



BHC-MSS 0121

Guide to the Records of Park Street Congregational Church

By Meg Rinn

January 2021

Descriptive Summary

Creator: Park Street Congregational Church

Title: Records of Park Street Congregational Church

Dates: 1874-1979

Quantity: 5 record cartons, 1 oversize, ½ manuscript box

Abstract: Park Street Congregational Church was founded on January 15, 1868 under the original name of the East Bridgeport Congregational Church. This collection balances the financial and administrative elements of the church with lay religious life, offering insight into the East End of Bridgeport in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Language: English

Repository: Bridgeport History Center

Administrative History:

Park Street Congregational Church was founded on January 15, 1868 under the original name of the East Bridgeport Congregational Church. Their first pastor was Rev. John Davenport, and services were first held at the Bethesda Mission Chapel. The congregation would later move to a custom built building by Abram Skaats located on Park Street and Barnum Avenue, giving the church its new name.

The church was organized with a pastor and with a corporate auxiliary body run by lay members that managed business and financial obligations. This body was essential to management, just as the Women's League and Fullerton Memorial Circle were to outreach and charity work that demonstrated their faith. Park Street Congregational Church boasted a well-attended Sunday school as well.

However, as the years went on, membership declined. This is noted in the 1968 booklet celebrating the church's 100th anniversary. Park Street Congregational Church would go on to merge with Trinity United Church of Christ in Trumbull. The two organizations are now the Unity Hill United Church of Christ, and the Park Street building is home to Calvary Temple Christian Center.

Note that *The Story of a Church* by John S. Wooster in the collection provides a detailed history of the church from 1868 to 1937 with a focus on all pastors and the key events in the church's history up until that time.

Scope and Content note:

This collection balances the financial and administrative elements of the church with religious life. There are extensive reports, financial documents, and administrative material from most of the church's history, mostly focused on day-to-day management. The presence of various church newsletters from most of the congregation's 20th Century history helps to not only compliment

administrative matters but inform lay religious life as well. This is especially true for material in the Women's League sub-series, and helps emphasize the role of women in lay life.

Not extensively documented are materials specifically related to the Sunday school. In addition, there is a group of unprocessed material related to Gabriel Rider and the Rider family, whose significance at the Park Street Congregational Church is still under review.

Arrangement Note:

Series I, organizational rules and reports contains manuals, by-laws, and reports such as annual reports and church council meetings. These reports run from about the 1940s to late 1970s. The second series, church groups, primarily contains documentation of the Women's League, but also includes the Fullerton Memorial Circle, Friendly Service Committee, and Young People's Alliance.

Series III, membership, primarily consists of directories. However, it is worth noting that there is one folder of baptism records included, although these records are not complete or inclusive.

Series IV contains church newsletters starting in 1876 and running up until the time of donation, whereas series V contains what the church called calendars, but are in fact worship schedules and other church information.

These series are followed by series VI, anniversaries, containing anniversary material. Subject files are next in series VII, and are divided into sub-series 1 - general and sub-series 2 alphabetical files. The general subject files are chronological only, and mostly contain material from 1970-1980. The topical files are alphabetical and generally earlier, and include early records and writings of the church's first pastor.

Series IX, relationships with other churches, consists of material related to Bridgeport's interfaith community and other Congregational churches in Connecticut. Series X, Gabriel Rider material, contains unprocessed material related to a member of the church community. It will be examined at a later time.

The final series, XI, contains photographs of the church and church activities.

Administrative information:

Provenance: 198

Preferred Citation:

Records of Park Street Congregational Church (BHC-MSS 0121) Bridgeport History Center, Bridgeport Public Library.

Names and Subject Tracings

Corporate names

Park Street Congregational Church

Subject tracings

Congregational churches | sh85031108

East Side (Bridgeport, Conn.)

Baptism--Congregational churches | sh2020011708

Women and religion | sh85147433

Detailed box and folder listing

Series I - Organizational rules and reports

Box 1

1. Manuals, 1874-1885
2. Constitution and by-laws, 1924-194
3. Annual reports, 1944-1954
4. Annual reports, 1957-1975
5. Annual reports, 1957-1975
6. Treasurer's reports, 1961-1968
7. Budgets, 1920-1968
8. Annual account, 1952-1924
9. List of origin of giving funds, 1945
10. Resource list, 1956-1957
11. Executive board meetings, 1944-1955
12. Business meeting, 1944-1950
13. Business meeting, 1951-1957
14. Meeting notes, 1942-1966
15. Clerk notes (Ethel Russel), church council, 1947-1960
16. Clerk notes (Ethel Russel), church council, 1947-1960
17. Meetings, 1967
18. Council reports, 1970-1971
19. Council reports, 1972
20. Council reports, 1973
21. Council reports, 1974
22. Council reports, 1976
23. Council reports, 1977
24. Council reports, 1978

Series II - Church groups

25. Reports to the Congregational Christian Churches Yearbook, 1946-19631
26. Reports of the Women's League, 1925
27. Reports of the Women's League, 1940s-1950s
28. Women's League minutes, 1955-1961
29. Women's League calendars, 1919-1931
30. Women's League calendars, 1936-1954
31. Women's League calendars, 1956-1975

Box 2

1. Women's League Annual Meeting, 1951-1972
2. Women's League Annual Meeting, 1951-1972
3. Women's League Annual Meeting, 1951-1972
4. Women's League Annual Meeting, 1951-1972
5. Women's League clippings, 1946-1950
6. Women's League yearbooks, 1925-1928, 1942-1943
7. Women's League treasurer's reports, 1956-1958
8. Women's League additional material, undated
9. Fullerton Memorial Circle, 1903-1909
10. Fullerton Memorial Circle 1918-1920
11. Friendly Service Committee, 1951-1954

12. Young People's Alliance, 1908-1931

Series III - Membership

13. Baptism records, NON INCLUSIVE, 1938-1961

14. Directories, 1898, 1914, 1937-1974

15. Directories, 1898, 1914, 1937-1974

Series IV - Newsletters

16. The Messenger, 1910-1912

17. The Messenger, 1927

18. The Messenger, 1928

19. The Messenger, 1929

20. The Messenger, 1931

21. The Messenger, 1932

22. The Messenger, 1933

23. The Messenger, 1935

24. The Messenger, 1938

25. The Messenger, 1939

26. The Messenger, 1940

27. The Messenger, 1941

28. The Messenger, 1942

29. The Messenger, 1943-1944

30. The Messenger, 1945-1957

31. The Messenger, 1958-1960

32. The Messenger, 1961

33. The Messenger, 1923-1963

34. The Messenger, 1963-1964

35. The Messenger, 1965-1969

Series V - Calendars

36. Calendars, 1898, 1905, 1910, 1918

Box 3

1. Acceptance of call by 1st minister John G. Davenport, 1868

2. Historical discourse delivered by John G. Davenport, 1876

3. Records, 1868-1890 [fragile, restricted]

Series IV - Newsletters

4. Park Street Chronicle, 1876-1881

5. Park Street Chronicle, 1876-1881

6. Park Street Chronicle, 1876-1881

7. Fairfield East Association and Consociation report, 1879

8. Early material including dedication, 1871-1893

9. Church histories, 1892, 1905

Box 4

1. Calendars, 1919-1931

2. Calendars, 1920-1921

3. Calendars, 1930-1939

4. 1940-1944

5. Calendars, 1950-1959

6. Calendars, 1960

7. Calendars, 1962

8. Calendars, 1963

9. Calendars, 1965
10. Calendars, 1967
11. Calendars, 1968
12. Calendars, 1969
13. Calendars, 1971-1972
14. Other notices to church members, 1934-1945

Series VI - Anniversaries

15. Anniversaries, 1938
16. Anniversaries, 1938
17. Anniversaries, 1943-1947
18. Anniversaries, 1943-1947
19. Anniversaries, 1943-1947

Series VII - Subject files

Subseries 1, General files

20. General files, 1947
21. General files, 1970

Box 5

1. General files, 1970
2. General files, 1971
3. General files, 1972
4. General files, 1973
5. General files, 1974
6. General files, 1974
7. General files, 1974
8. General files, 1975
9. General files, 1976
10. General files, 1977
11. General files, 1977
12. General files, 1978
13. General files, 1978
14. General files, 1979
15. General files, 1979
16. General files, 1980
17. General files, undated

Subseries 2, Topical files

18. Church building, purchase of new property, 1926-1928
19. Church building, 1949-1961
20. Church histories, 1905, 1953
21. Church events and programs, 1950s-1960s
22. Church school, 1895-1960
23. Church school, 1895-1960
24. Church school, 1895-1960

Box 6

1. Clippings, 1905-1953
2. Communion service for Holy Week. 1947, 1978, undated
3. Correspondence, 1925-1969
4. Installation of Reverence Olson, 1966

5. Little Pilgrim/Little Bible lesson pictures, 1895-1901
6. Marsh estate documents, 1913-1917
7. Memorial and other special services, 1935-1957
8. Ordination papers by John Tweed, 1967
9. Planning committee, 1966-1972
10. Programs, 1968-1969
11. Rev. Henry White, 1958
12. Special events, 1958-1963
13. Task force[newsletter], 1963-1964
14. Other material, 1935-1945, undated

Series VIII - Relationships with other churches

15. 22nd Meeting of the Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport, 1967
16. Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport, 1969-1970
17. Connecticut conference of congregational churches, 1961-1966
18. Other congregational churches in Connecticut, 1952-1970
19. Rider joining church, 1911-1912

Series IX - Gabriel Rider material

20. Gabriel Rider material,
21. Gabriel Rider material
22. Gabriel Rider material

Series X - Photographs

Box 7

1. Photographs, church exteriors, 1960, undated
2. Photographs, church interiors, 1896-1953
3. Photographs, individuals including reverends, 1887-1968
4. Photographs, church services, 1952, undated
5. Photographs, church events and groups, undated
6. Photographs, church events, sent to John Olson for identification, 1977-1978

Oversize drawer Flat File D, Drawer 5

7. Easter play photo, 1968
8. Clippings, 1898, 1968
9. Clippings, 1900-1953
10. Photostat map of 1867 showing church location, undated

Accrual of material found in collections May 2022

Box 8

1. Membership book. 1908-1919
2. Membership book, 1920-1921
3. Treasurer's accounts, 1873-1908
4. Treasurer's accounts, 1917-1921
5. Treasurer's accounts, 1921-1940s
6. Funds account book, 1926-1943
7. Ladies Union secretary reports, 1886-1891
8. Ladies Union Minutes and treasurer's reports, 1891-1895
9. Ladies Union membership and minutes, 1898-1904
10. Ladies Union membership and minutes 1908-1909
11. Ladies Union secretary reports, 1912-1920

12. Ladies Union treasurer's reports, 1921-1927
13. Ladies Union register celebrating anniversary, October 1920
14. Ladies Union/Women's League list of membership and pledges, 1921
15. Fullerton Memorial Circle treasurer's accounts, 1896-1903
16. Fullerton Memorial Circle treasurer's accounts, 1903-1911
17. Fullerton Memorial Circle committees, membership, and directories, 1896-1901

Box 9

1. Fullerton Memorial Circle committees, membership, and directories, 1901-1905
2. Fullerton Memorial Circle committees, membership, and directories, 1901-1903
3. Fullerton Memorial Circle committees, membership, and directories, 1905-1909
4. Fullerton Memorial Circle committees, membership, and directories, 1911-1920
5. Sunday School membership and attendance records, 1872-1873
6. Friendly Circle minutes, 1956-1963
7. Kings Highway cookbook, 1894
8. Royal Diadem hymnal, undated
9. Winnowed Hymns, undated
10. Periodicals, 1888
11. Weekly church bulletins, 1905-1908
12. Weekly church bulletins, 1905-1908
13. Weekly church bulletins, 1900s, undated
14. Weekly church bulletins, 1909-1912
15. Weekly church bulletins, 1910s, undated
16. Weekly church bulletins, 1910s-1930s
17. Weekly church bulletins, 1924-1932
18. Weekly church bulletins, 1924-1932

Box 10

1. Weekly church bulletins, 1924-1932
2. Weekly church bulletins, 1920s-1930s
3. Weekly church bulletins, 1958
4. Weekly church bulletins, 1959
5. Weekly church bulletins, 1961
6. Weekly church bulletins, 1960s
7. Weekly church bulletins, 1960s
8. Weekly church bulletins, 1960s
9. Weekly church bulletins, 1970s
10. Weekly church bulletins, 1970s
11. Experiences and Observations [...] by John Gaylord Davenport with inscription, 1918
12. Experiences and Observations [...] by John Gaylord Davenport with inscription, 1918
13. Something Beyond by John Gaylord Davenport with inscription, 1918

Accrual of material found in collections July 2022

Box 11, Photo album, 1900s

Box 12

1. Records, Congregational Ecclesiastical Society 1868-1916
2. Records, Congregational Ecclesiastical Society 1901-1945

Box 13

1. Church calendars, 1920-1977
2. Church calendars, 1920-1977
3. Church calendars, 1920-1977
4. Church calendars, 1920-1977
5. Church calendars, 1920-1977
6. Church calendars, 1891-1900
7. Church calendars, 1891-1900
8. Church calendars, 1906-1908
9. Church calendars, 1915-1917
10. Church calendars, 1924-1930
11. Church calendars, 1970s
12. Ladies Union treasurer's book, 1916-1927
13. Women's League secretary reports, 1920-1930
14. Ecclesiastical Society treasurer's book, 1908-1940
15. Ecclesiastical Society, 1911-1914

Box 14, Albert S[?]'s treasurer's reports, 1957-1962

Accrual of material found in collections August 2022

Box 15

1. Kings Highway Chapel Records, 1893-1895
2. Kings Highway Chapel Register and records, 1895-1925
3. Kings Highway Chapel Register, 1907-1920
4. Kings Highway Chapel Historian's book, 1894-1904

Box 16

1. Kings Highway Chapel records/history, 1894-1925
2. Kings Highway Chapel prayer meetings, 1895-1904