UNIVERSITY PARK CHRISTIAN CHURCH COLLECTION, 1897-2006

Collection Information

Historical Sketch

Scope and Content Note

Series Contents

Cataloging Information

Processed by

Stacey Steadham 4 October 2008

Manuscript and Visual Collections Department
William Henry Smith Memorial Library
Indiana Historical Society
450 West Ohio Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF 30 manuscript boxes, 1 visual collections box, 10 bound

COLLECTION: volumes

COLLECTION Inclusive 1897-2006; Bulk 1950-2000

DATES:

PROVENANCE: University Park Christian Church, 4550 N. Illinois Street,

Indianapolis, IN 46208

RESTRICTIONS: None

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NUMBER:

NOTES:

HISTORICAL SKETCH

University Park Christian Church traces its history back to 1897, through two congregations that merged in 1930. North Park Christian Church had its beginning in 1897 in what was then known as the North Park section of Indianapolis—north of Fall Creek and west of Meridian Street. In June of that year, J.M. Canfield, a preacher-evangelist with a passion for starting and developing new churches, came into the area. Soon an evangelistic meeting was started on the third floor in Pool's Hall, at the northeast corner of Illinois and 30th streets. Later, a Sunday school began, and soon after, North Park Christian Church was organized with 30 charter members, the 13th congregation of the Disciples denomination in Indianapolis. Later that same year, the congregation moved into a frame building at 29th and Kenwood. As the neighborhood developed, membership grew to 225 and a brick church building on the same corner was dedicated on January 14, 1910. By its 20th anniversary, North Park had 500 members and their church home was approvingly noted as "the most pretentious church edifice north of Fall Creek."

Columbia Place Christian Church took its name from the part of the city north of Crown Hill Cemetery and south of what was then Fairview Park, now the campus of Butler University. Around 1909, a group of neighborhood girls playing "Sunday School" are said to have inspired the formation of an organized Sunday School in the rear of the J.B. Demaree Grocery Store at the corner of Cornelius and 41st streets. By June of that year, the Columbia Place Christian Church was organized and in October, a church building was dedicated at the corner of Bernard and Cornelius streets. To accommodate the congregation's continuing growth, the first unit of an intended imposing structure was built on the southeast corner of Capitol and 40th streets, dedicated in the spring of 1922, with the name changed to Capitol Avenue Christian Church. In 1928, after the move of Butler University from Irvington to the Fairview Park area, once again the congregation's name was changed, this time to University Place Christian Church.

Around 1929, the pastors at both North Park and University Place Churches retired, and eventually the congregations were united to form University Park Christian Church with F.W. Burnham as the new pastor in 1930. The 29th and Kenwood location served for Sunday morning activities and administration and the 40th and Capitol building served for Sunday evening functions. In 1948, with Lewis H. McAdow as pastor, University Park Christian Church sold the 29th & Kenwood property to Second Christian Church. It then purchased the Blue estate at 46th and Illinois and moved services to Sweeney Chapel on the Butler campus. University Park Christian Church worshipped on the Butler campus until 1953, when the sanctuary at 4550 N. Illinois Street was dedicated. The education wing was dedicated five

years later.

University Park, like many other mainline congregations in the United States, enjoyed its largest years of membership and attendance during the 1950s and early 1960s. Numerical decline began in the late 1960s and continued for several years. However, a new phase of life begin in 1985 on the first Sunday of Advent, when Faith United Christian Church (a predominately African American church established by the Christian Church in Indiana) and University Park (integrated, but predominately white) became equal co-owners of the church property. Though the congregations did not merge, they met together for special times of worship and service. They sought to promote cooperation and common life while maintaining their own identities and unique characteristics.

On Palm Sunday, April 9, 2006, University Park Christian Church held its final worship service. The church cited a dwindling and aging membership in its decision to close, believing that it was better stewardship of its remaining resources to invest in local and global outreach programs.

Sources:

- 1. Materials in the collection.
- 2. http://www.polis.iupui.edu/RUC/Neighborhoods/ButlerTarkington/BTTimeline.htm

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection, spanning from 1897 to 2006, contains material related to University Park Christian Church, which was formed in Indianapolis by the merging of two congregations in 1930. Most of the material dates between 1950 and 2000. It is divided into four series based on content.

Series 1 (boxes 1–5) contains material from related church congregations. These include the original congregations of North Park Christian Church and Columbia Place Christian Church (later University Place Christian Church). The material includes administrative records as well as several bound volumes dating back to the early 20th century. Discussions of a possible University Park merger with Northwood Christian Church are included, as well as materials pertaining to the Faith United Christian Church-University Park Christian Church building co-ownership. Other areas in this series include legal documents, land agreements, related correspondence, committee minutes, and joint programs and activities sponsored by University Park and Faith United.

Series 2 (boxes 6–16) contains University Park Christian Church administrative records. This includes financial records, correspondence, church board and cabinet minutes, land deeds, various committee member lists, minutes, and records. These mainly date from the 1930s to late 1990s. Also included are church-sponsored group records, like the White Cross Guild and Christian Women's Fellowship. Additionally, material related to University Park events and programs like the yearly "Hanging of the Greens" at Advent, prayer vigils, the Centennial Celebration, etc. are also included in this series, along with historical material, like several church histories, reports, academic papers, and ephemera relating to University Park.

Series 3 (boxes 17–30) contains University Park Christian Church annual reports and directories, weekly bulletins, and newsletters. This series is made up of U.P.C.C annual reports and church membership directories, the bulk of which dates from the 1940s through 2005. Additionally the series includes weekly church bulletins and weekly issues of the church newsletter, *The Messenger*, mainly from the 1950s through 2006.

Series 4 (VC Box 1) is comprised of related photographs. Most relate to the various buildings occupied during the course of University Park's history. Some individuals and church events are documented as well.

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For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

- 1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog: http://opac.indianahistory.org/
- 2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.
- 3. Select "Call Number" from the "Search In:" box.
- 4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, M 0966).
- 5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.