



FOUNDATION FOR THE FUTURE

Mid-America Reformed Seminary's Campus Expansion Plan



MID-AMERICA
REFORMED SEMINARY

WHY EXPAND OUR FACILITIES?

Seminaries, like churches, go through various stages throughout their history. In the early years, there are many challenges. These include the need to define your mission and purpose and to persuade a supporting constituency to get behind your endeavor. When I first arrived at Mid-America Reformed Seminary in 1988, the school was located in Orange City, Iowa. In a period of “new beginnings,” the seminary was like a newly planted seedling that needed careful cultivation in order to maintain itself and eventually flourish. Nestled among growing fields of soybeans and corn, Mid-America was in a circumstance like that of its neighboring farmer’s newly planted crop. The seeds were sown, but they needed favorable weather and cultivation if they were to grow and bear much fruit.

After thirteen years of labor in Northwest Iowa, the Board of Trustees made a difficult decision to relocate the Seminary to Dyer, Indiana, in the south suburbs of Chicago. The decision was especially difficult because the school enjoyed the warm, generous support of many loyal constituents in Northwest Iowa, who had welcomed the Seminary’s birth and nurtured it along through the early years. However, the Board’s decision to move to the Chicago area was motivated by a desire to see the school serve a greater number of confessionally Reformed and Presbyterian churches, many of which were located in the south suburbs of Chicago, Western Michigan, the province of Ontario, Canada to the Northeast, and elsewhere. The new location of the Seminary was chosen because it lies in what is often described as the “crossroads” of North America.

Though the seminary relocated in 1995, its original vision remained the same: to provide an academically rigorous and pastorally focused preparation of students for the ministry of the Word and sacraments in confessionally Reformed and Presbyterian churches. In its new location and facility, the seminary would have enhanced opportunities to serve a greater number of churches with its unique approach to training students who aspire to the gospel ministry.

As I reflect upon Mid-America’s history over the twenty-eight years of labor in Dyer, Indiana, I am reminded of words often used by Rev. John Piersma, one of the original founders of the Seminary—“Mid-America is a faith-venture.” Piersma used this expression to underscore how uncertain the prospects of success were when the school was first established. What likelihood was there for success and fruitfulness in a day of such “small things?” And yet, as I look back over the years in our present location and facility, I marvel at the way the Lord has provided for and blessed us. When we needed new staff or faculty members, He provided them. When we needed financial resources to enable the school to do its work, we enjoyed the favor of many generous donors and churches. Our student population has grown slowly, but steadily, to the point where our present facility is nearly full. With the addition of new faculty and staff, some of whom are engaged in student recruiting and marketing, we no longer have enough offices to furnish them with a work-place of their own. The Seminary recently launched the Center for Missions and Evangelism under the direction of Dr. Eric Watkins, but the Center has no physical space on campus to serve as a hub for its work.

My brief rehearsal of Mid-America’s history aims to explain why we are presently seeking to expand our facility. We are not doing so because we have changed our historic commitment to offer our students a residential program of study that aims to prepare them for the work of the pastoral ministry, especially the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Nor are we doing so out of a desire to have a larger student body. We do not believe, for example, that our approach to theological education, with its emphasis upon the pastoral mentorship of our students, can be achieved with a student body that exceeds seventy-five students. Rather, our aim is to enhance our present facility to accommodate a student body modestly larger than at present (our present facility can accommodate 45 students, but with the expansion we will be able to accommodate as many as 60-75 students). The expansion will include an additional larger classroom, several new offices for staff and faculty members, and a chapel-auditorium. Our present chapel is a modified classroom, but the proposed chapel-auditorium will serve a number of purposes, including hosting evening classes and conferences.

As we embark upon this project, we are keenly aware of our constant dependence upon the Lord’s provision and blessing. We recognize that the project’s cost is significant and that we must always be wise stewards of the gifts that the Lord entrusts to us through His people. But we also believe that we must venture in faith, confident that the Lord will continue to provide for our work even as He has throughout the Seminary’s history. Please join with us as we lay a foundation for the future that the Lord has in store for Mid-America Reformed Seminary.



Dr. Cornelis P. Venema
President of Mid-America Reformed Seminary

Dr. Cornelis Venema stands in the location of the future chapel of Mid-America.



“This new building project brings a much-needed expansion of the Seminary facilities for the day-to-day labors of our students, professors, and staff. But it’s more than that. Central to our mission is serving the Church by training men to be faithful pastors, scholars, missionaries, and evangelists. The Church’s future flourishing—as it has been in the past—is bound up with the faithful ministry of the gospel of Jesus Christ. This is how our Good Shepherd rules, keeps, restores, strengthens, and gathers His people. The Church and Seminary must be good stewards of the gospel. So, at Mid-America, we view this building project as a compelling need to better facilitate the present and future work of training and preparing men for gospel ministry in the churches. We covet the ongoing partnership of our supporting churches and donors for this project through their prayers and gifts.”



*Rev. James Sawtelle
Class of 1993
President, Board of Trustees*



“What value do you assign faithfulness in a faithless age? Or trustworthy guides of tried-and-true paths when the blind are leading the blind? What the Lord has accomplished, is accomplishing, and (we pray) will accomplish through Mid-America Reformed Seminary is of inestimable value in such a time as ours. The training I received at Mid-America Reformed Seminary equipped me for a confessionally Reformed ministry in the heart of New York City alongside hundreds of other students who are now serving the church throughout the country and the world. With humble roots in an Iowa cornfield, the now-global reach of Mid-America Reformed Seminary is a testament to the inestimable value of its faithfulness to the Word of God and its trustworthy teachers who know well the tried-and-true paths of the Reformed tradition.”

*Rev. Dan Ragusa
Class of 2016*



“Mid-America’s unwavering commitment to Scripture, the Reformed Confessions, and academic excellence makes her uniquely qualified to train men for the gospel ministry. Of particular value is how students who choose to attend Mid-America get the very best that the Continental Reformed and Presbyterian traditions have to offer. Moreover, Mid-America’s strong emphasis on preaching throughout the curriculum and supplementation by the Ministerial Apprenticeship Program makes for men who have learned much by way of practical, pastoral experience and who have had a great deal of pulpit experience even before entering full-time gospel ministry. Since her inception, the impact of Mid-America’s service on the Church of Christ has been immeasurable. By God’s grace, this will continue to be the case for many years to come. To that end, as Mid-America’s student body continues to increase in size, please consider prayerfully and financially supporting the expansion of the Seminary. Doing so will provide future generations of students with an exceptional learning environment as they look forward to a lifetime of service unto the glory of God and the edification of the Church of Christ.”



*Rev. Bryce De Zwarte
Class of 2019*

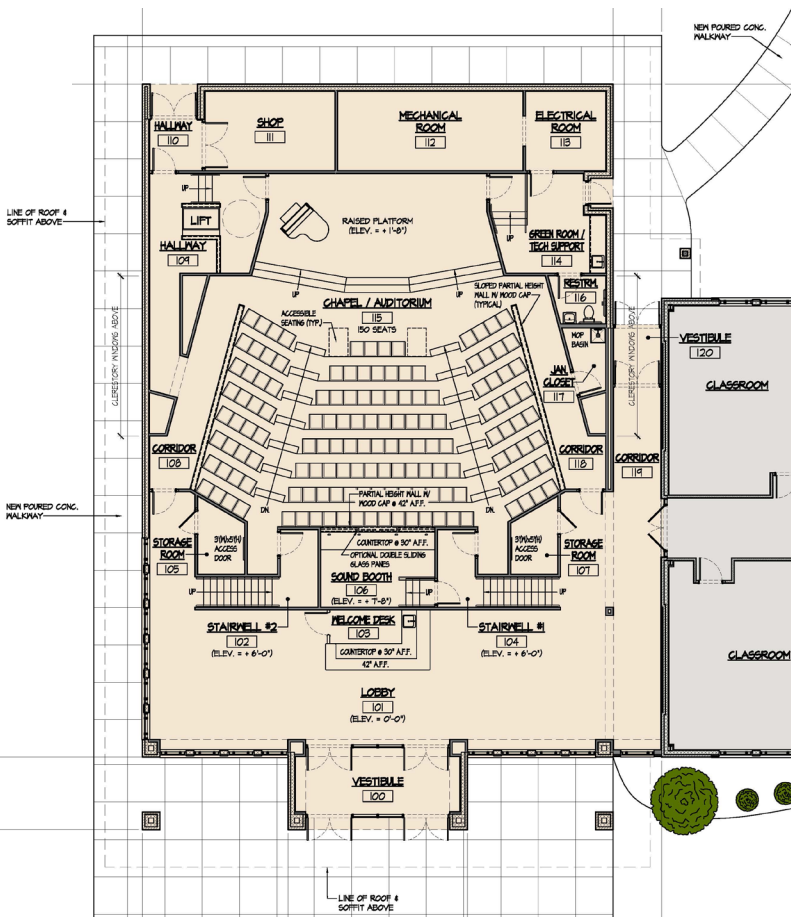
THE CONCEPT

A New Chapel/Auditorium

Situated on the west side of campus, our auditorium will seat 150 individuals, providing sufficient space for our chapel services (three times weekly). It will also be suitable for public use for our special lectures, evening classes, receptions, and other events as needs arise. Features and designs will create an inviting and elegant space for prayer and praise, and state-of-the-art audio/visual equipment will be implemented to complement a wide variety of uses.

Existing Campus Remodel

The school's interior is original to its 1995 construction, and though it has worn well, it needs a refresh. We intend to replace all flooring, wall-covering, and fixtures, and we also plan to replace the Seminary's HVAC system, which has been underperforming for quite some time.

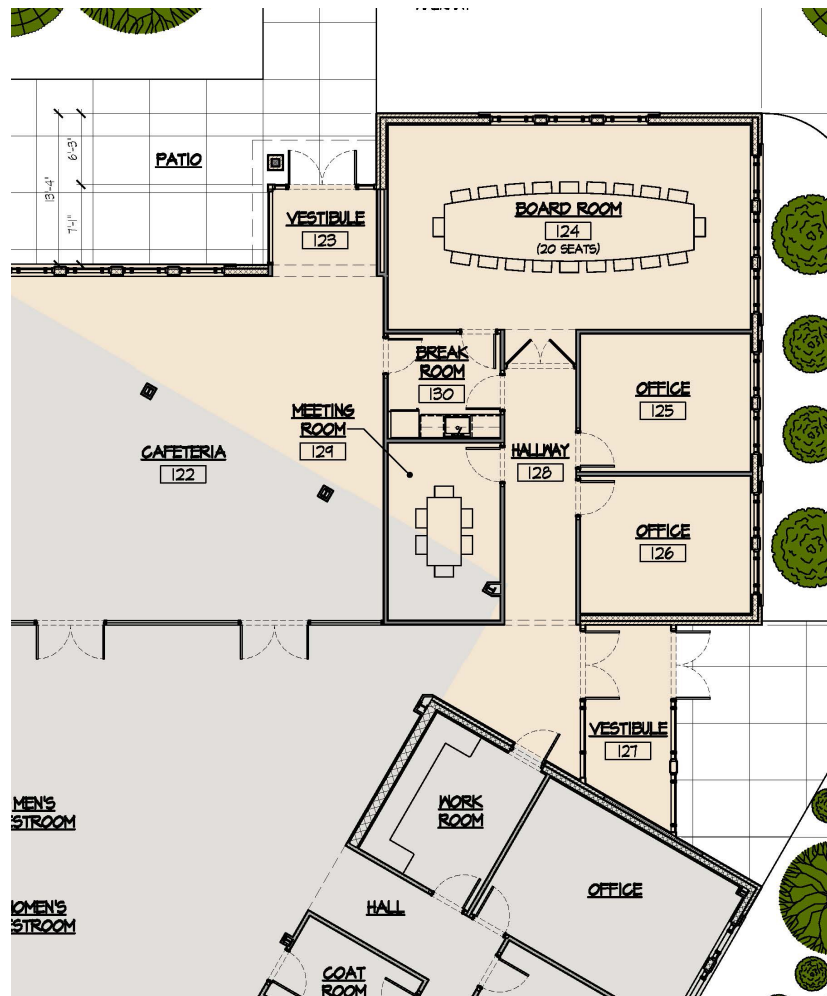


Cafeteria Expansion

With demolishing the cafeteria's northern exterior wall and a rebuild further to the north, the cafeteria will nearly double in size, providing extra fellowship space for our growing student body.

Administrative Office Expansion

On the east side of campus, two additional staff offices, a board/conference room, a small meeting space, and a kitchenette will allow for current staff to relocate from public to private working space and will also provide permanent accommodations within which our Board of Trustees and its committees can perform their work.



THE COST

Mid-America Reformed Seminary is one of the last confessionally Reformed and Presbyterian seminaries offering in-person classes only. If you want to study here, you have to be here. We think that's important. The academic and spiritual formation of the next generation of pastors happens best when students, their families, and our faculty dwell together.

The Seminary is enjoying a renewed interest in our program; thus, we are poised for continued growth. This is a tremendous blessing, indeed, but this also brings about challenges to our campus that we must now accommodate.

As with any building project, a substantial financial commitment is required. The entire project – from new construction to remodeling our current facility – will cost \$4,500,000. With gifts already given and pledged, we have raised nearly \$2,000,000 for the project. That's a great start, but we have a long way to go. We intend to break ground this summer, with construction lasting 8-10 months. We go forward in faith, knowing our heavenly Father has provided for our needs in the past and has led us to where we are today – poised for future growth for His glory in service to His church.

Throughout this publication, you've seen what this expansion project looks like. You have heard from alumni just how special this place is. Those at the highest leadership level endorse this project, as you have heard Mid-America President Dr. Cornelis P. Venema, and Board of Trustees President Rev. Jim Sawtelle articulate their passion for Mid-America and their overwhelming support of this expansion project. We welcome you to join us by pledging your support of Foundation for the Future today. Please prayerfully consider how the Lord might use you to bless this vital project, and use the pledge card below or contact me at mdeckinga@midamerica.edu to discuss giving options. Thank you for your support!

Foundation for the Future Funding Progress



Michael B. Deckinga
Vice-President of Advancement



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REFORMED SEMINARY

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