

# Resurrection Central: Answers to Common Questions

## **Why did Central UMC vote to close?**

Central has been a great church with a long, rich history in Kansas City. In fact, the congregation is the oldest continuous Protestant congregation, started in the “Town of Kansas” in 1844. Over the years, the congregation continued to be an important part of our community, yet they have experienced a slow but steady decline in vitality. When Central’s leaders began looking into the future and asking how to best share Christ’s love with the community, they opened a careful process of congregational discernment. Through these conversations, the congregation came to believe that the difficult choice of closing Central UMC as a stand-alone congregation in order to join Resurrection would provide ministry opportunities that would be unattainable on their own. On June 30, the congregation approved an official resolution to close their congregation contingent on the approval of Resurrection’s resolution to proceed with opening a new location at 5144 Oak Street in Kansas City, Missouri.

## **Was Central UMC in a crisis?**

Central did *not* begin this conversation out of an immediate crisis. Their financial resources, while stretched, would likely be sufficient to sustain the congregation for a decade or longer into the future. However, their continued impact to the community has been waning for many years. Long-term growth and expansion continue to be elusive, despite their best efforts. In their articulation, “Not only does Church of the Resurrection have proven experience in reaching out to communities effectively, but their values align with ours. Resurrection has been on the forefront of many important issues in our community and across our denomination.” They cited the involvement of Resurrection in social justice issues like the Jewish community shooting, Black Lives Matter campaign, positive impact in politicized divisions over covid, and our encouragement of Kansas City’s healthcare workers.

## **Would this be a merger of two churches, or is Resurrection rescuing Central UMC?**

Neither. Motivated by a desire to reach out to their community, Central’s members made a proactive decision to close several years before it would have become necessary. They are prepared to close their doors and dissolve Central UMC as a non-profit corporation. All real estate and remaining assets will transfer to the Church of the Resurrection on October 3, 2022. From that point forward, Resurrection will operate in that location, with a public grand opening in December 2022. During the pre-launch period every member of Central will be invited to transfer their membership to Resurrection during Coffee with the Pastor events in October and November. While some Central members may decide otherwise, Resurrection’s hope is that every member of Central will become an engaged member of Resurrection.

## **What would this location be named?**

As with each of our locations, attendees will be welcomed to “Resurrection.” Where there is need to identify this particular location of Resurrection, we anticipate referring to it as Resurrection Central. Beyond that, our team will work with leaders to confirm how to best communicate the building’s location, which is proximate to Brookside, the Plaza and UMKC. The top priority will be to offer clarity as we reach out and welcome new people.

## **What is Central UMC’s average worship attendance?**

Central’s membership and attendance has fluctuated over its 178-year history. To foster growth and vitality, the congregation has relocated eight times and merged with another congregation, Kenwood Methodist Church, in 1933. Although Central’s attendance peaked many decades ago, the congregation has seen peaks and valleys over the years with an overall slow downward pattern. Central UMC currently holds one weekly worship service per weekend, with attendance of 70-80 committed adults.

## **What is the history of Central UMC?**

In 1840, Reverend James Porter began preaching in a log schoolhouse at Missouri Avenue and Walnut Street in the Town of Kansas. Because of the heat in the summer of 1844, he moved the Sunday service of 15 people to a grove near the schoolhouse. At the close of the service, he invited all who wanted to join the Methodist Society to come forward and take seats on a log. This group became the first Methodist Church in the Town of Kansas, later known as Central UMC. The congregation met in a log schoolhouse at 3<sup>rd</sup> and Delaware until building the first Protestant church building in

Kansas City in 1852. During the Civil War, the church's sanctuary was used by Union forces as a hospital to care for wounded Confederate soldiers. The congregation grew and relocated over the decades, including buildings at 9<sup>th</sup> and Walnut, 9<sup>th</sup> and Lydia, and 11<sup>th</sup> and Paseo (a large sanctuary that could seat up to 2500 people). The congregation combined with Kenwood Methodist Church in 1933 and later broke ground on their current facility at 5144 Oak in 1938. Central is known as a leader in the community and for starting organizations and ministries, including the YMCA in Kansas City, Della Lamb Community Services, Kingswood Manor retirement facility and Shepherd's Center. Notably, Adam Hamilton was appointed to Central UMC prior to starting Resurrection in 1990, and Central was instrumental to the birth of our congregation.

#### **What is the condition of Central UMC's building?**

The current facility is approximately 30,000 square feet. The exterior of the building has beautiful, historical presence. It has generally well-maintained offices, parking lots, classrooms, a renovated entry, a fellowship hall, and a traditional, beautiful cruciform sanctuary constructed in gothic style. An Early Childhood Center operates Monday through Friday to serve the community. Our church's discernment process included evaluations of all major building systems, such as HVAC, roofing, plumbing, elevator, fire protection, and building materials, as well as evaluations of building exterior and landscaping, access and security, technology, and local and national historic registries.

#### **What would worship be like?**

As with our other locations, the sermon will often come by video, with occasional live preaching. The sanctuary has a traditional feel, including pews, a pipe organ, a rear balcony, and a chancel with a choir loft. At the outset, we anticipate holding two weekly worship services, with at least one traditional service. Worship will be designed to help the engage new non-religious and nominally religious people from the Plaza and Brookside communities, with people from Central and Resurrection working together on the launch team to prepare for the grand opening in mid-December.

#### **What would happen to Central UMC's ministries?**

During the pre-launch phase, Central's existing ministries will cease, except the Early Childhood Center, Meals on Wheels and the Boy Scouts which will continue to serve families in the community through the transition. Many of Central's ministries already mirror the ministries Resurrection offers, including nurseries, mission activities and an Early Childhood Center (preschool). Where possible, these ministries will be launched as part of Resurrection's ministries to the congregation and community. Beginning on October 1, and throughout the pre-launch period, the new location pastor will provide congregational care for, and hold regular gatherings with, the members of Central.

#### **How would this location be staffed?**

As with other locations, there would be a Location Pastor under appointment to Resurrection to lead the congregation, including worship, outreach to the community, pastoral care, the development of congregational leaders and the engagement of people throughout the life of the congregation. The Location Pastor would be supported by a Director of Operations who will provide essential administration and support. In addition, there would be an onsite staff team to empower lay leaders to serve in their various areas: children, missions, choir, youth, etc.

#### **How does the recent re-organization impact our capacity to establish this new location?**

We have never been better positioned to expand to a new location than we are right now. One of the aims of the re-organization was to prepare our church for expansion and to maximize creativity and effective leadership across our locations. With the support of cross-church collaborative teams, each location is freed up to lead the outreach, care, development, and engagement of people within its specific context.

#### **What would be the impact of the proximity of this location to other Resurrection locations?**

Much consideration has been given to the potential impact of this launch. We know there will be some movement of people and we believe this will be a positive outcome. Resurrection Downtown is the closest existing location, about 7 miles to the north. Our estimates include a predicted movement of approximately 175 people from other Resurrection locations (100 from Leawood; 50 from Downtown; 10 from Overland Park and 15 from Online). Such movement will be beneficial because these Resurrection members will serve as key members of the core team and will be joining a

location closer to their homes generating easier invitations to their non-religious and nominally religious family, friends, and neighbors.

**What is Central UMC’s current debt?**

Central UMC is debt free.

**What about endowed funds?**

Funds donated to Central UMC with restrictions or designations will be honored to the best of our ability. Our accounting software tracks balances and activity at the fund, department, program, and location level. As an example, the Music Ministry Fund at Central would be classified as a donor-restricted fund, in the Worship department, for music programming, and specific to that location.

**What has been Central UMC’s operating income?**

Central UMC’s total operating budget is approximately \$600,000 with 35% of the annual budgeted income coming from disbursements from investments. There are approximately 100 giving households faithfully supporting the church. We will work closely with these members as they transition support to Resurrection following the closure of Central UMC.

**How is budgeting handled?**

There is a unified budget for all of Resurrection, with breakouts for each location. In addition, there are long-term budgets that forecast needed capital expenditures for 5 and 10 years into the future.

**What will be the cost to open and operate the Brookside Central location?**

Launching additional locations has been a long-term vision for Resurrection. The Finance Committee has maintained and added to a restricted fund to assist in funding future locations. That fund has a balance of \$614,271 as of June 30, 2022. Central UMC’s donors will be encouraged to transfer giving to Resurrection in October and all unused financial assets of Central UMC will transfer to Resurrection on October 3. These funds include unrestricted funds and funds designated for building maintenance improvements. In addition, we will be applying for a grant from the Missouri Annual Conference for new church development.

2022-2023 Projected One-time Start Up Expenses

\$400,000	Facility improvements
\$550,000	Technology upgrades
\$250,000	Furnishings
\$1,200,000	Total One-time Start Up Expenses

2023 Projected Budget for Income and Expenses

The 2023 Budget will be developed this fall. We are currently projecting approximately \$1 million of income from Resurrection Central in 2023, with approximately half of that income coming from current Resurrection members and the other half coming from current Central UMC members and new attendees. Initial projections show income from Resurrection Central covering operating expenses of approximately \$1 million, with attendance of 350-400 people in weekly worship.

**What process has been followed to engage both congregations and leadership?**

There are five identified phases for the complete process namely: *Inquiry, Discernment, Planning, Pre-Launch* and *Launch*. We are currently at the final step of the discernment phase. The following are benchmark’s dates that explain information flow:

Feb 3	Initial preliminary inquiry by Pastor Sally Haynes of Central UMC
Apr 24	After consulting with Leadership Team and District Superintendent, the possibility was shared with Central UMC’s congregation Pastor Anne shared the same information with Resurrection’s Church Council and staff
Apr 29	Pastor Adam shared with Resurrection congregation in weekly enote
May 11	Informational presentation to Resurrection staff leadership with invitation of insights and questions

May 15	Pastor Adam leads Q&A and Conversation with Central Congregation before worship
May 23	Second congregational informational meeting for Central with panel of Resurrection congregants from locations that previously aligned with Resurrection (Blue Springs and Overland Park)
May 24	Informational presentation to Resurrection's elected governance leaders with invitation for insights and questions
Jun 5	Central congregation Round Table discussions to gauge the congregation's interest
Jun 8	Resurrection staff leaders met with Central church and Early Childhood Center staff
Jun 30	Central UMC Church Conference voted to close

Between these milestone dates numerous conversations have occurred between Central's leadership, Resurrection's leadership and staff, District Offices and the Missouri and Great Plains Conferences.

**What is the schedule between today and the potential launch of Resurrection Central?**

Jul 16	Resurrection Church Conference votes on resolution to start the new location
July	Location Pastor search and posting of new staff positions
August	Identification of the Location Pastor and begin building the staff team Invite Resurrection members to join the pre-launch core group
Sep 25	Central UMC holds its final worship service
Oct 3	Central UMC transfers financial, personal, tangible, and intangible assets to Resurrection Location Pastor and staff move into offices
Oct-Dec	Pre-launch activities, team building and weekly leadership meetings Coffee with the Pastors held for current Central UMC members Update facilities, exterior signage, audio and video systems Marketing and community outreach events Pre-launch test worship services
Dec 11 or 18	First weekend of worship