

Finding Aid for the Burlingame United Church of Christ records Collection 505

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Grand Rapids History and Special Collections

111 Library Street NE
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503

localhis@grpl.org

URL: <https://www.grpl.org/research/history/>

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Summary Information

Repository:	Grand Rapids History and Special Collections
Source - dnr:	Waalkes, Sue
Title:	Burlingame United Church of Christ records
ID:	Collection 505
Date [inclusive]:	1924-2007
Physical Description:	1 Linear Feet 1 box
Language of the Material:	English .
Mixed materials [Box]:	1
Abstract:	The Burlingame Congregational Church began in Wyoming, Michigan in 1924 and grew steadily up until the Depression when it experienced financial difficulties and membership loss. The pastorate of Rev. Edwin Richard Evans helped revive the church and it prospered through the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, during Evan's tenure and beyond. Membership grew and a new building was built in 1958. The church joined the newly formed United Church of Christ in the early 1960s, becoming the Burlingame Congregational United Church of Christ. After decades of membership decline and financial difficulties that began in the 1970s, the church made the decision to disband in 2009. The Burlingame Congregational United Church of Christ records consist of photographs, church directories and histories.

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Biographical / Historical

Realizing the need for a Congregational church in the growing community of Wyoming, Michigan, the Burlingame Congregational Church opened a new charter on April 28, 1924 and a new building was dedicated on December 4, 1925. The Rev. Arden served as the church's first pastor from 1925 to 1929. Rev. Francis Burchell served as interim pastor for two years following Rev. Arden's departure and was succeeded by Rev. Alfred Allard who served from 1931 to 1936. Financial problems plagued the church during the Depression, along with the loss

of membership. Rev. Edwin Richard Evans was assigned to help revive the church. Over the next seventeen years the church prospered. Membership grew. The building was enlarged and an organ was purchased.

By 1949 the church had 328 members with 200 in the church school. An extended basement was built to provide additional space for the church school. When Rev. Evans retired in 1954, Rev. Homer Dalrymple arrived and found the church crowded and in need of a new building. A committee was appointed to raise funds and ground was broken on March 2, 1958. After seventeen years, Rev. Dalrymple retired in 1971.

In 1957 the Congregational Christian Churches merged with the Evangelical and Reformed Churches and the United Church of Christ (UCC) was created. The Burlingame Church joined the UCC in the early 1960's becoming the Burlingame Congregational United Church of Christ.

Beginning the in early 1970s, the church experienced dwindling attendance and an aging congregation through the service of four more pastors. This, combined with the rising cost of maintaining the church building, led to the decision in 2009 to disband.

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Scope and Contents

The Burlingame Congregational United Church of Christ records consists of a large binder containing photographs of the church buildings, various church groups, events, and individuals. It also contains newspaper articles, church directories from various years, anniversary booklets, church histories and fundraising campaign materials.

Those researching the growth of Wyoming, Michigan, church history in the area, or Congregational Church history might find this collection of interest. Genealogists whose family members attended the Burlingame Congregational United Church of Christ will find this collection of particular interest as well.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Immediate Source of Acquisition

This material was donated by Sue Waalkes, former member of the Burlingame Congregational United Church of Christ. Burlingame Congregational United Church of Christ records, 2021.041

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Controlled Access Headings

- Church records and registers -- Michigan
- Grand Rapids (Mich.) -- History
- Wyoming (Mich.) -- History
- Waalkes, Sue

Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Instances
Binder containing photographs of the church buildings, various church groups, events, and individuals; newspaper articles, church directories from 1972, 1975, 1984, 1989, 1994, 2003, 2007, 75th anniversary booklet, church histories and fundraising campaign materials, 1924-2007	Box 1