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Chicago, Ill. Thomas Memorial Congregational Church records, 1902-1999. RG5596

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Congregational Library & Archives

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Summary Information

Repository:	Congregational Library & Archives
Creator:	Thomas Memorial Congregational Church (Chicago, Ill.)
Creator:	Chicago Lawn Congregational Church (Chicago, Ill.)
Creator:	Hiram W. Thomas Memorial Congregational Church (Chicago, Ill.)
Title:	Chicago, Ill. Thomas Memorial Congregational Church records, 1902-1999.
ID:	RG5596
Date [inclusive]:	1902-1999
Physical Description:	0.53 Cubic Feet (2 boxes)
Language of the Material:	English .
Abstract:	The Chicago Lawn Congregational Church was formed by members of the Chicago Lawn Union Church in 1902. The church's first building was constructed in 1904. In 1912, land for a second church building was donated by Vandelia Thomas, wife of the late Rev. Hiram Washington Thomas, and the name of the church was changed to Hiram W. Thomas Memorial Church. Construction on the new church building completed in 1917. In 1923, following the death of Vandelia, the name of the church was changed again to Thomas Memorial Church. The church joined with the United Church of Christ. The church dissolved in 2000. This collection contains the vital membership records and includes meeting minutes, baptismal records, membership records, marriage records, and necrologies.

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], in the Chicago, Ill. Thomas Memorial Congregational Church records, 1902-1999, RG5596. The Congregational Library & Archives, Boston, MA.

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Historical Note

The Chicago Lawn Union Church was a mission church formed in 1897 to support the religious lives of those in the, at the time, largely farming community of the Chicago Lawn neighborhood. Members of that mission church eventually organized the Chicago Lawn Congregational Church in 1902. Rev. Alexander Monroe was the first minister of the newly established church. At first the congregation met at the Lawn Club Hall. Within two years of the church's formation, a simple two-story frame church was built near the intersections of 62nd Place and South Saint Louis Avenue.

Land for a new church building was donated to the church by Vandelia Thomas (née Varnum), wife of the late Rev. Hiram Washington Thomas, who had founded the Unitarian Peoples Church of Chicago. In honor of the donation of land, the name of the church was changed to Hiram W. Thomas Memorial Congregational Church in 1912. The new church building was constructed at the corner of 64th Place and South Homan Avenue and it was completed in 1917. Following Vandelia's death in 1923, the name of the church was changed again to Thomas Memorial Church to honor both Vandelia and Hiram.

In 1950, the church was remodeled and renovated and a new educational wing was added to the church. The church joined with the United Church of Christ following the formation of the denomination in 1957. The church officially dissolved in early 2000 owing to decreased membership. The church building remains as an active church within the Chicago Lawn community.

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Scope and Contents

This collection contains the vital membership records of the Thomas Memorial Congregational Church as well as the earliest meeting minutes for the church. The collection includes meeting minutes, baptismal records, membership records and membership lists, marriage records, necrologies, and a 1967 annual report.

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Arrangement

Materials in this collection have been arranged in 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

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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.

Processing Information

This collection was processed by Zachary Bodnar, May 2024, according to the rules of Describing Archives: A Content Standard.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Baptismal records.
- Church membership.
- Church records and registers.
- Marriage records.
- Necrologies.
- Chicago (Ill.) -- Church history.
- Chicago Lawn Congregational Church (Chicago, Ill.)
- Hiram W. Thomas Memorial Congregational Church (Chicago, Ill.)
- Thomas Memorial Congregational Church (Chicago, Ill.)

Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Instances	
Church records, 1902-1914	box 1	volume 1
Member additions and removals, 1905-1955	box 2	folder 1
Church register, 1912-1924	box 1	volume 2
Pastor's register, 1924-1939	box 1	volume 3
Church register, 1924-1998	box 1	volume 4
Officers, boards, and committees lists, 1951-1962	box 2	folder 2
Membership lists, 1953-1967	box 2	folder 3
Church register, 1955-1999	box 2	volume 1
Annual report, 1969	box 2	folder 4