

Nazarenes celebrate golden anniversary

"It was moved that we, the undersigned, do hereby make application to District Superintendent W. C. Wilson of the Southern California District of the Church of the Nazarene for the organization of a church of that name at Highland Park, Los Angeles, California." With this action by the 29 charter members who attended the meeting and signed the request on Aug. 15, 1913, the history of the Highland Park Church of the Nazarene began, and was officially organized by Superintendent Wilson on Aug. 20, 1913. Today the congregation joins in special services to celebrate its 50th anniversary.

The church first met for services in 1913 in the chapel George Teel had built on the rear of his property at the corner of Ave. 56 and Meridian Street and where Teel had been holding Sunday school services. At that organizational meeting, the new church called as its Pastor Rev. S. D. White, who had been pastor of the local Holiness Church, and who, with most of the charter members, separated from that affiliation because of a conflict of opinion on church order, namely, a restriction against instrumental music in the church. **National Demonstration**

In organizing a Church of the Nazarene, they were uniting with a denomination that was at that time only five years old. In 1895 the well-known Southern California Methodist minister, Dr. Phineas F. Bresee, had formed in downtown Los Angeles a congregation under the name, The Church of the Nazarene. From that beginning the work expanded until in 1908 it was molded together as a nationwide denomination with 200 churches and 10,000 members.

In the months that followed the young Highland Park Church purchased the chapel from Mr. Teel and moved the wooden frame structure to the nearby property it has purchased at the corner of York Boulevard and Noldan Street, meeting on that corner in a tent in the time of transition.

In 1918, the Rev. Dennis Rogers was called as Pastor and the church continued its growth, despite such trials as the influenza epidemic of the Fall of 1918.

th installation of a standpipe on the property for irrigation.

At nearly the same time that the Highland Park church was organized, the Eagle Rock Avenue Church of the Nazarene was initiated and began holding meetings in a building on Eagle Rock Avenue (now Figueroa Street) at Crestwood Way.

By 1920 its membership decided it would be best to merge with the Highland Park congregation, and this it did that year when Rev. E. E. Hale came to serve as pastor.

With this came need for more room than afforded by the simple structure the Church had occupied for six years. After many months of effort lots were purchased on Meridian Street at Neva Place and the church there was constructed. The minutes of the Board meetings of that time show that when the church was occupied a petition was also signed asking for the "paving of Meridian Street from Neva Place to Eagle Rock Avenue" (Figueroa St.)

At that time also, 1922, the name of the Church was changed to Garvanza Church of the Nazarene to fit the change in community identity. In 1936 the name reverted back to Highland Park Church of the Nazarene.

Present Church

At the Meridian Street location the church worshipped for 30 years. In 1948, under the leadership of Rev. Harold Woodall, three lots were purchased on North Figueroa Street at Ruby Place. The vision of a new church became reality under the ministry of Rev. Nelson Gunstream when the present church was constructed, being completed in 1954. The old Church on Meridian Street was purchased by the Covenant Baptist Church. Since this time the church has grown stronger, and in 1962, under the leadership of

Rev. Frank Watkin, and with a continuing vision for a greater service to the community of Highland Park, the lots at 6524 and 6532 North Figueroa Street were purchased. The buildings on these properties are now in use as Sunday school facilities and the church is planning toward the day when a spacious Christian education unit will stand beside its sanctuary.

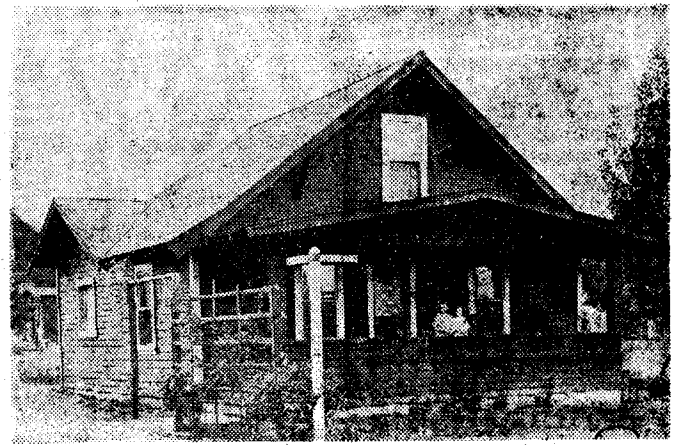
In commenting about the golden anniversary celebration, the present Pastor, Harold Bonner stated, "The record of the past 50 years proclaims the goodness of God and the faithfulness of His people in this congregation. It shows from whence we have come and declares our direction for the future. We shall not alter our course nor change the high purpose that we share with those who have gone before, namely, that of living and serving the Lord

Jesus Christ. We pray that we shall be as faithful in our mission as were those whose Christian achievements we celebrate today."

Recollections

In marking the anniversary the church will have an anniversary service at 3 p.m. today. The speaker will be Dr. Shelburne Brown, superintendent of the Los Angeles District of the Church of the Nazarene. Rev. E. E. Hale, pastor from 1920-1922 will be present to share his recollections about the former days. Also assisting will be Rev. Virgil Raley, representing the Highland Park Ministerial Association, and Edward Files, president of Highland Park Chamber of Commerce. Following the service there will be an Anniversary Fellowship Hour in the Fellowship Hall.

Friends of the Church are cordially invited to share in all the anniversary activities.



Back in 1913

The modest frame home of George Teel, Avenue 56 and Meridian, served as the first meeting place for Highland Park Nazarenes at their first services held Aug. 15, 1913.



Fifty years later

From such small beginnings, the Church of the Nazarene has grown to such proportions that it now occupies this modern building. At upper left is the Rev. Harold Bonner, pastor who will be in charge at the 50th anniversary celebration today.