HISTORY OF SHAWNEE CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

She prayed that a Church of the Nazarene would be established in her little village called Shawnee. Ruth Hieronymous was a faithful member of Kansas City First Church of the Nazarene. Twice on Sunday, at midweek, and no doubt many other times as well, she made the eight-mile trek from her home to her church. She was happy to do that, but longed for the day there would be a Church of the Nazarene in her town. She prayed and believed for nearly 25 years.

It all came together on June 8, 1960 with a preliminary organizational meeting. The site was the old campground at 7700 Antioch Road, Overland Park, Kansas. Lakeview (now Antioch) Church of the Nazarene contributed nine members and a thousand dollars to the dream. Others joined later at the August organizational service, from several other churches to comprise 26 charter members. Thus on August 28, 1960, Shawnee became the second Nazarene congregation in northeast Johnson County and the 24th in greater metropolitan Kansas City.

It was Wayne Brunson's neighbor, Elmer Johnson, who helped the new church find a meeting facility. Elmer was treasurer of the Masonic Lodge. Wayne asked if the Lodge Hall on Johnson Drive was available for Sunday services. Lodge officials said, "yes, if you agree to rent it for $5.00 per Sunday."

The members of the church met each Sunday morning at 7:00 a.m. to sweep out the mess from the night before. They would set up the chairs for Sunday school and church, bring in portable cribs for a nursery, and then dedicate the building to God for use as a sanctuary for the day.

Dr. Jarrette Aycock spoke from Romans 1:14 at the first Sunday morning service. He was the presiding district superintendent. This was July 3, 1960. The evening message was brought by Seminary president, Dr. L. T. Corlett. He spoke from several passages out of Romans 6, 7, and 8. Other guest speakers throughout July 1960 were: Dr. Bennett Dudney, Rev. Charles Hastings Smith, and Rev. Floyd Hawkins.

The big day was August 7, 1960 when Rev. Clarence Kinzler preached his first message as the first full-time pastor. The title was, "Let Us Run Well the Race . . . ", from 1 Corinthians 9:2-27. Dr. Jarrette Aycock came back on August 28, 1960 to preside over the organizational service. The following persons went forward to join as Charter Members: Dr. and Mrs. Jarette Aycock, Bob Boucher, Mr. and Mrs. Wayne Brunson, Mr. and Mrs. John

Cashman, Mr. and Mrs. Art Croy, Elaine Croy, Dan Croy, Mr. and Mrs. Darrell Garrett, Mrs. Ruth Hieronymus, Rev. Clarence Kinzler, Mr. and Mrs. Roy Mink, Maridel Mink, Duane Peppley, Mr. and Mrs. Russell White, Tim White, Mrs. Claude Williams, Dan Williams, Beverly Williams, Gary Williams.

The Shawnee Church began constructing its first building with a ground breaking ceremony August 5, 1962. It was occupied on February 17, 1963 and dedicated April 28th of the same year. Under Pastor Kinzler the church grew to 98 members. In the summer of 1966 Rev. Kinzler moved to become the pastor of Arlington Avenue Church of the Nazarene in Riverside, California.

Rev. Mel McCullough of Forth Worth, Texas was invited to be pastor. He began his duties on July 17, 1966. By the time Rev. McCullough concluded his pastorate here in 1971, the church had grown to 200 members and had constructed an 8,700 square foot educational facility.

The church again reached into Texas for leadership and invited Rev. Richard Young of San Antonio to become pastor. Rev. Young had pastored the Del View church and came to Shawnee in 1972. He served as pastor until January of 1984. Under his leadership the membership grew to over 400 and the church built a beautiful new sanctuary seating 550.

Rev. Dan White served as pastor from July 1984 to June 1986. Rev. Charles West filled the office from August 1986 to October 1987. Rev. William Bridges pastored Shawnee from August 1988 to September 1991. The years from 1983 to 1991 were a period of struggle for the congregation. Attendance slipped from a high average of 422 to under 200. Several families moved away and morale was shaken.

Rev. Jeren Rowell, served as pastor from November 1991-September 2005. He formerly served the congregation as Associate Pastor in 1983 under Rev. Richard Young. The Rowells moved to Shawnee following an eight-year assignment at Chicago First Church of the Nazarene. Under his leadership, the congregation grew back to an all-time high average annual attendance of 478 (2004). A daughter church was also planted in 2002 that is now averaging approximately 200 in attendance. In August 2005, the Kansas City District elected Rev. Rowell to the office of District Superintendent where he currently serves.

Rev. Glen Shoup began his service to Shawnee Church in January of 2006. Rev Shoup and his family moved from Florida where he had served most recently as a preaching pastor to an United Methodist congregation.

Rev. Shoup was called to be the —- Pastor at Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, KS in 2009 where he continues to serve today.

Rev. Jason Rowinski served as pastor from 2010 until 2016. He moved from Bethany First Church in Bethany, Oklahoma where he served on staff. He shared a passion for theology and ministry to young people. He taught (and continues to teach) at MidAmerican Nazarene University and as a result made many connections to young people who felt called to ministry. Many interns came through Shawnee as a result of Pastor Jason teaching at the universtiy. Rev. Stefanie Rowiski served on staff alongside Pastor Jason. Her kind and generous spirit was contagious and impacted many. She recently became a chaplain for Marketplace Ministries and Pastor Jason is the church planing coordinator for the Kansas City District.

Rev. Cara Shonamon and Rev. Chuck Sunberg began a covenant relationship with Shawnee Church of the Nazarene on February 26, 2017 service as Co-Senior Pastors. Rev. Sunberg served as the interim beginning in May of 2016. Rev. Shonamon (Rev. Sunberg's daughter) served on staff at Shawnee as Associate Pastor to Children and Families in 2012 to 2014.