



**William Francis Galvin**  
Secretary of the Commonwealth

Contact: Brian McNiff  
Telephone:

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**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, NORTHBOROUGH, 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 the First Baptist Church in Northborough for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places at a recent meeting. The nomination will be 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 Northborough’s First Baptist Church in the National Register is a testament to the preservation and careful stewardship of this historically significant building.”

The First Baptist Church building, which presently houses the Northborough Historical Society, stands at 52 Main Street, on the eastern edge of the town center. Formed in 1827, the Baptist Society was the first religious organization in Northborough to separate from the Congregational parish. The Italianate-style church, which replaced an earlier Baptist meetinghouse on the same site, was constructed by local housewright Richard W. Newton in 1860.

Many church buildings in Massachusetts sustained significant damage to their steeples in the Hurricane of 1938; however, First Baptist’s decision to cap the tower with a gable roof instead of rebuilding the steeple resulted in a unique design solution that also serves as a visible reminder of one of the most devastating storms to hit New England.

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The Northborough Historical Society purchased the property in 1959, and has operated a local history museum here since 1962. Consistent with this second chapter in the building's history, the lawn displays historic artifacts including the church's original steel bell, cast in 1859 by Naylor, Vickers & Co. The historical society has made a number of improvements to the building in recent years, both for universal access and to meet building codes.

However, the building's interior retains historic elements dating to its use as a church, such as the pulpit platform, wood paneling and wainscoting, and the choir loft's George Stevens & Company pipe organ, installed in 1873 and restored in 2013 with partial funding from the town's Community Preservation Committee. The building continues to serve as the society's headquarters, and the first-floor vestry and adjacent kitchen and restroom facilities are used for community events and are available for rental.

The First Baptist Church is one of six 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](http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc)).

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