



PRESS RELEASE
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Opening at The Gallery at Hallmark

A Space for Faith: The Colonial Meetinghouses of New England

*Photographer Paul Wainwright's Study of New England's Meetinghouses
Tells an Important Story of Our Nation's History*

Turners Falls, Massachusetts, July 5, 2011 - New Hampshire photographer Paul Wainwright's large-format black & white photographs of colonial meetinghouses will be on exhibit at the Gallery at Hallmark in Turners Falls, Massachusetts, from July 22 through September 4, 2011. An opening reception will be held on Saturday, July 23, from 1 to 5 PM.

The Gallery at Hallmark, located at 85 Avenue A in historic downtown Turners Falls, is open Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays from 1 to 5 PM, or by appointment.

New England's Puritan meetinghouses embody an important chapter in American history, yet their role in forming our country is not widely known. Participatory government (the "town meeting") was born and refined in them, and the separation of church and state in the first amendment of our federal constitution was the result of the public's displeasure of supporting them with tax money. The original "Tea Party" was organized in one - the Old South Meetinghouse in Boston - which still stands today on Washington Street, and is part of Boston's Freedom Trail.

Following the example set by Paul Strand in his classic 1950 book *Time in New England*, the exact location of each photograph is relatively unimportant. Just as Strand painted a composite portrait of New England, Wainwright's photographs paint a composite portrait of the New England meetinghouse. These structures are typical of those that once existed at the center of every colonial New England town. While most have been torn down or renovated beyond recognition, the few structures contained in this body of work remain, touched only by time.

"These buildings are my models for making art," says Wainwright. "Not only are they significant in American history, they are also beautiful to my eye. The textured wood and natural light that filters through centuries-old glass is a joy for me to photograph."

Lisa Robinson, Executive Director of The Gallery at Hallmark says: "There is a beauty to this collection of work that transcends time. The images capture a feeling and essence of these hushed yet very alive places. The careful design and craftsmanship of the photographs honor the stunning simplicity of early colonial architecture."

The Gallery at Hallmark in Turners Falls, Massachusetts, is one of New England's premier photography galleries. Part of the Hallmark Institute of Photography, it has shown the work of many well-known photographers, including William Wegman, Lynn Goldsmith, and Lois Greenfield.

Wainwright describes himself as a modern-day Ansel Adams. He works with a wooden large-format camera, sheet film, and develops all his images in his darkroom. Every photograph is carefully and individually created. He prefers to create a photograph rather than "shoot" or "take a picture," and uses traditional processes which force him to slow down and really think about what he wants his images to be.

"My work with these traditional photographic processes is a very Zen-like activity," says Wainwright. "I think the slow, deliberate pace of creating these photographs complements the timeless nature of the meetinghouses. I find a beauty in their simplicity and austerity. My photographs are devoid of people, yet to me they are all about the people who built and used these spaces."

Tony Decaneas, founder of Panopticon Gallery in Boston, commented: "Paul Wainwright is one of the best traditional silver gelatin printers in the country."

Wainwright's meetinghouse photographs were recently showcased in the award-winning book *A Space for Faith: The Colonial Meetinghouses of New England*, published by Peter E. Randall Publisher of Portsmouth, New Hampshire. *A Space for Faith* has received the New England Book Festival Award for best photography/art book of 2010, the Independent Publishers 2011 Gold Award for best northeast regional non-fiction book of the year, and the American Association of State and Local History 2011 Award of Merit.

In the book, Wainwright's photographs are accompanied by a Foreword by Brent Glass, Director of the National Museum of American History at the Smithsonian. Also, an essay by noted colonial-era historian Peter Benes tells about the role these buildings played in this fascinating chapter of American history.

Wainwright, who had long considered himself to be a "photographer with a day job," discovered his creative passion with his first darkroom at age 12. In 2001, when the job he had held for 24 years at Bell Laboratories was eliminated, he embraced his love of photography and re-created his life.

"I took a leap of faith." Wainwright says, "I'll admit that like many of us who suddenly find ourselves without a job, I was scared. But that leap of faith led me to create *A Space for Faith*, a book which wouldn't exist if I'd still been working in the corporate world." Wainwright is now a successful landscape and architectural photographer.

Drawn to capture images that reflect our Puritan heritage, Wainwright says, "They were religious dissidents who came to New England so they could live apart from the Church of England. Their lives were simple, and their belief in God was central to their lives. I believe my meetinghouse photographs reflect the Puritans' simple, well-ordered lives and inspire my quest to simplify my own life."

A Space for Faith may be purchased during the exhibit at The Gallery at Hallmark, or securely on-line at www.aspaceforfaith.com.

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Hi-res image downloads available: http://www.aspaceforfaith.com/media_room.shtml.

For review copies and author interviews, please call 603-362-6589. Additional information and photos may be found in the Media Room section of the book's web site, www.aspaceforfaith.com.

A Space for Faith: The Colonial Meetinghouses of New England by Paul Wainwright (ISBN 13: 978-0-9817898-5-9) is published by Peter E. Randall Publisher of Portsmouth, New Hampshire.



Old Meeting House (1758), Damville, New Hampshire



Rocky Hill Meeting House (1785), Amesbury, Massachusetts



Old Trinity Church (1773), Brooklyn, Connecticut

About The Gallery at Hallmark

The Gallery at Hallmark strives to foster a greater understanding and appreciation for photography by displaying visual expressions of the fine and applied photographic arts. The Gallery serves as an extension of the educational processes and objectives of [Hallmark Institute of Photography](#) while endeavoring to engage the lives of students, the local community, the state of Massachusetts, and the Northeast region. The Gallery at Hallmark fulfills its mission through exhibitions, outreach, and related educational programs dedicated to cultural and intellectual enrichment.



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