

Grandville Branch (Spanish Speaking)

The Grandville Branch began when the Grand Valley Ward Bishop began meetings with a group of Hispanic Saints: the Nazers family, Erica Torres, and her sister Maria Carmen Torres. Eventually, members of their families and other relatives were converted, the meetings were held at the home Erica's cousin, Rosie. By this time Spanish speaking missionaries were sent and the branch began to grow.

Once the branch had grown, Brother Garrick was the Branch President and the meetings began to be held at the Stake Center on Leonard. As the branch continued growing, Bro Israde was called as Branch President in 1998 or 1999, with Bro. Quintero as first counselor, and the branch was moved to the Wyoming Ward building on 56th SW.

In 2003 or 2004 Brother Quintero was called as Branch President, with Brother Corona as a counselor. In this period there was discussion of closing the branch. In counsel with Regional leaders, President Stoddard and his counselors came to the decision to maintain the branch and assign more Spanish speaking missionaries as support.

At this time Brother Schurtz (known to members as Camisas, the Spanish word for shirts) was called as Branch President. Brother Black and Brother Urena would serve as his counselors. When Brother Schurtz departed, Brother Black was called as Branch President with Brother Urena and Brother Jorge Duran, a recent convert, as his counselors.

Eventually Brother Black departed and Brother Duran was called as Branch President. Brother Bloomfield and Brother Corona were called as his counselors. They served until Brother Riony Soliz was called as the new Branch President and continues in this calling today.

President Soliz began his service with Vicente Olguin as First Counselor and Guillermo Oliva as Second Counselor. Eventually Noah Read was called as the Second Counselor. Sister Maricsa Sifontes serves as Relief Society President with Elizabeth Vazquez and Amalia Soriano as Counselors. Jorge Duran serves as Elder's Quorum President and Remi Montigny serves as High Priest Group Leader. Walter Sifontes serves as Young Men President, Sandra McNamara serves Young Women President, Migdalia Oliva serves Primary President, and Guillermo Oliva serves as Branch Mission Leader.

The Lord has preserved and strengthened the Grandville Branch in order to bless His beloved Hispanic children in the Grand Rapids area for many years. Despite growing pains and the challenges associated with small units of the church the Branch has served to strengthen the faith of many people.