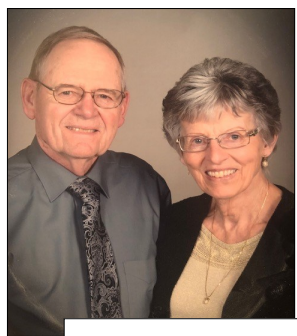




## Alumnus of the Year Alvin Kroeker ('58)

Comments by Alumni Director Jim Doerksen ('67):

Alvin Kroeker ('58) is our worthy selection of Central Christian School's Alumnus of the Year Award! Alvin and his wife, Jan, can be seen in their regular spot in the bleachers at many of Central's home football games. They have been enthusiastic long-term supporters of the school. Their two daughters attended CCS during the years 1978 through 1985. Daughters Kathy Kroeker Perry graduated in 1982 and Susan Kroeker Penner in 1985. Susan has been teaching at Central for over 32 years. Alvin was on the school's board of trustees and was board chairman for several years. They are wonderful examples of commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ and have been faithful and generous stewards of their time and resources.



Alvin and Jan

I grew up during the era that Central Kansas Bible Academy was in its infancy. I was raised in a Christian home with parents who were genuinely concerned about the future and type of education that was available to their children. Since some of the founding members of CKBA were part of my extended family as well as members of my home church, it was only natural that I would be encouraged to attend CKBA upon my completion of elementary school. I had joined the family of God at an early age, but it was while I was a student at CKBA that I made my serious commitment to following my Lord and Savior in a life of stewardship. After graduating in 1958, I allowed my involvement at

Central Christian School to fade until it was time for our daughters to make a choice in their education after finishing the eighth grade. They both chose to attend Central Christian School—the school had undergone a name change by this time. During those years, my wife, Jan, and I became serious about Christian education, and I was asked to serve on the school's board of directors.

While I was on the board, we became keenly aware of the meaning of stewardship, and if we are to be serious about this lifestyle, it must affect our entire lives. Stewardship to me is not restricted to our pocketbook alone, but it sets the tone for a way of life that affects and controls our very being, including our time, our relationships, and our finances. During the time I spent as a board member, part of that time as board chairman, the school was experiencing great financial need. It was not uncommon for the school's bank account to drop too low to cover the payroll for our staff in a timely manner. In late-night meetings, we board members would challenge each other financially in order to pay our dedicated staff who, on more occasions than I would like to admit, were asked to be patient with us for their paychecks. The board made a commitment to honor our staff by meeting payroll even if it meant borrowing money to make it happen. Those decisions were what started years of debt for Central Christian School, and praise be to God that era has now finally come to an end. I served on the board until our youngest daughter Susan Kroeker ('85), now Mrs. Penner, began her teaching career at Central Christian. I felt that my presence on the board could be viewed as a conflict of interest, so I stepped away from the board and have allowed her to carry on the torch for the last 30-plus years.

As I look back to those years of involvement and leadership at CCS, I realize that God has a purpose for everything that happens, whether it is time spent volunteering to help construct and build the facility that CCS occupies at the present, or helping to make decisions at the board level.

It is incredible to witness what has become of the vision a group of Mennonite men representing various churches from the Inman and Buhler area had concerning the future education of their next generation. In my opinion, their bold vision was also perceived by the greater community as being a Mennonite school even though that was never the intent. This quickly became a limiting factor for growth as well as financial

resources. It took years of concentrated intentional planning to overcome this perception and to realize Central Christian School's potential impact within the community where it was located.

I am ever so grateful to the past and present leadership at CCS that has and is carrying out the original vision for the future of Central Christian School. CCS is making a positive difference in our world as students graduate and move on to become Christian leaders and Christian parents in our society that is desperately in need of seeing God's grace lived out daily. So, I am thankful for the influence that Central Christian School had in my life and in the lives of so many students who have been touched by CCS and its committed staff over the years.

When I consider how God has led and directed our lives over the last 62 years of married life, I realize that much of life's experiences are directly related to our original commitment to stewardship. As farmers, we were privileged to own our time and be available to respond when a need was perceived, whether that was a next-door neighbor or someone devastated by a natural disaster.

During the last several years on the farm and after retirement, we connected with an organization called Mennonite Disaster Service, responding to storms and natural disasters in the continental United States and its territories. We served as long-term field leaders for a period of three months each winter for about five years. In 2009, we were contacted about becoming directors for Region III, which covered 14 states. This position also placed us on their bi-national board which covered all of the U.S. and Canada. The experiences and contacts that God allowed us to experience during those years of service were second to none. When we are truly committed to allowing God to work His will, the ride is incredible. At times, it felt like chaos and the situation was out of control. but when God is directing our lives, there is always a long-range plan. Needless to say, we often felt insecure for the lack of experience as leaders in the areas that God was directing us to go, but we soon learned that God does not require experience but willing hearts. We are ever so grateful that God can and does desire the service of the retired community. One may retire from his job, but we should think twice about retiring from the Lord's service.

"The world has yet to see what God can do with a person fully consecrated to Him"  
Henry Varley

## 75<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY TRIBUTES TO CENTRAL CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

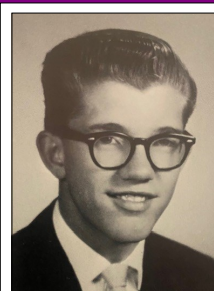
Tom Klassen ('62)

My years at Central Christian were some of the most memorable of my life. I am forever grateful for the personal and spiritual growth I experienced.

The friendships I made have remained throughout my life. Had I not attended Central, I would not have met the love of my life and future bride.

The education and guidance I got from faculty and staff prepared me for the future and strengthened my faith.

I strongly believe in the value of Christian education. I feel that Central has a definite role in today's society, and I would encourage all alumni to cherish their memories and support Central Christian.





## Annette (Clark '86) Engweiler

CENTRAL CHRISTIAN COMETS!! Oh! I mean COUGARS! I'm still getting used to that one.

During my years at Central Christian, there were many special memories and lifelong friendships made. The gratitude I have for our teachers and faculty is still kept close to my heart.



Craig and Annette

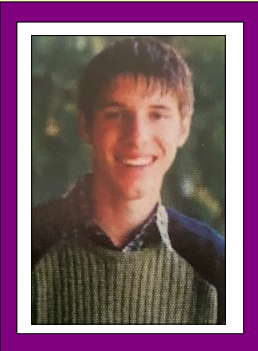
At the time, I didn't realize the impact Central Christian would have on me or the influence it would have in my adult life. We each have something that connects us to Christ, and Central played a large part in building my faith. Central surrounded me with very special people who loved the Lord.

For over seven decades, the teachers of Central Christian have planted seeds in its students, providing knowledge in Christ. Deuteronomy 6:6-7 states, "These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up." Central opened the door for thousands to hear God's Word through the generations.

One of my favorite times during the school day was in chapel. That hour was reserved for speakers, music, worship, and testimonies. God filled that room with love, grace, unity, forgiveness, and restoration.

A memory we (as a class) still laugh about was the day Todd Shelton, who had the coolest car on the lot, burned through the parking lot, dirt flying through the air, screaming across the street, and sailing down 30<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Nies must not have thought this was as cool as we did, and he met Todd the next day with a spoon. Todd was to go turn the dirt over in the parking lot with it. Worth it? I bet Todd still says, "Yes!" LOL!

Since my time at Central, my family has taken a special interest in focusing on the success of the school. As many of you might remember, my dad has filmed thousands of ball games, plays, and programs over the years. This is his gift. My mother serves on the board, my brother has coached high school basketball for 28 years, and my husband coached a few years as well. My hope is that the alumni hold Central dear to their hearts and continue to support the school through the gifts God has given them. Watching this school expand its classes, paving the parking lot, and now being out of debt— all are huge milestones. Let's continue the Greatness set before us.

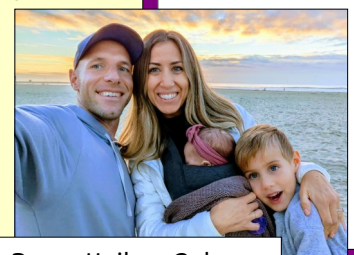


## Ryan Crouse ('05)

Proverbs 22:6—"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it." I attended CCS beginning in 6th grade, and my parents, teachers, and coaches had a tough task ahead of them, as exemplified by my record of detentions. Some of them were justified (dancing on the teacher's desk— sorry, Mrs. Whiteman), and some of them were not (having my t-shirt untucked). But years later, in all my wisdom (cue the jokes), I have come to realize that their intentions were good.

God has blessed our family with two young children, and education is something we think about often. But what is the benefit of a good education if it is not used to glorify God? As my wife and I look forward to our children's futures, a frequent prayer is that God's Word will be instilled in their hearts. As parents, we are responsible for raising our children in the way they should go, and a Christian school can be a valuable partner in that. There will be a day when our children are no longer accountable to us, and our hope and prayer is that when that day comes, they are well-equipped to accurately discern what is right and what is wrong and to be a godly example to those around them. Christian parenting combined with a Christian education is a foundational part of this.

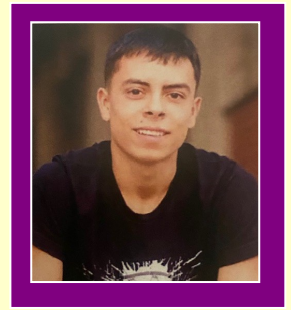
Now more than ever, I believe in the value of a good and Christ-centered education. Over the years, I have come to see that God has put in place leaders at Central Christian who are striving for both. I am thankful for those who continue to support CCS and hope that the school continues to grow and have an impact on Hutchinson and beyond as students graduate and make their mark on the world for God's kingdom.



Ryan, Kailey, Cohen, and Lincoln

## Adre Ibarra ('21)

I first attended Central Christian at the beginning of my 7<sup>th</sup> grade year, and I was not happy at all. I wanted to stay at my old school and not move to a new one.



However, once I arrived at CCS for summer football workouts, my ideas changed drastically. I remember how Collin Oswalt greeted me on the first day and said, "Nice shoes." I remember I was freaking out right before that because I was scared of new people and new things. But, when Collin came up to me, I felt seen, valued, and wanted.



This feeling did not go away throughout my time at Central. I was always feeling seen, valued, and wanted. I will say it is pretty easy to feel this way because of the size of the school. But it wasn't just because of that, the students and staff made all the effort to have relationships with me and my family. I remember how my classmates and I would hang out after games and various events. CCS had a sense of community I never had and that I needed in my life.

The best thing that Central Christian has left me was the instruction and guidance in my relationship with God. I just loved and cherished the times we would talk about God in class (not just in Bible class) but in all our classes. The Class of 2021 would never shy away from any time to talk about the Bible (this was our way to get the teacher off topic) and wrestle with passages that were challenging to understand. This is what made me and all my classmates grow so much closer to Christ. My time at CCS made me feel seen, valued, and wanted, and that will forever be something that I am grateful for.

## Family News

Please keep us updated on you and your family's marriages, births, and deaths.  
Email [alumni@cougarsccs.com](mailto:alumni@cougarsccs.com).

### Congratulations

Madison Kauffman ('17) and Sam Decker were married on April 15, 2023.  
Elias Butterfield ('17) and Anna Kelley were married on April 29, 2023.  
Ezekiel Willcox ('14) and Madison Moore were married on April 29, 2023.  
Jamie Patrick ('12) and Kellen Watkins were married on May 13, 2023.  
Caleb Lambert ('20) and Danielle Staats were married on May 13, 2023.  
Blade Canter ('14) and Kaylee Womack were married on June 10, 2023.  
Josie Ibarra ('20) and Adam Hall ('20) were married on June 24, 2023.  
Marshall Walton ('19) and Paige Carlin were married on July 29, 2023.

### Welcome

Laura (Thompson '13) and Andrew Goering welcomed their baby girl Molly Mae on April 23, 2023.  
Joshua ('14) and Ashlyn Ruhlmann welcomed their baby boy Sawyer Jaymes on April 26, 2023.  
Kyle ('12) and Andrea Crouse welcomed their baby boy Jude Robert on May 15, 2023.  
Tim ('13) and Sarah Willis welcomed their twin baby girls Elizabeth (Ellie) Ruth and Eden Joy on May 25, 2023.  
Jacob ('07) and Bethany Yates welcomed twin boys Hunter Richard and Archer Jacob on June 16, 2023.  
Jonathan ('09) and Anna Belknap welcomed their baby boy Tucker Jonathan on June 19, 2023.  
Susan (Brock '09) and Taylor Morris welcomed their baby girl Arie Kate on July 3, 2023.  
Caleb ('10) and Lauren Zogleman welcomed their baby boy Silas Oliver on July 6, 2023.

### Deaths

Kris (Bohren '83) Goertzen of Hoover, Alabama, died on April 26, 2023.  
Jerry Dean Wiens, former teacher, of Buhler, Kansas, died on April 28, 2023.

# JOIN US IN WELCOMING OUR NEWEST CENTRAL CHRISTIAN ALUMNI



As of May 6, 2023, we added 18 to our alumni community.



We are so proud of these seniors who have persevered with diligence to receive their high school diplomas, and we ask the Lord's richest blessing on their future.



For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Jeremiah 29:11 NJKV

Jim Doerksen ('67) and Jan (Klassen '55) Flickinger at the Senior Blessing Breakfast



Front row: Cammie Davis, Shas Millermon, Morgan Urwiller, JoJo Losew, Allison Bateman, Emerie Boman, Teagan Gill, Kaylee Kauffman, Kallie Lemen

Back row: Brandon Bailey, Jordan Yoder, Tommy Barnett, Josh Miller, Ethan Glover, Drew Yoder, Gage Regehr, Tate Unruh, Riley Barnes

## THE DIRECTOR'S CORNER



Jim Doerksen ('67),  
Alumni Director

**Alumni & Reunion Weekend – September 22 and 23** – This weekend is always an encouragement and a joy to attend. On Friday morning, preschool–eighth grade students and staff will be celebrating Grandparents Day. At 5:30 p.m. near the football field, there will be a carnival with inflatables for the kids. The newly completed classrooms will be open for all to see, and a Mexican meal and concessions will be available to purchase. In celebration of CCS's 75th anniversary and the grand opening of the newly completed classrooms, free cookies and cake will be served. Our football feature will see the Central Christian Cougars pit against the Fairfield Falcons at 7:00 p.m. At halftime, our Alumnus of the Year Alvin Kroeker ('58) will be announced on the football field, and alumni in attendance will be recognized behind their decade banners. (Alvin will be honored at the Stewardship Dinner in November.)

On Saturday morning at 9:00 a.m., there will be coffee and a bake sale of delicious homemade items. From 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., come and enjoy a classic car show happening in our new paved parking lot. Reunion classes and anyone else are welcome to join us for school tours at 10:30 a.m. A lunch of grilled hamburgers and hot dogs will be available for purchase. Check-in and lunch for the Cougar Classic Golf Tournament at Willowbrook will be at 11:30 a.m. followed by a 1:00 shotgun start.

At 1:30 p.m. on Saturday, the alumni mass choir will practice in the music room for the first time to sing at the 75th Anniversary Celebration and Stewardship Dinner on November 11. I would like to encourage young and old alumni to join us for this unique opportunity as we lift our voices in praise to the Lord. Do you think we can have at least 50 alumni for this performance? If you are planning to sing, please register today and be sure to plan your schedule for at least two of the required practice sessions. [cougarsccs.com/news-events/stewardship-dinner.cfm](http://cougarsccs.com/news-events/stewardship-dinner.cfm).

**A Call for Classic Cars** – If you or anyone you know has a classic car that could be included in our car show on September 23, please let us know. Contact Tom Klassen ('62) at 620-272-3938 or Bob Friesen ('65) at 620-727-7682. We are well on our way to 60 cars, and you will not want to miss this show!

**75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration and Stewardship Dinner, November 11** – This year for the school's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we are making a special effort to have our alumni come and join us. Plans are being implemented now to have a celebration that brings glory to the One who has been faithful since the beginning to supply the school's needs. The dinner will be a complimentary traditional German supper featuring homemade verenika! A large alumni and school choir will be presenting praise to the Lord for His faithfulness to us. The keynote address will be given by Jeff Keaton of Renewanation. This is such a short summary of what is being planned, but it will be a memorable evening that all alumni from far and near will want to attend.

**FORWARD Campaign Update from Dr. John Walker, CCS Superintendent** – Just a few short years ago, the Lord brought together a group of strategic thinkers to begin brainstorming in a collective effort toward planning for the future. Through this process, after an intense pre-campaign study, and with much prayer and petition, our \$3.2 million FORWARD Campaign was launched. We are thankful that these goals have been met:



The school has been successful in eliminating over \$400,000 in debt.  
The gravel parking lot has been transformed into a concrete paved parking lot.  
The classrooms completion project is almost finished.

By God's grace, we have nearly surpassed the \$2 million mark in capital campaign funds raised! Please join us in praising the Lord for His goodness.

We still need \$120,000 to remodel the old classrooms across the hall from the newly completed classrooms addition. On top of that, we are still hoping to build up the Central Fund through generous monthly, quarterly, or one-time donations. Have you considered supporting CCS in this way?

The FORWARD Campaign will come to a close on December 31, 2023. Would you please partner with us to meet our remaining goal of \$1.2 million? There are many ways you can help.

**Monthly, quarterly, or one-time gifts**– Have you thought about making a gift to the FORWARD Campaign? Now is the time to give to help us achieve our gap of \$1.2 million!

**Estate planning**–Have you considered including CCS in your estate plan? CCS has been a recipient of these types of gifts, and they have an eternal impact!

**Prayer**—Students are influenced by more things today than ever before. Would you please pray that our students would stay on the straight and narrow?

We need your support. There has never been a more important time to invest in Christian education and to support our mission to educate, equip, and edify every student to exalt the name of Jesus Christ. May the Lord bless you as you consider how you can participate.

**Estate Planning** – As you are planning your last acts of stewardship, please remember Central Christian School. There will always be ongoing needs. Your gift to the school will help provide solid Christian worldview education and help build character that would resemble that of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**New Leadership for the CCS Alumni Association** – This is the last newsletter that my wife, Karen, and I will be compiling. It has been a blessing to us beyond what I could have imagined, and God has shown Himself strong in growing and blessing our school. It has been so fun getting to know many of you in person and in phone conversations. I hope to continue to be involved in a number of ways at the school, but not as the director of the alumni association. I am so happy to announce that Cassi Johnston will be assuming this role on October 1. Many of you know Cassi as the wife of David and mother of three kids who are students at Central, friend to many, 2006 graduate of Central, faithful administrator of the Central Christian Alumni Facebook page, and all-around good person. Again, God is providing for our needs!



Picture taken from an old Open Door yearbook.

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 5:1

CCS Alumni Association  
6547 N. Academy Blvd. #462  
Colorado Springs, CO 80918

Central Christian School  
1910 E. 30th Avenue  
Hutchinson, KS 67502

We want to keep in touch with our alumni and friends. If you have a change of email or mailing address, please contact the CCS Alumni Association at [alumni@cougarsccs.com](mailto:alumni@cougarsccs.com).



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Colorado Springs, CO

**ADDRESS SERVICE  
REQUESTED**

We encourage you to get in touch with your former classmates.  
Email [alumni@cougarsccs.com](mailto:alumni@cougarsccs.com) for their contact information if you need it.

Cassi is married to David and together they have three children who attend CCS. David owns Network Management Group Inc. (NMGI), and Cassi has been a stay-at-home mom for 13 years. She loves being involved at the school and with NMGI employees. She has enjoyed writing since her high school journalism class.

## New Life



By Cassi (Eldridge '06) Johnston

Ecclesiastes 3:1-2 "For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted."

What does the fall season look like to you? Does it appear chaotic and messy? Those are accurate descriptions, but I would add that it's beautiful.

It might appear messy, but there is no wrong way to make a leaf pile. The leaves look amazing on the trees or on the ground. They are a painter's palette full of colors that create beauty together. It can't be messed up because it is doing exactly what God created it to do. It is going through the process of dying so that the new life can come.

This is part of the God-ordained process of the seasons. The spring couldn't happen if the fall didn't happen first. Without the death, there's no rebirth. The extraordinary example that God gave us is in Jesus—it started with death, and then came the new life. It's both a beautiful gift and a sacrifice. As you look out the window in this season, I hope you're encouraged that this is the first step of God's gift of new life.

1 Peter 1:3 "All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by His great mercy that we have been born again, because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead."