

The Same Spirit

I recently preached for my congregation's homecoming.

Knob Creek had sent out invitations to people who had moved away. And to family members whose parents had passed away to join us for our reunion. The Church was organized in 1799 not long after Tennessee had become a state. Many then still referred to the territory as being the State of Franklin.



Figure 1 Knob Creek Covenant Brethren Church

In the time that we live in where everything is “here today and gone tomorrow,” It is amazing to talk to people and tell them about our church of 225 years. They have never heard of “Brethren” especially the folks here in the south... This congregation was the ‘hub” for the Southeastern District and now the Southern Region. The Church was at the center, originally known as the Knob Creek Brethren District and named for the organized Churches that came out of this congregation. Over the years the church went through many trials. When the log cabin church burnt down and a new Church was built in 1905, Knob Creek went through divisions in the denomination during the 3-way split in the 1800s. A name change was made in 1908 of the denomination, from the German Baptist Church to the Church of the Brethren and, in 2020, to Covenant Brethren Church.

I couldn't help but think about all the men and women who met in meetings to discuss and pray for the changes that were going to affect the Knob Creek Church as well as its sister churches. The many hours spent in prayer and the sermons preached to encourage the congregation.

For the first time in a long time, I felt the weight of the church on my shoulders, I was very nervous and even felt unworthy. Because here I was standing in the pulpit of a church that had been proclaiming the gospel for 225 years and in the same location for 116 years. It was humbling to be standing where Reuel Pritchett stood in 1908 when he was called into the ministry. He was even named Rural Minister of the Year for the State of Tennessee in 1956. Even his niece was sitting in the pews watching and listening to me.

After the service, a brother in Christ thanked me for the message. I told him everything I was going through while trying to bring the message. He said, "Brother, you are no different than the pastors before you... nor are you any better or worse. But you are of the same Spirit, which is why this church has been here for 225 years. And why the gospel has been going forth into the world for 2000+ years." Wow! his words took me straight to **Philippians 2:1-2** *Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any ^[a]affection and compassion, ² make my joy complete ^[b]by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.* 200 years or 2000 years, the only thing that changes is time. The message and the Spirit remain the same. What encouragement!!!

By John Swonger, CBC Ex. Committee

Weekly Prayer Points

Heavenly Father, we praise You because You are our Stronghold, Rock of Refuge, Protector and Defender. Thank You for giving us Your Word that is "alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." (**Hebrews 4:12**). Help us to "watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in (our) way that are contrary to the teaching (we) have learned." (**Romans 16:17**) We ask for protection from the evil one and wisdom and discernment to recognize the deception of false teaching. Sanctify us by the truth that comes from Your Word. (**John 17:15-17**)

Please pray for these congregations and pastors:

- Maranatha Congregation in Tanzania, Africa and Pastor Daudi Faraja
- Melvin Hill Congregation in Columbus, NC and pastor Craig Scruggs

CBC Prayer Committee