

Salem's Church With the Lighted Steeple

Compiled and Edited by
Catherine K. Piemonte

Tabernacle Congregational Church UCC in Salem, MA, is publishing a book on the history of the church from 1735-2007.

Tabernacle has a long and interesting history in Salem, and many people have written about various historical events over the years. With such a wealth of information, it seemed to be a good time to collect this material and put it all into one book.

From the beginning of the settlement of Salem, the little First Church played a large role in the lives of the parishioners. On August 6, 1629 they covenanted with themselves and God to "walke together in all his waies, according as he is pleased to reveale himselfe." Tabernacle still uses this covenant in its services.

However, in 1735 there was a disagreement and the church split into two congregations, the majority leaving with the minister and the minority remaining in the original church!

That majority eventually became the nucleus of the present Tabernacle Congregational Church, although through the years many other divisions took place. Eventually, two of the congregations were reunited, and today the Tabernacle family worships in the third sanctuary, all of which have stood on this same plot of land in Salem!

The original building, built in 1777, had a steeple designed by Samuel McIntire in 1805, and that steeple contained a bell struck by Paul Revere in 1806! Eventually the bell was cracked, possibly by being rung too strongly at a Fourth of July celebration. Two other bells have since replaced this original, and that story is one of the chapters in the book.

An unusual artifact that stands in our historical room is a small stuffed Chinese chicken, fondly known as Koo-Koo. Her story is related to the sailing ships of Salem, which went to the Far East and brought back wonderful treasures from many countries. It may seem an odd remembrance for a church, but when you read her story you will find that she relates to the many mission projects that Tabernacle has been known for throughout its history.

An ordination and commissioning service which took place in Tabernacle Church on February 6, 1812, is the most famous event of its almost 300 years of existence. Rev. Samuel Worcester, the minister at the time, was instrumental in having this service at his church because of his work with the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. The first five young missionaries, who left these shores for foreign lands, were commissioned here on that day. Several of them sailed the following week, on the *Caravan*, from Salem's Derby Wharf. Adoniram Judson, the most famous among them, spent the remainder of his life in Burma, preaching, teaching, and translating the Bible into Burmese.

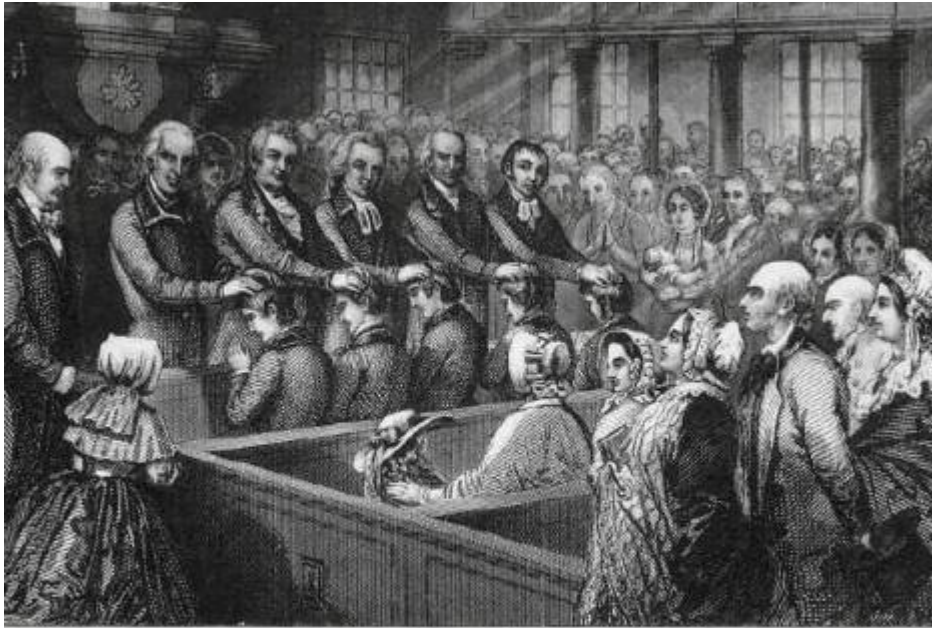
John Punchard, an early member, and clerk of Tabernacle Church for 40 years, wrote a one hundred year history in 1832, at the request of the "Proprietors of Tabernacle Church." This remarkable writing is included in its entirety, typed as closely as possible to the original. We believe it is an important document, which is now being published for the first time.

This book was compiled and edited by Catherine K. Piemonte, using articles written by many of the past members of Tabernacle Church. It contains many photographs of artifacts relating to the history of the church, as well as pictures of each of the three churches.

Books are available from the church at \$30.00 each plus \$5.00 for postage and handling.

Checks should be made out to:

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50 Washington St.
Salem, MA 01970



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DR. MOSES, DR. GRIFFIN, DR. SPRING, PROF. WOODS, DR. WORCESTER

ORDINATION OF MESSRS. JUDSON, HALL, NOTT, NEWELL AND RICE
IN TABERNACLE CHURCH, SALEM, FEB. 6, 1832.