

DEDHAM, MASSACHUSETTS. RIVERDALE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
RECORDS, 1913-1925, 1941-1992

143 items

Restrictions: None

Gift of Riverdale Congregational Church
September 1992

Congregational Library
14 Beacon Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02108
(617) 523-0470

Processed by Barbara E. Austen
December 2, 1992

1063

Historical Note

The residents of Dedham, Massachusetts, who eventually formed the core of the Riverdale Congregational Church first met in 1911 in a room above William Lent's boathouse. The primary focus of these early meetings was to provide a regular Sunday School; adults received irregular preaching services by visiting ministers or laymen. The first several years of the fledgling congregation's existence were supported by the members and clergy of the West Roxbury Church.

By 1912, although the small group had no resident minister, they did hold regular church services, again relying on lay preachers and visiting clergy. The following year, member Henry Bingham purchased land and built a church from his own funds. The building was dedicated on June 14, 1914. The congregation's first permanent minister was called in 1915, and he was responsible for getting the church formally organized, chartered, and recognized.

The first twenty-five years of the church's existence were tenuous; it received funds from the Congregational Conference as a missionary church. However, with the influx of new families in the years following World War II, the church grew dramatically, to the extent that it expanded its facilities with an education building dedicated in 1950. In the 1960s the church became the focal point for cooperative Christian activities in the community, and as a result again expanded, with dedication services coinciding with the celebration of the church's seventy-fifth anniversary in 1964. Declining membership in the 1980s led to the church's disbanding in 1991.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The records of the Riverdale Congregational Church, 1913-1925, 1941-1992, primarily consist of financial and legal records, most of them related to the disbanding of the church and distribution of assets, as well as printed programs from various dedications, anniversaries, and special events. The materials have been arranged in six series by type of document. Within each series, items are arranged chronologically, with the exception of vital records, which are arranged alphabetically by name of deceased, baptized, or new member. Newslippings were copied onto acid-free paper and the originals discarded.

Series A is a typed copy of the articles of faith subscribed to in 1916 when the church was organized. Vital records, in Series B, encompass a manuscript memoranda book of baptisms, marriages, and funerals, 1924-1925; cards recording baptisms and deaths, 1956-1989; two memoranda on marriages in 1965; and membership records, 1986-1989. Legal records, 1913-1916, 1943-1945, 1954-1958, 1991, arranged in Series C, include copies of deeds, land plot maps, building plans for the church expansion, resolutions and correspondence concerning the transfer of land in 1943 to increase the church's property, and correspondence, financial statements, legal orders, motions and affidavits concerning the disposal of church assets after disbanding.

Series D consists of programs, invitations, and newscippings from dedications, ordinations, anniversaries, as well as informational booklets on the church, the 1943 and 1964 building campaigns, and a membership directory, dating 1914-1989. The financial records in Series D, dating 1988-1992, encompass bank statements, treasurer's records, and materials about closing accounts when the church disbanded. Series E includes miscellaneous materials such as church histories, a pastor's report from 1990, photographs, newscippings, and printed material on the merger of the Congregational

Christian Church with the Evangelical and Reformed Church.

Series A. Articles of Faith, 1916. 1 item.

Series B. Vital Records, 1924-1989. Baptismal, marriage, death, and membership records. 44 items.

Series C. Legal Records, 1913-1916, 1943-1945, 1954-1958, 1991. Deeds, plot maps, plans, resolutions related to land transfer, materials concerning disbanding the church. 36 items.

Series D. Programs and Printed Material, 1914-1989. Programs, invitations, newsclippings, and booklets. 21 items.

Series E. Financial Records, 1988-1992. Bank statements, treasurer's records, materials relating to closing accounts. 26 items.

Series F. Miscellaneous, ca. 1940-1990. Pastor's report, histories, photographs, memo, newsclippings, printed material. 15 items.

DESCRIPTION

Series A. Articles of Faith, 1916

Folder 1. Articles of faith, 1916

Series B. Vital Records, 1956-1989

Volume 1. Record of baptisms, marriages, funerals, 1924-1925

Folder 1. Baptismal records, 1956, 1963, 1971, 1987-1989

" 2. Marriage records, 1965

" 3. Death records, 1988-1989

" 4. Membership records, 1986-1989

Series C. Legal Records, 1913-1916, 1943-1954, 1954-1958, 1991

Folder 1. Deeds (copies), 1914, 1945

" 2. Plot maps (copies), 1913, 1916, 1954, 1958

" 3. Building plans, 1956, ca. 1956

" 4. Resolutions and correspondence, 1943

" 5. Correspondence, financial statements, legal orders, motions, and affidavits, 1991

Series D. Programs and Printed Material, 1914-1989

Folder 1. Programs, invitations, and newsclippings, 1914-1989

" 2. Booklets, 1940, ca. 1943, 1963, 1967

Series E. Financial Records, 1988-1992

Folder 1. Bank statements, 1988, 1991

" 2. Treasurer's reports, 1990

" 3. Treasurer's records, 1991

" 4. Material related to closing accounts, 1991-1992

Series F. Miscellaneous, ca. 1940-1990

Folder 1. Historical sketches, 1943; Pastor's report, 1990

" 2. Photographs and post card, ca. 1940, 1963

" 3. Memo and newsclippings, 1941, 1961

" 4. Printed material relating to merger of Congregational Christian Church and Evangelical and Reformed Church, 1953-1955

RBR

Range

5

Dedham, Massachusetts. Riverdale Congregational Church.

Records, 1913-1925, 1941-1992.

143 items : MSS, type., DS, photocopies, maps.

Financial and legal records, programs, vital records, and other materials generated by the Riverdale Congregational Church. Includes material concerning disposal of church assets after disbanding.

1. Congregational Christian Churches--Massachusetts.
2. Riverdale Congregation--Church, Dedham, Mass.