

HISTORY OF CAMBRIDGE PRESTON CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

In 1926 a tent meeting was held with a musical group and a speaker, Oliver Crack. The services were held on a vacant lot just north of where the 7-11 gas bar was located. It was so successful that the people started having meetings in the Orange Hall for the next 9 months. In the spring of 1927 they acquired a hall that was near the corner of King and Laurel Streets and a full-time pastor, Rev. Charles Sparks, was called. The organization was named the Preston Gospel Tabernacle. The church rented this space for three years and then they purchased a property at Duke and Lowther Streets. A church was built by volunteers with its official opening on October 5, 1930.

The Church of the Nazarene had come across the Canada/US border in 1920 and started a work in Windsor. Additional churches were built in Toronto (2), Woodstock, London, Newmarket, and Hamilton. With 472 members and 7 churches, the Ontario District of the Church of the Nazarene was formed on July 14, 1936, with the founding District Superintendent being Dr. W. M. McGuire.

Dr. McGuire has recorded in the District Assembly Journal for the fiscal year of 1936-1937, "In Preston, it was our privilege to organize a splendid church, receiving Rev. C. Sparks and wife and thirty-five of his good people. They are a great crowd of folk and have a Sunday School and a Missionary Vision and will be heard from in the future of this district."

In 1946 the mortgage on the property was paid in full and a burning of the mortgage (copy) took place to celebrate what God had done during this rough period of the economy.

In 1952, when 25 Galt children were being car-pooled to Preston Church for Sunday School, the Ayres family left and began a work in Galt to better serve their community. This group subsequently formed the Calvary Church in 1958.

As the church building became older it was necessary to build a new church. The members at the time remember that every time we had a heavy rain storm, the sewers would back up and come into the basement of the church. The storm would ruin all the Sunday School Supplies and other items in the basement as well as contaminating the facility.

After prayer and discussion, the church purchased the property on Hamilton Street for \$2000 from the Town of Preston in November 1964. The new building was expected to cause \$35,000. At that time the church received permission to build a slab over the Bishop Street Sewer Connection that runs through the property. The Evening Reporter reported that the slab will not be needed at this time but would be in the future and it was the intention to build the church in two stages at which time the slab would belong to a covered walkway between the two buildings. The paper wrote that Rev. Jim Taylor, the pastor, predicted that Stage 2 would occur maybe 10 to 15 years in the future.

In July, 1965 the sod was turned at 1332 Hamilton Street for the building of our new church and the construction commenced immediately. The cornerstone was laid in October, 1965. The congregation moved mid-November of 1965 and the dedication service followed on November 28, 1965.

In May 1980, a parsonage was purchased at 972 Concession Rd for \$55,900.00 and this property was sold in 2008. Once the parsonage family were moved into the detached home, the parsonage within the

church building became available for church use. Renovations began in the mid-1980's and were completed by 1988/89. The renovations included the removal of the classroom walls in the basement and portable walls were built. At the back of the church, the parsonage walls were removed and the church offices were built, the sanctuary was enlarged, the sanctuary doors were repositioned and the restrooms were relocated. At the front, the platform was lowered, the tiny church office in the front right corner was removed, a storage space was removed and relocated above the enclosed stairwell.

In March 2003, the Cambridge Calvary Church of the Nazarene (Galt) was closed and some of the remaining members transferred their membership to Cambridge Preston Church of the Nazarene. (In 2010, the church in Galt was demolished to make way for infrastructure.) Shortly after the merger with Cambridge Calvary, an accessibility ramp was added to the church.

Over the years the style of worship has changed and moved from hymn books to chorus books to PC projection; from an organist accompanying a pianist to the drums accompanying the guitar; from a Song Leader to a Worship Leader to a Worship Team; from the pulpit to a podium; from the Worship Service beginning at 11 AM to a 10:30 AM start; and from a 7 PM evening service to a 6 PM service to such a time as that having an evening service wasn't feasible. But the Lord God of our fathers and predecessors is still the same. And today we celebrate and thank Him for being with us over these last 75 years.