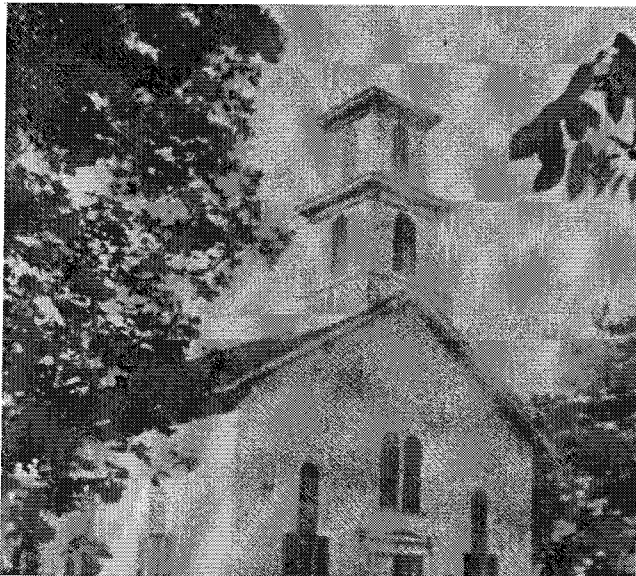


*A Historical Timeline of the
Niantic Baptist Church*

a.k.a.

The 2nd Baptist Church of East Lyme



14 Sep 1842: Since the Baptist Church in East Lyme declined to build a meetinghouse in Niantic, those members of the Baptist Church in East Lyme and the 1st Baptist Church in Waterford who had requested it decided to do so on their own.

29 Dec 1842: The 2nd Baptist Church of East Lyme was constituted after the reading of its Church Articles and Covenant.

12 Jan 1843: The congregation, with its Articles and Covenant, was accepted as the 2nd Baptist Church of East Lyme by a group of five local Baptist churches.

14 Jan 1843: The first church leaders named were Clerk James Denison; Church Committeemen Nathaniel Clark, Benjamin Champlin, and Clement Smith; and Treasurer Benjamin Champlin.

18 Feb 1843: The church named Nathaniel Clark & Benjamin Champlin as its first Deacons.

c. 1 Apr 1843: Rev. James Hepburn became the first Pastor of the 2nd Baptist Church of East Lyme.

23 Oct 1843: The church accepted a meetinghouse built on land donated by Benjamin Champlin and Roswell Smith on Champlin Hill. Trustees named were Roswell Smith, Lemuel Beebe, George A. Beckwith, and Jeremiah Manwaring; with Collector Savilian Manwaring; and Calvin Manwaring to circulate a subscription.

14 Dec 1843: It was voted that there would be no discussion of abolition or slavery during church meetings.

27 Apr 1844: It was voted to rescind the December vote, but the church decided that there would be no discussion of abolition during meetings.

31 Mar 1860: Pastor Rev. Curtis Keeney's pastorate ended on this day. During his three years as the Pastor, 60 people were baptized!

28 Jul 1860: A parsonage built for \$969.25 on land on Main Street donated by Calvin Manwaring was accepted by the church. The building (#334) has been owned by Gumdrops & Lollipops since 2008.

23 Jun 1866: The first meetinghouse burned to the ground, so the Baptists accepted the offer to share the meetinghouse of the Methodist Church.

c. 24 Nov 1867: The newly completed meetinghouse, which cost about \$5,500, was dedicated.

12 Sep 1869: Approval of the letter to the New London Baptist Association in which there is mention of a new cabinet organ in the singers' gallery (the balcony).

15-16 Sep 1869: The 2nd Baptist Church of East Lyme hosted the annual meeting of the New London Baptist Association for the first time.

3 May 1872: The Women's Missionary Society was formed.

9 Dec 1883: John and Elizabeth Luce were thanked for carpeting the church and the Young Peoples Association was thanked for "cushing" (cushioning?) the church.

11 Jan 1886: The church voted to build a platform for the singers in the northeast corner of the sanctuary.

1887: The Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor was organized.

28 Mar 1888: A committee was named to raise funds for the purchase of a pipe organ.

27 Jun 1888: The church voted to have the "Willing Workers" put chairs and a pulpit in the church.

19-20 Sep 1888: The Second Baptist Church of East Lyme hosted the Annual Meeting of New London Baptist Association.

14 Sep 1889: The Second Baptist Church of East Lyme changed its name to the Niantic Baptist Church.

7 Jan 1891: The Trustees were directed to obtain a person "to blow the organ" for Chorister Benjamin Hall. It was also decided to use envelopes to pay the church's expenses instead of renting the slips.

29 Dec 1892: NBC celebrated its 50th Anniversary of Christian service.

3 Jan 1893: Five Deacons were chosen "for as long as satisfactory". It was also decided to continue to use the envelope system.

8 Oct 1893: A Baptist Young People's Union (BYPU) was organized at Niantic Baptist Church with fourteen members.

21 Feb 1894: The church voted to have a baptistry installed by John Luce in the Niantic Baptist Church sanctuary for \$35.

25 Mar 1894: Twelve were baptized in Niantic Bay after the Easter morning service and 8 more in the new baptistry during the evening service by Rev. J. Milner Morris.

24 Aug 1894: The Baptist Young People's Union of NBC was reported to have about 70 members!

21 Jul 1895: William Mosier, Horace Denison, and Oliver Sterry were ordained as Deacons, and Addie Mosier, Cornelia Bush, and Mary Brooks were ordained as Deaconesses.

13 Dec 1895: “Resolved. That any member of the church while under discipline be ‘debarred’ the privilege of partaking the Lord’s Supper and also from voting at any of the church meetings.”

12 Apr 1900: Mr. Charles F. Eldredge was Ordained to the Gospel Ministry in the sanctuary of the Niantic Baptist Church.

Apr 1900: The church voted to sell the parsonage for \$2,000 with the possibility of purchasing the property on the east side of the meetinghouse for \$500. However, it was decided to repair the parsonage, since only \$1,900 was offered to buy it.

26 Oct 1900: It was voted to build a piazza (porch) on the parsonage.

19 Aug 1902: After voting to adopt and purchase trays with individual Communion cups in late July, the new service set was probably first used on this date in August.

10 Nov 1905: It was voted to incorporate as Niantic Baptist Church, Inc.

11 Sep 1907: Metal (tin) walls and ceiling were installed in the sanctuary for \$575.00.

6 Feb 1912: Pastor M. Harry Freda was Ordained to the Gospel Ministry in the sanctuary of the Niantic Baptist Church.

13 Feb 1914: The electric lights installed in the sanctuary were accepted by the church.

27 Oct 1918: Frederick A. Beckwith presented a service flag to the church which eventually had 14 stars on it for the men in the military services.

22 Jan 1923: The church voted to put electric lights in the parsonage.

Nov 1923: It was decided to have new, larger lights put in the sanctuary.

May 1924: NBC voted to have services on daylight time as do other churches in the village.

1924: Union evening services alternated amongst the Niantic Baptist, Methodist, and Congregational Churches "all year".

1928: Running water was installed in the ladies' parlor by the Gleaners.

18-19 Sep 1928: NBC hosted the New London Baptist Association. The Ladies Aid Society & the Gleaners served "dinner and supper".

21 Dec 1930: A Union Christmas cantata was performed in the grammar school auditorium with the Methodist and Congregational Churches.

24 Nov 1931: Pastor Arthur Darby was Ordained to the Christian Ministry in the sanctuary of the Niantic Baptist Church.

10 Jul 1932: Niantic Baptist Church was involved in a drama sponsored by the Women's Christian Temperance Union.

Dec 1933: Pastor Rev. Francis B. Boone represented the church at the Anti-Saloon League and Allied Prohibition Forces Convention in Washington, D.C.

1933: Thirty-five people became members of the church this year, 31 after baptism.

26 Nov 1933: A Union temperance service with the Methodist and Congregational Churches was held.

21 Sep 1938: The steeple cupola on the meetinghouse was blown off in the Hurricane of 1938.

1943: The members voted to purchase “blackout shades” and a new furnace for the meetinghouse and “voted not to serve cider at any activities in the church building.”

1943: Thanks to members of the Hilltop Society, a service flag with 38 stars was donated to, and dedicated by, the church.

12 Mar 1943: Pastor Robert Q. Jones was Ordained to the Christian Ministry in the sanctuary of the Niantic Baptist Church.

20-23 Jun 1943: NBC recognized its Centennial (100th Anniversary) with a banquet in the “church dining room”, and during various types of services, which included reminiscences, a roll call, and special preachers and speakers.

31 Oct 1944: A Hammond organ, first church’s first electric one was installed, and was first played and dedicated on the next Sunday.

19 Mar 1944: Pastor Rev. Lynn Leavenworth and Miss Marie Bunt were married in the sanctuary of the Niantic Baptist Church.

Aug 1952: The Protestant Vacation Bible School hosted by the Niantic Baptist Church was attended by 183 children!

21 Oct 1952: Pastor A. Theodore Ekholm was Ordained to the Christian Ministry in the sanctuary of the Niantic Baptist Church.

7 Jul 1953: Member Edith M. Northrop was Ordained to the Christian Ministry in the church sanctuary, becoming one of the first women to be a Baptist Minister in Connecticut.

1953: Rheba Gunn was the first cook for Camp Wightman's Work Camp.

20 Jun 1954: Phyllis Andrade's river painting hidden behind the pulpit and baptistry was unveiled.

4 Jan 1959: Hunt Fellowship Hall was dedicated to the retiring Pastor, Rev. Horace H. Hunt.

29-30 Jun 1968: The Niantic Baptist Church celebrated its 125th Anniversary with a banquet and special Sunday services

9 Jan 1969: The Niantic Baptist Church sold its parsonage at #334 Main Street for \$26,000 and purchased #18 Corey Lane for a new parsonage for the same \$26,000 price.

31 Dec 1970: After completing the church's Annual Report for 1970, Miss Lesley M. Beckwith retired after serving as Church Clerk for 50 years!

15 Oct 1972: "Dutch" Hoffman resigned after more than 32 years as the Music Director at the Niantic Baptist Church.

24 May 1975: The Gleaners, founded by the late Rev. Edith M. Northrop as a Sunday School class, celebrated their 50th Anniversary.

9 Nov 1975: After Myrtle (Havens) Knox died in May 1975, the church purchased the Knox Property house and grounds for \$64,000.

23 April 1976: The Chiang Xiong family, political refugees from Laos, moved into the house on the former Knox Property, with other costs borne

by the Waterford-East Lyme Clergy. (The family of a brother of Chiang moved in during the fall, bringing the number of residents to nine.)

11 Jan 1977: The church voted to purchase a Carillon as a memorial to "Dutch" Hoffman, who died in July 1976, and to Myrtle Knox.

Nov 1977: Judy Mack became the Niantic Baptist Choir Director, with Shirley Ward as the Organist.

11 Apr 1978: The congregation voted to accept as full members people who transfer from any Evangelical Church or who give evidence of Christian Experience. Therefore, 25 people who were Affiliated Members because they hadn't been immersed were changed to full membership.

10 Apr 1979: The church scholarship fund was officially changed to "The Niantic Baptist Church Gordon J. Ely Memorial Scholarship Fund".

10 Apr 1979: The church approved Rev. Bradley's request to use his education allowance toward the cost of a three-week course at Mansfield College in Oxford, England.

c. Nov 1982: The ramp on the east side of the meetinghouse was built by Gary Swanson.

23 Oct 1983: Twelve people were honored for 50 – 75 years of Niantic Baptist Church membership.

Apr 1989: Rev. Edward W. Bradley, Pastor of the Niantic Baptist Church, was elected President of ABCCONN after serving as Vice-president for one year.

16 Apr 1989: Niantic Baptist Church hosted the first course (appetizer) of the Progressive Supper to help celebrate East Lyme's Sesquicentennial. Other East Lyme Churches hosted the other courses.

1 Jul 1990: Rev. Edward W. Bradley retired from active ministry due to health problems after 16 years as the Niantic Baptist Church Pastor.

1993: NBC's 150th Anniversary actually started in October 1992 with a talk by Town Historian Olive Chendali. Other events included a talk by ABCCONN Historian Mason Andrews; the choir's "150 Years in Song"; "Baptist History Sunday"; "Homecoming Sunday", with a post-service picnic; "Baptism Sunday", with 2 baptisms at Hole-in-the-Wall Beach; a "Sesquicentennial Banquet" at the East Lyme Community Center; and a "Roll Call" Service in January 1994.

20 Oct 1996: Camp Wightman's Gertrude Waterman cabin was "adopted" by NBC, taking responsibility for its basic spring and fall maintenance.

Apr 2000: Lloyd Beachy was elected President of ABCCONN after serving as Vice-president for one year.

14 Oct 2001: Rev. Dr. David Bowes retired from active ministry for health reasons after more than 10½ years as pastor of the Niantic Baptist Church.

7 Apr 2002: Rev. Jill E Harvey, Interim Pastor of Niantic Baptist Church, introduced the congregation to "Holy Humor Sunday" on the first Sunday after Easter.

13 Oct 2002: Rev. Jill E. Harvey and Rev. Ron Lake (Pastor of The Road Church in Stonington) were married in the Niantic Baptist Church sanctuary.

3 Jan 2008: Rev. Jill Harvey started serving as NBC's first female pastor after being called on the 9th of December.

2010: Members of Niantic Baptist began volunteering to prepare and serve supper at the New London Soup Kitchen on Montauk Avenue on the fifth Wednesday or the fifth Sunday of a month. Although the fifth Wednesday turned out to be difficult to staff, the church has regularly covered the fifth Sunday to the present day.

Nov 2010: Members of NBC officially accepted the new set of By-Laws with a "one-board church" governed by a 13-member Board of Stewards after piloting the setup for one year.

Dec 2010: The Niantic Baptist Church received one of the two "Widow's Mite" Awards from the American Baptist Churches USA for its exemplary giving to the Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering.

11 Sep 2011: "Lest We Forget", a worship service in memory of the attacks and deaths which occurred at the World Trade Center towers ten years ago.

12 Nov 2017: The church celebrated Dr. Judy Mack's 40th Anniversary at Niantic Baptist Church with a concert utilizing the new Allen organ and an ecumenical choir.

14 Jan 2018: Rev. Jill Harvey was recognized for the 20th Anniversary of her Ordination to the Christian Ministry and her 10th Anniversary as the NBC Pastor.

2018: NBC's 175th Anniversary Kickoff was held on the same day as Rev. Harvey's Anniversary in January. The celebration continued with "Organ and Carillon Dedication Sunday"; a "classic car" advertising our special year in the Memorial Day Parade; a Church Picnic in June, to which Flanders Baptist and Community Church (our Mother Church) was invited; and culminating in October with the "Homecoming Luncheon" at Langley's Restaurant, and the "Homecoming Service" on the following day.

Thanks to all who have helped us to
celebrate our 175th Anniversary. We
couldn't have done it without you!

Special thanks to our Church Historian, Charlie Wyand,
for preparing this timeline and serving as a general
consultant throughout the anniversary year.

The Anniversary Committee

Pat Baker
Eleanor Chapman
Laurie Goldreich
Rev. Jill Harvey
Rowena James
Jackie Lamourine
Pam Rothgeb

