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**ALL SOULS CHURCH, BRAINTREE, APPROVED FOR NOMINATION TO THE NATIONAL
REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

Secretary of the Commonwealth William F. Galvin is pleased to announce that the Massachusetts Historical Commission approved All Souls Church in Braintree for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places at its March meeting. The nomination has been submitted to the National Register of Historic Places at the National Park Service in Washington, DC, for final consideration and designation.

“The Massachusetts Historical Commission is dedicated to preserving the Commonwealth’s rich historic, architectural, archaeological, and cultural resources,” Secretary Galvin said. “Inclusion of All Souls Church in the National Register will help preserve this picturesque, stone Gothic building prominently sited in Braintree.”

Designed by prominent Unitarian architect Edwin J. Lewis, the 1 ½-story All Souls Church occupies a prominent corner lot on Elm Street in northern Braintree. Local businessmen funded the church’s construction in 1905. With walls of uncut and uncoursed fieldstone, Indiana limestone trim, and a slate roof, the building exhibits Late Gothic Revival and Tudor Revival stylistic elements. Much of the building’s historic significance stems from its unique congregation, co-founded in 1900 by separate Unitarian and Universalist groups, which continued to recognize both traditions until the national merger of the two denominations in 1961.

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The church is also significant as an effect of, and influence on, the growth and evolution of Braintree from a manufacturing town to a suburban community around the turn of the 20th century. This evolution continued in the mid-20th century with the return of soldiers from World War II. The resulting population growth is evident at All Souls Church, which in 1958 converted its mostly unfinished basement with a suite of Sunday school rooms to serve the returning soldiers' young families. Since 1981, the church has leased these rooms to a nursery school.

The church has remained relatively unchanged on the exterior. In 1970 a fire damaged the interior, most significantly in the battlemented tower, which today holds a meeting room on the ground level. After the fire, the chancel was significantly rebuilt, while the rest of the building's interior was carefully repaired, cleaned, and restored. Since that time, the most significant changes include the addition of accessible bathrooms and ramps, and the conversion of part of the deep stage area, originally known as the ladies' parlor, into two church offices.

However, the stage width, circulation, apron, and some of its depth were preserved, and the parish hall itself maintains its open character, with its original wooden flooring and scissor trusses. Following 2011 repairs to its slate roof, All Souls Church is in good condition and retains its historic integrity.

All Souls Church is one of 7 historic resources around the Commonwealth approved for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places by the Massachusetts Historical Commission at this meeting.

Secretary Galvin serves as Chairman of the 17-member board, which meets regularly and considers historic resources eligible for the National Register four times a year.

The National Register is the nation's official listing of significant historic resources. In Massachusetts, there are more than 70,000 properties listed in the National Register. The Massachusetts Historical Commission has been administering the National Register of Historic Places program in Massachusetts since 1966.

The Massachusetts Historical Commission is the office of the State Historic Preservation Officer and the State Archaeologist. It was established in 1963 to identify, evaluate, and protect important historical and archaeological assets of the Commonwealth. Visit our website to learn more about the Commission's programs (www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc).

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