Collection #
SC 3247

UNIVERSITY PARK CHRISTIAN CHURCH
ADDITION, CA. 1930S–1977

Processed by

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Manuscript and Visual Collections Department
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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	1 manuscript folder, 1 black and white photo folder
COLLECTION DATES:	Ca. 1930s–1977
PROVENANCE:	Calvin L. Porter, Indianapolis, IN; September 2009
RESTRICTIONS:	None
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ALTERNATE FORMATS:	
RELATED HOLDINGS:	University Park Christian Church M0966
ACCESSION NUMBER:	2009.0241
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.

University Park Christian Church was also home to Boy Scout Troop 82 for a time. The troop was organized in 1917 in Indianapolis. From 1924 until 1946, the troop operated out of University Park. The troop later returned to University Park in March of 1953 at its new location on Illinois Street.

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:

Collection materials.

http://www.polis.iupui.edu/RUC/Neighborhoods/ButlerTarkington/BTTimeline.htm

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection includes a pamphlet about the church which discusses the history, purpose, and activities of the congregation. There are two copies of "The Scout," a publication describing the history of Troop 82. These copies were compiled for the 40th and 50th anniversary reunions of the troop. Also in the collection are two informational packets for the 50th and 60th anniversary reunions of Troop 82 and two black and white photos of the dedication of the eagle portraits in 1958.

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