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## **Rehoboth, Mass. First Church articles of faith, 1785. RG0953**

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This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on June 05, 2019.

English

DACS2 - 2013

Congregational Library & Archives

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository:</b>	Congregational Library & Archives
<b>Creator:</b>	First Church (Rehoboth, Mass.)
<b>Title:</b>	Rehoboth, Mass. First Church articles of faith, 1785.
<b>ID:</b>	RG0953
<b>Date:</b>	1785
<b>Physical Description:</b>	1 Folder
<b>Language of the Material:</b>	English
<b>Abstract:</b>	<p>The First Church of Rehoboth was established in 1643 with Rev. Samuel Newman as the first minister. The first meeting house was constructed in 1646. The second meeting house was completed in 1678 after being delayed due to King Phillip's War. The third meeting house was constructed in 1718. The fourth, and final, meeting house was completed in 1810. In 1812 the western precinct of Rehoboth became the town of Seekonk. In 1862 the town of Seekonk was further divided and the church became a part of East Providence, Rhode Island. In 1886 the church was renamed to Newman Congregational Church. The church continues to serve the East Providence community today. This collection contains a 1785 draft of the articles of faith for the First Church in Rehoboth that were approved by Rev. John Ellis.</p>

### Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], in the Rehoboth, Mass. First Church articles of faith, 1785, RG0953. The Congregational Library & Archives, Boston, MA.

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## Historical Note

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The town of Rehoboth, Massachusetts, was settled as early as 1636 and was officially established in 1643. The town included what is now Seekonk, Massachusetts, and East Providence, Rhode Island. The First Church in Rehoboth was established in 1643 with Rev. Samuel Newman as the minister. Newman, born in England, immigrated to the Massachusetts Bay Colony to escape persecution for his

nonconformist beliefs. He settled in Dorchester until eventually he was called to become the sole minister of the Church at Weymouth after the church had, for a short while, three concurrent ministers. In 1643, Rev. Newman resigned from the position in large part because of dissent in the parish due to the continued residence of the three previous ministers in Weymouth. He left Weymouth to settle in western Rehoboth with some of his former parishioners. Rev. Newman served the First Church until his death on July 5, 1663.

The first meeting house was constructed in 1646. In 1674 construction began on the second meeting house. The onset of King Phillip's War in 1675 however delayed construction. Much of the town was burned in 1676, though the original meeting house was preserved. In 1678 construction on the second meeting house was resumed and by the following year the parish had moved into the new building. In 1713 the eastern portion of Rehoboth was set aside as its own parish where the Second Church was established. The First Parish remained in Seekonk and by 1718 construction was completed on the third meeting house.

In 1785 Rev. John Ellis was installed as the minister of the church. By 1791 his ministry was largely unpopular within the parish, although he still maintained the support of the Congregationalists. The parish attempted to discharge Ellis after a salary dispute, although legally the parish could not summarily discharge the minister. For a while Ellis was unable to preach in his own church, finding himself being blocked by Baptist ministers. In 1792 the General Court ruled in favor of Ellis which ultimately resulted in the formation of the Congregational Society and further separation of parish government and church administration. The fourth and final meeting house was constructed in 1810. In 1812 the western precinct of Rehoboth was incorporated as the town of Seekonk and the church was renamed to the Congregational Church of Seekonk.

During the 1830s the Rev. James Barney established the first Sabbath School and the Sabbath School library. The church community began to advocate for, and participate in, nineteenth-century social movements, especially the temperance and home missionary movements. In 1862, the governments of Massachusetts and Rhode Island settled a land dispute and the portion of Seekonk containing the Congregational Church became a part of East Providence Rhode Island. In 1886 the church was renamed to Newman Congregational Church in honor of the first minister.

In 1961 the Newman Congregational Church voted to join the United Church of Christ. The church continues to serve the East Providence community today.

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## Scope and Contents

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This collection contains a 1785 draft of the articles of faith for the First Church in Rehoboth, Massachusetts. The articles of faith, Within Congregationalist churches, lay out in writing the core beliefs that the parish agrees to uphold as part of their membership. This particular document is a draft which was reviewed by Rev. John Ellis. There are some revisions and addenda which may have been added after Ellis's written approval of the draft.

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## Administrative Information

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### Publication Statement

Congregational Library & Archives

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### Acquisition Information

No acquisition information is available for this collection.

### Accruals

Additional accruals are expected for this collection in the form of full-text transcription. There is no anticipated date for this accrual.

## Processing Information

Processed by Zachary Bodnar, May 2019, using DACS Second Edition.

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## Controlled Access Headings

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- Church records and registers.
- New England's Hidden Histories.
- Congregational Church (Seekonk, Mass.)
- Newman Congregational Church (Rumford, East Providence, R.I.)
- Rehoboth (Mass.) -- Church history.

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## Technical Requirements

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To access digital user's copies via online-interface, a java-enabled web browser is required. Internet Explorer 8.x and later, Firefox 5.x and later, Opera 12 and later, Safari 5.x and later, or any version of Google Chrome are recommended.

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## Bibliography

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*Newman Congregational Church, U.C.C. of Seekonk and East Providence.* East Providence: 1993.  
17.11.1 EA7.953 NewCC

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## Collection Inventory

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Title/Description	Instances
Articles of faith, 1785	box NEHH- folder 12 Small 1

Digital Copies:

**Digital Copies**

These articles of faith were digitized as part of the New England's Hidden Histories project. Digital reproductions are [available to view online](#).