 리드하는데 필요한 신학적 지식, 영적 통찰력, 실용적인 기술을 학생들이 갖출 수 있도록 돕고, 자기성찰, 비판적인 사고가 가능하고 분별력을 갖춘 학생들을 배출하도록 노력합니다.

우리는 필요에 기반하여 다양한 언어 및 상황화된 신학 교육 기회를 제공할 수 있도록 전념을 다하고, 접근이 용이하고, 학비가 적절하며, 다문화 사역을 강화시킬 수 있는 교차 교육 경험을 촉진시키고자 하는 다음 시즌으로 나아가고 있습니다.

Pam Durso

2021 Alumni Award for Ministry Excellence

The Alumni Award for Ministry Excellence is presented by Central Seminary to alumni who have made extraordinary contributions in their ministry context and exemplify the mission, values, and legacy of Central Seminary. Reverends Soozie Whitten Ford and Walter Lanier received the award at Centralize 2021, Central's new, annual fall alumni gathering.

Rev. Soozie Whitten Ford



Rev. Ford is a 1982 Master of Divinity graduate, who recently retired from her role as executive minister of the American Baptist Churches of Indiana/Kentucky after serving over 40 years in congregational and denominational ministries. She has led

countless mission groups to Nicaragua, Honduras, and Mexico, served as ABCUSA's national stewardship facilitator, and has taught at Sterling College and Central Seminary. Most recently, Ford began a partnership with Northern Seminary to support bi-vocational pastors in the Indiana/Kentucky region, enabling them to receive a seminary education debt-free and developed the Latino-Anglo Bridge Builders program, bringing together congregations of various cultures to build relationships and learn from one another.

Rev. Walter Lanier



Rev. Lanier is a 2011 Master of Divinity graduate who serves as pastor of Progressive Baptist Church in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He is a community leader, lawyer, and tireless

advocate for justice in his community, particularly on issues of voting rights. Lanier is a leader of MICA, Milwaukee Innercity Congregations Allied for Hope. According to his congregants, he has led with "calm and righteousness" through the difficult season of COVID, promoting safety and wellness while continuing his excellent ministry in creative ways. ✨

- ▶ Check out all winners of the Alumni Award for Ministry Excellence cbts.edu/alumni-award-for-ministry-excellence/

Renowned Theologian to be Commencement Speaker

For the first in-person commencement ceremony since 2019, Central is proud to announce that Rev. Dr. Grace Ji-Sun Kim will provide the commencement address.

Kim received a Master of Divinity degree from Knox College (University of Toronto) and a Ph.D. from the University of Toronto. She is professor of theology at Earlham School of Religion, has authored or edited 20 books, and has written more 70 book chapters, journal articles and book reviews. Kim is a much sought-after lecturer and has given papers and lectures in the United States and many countries throughout the world.

In addition, Kim serves on numerous boards and committees, is the host of Madang podcast that features conversations on Christianity, religion and culture, has appeared on numerous television and radio shows, and is honored to be included in the Englewood Review of Book's list of "Ten Important Women Theologians That You Should Be Reading."



Commencement will be held on Saturday, May 14 at 10:00 a.m. (CST) at the Westside Family Church near the Shawnee, Kansas campus and will be available for viewing through livestreaming on Central's YouTube page or Facebook page. ✨

 @CentralSeminaryKS

 @centralbaptisttheologicalseminary

This is Central CJ Duffie, current MDiv student



What led you to Central Seminary?

My journey into theological education has been a long, winding road with many deep valleys of discovery, exhilarating peaks of joy, and pitstops to ponder. After completing undergrad (BA in Religion, Faith International University), I leapt right into the job market and landed in transportation and logistics.

While working in transportation, I sensed the nudging, and sometimes nagging, presence of God calling me to theological education. I knew that a seminary education was needed if I were going to be ready to lead in the changing social and cultural landscape of the 21st century. My search for a seminary began with a checklist: affordable, accessible, academically rigorous, reputable, and innovative. The first day I set foot on the hallowed grounds of Central Seminary, my spirit rested with a joyful ease. [Central] is a place where I experience a deep sense of belonging and have been granted grace and space to discern what God is calling me to alongside students, faculty, and staff.

Will you share with us the story of your call to ministry?

I have always known I wanted to be a preacher. My childhood was full of pretending to play church, and I always elected myself as the preacher/pastor.

I preached in the mirror and to stuffed animals, and my sisters were the choir members. One day my grandmother said to me that my pretending was over, and God was really calling me to ministry. I responded to God's call of ministry before I understood anything about a call to ministry. Growing up in church I served in various capacities; I led worship and served as youth leader. Most of all, I have had various opportunities to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ through the foolishness of preaching.

What have been the best resources and experiences you have had in your time at Central?

God has a way of sending what you need when you most need it. When I came to Central, I needed a community to help rediscover myself—who I was and what God was calling me to—Central's community became a place to fill in spaces of deep longing and regain a sense of call.

The best resources and experiences I have had at Central have been in and with my cohort and other members of the student community. We listen, talk, laugh, and cry together. This is the best feeling in the world—to share in a community with a deep sense of belonging and share space and grace to listen, learn, and discern together what God has done, is doing, and is going to do in, with, and through us. 🙌

► Read more student and alumni spotlights at cbts.edu/this-is-central



Margene and Bob Phares, Central Vision Members, North Platte, NE

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SELLING THE ~~CHURCH~~

Building

Rev. Melissa Newberry '03 MDiv leads a new beginning for Grandview Baptist Church

Unfortunately, it is not an unusual story. A large and active congregation shrinks slowly through the decades and eventually finds itself struggling to keep the ministry alive. There are now few members (although passionately committed) and even fewer resources. The church has moved from thriving to surviving.

This is the story, but it is only part of the story of Grandview Baptist Church, a historic congregation in urban Kansas City, Kansas. Located in the community since January 1910, the congregation has decreased from an average attendance of nearly 150 on a typical Sunday in the 1980s to around ten percent of that number now. But for Grandview, while it may be the end of what they had known, they choose to see it as the beginning of something new.

Since November 2010, Grandview has been led by Central alum, Rev. Melissa Newberry '03 MDiv. Prior to her arrival but also during her tenure, maintaining the aging sanctuary and attached building became more and more difficult as funds became less available. After years of discernment and conversation, the congregation decided that it was time to sell the building. Recalling a conversation during the process, Newberry clarifies, "It was important for the congregation to remember that we were selling the building, not the church. We all needed to realize that our church family and our ministry were going to continue." One of the greatest blessings throughout the entire experience was that with its current size of the congregation: "Everyone had a voice in the conversation."

Grandview now utilizes a chapel space at First Baptist Church of Kansas City, Kansas,

for Sunday services and is one of nine organizations that share the building. In this move, Grandview found some unexpected benefits. "The intentional choice made to remain together and occupy space alongside other churches/missional outreaches has brought forth a plethora of opportunities to see the bigger picture and know we are not an island in the Kingdom. Such experiences as an ecumenical Thanksgiving dinner that featured turkey, mashed potatoes, BBQ, fried rice and Lo Mein noodles are just one example."

"It was important for the congregation to remember that we were selling the building, not the church. We all needed to realize that our church family and our ministry were going to continue."

Today, Newberry has much pride in her Grandview family and their shared ministry. What they lack in size and resources, they more than make up for in spirit and determination. Their story is a reminder that every church in transition needs to hear.

Grandview Baptist meets for worship 10:00 am (CST) each Sunday at 2900 Minnesota Ave., Kansas City, Kansas. All are welcome. ✨

Rev. Newberry will host a free, virtual Lunch and Learn to share more about this story. Thursday, April 21, 12:00 p.m. (CST)
▶ Register here: cbts.edu/events



Above images from Central's original campus in Kansas City, Kan. Left: Women gathered for educational programming. Right: Administrative building. Below: Pam Durso, president, gives homily during 120th anniversary worship service.



Celebrating the Past, Looking Toward the Future

On the evening of November 11, 2021, President Durso, board members, staff, faculty, alumni, and students led a worship service from the Central Seminary chapel for a virtual celebration of the seminary's 120th anniversary and the 10th anniversary of its Korean programs.

Thanks to livestream technology, more than 300 people gathered from around the world to celebrate the highlights of many decades of service.

As Durso said in her homily, "120 years later, Central is still here, still living into its purpose and mission—and tonight we remember and celebrate the tenacity of a little Baptist seminary founded in the heart of the Midwest, one that never gave up on itself, never surrendered, never closed its doors."

While recognizing the past, the service also focused on the future as Durso acknowledged, "To advance toward our vision and fully leverage our value proposition, we step forward into our next season, a season in which we will give our full selves to providing needs-based, in-language, and contextualized theological education opportunities that are accessible and affordable and that facilitate intersectional experiences that transform and empower leaders for diverse ministry practice."

Don't Miss Out

If you were unable to join us live, you can still watch the video here: youtube.com/CentralSeminaryKS 📺

Worship service participants included:

- | | |
|--|--|
| Rev. Dr. Wallace Hartsfield, II Fred E. Young Chair and Associate Professor of Hebrew Bible | Rev. Dr. Samuel Park Associate Professor and Director of Korean Missional Church Programs |
| Rev. Dr. Angela Barker Jackson Director of Development | Rakmi Shaiza, '04 MDiv Member, Board of Trustees |
| Pawm Naw Awn Current MDiv Student | Rev. Dr. Pamela R. Durso President |
| Sarah S. Kim Current MDiv Student | Rev. James R. Cook Chair, Board of Trustees |



THRIVING CONGREGATIONS RESHAPING CHURCH

2021 REPORT

RESHAPING CHURCH is a guided process for capturing and integrating the innovation and adaptation resulting from disruptive life experiences, transforming churches into greater expressions of the body of Christ.



10 CONGREGATIONS

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

- 3 Small (<100)
- 4 Medium (100–250)
- 3 Large (250–500)
- Range: 20–400

COMMUNITY CONTEXT

Ranging from a small town of less than 5,000 to large metropolitan areas

EXAMPLES OF INNOVATIVE MINISTRIES RESULTING FROM THE **RESHAPING CHURCH** PROCESS

All churches will continue to **utilize technology and media in innovative ways** throughout their ministries, especially worship

\$45,000 in small grants distributed to implement these and other ministries

- Partnership with Brazilian church that uses the building, including offering ESL classes
- Pursue partnership with Kansas Poor People's Campaign to expand justice ministry efforts
- Develop and utilize outdoor spaces for worship
- Expand music school ministry to better serve community, including offering scholarships for low-income children to enroll

MOST VALUABLE ASPECTS OF THE **RESHAPING CHURCH** PROCESS

- Convening people together in small groups after a period of disconnection during the pandemic. *First Baptist Church, Bloomfield, Indiana*
- The most valuable aspect of the **RESHAPING CHURCH** process was that it has enabled us to reconnect, debrief our experiences of the pandemic, and to discern ways the Holy Spirit is leading us to partner with our neighbors to bless our community. *St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Charleston, South Carolina*

RESHAPING CHURCH CONVERSATIONS

- Ministry in Times of Conspiracy Theories and Disinformation
- Adaptive Leadership in Times of Crisis
- Faith Formation in Times of Crisis
- We Cry Justice: How the Freedom Church of the Poor is **RESHAPING CHURCH**
- Storytelling for Racial Healing



We used to **think of church as place** and now we **think of it as a way of being.**

Calvin United Church of Christ, Toledo, Ohio

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Johns Island Presbyterian Church, Johns Island, SC



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