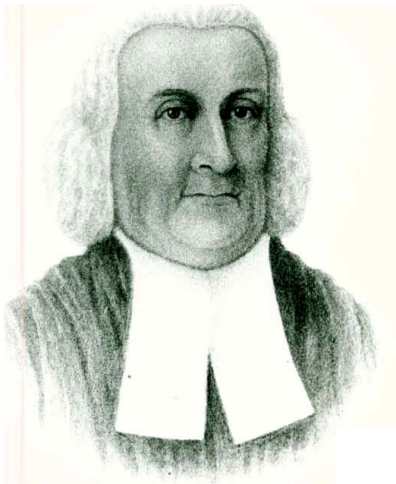


A Brief History of the First Congregational Church

The history of the First Congregational Church of Sutton is a full and interesting story covering almost 300 years. The Church was organized in 1720 with ten members, all male. The townspeople were taxed to raise the money for building a Meeting House and for paying the salary of the minister. Later, when church and town affairs were separated, the pews were deeded to members and taxes were set on the pews for these expenses. Now, we members make pledges each year to pay to support the church and its ministry.

The building we have today is the third built by the First Congregational Church. The first building, built in 1720, was on the west side of the Common (the Town Hall side) the second building, built in 1751, was on the south side of the Common (near or in front of the red brick store) and the present building was built in 1829. The first two buildings were plain with clear glass windows and simple wooden benches with backs. The second building burned in 1828.



Reverend David Hall

Our church has been served by twenty-nine pastors. The longest pastorate was 60 years served by Rev. David Hall. Rev. Edmund Mills served after Rev.

Hall for 35 years. Thus our second and third ministers served our church and community for 95 years.



Reverend Edmund Mills

Our fifth minister, Rev. Hiram Tracy, served us twice, starting in 1835 for fifteen years and 21 years later for 14 years.



Reverend Hiram Tracy

Over the years our church has been blessed with many memorial gifts which have added to the beauty of the building itself and to the worship services held here. A few such gifts are the stained glass windows, Communion table, Communion services, organ and piano. The pipe organ had been a dream of former church organist and teacher, Grace Mills Jordan. She opened a bank account with \$.50 in 1939 with the hope that "...not in my day

but perhaps in yours..." Her dream was realized in 1971 when after a fund drive the new pipe organ was purchased and installed. In recent years we have been given money to update our pipe organ and to restore the stained glass windows. Many other memorial gifts have also been received.

Additions to the church were built in 1965 and 1985 in order to serve the increased enrollment in the church school and to provide additional office and meeting spaces. Our building today is a busy place that is used on a daily basis by many groups and organizations within the church and community.

During three centuries, the First Congregational Church of Sutton has been a "light on the hill," a witness to generation upon generation of faithful servants to God. Our Spire, rising majestically from among the trees on the common, guides us to the house of God and points us to the source of all life and love. It stands against the sky, bright and strong because of the faith and dedication of so many generations. It will stand for years to come because of ours.



Reverend and Mrs. John Maltby
by Artist Zedekiah Belknap, 1830

The artwork displayed above the silver cabinet at the front of the sanctuary is a copy of the original painting of Rev. John Maltby and his wife, Margaret Graves Jackson - who he married May 15, 1827. It is an excellent replica of the original painting, owned by the congregation of First Church, in storage at this time.

John Maltby was born in Northford, CT. He graduated from Yale College in 1822 and then from Andover Newton Theological School and was ordained June 28, 1826. He served as minister of First Church from 1826 to 1834. During his tenure, church membership increased from 143 to 231 members and great interest was devoted to developing the Sabbath School education.

According to the book*, History of the Town of Sutton, Massachusetts, from 1704 to 1876, by Rev. William A. Benedict and Rev. Hiram A. Tracy, © 1878, pg. 291, "Rev. John Maltby was a man of fine personal appearance, and a most eloquent preacher. The new church was built during his ministry, and he filled it so that new side-galleries were proposed to accommodate his hearers." *This book may be purchased through the Sutton Historic Society. To do so, contact Wally Baker by clicking [here](#).

This rare double portrait is a copy of a painting by artist Zedekiah Belknap, born in 1781 in Auburn, Massachusetts. Belknap became an itinerant limner whose specialty was life-size portraits. Likely without formal art training, he was a graduate of Dartmouth College in 1807, and then painted portraits in Vermont, New Hampshire, New York City and Massachusetts.

Belknap completed about 170 portraits during his career and passed away in Wethersfield, Connecticut in 1858.

While the First Congregational Church of Sutton originated in 1719, its congregation has come together in three different buildings over the course of history. In 1828, the second building built in 1751 to serve both the town of Sutton and the congregation of the First Congregational Church burned after a town meeting had been held in it that day. Reverend Maltby ministered to the congregation during this difficult time.



The pulpit was built before 1829 for a cost of \$5,943.00.
Click [here](#) for more information about the pulpit.

After eight years of devoted service, Reverend and Mrs. Maltby left Sutton to serve as pastor at Hammond Street Congregational Church in Bangor, ME from 1834 to 1860. Additionally, he served as Trustee at the Bangor Theological Seminary from 1835 to 1860.

Deacon John Marble (deceased) and his wife gifted the painting to First Church in 1905.



Residence of Dea. John Marble



Above: The twelve piece silver plated communion set and two flagons were donated in 1870. This was the second gift of a communion service to the church.



The First Church silver communion cup was smithed by Apollos Rivoire. Born November 20, 1702 in Riaucaud, France, he arrived in Boston about 1715 and apprenticed under John Coney.

After Coney's death in 1722, Apollos changed his name and married Deborah Hitchbourn June 19, 1729. His son, Paul, apprenticed under him until 1748.

Paul Revere, Sr. died July 22, 1754; his son, who learned the trade of silversmith from his father, is best known for his famed midnight ride April 18, 1775 poetically described in 1860 by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

The original cup is on loan and displayed at the Worcester Art Museum. In the 1970s a replica of the original was made by Mrs. Philbrick, a talented silversmith who copied Revere's cup in every detail. She was wife to Reverend Philbrick who was pastor at St. John's Episcopal Church in Wilkinsonville. The replica is used by the minister in every communion service.



This painting is by Charles Edmund Gillford (September 1987) and depicts the effort to secure the 1600 lb. church bell in the bellfrie in 1884. The original bell was cracked when being rung in celebration of the end of the Civil War. It took almost 20 years to get it replaced. All the school children, under the management of retired ship's Captain Luther Little, used pulley's to coax the bell into place.

Little was the master of Jane (Ship) from October 11, 1838 to December 31 1842.

Ironically, Capt. Little died in Lake Singletary apparently falling from his boat after having a heart attack.