

Grand Rapids Epworth United Methodist Church records

Finding aid prepared by Mary Koch

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Albion College Archives and Special Collections
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Summary Information

Repository	Albion College Archives and Special Collections
Title	Grand Rapids Epworth United Methodist Church records
Date [inclusive]	1895-1978
Extent	1.0 Linear feet 1 box
Language	English
Language	The material is in English.

Preferred Citation

[Item], [Folder], [Box], [Collection Number and Title], Archives and Special Collections, Stockwell-Mudd Library, Albion College. Albion, MI.

Biographical/Historical note

The **Grand Rapids Epworth United Methodist Church** was organized and duly incorporated on 1895 October 4 with President Elder W.I. Cogshall in the chair. On 1896 April 28 the Church was dedicated with all indebtedness paid and Rev. C.E. Paddock was appointed as the first minister. Epworth United Methodist Church, located at 600 Lafayette N.E., Grand Rapids, Michigan, was discontinued in either 1977 or 1978.

In 1892 the Rev. W.I. Cogshall was presiding Elder of the Grand Rapids district, and Rev. A.M. Gould was Pastor of the Division Street Church, known as the First Methodist Church. The Division Street Church was the mother of Epworth. A number of the members of Division Street Church lived on College Avenue Hill, and it was a long way down to the church. So a class was organized on the Hill with Dr. C.A. Shackleton as leader. At first meetings were held in the homes of members and later a little building, which had been a meat market on College Avenue, N., was rented and fitted up as a house of worship.

In 1893 Rev. Albert Smith began preaching to the people in the mission. A Sunday School was organized in 1893 with Bro. Stafford as superintendent, as well as an Epworth League, with Bro. Studley as president.

In 1894 what was known as the Michigan Revival Band, under the leadership of Rev. J.J. Smith, pitched their tent along side of the mission and conducted revival meetings. In 1895 the tent came back, but this time it was pitched on the corner of Fairbanks and North Prospect Streets. The Sunday school records show that the membership grew to over 300 with a large Epworth League of young people. In the autumn, after the tent had been taken away, they were left as a flock without a fold. Dr. Shackleton and others got donations of lumber and built what they called a tabernacle (a light board fence around the outside and an old canvas stretched over the top). They worshiped there only one Sunday when a storm came and it fell. A few days after the storm, the Official Board of the mother church had a meeting and voted to build them a church, providing they would buy a lot and pay for it. The land on the corner of Lafayette and Trowbridge Streets was procured. While the Church was being built, the Baptist Mission, located on College Avenue, was rented. On October 4, 1895, the Epworth Methodist Episcopal Church was organized and duly incorporated with Presiding Elder Reverend W.I. Cogshall in charge.

On 1921 April 24, the Church celebrated its 25th Anniversary, with Pastor Rev. William Forbes Emery. On 1960 February 7 the Church celebrated its 50th Anniversary, with Rev. Emmett E. Coons, Minister.

In 1971 the Epworth congregation was yoked with the Plainfield United Methodist Church. At this time, the congregation was composed of an active membership of approximately 20 persons, most senior citizen women. It's worship and congregational life was under the supervision of the Pastor of the Plainfield/Epworth Charge. With this new arrangement, the Epworth church became the Headquarters of the Northeast Community Ministry, under the direction of the Community Minister assigned to the Plainfield/Epworth Charge.

On 1974 December 1 Epworth entered into a cooperative program with the Christian Reformed Church. The initial cooperation began with Epworth Church housing the Sunday School previously held at the Livingston Chapel, two blocks up the hill. The United Methodist Church and the Christian Reformed

Church worked together as a "Community Church". The Epworth building was held in trust by the Trustees of the Epworth United Methodist Church for the denomination. The Building Manager and Coordinator of all programs was the Community Minister. Responsibility for worship and pastoral care was assigned to the Pastoral Minister appointed by the Bishop of the West Michigan Conference of the United Methodist Church. Epworth Church remained open to serve those who desired to affiliate with the Christian Reformed Church as members as well as those who desired United Methodist membership. Christian Reformed members were granted associate membership status entitling them to hold any office except lay member to Annual Conference. The appointee of the Grand Rapids Board of Evangelism of the Christian Reformed Church served as the Director of Christian Education at the Epworth Church.

On 1977 October 16, a Special Charge Conference at Epworth United Methodist Church was held. The purpose of the conference was to discuss and vote upon whether or not to lease the church property to the Christian Reformed Church, as well as voting on the future of the congregation--whether to continue services, etc.

Recommended solution for Epworth by the Epworth Community Church Missions Analysis and Projection (MAP) team, dated 1977 March 21: Option: "Gradually phase out the Epworth ministry while getting area churches to assume the various ministry programs that are now carried on. The design of this option would be to phase the Epworth worshipping community into other United Methodist Churches and to phase the Sunday School and various youth ministries and Bible study ministries into whatever area church is most able and willing to carry it on. This church would then also assume a certain responsibility to the entire Epworth geographical community as part of its parish territory for continual ministry and witness. Recommendations: ... 3. We recommend to the Administrative Board that they begin to take steps to phase out the Sunday worship service at the Epworth Methodist Church by December 31, 1977, and that all Epworth Church activities be concluded by that date. 4. We recommend that the United Methodist District Superintendent confer with Rev. Marvin Zimmerman and with the Plainfield Administrative Board concerning the possibility of Rev. Zimmerman continuing to assume the pastoral and preaching responsibilities at Epworth until January 1, 1978 ..."

Pastors who have served at Epworth: Rev. Clark S. Wheeler (1896-1899) William W. Phelps (1899-1902) C.E. Paddock (1896) F.H. Larabee (1902) W.W. Slee (1905-1908) Estes J. Hawks (1907) W.J. Coates (1908) M.A. Braund (1909-1910, 1913-1915) I.W. Minor (1911) R.C. Lord (1915) C.R. Cochran (1917) C.W. Saterlee (Supply) (1917) Robert H. Bready (Supply) (1917) William Forbes Emery (1918) D.D. King (1923-1925) C.E. Davis, Henry Candler (1928-1931) Floyd George, Jr. (1931-1935) Maurice D. McKean (1935-1938) Thomas Rice (1938-1942) John Lockyer (1942-1945) James Clyde DeVinney (1945-1947) Grant L. Jordan (1947-1957) Emmett Coons (1957-1959) Victor Niles (1959-1961) Richard Kidder (1961-1963) James Fox (1963-1967) Wm. Rynders (1967-1969) Dow Chamberlain (1969-1971) Robert L. Hinklin (Minister to the Congregation), Don Eddy (Minister to the Community) (1971-1977)

Scope and Contents note

This collection contains the organizational records of the **Epworth United Methodist Church**, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

This collection consists of four series:

Series 1: Administrative records, 1885-1978. This series contains the following records: Membership record book (church history, membership, baptisms, marriages, deaths); Permanent membership roll loose leaf pages; Parish directories, 1935, undated; Membership forms and correspondence (transfers, suspensions, enrollments), 1961-1970; History, 1895-1960, undated; Pastor file--correspondence, Annual Conference reports and forms, Official Board minutes, 1953-1967; Pastor file--correspondence, Annual Conference reports and forms, Official Board minutes, 1957-1966; Pastor file--correspondence, Annual Conference reports and forms, Official Board minutes, insurance policy, church program outline, non-profit corporations reports, quarterly conference reports, 1965-1968; Pastor file--correspondence, Annual Conference reports and forms, Official Board minutes, Administrative Board minutes, duties of custodian, Council of Ministries minutes, 1966-1972; Pastor file--correspondence, Annual Conference reports and forms, Official Board minutes, financial ledger sheets, monthly treasurer's reports, bulletin (1975), Mission Analysis and Projection (MAP) correspondence and report, World Parish Citation, items belonging to Don Eddy list, Northeast Community Ministry operating agreement, 1975-1977, 1978; Financial ledger sheets, 1971-1975; Non-Profit Corporation papers (State of Michigan), 1962-1973; Area improvement papers (minutes and correspondence), Citizens Group minutes, Committee of 100 (information, minutes, correspondence), 1967-1968.

Series 2: Church groups, 1968-1977. This series contains the following records: United Methodist Men--correspondence, 1968; Women's Society of Christian Service, Epworth United Methodist Women, Vesper Belles Circle, and Esther Circle--booklets, 1969-1977.

Series 3: Legal papers, 1895-1978. This series contains the following records: Articles of Association of the Epworth Methodist Episcopal Church (1895), architect correspondence, loan correspondence from Grand Rapids District Methodist Episcopal Church, trustees statement and pledge form (1896), mortgage papers, organ warranty papers, Harry and Matilda Hooper warranty deed and papers, proposed lease for Epworth Church, insurance papers, 1895-1978.

Series 4: Print block, undated. This series contains one print block of the Epworth United Methodist Church building.

Arrangement note

The collection is arranged into four series: Series 1: Administrative records, Series 2: Church groups, Series 3: Legal papers, Series 4: Print block.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Albion College Archives and Special Collections 2013 March

Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research.

Rights

The literary rights to this collection are assumed to rest with the person(s) responsible for the production of the particular items within the collection, or with their heirs or assigns. Researchers bear full legal responsibility for acquisition to publish from any part of said collection per Title 17, United States Code. The Albion College Archives and Special Collections Department may reserve the right to intervene as intermediary at its own discretion.

Immediate Source of Acquisition note

Origin of the collection is Epworth United Methodist Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Controlled Access Headings

Corporate Name(s)

- Epworth Community Church (Grand Rapids, Mich.).
- Epworth Methodist Episcopal Church (Grand Rapids, Mich.).
- Epworth United Methodist Church (Grand Rapids, Mich.).

Geographic Name(s)

- Grand Rapids (Mich.) -- Church history

Administrative records

Collection Inventory

Series 1 Administrative records 1885-1972		
	Box	Folder
Official church record--historical record of permanent data, book 1 1885-1972	1	1
Permanent membership roll in loose leaf, book 4 1885-1966	1	2
Parish directories 1935, undated	1	3
Membership--Certificates of Transfer, Certificates of Suspension, Notices of Enrollment, correspondence 1961-1970	1	4
History 1895-1960, undated	1	5
Pastor file--Annual Conference reports and forms, correspondence, Official Board minutes 1953-1967	1	6
Pastor file--Annual Conference reports and forms, Official Board minutes, correspondence 1957-1966	1	7
Pastor file--Annual Conference reports and forms, insurance policy, church program outline, correspondence, Official Board minutes, Non-Profit Corporations report, quarterly Conference reports 1965-1968	1	8

Church groups

Pastor file--Annual Conference reports and forms, Administrative Board minutes, correspondence, duties of custodian, Council of Ministries minutes, Official Board minutes 1966-1972	1	9
Pastor file--Annual Conference reports and forms, financial ledger sheets, correspondence, monthly Treasurer's reports, bulletin, Mission Analysis and Projection (MAP) correspondence and report, World Parish citation, items belonging to Don Eddy list, Northeast Community Ministry operating agreement 1975-1977, 1978	1	10
Financial ledger sheets 1971-1975	1	11
Non-Profit Corporation papers (State of Michigan) 1962-1973	1	12
Area Improvement minutes and correspondence, Citizens Group minutes, Committee of 100--information, minutes and correspondence 1967-1968	1	13
Series 2 Church groups 1968-1977		
	Box	Folder
United Methodist Men--correspondence 1968	1	14
Women's Society of Christian Service, Epworth United Methodist Women, Vesper Belles Circle, Esther Circle--booklets 1969-1977	1	15
Series 3 Legal papers 1895-1978		
	Box	Folder

Print block

Articles of Association of the Epworth Methodist Episcopal Church (1895), architect correspondence, loan correspondence from Grand Rapids District Methodist Episcopal Church, trustees statement and pledge form (1896), mortgage papers, organ warranty papers, Harry and Matilda Hooper warranty deed and papers, proposed lease for Epworth Church, insurance papers 1895-1978	1	16
Series 4 Print block undated		
	Box	Folder
Print block of church building undated	1	17