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Acton, Mass. South Acton Congregational Church records, 1877-2024. RG5537

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Congregational Library & Archives

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Summary Information

Repository:	Congregational Library & Archives
Creator:	South Acton Congregational Church (Acton, Mass.)
Title:	Acton, Mass. South Acton Congregational Church records, 1877-2024.
ID:	RG5537
Date [inclusive]:	1877-2024
Physical Description:	5.97 Cubic Feet (6 boxes, 3 flat files)
Language of the Material:	English .
Abstract:	<p>The South Acton Congregational Church in South Acton, MA began in 1876 as a chapel society founded by the Middlesex Union Conference of Congregational Churches and the Massachusetts Home Missionary Society. In 1877, a Sunday school was started with the Ladies Social Circle following in 1879. In 1891, the church voted to build a house of worship which was completed in 1893 along with the corporation of the South Acton Congregational Church. The church had various periods of renovations and renewal over the years but faced difficulties after 2020 leading to the close of the church in 2024 due to declining membership and finances. The church formally decommissioned in March 2025 with the congregation moving to the West Concord Union Church. This collection contains records of the South Acton Congregational Church's history, activities, administration, and members along with the chapel society, Sunday school, and Ladies Social Circle. The records include minutes, vital statistics, financial and legal records, building records, programs, correspondence, photographs, newsletters, newspapers, reports, plans, histories, and ledgers.</p>

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], in the Acton, Mass. South Acton Congregational Church records, 1877-2024, RG5537. The Congregational Library & Archives, Boston, MA.

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Biographical / Historical

The South Acton Congregational Church in South Acton, MA was started in June of 1876 by the Middlesex Union Conference of Congregational Churches and the Massachusetts Home Missionary Society as a chapel society. Meetings were held in the chapel in Dwight's Block before they moved to the schoolhouse in 1877. In 1877, the church started a Sunday school with the first classes in October. In February 1879, the ladies of the chapel society formed the Ladies Social Circle which was the first of the church's various women's groups that later included the Congregational Junior Guild and the Faholo Circle of King's Daughters. In 1886, the chapel society served ties with the Middlesex Union Conference and Missionary Society in an effort to be self-supporting. Throughout the 1880s and 1890s and various times in the 20th century, the church shared pastors and services with neighboring congregations including West Acton Baptist Church, Acton Center Congregational Church, and South Acton Universalist Church. There were discussions about federating and joining the South Acton Universalist at various points, but those efforts failed likely due to each church wanting to remain in their own building. In July 1891, the church voted to build a house of worship to accommodate their members with construction beginning in 1892 and ending with a dedication and transfer of land ownership in 1893. Also in July of 1893, the church officially and legally incorporated as the South Acton Congregational Church.

In the 1960s, the church experienced a period of renewal with a parsonage purchased in 1960, renovations and large maintenance projects in 1962 and 1963, and a renovation in 1966 of the cellar from a maze of underused rooms into a space suitable for the Sunday school and other functions. In 1978, the parsonage was added on to and renovated. Also in the 1970s, the SACC Movers, later the Mission Movers, began as one of the longest of the church's many outreach and service efforts that characterize much of the history of the church. In late 2000, the "Room to Bloom" campaign was completed with renovations of multiple rooms including the fellowship hall, offices, and classrooms. Another campaign, "Blessed and Blooming", was completed in 2006 with more renovations focused on accessibility in the kitchen, the chancel, and new floors. Entering the 2020s, the Covid pandemic brought difficulties to the church that it struggled to overcome and ultimately resulted in the church deciding to close in 2024 due to declining membership and finances. In December 2024, the last services were held before the majority of the congregation moved to the West Concord Union Church in West Concord, MA. The church was formally decommissioned March 2025, and the building sold in May 2025.

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Scope and Contents

This collection contains records depicting the history, activities, administration, and members of the South Acton Congregational Church in Acton, MA along with some records from the

chapel society and ladies social circle that predate the organization of the church. The records include meeting minutes, histories, vital statistics, guest books, financial records, legal records, programs, correspondence, building and property records, by-laws, annual reports, attendance records, library records, and records from outreach efforts. The collection contains ledgers, photographs, drawings, pamphlets, notebooks, building plans and diagrams, member cards, and newspapers.

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Arrangement

The collection is arranged into five series with series 3: Auxiliary groups, 1879-1984 and series 5: Church history, 1907-2024 having one subseries each. Series 1: Member records, 1891-2024 is arranged alphabetically then chronologically by start date. The other series and subseries are arranged chronologically by start date.

Series 1: Member records, 1891-2024

Series 2: Sunday school records, 1894-1954

Series 3: Auxiliary groups, 1879-1984

Subseries 1: Women's groups, 1879-1984

Series 4: Administrative records, 1877-2023

Series 5: Church history, 1907-2024

Subseries 1: Newsletter, 1934-2009

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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. The library reserves the right to restrict access to identifying information.

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 South Acton Congregational Church in December 2024; 2024-47.

Processing Information

Processed by Madison Bellew in December 2025 using DACS.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Church records and registers.
- Women -- Religious life.
- Sunday schools.
- Church finance.
- Church societies.
- Correspondence.
- Church management.
- Newsletters.
- Church and social problems.
- Church architecture -- Designs and plans.
- Photographs.
- Church libraries.
- South Acton Congregational Church (Acton, Mass.)
- Spinney, Carroll Edwin (1933-2019)

Content Warning

This collection includes content and language that may be upsetting or triggering. These records reflect the language and attitudes of the historical period in which they were created; many of these terms are unacceptable today. The Congregational Library & Archives works to preserve Congregational history and stories while acknowledging that sometimes that history is problematic or questionable. We do this to preserve, contextualize, and reflect on the past so that we may learn from it.

This collection contains racist images and language.

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Collection Inventory

Member records, 1891-2024

Scope and Contents

This series contains records and vital statistics of the members of the South Acton Congregational Church including registers, baptisms, weddings, funerals, membership transfers, member lists, directories guest books, and member cards.

Title/Description	Instances	
Baptism certificates, 1949-1993	box 1	folder 1
Baptism forms and programs, 2002-2016	box 1	folder 2
Directories, undated	box 1	folder 3
Directories, 1966-2019	box 1	folder 4
Funerals, 1944-2016	box 1	folder 5
Guest book, 1961-1979	box 6	folder 1
Guest book, 1965-1971	box 6	folder 2
Guest book, 1971-1985	box 6	folder 3
Guest book, 1985-2000	box 6	folder 4
Guest book, 2000-2024	box 1	folder 6
Mailing and phone list, 1994-2000	box 1	folder 7
Member forms, 1952-2015	box 1	folder 8

Member list, 1958	box 6	folder 5
Member list, 1991-2017	box 1	folder 9
Member transfers, 1891-1964	box 1	folder 10
Member transfers and bequests, 1893-1967	box 1	folder 11

Separated Materials:

Separated Materials

These items were separated from Register and minutes, 1934-1958 for preservation purposes.

Member transfers and lists, 1891-1962	box 1	folder 12
Members recieved, 1949-1959	box 1	folder 13
New member folder, 2011-2013	box 1	folder 14
New member forms, 2005-2014	box 1	folder 15
New member forms and welcome brochures, 2005-2009	box 1	folder 16
Officer lists, 1965-1966	box 1	folder 17
Register, 1979-1983	box 6	folder 6
Register and book of remembrance, 1945-2024	box 1	folder 18
Register and minutes, 1922-1973	box 1	folder 19
Register and minutes, 1931-1975	box 1	folder 20
Register and minutes, 1934-1958	box 1	folder 21

Separated Materials:

Separated Materials

This volume has items seperated in Member transfers and bequests, 1893-1967 for preservation purposes.

Transfer booklets, 1949-2020	box 6	folder 7
Transfers in, 1954-2016	box 1	folder 22
Transfers out, 1984-2019	box 1	folder 23
Visitor cards, 2004-2018	box 1	folder 24
Wedding programs and services, 2004-2007	box 1	folder 25

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Sunday school records, 1894-1954

Scope and Contents

This series contains records of the Sunday school including library records, attendance records, minutes, and account books.

Title/Description	Instances	
Sunday school library record, 1894-1898	box 1	folder 26
Sunday school minutes, 1897-1935	box 1	folder 27
Sunday school library record, 1899-1903	box 1	folder 28
Sunday school library record, 1904-1922	box 1	folder 29
Sunday school treasurer's book, 1910-1929	box 1	folder 30
Sunday school attendance, 1912-1917	box 1	folder 31
Sunday school attendance, 1917-1923	box 1	folder 32
Sunday school attendance, 1924-1929	box 1	folder 33
Sunday school attendance, 1929-1934	box 2	folder 1
Sunday school miscellaneous, 1953-1954	box 2	folder 2

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Auxiliary groups, 1879-1984

Scope and Contents

This series contains records from the various groups and organizations at South Acton Congregational Church including the women's groups, christian endeavor groups, men's club, and deacons. The series contains minutes, constitutions, account books, correspondence, member lists, and financial records.

Women's groups, 1879-1984

Scope and Contents

This subseries contains records from the women's groups including the Ladies Social Circle, Congregational Junior Guild, and Faholo Circle of King's Daughters. The records include minutes, account books, financial records, member and attendance lists, notebooks, correspondence, and constitutions.

Title/Description	Instances	
Junior Guild miscellaneous, undated	box 6	folder 8
Ladies Social Circle treasurer's book, 1879-1918	box 2	folder 3
King's Daughters minutes and member list, 1897-1901	box 2	folder 4
Ladies Social Circle bank book and receipts, 1897-1937	box 2	folder 5

Separated Materials:

Separated Materials

This folder was separated from Ladies Social Circle member list and account book, 1962-1965 for preservation purposes.

King's Daughters minutes and member list, 1901-1907	box 2	folder 6
Ladies Social Circle minutes and correspondence, 1914-1927	box 2	folder 7
Ladies Social Circle member list and constitution, 1914-1929	box 2	folder 8
Ladies society miscellaneous, 1924-1967	box 2	folder 9
Ladies Social Circle minutes, 1926-1931	box 2	folder 10
Ladies Social Circle minutes, 1931-1936	box 2	folder 11
Ladies Social Circle minutes and records, 1932-1967	box 2	folder 12
Ladies Social Circle account book, 1947-1968	box 2	folder 13
Junior Guild account book and dues, 1949-1953	box 2	folder 14
Junior Guild minutes, 1949-1956	box 2	folder 15
Junior Guild treasurer's book, 1950-1954	box 6	folder 9
Ladies Social Circle minutes, 1950-1956	box 2	folder 16
Junior Guild minutes, members, and correspondence, 1950-1972	box 6	folder 10
Junior Guild dues and attendance, 1954-1964	box 2	folder 17
Junior Guild treasurer's book, 1955-1958	box 6	folder 11
Ladies Social Circle minutes, 1956-1964	box 2	folder 18
Ladies Social Circle member list and account book, 1957-1961	box 2	folder 19
Junior Guild member list and treasurer's book, 1958-1963	box 2	folder 20
Ladies Social Circle member list and account book, 1962-1965	box 2	folder 21

Separated Materials:

Separated Materials

This volume had items separated into Ladies Social Circle bank book and receipts, 1897-1937 for preservation purposes.

Junior Guild account book, 1963-1964	box 2	folder 22
Junior Guild receipts and financial records, 1963-1965	box 2	folder 23

Separated Materials:

Separated Materials

This folder was separated from Junior Guild president's notebook, 1963-1971 for preservation purposes.

Junior Guild president's notebook, 1963-1971	box 2	folder 24
<u>Separated Materials:</u>		
Separated Materials		
This folder has Junior Guild receipts and financial records, 1963-1965 and Junior Guild receipts and financial records, 1966-1969 separated for preservation purposes.		
Junior Guild account book, 1965-1967	box 2	folder 25
Ladies Social Circle minutes, 1965-1967	box 2	folder 26
Junior Guild receipts and financial records, 1966-1969	box 2	folder 27
<u>Separated Materials:</u>		
Separated Materials		
This folder was separated from Junior Guild president's notebook, 1967-1971 for preservation purposes.		
Junior Guild account book and receipts, 1967-1984	box 2	folder 28
Junior Guild guest book, 1979-1984	box 2	folder 29
Deacon's guidelines, undated	box 2	folder 30
Young People's Christian Endeavor minutes and constitution, 1894-1903	box 2	folder 31
Young People's Christian Endeavor roll call and attendance, 1894-1903	box 2	folder 32
Men's Sunday Evening Club minutes and by-laws, 1908-1916	box 3	folder 1
Christian Endeavor roll call and attendance, 1916-1928	box 3	folder 2
Christian Endeavor minutes, 1932-1934	box 3	folder 3
Junior Christian Endeavor minutes, 1933-1936	box 3	folder 4
Christian Youth Club minutes, 1937-1938	box 3	folder 5
Men's League account book, 1949-1954	box 6	folder 12
Men's Club constitution, 1952	box 3	folder 6

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Administrative records, 1877-2023

Scope and Contents

This series contains records relating to the administration of the church including financial records, legal records, correspondence, minutes, meeting warrants, annual reports, yearbook reports, building records, account books, by-laws, building plans and diagrams, and reports.

Title/Description	Instances	
Christian education guidelines and programming, undated	box 3	folder 7
Miscellaneous, undated	box 6	folder 13
Chapel Society minutes and annual meetings, 1877-1893	box 3	folder 8
Building records, 1891-1892	box 3	folder 9
Chapel Society expense books, 1891-1892	box 3	folder 10
Church construction account book, 1891-1892	box 3	folder 11
Building receipts, 1891-1901	box 3	folder 12
Pastoral and church correspondence, 1891-2013	box 3	folder 13
Original building contract and specifications, 1892	box 3	folder 14
Legal records, 1892-1962	box 6	folder 14
Financial correspondence and records, 1892-1974	box 3	folder 15
Certificate of organization, 1893	box 6	folder 15
Treasurer's reports, 1893-1901	box 6	folder 16
Manuals, 1893-1917	box 3	folder 16
Account book, 1893-1920	box 3	folder 17
Meeting minutes, 1893-1939	box 6	folder 17
Ecclesiastical council, 1893-1965	box 3	folder 18
Clerk's minutes and member list, 1916-1927	box 3	folder 19
Clerk's reports, 1917-1959	box 3	folder 20
Meeting warrants, 1917-1996	box 3	folder 21
Yearbook reports, 1918-1946	box 3	folder 22
Church committee and annual meeting minutes, 1927-1934	box 3	folder 23
Bequests, 1936-1957	box 3	folder 24
Clerk's minutes and member list, 1938-1948	box 6	folder 18
Reports, 1938-1966	box 6	folder 19
Canvass, 1943-1966	box 3	folder 25
Clerk's minutes, 1948-1952		

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	box 6	folder 20
By-laws, 1952-2017	box 3	folder 26
Maintenance and renovation, 1954-1994	box 3	folder 27
Miscellaneous, 1956-2017	box 3	folder 28
Budgets, 1960-1991	box 3	folder 29
Committee correspondence, 1962	box 3	folder 30
Annual reports, 1962-1967	box 3	folder 31
Church, prudential, and executive board minutes, 1963-1972	box 3	folder 32
Renovation and canvass, 1965-1966	box 3	folder 33
Stewardship committee, 1966-1967	box 3	folder 34
Church structure and renovation, 1966-2014	box 6	folder 21
Yearbook reports, 1967-2001	box 6	folder 22
Pastoral relations, 1969-2004	box 3	folder 35
Annual reports, 1970-1990	box 3	folder 36
Properties committee parsonage expansion, 1972-1976	box 3	folder 37
Church profile, 1972-1978	box 6	folder 23
Executive board and church meeting minutes, 1973-1980	box 3	folder 38
Pastoral relations committee, 1975-1982	box 3	folder 39
Executive board minutes and records, 1977-1982	box 6	folder 24
Stained glass window restoration, 1983-1984	box 4	folder 1
Annual and budget meeting minutes, 1985-1999	box 4	folder 2
Confirmation classes, 1987-2014	box 4	folder 3
Executive board minutes, 1989-1999	box 4	folder 4
Front stair replacement, 1990-1998	box 4	folder 5
National Register of Historic Places, 1990-2006	box 4	folder 6
Annual reports, 1990-2012	box 4	folder 7-8
Renovation and construction plans, 1998-2006	folder 1	
Design session , 1999	box 4	folder 9
Property appraisal, 1999	box 4	folder 10
Memorial donations, 2001-2017	box 4	folder 11
Yearbook reports, 2002-2022	box 4	folder 12
Constance McFarland memorial donations, 2003	box 4	folder 13

Strengths report and life survey, 2003	box 4	folder 14
Russell Henderson memorial donations, 2004	box 4	folder 15
Our Mission budget, 2005	box 4	folder 16
Capital campaign , 2006	box 4	folder 17
Ed Richter, Luke Tolman, and Shirley Goodman memorial donations, 2006	box 4	folder 18
Open and affirming process and certificates, 2006-2008	box 4	folder 19
Open and affirming articles and statements, 2007-2008	box 4	folder 20
Open and affirming meetings and resources binder, 2007-2008	box 4	folder 21
Missions efforts and forms, 2008	box 4	folder 22
Board and church meeting minutes, 2009-2016	box 4	folder 23
Pederson memorial donations, 2012	box 4	folder 24
June and Arthur Tayor memorial donations, 2012-2014	box 4	folder 25
Annual reports, 2012-2023	box 4	folder 26
Finance and membership meeting, 2014	box 4	folder 27
Visioning , 2014	box 4	folder 28
Exterior painting, 2017	box 4	folder 29
Peter Alling memorial donations, 2017	box 4	folder 30

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Church history, 1897-2024

Scope and Contents

This series contains records relating to the history and activities of the church including photographs, newsletters, publicity, journals, catalogues, correspondence, programs, flyers, histories, and outreach efforts.

Newsletters, 1934-2009

Scope and Contents

This subseries contains newsletters from the church.

Title/Description	Instances	
"The Assistant Pastor" newsletter, 1934	box 4	folder 31
"The Inquirer" newsletter, 1955-1962	box 4	folder 32

"Markings" newsletter, 1978-1982	box 4	folder 33
"Markings" newsletter, 1983-1986	box 4	folder 34
"Markings" newsletter, 1987-1990	box 4	folder 35
"Markings" newsletter, 1991-1993	box 4	folder 36
"Markings" newsletter, 1994-1999	box 4	folder 37
"Markings" newsletter, 2000-2006	box 4	folder 38
"Markings" newsletter, 2007-2009	box 4	folder 39
Building photos, undated	box 5	folder 1
Church activities and outreach, undated	box 5	folder 2
Miscellaneous photos, undated	box 5	folder 3
Photographs, drawings, and diagrams, undated	folder 2	
Photographs, layouts, and meeting notices, 1897-1966	folder 8	
Miscellaneous photos, 1907-2000	box 5	folder 4
Programs and flyers, 1912-2017	box 5	folder 5
History and minister list, 1921-2023	box 5	folder 6
Publicity, 1933-1981	box 6	folder 25
Publicity, 1933-2015	box 5	folder 7
Church letters and announcements, 1942-1981	box 5	folder 8
Activities publicity, 1949	box 6	folder 26
Minstrel show photos and publicity, 1954-1956	box 5	folder 9
Minstrel show programs and script, 1954-1962	box 5	folder 10
Press releases, circa 1960s	box 5	folder 11
Children's questionnaire reponses, 1965	box 5	folder 12
Fair publicity, 1975	box 5	folder 13
Chicken BBQ, 1977-1979	box 6	folder 27
Reunion Sunday correspondence, 1982	box 5	folder 14
Building and party photos, 1985-2004	box 5	folder 15
Publicity, 1994-2018	box 6	folder 28
Room to bloom renovation photos, 2000-2001	box 5	folder 16
Nancy Taylor visit, 2002-2003	box 5	folder 17
Publicity and press releases, 2002-2009	box 5	folder 18
Member photos, 2003	box 5	folder 19

Pie baking photos, 2003	box 5	folder 20
Event photos, 2003-2004	box 5	folder 21
Youth mission trips, 2006-2014	box 5	folder 22
Green congregation awards, 2013	box 5	folder 23
Missions and outreach, 2014-2016	box 5	folder 24
Heifer International trip photos, 2015	box 5	folder 25
Prayer request notebook, 2015-2019	box 5	folder 26
SACC movers, 2015-2024	box 5	folder 27
Prayer journal, 2018	box 5	folder 28
Craft catalogue, 2023	box 5	folder 29

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