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Providence, R.I. Plymouth-Union Congregational Church records, 1870-1932. RG5552

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Congregational Library & Archives

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Summary Information

Repository:	Congregational Library & Archives
Creator:	Plymouth-Union Congregational Church (Providence, R.I.)
Creator:	Plymouth Congregational Church (Providence, R.I.)
Creator:	Union Congregational Church (Providence, R.I.)
Title:	Providence, R.I. Plymouth-Union Congregational Church records, 1870-1932.
ID:	RG5552
Date [inclusive]:	1870-1932
Physical Description:	3 Folders
Language of the Material:	English .
Abstract:	<p>The Plymouth Congregational Church was formed in 1878 and the Union Congregational Church was formed in 1871. Construction on the Plymouth Church was completed in 1919. Both churches merged in 1927 to form the Plymouth-Union Congregational Church. Due to decreased membership, the church dissolved in 1971. The church building was transferred to the Holy Cross Church of God in Christ in 1971 and then to Iglesia Visión Evangélica in 2016. In 2021, the church building was added to the National Register of Historic Places. This collection contains three folders of historical items related to the Plymouth-Union Congregational Church in Providence, Rhode Island, and its two predecessor churches, the Plymouth Congregational Church and the Union Congregational Church. The folders contain clippings, directories, photographs, and meeting minutes.</p>

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], in the Providence, R.I. Plymouth-Union Congregational Church records, 1870-1932, RG5552. The Congregational Library & Archives, Boston, MA.

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Historical Note

The Plymouth Congregational Church was formed in 1878, though a chapel for the community had been around since 1871. The first church building was constructed on Richardson Street, now Pennsylvania Avenue, in South Providence, Rhode Island. Construction on a new church building began in 1915 and was completed in 1919. The building was designed by George F. Newton of Boston. The church and building continued to serve the community until 1927 when the Plymouth Congregational Church and Union Congregational Church merged to form the Plymouth-Union Congregational Church.

The Union Congregational Church was formed in 1871 with the merging of the Richmond Street and High Street Churches. Construction on a new church building for the Union Congregational Church on Broad Street was completed in 1872. By the 1920s, membership at the Union Congregational Church had declined significantly. By 1927, it was agreed that the Plymouth and Union Congregational Churches would merge to form the Plymouth-Union Congregational Church. The Union Congregational Church's building was sold in favor of keeping the Plymouth Church's building.

In 1928, Dr. Samuel T. Clifton became the Plymouth-Union Congregational Church's first minister. In 1944, a stained-glass window designed by Hiemer & Co. was installed in the south wall of the church building. J. Wesley Prince was installed as minister of the church in 1946. Membership in the church began to decline during the 1940s and continued to decline through the 50s and 60s, largely due to changes in the demographics of South Providence. During this time, the church building was shared with the Central Christian Church of Warwick and the South Baptist Church of Providence. J. Wesley Prince remained minister at the church until 1969. In 1971, the church was dissolved and the church building was transferred to the Rhode Island Conference of the United Church of Christ.

The building was then transferred to the Holy Cross Church of God in Christ, an historically black congregation that had previously been firebombed at its previous location in Providence, on December 26, 1971. The Holy Cross Church of God in Christ closed in 2015 and in 2016 the Plymouth Church building was transferred to Iglesia Visión Evangélica. The church building was added to the National Register of Historic Places in March 2021; the nomination was significant as the first bilingual nomination to be submitted to the NHRP.

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Scope and Contents

This collection contains three folders of historical items related to the Plymouth-Union Congregational Church in Providence, Rhode Island, and its two predecessor churches, the

Plymouth Congregational Church and the Union Congregational Church. The titles of the folders were derived from titles created by Rev. J. Wesley Prince, however, the contents of the folders seem to include materials from potentially all three churches. It is likely that the contents of the folders were once kept in scrapbooks before their current arrangement. The folders contain worship bulletins, clippings, directories, financial records, photographs, meeting minutes, reports, mortgage documents, and anniversary brochures.

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Arrangement

Materials in this collection have been arranged into chronological order by start date.

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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 Rhode Island Conference of the United Church of Christ in April 1984; no acquisition information.

Custodial History

The contents of this collection were organized and documented by Rev. J. Wesley Prince in 1979 before they were given to the Rhode Island Conference of the United Church of Christ. It is likely that some, if not all, of the materials were originally kept in scrapbooks prior to their current arrangement.

Processing Information

Processed by Zachary Bodnar, May 2025, according to the rules of Describing Archives: A Content Standard.

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Related Materials

Related Materials

[Plymouth Union Congregational Church Records, 1720-1974, MSS 139](#). [Mary Elizabeth Robinson Research Center](#), Rhode Island Historical Society.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Church finance.
- Church records and registers.
- Mortgages.
- Photographs.
- Scrapbooks.
- Plymouth Congregational Church (Providence, R.I.)
- Plymouth-Union Congregational Church (Providence, R.I.)
- Providence (R.I.) -- Church history.

- Union Congregational Church (Providence, R.I.)

Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Instances	
Historical items from the history of Union Congregational Church, 1870-1932	box Small 9	folder 24
Historical items from the history of the Plymouth Congregational Church, 1871-1903	box Small 9	folder 25
Historical items from the history of the Plymouth Union church, 1903-1928	box Small 9	folder 26