

MIDDLE STREET BAPTIST CHURCH



Our Story.

Ours is an enduring ministry. Our history speaks to our faithful commitment to steward our church, nurture our faith and support our community. God calls us to love and to serve. We answer that call through our continued care for our church building, our church family and our community. This is our mission and our legacy.

1826 Our church is founded on Vaughan Street as the Calvinistic Baptist Church.

1827 Rapid growth and a philosophical divide cause the church to branch into two congregations; our church is incorporated as the Middle Street Baptist Society.

1828 Upon this rock I will build my church. The congregation contributes funds to build its first brick sanctuary on a rocky ledge at the corner of Middle and State Streets. The belfry's massive brass bell, cast by George Handel Holbrook (whose father established the Holbrook foundry after serving his apprenticeship with Paul Revere), calls worshipers to Sunday service for the first time. Holbrook's bells are famous for their musical tones.

1868 Extensive renovations are undertaken, including installing a central heating system, walnut pews and a high-end organ. The pews are later re-installed in the Smith Memorial Chapel in the Peirce Mansion.

1869 An indoor baptismal font is installed; outdoor baptismal services in the river are discontinued.

1897 Stained glass windows with memorial inscriptions are installed in the sanctuary; the inscriptions are later preserved in our current church building.

1926 MSBC celebrates its centennial anniversary. The Church membership supports a comprehensive building renovation. Rev. Elisha Lake addresses the congregation with a sermon titled The Church of the Future.

1932 Our church prospers through the Great Depression. MSBC exceeds its quota for world missions

and in 1937 completes a successful fundraising campaign to make improvements to its chapel. Church membership swells, particularly among young adults.

1939 Additional renovations are undertaken to modernize the building and increase its efficiency.

1945 Howard R. Smith bequeaths his home to MSBC, which serves as the parsonage until 2015.

1948 Our church purchases the historic Peirce Mansion (built in 1799) for \$35,000, to use as an educational facility.

1950 The Peirce Mansion is moved to its current foundation, structurally reinforced and renovated. Efforts are made throughout the renovation to maintain the historic architecture of the building. Construction begins on a new colonial-style church building, in keeping with the period of the Peirce Mansion.

1951 The Peirce Mansion is used exclusively for all church programming while the new building is under construction.

1952 The basement of our new building is completed and Sunday services are held in the Fellowship Hall.

1953 The Smith Memorial Chapel in the Peirce Mansion is completed and dedicated in memory of Howard R. Smith, a long-time member and supporter of MSBC.

1956 Our current building on the corner of Middle and Court Streets is completed for a total cost of \$160,000. To support the construction and other objectives, the congregation raises more than \$300,000. The church is dedicated "to the glory of God and the service of mankind." The antique 1828 Holbrook bell is carefully reinstalled in the new belfry; it continues to call us to worship today.

2006 An elevator is installed to ensure access for all.

2015 MSBC completes a comprehensive rehabilitation of the exterior of the Peirce Mansion.

2017 The Answer the Call campaign is launched to advance our mission and secure our legacy for future generations.

