

Church Profile for Garland Community Baptist Church

July 2026



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1. Introduction

We are a welcoming and loving group of Christians who live in, or near, the tranquil rural farming community town of Garland in the Maine Highlands region of western Penobscot County, Maine. We are mostly an older congregation, with a few younger families. In theological outlook we are committed to sound biblical doctrine, emphasizing the importance of Scripture and the work of the Holy Spirit in guiding our beliefs and practices to become a mature family of brothers and sisters. In purpose, we believe in sharing the love of Christ and the way of Salvation by serving others and as a harbor for the spiritually broken. Over recent years we have become more involved in outreach, including reaching children with the Gospel through after-school clubs, and providing food and fellowship through quarterly Community Outreach meals. We are excited to develop these and other ways of making our faith and church more available and relevant to those we seek to reach.

2. Our Church as it is now

A. The People

Around 45 adults make up the church at present (including 'active' non-members).

Compared with the demographic make-up of Garland and the surrounding towns, our church is similar, being predominantly white and working class, although most of our membership is older than the median age, retired, and on fixed incomes.

As of June 2026, there are 26 enrolled church members.

We currently have three people on our leadership team – two elders and a deacon. All are over the age of 65 and retired or working part-time. We also have several members operating in coordinating and service positions for building upkeep, greeters, widow/widower ministry, children/youth ministries, outreach, and music.

B. The Services

We presently have one worship service at 10:00 AM on Sunday morning. Services are led by the elders with preaching usually delivered by our interim Pastor, backed up in his absence by men in the church gifted to teach. Services are livestreamed for the benefit of those unable to attend and are archived on YouTube.

Our service type is traditional, consisting of congregational singing, a time for prayer, and preaching. A music team leads the congregation singing with a mix of traditional hymns and select contemporary music, chosen for their Biblical message and clearly God-honoring praise. Our service structure is flexible, but most Sundays begin with a call to worship, a time of prayer, congregational singing of God's praises, and expository preaching of the Word. We share communion on the first Sunday of the month. Attendance on a Sunday averages around 42 adults and 7 children.

On most Sundays we have a nursery for babies and Junior Church for children ages 6-12. We begin our worship together as a whole family for singing and prayer, with children leaving just prior to the preaching time for age-appropriate teaching. On Communion Sunday we do not have Junior Church; the families stay together for the entire service, concluding with communion time.

C. The Activities and Ministries

Our mid-week Bible study and prayer group meets at the Church on Wednesday morning.

Sisters of Ruth, our women's Bible study and fellowship group, gets together monthly.

Growing in Christ, using resources from The Navigators, is a multi-week discipleship class for new and growing Christians.

We operate a Widows Mite ministry that provides help and support including transportation, handyman services, pastoral care, and prayer for the widows and widowers of our congregation. A variety of luncheons and outings are planned each year.

Our church supports the New Hope Women's Shelter in Solon as well as individual missionaries in the following organizations: Ratio Christi and Operation Mobilization.

We have an internal benevolence program to assist and support church members and regular attendees with specific needs. A separate benevolence program extends compassion, support, and practical resources to individuals and families in the community facing financial hardships and other challenges.

During the school year, we hold an after-school Good News Club weekly at the district elementary and middle school. A children's 3-day Bible Club (VBS) is held at the church during the summer.

The church family offers free outreach community meals each quarter in the church fellowship hall. These provide times of physical nourishment and emotional/spiritual fellowship to residents in the community and surrounding towns.

From Labor Day to Memorial Day, we hold Sunday School for adults and children, prior to our morning worship service.

Church services and all events that are open to the community are posted in the area newspaper, The Rolling Thunder Express, are advertised on Facebook, and have flyers placed in area stores and businesses.

D. The Buildings

Garland Community Baptist Church holds a long and lasting place in the town's history, being founded and built at its current site in 1866 as the Free Baptist Church. A lightning strike in 1953 caused a fire that destroyed the steeple and belfry. A new steeple was erected. While shorter than the original, it was designed to match the historical aesthetic and still houses a fully functional church bell tower.

Much has changed since then with major modernizations over the years including replacing the floor-to-ceiling windows, hydronic baseboard heat, an updated well, new septic, plumbing, and electric service.

Installation of a fully poured basement and a rear addition took place in 2006. The addition added a foyer, two bathrooms, and stairs to the finished basement level. The stairs are outfitted with a stairlift. The basement contains additional bathrooms, a kitchen, fellowship hall, classrooms, an office, and small library.





A standby generator was added in 2024, allowing us to register with the town as a warming center for the community during severe weather and extended power outages. In 2024, half the original pews were replaced with linked padded chairs for the comfort of congregants and the flexibility of re-arranging the sanctuary to better accommodate events such as weddings and funerals.

One front entrance has been retired, while the other is still maintained and used. The parking area is alongside and behind the church building, making it more convenient to enter the church through the rear of the building which has become the de facto main entrance. This entrance also has a wheelchair ramp.

To the south of the church is a parsonage. Originally deeded to the church in 1897 and updated over the years, it has served as a residence for several pastors and their families. In recent years it has been unoccupied and is currently used for storage but can be restored to use as a residence if needed.



3. A brief history of the church

The records of the early days of the church are not complete, but the church can trace its beginnings to the early 19th century. Beginning around 1825, a group of families who called themselves “Free Will Baptists” met in village homes and schools. They grew in number and in 1841 the first church was built just east of the village. Through the years the membership increased, and a larger church was needed. In 1866 the current building was erected in the village center. In 1915 the Baptists and Congregationalists formed a federation, and the church became known as the “Federated Church”. They met together this way until 1940 when the federation was dissolved, and the church became known as the “Garland Baptist Community Church”. In 1943 the name was changed to “Garland Community Baptist Church”, which has remained to the current day.

4. The Church we would like to see

A recent survey of the Garland Community Baptist Church identified the shared goals we have for our church:

1. Above all, we would be a people who love God, love each other and love the community we are called to serve.

2. We want to see people of all ages using and developing their gifts and fully participating in the life of the church and its mission. We recognize the need for a more intentional way to identify and encourage the use of the gifts God has given us as a church.
3. We want to be a church that is growing and moving forward with God. However, we recognize that our priority should be to grow 'the kingdom' rather than just 'our church'.
4. We need to develop ways to move people from the fringe to the center. This includes outreach that meets the needs of our community and changes contacts to converts and converts to disciples.
5. We want to continue to be firmly rooted in God's Word through inspirational, expository, Bible-based preaching and teaching – from a new Pastor and others who are already within our church
6. We want to be a people who bear one another's burdens, who support and encourage each other in our day-to-day life, and who are better equipped to be 'salt and light' in the communities God has placed us in.

5. The Pastor we believe that we need

We seek a pastor who will help us develop our life together: setting the direction for the church spiritually, sharing responsibility and working with the elders and deacons to guide teaching, discipling, outreach, community service, and growth.

Specifically, we believe we need someone who:

1. Recognizes the importance of rural community churches and can shepherd an older and rural population of believers.
2. Has a deep and profound respect for the Bible in his own life and knows how to communicate that well to others – and will enable other church members to do that as well.
3. Will inspire, challenge, encourage and work with the whole church to move us forward together into the future that God has prepared for us.
4. Has a collaborative style of leadership which will enable him to work well with our existing and future leadership and ministry teams.
5. Will encourage, inspire and equip church members to use and develop their God-given gifts both inside and outside the church.

6. Statement of Faith

WE BELIEVE:

1. THE BIBLE verbally and completely inspired, is God's infallible word, authoritative for all faith and life. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
2. THERE IS ONE GOD personal, infinite, perfect and eternally existing as the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. (1 John 5:7)
3. JESUS CHRIST is true God and true man, was born of the virgin Mary, lived a sinless life, provided substitutionary atonement for lost man and rose bodily from the grave. (Hebrews 1:1-14)

4. THE HOLY SPIRIT is a divine person and works in the conviction of men and in the regeneration, sanctification and preservation of the believer. (John 14:26)
5. GOD DIRECTLY CREATED the universe from no pre-existing substance. We reject both naturalistic and theistic evolution. (John 1:3; Col 1:16)
6. SATAN IS A FALLEN created personality, opposed to all that is holy and is destined for eternal punishment. (John 8:44)
7. MANKIND was made in God's own image, and He has created each person as male or female. These two distinct genders complement one another as designed in God's wisdom and goodness (Genesis 1:26-31; 2:18-25). Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of and a distortion of the creative process of God within that person (Romans 1:18-32; 2 Peter 2:6-14). (We believe) that the term "marriage" means the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as found in Scripture (Genesis 2:18-25; Matthew 19:3-6). We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman (as determined by gender at birth) who are married to each other (1 Corinthians 6:18; 7:2-5; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; Hebrews 13:4). (We believe) that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity (heterosexual, homosexual or otherwise) be engaged in outside of a marriage between one man and one woman. It is therefore immoral and sinful to live a lifestyle that opposes what the bible declares (1 Corinthians 6:18-20). (We believe) mankind fell into sin in Adam and is now a sinner both by nature and choice and can be restored to God's favor only by God's provision in Christ as applied by the Holy Spirit (Romans 3:10-19).
8. GOD'S PROVISION Christ is the only ground for man's justification which includes both pardon from sin and the gift of eternal life. (1 Peter 2:24)
9. SALVATION comes to man only by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, apart from any human merit. (Romans 4:4-5; Ephesians 2:8-9)
10. ALL PERSONS will experience resurrection, believers to a state of eternal happiness and unbelievers to eternal punishment. (Matthew 25:31-46; John 5:28-29)
11. THE RETURN OF CHRIST includes both the rapture of the church and His return in glory. The first is for His church which is personal and may occur at any moment. The second is His return to earth to establish His righteous reign over the earth. (1 Thessalonians 4:16)

7. Practical Matters

The current size and income of our congregation is ready to financially support a bi-vocational Pastor. As we have done in the past, we would plan to bring the Pastor on to full-time as God grows and prospers our church.

The church does have a 2-3 bedroom parsonage which has served as a residence and as a meeting house for our former Youth Group, but is currently being used as storage. If desired as a residence for a Pastor and his family, we plan to make the necessary repairs and upgrades.

8. The Area

Garland is a small country village to the east of Dexter, Maine, and is part of the Central Maine Highlands. As of 2026, there are 1,045 residents.

Its landscape is a combination of hayfields, mixed woods, rolling hills, old barns, and quiet backroads. It is also home to the 128-acre Garland Pond which is the headwater for the Kenduskeag stream that flows to Bangor where it joins the Penobscot River. The center of town is where you'll find the Garland Country Store, a convenience store that also boasts a deli, gas station, and the attached town Post Office.



Garland offers country living near larger service hubs. Shopping and healthcare are in nearby Dexter, Newport, Dover-Foxcroft, and Bangor. There is four-season trail access, with local clubs grooming ATV and snowmobile routes that link to the Interconnected Trail System network.

Within 8-10 miles in any direction are several towns with populations ranging from 2500 to 4500 residents. It is 30 miles to the nearest major city, Bangor.

Beneath the rural charm, Garland has its share of social problems. There are spiritually broken and lonely people, fractured families, with many struggling to make ends meet, just as you would find in many communities in Maine. As a church these are the ones we have sought to minister to, especially in recent years through our various outreach ministries.