

Westminster Congregational Church Records

The Westminster Congregational Church Records collection contains a variety of records pertaining to the life of the church while it was located at 36th and Walnut in Kansas City, Missouri.

Descriptive Summary

Creator: Westminster Congregational Church
Title: Westminster Congregational Church records
Dates: circa 1900-1995, bulk 1932-1993
Size: 3 boxes, 2 cubic feet
Location: SC56

Administrative Information

Restrictions on access: Unrestricted access.

Additional physical form available: Photographs have been digitized.

Acquisition information: Gift, March 1996, Accession #1996-17.

Citation note: Westminster Congregational Church records (SC56), Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.

Collection Description

Biographical/Historical note

For many years, the Westminster Congregational Church had a distinctive physical structure and a vibrant, growing membership in the Midtown, Hyde Park area of Kansas City, Missouri. Although the church initially was associated with the Presbyterian denomination, it was a Congregational affiliate for most of its 20th century history. Among its early members were several well known individuals in Kansas City as can be seen by the listing below of obituaries in the various scrapbooks. These members included realtor Herbert V. Jones, former mayor Henry Beardsley, Judge Henry L. McCune, Frank and Harriet Burnap, Jane Gordon, banker Watt Webb, and many more.

In time the city's population moved farther south and in different directions from what was at one time the heart of the city. As this happened, the church, as well as other churches, were left with a declining membership and trying to support earlier built, large buildings and facilities. With continual declining membership and denominational turmoil and consolidation, what was once an early religious presence in the city was forced to close its doors.

On January 17, 1901, Westminster Presbyterian Church at 10th and Central officially became Westminster Congregational Church, affiliated with the Kansas City Congregational Union. The church contracted the New Orleans architectural firm of Diboll & Owen in cooperation with the local firm of Bracklein and Martling to design a sanctuary patterned after the Prytania Street Presbyterian Church in New Orleans, Louisiana. The new building's corner stone was laid on May 22, 1904. The formal dedication took place three years later in January of 1907. This church is located at 36th and Walnut, Kansas City, Missouri, part of the original Hyde Park subdivision.

In 1913 plans were submitted for additional space which included the Fellowship Hall, Sunday School class rooms, the Mayflower Room, the kitchen and church offices. The church membership in 1913 numbered 504. The bronze tubular chimes of the church were a gift from Mr. and Mrs. Jacob L. Loose in 1922. The church was put on the National Register of Historic Places in 1980. (See Vertical File: Churches--Congregational--Westminster for National Register of Historic Places Inventory/Nomination Form) Dr. G. Charles Gray served the longest as pastor and Mrs. James H. Cravens was organist and choir director from 1895-1946. At one time the Kansas City Korean Christian Church used the building as well as Genesis, a school for high school dropouts. The church closed in 1995. - Historical information gathered primarily from the pamphlet "Celebrating Seventy-Five Years at 36th and Walnut Welcomes You" found in unboxed scrapbook, p. 15.

Scope and content note

The collection contains seven scrapbooks, two church registers, and three envelopes of miscellaneous material. The scrapbooks contain newspaper clippings, brochures, church programs, and other miscellaneous materials dating primarily from the 1930s-1990s. The church registers include lists of members, pastors, deaths, trustees, baptisms, deacons, elders, etc., and are dated from ca1900-1990. Also included in the collection are church bulletins, printed sermons, articles of incorporation, annual reports, pamphlets, magazine articles, building fund material (1911), etc. Over 140 photographs are included, both color snapshots and black and white, in varying sizes covering many years and mostly identified. These images include the church facilities as well as members and church group activities.

Collection Inventory

Box 1

- Folder 1** - Scrapbook, 1932-1938 - (Photocopied) Contains primarily newspaper articles, mostly dated, concerning church activities, obituaries, items of interest concerning church members. Also contains some church programs, magazine articles and poetry. Obituaries include the following people as found in the scrapbook: Mrs. Cora **Jones**, daughter of J.J. **Squier** and wife of real estate operator Robert V. Jones; Lorenzo L. **Luce**, president of the Luce Manufacturing Company; William **Murphy**, Kansas City grain man; Alfred D. **Rider**, Vice President of Fidelity National Bank and Trust Company; Mrs. Nellie Gates **Marty**, wife of real estate man Albert Marty, F.P. **Lyman**, Jr., an architect; Charles E. **Smith**, vice president of the Kansas City Title and Trust Company; Mrs. Louise **Keene**, wife of Architect Arthur S. Keene; Hermann C. **Henrici**, local Boy Scout leader; Edmund D. **Bigelow**, Secretary of the Board of Trade; Walter **LeClerc**, Allis Press president; Mrs. Jeanne W. **Kennedy**, wife of Norman A. Kennedy; Dr. Samuel C. **Wheat**, dentist; M.C. **McGreevy**, broker; John F. **Downing**, banker; David **Dietrich**, Marsh Oil Works; and Henry M. **Bearsley**, former mayor.
- Folder 2** - Scrapbook, 1939-1954 - Contains primarily newspaper articles, mostly dated, concerning church activities. obituaries, items of interest concerning church members. Also contains some church programs and magazine clippings. Obituaries include the following people as found in the scrapbook: Mrs. Catherine **Stevens**, wife of minister Frank V. Stevens; C.O. **Gossard**, gas company official; Dr. Calvin B. **Moody**, pastor of Ivanhoe

Congregational Church; Charles D. **Mill**, insurance agent; James T. **Porter**, doorman; Mrs. Agnes **Kirshner**; Judge Henry L. **McCune**, judge and city councilman; C.C. **Nicolet**, newspaper journalist; Mrs. Eva **Land**, lecturer; Dr. Caleb A. **Ritter**, physician; Joseph M. **McCune**, lawyer; W.C. **Woods**, Jr., soldier; Lewis L. **Varney**, auditor; Maud **Glover**; Ben **Johnson**, World War II soldier; Rosamond **Losh**, secretary; Grace **Prescott**, wife of banker John A. Prescott; Edgar C. **Ellis**, congressman; William J. **Koch**, architect; Mrs. Franklin E. **Murphy**, musician; James E. **Brooks**, envelope company executive; Marie **Myer**, bookkeeper; Harriet **Burnap**, wife of Frank P Burnap; Ethel **Baldwin**, wife of Robert L. Baldwin; William N. **White**, Air Force pilot; Albert **Knollin**; Ada **Ultch**; Herbert V. **Jones**, realtor; Arthur **Waters**, lumber executive; and Dr. C. Charles **Gray**, minister of Westminster Congregational Church.

- Folder 3** - Scrapbook, 1957 - 1966 - Contains primarily newspaper articles, mostly dated, concerning church activities and members, obituaries, etc., Also contains cards, church programs as well as other types of programs, invitations, magazine articles, and a letter. Obituaries include the following people as found in the scrapbook: Mrs. Marion **Serat**, wife of Seth S. Serat; Mrs. Louise **Sutermeister**, teacher; Frank **Burnap**, printing firm owner and collector; Mrs. Eleanor **Kemper**, at one time wife of James Kemper; Edward C. **Burnap**, printing firm; George E. **Simpson**, composer; Jerrene E. **Lutch**, secretary; Jessica **Burnap**; Dr. George **Hoxie**, physician; Dr. Louis C. **Leabo**, dentist; Frank M. **Briggs**, salesman; Watt **Webb**, Jr., banker; Mrs. Emily **Koch**, architect's widow; Esther **Durbon**; Nettie **Moulton**; Louise **Moffett**; Mrs. Frances **Carter**, widow of Page F. Carter; Mrs. Anna W. **Webb**, widow of Watt Webb; Samuel C. **Marty**, lumberman; Lawrence E. **Reedy**; Robert L. **Baldwin**, engineer; Mason L. **Dean**, banker; Galen R. **Gloyd**, engineer; Howard A. **Fitch**, Jr.; president of Kansas City Structural Steel Company; and Mrs. Louise Z. **German**.
- Folder 4** - Scrapbook, 1960-1968 - Contains primarily newspaper articles, mostly dated, concerning church activities and members, obituaries, etc. Also contains funeral programs, magazine articles and church 100th anniversary church program. Obituaries include the following people: Dr. Owen **McPherson**, physician; Mrs. Alma M. **Leabo**, schoolteacher; Mrs. Jennie W. **Mullen**, secretary; Mrs. Marjorie H. **Fitch**, widow of Howard A. Fitch, Jr.; Mrs. Maude **Weeks**; Mrs. Loyal **Brush**; Edwin H. Leo **Thompson**, realtor; Mrs. Grace Osborne **Hunt**; Mrs. Louise M. **Buckingham**; Wallace W. **Goodwin**, lawyer and builder; Mrs. Luella M. **Meyer**; Edward H. **Hanson**, accountant; Helen M. **Rose**, teacher; Mrs. Ethel **Carr**, widow of Dr. William Carr; Charles **Titsworth**; Alfred T. **Schauffler**, insurance agent; Arthur Mathias **Marty**, realtor; Mrs. Leroy H. **Capoot**; Mrs. Eleanor B. **Jones**, widow of Herbert V. Jones; Vincent L. **Wood**; Mrs. Elmyra M. **Reedy**; Mrs. W.B. **Sherwood**; Mrs. Jane H. **Gordon**, wife of George L. Gordon (her relatives included Alfred Hemingway, John Barber White, Clarence Shepard); Mrs. Henry L. **McCune**, widow of Judge McCune; Mrs. Louise **Moore**, antique dealer.
- Folder 5** - Scrapbook, 1957-1969 - Contains primarily newspaper articles, mostly dated, concerning church activities and members, obituaries, etc. Some are duplicates found in other scrapbooks. Also contains cards, funeral programs, etc. Obituaries that are not duplicates include: Mrs. Cara Withers **Goodwin**, widow of Wallace Goodwin.

- **Folder 6** - Scrapbook, 1967-1990 - Contains primarily newspaper articles, mostly dated, concerning church activities and members, obituaries, etc. Also contains invitations, correspondence, and funeral programs. Obituaries include the following people: Helen **Siemens**, widow of architect George Siemens; Williamson L. **Collins**, former cavalryman; Vaughan T. **Williams**, American Legion leader and associated with Guadalupe Center; Herbert E. **Duncan**, minister; Mrs. Mildred M. **Berkeley**; Gladys **Gaylord**, teacher; M. Cecile **Burton**, teacher; William H. **Guild**, banker; Lucile J. **Gaskill**; and Gail E. **Eutsler**, surveyor.
- **Folder 7** - Church programs (5), 1909-1990, and published sermons (16), n.d., 1908-1918

Box 2

- **Folder 1** - Photographs - 4 interior views of Westminster Congregational Church and 1 exterior view, n.d.
- **Folder 2** - Photographs - 6 interior views of Westminster Congregational Church and 2 exterior views (1 dup), ca1940s
- **Folder 3** - Photographs - 5 interior views of Westminster Congregational Church, ca1940s
- **Folder 4** - Photographs - 4 interior views of Westminster Congregational Church, 1 exterior view, ca1940s
- **Folder 5** - Photographs - 5 black and white, 23 color, 1 postcard - mostly interior views, church related activities, ca1950s-1990s
- **Folder 6** - Photographs - 6 black and white, 6 color, 2 photocopied newspaper clippings - photos are both exterior and interior views, ca1950s-80s, clippings from 1933 and n.d.
- **Folder 7** - Photographs - 3 black and white, 3 postcards - interior and exterior views, mainly groups, ca1940s-50s
- **Folder 8** - Photographs - 10 black and white, 27 color - interior and exterior views including of the church building, 1950s-1980s
- **Folder 9** - Photographs - 23 color, Both interior and exterior views of the church building, ca1970s; 1 bulletin mock-up (1980)
- **Folder 10** - Miscellaneous material including Building Fund records, Articles of Incorporation, annual reports, printed publications, correspondence, early church service program, varying dates
- **Folder 11** - Membership book - original, ca1900-

Box 3

- **Church Register**, ca1900-1990 - Includes register of communicants, elders, deaconesses, deacons, trustees, baptisms, deaths (beginning in 1921), pastors, superintendents of Sunday School, and correspondence and miscellaneous loose items in front of book

Unboxed Scrapbook - Identified as "this is the last scrapbook of the Westminster Congregational Church, but it has several items out of sequence" - includes newspaper clippings, bulletins, church publications, invitations, funeral program, photographs, etc., 1915-1995. Obituaries include the following people: Benjamin **Powers**, lawyer; Dorothy **Varney**, teacher; Ok Soon Um **Yu**; Herbert V. **Jones, Jr.**, realtor; and Orel G. **Trowbridge**.

Processed by Special Collections Librarian Sara Nyman, April 1996 and December 2005.