

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF GRACE ASSEMBLY OF GOD

Our church, Grace Assembly of God, first took root in the community of Parker in 1961. At first, the church had no name and resided in an old armory building. The church's first congregation would gather for worship and the reading of the Word. Before long, the congregation built a new church on a donated piece of property, located at 19th and Navajo. The church was named *First Assembly of God*. Delbert and Mary Seaton were the young congregation's pastors. This building was destroyed in a fire July 30, 1969. It was immediately rebuilt using an A-frame construction.

The church has experienced the ministry of many pastors over the years. Following the Seatons, the succession of pastors is as follows: Norman and Ora McDowell, Brother Rowlett, Brother Marr, Rudy and Sue Rimer, Tom and Melba Rimer (no relation), Bob and Debbie Hillyer, Monty and Kelli Sears, Chuck and Pam Ray, Gene and Sirkku Chewning, and the present pastors, George and Sherry Rennau.

Older members of the congregation occasionally reminisce about the Hillyer's. They were "community" pastors who enjoyed a long, spiritually solid, ministry here in Parker. Pastors Monty and Kelli Sears are remembered for their role in the construction of a new sanctuary in 1996, which followed a time of evangelistic revival. Many of our congregation's current members were saved during that revival. It was an intense time of repentance and Holy Spirit deliverance. The church used the old A-frame building for children's ministries and fellowship. During this time, the church ran a pre-school which some people from the community still make inquires about, even though the school has been closed for some time!

The church has had several name changes over the years. In 1992, after about 30 years under the name of First Assembly of God, Parker, the church name was changed to Grace Community Church of the Assemblies of God. In 1996, church members approved changing the name to Grace Assembly of God of Parker, Arizona. Most members lovingly refer to their church as *Grace*. That is exactly what this church has enjoyed over its more than 40 years of existence, God's grace! God has blessed us with solid, Pentecostal leaders who desire, more than anything, the presence of Jesus Christ. For several years, the church has been experiencing ongoing renewal, which has touched lives here in Parker, and all over the world.