

Lutheran, Presbyterian schools moving to Chicago campus of Catholic Theological Union

by [Emily McFarlan Miller](#)

May 17, 2023



The Catholic Theological Seminary Union campus. (Courtesy photo)

The Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago and McCormick Theological Seminary are moving into available space on the campus of Catholic Theological Union, creating a theological megacampus on the South Side of Chicago.

The Lutheran School of Theology, a seminary belonging to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, signed a lease on May 10 with Catholic Theological Union, CTU announced that day in a press release.

McCormick, a graduate school belonging to the Presbyterian Church (USA), also has signed a letter of intent with the Catholic graduate school of theology and ministry.

Barbara Reid, president of CTU, said in the press release that the Catholic institution was “delighted” for the two mainline schools to join its campus in Chicago’s Hyde Park neighborhood.

“Sharing our space with LSTC and McCormick will bring numerous benefits to our schools, building on our existing modes of collaboration through the Association of Chicago Theological Schools,” Reid said.

Each school will remain independent with its own identity, mission, and governance. The two mainline institutions are expected to begin holding classes on CTU’s campus this fall at the start of the 2023-24 academic year.

The move comes as [a slew of seminaries](#) across the United States plan to sell part or all of their properties to remain nimble as the religious landscape continues to shift.

CTU called the arrangement a “model of ecumenical collaboration” by the three schools, which have partnered for decades—even offering an [ecumenical doctor of ministry program](#).

Reid believes their agreement “demonstrates a responsible use of space and resources in the spirit of Pope Francis’ vision articulated in *Laudato Si*,” the pope’s encyclical about the environment.

Both mainline schools sold their properties earlier this year to the University of Chicago.

Last year, as they announced their plans to do so, McCormick Theological Seminary said the Presbyterian school’s enrollment has been relatively stable for five to seven years.

But, McCormick President David Crawford said at the time, “I think it’s really important, particularly for the smaller and mid-sized schools, to be bold in making decisions now while they’re in positions to do so, rather than when they’re forced to do so.

“Times will continue to demand that we be creative, imaginative and flexible in the work we do. And I think that’s not just at McCormick, but probably at every school,” Crawford added. —Religion News Service