

## **The History of Northland Reformed Church**

Northland Reformed Church is a member congregation of the RCUS (founded in 1748). The Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS) is a church which stands in a tradition dating back to the Reformation in Germany in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century. Elector Fredrick III (1515-1576) received permission to teach the Reformed faith in his principality, know as the Palatinate, and, in 1563, comissioned Zacharias Ursinas and Casper Olivianus to author the Heidelberg Catechism, in order to do so.

In 1710, the first German Reformed worship services were held in America, and the church in America grew to roughly 300,000 members across 1,600 local congregations. However, in 1934, the RCUS decided to merge with the Evangelical Synod of North America, a move that shifted the focus away from the gospel and toward interfaith and social justice initiatives. Given this shift, a core group RCUS churches in the Dakotas (Eureka Classis) determined to remain as the RCUS, taking as their motto 2 John 9, “Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.”

From this first group of churches, we now have over 50 churches planted in the United States, of which Northland Reformed is one. But the questions remain—when did Northland Reformed Church begin? How many names has the church had? How many locations? How many pastors? What trials and triumphs have been faced? Much of the following information comes from the diligent work of the members of Northland Reformed Church, and a special thanks is due to Melanie Termorshuizen for her work in researching and recording these events.

The history of Northland Reformed Church may be divided into four periods, each identified by the name of the church at the time—The Zion Reformed Chapel period, the Hope Reformed Church period, the Walnut Creek Presbyterian Church period and the Northland Reformed Church period.

### **The Zion Reformed Chapel Period (1973 – 1975)**

In the summer of 1973, Ray and Juanita Schnabel and their three children, Linette, Kathy, and Daniel, moved to Kansas City, Missouri. They began attending the Reformed Presbyterian Church in downtown Kansas City, where Jacob and Joanna Fisher and their son and daughter-in-law, Mark and Mary Ann with their six children, Michael, Amy, Matt, Chris, Melinda and Melanie also were attending. When the Reformed Presbyterian Church moved south of the river, these three familes decided to start a Reformed church in the northland. Since Ray Schnabel grew up in the RCUS, they contacted the denomination about starting a new mission

work. The church officially began in 1974 as Zion Reformed Chapel, a mission work of Zion Reformed Church in Menno, South Dakota. The initial membership, comprised of these three families, met at the Oddfellows Hall in Gladstone, MO for morning services and evening services were held in the families' homes. Since the church did not yet have a pastor, various ministers from Nebraska, South Dakota, and Iowa travelled to Kansas City weekly to lead worship.

### **The Hope Reformed Church Period (1975 – 1991)**

In the summer of 1975, Reverend Robert Grossmann was installed as the church's first pastor and the church began meeting at the First National Bank of Gladstone on Antioch Road. Jacob Fisher played the organ and he was known for giving cherry Lifesavers to the children after every service. At the end of each morning service, while he was still playing the postlude, all the kids would make a mad dash to the organ and hold out their hands in anticipation.

At the first annual meeting, held in 1975, the church's name was changed to Hope Reformed Church. Later that year Ray Schnabel was ordained as the first elder and Jacob Fisher, the first deacon. Jacob would later be ordained as an elder.

As the church continued to grow a decision was made to obtain a permanent building. A gas station, at I-29 and Parvin Road, was purchased and subsequently renovated as the new church building and, in June 1979, the first services were held at this new location.

In August 1982, Reverend Grossmann took a call to the RCUS church in Mitchell, South Dakota and Reverend Norman Hoeflinger was called from Menno, South Dakota as the church's second pastor. During this time the Belgic Confession and the Canons of Dort were added, along with the existing Heidelberg Catechism, to the confessional standards of the church. In the summer of 1987, Scott and Barbara Clark joined the church, having moved to Kansas City after Scott finished Seminary at Westminster Seminary in California. In January 1989, Scott was ordained as assistant pastor, and in April of that same year became a full-time pastor, working alongside Reverend Hoeflinger. Later that year Reverend Hoeflinger took a call as the pastor in Mitchell, South Dakota, while Reverend Clark remained in Kansas City as the church's third pastor.

### **The Walnut Creek Presbyterian Church Period (1991 – 1996)**

At a special meeting in March 1991, the church's name was changed from Hope Reformed Church to Walnut Creek Presbyterian Church. The next year the church lost a dear saint, as Jacob Fisher, one of the initial members of the church, died in November 1992. The next year Reverend Clark was accepted to study at Oxford University, which required him to move to England, and Reverend Jan Dykshoorn was called as the church's fourth pastor in October 1993. The following year was difficult time for the church. Reverend Dykshoorn resigned his position in December 1994, and consideration was given to closing the doors of the church. However, being reminded that faithfulness to the LORD will bring blessing from the LORD, the church remained hopeful.

### **The Northland Reformed Church Period (1996 – Present)**

Reverend Wes Brice, the church's fifth pastor, was called in August 1995 and moved to Kansas City from California. Following his arrival, the decision was made to purchase land in the Northland area, first at Woodland and Cookingham Road, then finally at 2901 NW Cookingham Drive. At this time the church's name was changed to Northland Reformed Church. From 1995 to 1998 the church experienced continued growth. The last service in the renovated gas station, at I-29 and Parvin Road, was held in May 1998. After this services were moved to a temporary location in North Oak, at the White Oak Shopping area, until the new church building on Cookingham Drive was completed.

The groundbreaking for the new building occurred in 2000, with a building permit granted in July of that year. The members of the church, led by Ernie Termorshuizen and Tom Whittar, did all the work on the new building. The first service was held in the new building on Christmas Eve, 2001, with much joy and thanksgiving for God's blessing.

In 2002, Reverend Brice was called to pastor the church in Rogers, AR and in 2003 Reverend George Syms was called to become the sixth pastor of Northland Reformed Church. Reverend Syms served faithfully for six years, after which time he took a call to an RCUS church in South Dakota.

The seventh pastor of Northland Reformed Church, Reverend Randy Klynsma, was called from an Orthodox Presbyterian Church congregation in South Dakota, to serve at Northland Reformed Church, in 2009. Reverend Klynsma served the church

from 2009 to 2016. In January 2016, after many years of faithful service, Reverend Klynsma accepted a call to pastor an RCUS mission work in Omaha, NE.

The elders spent 2016 evaluating potential candidates for the next pastor of Northland Reformed Church. This was a year of transition, during which the elders were able to find preachers to fill the pulpit, morning and evening, each Lord's Day, with the exception of one Lord's Day evening, when a pre-recorded sermon had to be used.

In August 2016 the pastoral search committee approached Christopher Campbell, who was currently serving as an elder, and asked if he would be willing to serve as the next pastor. Mr. Campbell was finishing his studies at Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary and had served at Northland Reformed Church as an intern, under Reverend Klynsma. A special meeting was held in September 2016 and a call was issued to Mr. Campbell, which he accepted. Mr. Campbell began full-time work in January 2017 while finishing up his theological training, which he completed in May 2017. In October 2017, Reverend Christopher Campbell was ordained and installed as the eight pastor of Northland Reformed Church.

Northland Reformed Church continued to grow during this time, with new families joining the church and new visitors attending services. At the 2017 annual meeting, the decision was made to add a fellowship hall onto the existing church building. Construction began in 2017, and over the course of the year the new building was completed, with the first gathering for a fellowship meal happening in January 2018.

In 2021, Northland Reformed Church will celebrate its 47th anniversary. Although the church has been known by various names, met in various places, served by various pastors, witnessed various members come and go, and weathered various trials, one thing remains the same, the message we proclaim. Jesus is who we preach, Jesus is the one in whom we live, and Jesus is the end goal of everything we do. Remember, the church has only one foundation, the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, the reason for our existence is to proclaim His gospel to the glory of the Triune God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit. While it is true that many individuals have been used throughout the history of this church, we must remember that it was God who used them. And while we do not know what the future holds, we do know the one who holds the future in His hand. God has been faithful to Northland Reformed Church for many years, and it is my prayer that he will continue to do so, and to use each of us, the members of His Church, as instruments in His hand. May God give each of us a heart for the salvation of the lost, the growth of the saints, and the glory of our God as we labor for him in Kansas City.