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Hillsborough, N.H. Hillsborough Center Congregational Society records, 1840-2022. RG5439

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Congregational Library & Archives

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Summary Information

Repository:	Congregational Library & Archives
Creator:	Hillsborough Center Congregational Society (Hillsborough, N.H.)
Title:	Hillsborough, N.H. Hillsborough Center Congregational Society records, 1840-2022.
ID:	RG5439
Date [inclusive]:	1840-2022
Physical Description:	0.70 Cubic Feet 2 boxes
Language of the Material:	English .
Abstract:	<p>The Congregational Society in Hillsborough, New Hampshire, was first organized and began convening in its first meeting house in 1769. Over the next two decades, the society constructed two more meeting houses. Its third meeting house served the community until 1839, when a group of church members withdrew to form their own congregation and build their own meeting house, a fourth, in Bridge Village. After the split in the community and the construction of the fourth Bridge Village meeting house in 1839, the third meeting house ceased to serve as a house of worship and was finally abandoned in 1874. Efforts were underway in the late 1880s and early 1890s to restore the third building, but it burned down in a fire in 1892. After the fire, the efforts that had been directed at restoring the third building were redirected instead into the construction of a new fifth church building, which was ultimately dedicated in 1893. This fifth building served the Congregational Society until the 1920s, when its doors closed. In 1935, though, some community members spearheaded an effort to reopen the church for summer services. The society continues to this day to hold Sunday services during the summer. This collection contains records of the society, including vital records, financial records, building records, cemetery records, records of meetings and events, records of the Junior Society of Christian Endeavor, pulpit supply records, orders of worship, incorporation documents, and correspondence.</p>

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], in the Hillsborough, N.H. Hillsborough Center Congregational Society records, 1840-2022, RG5439. The Congregational Library & Archives, Boston, MA.

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Biographical / Historical

The Congregational Society in Hillsborough, New Hampshire, was first organized and began convening in its first meeting house in 1769. On November 24, 1772, the town appointed the Rev. Jonathan Barns to take oversight over the church's meetings in the town, and several months later, on May 25, 1773, the annual town meeting called for the erection of a second meeting house. That construction was completed around 1779 on a hill southeast of the Hillsborough town center, which came to be known as "Meeting House Hill." When the congregation outgrew that building, they constructed a third, larger meeting house. The building of the third meeting house began in 1789 and was finished in about three years. The Rev. Jonathan Barnes continued to serve as minister for the congregation until 1803, when he was struck by lightning while horseback riding. He died as a result of his accident in 1805.

The third meeting house served the community until 1839, when a group of church members withdrew to form their own congregation and build their own meeting house, a fourth, in Bridge Village, closer to where those members were living. That community initially called itself the Hillsborough Bridge Village Congregational Church but eventually adopted the name Smith Memorial Congregational Church, after Governor John B. Smith, who contributed funds to the building's renovation in 1909. Smith Memorial continues to meet today and is presently affiliated with the United Church of Christ.

After the split in the church community and the construction of the fourth Bridge Village meeting house in 1839, the "Old Meeting House" (the third) ceased to serve as a house of worship and instead became a town house used primarily for community meetings. The building then became a house of worship for a local Methodist congregation, and it was finally abandoned in 1874. Efforts were underway in the late 1880s and early 1890s to restore the building, but it burned down in a fire in 1892.

After the fire, the efforts that had been directed at restoring the third building were redirected instead into the construction of a new fifth church building. That building was dedicated on August 15, 1893. Records from 1897 to 1909 indicate that this church hosted an active Junior Society of Christian Endeavor for its youth. This fifth building served the Congregational Society until the 1920s, when its doors closed. In 1935, though, some community members

expressed a desire for the church to reopen, and repairs on the building were undertaken and it was reopened for summer services.

In 1968, the Hillsborough Center Congregational Society was incorporated, and it celebrated its bicentennial in 1969. The society continues to this day to hold Sunday services during the summer, relying on supply ministers from throughout the Northeastern United States. The society has been maintained by a group of church officers including a clerk, treasurer, pulpit supply chairperson, building and grounds chairperson, flower chairperson, and cemetery chairperson.

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Scope and Contents

This collection contains records of the activities and members of the Hillsborough Center Congregational Society, including vital records, financial records, building records, cemetery records, records of meetings and events, records of the Junior Society of Christian Endeavor, pulpit supply records, orders of worship, incorporation documents, and correspondence.

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Arrangement

Materials have been arranged primarily in chronological order by start date, and secondarily by topic.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Restrictions on Access

Access to this collection is unrestricted and open to the public.

Restrictions on Use

Items in this collection are subject to U.S. Copyright Law. It is the responsibility of the researcher to determine the copyright status of collection items and to secure any permissions necessary for their reproduction and publication. Requests for permission to publish material must be discussed with the archivist or librarian.

Acquisition Information

Materials were donated to the Congregational Library & Archives by the Hillsborough Center Congregational Society in October, 2022; Accession 2022-22. An additional two manuscripts, one a confession of faith and covenant and one a confession of faith, were transferred from the library into this collection in November, 2022; Accession 2022-24.

Processing Information

Processed by Karen Clausen-Brown in 2022, using DACS 2019.0.3.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Baptismal records.
- Church correspondence.
- Church finance.
- Church history.
- Church membership.
- Covenants (Church polity).
- Creeds.
- Interim clergy.
- Legal documents.
- Marriage records.
- Necrologies.
- Church group work with youth.
- Cemeteries.
- Church bulletins.

- Hillsborough Center Congregational Society (Hillsborough, N.H.)

Bibliography

Browne, George Waldo. *The History of Hillsborough, New Hampshire, 1735-1921*. Vol. 1, *History and Description*. Manchester, N.H.: John B. Clarke Company, Printers, 1921. T H55.7 B

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Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Instances	
Confessions, covenant, and manual, 1840-1894, undated	box 1	folder 1
Financial records, 1880-2014	box 1	folder 2
Events, memorials, and meetings, 1888-2013	box 1	folder 3
Church histories, 1890-2009	box 1	folder 4
Pilgrim Church Register and Record, 1893-1928	box 1	volume 1
Membership records, 1894-2019	box 1	folder 5
Junior Society of Christian Endeavor, 1897-1909	box 1	folder 6
Reports for Congregational Year Book, 1918-1923	box 1	folder 7
Building and facilities, 1936-1994	box 2	folder 1
Pulpit supply records and correspondence, 1940-1972	box 2	folder 2
Pulpit supply records and correspondence, 1973-2019	box 2	folder 3
Budgets and treasurer's reports, circa 1940-1986	box 2	folder 4
Cemetery committee and cemetery records, 1955-1995	box 2	folder 5
Orders of worship and Sunday services, 1957-2015	box 2	folder 6
Annual Meeting and Special Meeting records, 1963-2018	box 2	folder 7
Summer preaching cards, 1965-2022	box 2	folder 8
Correspondence, 1966-2012, undated	box 2	folder 9
Incorporation documents, 1968	box 2	folder 10
Nominating committee and officers, 1981-2017	box 2	folder 11

Newspaper clippings, 1981-1983	box 2	folder 12
Hymnal donation records, 1985-circa 1999	box 2	folder 13
