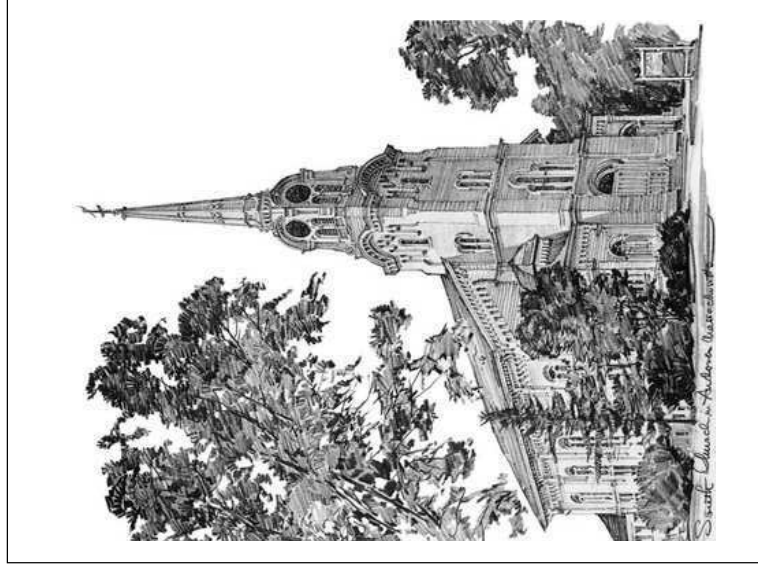


The South Church In Andover

United Church of Christ

Gathered Congregational 1711



A Visitor's Guide to Historic South Church

41 Central Street
Andover, Massachusetts 01810

978-475-0321 www.southchurch.com

Introduction

As you look at South Church from Central Street you see a classic, white clapboard, New England-style, Congregational church building. You might be inclined to think it looks the same as it did in George Washington's time. Well, not quite. It's actually the fourth Meeting House (the Congregational name for a church building) on the same site. George Washington would have seen the second and third ones, on his different visits to Andover.

There have been a number of prominent members of the church, beginning with Samuel Phillips who was the first pastor and who served for 60 years, from 1711 to 1771. He was the father and grandfather of the founders of Phillips Andover and Phillips Exeter Academies. Sarah Abbot founded Abbot Academy, a school in Andover for the education of women. Jonathan French, the second pastor, was also a soldier and a surgeon. When news of the Battle of Bunker Hill reached Andover on a Sabbath morning, he picked up his musket and surgical instruments and headed off to the battle. Four parishioners were killed there, and several were wounded.

In 1807 Samuel Abbot, another prominent member, donated land for the Andover Theological Seminary and was one of its founders. In its early years the Seminary was closely connected with South Church; many of its founders and trustees were also leaders of South Church. The students attended South Church, and were our Sunday School teachers. Many of the men boarded in parishioner's homes, and the families were patrons of their student's mission work. From this seminary came a large number of church leaders, and missionaries to Hawaii, Burma and beyond. In 1965 the Seminary merged with the Newton Theological Institution to become Andover Newton Theological School.

One of the seminarians was Samuel F. Smith, who in 1832 wrote the words to "America" ("My Country 'Tis of Thee"). From the house at 151 Main Street he saw the steeple of South Church and the stream next to it. He later said he was inspired by that view to pen the second verse "I love thy rocks and rills, thy wooded and templed hills."

Sons and daughters of the congregation helped form new churches in other communities: Methuen 1729; Concord, NH 1730; Pembroke, NH 1738; Hollis, NH, 1743 and Wilton, NH, 1763, to name a few.

South Church has a long tradition of community and world service. Our forebears fed and housed the homeless Acadians, who stopped in Andover during their long trek from Nova Scotia to Louisiana in 1755. In 1840 the church made major gifts to the American Abolition and American Anti-Slavery Societies. Missionaries have been sent to a number of foreign countries. In more recent years members have been among the founders of many groups including: Andover's A Better Chance, American Field Service, Merrimack Valley Hospice, Habitat for Humanity, Bread and Roses, and Neighbors in Need.

Origins of the Congregation

Present-day Andover and North Andover were originally one town, incorporated in 1646, with one meeting house, located at the town green in North Andover. By the early 1700's the town had grown considerably and the congregation voted to build a larger meeting house. A dispute arose as to where it should be located, which was resolved when The Great and General Court in Boston (the legislature) divided Andover into North and South Parishes, in 1708. The residents of the South Parish voted to build "a meeting house for the worship of God, and as a convenient place to conduct town affairs".

South Church was officially "gathered" on October 17, 1711, when fourteen men and twenty one women signed the Covenant of their new Church. It was a typical Puritan document. They called as their Pastor the young Rev. Samuel Phillips, a graduate of Harvard, who was ordained on the same day. He was a great and powerful figure in the growth of the town and remained as Pastor until his death in 1771.

South Church in the 21st Century

South Church today is the spiritual home for more than 700 people raised in many different faith traditions. It is an intergenerational congregation with a church school enrollment of more than 300 children and an active youth program. Missions, both local and international, continue to have a high priority.

The mission of South Church, as expressed in our 2005 bylaws, is to be "a Christ-centered fellowship which celebrates the love of God. We seek to learn and grow together in the Holy Spirit, to allow the Scriptures to guide our faith and our daily lives, and to share with others the Good News of Jesus Christ in word and deed and substance."

Our Welcome statement reads: "We are a Christ-centered community that celebrates the love of God. Although we are of varied minds, we are one body, bound together in Christ. We recognize the uniqueness of every individual as God's beloved child. We seek to respond faithfully to God's call for justice for all creation. We strive in word and deed to be faithful to Jesus' model of loving acceptance. We seek to create a sanctuary where all will know they are welcomed and included.

You are welcomed, no matter your age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, race and ethnicity, physical and mental ability or economic circumstance, into the full life and ministry of South Church, including worship, sacraments and rites. Join us as we grow together in God's love."

South Church is a Protestant church and a member of the United Church of Christ (UCC), a socially inclusive and progressive denomination. The UCC was formed in 1957, when the Congregational Christian Churches and the Evangelical & Reformed Church merged. The UCC has more than 1.4 million members in 6,000 autonomous American congregations, which are subject to no bishop or temporal authority other than themselves. United, they covenant with one another and pay dues to the UCC for work in the wider world (see www.ucc.org).

The Congregation's Four Meeting Houses

The First Meeting House was "accepted" in 1709; it was located at "ye Rock on the west side of Rogers brook". Not much is known about its appearance. It was on the same site as the present building, 41 Central Street. Rogers Brook is no longer here; it was diverted many years ago. "ye Rock" was removed in 1844.

The Second Meeting House was completed in 1734 on the same site and measured "thirty feet between plate and sill, and forty-four feet wide, and fifty-six feet in length". It is said to have been drafty and uncomfortable. The Third Meeting House was built in 1788 and measured "seventy feet in length and fifty-four feet in width, with a porch at each end and one in front of the house". Drawings of both of these are displayed in the stairway descending from the Narthex.

The Fourth Meeting House, the main sanctuary and steeple used today, was built in 1860 at a cost of about \$19,000. It is Romanesque Revival in style. The architect was John Stevens of Boston, well known throughout the country and especially in New England where he designed many churches. The dedication service was held on January 2, 1861. A printed program for the service survives. The building is 109 feet long, 71 feet wide, and seats approximately 725 people. The steeple is about 165 feet high. By 1990, the steeple was in danger of blowing down in a strong wind. It was removed and rebuilt, restoring its original appearance.

In 1956 an annex was built behind the meeting house, containing classrooms, offices and a kitchen. In 2005 the parish center for ministry was added. It contains more classrooms, offices, a youth activity room, a library and a chapel.

Inside the Sanctuary

As you enter the sanctuary you see a simple, functional arrangement. There are pews arranged in a gentle arc on the main floor facing the chancel, the raised area in front where the lectern, or pulpit, is located. Above are galleries on the left, right and rear. There are few adornments. The Congregationalists liked their meeting houses simple, not fancy like a cathedral. The meeting house was used for town meetings, as well as worship. Although the Fourth Meeting House has not been used for the annual town meetings (that ended in 1833 in Andover), it has been used for a number of other town functions.

There is no altar, but rather a table in front of the chancel. The table represents the Lord's Table, from which the Sacrament of Communion is served. The Communion Table is graced with a Bible inscribed, "Presented by Herman Griffin to the South Church, Andover, 1861," a gift to the new Meeting House which was dedicated January 2, 1861. It is a large-print, leather-bound 1855 Oxford Bible printed in London.

Some points of interest are numbered and described below.

1. Lorenzo Langstroth plaque - (b. 1810, d. 1895) The Rev. Mr. Lorenzo L. Langstroth was called to be the fifth pastor of the church. He was born in Philadelphia, PA and he graduated from Yale College. He received his theological education at New Haven. He was ordained and installed on May 11, 1836. "Finding his health inadequate to the discharge of his duties, he resigned and was dismissed March 30, 1839."

Later he taught school and preached in a number of different places. He is most remembered for his invention in 1851 of the moveable frame for bee-keeping. The Langstroth hive is a rectangular box containing a number of frames, in which the bees make their honeycombs. A beekeeper removes frames which are full of honey, and replaces them with empty frames for the bees to fill again. This invention revolutionized beekeeping, and is still used widely today. In 1951, the Massachusetts Federation of Beekeepers' Associations honored his memory with this plaque.

Although he did not invent the beehive while living in Andover, it is said that he kept a hive in his room in the attic of the Amos Blanchard house, now home to the Andover Historical Society.

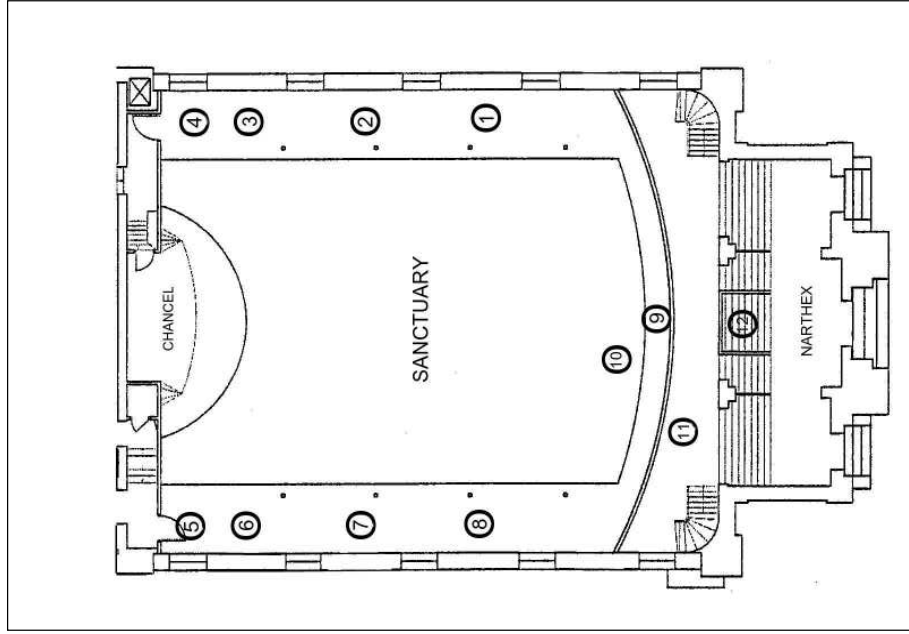
2. WWI plaque - The South Church congregation honored 67 members who served in the military in World War I, including a woman, Lucy Abbott, a nurse. Several of these veterans are buried in our cemetery.

Of the almost 2900 persons buried here, 275 are veterans from the earliest Essex Militia of the 17th century through the Vietnam War. There are four Army chaplains, including the Rev. Jonathan French, our second pastor. A British soldier who died 'in service to the King' is buried next to his father, who was killed in action on the battlefield at Spotsylvania, VA, during the Civil War. This Sanctuary hosted the town's memorial service for Abraham Lincoln in 1865. Andover veterans worshipped with their units and were the ushers for the service.

3. This plaque commemorates the organization of the South Church in Andover, on October 17, 1711 and the various meeting houses.

4. & 5. The stained-glass windows honor our sixth pastor, John Lord Taylor, who served from 1839 to 1852, and his wife Caroline Phelps Taylor. (Inexplicably, the window gives 1853 as the end of his service, but the records are clear that he was "dismissed" on July 19, 1852) He was born at Warren, CT 1811, graduated from Yale College 1835, studied Divinity at Yale College, and was ordained and installed on July 18, 1839.

Sanctuary Floor Plan



He resigned to become Treasurer of the Trustees of Phillips Academy. In accepting his resignation the church acknowledged that he had served with "great ability, fidelity and discretion". The windows were donated by their son, Professor Taylor, circa 1900. They were made by Tiffany of New York. There was some controversy at the time, as to whether stained-glass windows were appropriate for a traditional meeting house. But it seems that in the 1890's many congregations were "modernizing" with similar decorations. The congregation voted to accept the gift.

6. George Mooror plaque - The only native of Andover (and a descendant of the Phillips and Abbot families) to serve as Pastor of South Church, was the Rev. George Mooror from 1855 through 1861. He attended Phillips Academy, Williams College, and upon graduation from the Andover Theological Seminary, was called as the eighth pastor. During his tenure, he dealt with a strained relationship with the Town over the use of the Meeting House, leading to the razing of the 3rd building and the erection of this current Meeting House in 1860. In 1859 he compiled The Historical Manual of the South Church in Andover, Mass. It is an excellent genealogical and historical resource.

In 1861, Mr. Mooror answered a call to serve the First Congregational Church of Oakland, CA, as the growing west coast population needed ministers. This coincided with his wife's ailing health and need for a better climate. After eleven years of service to local churches in Oakland, Mr. Mooror then became professor of the Chair of Theology at the Pacific Theological Seminary.

7. A plaque honoring the first three pastors - Samuel Phillips and Jonathan French were truly remarkable leaders who, together, served the church for nearly 100 years. The third pastor, Justin Edwards D.D., served from 1812 to 1827. This was his first parish; he was ordained and installed simultaneously. He graduated from Williams College and Andover Theological Seminary. He brought his passion for the new missionary movement with him. He established "The Andover South Parish Society of Doing Good" in 1814, and later two branches, "The Female Charitable Society" and "The Juvenile Missionary Society". Mr. Edwards led local temperance and Sabbath reformations, which later led to creating national societies "to enlighten and purify the world". He went on to an illustrious career, including serving as president of the Andover Theological Seminary from 1836 to 1842.

8. Plaque in memory of Maria Ames Barker, 1809-1905. Regrettably, few records of her remain. She was the oldest member of the congregation at the time of her death.

9. Frank R. Shipman plaque - Mr. Shipman was ordained and installed as Pastor on December 27, 1893. He resigned in 1913 to become a member of the faculty (and later, president) of the Atlanta Theological Seminary of Atlanta, GA. After fifteen years of service at the Seminary he returned to South Church in 1928, after the resignation of Dr. Bigelow, and served again as Pastor until 1930. During this second term he hired the Rev. Mr. Frederick B. Noss as his assistant. He chose well because, when he retired in 1930, Mr. Noss went on to become the Pastor and served for 36 years.

10. The Sanctuary organ is a 3-manual tracker pipe organ, built by George Bozeman, Jr. and Co. of Deerfield, New Hampshire in 1905 for Phillips Academy. It was purchased and installed here in 1935 and rebuilt in 1986. It uses many parts and pipes from previous instruments.

11. Portraits of all sixteen Senior Pastors are displayed here.

12. On the walls of the staircase going down from the Narthex, various certificates are displayed which honor our historical preservation and charitable efforts.

We gratefully acknowledge Old South Church in Boston for their visitor's guide, which we have emulated here. Historical Committee: June, 2007.