



William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth

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FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, SCITUATE, 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 Scituate 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 the First Baptist Church in the National Register will help to protect an intact, well-preserved symbol of the cultural and social development of Scituate over the last 150 years.”

The First Baptist Church is located in the village of Gannett’s Corner in North Scituate, near the town’s border with Cohasset. The Baptists established themselves in Scituate in 1818 and built their first chapel down the road from the present church in 1825. After years of membership growth, the congregation decided to build a new church on land donated by a parishioner. Construction began in 1869 and was completed the following year. Members of the congregation skilled in the building trades built the new church, possibly elaborating on a conceptual design by Boston architect Shepard S. Woodcock.

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The First Baptist Church displays a variety of Italianate and Gothic Revival architectural motifs in an eclectic composition, its wood-trimmed sanctuary illuminated by stained-glass windows. Adjacent to the church is a late 19th-century, vernacular residential building owned and operated by members of the church for many years. The house became the church's parsonage in 1961. Still in its original use, the church has hosted over its lifetime not only an active, civic-minded religious congregation, but also a wide range of public meetings, gatherings, and entertainments.

Although the First Parish Church boasted more than 250 members as recently as 1950, current membership has dwindled to only about 20 families. The congregation recently secured Community Preservation Act funding to preserve, restore, and electronically reproduce the congregation's meeting minutes dating back to 1818. The congregation hopes that listing in the National Register will increase appreciation of this important historic resource.

The First Baptist 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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