

Rhode Island Baptist Heritage Center
Annual Report for 2018
March 4, 2019

The RIBHC is the part of our RI family that has taken the responsibility to identify and share the rich heritage of those people known as “Baptists” and to share the narrative as they emerged and developed. The purpose of this effort is to provide support to our congregations in understanding and preserving our heritage. We do this to promote a positive sense of “Baptist identity” that encourages vital ministries in and through our local congregations.

Since its inception, the Center has chosen to alternate major emphases between a “Baptist heritage weekend” one year and to offer the next year, a “history/polity course.” The course is appropriate for both lay and clergy with a special emphasis on meeting the requirements for ordination in ABCORI. The RIBHC board has met 5 times this year to review the last course and to plan and implement this year’s program. Our first meetings evaluated the 2017 History/Polity course. We then began to focus on this year’s “Heritage Weekend.”

The theme for the 2018 weekend was “The power of small gatherings”. In selecting this topic, we hoped to share both our history and contemporary insight into the organizational format (congregations) which Baptists utilize in our local ministries. To further celebrate the successes of one of our own churches, we chose the Berean Baptist church in Harrisville as our gathering place. This was to highlight the work of their pastor, the Rev. Darin Collins, who had been chosen to receive the Rosa O. Hall award for 2018. As was our custom, we chose a noted Baptist historian to help explicate our heritage. This year we asked the Rev. Dr. William Brackney, Professor Emeritus at Acadia University, Wolfeville, NS, to be our keynote speaker. We also enlisted several of our own local “experts” to further the discourse. These included the Rev. Dr. Tony Pappas and the Rev. Dr. Tom McKibbens.

While those who attended this event were impressed by the richness of the fellowship, presentations and the conversations which followed, there was disappointment in the response to our offering. Only ~20 attended, including the participants. Some thought this was because of the site being located in such a remote part of RI. Also we had arranged for a tour of “Roger’s Providence” with Ranger John McNiff which was cancelled when only 2 signed up. Whether the lack of response for our offerings was a result of little interest in our heritage, conflicts with “people’s weekend schedules”, or the distance we ask folks to travel, the board should reassess this offering.

As we finish the year and turn our focus to the next history/polity course, we are beginning to organize the class by recruiting instructors, assessing the curriculum and setting dates. One of the challenges is to create an educational experience that accommodates the many cultural differences within our fellowship as well as the varying educational backgrounds of our participants. Our 2017 class included many from TABCOM. But this year the Mass. Baptists are offering their own course. We will continue to offer the class staffed by experienced instructors to meet the ABCORI ordination requirement for graduate level course work.

The most pressing challenge, however, as we move into 2019 is to have sufficient members sitting on the board. Without people willing to give time and effort to preserving and sharing our Baptist heritage, the center will be much hampered in achieving its intended purpose.

Respectfully submitted,
Charles K. Hartman
President.



**RI Baptist Heritage Center
Offices and Board members 2017-2020**

Office/Term	
President 2018-2020	The Rev. Dr. Charles Hartman FBC Swansea, MA
Vice President 2018-2020	The Rev. James C. Miller Emmanuel Baptist Church, Providence
Secretary 2018-2020	Mr. Don Waterman Berean Baptist, Harrisville
Treasurer 2018-2020	Mr. Don Waterman Berean Baptist, Harrisville
Class of 2018	The Rev. Dr. Clay Berry Wakefield Baptist The Rev. Dr. Don Anderson* RI Council of Churches
Class of 2019	Rev. Dr. Tom McKibbens Interim, FBC Georgiaville, RI Rev Dr. Jon Malone FBC E. Greenwich
Class of 2020	John Odams First Baptist, Boston, MA __Open_____
Class of 2021	Dr. J. Stanley Lemons FBC Providence The Rev. Stephen E. Hollaway FBC, Block Island

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Class of 2018	Open: _____ The Rev. Dr. Donnie Anderson??? RI Council of Churches
Class of 2019	Rev. Dr. Tom McKibbens Interim, FBC Georgiaville, RI Rev Dr. Jon Malone FBC E. Greenwich
Class of 2020	John Odams ??? First Baptist, Boston, MA Open: _____
Class of 2021	Dr. J. Stanley Lemons FBC Providence Open: _____

Members with ??? have not attended meetings...