



A Brief History of CLC

Towards the end of the 1980's a group of believers from several area churches began to gather on Sunday evenings. Their purpose was to discern from God if a new and alternative kind of church should be established in the greater Tri-City community. Determining that such a church was needed, about 40 people began meeting for worship at the YMCA in Grand Haven.

In 1989 the church was informed that their lease was up with the "Y", forcing the church to seek out an alternative meeting space. God lead the church to an old and largely abandoned warehouse in downtown Grand Haven. The space was not much to look at and it took a group of visionaries to see beyond the rawness of dirt, grease, peeling paint and outdated light fixtures to see the possibilities.

Having established a new, but at that time temporary meeting place, CLC began to develop its ministries. Key to its initial development was the role of small groups and children's education. It was in the Fall of 1990 that the church contracted with Pastor Andy DeJong to be its temporary, part-time pastor. His assignments included preaching, worship planning and the development of CLC's small group ministry. However, Pastor Andy did not serve alone. Most everyone who was a part of the church found a place to serve in meaningful ministry. There was a high degree of ownership and participation on the part of church members. Gradually the ministry needs grew, necessitating the eventual hiring of a part time church secretary and student ministry leader.

The church continued to grow modestly over the next several years as did ministry opportunities. In the mid 90's, after the facility had been purchased, a much needed renovation project got underway. Although a great deal of the work was done by professional contractors, many volunteer hours contributed to making this an affordable project. With these improvements, more people came into the church. Additional full and part-time personnel were added to the staff, expanding into areas of women's and children's ministry as well as worship. Providing effective ministries along with a warm sense of hospitality witnessed more and more people attending Sunday worship and weekday ministries.

In 2005, several staff members left for other ministry opportunities and we went through a time of transition under the leadership of our Interim Pastor, Rev. Case Van Kempen. Case led us through a time of examining our ministry purpose and vision, as well as the process of calling a new Senior Pastor. In the fall of 2006, Rev. Bruce Ballast accepted the call to become our Senior Pastor. Bruce brings over 30 years of leadership, passion, and ministry experience to our church. In the spring of 2007, we extended a call to Bob DeVries to be our Pastor of Discipleship and Operations. Bob brings 28 years of experience in teaching, administration, and business.

In the fall of 2007, the leadership embarked on its new Strategic Plan with a new mission statement: "Taking the next step in our relationship with Jesus Christ". Our passion is to see people gather for worship and community, to grow in grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ, and to go into the world to share the gospel. Our desire is to see each member use their spiritual gifts by serving in ministry and involving themselves in small groups, celebrative worship, and the life of the church.

CLC is committed to creating meaningful partnerships with ministries that share in the desire to impact people with the grace and mercy of Christ. This has helped to balance CLC's ministry between the ministries within the church and outwards to God's ministries in other parts of the world.

Today, Covenant Life Church remains a robust ministry with many opportunities for faith development and spiritual formation. We praise God for His faithfulness and leadership throughout the past. The future holds even more challenges and opportunities meant to help CLC make a difference.