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Berwyn, Ill. North Berwyn Congregational Church records, 1910-1999. RG5558

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Congregational Library & Archives

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Summary Information

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| Repository: | Congregational Library & Archives |
| Creator: | North Berwyn Congregational Church (Berwyn, Ill.) |
| Title: | Berwyn, Ill. North Berwyn Congregational Church records, 1910-1999. |
| ID: | RG5558 |
| Date [inclusive]: | 1910-1999 |
| Physical Description: | 1.79 Cubic Feet (3 boxes) |
| Language of the Material: | English . |
| Abstract: | <p>On February 8, 1910, the North Berwyn Congregational Church was formally established. It was initially supported, financially, by the First Church of Oak Park before being supported by the Chicago Congregational Union, later known as the Chicago City Missionary Society. After nearly closing during the Great Depression, the church building was expanded in 1938. A new church building was constructed in 1956 and this building too received an expansion almost a decade later. The church joined with the United Church of Christ. Membership declined after the North Berwyn community changed during the 1970s. The church dissolved circa 2008. This collection contains both administrative and membership related materials and includes church records, annual reports, council records, newsletters, histories, and membership records.</p> |

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], in the Berwyn, Ill. North Berwyn Congregational Church records, 1910-1999, RG5558. The Congregational Library & Archives, Boston, MA.

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Historical Note

By 1906, the First Church of Oak Park was involved in multiple home missionary projects within the growing community of northern Berwyn, a Chicago suburb. These projects including supporting a Sunday School and a Women's Aid Society in the community. In 1909, Rev. F. V. Bastel was called to become the leader of these missionary efforts. At this time, serious thought was put into establishing a permanent church in the neighborhood. In December 1909, a petition of more than 30 persons was presented to the First Church of Oak Park requesting the formal establishment of the North Berwyn Congregational Church. On February 8, 1910, the church was formally established and the First Church of Oak Park was the primary financial source for the church until 1914. After the establishment of the church, Rev. George Milne was called to become the church's pastor.

After 1914, financial support for the church was transferred to the Chicago Congregational Union, later known as the Chicago City Missionary Society. The church nearly closed, as the suggestion of the Chicago Congregational Union, during the Great Depression, but the small numbers of members at the time managed to keep the church active. The church saw growth again after the great depression and expanded their church building in response with the dedication for the expansion held in May 1938.

The church continued to see growth throughout the 1940s and 1950s. By the mid-1950s, the church saw the need for a new church building. A new church building was constructed in 1956 with the dedication in October of that year. At the same time, the church became financially solvent and no longer needed financial assistance from the Chicago City Missionary Society. The church building saw another extension in the 1960s. The church also joined with the United Church of Christ following the denominations formation in 1957.

By 1970, the population of North Berwyn had seen significant changes, with many moving further out to the suburbs and the Catholic community growing. Between 1971 and 1974, the North Berwyn Congregational Church shared a pastor with the Plymouth Congregational Church in Maywood. In 1979, the church fully payed off the mortgage and celebrated with a mortgage burning. During the 1980s and beyond, the church worked closely with the wider North Berwyn community, participating in ecumenical events and opening up the church as a space for community and secular groups to gather. The North Berwyn Congregational Church dissolved circa 2008.

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Scope and Contents

This collection contains the administrative records of the North Berwyn Congregational Church as well as records documenting the activities of church's members. The collection contains church records and meeting minutes, council records and meeting minutes, annual reports, building and financial records, newsletters, church histories, a historical scrapbook, and membership records.

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Arrangement

This collection has been arranged into the two series listed below. Materials within each series have been arranged primarily by chronological order, with continuous materials grouped together.

Series 1: Administrative records, 1910-1992

Series 1: Membership and church activities, 1921-1999

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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 Illinois Conference of the United Church of Christ in December 2024; accession number 2024-46.

Custodial History

The materials in this collection were given to the Illinois Conference of the United Church of Christ, likely around the time of the church's dissolution. There is no further documentation on how the materials arrived at the Illinois Conference.

Processing Information

This collection was processed by Zachary Bodnar, December 2025, according to the rules of Describing Archives: A Content Standard.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Baptismal records.
- Church membership.
- Church newsletters.
- Church records and registers.
- Marriage records.
- Necrologies.
- Women -- Societies and clubs.
- Berwyn (Ill.) -- Church history.
- North Berwyn Congregational Church (Berwyn, Ill.)

Collection Inventory

Administrative records, 1910-1992

Scope and Contents

This series contains records related to the governance and daily business of the North Berwyn Congregational Church. This series includes church records and meeting minutes, board of deacons records and meeting minutes, council records and meeting minutes, committee records, annual reports, and financial records.

| Title/Description | Instances | |
|---|-----------|----------|
| Ecclesiastical council letter missive, 1910 | box 2 | folder 1 |
| Church records, 1910-1931 | box 1 | volume 1 |
| <u>Separated Materials:</u> | | |
| Separated Materials | | |
| Loose materials in this volume were removed and placed in the folder labeled "Membership records, 1921-1937" for preservation purposes. | | |
| Church records, 1932-1942 | box 1 | volume 2 |
| <u>Separated Materials:</u> | | |
| Separated Materials | | |
| Loose materials were removed from this volume and placed into the folders labeled "Miscellaneous records, 1938-1957" and "Church cabinet meeting minutes, 1935-1936" for preservation purposes. | | |
| Church records, 1942-1947 | box 1 | volume 3 |
| Church records, 1946-1952 | box 1 | volume 4 |
| Church records, 1952-1958 | box 1 | volume 5 |
| Church cabinet meeting minutes, 1935-1936 | box 1 | folder 3 |
| <u>Separated Materials:</u> | | |
| Separated Materials | | |
| These materials were removed from the "Church records, 1932-1942" volume for preservation purposes. | | |
| Building and financial records, 1937-1939 | box 2 | folder 2 |
| Miscellaneous records, 1938-1957 | box 1 | folder 1 |
| <u>Separated Materials:</u> | | |

Separated Materials

These materials were removed from the "Church records, 1932-1942" volume for preservation purposes.

| | | |
|---|-------|-----------|
| financial graphs, 1941 | box 1 | folder 10 |
| Board of deacons and deaconesses minutes, 1941-1944 | box 1 | volume 6 |
| Board of deacons records, 1942, 1945-1949 | box 1 | folder 4 |
| Board of deacons records, 1955-1964 | box 1 | folder 5 |
| Board of deacons records, 1958-1962 | box 1 | folder 6 |
| Board of trustees records, 1941-1954 | box 1 | volume 7 |
| Board of trustees records, 1955-1958 | box 1 | folder 2 |
| Annual reports, 1942, 1954, 1989, 1991 | box 2 | folder 3 |
| Building committee records, 1950-1954 | box 1 | folder 7 |
| Year book report, 1960 | box 1 | folder 11 |
| Various church and committee records, 1967 | box 2 | folder 4 |
| Various church and committee records, 1968-1970 | box 2 | folder 5 |
| Constitutions, 1968, undated | box 2 | folder 6 |
| Council records, 1968 | box 1 | folder 8 |
| Council records, 1969 | box 1 | folder 9 |
| Council records, 1970 | box 2 | folder 7 |
| Council meeting minutes, 1972-1974 | box 2 | folder 8 |
| Council meeting minutes, 1990, 1992 | box 2 | folder 9 |

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Membership and church activities, 1921-1999

Scope and Contents

This series contains records related to the activities of members of the North Berwyn Congregational Church. The series includes newsletters, men's club records, women's society records, photographs, church histories, and a historical scrapbook.

| Title/Description | Instances | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|----------|
| History scrapbook, 1902-1999 | box 3 | folder 1 |
| Confirmation class lists, 1913-1955 | box 3 | folder 7 |
| Membership records, 1921-1937 | box 3 | folder 8 |

Separated Materials:

Separated Materials

These materials were removed from the "Church records, 1910-1931" volume for preservation purposes.

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|------------------------------------|-------|----------|
| Women's Society records, 1922-1952 | box 3 | folder 9 |
|------------------------------------|-------|----------|

Separated Materials:

Separated Materials

These materials were removed from the "Women's society minutes, 1941-1953" volume for preservation purposes.

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------|----------|
| The Messenger newsletter, 1925-1928 | box 3 | folder 2 |
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| The Messenger newsletter, 1929-1932 | box 3 | folder 3 |
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| Church histories, 1936, undated | box 3 | folder 11 |
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| Men's club records, 1936, 1940 | box 3 | folder 12 |
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|------------------------------------|-------|----------|
| Neighborhood News newsletter, 1937 | box 3 | folder 4 |
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| Women's society minutes, 1941-1953 | box 1 | volume 8 |
|------------------------------------|-------|----------|

Separated Materials:

Separated Materials

Loose materials were removed from this volume and placed into the folder labeled "Women's Society records, 1922-1952" for preservation purposes.

| | | |
|---|-------|-----------|
| Special events and anniversaries, 1941-1963 | box 3 | folder 15 |
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|---------------------------------------|-------|----------|
| N.B.C.C. Broadcaster newsletter, 1944 | box 3 | folder 5 |
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| Women's society history, 1950 | box 3 | folder 10 |
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| Pilgrim fellowship meeting minutes, 1957 | box 3 | folder 13 |
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| Membership list, 1962 | box 3 | folder 14 |
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| Congrenews newsletter, 1964-1966 | box 3 | folder 6 |
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| Photos of lots 30 and 31 at corner of Oak Park Avenue and 13th Street, undated | box 3 | folder 16 |
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