

## LANDMARK CHURCH IN JESSAMINE IS TORN DOWN - PROVIDENCE CHRISTIAN PLANNING FOR NEW BUILDING ON 8-ACRE SITE

NICHOLASVILLE -- Providence Christian Church, an 89-year-old landmark on U.S. 27 in northern Jessamine County, returned to dust yesterday after it was demolished.

"It's a sad thing for me," said longtime member Harold Waits of Nicholasville. "I was married there and I was baptized there, and my two kids were baptized there and both of them were married there. It's just been a big part of my life. It's been home. I could depend on the church when I needed anything." But I guess we'll be all right. It will take us a year to get a new church built."



The Providence congregation is meeting in a 4,800-square-foot transitional space in Brannon Crossing Centre, between Subway and Foot Solutions, and plans to build a new church on an 8-acre site east of the AmStar movie theaters in Brannon Crossing.

The Rev. Gerald Johns, pastor of Providence Christian, preached his last sermon in the old building Aug. 20.

"At the end of the service, all the elders of the church came forward and we picked up the Communion table and plates and everything and took them out the front door," Johns said. "And we had a procession to this transitional space and brought the Communion table into the new space and concluded our service over here."

The groundbreaking for the new church building might come within two or three weeks, Johns said.

The new building will open sometime in 2007. It will seat 225, and will use stained glass from the old church as well as the pews and a balcony rail. The new church will also have a gym.

Providence began as a mission outreach of South Elkhorn Baptist Church in Lexington on Jan. 13, 1817, according to a Jessamine County bicentennial commemorative book published in 1998.

Several members met at Waveland, the home of Daniel Boone's nephew, Daniel Boone Bryan, to discuss the need for a church in the Brannon Road area.

By the mid-1820s, Kentucky congregations came under the influence of reformers Thomas and Alexander Campbell, whose teaching included open Communion and membership by simple profession of faith. Providence was one of those congregations,

and in 1830, the Elkhorn Baptist Association voted to remove the church from that group.

The congregation then became a part of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in 1832.

The building torn down yesterday was actually the third used by Providence.

The original "meeting house" was destroyed by a tornado in 1849. The second building, which now houses Clairebourne Antiques on U.S. 27, was built in 1850 and served the congregation until 1917, when the building just demolished was dedicated.

The ground on which the church sat will be the site for a new Red Robin restaurant, a chain based in the western United States and known for gourmet hamburgers, said Jim Hughes, developer of Brannon Crossing Centre.

Hughes said construction on the restaurant will begin later this year.

Reach Greg Kocher in the Nicholasville bureau at (859) 885-5775 or [gkocher1@herald-leader.com](mailto:gkocher1@herald-leader.com).

Author: Greg Kocher

Central Kentucky Bureau

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