

## The Story of The Refuge

The Refuge, formerly called Trinity Christian Reformed Church, began in 1949 in our present location by the intersection of Grandville and Jenison along Chicago Drive just off I-196. Trinity served the Lord faithfully in this neighborhood for many years with a variety of pastors.

The past 10 years have been a time of very intentional work at transforming The Refuge into a more missional church in all that we do. In 2016 we spent considerable time imagining a new statement of Mission, Vision and Values to reflect the change in what we believe God was calling us as a church to be and do in our current context. These were adopted by the Council and the church has been working to implement them as the Holy Spirit leads and empowers us.

As we worked at putting the new Mission, Vision and Values into practice in our ministry we realized we were becoming a different church. We therefore wanted to reflect that difference in our name and we began dreaming up a name which would identify who we were becoming. We settled on The Refuge because of its wonderful Biblical meaning and what it means for God's creation. We are becoming a place where people can find Refuge in Christ from the storms of life and even where God's creatures can find refuge from habitat degradation. Through this powerful, and at times difficult transition, we are now a small congregation which is beginning to serve as a refuge for more people. Our current membership is 106 people (including baptized members), with potentially 60 worshipping in person from week to week. Total families are 28.

The Refuge is a multigenerational congregation which relishes our casual worship using a blend of older and newer songs and accompanied by a variety of instruments. We use liturgy which is both old and new, and members of all ages participate in various elements of our service. We also enjoy many shared meals together after our worship time from burgers and hotdogs to charcuterie and salads.



God has blessed us with a beautiful big building to utilize so we use our building as a ministry center. We presently have two other churches and three Christian homeschool groups who call this place home, as well as a variety of people who regularly use our facility for their ministry.

We are located on 6.5 acres which has been designated as a Sacred Grounds wildlife habitat by the National Wildlife Federation due to the many things that we do to protect the environment and

make a refuge for many of God's small but beautiful creatures. Beautiful Kenowa Creek runs through the property and we also have a community garden, a creation station classroom and play area in the woods, and several wild flower gardens.

We planted a church for East African Refugees in 2015 called Strong Tower Ministries. This ministry continues to provide a church home to a growing community of immigrants so that they can know the Gospel and the love of Christ as they adapt to their new home country. This group is pastored by Rev. Bryson Masiboh.

This is by no means the end of our story. God continues to lead us into new and fruitful ways of being his missional congregation in the wonderful location he has put us in. Perhaps the Spirit is leading you to help us move our mission into the bright future He has for us.

### **Mission, Vision and Values of The Refuge**

The Mission, Vision and Values of The Refuge came out of a two-year process in which we polled the congregation, engaged with our local history, studied the Scriptures and prayed diligently for the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Refuge strongly believes that God goes before us in mission and is already at work in people's lives all around us. We just need to have the discernment to be able to come alongside God in His mission in the world around us. As a result of this process, we believe that the following need to be our mission, vision and values:

God's Mission in the World: to rescue and restore the world and the nations unto Himself.

God's Vision for The Refuge: to actively participate in God's rescue and restoration work in the world.

#### **The Refuge's six values:**

##### **Intrinsic Values:**

1. We value being Bible-based and gospel focused in all our worship and teaching.
2. We value the leading and power of the Holy Spirit as a vital and prayerful part of Christian life and ministry.

##### **Actionable Values:**

3. We value lifelong discipleship for believers of all ages.
4. We value deep compassion for the lost and a desire to bring them to Jesus.
5. We value diversity and inclusiveness in our church and in our world.
6. We value working for justice in our world, including creation stewardship.

We are very excited about putting flesh on this mission, vision and values. We believe God gave these to us and we are enthusiastic about where he will take us. We are looking forward to finding a pastor who will be energized by this vision and partner with us as we move into the future that God has already prepared for us.

## **Ministries**

None of us here at The Refuge are perfect people; we are disciples of Jesus, journeying with Him. So, following the guiding of His Word and keeping in step with the Holy Spirit, we have come to develop the following ministries at The Refuge:

**Worship Ministries:** Praise Team, Tech Team, Sound and video Team, Sensory Sanctuary Team, Hospitality Team

**Discipleship Ministries:** Small Groups, 222 Discipleship, Creation Care Ministries, Bible Studies, Prayer groups

**Mission Outreach:** Strong Tower Ministries, Stream Team, Blessing Box, Community Garden, Creation Care Ministries, Trash Tuesdays, Outdoor Creation Care VBS, Kids Christmas Gift Give-away

**Facility Ministry:** We have turned our facilities and grounds into a multifaceted ministry center whereby we rent the premises out to two churches, three home school associations, and various community ministries and events. This has allowed us to have the facility pay for itself with the revenue that is generated. It also provides a tremendous service for the ministries that are based in our Church.

