

THE RHODE ISLAND BAPTIST HERITAGE CENTER
REV. DR. CHARLES HARTMAN

2016 was a very good year for the Rhode Island Baptist Heritage Center. We began the year with renewed sense of purpose as we took our place amongst the many ministries of ABCORI. Committed to preserving and sharing our Baptist history and heritage, we met as a board, seven times from February through November. We had good attendance and participation from all board members. Within each meeting we gave time to discuss how our heritage offers insight into critical issues for our Baptist congregations. Then we gave thought to new ways we could support each congregation's ministry while continuing to provide the same programs that we have offered in the past.

- ❖ *Providence Heritage Tour:* Our first offering was a tour of the historic Baptist sites in Providence. We began at the Roger Williams Memorial, then visited the 1663 Charter Room at the State House. A highlight of the tour was the John Hay Library where Dr. Holly Snyder set out a display of major Baptist artifacts including Roger Williams's copy of John Eliot's translation of the Bible into the Massachusetts's language, the John Myles / Swansea record book, and many documents by Isaac Backus, James Manning and others. Our final stop was at the First Baptist Church, Providence where Dr. Stan Lemons spoke about its long history and significant architecture. The group of fourteen shared a luncheon and fellowship while reflecting on the tour.
- ❖ *Baptist Heritage Weekend:* Our major effort this year was the 6th biennial Heritage Weekend. This year's program was a celebration of the work of J. Brent Walker, retiring Executive of the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty. The event included worship, lectures by Walker, and a gracious luncheon provided by the host congregation, Emmanuel Baptist, Providence. Among the participants and attendees were Sen. Jack Reed (RI), staff from Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse's RI office, Dr. Donald Farish, president of Roger Williams University, the Rev. Dr. Mary Miller, Exec. Minister of the American Baptist Churches of MA, Dr. Michael Yelnosky, Dean of the Roger Williams University Law School. The highlight of the event was a dialogue between National Park Ranger John McNiff, as Roger Williams, and Mr. Walker.
- ❖ *On going efforts:* We have updated our brochures and flyers to spread the word about the resources we can provide. We continue to be a help for any of our congregations as they seek to preserve critical records of historic interest. We also have offered to develop heritage events at any congregation that would invite us. On Feb. 5, 2017 The Oaklawn Baptist, Cranston, will host our first heritage workshop. It will follow up from the Walker Heritage weekend further investigating the theme of "freedom of conscience" by identifying and exploring local "Baptist"

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narratives. We are exploring a late summer or early fall “History Camp” for adults that would include a tour of heritage sites outside of Providence.

- ❖ *History and Polity Course 2017*: This offering has been given every other year in response, first, to the requirement for a “Baptist history and polity” course for those seeking ordination. It is a less expensive alternative to courses offered at local seminaries. To expand its usefulness, we have also offered the course to laity who seek deeper appreciation for our Baptist heritage. We intend to offer this course once more beginning in September 2017. As we develop the course, we seek to broaden its appeal to include congregational teachers as well as lay leaders. Given that we are in the very nursery of American Baptist experience, we have many rich and inspiring places, documents and figures from which to learn.

The Board of the Heritage Center is a group of very capable scholars and leaders. Many are involved in current research and publication. All are vital members of their own congregations. They are excited to talk about what it means to be a Baptist in these, our moments in history. The Board encourages all who have interest to participate in our events or help us with our programs.

Additional members of the board are needed. Anyone who is interested is encouraged to contact me directly or through the ABCORI office who will relay the message to me. Let us know how we can share our heritage with your congregation.

BHC TREASURER'S REPORT 02-12-2016

Present BHC account balance is \$2535.66

The Brent event totaled approximately 52 attendees, 42 paid and 10 guests.

Total expenses for Brent were: \$92.49 postage/ printing/ mailing

95.48 hotel expense

1202.20 airfare and honorarium

780.00 meals

\$2170.17 Total expenses

\$915.00 Total income from registrations.

Respectfully submitted, Don Waterman

**RI Baptist Heritage Center
Offices and Board members 2015**

Office/Term	
President 2015-2017	The Rev. Dr. Charles Hartman FBC Swansea, MA
Vice President 2015-2017	The Rev. James C. Miller Emmanuel Baptist Church, Providence
Secretary 2014-2016	Ms. Nancy Bancroft Wakefield Baptist
Treasurer 2014-2016	Mr. Don Waterman Berean Baptist, Harrisville
Class of 2016	The Rev. Dr. Clay Berry Wakefield Baptist The Rev. Dr. Alvin Johnson Second Freewill Baptist, Providence
Class of 2017	Dr. J. Stanley Lemons FBC Providence The Rev. Stephen E. Hollaway FBC, Block Island
Class of 2018	Rev. Dr. Clay Berry Wakefield Baptist, Wakefield Rev. Dr. Don Anderson RI State Council of Churches
Class of 2019	Tom McKibbens FBC _____ 1 Open

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Offices and Board members 2017-2020

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Class of 2019	The Rev. Dr. Tom McKibbens FBC Open
Class of 2020	Open Open