



LIGHTHOUSE TO THE WORLD:

**HISTORY OF THE
CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE
ALBION**

Lighthouse to the World

Albion Church of the Nazarene

Birth of a Church

The initial attempt to begin a Nazarene church in Albion was made in the late 1930's by Rev. Paul Gilmore of the Springboro church. Evangelistic services were held in the Albion area and plans were under way for the organization of this new congregation. However, this did not seem to be God's time and plans had to be postponed.

"Later, when Rev. Alvin Mountford came to pastor the Springboro church in 1941, he held services above the post office *on Main St.* We had quite a number of people out to services. The services were held on Sunday afternoons.

"Then we found a Presbyterian church which had been closed. Rev. Mountford inquired about it, and we got to pay for the church by monthly rent. Soon we held afternoon services until Rev. Mountford was called to Erie to pastor, then the doors were closed until 1945. When Rev. Frank Heberle from the Erie church was called by God to come to Albion to pastor. Since then he has organized the church during revivals in a tent. (*The evangelists for the tent meeting when the church was organized was Rev. & Mrs. David McKay*). We took in 9 members. We also have a large Sunday School.

"The church was organized July 13, 1947 in the evening service. We took up a dedication offering for Rev. Heberle to buy himself a suit."

Source: Original history written at the beginning of the first church "Record."
Italics added in from material submitted in 2008 by June (Barton) Mihalek who would have written this original statement.

Organization took place during tent services with Evangelists Tommy and Bernard Younce.

The Charter Members were:

Rev. & Mrs. Frank Heberle	Mrs. Roy Clawson
Mrs. Sowry	Mrs. B. Bateman
Mrs. Harriet Russin	Miss June Barton
Mr. Alva Perry	Mrs. Evelyn Perry
Mrs. Mattie Perry	Mrs. Evelyn Barrows

The first official church board meeting was held July 17, 1947 under the direction of Rev. Mountford. The original officers were as follows:

Pastor: Rev. Frank Heberle

Trustees: Mr. Alva Perry
Mrs. B. Bateman
Mrs. Sowry

Stewards: Mrs. Mattie Perry
Miss June Barton
Mrs. Harriet Russin

Sunday School Supt: Mrs. Frank Heberle

Secretary: Miss June Barton

Treasurer: Mr. Alva Perry

God was with our church. His presence was sought in the beginning days of our church. Revival plans were being made and our church continued to grow spiritually and numerically. For the next year and a half, services were scheduled with Rev. Billy Smith, Rev. Tommy Younce, Rev. Bernard Younce, and Rev. William J. Stract.



Rev. Donald Hennen later shared his memories of the original church building. “That was a homey little church with seating for 65, and four classrooms in the basement, which used curtains for partitions. The church still owed \$1,000 on the mortgage of \$1,500, and we set out to liquidate that debt as soon as possible.”

Humble Beginnings

At the second board meeting on August 6, 1947 the Church Board “decided the church would pay his (Rev. Heberle’s) rent and give the pastor \$5.00 a week for salary.”

The offerings for the first full month after the church was organized totaled \$89.36 for an average of \$17.87 for the five weeks. The 2014 equivalent for the month would be \$867.

In March of 1948 our pastor’s salary was increased to \$10 per week. The 2014 equivalent would be \$97 per week.

As a note of interest, let’s compare our budgets for the years 1949 and 2014.

	<u>1949</u>	<u>2013/14</u>
World Evangelism Fund	\$48	\$7,941
District Fair Share	\$36	\$6,228
Eastern Nazarene College	\$24	\$2,886
Pensions & Benevolence	\$0	\$3,262

In the past 10 years alone, our congregation has given over \$260,000 for ministries outside of our local church, not including special mission offerings and contributions for Work and Witness trips.

Multiple Pastoral Changes

In 1949 Rev. Heberle relegated his duties as pastor to Rev. William A. Slick. Due to a later fire in which all records were destroyed, we have no information for this period. We do know however, that there were devoted Christians during this time because our little congregation carried on. In early August, 1949 Rev. Paul E. Black assumed the duties of pastoring the Albion Church of the Nazarene. Rev. Hoover was asked to assume the pastorate of our church in July of 1952 and was the pastor until May of 1953.

Rev. Donald Hennen Becomes Pastor

Just one month later, on June 1, 1953, Rev. Donald H. Hennen, having recently completed his preparation for ministry at Eastern Nazarene College in Quincy, Massachusetts came to be our pastor. His wife, Charlotte Wayman Hennen, was from the Pittsburgh Lincoln Place Church of the Nazarene on the Pittsburgh District. Rev. Hennen had grown up in the Washington, PA First Church of the Nazarene, on the same district.



Being unable to find a house for rent in Albion the couple settled into a home in Springboro until 1958 when they were able to move to Albion. In October 1954 a son, Wayne, was born to the Hennens.

Rev. Donald Hennen served the Albion Church and Albion area until his death on July 4, 1991, having completed 38 years as its pastor.



Following the arrival of Rev. Don Hennen, plans were made and carried out for painting and generally rejuvenating the church building. Debt liquidation became a matter of further prayer and concern and in 1955 a mortgage burning ceremony was held.

Attendance continued to grow as God prospered His work. Youth society (NYPS) and Juniors (children's ministry) were started.

These early days were often difficult days, with it being difficult to keep the bills paid, coal in stock for the furnace, and the pastor's salary of \$15 per week paid. The church depended on God, continuing in prayer and worship. God continued to supply the needs of the church and the parsonage family.

Disaster Strikes

On Sunday afternoon, November 30, 1958 our church building was destroyed by fire. There was nothing the pastor and his families and others could do but stand there and watch as their church home went up in flames. What were they going to do now? Rev. Herbert Boyd and his generous congregation at Grace Methodist Church on Pearl Street opened their doors to the

homeless congregation, allowing them to use a portion of their new annex as a place of worship. The church went on!

Rebuilding

It was decided that it was going to be impossible to rebuild the old church and plans were put into motion for a new building. Money was needed and people gave sacrificially. Labor was needed and God's people gave of their time and efforts. An attractive building was built on the same property, but this time facing Orchard Street rather than Pearl Street. The building was two story, white cement blocks on the exterior, and wood paneling and oak hardwood floors in the sanctuary. Classrooms and restrooms were in the lower level. The first service was held in the new sanctuary on Easter Sunday in 1961 and the dedication service followed on August 13, 1961 at 3PM with Rev. John Andree of the Warren, PA church as the speaker.

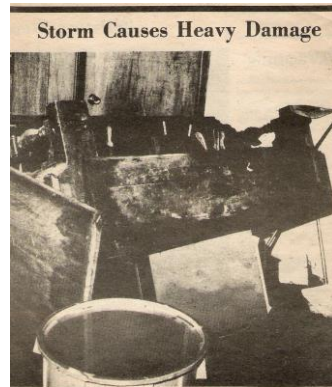


During the next years we held many revival services, including services with organist Rev. Bert Jones. The church was faithfully instructed in their responsibilities of witnessing and bringing those around them to Christ.

The church people worked together and the church continued to grow.

basement was flooded that came from a small continued to bounce back

In 1970 and 1971 to a point where were made to purchase the church. There was for fellowship times and classrooms when the dividing doors were pulled. There was also a new pastor's office in the annex.



While in this building, the three different times due to the overflow creek behind the church. The church following these times of adversity.

the Sunday School and church had grown additional room was needed and plans additional land and build onto the back of one good sized room that could be used which could also serve as three

In the early 1970's the Albion Church was instrumental in the starting of the Nazarene church in Edinboro. Rev. Hennen and some of the people would hold worship services weekly at the Presbyterian Church in Edinboro (current Pizza Hut location) on Sunday afternoons. The youth group from the Albion church was active in going door to door distributing information about the new church and in singing in the worship services from time to time. June Barton, one of the charter members of the Albion church who had come out of the Springboro church, was then active in the starting of the Edinboro church.

In the early 70's the teen group experiences revival among their group and started holding a teen led weekly prayer meeting each week that was well attended. The fires of their revival spread to the rest of the church and beyond.

Explosive Growth

Following the helping to start the church in Edinboro, building the new annex to the church in Albion, and the revival of the early 70's the church began to grow faster than it ever had before. The church was again running out of Sunday School space and the teens used a room on the upper floor of Steff's Funeral Home (the building that was destroyed by a tornado in 1985).

Moving Ahead

Since there was limited land available for future expansion at the current site, the church board began making plans for a new building west of Albion on 10 acres of land that had been purchased previously from Mr. & Mrs. Charles Randall. The land was four miles from Albion and had easy access from Interstate 90, being only four miles from the West Springfield exit. Originally a pavilion was constructed on the property so that the church could hold picnics and athletic events.

An architect was hired and plans were completed in early 1980. The church was able to take out a loan and work began on a new church building in June 1980. Nearly all of the labor was done by the men and ladies of the congregation, however a group of Amish men were hired to help with the roughing in of the structure.



The church was dedicated on June 6, 1981. God continued to bless the congregation as lives were impacted with the Gospel.



Dedication Service: From left to right: Rev. Donald Hennen; Rev. Jerry Lambert, Pittsburgh District Superintendent; Rev. Wayne Hennen; Rev. Tom Rockrohr, Associate Pastor; Paul Cam, Architect; and Rev. James Schmittle, representing Northwestern Ministerium.



In May 1985, a large portion of the properties on the Albion Area were destroyed by a killer tornado which struck the area. Our building at Orchard and Pearl was destroyed along with many other businesses and homes in town. At the time the church was only being used for the Northwestern Food Pantry. With everyone's cooperation and with the leadership of Clair F. Henley, the remains of the building were the first in town to be torn down and

the site brought up to specifications. At the same time, the pastor and congregation were ministering to the families of those who lost a loved one in the tornado and assisting in feeding the volunteers and visiting the injured. Manual labor was given to help others as well. Several in the church had damage to their homes. As a result of the total destruction of the building we were able to receive money from insurance which paid off the mortgage on the new building on 6N and to assist in building a church for the Paradise Park Church of the Nazarene in Hilo, Hawaii. Fourteen people from this congregation traveled there, at their own expense, to assist in the construction.

Unexpected Change

Pastor Donald Hennen continued to faithfully serve the congregation until he succumbed to pancreatic cancer on July 4, 1991. He died at the age of 60 and had been praying about the future of the church when he would retire in 5 more years. One of the things that he was concerned about was who was going to follow him as pastor and how he could best prepare the church for that huge change and how he could back away from the leadership role to allow the new pastor to become the shepherd of the congregation.

His son, Rev. Wayne Hennen, had begun attending the Albion church in June 1990 when he resigned his pastorate in Edinboro to pursue a master's degree in clinical psychology to prepare to be better able to be of assistance to hurting pastors and their families.



Left: Carol & Pastor Wayne

Right: Their Daughter & Son-in-law, Adam & Melissa Uzzo



Rev. Wayne was able to help his father during six months of his father's illness as he became able to do less and less. The congregation pulled together with Rev. Wayne, Rev. Mayne Minich, and Associate Pastor Dean Schlosser to support their pastor and wife and to keep the ministries of the church going during this difficult time. Rev. Wayne agreed with the church that he would serve as pastor for one year following his father's death in order to allow the congregation to heal somewhat from their grief and to begin to make the adjustments and preparations necessary to call in a new pastor. At the end of that year the congregation and Rev. Wayne both perceived that God wanted them to continue their relationship and Rev. Wayne Hennen was called as the pastor of the congregation in 1992. He has now completed over 23 years of service with the congregation. He believes that this was God's plan for him and for the congregation. He feels that God was preparing him for his whole life to pastor this congregation during this stage of his life. God had a plan. The church has welcomed and loved Pastor Wayne, his wife Carol, and their daughter Melissa with abundant graciousness.

Former Associate Pastor: Rev. & Mrs. Mayne Minich

Rev. Mayne Minich and his wife Gladys retired in 1985 and came to Albion in 1987 to be an associate pastor. Rev. Minich served the Lord through that role until his death at age 90 in August 2013. Rev. Minich especially blessed the congregation through hospital visitation and preaching.



Current Associate Pastors and Spouses

Phil and Deb Gilmore

Connie and Dana Young

Continued Service

As our church continues to serve the world, the Pittsburgh District, and the local area, many projects have been and are being accomplished: Kidz Klub at Albion Elementary School; Vacation Bible School in the Albion Borough Park; and Work and Witness trips here in the United States as well as abroad. The church also ministers through Bible studies weekly at the Northwestern Senior Center. The congregation has been able to team up with Panera Bread on Peach Street in Erie where one day a week we pick up their donation of the previous day's breads so that the congregation can share it Sunday attenders, and now with the Nazarene Church in Springboro, PA as well.

God has especially been blessing in our ministry to children and youth and their families. He has given us fantastic, dedicated workers in these areas as well as in many other areas. We want to be a place where families can come and be accepted and loved. We want to be a place where children with special needs can be ministered to and where their families will know that it is safe to bring them and that they are loved.

Albion Nazarene is looking forward to what God will do through the congregation through the years to come. Our primary goal is to fulfill the "Great Commission" that Christ gave to His church and that is to go and make disciples (followers) of Jesus Christ. It is our plan to be disciples ourselves and to let Him work through us to make many more disciples, who will then go out and make even more disciples. It is God's plan for us and we intend to carry it out in the local area as well as around the world.

Compiled from material written by: Janet (Perry) Schultz; Rev. Donald Hennen; Charlotte Hennen; June (Barton) Mihalek; and Rev. Wayne Hennen