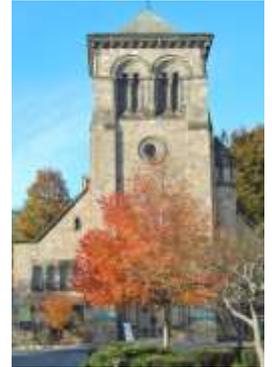


Built on the site where the Pilgrims gathered their meetinghouse nearly 400 years ago, First Parish symbolizes the birth of religious and civic freedom in America. Our records date back to 1606 in Scrooby, England, when the Separatists were forced to worship in secret in the manor house of William Brewster.

First Parish Meetinghouse celebrates the Pilgrim's through its Norman architecture, Arts and Crafts interior, and unique stained glass windows that tell the Pilgrim story.

We were listed on the *National Register of Historic Places* in 2014 by the United States Dept. of Interior.



A Note from Jan

Well, the Season is upon us! From Thanksgiving until January 1st most of our lives will be in a spin, focused on turkey, parties, gifts, celebrations, and all the little details of our lives during this busy time of year. As the end of the year approaches, many of us also think about our end-of-year giving.

I hope you will take some time to consider First Parish Meetinghouse in your plans, and better yet, sit down and write that check now.

There's no time like the present!

Exchange Rate

Jack Barwis

Whenever you travel abroad you are apt to know what the exchange rate is for your currency. Thus, if you were to travel to Plymouth, England you would wish to know how many English pounds you would get in exchange for U.S. dollars. Post the Brexit vote, the rate is more favorable toward the American dollar: currently about 1 pound for each 1.39 dollar (less a transaction fee, of course).

So, this is a fair exchange; one thing for its other equivalent

What, then, do you get in return for contributing to the restoration of the Pilgrim Meetinghouse? Well, it is an intangible. You will receive our thanks, of course, and, perhaps, another token of our appreciation, a handsome guide to the Meetinghouse. More importantly, though, you will have the satisfaction of knowing that you have helped to preserve an American treasure; one which is designated a Historic Place by the United States Department of the Interior.

Fair enough?

All donations to Friends of First Parish Meetinghouse are tax-deductible. We are a nonprofit charitable organization that has been approved by the Internal Revenue Service under the terms of section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code.



A Pilgrim's Journey

Rev. Ed Hardy

*"It is the destruction of the world
in our own lives that drives us
half insane, and more than half.
To destroy that which we were given
in trust: how shall we bear it?"*

-Wendell Berry

Wendell Berry, our great American poet and conservationist, laments the destruction of our earth. Our earth that we were given in trust.

Similarly, Plymouth's First Parish congregation was given the responsibility of holding our 1899 Meetinghouse in trust for future generations. Without over glamorizing it, our present church stands on the spot and symbolizes the beginning of the American journey toward both religious and civic freedom.

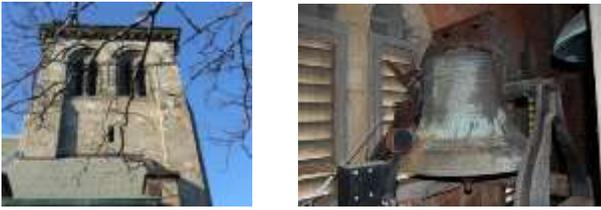
For many years we have ignored the Meetinghouse's need for repair and maintenance. It has been ignored long enough that it now needs restoration. Recently, a separate 501c3 non-profit corporation, Friends of First Parish Meetinghouse, was established to raise funds for restoration in the hopes of expanding the number of people working on restoration and raising funds beyond our 65-70 members.

First Parish in Plymouth is a community monument. We should allow the Plymouth community to join us in restoring and maintaining this *unique monument to the Pilgrims*. It is our trust.

The Town Bell(s)

Jan Palmer-Tarbox

The Town Bell is housed in the belfry tower of the First Parish Meetinghouse as it has been since the 1600's.



The current bell, also known as the Paul Revere Bell, was recast in 1896 following the 1892 fire which destroyed the 1831 Meetinghouse. The tower of the Meetinghouse fell to the ground, and the bell struck the ground and broke into fragments.

It was decided to build a new Meetinghouse out of stone and in so doing, to create a memorial to the Pilgrim fathers and mothers. The bell fragments were collected and recast. On November 28, 1896 a crowd of some 500 people assembled in Town Square to hear the curfew rung on the new Revere Town Bell.

The story of the Town Bell really began in 1679 when it was first referenced in the Town's historical records. Town Meeting voted that a bell be installed in the turret of the 1648 Meetinghouse, set at the foot of Burial Hill. In 1683 a new Meetinghouse was constructed and the bell was moved again. Alas, this bell did not outlast its new home, and a new bell was procured in 1732.

continued on next column

In 1744 a new meetinghouse was erected to replace the one built in 1683 which was old and in bad repair, having been struck by lightning. In 1794 the bell, now 62 years old, was replaced by a bell imported from England, and weighing 564 pounds. Mrs. Elizabeth Russell presented the bell as a gift to the Town of Plymouth, the place of her birth. This bell had a short life, having been broken in 1801, and a new one was purchased from Mr. Paul Revere of Boston. In a bill made out to the selectmen dated May 21, 1801, Revere charges \$375.12 for a bell weighing 844 2/8 pounds.

A vote of the Parish on April 10, 1831, authorized the demolition of the 1744 Meetinghouse as it was in substantial decay. (It was around this time that separation of church and state took place.) The new church, a wooden structure of Gothic type architecture, was dedicated on December 14, 1831 and cost \$10,000 to build. The Paul Revere Bell was hung in the tower where it rang for 61 years until the fire of 1892. At the time of the fire, the 60 year old Meetinghouse was undergoing extensive interior renovations including re-lathing and plastering. On November 22, 1892, the heating furnaces were going at their maximum to dry out the plaster when a fire started in the basement, spread to the area around the chimney, and rapidly spread from there. The church was completely destroyed!

First Parish Meetinghouse is indeed fortunate to be able to provide a home for this historic bell. More recently, the Town installed an automatic ringer, so the bell can be heard several times a day, as it was when it was rung by hand.



First Parish Meetinghouse; A Centerpiece to the Pilgrim Story

Shelia Fey – Communications Coordinator – Plymouth 400th

With the 400th anniversary of the Mayflower voyage and the founding of Plymouth Colony approaching, Plymouth and its surrounding areas are already buzzing with excitement over this commemoration of national and international significance. The story of the 102 passengers of the Mayflower who left England in the hopes of finding a better life in the New World, the hardships they faced, and the interaction between the Wampanoag Tribe and the Pilgrims are moments that shaped America's earliest beginnings and truly altered the course of world history.

In an effort to tell the story in a comprehensive, historically accurate, and culturally inclusive manner, Plymouth 400, the organization leading the planning and execution of the 2020 Commemoration and its events and programs, has been working with historians and cultural entities to highlight the lesser-known pieces of the story of the founding of Plymouth Colony.

One central theme of this moment in America's narrative is religious freedom. The Pilgrims' faith is what led them to the

New World, and First Parish Meetinghouse in Plymouth's Town Square stands today as an iconic tribute to the Pilgrims' journey to find freedom from persecution for their beliefs. Although the current Meetinghouse wasn't built until 1899, it is believed that a church has stood on this location for nearly 400 years, as the Pilgrims' first meetinghouse was located at this location. In fact, First Parish's records date back to the 1606 congregation which worshiped in secret in Scrooby, England. Several of those worshippers made their way to the New World on the Mayflower in 1620, including William Bradford.

Over the last 400 years, five churches have stood on the grounds upon which First Parish Meetinghouse was erected. The current church was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2014 due to its historical significance to the Pilgrim story and the founding of America. It remains today an attraction sought out by visitors and locals alike for its architecture, symbolism, and Pilgrim roots, and in 2020 its history will be honored through various events and programs.

To learn more about Plymouth 400 and plans for 2020, visit www.plymouth400inc.org.



Front of First Parish Meetinghouse



23 August 2016

Ms. Donna Petrangelo
First Parish Restoration Committee
First Parish Meetinghouse
19 Town Square
Plymouth, MA 02360

Dear Donna,

I am writing on behalf of our Executive Committee to provide this letter of enthusiastic endorsement to your efforts to raise funds for the Campaign for the Restoration of First Parish Meetinghouse. As you doubtless know, the very first Triennial Congress of the General Society of Mayflower Descendants was held at Kendall Hall on September 6, 1897, and has convened opening sessions in the beautiful sanctuary of the Meetinghouse several times since, as it will do again for our forthcoming Congress in 2017. From that time to the present our members have felt a keen sense of ownership in the building, and recognizing the real threat to this priceless historic structure, we want to join in urging all potential funding sources, public and private, to give to your requests every consideration. If I can be of further assistance, or if potential funders would like to speak to our organization, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Walter L. Powell, Ph.D.
Executive Director

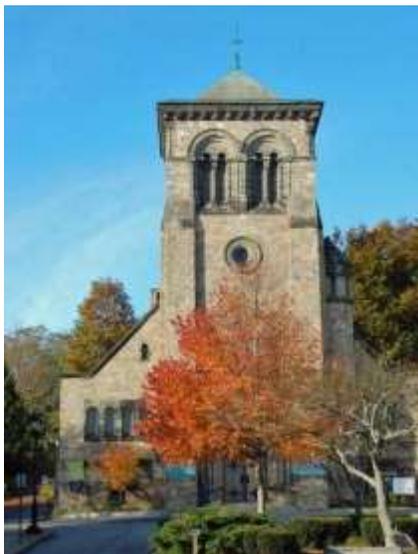


Preservation Massachusetts



Most Endangered Listing Update:

First Parish Meetinghouse, Plymouth
Status: Progressing



Most Endangered Listing 2014

Though the impressive Romanesque Revival structure at the foot of Burial Hill dates from 1899, the Church's beginnings go back to 1606 in Scrooby, England. It sits on the same site as four previous pilgrim meetinghouses (1683, 1744, and 1831) and the parish and building has served the religious, spiritual, cultural and other needs of Plymouth and beyond. It was designed by famed architects Hartwell and Richardson of Boston and its Arts and Crafts interior features hand carved symbols reflective of the Pilgrim's values. The windows are considered irreplaceable and many were designed by Edward Peck Sperry of Tiffany Studios. They depict

significant events in the Pilgrim epic, including The Signing of the Compact, which is signed by Louis Comfort Tiffany.

The First Parish Meetinghouse was designated a Most Endangered Listing in 2014 by Preservation Massachusetts due to its dire need of restoration. An assessment report found the mortar of the exterior granite was weakened, allowing moisture in and destabilizing interior walls, causing plaster to fall almost daily. Though the stained glass windows were removed for a complete restoration, they cannot be returned until work on the church's failing façade is completed.



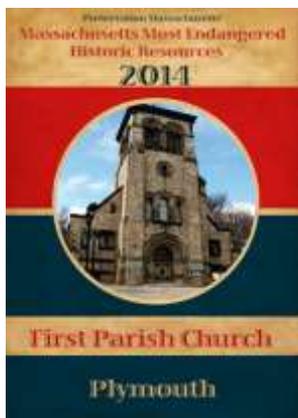
First Parish symbolizes the birth of religious freedom in America and celebrates the values courage and experiences of the Pilgrims who followed their faith across the sea to create a new world. Their story, a quintessential American narrative that continues to inspire people throughout the world, is uniquely preserved through First Parish's architecture, Tiffany stained glass windows and Arts and Crafts interior. No other church in America preserves this epic story for future generations as does First Parish, looking out upon Plymouth Harbor and the rock upon which the settlers first stepped.

Preservation Massachusetts feels that it is important that this national landmark be made to endure for generations more, as a tangible link to the people and ideals that founded this country.



Donna Petrangelo of the Friends of the First Parish Meetinghouse shares with us the successes and challenges that lie ahead for this endangered landmark.

“Since being named one of Massachusetts Most Endangered Resources in 2014, our efforts to save Plymouth’s First Parish Meetinghouse have continued to progress, and we have taken some important steps.

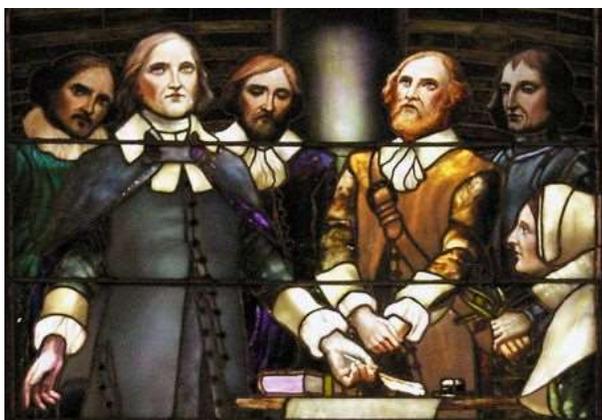


However, locating significant sources of funding continues to prove extremely difficult due to the lack of federal and state money for historic preservation. In addition, many private foundations will not award grants to religious institutions, regardless of their historical importance we have a long way to go – more than \$1.5 million for restoration work.

In December 2014 we celebrated when our 1899 Meetinghouse was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. We also hired Partners for Sacred Places to conduct a second feasibility study.

In 2015 we contracted with Spencer & Voght Architects and hope to restore First Parish’s east-facing façade and bell tower within the next year.

In 2016 we formed Friends of First Parish Meetinghouse, a nonprofit 501(c)3 that is not connected to the church.



In 2012 a grant from the CPC allowed us to totally restore the Meetinghouse’s beautiful stained glass windows.

In addition, we hope to reach new audiences through our recently published illustrated guide to First Parish, our Facebook page, our website and our in-progress attempt at crowd-funding.

continued on next column

As we continue to submit grant applications, our Most Endangered listing provides legitimacy and gravitas to our quest! In addition, since our initial listing we have reached out to PM on quite a few occasions and have, in return, always received valuable suggestions and encouragement.

We have learned not to be afraid to ask for advice. Both our restoration committee and Friends consist of a small group of dedicated volunteers. We are not professional fundraisers or social media experts, so advice from those with experience in these areas has meant a great deal. While continuing to network, we also are trying to reach new audiences. Embracing social media certainly continues to prove challenging.

We also have learned to try to investigate all options. Following our initial structural survey in 2010, we focused on raising the funds needed to restore the entire granite façade, a daunting task. After investigating how other churches approached their restoration campaigns and then attending a PM workshop in Worcester where Lynn Spencer of Spencer & Voght Architects spoke, we started thinking about breaking our façade restoration into phases.



While the disadvantage of this approach is that scaffolding has to be put up more than once (an expensive proposition), we felt that demonstrating to the public in a tangible way that we were making progress could outweigh this negative.

Sadly, there is no silver bullet, and success often seems totally out of reach, but don’t give up. Continue employing and adding to your repertoire of fund-raising tools, and keep a timeline record of your important steps and successes. Keeping a list of finished tasks or possible future plans is also helpful.

With the upcoming 400th anniversary of the landing of the Pilgrims fast approaching, we are hoping that First Parish’s important role in Plymouth history may lead to some much-needed funding, but time will tell."

Mystery Solved?

Bonney Dyer



In our previous newsletter we showed the above picture of the plaque that is displayed in our sanctuary that was a bit of a mystery to us. We asked that if anyone had information about it, to please contact us, and we would share it with all of our readers. I come bearing gifts!

Linda Harding, a long standing member of First Parish, forwarded me the following information: If you look very closely at this carving you can see the trace of an anchor. The anchor is one of the earliest Christian symbols sometime found in the catacombs etc. Early Christians in the Roman Empire, for safety reasons, found that they could hide the symbol of the cross in the stock of an anchor. The anchor stands for hope. (Hebrews 6:19) *Maurice M. Hassett, the Anchor(as symbol), Catholic Encyclopedia (1907)vol.1.* You can see that the artist created a sail at the top of the anchor to also symbolize a boat's sail. The ship (bark or barque) was also an ancient Christian Symbol. Same reason – early Christians needed to hide the symbol of the Cross. It may convey the transport of souls from this world to the next. Also, many biblical illustrations of faith take in a boat (Noah's Arc, Peter lies in the bottom of a boat in a stormy sea and God blesses him, etc.) A bark is also the symbol of St. Jude. CCC – could stand for the year 300, or it may be short for three words in a phrase containing Greek "Christos", or Latin "Christus" meaning Christ

Corpus Christi - The body of Christ

Caritas Christi - The love of Christ"

The Pilgrims would have walked over, or on this plaque, on their way out of the Delftshaven church , on their way towards freedom.

Thank You

Julia Rose

On behalf of the Friends of First Parish Meetinghouse Tour Committee, we want to thank all of our tour guides that gave up some of their valuable free time to volunteer for us during this past season, they do a remarkable job and we are very grateful to them all.

In our future newsletters, we will be highlighting at least

continued on next column

two of our tour volunteers.

In this issue, we would like to introduce Nancy, who has lived in Plymouth her entire life. She has been a member of our volunteer group for the past 4 years. Nancy's favorite part of conducting tours is interacting with such a variety of interesting people from all over the world. She enjoys talking about Plymouth history and the significance of our Meetinghouse. She hopes that her contribution as a tour guide will help with the ongoing restoration of First Parish.

Our Tour Season is Officially Over till Spring

Bonney Dyer

The tour season for 2016 has ended. We made it through another year! We did it with style, grace, humor, the exchange of a lot of information, and a lot of fun!



Tours will continue through the Fall and Winter, by appointment, you can call the office at (508) 747-1606 or email us at info@friendsfirstparishmeetinghouse.org. We would appreciate a donation if that is possible. We are also continuing to sell the beautiful guide books, puzzles, posters, and postcards. All proceeds go to the restoration effort.

We want to thank you for all of your donations, and good wishes. I look forward to seeing you for a tour!

Our regularly scheduled tour days will resume on June 1, 2017.

First Parish Meetinghouse Guidebooks for Sale

Our recently published 24-page color illustrated soft cover book on the history and architecture of First Parish in Plymouth is on the market for sale. All proceeds from the sale of these books go towards the restoration of the Meetinghouse.

These books are \$10.00 each and mailed USPS first class (shipping & handling included). Books mailed within 3 days of payment received.

Books can be bought by completing order form located within this newsletter, or going to our website at <http://friendsfirstparishmeetinghouse.org> and purchasing through *Paypal*.

Friends of First Parish Meetinghouse

Board of Directors

Jan Palmer-Tarbox, President

Jack Barwis, Vice President

Joyce Stewart, Treasurer

Donna Petrangelo, Clerk

Bonney Dyer

Rick McDonald

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*Dr. Jeremy Dupertuis Bangs, Director,
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*Donna Curtin, Ph.D., Director,
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*Ellie Donovan, Executive Director,
Plimoth Plantation*

*Peter Forman, President & CEO,
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*The Rev. Ed Hardy, Minister
First Parish Church, Plymouth, MA*

Christopher Hussey, AIA Emeritus

*The Rev. Dan King, Minister,
First Parish Church, Kingston, MA*

*The Rev. Gary L. Marks, Pastor Emeritus,
Church of the Pilgrimage, Plymouth, MA*

*Hon. Therese Murray, Former President of the
Massachusetts Senate*

*Timothy Turner, Manager, Wampanoag Indigenous Program at
Plimoth Plantation &
Director, Native Plymouth Tours*

Contact Information

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(508) 747-1606

Email - info@friendsfirstparishmeetinghouse.org

Website – <http://friendsfirstparishmeetinghouse.org>

Facebook – <https://www.facebook.com>

Twitter – <https://twitter.com/ParishFriends>

Pinterest – <http://www.pinterest.com/friendsffpm>

Friends YouTube Channel - <https://www.youtube.com>

Flickr - www.flickr.com/friendsfirstparishmeetinghouse

Donations have been gratefully received in the past
twelve months for the continuing restoration of
First Parish Meetinghouse.

In Honor of:

Ben & Anne Brewster

Rev. Ed Hardy

Jeremiah Brosnan

Rev. Gary Marks

Jerome Ketterling

Jan Tarbox and all the team

Our Forefathers

&

In Memory of:

Horace L. Bachelder

Mr. & Mrs. Spencer H. Brewster

Ernest Higgins

Elder Thomas Faunce

Dorothy Libby Savery

Pilgrim Ancestors, John Billington & Francis Eaton

Ann Sargent

Phyllis & Eugene Daily

Roland & Margie Holmes

Christopher Knudsen

Norma Jean Spencer Bedford

Amy & LeBaron Barker

Rev. Raymond B. Bragg

Brooks Barnes

Marian Wheeler

Chandler Gregg

Alice Hedge

Lucia Russell Woods

Warren H. & Dorothy H. Linn



Chandelier at top of stairway before entering sanctuary.

Friends of First Parish Meetinghouse Donation/Order Form

With a donation of \$100.00 or more, you will receive a copy of our 24 page illustrated guide.

Amount of donation enclosed: _____ *Make your check payable to: Friends of First Parish Meetinghouse.*

Name: _____

Street: _____

City/Town: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

All donations to Friends of First Parish Meetinghouse are tax-deductible. We are a nonprofit charitable organization that has been approved by the Internal Revenue Service under the terms of section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code.

This donation is given: In Memory of/In Honor of: _____

Please include your honoree's address if you would like us to send her/him notification of this gift.

Your support and contribution are greatly appreciated. Thank you.

First Parish Meetinghouse

19 Town Square

Plymouth, Massachusetts

The National Memorial Pilgrim Church



The experiences of the Pilgrims, who followed their faith across the sea to create a new world, form a quintessential American narrative that continues to inspire people throughout the world today.

*Donna Curtin, Ph.D.
Director of the Pilgrim Society & Pilgrim Hall Museum*

Please send me _____ copies of the 24 page color Illustrated Guide to First Parish Meetinghouse.

\$10.00 per book, check enclosed.

Guidebook shipped USPS 1st class (no charge for shipping and handling).

Please fill out the name and address form above.

Make check payable to: Friends of First Parish Meetinghouse.

Please print this form and mail to:

Friends of First Parish Meetinghouse, Inc., P.O. Box 3754, Plymouth, MA 02361