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Philadelphia, Pa. First Christian Church records, 1835-1974. RG5488

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Congregational Library & Archives

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Summary Information

Repository:	Congregational Library & Archives
Creator:	First Christian Church (Philadelphia, Pa.)
Creator:	First Church of Disciples (Philadelphia, Pa.)
Title:	Philadelphia, Pa. First Christian Church records, 1835-1974.
ID:	RG5488
Date [inclusive]:	1835-1974
Physical Description:	1.09 Cubic Feet (1 box, 1 oversize folder)
Language of the Material:	English .
Abstract:	The First Church of the Disciples of Christ in Philadelphia was chartered in 1841. In 1912, Irving S. Chenoweth became the past of the First Christian Church and under his leadership a new church building was constructed in 1917. The church joined with the United Church of Christ after 1957. This collection contains membership and administrative records and includes meeting minutes, newsletters, and vital membership records.

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], in the Philadelphia, Pa. First Christian Church records, 1835-1974, RG5488. The Congregational Library & Archives, Boston, MA.

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Historical Note

The First Church of the Disciples of Christ in Philadelphia was chartered in 1841, though the church's membership roll dates back to 1835. By the twentieth century, the church was more commonly called the First Christian Church. The church was located at the intersection of Berks and Marvine Streets. The church was evidently struggling in 1912 when Irving S. Chenoweth became pastor. Chenoweth was born in 1883 and graduated from the Union Theological Seminary in 1911. Under Chenoweth's leadership, the struggling church changed

locations to one at the intersections of Tenth Street and Boulevard. First services at the new location were held on May 21, 1917. At some point after 1957, the church joined the United Church of Christ. It is unclear if the church continues to exist today in some form or fashion.

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Scope and Contents

This collection contains membership and administrative records for the First Christian Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The collection includes baptismal records, membership records, marriage records, records of deaths, church and board meeting minutes, newsletters, ladies aid society records, and an 1841 charter for the church.

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Arrangement

This collection has been arranged into chronological order, by start date, with like and continuous materials grouped together.

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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 Evangelical & Reformed Library & Archives in January 2024; 2024-01.

Processing Information

Processed for the CLA by Zachary Bodnar, October 2025, according to Describing Archives: A Content Standard.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Baptismal records.
- Church membership.
- Church records and registers.
- Marriage records.
- Necrologies.
- Newsletters.
- Chenoweth, Irving S.
- First Christian Church (Philadelphia, Pa.)
- First Church of Disciples (Philadelphia, Pa.)
- Philadelphia (Pa.) -- Church history

Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Instances	
Membership records, 1835-1938	box 1	folder 1

First Church of Disciples charter, 1841	folder 6	
Church records, 1867-1885	box 1	folder 6
Church records, 1892-1912	box 1	folder 7
Ladies aid society minutes, 1904-1923	box 1	folder 14
Church records, 1911-1920	box 1	folder 8
Board records and minutes, 1920-1923	box 1	folder 9
Board records and minutes, 1939-1942	box 1	folder 10
Board records and minutes, 1943-1956	box 1	folder 11
Board records and minutes, 1954-1974	box 1	folder 12
Newsletters, 1921-1922	box 1	folder 15
Newsletters, 1922-1923	box 1	folder 16
Newsletters, 1923-1924	box 1	folder 17
Newsletters, 1924-1926	box 1	folder 18
Newsletters, 1926-1928	box 1	folder 19
Newsletters, 1928-1929	box 1	folder 20
Newsletters, 1929-1930	box 1	folder 21
Historic Memoir: Irving S. Chenoweth and the First Christian Church of Philadelphia, 1930	box 1	folder 5
Baptismal records, 1938-1965	box 1	folder 2
Cradle roll, 1943-1967	box 1	folder 4
Church meeting minutes, 1943-1974	box 1	folder 13
Membership records, 1954-1968	box 1	folder 3