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Grand Rapids, Mich. Wallin Congregational Church records, 1896-2016. RG5408

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Congregational Library & Archives

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Summary Information

Repository:	Congregational Library & Archives
Creator:	Wallin Congregational Church (Grand Rapids, Mich.)
Creator:	Barker Memorial Branch Church (Grand Rapids, Mich.)
Title:	Grand Rapids, Mich. Wallin Congregational Church records, 1896-2016.
ID:	RG5408
Date [inclusive]:	1896-2016
Physical Description:	3.42 Cubic Feet (5 boxes, 4 reels, 1 folder)
Language of the Material:	English .
Abstract:	<p>The Lincoln Park Sunday School in Grand Rapids, Michigan, was formed in 1894. The Barker Memorial Branch Church was formed out of the Sunday school in 1896. The church moved locations in 1906 and was renamed to Wallin Congregational Church. The church was remodeled in 1947. The church began searching for land to build a new church in 1958 and that effort was concluded in 1964 when a new church building was constructed. The church remained active in the following decades with a strong focus on local mission work. The church closed in 2019 and donated the church building to the Sudanese Grace Episcopal Church. This collection contains the administrative, building, vital, and photographic records of the Wallin Congregational Church. The collection includes meeting minutes, vital records, fundraising records, blueprints and drawings, programs, and correspondence.</p>

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], in the Grand Rapids, Mich. Wallin Congregational Church records, 1896-2016, RG5408. The Congregational Library & Archives, Boston, MA.

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Historical Note

The history of the Wallin Congregational Church began in 1894 with the formation of the Lincoln Park Sunday School. It was formed, in part, by members of the Young People's Society of the South Congregational Church and its first superintendent was Rev. McRoberts of Smith Memorial Church. One of the earliest supporters of the Sunday school was George M. Barker who deeded two lots of land to the school in 1895. On one of those lots, a chapel was built and the chapel was reorganized as the Barker Memorial Branch Church in 1896. Initially the church was a branch of the Park Congregational Church. Due to rapid growth, the church moved to a new location in 1906. The move and expansion of the church building was largely made possible through the donation of money from Van A. Wallin. With the church building's expansion, the church was renamed to Wallin Congregational Church.

The church prospered during the first half of the 20th century. During World War II, the church was used as a training center for Air Raid Wardens and Block Wardens. The church purchased a new organ in 1945 and the church was remodeled in 1947. New pews were installed in 1956. At the same time, the church began to search for land to build a new church to meet the needs of the growing congregation. In 1958 land was purchased for a new church building. The land was paid off in 1960 and construction of the new building was begun in 1962 and completed in 1964. A portion of the land purchased was taken by the state of Michigan as part of the plans of the Highway Department.

The church joined the United Church of Christ in 1961. The church suffered financial difficulties in the late 1960s and 1970s, largely due to extent economic forces. In 1978, the church held a mortgage burning ceremony. The church remained active in the following decades with a strong focus on local mission work. The church closed in 2019 and donated the church building to the Sudanese Grace Episcopal Church.

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Scope and Contents

This collection contains the records of the Wallin Congregational Church from Grand Rapids, Michigan. The records include the church's administrative records, records related to ministers, records related to the church building and land, documents detailing church activities, vital records, and photographic materials. The collection includes meeting minutes, marriage records, baptismal records, memorials, building records, fundraising records, blueprints and drawings, photographs, programs, newsletters, and correspondence.

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Arrangement

This collection has been arranged into the five series listed below. Materials within each series have been arranged by chronological order.

Series 1: Administrative records, 1896-2003

Series 2: Audiovisual materials, 1896-2016

Series 3: Church activities, 1906-1990

Series 4: Building records, 1907-1991

Series 5: Membership and vital records, 1937-2014

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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 Access

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 Wallin Congregational Church in December 2919; 2019-30.

Processing Information

Processed by Zachary Bodnar, January 2025, using Describing Archives: A Content Standard.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Baptismal records.
- Church buildings.
- Church bulletins.
- Church membership.
- Church records and registers.
- Newsletters.
- Marriage records.
- Photograph albums.
- Photographs.
- Scrapbooks.
- Barker Memorial Branch Church (Grand Rapids, Mich.)
- Grand Rapids (Mich.) -- Church history.
- Wallin Congregational Church (Grand Rapids, Mich.)

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 includes images and language that is racist.

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Collection Inventory

Administrative records, 1896-2003

Physical Description: 6 Volumes

Physical Description: 21 Folders

Scope and Contents

This series contains church records and records related to the administration of the church. This series also includes records related to the pastorate of the church. The series contains meeting minutes, by-laws and constitutions, legal and insurance records, pastoral committee records and other records related to church ministers, and clerk's records.

Title/Description	Instances	
Church records, 1896-1918	box 1	volume 1
	box 1	folder 1
Pastor's aid society records, 1914-1919, 1932, 1997	box 1	folder 6
Church records, 1918-1926	box 1	volume 2
	box 1	folder 1
Church records, 1927-1937	box 1	volume 3
	box 1	folder 1
By-laws, 1934	box 1	folder 7
Church records, 1937-1950	box 1	folder 1
Mortgage records, 1948-1978	box 4	folder 1
Church records, 1951-1959	box 1	volume 4
	box 1	folder 1
Pastoral committee, 1953-1963	box 1	folder 8
John C. Whitcomb installation, 1954	box 1	folder 9
John C. Whitcomb installation and clippings, 1954-1969	box 1	folder 10
Board of trustees correspondence, 1955-1967	box 1	folder 11
UCC formation, 1956-1963	box 1	folder 12
Miscellaneous legal records, 1958-1991	box 1	folder 13

Church records, 1960-1966	box 1	volume 5
	box 1	folder 1
Name change vote, 1963	box 1	folder 14
Church records, 1966-1978	box 1	volume 6
	box 1	folder 1
Constitutions, 1969-1987	box 1	folder 15
Insurance records, 1971-1991	box 4	folder 2
John C. Whitcomb 20th anniversary celebration, 1974	box 1	folder 16
John C. Whitcomb 25th anniversary celebration, 1979	box 1	folder 17
Clerk's records, 1986-1992	box 1	folder 2
Clerk's records, 2002-2003	box 1	folder 3-5
Church profile, undated	box 1	folder 18

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Audiovisual materials, 1896-2016

Physical Description: 30 Folders

Physical Description: 4 Reels

Scope and Contents

This series contains audiovisual materials related to the activities of the members of the Wallin Congregational Church. The series includes photographs, film reels, a video cassette, a photo album, and a scrapbook.

Title/Description	Instances	
Old folks concert, 1896	box 5	folder 2
George Washington party, 1902	box 5	folder 3
Church dinner photograph, circa 1920	box 5	folder 19
"Aunt Samantha's Album" photograph, circa 1925	box 5	folder 4
Church building photographs, 1948-1963, undated	box 5	folder 9
Unorganized photographs of people, circa 1950-2000	box 4	folder 4-6
Unorganized photographs of people with labels, circa 1950-2000	box 4	folder 7
Church choirs, circa 1959	box 5	folder 10
New building photographs, circa 1964	box 5	folder 1
Confirmation classes, 1963-2006	box 5	folder 11

Rev. Wick sermon, 1996	box 3	folder 1
100th anniversary photograph, 1996	box 5	folder 18
Miscellaneous photographs, 2001-2007, undated	box 3	folder 3
Polaroids, 2002, undated	box 3	folder 4
Scrapbook, 2015	box 5	folder 16
120th anniversary photograph, 2016	box 5	folder 20
Kodachrome movies, undated	box 3	folder 2
Photographs of military men, undated	box 3	folder 5
Ministers, undated	box 3	folder 6
Historical photographs, undated	box 4	folder 3
Missionary society photograph, undated	box 5	folder 5
Church group photograph, undated	box 5	folder 6
Marette Fox Hudson portrait, undated	box 5	folder 7
Halloween party photographs, undated	box 5	folder 8
Play party photograph, undated	box 5	folder 12
Sunday school photograph, undated	box 5	folder 13
Mr. and Mrs. Kettle photograph, undated	box 5	folder 14
"Ministers' Honey Moon" photograph, undated	box 5	folder 15
Photograph album, undated	box 5	folder 17
Minstrel show photographs, undated	box 5	folder 21
Wallin church history and movies, undated	reel 1	
	reel 2	
	reel 3	
	reel 4	

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Church activities, 1906-1990

Physical Description: 18 Folders

Scope and Contents

This series contains records related to the activities of the members of the Wallin Congregational Church. This series includes newsletters, certificates, programs and bulletins, clippings, and correspondence.

Title/Description

Instances

Dedication services, 1906-1969	box 2	folder 31
Newsletters, 1928-1931	box 2	folder 32
Opportunity club minstrel show programming, 1930	box 2	folder 33
Certificates, 1933-2018	box 2	folder 34
Clippings, 1936-1985	box 2	folder 35
50th anniversary program, 1946	box 2	folder 36
Church histories, 1946-1996	box 2	folder 37
Homecoming day, 1962	box 2	folder 38
50 year members, 1966, 1977	box 2	folder 39
Confirmation classes, 1966-1991	box 2	folder 40
Church 75th anniversary, 1971	box 2	folder 41
United States bicentennial celebration, 1976	box 2	folder 42
Mortgage burning, 1978	box 2	folder 43
Inspiration Sunday, 1983	box 2	folder 44
A day to remember, 1983	box 1	folder 19
Miscellaneous correspondence, 1990, undated	box 1	folder 20
World War II poem, undated	box 1	folder 21
Opportunity club cookbook, undated	box 1	folder 22

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Building records, 1907-1991

Physical Description: 20 Folders

Scope and Contents

This series contains records related to the various church buildings that have housed the Wallin Congregational Church. This series also contains records related to the purchase of new land. This series includes drawings and blueprints, building committee records, fundraising related records, and records related to dedications of church buildings.

Title/Description	Instances	
Miscellaneous building records, 1907-1991	box 2	folder 1
Building records and clippings, 1936-1963	box 2	folder 2
Parsonage, 1946-1969	box 2	folder 3
Building site, 1956-1959	box 2	folder 4
Church building drawings, 1958, 1966	box 2	folder 45

New church building correspondence, 1958-1963	box 2	folder 5
Church building study groups, 1960-1963	box 2	folder 6
Miscellaneous building committee records, 1960-1974	box 2	folder 7
Building appraisal, 1961	box 2	folder 8
Canvass director's final report, 1961	box 2	folder 9
Building fund canvassing, 1961-1963	box 2	folder 10
State highway commission records, 1961-1965	box 2	folder 11
Blueprints and drawings, 1961-1968	folder 3	
Highway maps and land purchase, 1962	box 2	folder 12
Building specifications, 1962	box 2	folder 13
Building specifications, 1962-1963	box 2	folder 14-15
Church building dedication, 1962-1964	box 2	folder 16
Groundbreaking and cornerstone ceremonies, 1962-1963	box 2	folder 17
Real estate aquisition, 1973-1978	box 2	folder 18

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Membership and vital records, 1937-2014

Physical Description: 12 Folders

Scope and Contents

This series contains vital records and records related to the members of the church. This series includes baptismal records, marriage records, directories and membership lists, and memorials.

Title/Description	Instances	
Baptismal records, 1937-1938	box 2	folder 19
Directories, 1941-1999	box 2	folder 20
Memorial fund and book, 1961-1986, undated	box 2	folder 21
Membership lists, 1967-1977	box 2	folder 22
Memorial services, 1964-2018	box 2	folder 23
Memorial book, 1973-1990	box 2	folder 24
Marriage services, 1977-1993	box 2	folder 25
Memorial book, 1990-1995	box 2	folder 26
Marriage records, 1991-1994	box 2	folder 27
Vital records, 1993-2002	box 2	folder 28

Marriage records, 1995-1998	box 2	folder 29
Marriage records, 1999-2014, undated	box 2	folder 30

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