

2018
PROFILE OF:
THE BEACON FALLS
CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH



Our Mission

To be a family of faith, hope and love gathered to celebrate God's presence in our lives, to learn more about God's purposes, to nurture each other's spiritual growth and implement God's will in the world.

Our Vision

Beacon Falls Congregational Church is a Christ-centered, Spirit-filled, Bible based, and family based church. We accept the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the very Word of God. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is the only means of Salvation. We believe entrance into the Kingdom of God is through Jesus Christ as stated in Gospel of John, chapter 14, 6th verse, "I am the way, the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father but by me." We believe that commitment to Jesus Christ is a life-changing experience. We are a strong church family with the Lord at the center of our lives.

Introduction

The best way to describe Beacon Falls Congregational is with our "tag line" **A Family of Faith to Call Your Own.** Beacon Falls Congregational Church is a Christ centered, mission oriented, spiritually alive, warm, family-friendly congregation located in the town of Beacon Falls, CT. We are a congregation of approximately 336 members representing 160 families. We have many older members as well as a few families with young children. We have approximately 26 children (of the 65 that are eligible to participate) enrolled in our Christian Education program. Our present pastor of 30 years has retired effective April 29th, 2018. With the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we are now seeking a full time minister who feels God's call to help lead this congregation and help us to grow, both in numbers and in Christ.

What We Believe

The Trinity: Creator, Christ and Holy Spirit are one sovereign God.

God, The Father: God created and is ever active in the world.

Jesus Christ, The Son: In Christ, God has come to us, conquering sin and death and reconciling the world to Himself in divine love.

The Holy Spirit: God sent His Holy Spirit as His continuing presence, our comforter and counselor in the world.

Salvation: We are separated and estranged from God by sin, but forgiveness, grace and eternal life are promised to all who have faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

The Church: The church is a group of people united in Christ through worship, witness and service.

Authority of Scriptures: The Bible is our ultimate rule of faith and practice.

Christian Unity: All Christians are brothers and sisters in Christ.

Bearing Witness: We proclaim the Gospel by word and deed to individuals and to society.

Serving Others: Our mission is to establish God's will, rule and reign in the world through bearing witness and service to others

Church History

The Beacon Falls Congregational Church originally gathered as a Methodist Episcopal Church in 1846, erecting our first church building adjacent to what is now Pinesbridge Cemetery. After this building was destroyed by fire, a new building was constructed on Main Street (this building later became the American Legion Hall and is now the home of Beacon Falls Pizza). In 1868, the Home Woolen Mill gave a site for a new church in the pine grove west of Wolfe Avenue where the current church building was completed in 1871 and dedicated on January 11, 1872.

In 1900 we voted to become a new independent ecclesiastical society, and in 1919 we voted to become Congregational. From 1957 to 2005 we were a member of The United Church of Christ, a merger of certain Congregational Christian Churches with certain Evangelical & Reformed churches. Today we are an independent Congregational Church, true to our rich heritage and history.

About Congregationalism

Jesus Christ alone is the head of the church! The members of the local church manage our own affairs including worship practices, education and mission work. Each congregation is free to act in accordance with the collective decision of its members, ***guided by the working of The Holy Spirit and in the light of The Scriptures***. Congregationalists have no hierarchy, no bishops, no presbyteries, etc. The pastor is called by, and is a member of, the congregation.

Congregationalism was carried to America in 1620 by the Pilgrims, who were fleeing religious persecution in Europe. Congregational religious heritage stems from the great traditions of the Protestant Reformation – Lutheran, Calvinist, Methodist, Puritan and Reformed. Come discover for yourself the faith that birthed America and shaped New England – yet is still fresh, relevant and exciting in our lives today.

Worship

We currently hold one service on Sundays at 10AM. The adult choir sings, and an organ for traditional hymns and a piano for more contemporary praise songs provide the music. Lay people participate as greeters, acolytes, readers, and ushers. Our communion service is held the first Sunday of the month as part of our regular service. On the second and fourth Sundays of the month, a children's time is included in the service. After the children's time, the Sunday School age children are dismissed to their classes. Following worship we have fellowship time where the congregation and children gather for coffee/juice and snacks.

We use the "Celebration Hymnal" published by Word/Integrity Music Co.

We've recently launched a Youth-Led Contemporary Worship Service held once per quarter. These services are held on "5th Friday of the month" evenings and include prayer, short scripture readings, modern Christian music played on video and short "sermonettes" instead of a traditional sermon. Afterwards attendees go downstairs for an hour or so of pizza, snacks, board games and fellowship. We are looking to support, expand & grow this service.

Choir

Our choir at Beacon Falls Congregational Church, with approximately a dozen members, is always eager to sing praises to our Lord. We are a diversified bunch with willing voices led by our Director of Music, who handles all aspects of our choir and music ministry. However, we are always in need of more members. The choir of any Church has the responsibility of leading and energizing the congregation, inspiring them to sing songs of praise and worship. It is our hope to continue growing the choir to lead the congregation to new heights of the love of Christ through music.

Christian Education

Our Sunday school program meets during the 10:00 a.m. service. We use the David C. Cook Bible in Life Program for Pre-K to 3rd grade. We adopted a new curriculum in 2017 for grades 4-7; a four-year bible study program called "G2R" (Genesis to Revelation) produced by the Great Commission Publication. The Confirmation class uses the "Confirm" program produced by Cokesbury. We currently have four Sunday school classrooms for grades pre-school through ninth grade. Our 5th grade students make their first communion on Maundy Thursday and our 9th grade students are confirmed on Pentecost Sunday following a two year confirmation class. Classes meet from September until June. Our Sunday School students participant in the annual Christmas Pageant when the story of Christmas in retold and acted out during the Sunday service in December. We are working on increasing Sunday school attendance and participation as we have experienced a decline over the last few years, particularly in the lower grades.

We have an active lay-run adult bible study program at Beacon Falls Congregational Church. The program involves year-round programs of bible studies and programs for adults with the goal of increasing the level of bible literacy in our congregation. We've run "The Alpha Course" by Nicky Gumbel about half a dozen times, the last time in the fall of 2016. The following programs were more recently offered (2017-18)... In Person Studies: "The Promised One,

Seeing Jesus in Genesis” and “Behold the Lamb, Seeing Jesus in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy” both by Nancy Guthrie; “Jesus’ Final Week” by Cindy Bunch; “He Chose the Nails” and “Because of Bethlehem” both by Max Lucado. On-line Studies: “What to Do When I Don’t Desire God” by John Piper (LigonierConnect.org); “Bible Survey: A Big Screen Perspective” by Dr. Bert Downs (biblicaltraining.org); “The Holiness of God” by R.C. Sproul (LigonierConnect.org).

We also provide a Parenting / Family Resource called “Focus on The Family Bulletin” which is a monthly insert into our worship bulletins, and a Daily Devotional Resource called “The Upper Room Daily Devotional Magazine” which is available for free in our church Narthex.

Outreach Ministries

Local Missions:

- **HomeTouch Ministry** – Each week, we send our homebound members a personal package from our church. It contains two pages printed in LARGE type for easy reading, reminding them of how much they are remembered and loved. The devotional page includes a thought for the week, a prayer and a short, inspirational message. The activity page, important because shut-ins have so much time on their hands, is chock-full of things for them to do during those long hours of the day. Each activity is based on the Bible or church life. The HomeTouch mailings help to fill those long, quiet times of the day in a meaningful way.
- **Beacon Falls Care Bank** – The Beacon Falls Care Bank assists local people in need with grocery store gift cards. These cards are intended to complement/supplement the non-perishable foods they receive through our partner food-bank (see Ecumenical Food Bank information below). When canned and boxed foods are not enough, our gift cards enable families to purchase fresh produce, meat and dairy which are essential for a healthy, balanced diet.

Regional Missions:

- **Teen Challenge New England** – We are blessed by a yearly visit from the Men’s Choir at this ministry and are privileged to offer financial and prayer support. Several of our members even provide yearly sponsorships. Teen Challenge is one of the oldest, largest and most successful programs of its kind in the world. Teen Challenge New England serves individuals and families in the six New England states and New Jersey by providing *Christian faith-based*, long term residential recovery homes for more than 400 adults & adolescents and outreach and drug prevention programs to children and youth in schools and local communities. Through Teen Challenge sons and daughters are restored and reunited with their once heartbroken families torn apart by their loved one’s past drug and alcohol addiction. There are thousands of individuals who have been helped by Teen Challenge in New England over its more than 40-year history. Each are living demonstrations that change is possible and that there is hope for you or your loved one. Their ministry is best described by their tag line: **“Hope Lives Here...Freedom is Found Here...and Changed Lives Leave Here...”** Learn more about Teen Challenge.

- **My Sister's Place** – Our congregation runs an annual “gently used” clothing drive to benefit My Sister's Place – a unique family thrift shop located in the heart of downtown Ansonia, CT. All proceeds from My Sister's Place support Birmingham Group Health Services' Umbrella Program serving women and children who are affected by domestic violence by providing emergency shelter, counseling, therapy, advocacy, and other critical services that offer hope and help save lives. Learn more about [My Sister's Place](#).

World Missions:

- **World Vision Child Sponsorship** – Our most personal world-wide mission. In January of 2006 our church committed to financially and prayerfully sponsor a World Vision Child until their 18th birthday. We joyfully sponsored Abigail (from World Vision's Casitas Mission in Nicaragua) for 9 years until she moved away from the mission location and out of the program. We now sponsor beautiful Yaneris who, thanks to this wonderful program, now receives clean water, health care, improved nutrition and attends school regularly. Her entire village also benefits from World Vision's work in healthcare, education/economic opportunity, emergency response and child rights. All thanks and praise to God for richly blessing us with these sponsoring opportunities.
- **Heifer International** – One of our most popular missions. “Why give a cup of milk when you can give a cow?” Heifer International's mission is to work with communities to end hunger through gifts of livestock and training families to improve their nutrition and generate income. In exchange for their livestock and training, families agree to give one of its animal's offspring to another family in need. To see how you can learn more, please go to [Heifer International](#).
- **Operation Christmas Child** – An awesome prelude to our Christmas celebration! One of our favorite missions. Our church family support Samaritan's Purse's efforts to share the Good News of Jesus Christ. We put together shoe boxes chuck full of toys, gifts, books and goodies to be distributed to needy boys and girls world-wide. To discover more about this effort, please visit [Operation Christmas Child](#).

Prayer Ministries

- **Prayer Care** – weekly ministry called “Prayer Care”. It's an opportunity for us to pray for members individually, privately and personally. Volunteer pray-ers are available and happy to offer intercessory prayer with anyone in need. Each Sunday, just after we conclude worship, and while the congregation exits the sanctuary, “Prayer Care” volunteers will be located in the front of the sanctuary in case anyone would like one-on-one prayer time.
- **People @ Prayer** – We hold monthly prayer meetings called “People At Prayer” which focus on the needs of our church and its members. We take one hour, usually on the first Saturday of each month, to lift up our church/ministry needs, all those intentions already on our prayer list and any other requests brought by those present.

Membership Social Activities

- Tropical Paradise Pot Luck Supper
- Trip to Yale University sing-along performance of Handel's Messiah
- Church Campfire Sing-along
- Ice Cream Sundae Sundays
- Pilgrim Fellowship Youth Group for grades 5 through 12
 - Currently meets about once per quarter
 - Regular Trips to Contemporary Service at Christ Church Quaker Farms
 - Recent Meetings included Prayer, Pez & Pizza Night; Faith, Family Feud & Food Night

Church Committees

- **Church Council** – The Pastor presides as chairperson and does his best to keep us focused and on track (not always an easy task trying to get work accomplished when a bunch of people who like each other end up in the same room.) The committee consists of: all the officers of the church, the chairperson of each church committee / organization, and the advisors of the youth group. The council meets monthly to make sure our collective activities are coordinated so we are truly acting as one church.
- **Board of Deacons a.k.a. Diaconate** – The Diaconate works hand in hand in assisting the Pastor in all matters relating to worship services, communion and music. They recruit and coordinate congregation volunteers to serve as ushers, greeters, lay readers, flowers and fellowship hour hosts. The Board of Deacons also oversees the missions and outreach programs, congregation care, membership evangelism and growth.
- **Prudential Committee** – Prudential's prudence is what helps us to be good stewards fiscally and physically. They are responsible for the fiscal care of the church which includes: annual stewardship campaign (raising the funds to meet the budget!), financial budgeting, monitoring the inflow of cash and the paying of bills. We are grateful for their diligence in the upkeep and physical maintenance of our church and church property.
- **Christian Education Committee** – Blessed are the teachers. C.E. is responsible for the successful operation of our children's Sunday school and nursery. They also coordinate adult Christian Education (Bible studies and programs).
- **Membership Outreach Committee** – MTF is a sub-committee of the Board of Deacons. It is charged with stimulating membership growth, promoting our image in the community and fostering a "family like" culture by coordinating our many social activities. The MTF is also responsible for maintaining the church's website. Check it out www.BeaconFallsCongregational.org, we're kind of proud of it
- **Endowment Committee** – They are charged with the responsibility of encouraging donations, investing and managing the endowment fund (which is not part of our regular operating budget).

- **Nominating Committee** – They help match our members’ time and talents to the committees that truly need them. It is the Nominating Committee’s annual responsibility to make sure there are qualified, caring people LIKE YOU willing to serve on the various committees to ensure our church not just functions but rather thrives!
- **Pastoral Relations Committee** – This is a group that facilitates constructive communication between the congregation and the pastor. They also make annual recommendations to our prudential committee regarding the Pastor’s compensation. The pastor appoints two members to this committee.

Facilities

Beacon Falls Congregational Church

69 Wolf Avenue, Beacon Falls, CT 06403

- The Beacon Falls Congregational Church is situated on 1.6 acres of land currently overlooking Main Street, Beacon Falls, CT. The current church building, built in 1871 and renovated in 1977, has an approximately 180 seat sanctuary, a narthex, rear balcony, pastor’s study, 3 church school classrooms that can be divided for double usage, one dedicated meeting room which can be used as a classroom, rest rooms, a fully equipped kitchen, a downstairs fellowship hall, and a nursery. The Church School wing was completed in 1964. Installation of a handicapped access elevator and bathroom was recently completed. A memorial garden was included in this addition. Cell tower equipment in the steeple and a private day school are both revenue generating sources.
- An on-site, ranch style, parsonage, located adjacent to the church building, was built in 1977 with 1952 sq. ft. of living space, a full basement, and a 2-car garage. It is comprised of 3 bedrooms, kitchen with all appliances, hardwood floors, living room, dining room, family room with fireplace, 2 baths, and a sun porch. It has hot water, baseboard oil fired heat, and aluminum siding. Church parking is provided on the property adjacent to the parsonage and church building. Additional parking is available on Wolf Avenue in both directions.

Groups renting or using the Facilities

- United Day School
- AA
- Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts
- GRASP (Grief Recovery After a Substance Passing)
- Metro PCS (cell tower located in our steeple)

Attendance

Our attendance has been fairly consistent for the past few years with the exception of 2015 when it increased, but then dropped back down in 2016. The following chart shows our attendance trends over the last few years. We presently have approximately 55 members that attend regularly and 17 children that attend Sunday school regularly. We also have approximately 5 homebound members that are unable to attend on a regular basis.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Adults</u>	<u>Children</u>
2018 YTD	66	16
2017	55	17
2016	56	14
2015	64	17
2014	53	(unknown)

The rolling year average from April 1st, 2017 to March 31, 2018 is 56 adults. The 2018 year-to-date number reflects an upswing in attendance, but realistically this will decrease as our summer attendance decreases during June – August.

Staff

- We are currently seeking a full-time Pastor.
- We have a part time “Director of Music” who handles all aspects of our choir and music ministry.
- We have a part time “Secretary” who works approximately 10 hours per week and handles production of the weekly worship bulletins and a bi-monthly newsletter, maintains our website, Facebook/Instagram accounts and handles other administrative tasks.

Finances

We operate on an annual budget that is approved by church members at our annual meeting in January. Pledges made by the members are known only to the member, assistant treasurer, and God. Our 2018 operating budget is \$151,810 based on projections from 2017 actuals. We have investment accounts that we control, and the earned interest is reinvested. See table below for additional financial information. More detailed information is available in our annual report.

Operating Revenues \$148,930 (2017 Actuals)

- Offerings \$108,552
 - Rental Income \$ 24,200
 - Fundraisers \$14,922
 - Other \$1,256
- Cell Tower rental income \$2,146/mo
 - Operating Expenditures \$144,211 (2017 Actuals)
 - Current Funds \$230,773 (as of March 2018)
 - General Fund \$8,802
 - Endowment Fund market value \$83,000
 - Memorial Fund market value \$3,436
 - Emergency Fund \$7,689
 - Reserve Certificate of Deposit \$15,030
 - Capital Improvements Fund \$112,816 (primarily allocated to Access for All project)
 - Our church fundraises to help cover some of our expenses. Our fundraising efforts include:
 - Chicken Dinner and Raffle
 - Cookie Walk
 - Super Bowl Grinder Sale
 - Scrip gift card program

Church Profile (According to 2018 Congregational Survey)

- Demographics of the congregation
 - Half of the members are associated with BFCC (Beacon Falls Congregational Church) more than 20 years and 28% of the members are associated less than 10 years.
 - Half of the members are between the ages of 50 and 70 years old and 16% under 40 years old.
 - More than half are female (66%).
 - Over 70% are married.
 - 40% have a 4 year college degree or higher.
 - 80% have lived at their current address 10+ years.
- Average weekly worship attendance is 55 adults and 12 children attending Sunday school.

- Most important reasons people continue to attend BFCC
 - Minister/Pastor
 - Meets spiritual needs for prayer and worship
 - Enjoy fellowship
 - Community/Location
- 20% of the congregation fills 100% of committee duties and activities.
- Sunday School
 - Of Sunday School age children – 75% attend (26 children)
 - Attendance of Sunday school children has decreased 42%.
 - Of those children attending, 75% attend 2 or more times per month.
- The most prominent challenges for existing member to attend:
 - Time/Schedule constraints
 - Health issues
- The congregation in general is moderate (not liberal or conservative) in their beliefs and 95% pray occasionally or often
- The congregational expect sermon topics to include:
 - Family and relationships and values
 - Spiritual growth
 - Coping with life
 - Interpreting and teaching from scripture
- The congregational does not want sermon topics to include current political events
- The ideal pastor will:
 - Support the church making own decisions
 - Make sickness, grief, & celebration visits
 - Preach topically with scripture support
 - Be a moderate/traditional pastor
- The congregation voted to leave the UCC (United Church of Christ) in 2005. This was a difficult and painful time for the church. The decision to leave included, but was not limited to, the UCC's stance and activism related to same-sex marriage and abortion. As a result of the vote, we lost some long-standing members, but we also gained some wonderful new active members. The survey results indicate that we are still some-what divided on these two issues, but a majority of the respondents indicated they are against same-sex marriage and are pro-life.
- Church Strengths
 - Our members
 - Our atmosphere – warm; family-like; welcoming
 - Core of highly committed people
- Church Weaknesses
 - Drop in active attendance – including Sunday school
 - Lack of young demographic
- 3-5 year goals
 - Growth in membership numbers – particularly a younger demographic
 - Develop engaging youth programs to attract and retain the youth of the church

Our Town – Beacon Falls

We are one of the youngest towns in the State of Connecticut (incorporated in 1871), situated in the heart of the Naugatuck Valley; a convenient commute to major cities yet (located right off of Route 8) peacefully "far from the maddening crowd". Beacon Falls is a picturesque town with beautiful view of the hills in the valley.

We are a small, yet active town. We have numerous civic organizations, a volunteer fire department, and active youth organizations in town. The school system engages the town through their arts and sports programs.

Our parks and trails afford many opportunities to enjoy the beauty of southern New England. I invite you to picnic in Matthies Park, enjoy a game of tennis at the Pent Road Recreation Complex, kayak on Toby's Pond, fish the Naugatuck River, or hike in our newest gem, Lantern Ridge.

- **Town Facts** - The town of Beacon Falls, with a population of 6,049 is located in southwest Connecticut where it is bisected by the Naugatuck River. The area, 9.8 sq. miles, an Indian camping ground on which many relics such as arrowheads have been found, was first settled by colonists from Derby in 1678. The town was incorporated in 1871 on lands from each of the bordering towns: Bethany, Naugatuck, Oxford, and Seymour. Beacon Falls' principle industries include agriculture, warehouse storage and manufacture of plastic molding and small hardware. Website: www.beaconfalls-ct.org
- **Heritage** - Due to its strong sense of community, Beacon Falls was incorporated from Bethany, Oxford, Naugatuck, and Seymour in 1871. The first friction matches were made here in 1834 by Thomas Sanford, who later sold his "recipe" for \$10.00; the Diamond Match Co. ultimately acquired the formula. The town was named after Beacon Hill, which historians say was a lookout for colonists to signal the movements of hostile Indians.
- **Geography**
 - According to the [United States Census Bureau](#), the town has a total area of 9.9 square miles (26 km²), of which, 9.8 square miles (25 km²) of it is land and 0.1 square miles (0.26 km²) of it (1.01%) is water.
 - The village of Pine Bridge, once known as Pines Bridge, is located within the town, south of the town center. Beacon Falls has been known as Beacon Falls Station, Beacon Falls Village, and the Beacon Falls Postal District within Bethany.
 - The [Beacon Falls \(Metro-North station\)](#) is on the [Waterbury](#) branch of the [New Haven](#) line.
 - On the National Register of Historic Places
 - [Depot Street Bridge](#) - added March 9, 2007
 - [Home Woolen Company](#) - added November 29, 1984

- On the State Register of Historic Places
 - Rimmon School - One room schoolhouse ca. 1830, Pinesbridge Road (RT-42)
 - Tracy S. Lewis House - Home of the Beacon Falls Rubber Shoe Company President. Originally built ca. 1855 by the American Hard Rubber Company, 35-37 Wolfe Avenue

- **Demographics** – There is limited information available from the 2010 census. More detailed information is available from the 2000 census.
 - As of the census of 2010, there were 6,049 people, divided into 2,509 total households, with 2,360 occupied households in the town.
 - The racial makeup (population) of the town was 5,741 White, 95 African American, 2 Native American, 70 Asian, 2 Pacific Islander, 52 from other races, and 0.76% from two or more races. There are 300 Hispanic or Latino.^[5]
 - As of the census ^[6] of 2000, there were 5,246 people, 2,032 households, and 1,450 families residing in the town. The population density was 536.6 people per square mile (207.1/km²). There were 2,104 housing units at an average density of 215.2 per square mile (83.1/km²). The racial makeup of the town was 96.97% White, 0.72% African American, 0.08% Native American, 1.03% Asian, 0.04% Pacific Islander, 0.40% from other races, and 0.76% from two or more races. Hispanic or Latino of any race were 2.13% of the population.
 - There were 2,032 households out of which 34.1% had children under the age of 18 living with them, 58.2% were married couples living together, 9.5% had a female householder with no husband present, and 28.6% were non-families. 23.0% of all households were made up of individuals and 6.3% had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older. The average household size was 2.58 and the average family size was 3.08.
 - In the town the population was spread out with 25.2% under the age of 18, 6.5% from 18 to 24, 35.1% from 25 to 44, 23.6% from 45 to 64, and 9.6% who were 65 years of age or older. The median age was 37 years. For every 100 females there were 100.6 males. For every 100 females age 18 and over, there were 96.5 males.
 - The median income for a household in the town was \$56,592, and the median income for a family was \$62,461. Males had a median income of \$41,696 versus \$34,844 for females. The per capita income for the town was \$25,285. About 4.2% of families and 5.9% of the population were below the poverty line, including 9.8% of those under age 18 and 4.6% of those age 65 or over.

- Beacon Falls is home to [Woodland Regional High School](#), which opened in 2001. Woodland is part of Regional School District #16 (Beacon Falls and [Prospect](#)), which also consists of Long River Middle School (P), Laurel Ledge Elementary School (BF), Community School (P), and Algonquin School (P).

Historical population

Census	Pop.	%±
1880	379	—
1890	505	33.2%
1900	623	23.4%
1910	1,160	86.2%
1920	1,593	37.3%
1930	1,693	6.3%
1940	1,756	3.7%
1950	2,067	17.7%
1960	2,886	39.6%
1970	3,546	22.9%
1980	3,995	12.7%
1990	5,083	27.2%
2000	5,246	3.2%
2010	6,049	15.3%
Est. 2014	6,055 ^[4]	0.1%

Beacon Falls – Town History

- Settlers from [Derby, Connecticut](#) moved to the Beacon Falls area in 1678. The town was incorporated in 1871 on lands carved from the neighboring towns of [Bethany](#), [Seymour](#), [Naugatuck](#) and [Oxford](#).
- The history of Beacon Falls is tied to the series of manufacturing concerns that operated in the town's impressive brick factory buildings on North Main Street, adjacent to the Naugatuck River. The last and most successful of those concerns was the Beacon Falls Rubber Shoe Company. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries rubber manufacturing thrived in the [Lower Naugatuck Valley](#). This followed the invention and 1844 patent, by Connecticut native [Charles Goodyear](#), of a chemical process called [Vulcanization](#) to convert natural rubber into a durable, flexible, waterproof material. In the 1850s the American Hard Rubber Company built a brick factory in Beacon Falls,

utilizing water power from the Naugatuck River. The company made buttons, whip sockets, and powder flasks. After that company was acquired and moved to Long Island, the empty brick building was bought by the Home Woolen Company, which in the 1860s expanded and manufactured woolen shawls, popular at the time with men, women and Civil War soldiers. The Home Woolen Company thrived for 20-plus years until it became insolvent in 1887.

- The 1898 inception of the Beacon Falls Rubber Shoe Company lay in the decision of Samuel J. Lewis, President of the Goodyear Metallic Rubber Shoe Co. of [Naugatuck, Connecticut](#), and his son Tracy S. Lewis, Secretary and Treasurer of that company, to resign and start a new business together. In 1898 the two Lewis men bought the Home Woolen Company facility and started the Beacon Falls Rubber Shoe Company. The new company enjoyed great success for over two decades. From 150 pairs of shoes manufactured in 1899, by 1920 5.5 million pair were shipped; during that same time the town's population doubled. The company specialized in rubber soled boots with leather uppers (like today's "L.L. Bean" boots), and rubber soled athletic shoes with canvas uppers (now called "sneakers"). The footwear was marketed under the brand name, "Top Notch."
- The Beacon Falls Rubber Shoe Company was a tremendous physical, economic, and cultural presence in Beacon Falls. It made major civic efforts to enhance the town and the lives of its employees, including building a movie theater, with an assembly room and dance hall for public use, sponsoring a musical band that gave daily performances, and commissioning the influential landscape architectural firm [Olmsted Brothers](#) to create an overall design for company lands and buildings. The resulting plan embraced the [Tracy S. Lewis House](#) and a neighborhood of workers' homes above the factory.
- Tracy Lewis died prematurely in 1921 at age 47, marking the demise of the Beacon Falls Rubber Shoe Company, followed by the gradual end of manufacturing at the Beacon Falls facility. After Lewis's death the company was acquired by the [United States Rubber Company](#) in Naugatuck (formerly Goodyear Metallic Rubber Shoe Co., renamed Uniroyal, Inc. in 1961), and the Beacon Falls athletic shoe was renamed "Keds." Production in the elegant brick factory buildings ended during the [Great Depression](#) in 1930, after which the buildings were used only for storage. Several buildings associated with the company, including the movie theater, were destroyed when the State of Connecticut widened the road in front of the factory in 1949, and when the [Flood of 1955 \(Connecticut\)](#) flooded the Naugatuck River, causing extensive damage through the valley. In 1984 the brick factory buildings were placed on the National Register of Historical Places as the "Home Woolen Company" (#84000410 -- "also known as Beacon Falls Rubber Shoe Factory"). In the late 1980s the buildings were converted to a 188-unit, full-amenity apartment complex called Beacon Mill Village. The "Depot Street Bridge," spanning the Naugatuck River across from the old brick factory, is also on the National Register of Historical Places (#07000108). Built in 1935 of riveted steel, it was designed by engineers from the Public Works Administration and the Connecticut Highway Department. The bridge joins the two parts of Beacon Falls bisected by the river.

- A second major historical Beacon Falls business, where many town residents worked over the years, was the Homer D. Bronson Company. In 1884 the company moved to Beacon Falls from [Waterbury, Connecticut](#) (known as "the brass capital of the world"). The Homer D. Bronson Company manufactured a multitude of brass items, specializing in hinges used in industry and homes; automobile hood hinges were a major product. The company survived both the Great Depression and the Flood of 1955. Now named HDB Inc., its present-day website states that it has been "a leader in the engineered hinge and metal stamping markets since 1839." In 1986 the company moved to [Winsted, Connecticut](#).

Meet our Congregation!! (photos from recent events)



