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Oak Park, Ill. Harvard Congregational Church records, 1907-1997. RG5588

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Congregational Library & Archives

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Summary Information

Repository:	Congregational Library & Archives
Creator:	Harvard Congregational Church (Oak Park, Ill.)
Title:	Oak Park, Ill. Harvard Congregational Church records, 1907-1997.
ID:	RG5588
Date [inclusive]:	1907-1997
Physical Description:	1.14 Cubic Feet (3 boxes)
Language of the Material:	English .
Abstract:	The first meeting of the Harvard Chapel was held on January 20th, 1907, and the church was formally named the Harvard Congregational Church on February 5th, 1907. The first church building was destroyed by fire in 1916 and replaced a year later. The church joined with the United Church of Christ after the denomination's formation. In 2005, the church merged with the Family of Faith church to form the Harvard Family United Church of Christ. The church remains open today. The collection contain membership and auxiliary group records and includes trustees' records, auxiliary group records, especially from the women's group, World War II related records, Sunday school records, and photographs.

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], in the Oak Park, Ill. Harvard Congregational Church records, 1907-1997, RG5588. The Congregational Library & Archives, Boston, MA.

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Historical Note

The story of the Harvard Congregational Church in Oak Park, Illinois, began on Thanksgiving Day, 1905, when Rev. William E. Barton found an undeveloped lot at the intersection of Harvard Street and Kenilworth Avenue and declared that "upon this rock will I build my

church." In 1906, the lot was purchased by a Joint Conference Committee and the first religious service on the lot was held on June 24 of that year. Ground broke on a church building in October with William Barton breaking the first ground. The first meeting of the Harvard Chapel was held on January 20th, 1907, and the church was formally named the Harvard Congregational Church on February 5th.

Rev. O. C. Grauer was the first minister of the newly formed church. He was quickly followed by Rev. C. Arthur Jevne in October, 1907. Jevne remained pastor until 1915. He was followed by Rev. Edward J. Ridings. On December 13, 1916, the church was destroyed by a fire. Following the disaster, the church met in the Circle Masonic Temple. Construction on a new church building was begun in April 1917 and the new building was dedicated on December 9th of that year. Rev. William H. Hill became the fourth pastor of the church in 1926.

After the formation of the United Church of Christ, the Harvard Congregational Church joined the denomination. In 2005, the church merged with the Family of Faith church to form the Harvard Family United Church of Christ. The church continues to serve the Oak Park community today.

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Scope and Contents

This collection contains, primarily, membership and auxiliary group records for the Harvard Congregational Church in Oak Park, Illinois. The collection includes building records, trustees' minutes, Woman's Benevolent Society records, Five Point Club records, newsletters and a "diary" related to World War II, Sunday school records, a history scrapbook, photographs and a postcard, and the church's memorial book.

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Arrangement

Materials in this collection have been arranged into chronological, with contiguous 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 Illinois Conference of the United Church of Christ in December 2024; accession number 2024-46.

Custodial History

Materials in this collection were given to the Illinois Conference of the United Church of Christ at an unknown time. There is no further documentation on how the materials arrived at the Illinois Conference.

Processing Information

This collection was processed by Zachary Bodnar, February 2026, according to the rules of Describing Archives: A Content Standard.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Baptismal records.
 - Church buildings.
 - Church membership.
 - Church records and registers.
 - Marriage records.
 - Necrologies.
 - Scrapbooks.
 - Women -- Societies and clubs.
 - Harvard Congregational Church (Oak Park, Ill.)
 - Oak Park (Ill.) -- Church history.
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Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Instances	
Woman's benevolent society records, 1907-1913	box 3	volume 2
Women's benevolent society records, 1913-1919	box 3	volume 3
Photographs, 1907, undated	box 1	folder 13
Board of trustees minutes, 1910-1916	box 1	volume 1
Anniversary and special programs, 1912-1967	box 1	folder 1
Daily light circle king's daughters records, 1913-1936	box 3	volume 1
Cornerstone time capsule contents list, 1917	box 1	folder 2
Building records, 1917-1918	box 1	folder 3
Woman's benevolent society yearbooks, 1925, 1952-1965	box 2	folder 1
Yearbooks, 1927-1967	box 1	folder 4
Oak Park facts and figures, 1930	box 1	folder 5
Memorial book, 1935-1981	box 1	folder 6
Board of trustees minutes, 1937-1938	box 1	folder 7
Board of trustees minutes, 1938-1941	box 1	folder 8
Woman's benevolent society poem, 1940	box 2	folder 2
Five point club records, 1942-1944	box 2	volume 1
Five point club records, 1945-1946	box 3	volume 5
Record of weddings and baptisms, 1944-1997	box 3	volume 4

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Neil Hanson anniversary banquet speech, 1945	box 1	folder 9
Victory in Europe Day service program, 1945	box 1	folder 10
Victory in Europe Day and Victory over Japan Day newsletters, 1945	box 1	folder 11
Sunday school records, 1951-1958	box 2	folder 11
History scrapbook, 1954	box 2	folder 12
Woman's benevolent society records, 1955	box 2	folder 3
Woman's benevolent society records, 1956-1959	box 2	folder 4
Woman's benevolent society reports, 1957	box 2	folder 5
Woman's benevolent society reports, 1959	box 2	folder 6
Woman's benevolent society records, 1960	box 2	folder 7
Woman's benevolent society records, 1961-1965	box 2	folder 8
Woman's benevolent society records, 1963-1968	box 2	folder 9
Woman's benevolent society records, 1968-1971	box 2	folder 10
Constitution, circa 1967	box 1	folder 12
World War II servicemen "diary", undated	box 2	volume 2
Church building exterior postcard, undated	box 1	folder 14