

MASSACHUSETTS COUNCIL OF CHURCHES
Records, 1887-Present
RG 4833

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Boston, Massachusetts 02108
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Originally processed by Anna Koch, 1991. Reprocessed by Jessica Steytler, June 2007; Photographs processed by Konstancja Sinczak May 2009; Regular additions expected

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Introduction

Since its beginning as a Sunday School Association in the late-nineteenth century, the Massachusetts Council of Churches has played a leading role in racial reconciliation, interfaith dialogue, and church-state understanding. As a long-time resident of the Congregational House at 14 Beacon Street in Boston, the Council has been closely aligned with the goals and purpose of the Congregational Library.

The Council's archive begins with its originating organization, the Massachusetts Sunday School Association (MSSA), which later became the Massachusetts Council of Religious Education (MCRE). The Massachusetts Council traces its roots to 1902.

The collection was deposited on permanent loan to the Library in January 2007 on the eve of Director Diane Kessler's retirement. The collection had been kept in the Council's offices until that point. They had been organized in 1991 by Anna Koch, and the system she instituted was maintained until the transfer. At that time, Jessica Steytler refined the existing system, although the majority was left intact. The most dramatic change instituted was designating series and sub-series and collating the separate subjects so all similar material would be continuous.

Researchers may note that there is very little beyond board meetings and financial records for anything earlier than the late 1960s. At that time, the then director purged most of the organization's records. While some were recovered, most were not.

For a complete history of the Massachusetts Council of Churches, please review Elizabeth Nordbeck's book

Scope and Content

Series I: Parent Organizations. This series is four record cartons and a static set of material. Because of this, each sub-series is not independently numbered.

Sub-series 1: Massachusetts Sunday School Association. 1887-1929.

This section includes Meetings, committees, correspondence, financial reports, convention programs, manuscript material. The convention programs include regional town activities and those are listed in alphabetical order.

Sub-series 2: Massachusetts Council of Religious Education. 1924-1933.

This section includes by-laws, directors and executive meetings, reports, convention programs, correspondence. And religious schools of training information.

Sub-series 3: Massachusetts Federation of Churches. 1906-1933.

This section includes meetings, reports, by-laws, constitution, correspondence, and programs.

Sub-series 4: Massachusetts Federation of Women's Church Society. 1935, 1949-1956

This section was originally stored in Series II with the Council's Program records, however, they really did not fit there at all. Most of the material consists of ledger books that contain minutes. The publications from this section were removed and included with the rest of the publications from this collection.

Series II: Massachusetts Council of Churches (MCC).

Sub-series 1: Meetings: Annual, Board of Director. 1933-present

Originally the regular meetings were separated out from the annual meetings. They are intermingled after 1990. The series is arranged in chronological order.

Sub-series 2: Commissions, Committees. 1970s-present

This section is divided into active and non-active groups. Both sets are arranged in alphabetical order. The current active committees also include inter-faith dialogs. Like the majority of this collection, the bulk of the dates are in the 1960s and 1970s. For all Strategy Action Commission (SAC) records including committee minutes, please see Sub-series 7: Programs. Financial and Investment Committee records are filed in Sub-series 6: Financial Records.

Sub-series 3: Conferences, Meetings, Events. 1960s-present

The first section within this series is an alphabetic listing of conferences. Most of them took place in the 1960s and 70s. The Meetings and Events section, also alphabetically listed, is much more extensive and includes a significant number of activities up to the 1980s through 2000s.

Sub-series 4: Correspondence 1967-present

This section is divided into general, incoming, and/or outgoing. The executives listed include: Sprague, Nash, Kessler, Bailey, and Anderson. There are no further subject divisions.

Sub-series 5: Department Records, 1940-1970:

Before the Council downsized, there were a number of departments. Those represented here include: Community Information Center, Research & Strategy, Communication, Evangelism, Institutional, Ministry Pastoral Services Public Relations, Religious Education, Social Relations, Town & Country Church, and Youth Services. They are arranged in this order.

Sub-series 6: Financial Records 1934-present

Records include budgets, audits, finance and investment committees, fundraising, and treasurer's reports. The Finance committee's records are essentially complete from 1945-present.

Sub-series 7: Programs 1973-

The majority of the records in Programs are from the Strategy and Action Commission (SAC). They continue to have an active committee, however for continuity, it's kept here rather than with Sub-series 2. Major projects include: Tax Reform Program 1972-1978, Health Care Program 1975-1979, Prison Reform 1971-1979, Farmworkers in Massachusetts and United Farmworkers 1973-1974. Another section in Programs includes the Regional Ecumenical Network, 1974-1990.

Sub-series 8: Subject Files 1954-

This section is listed in alphabetical order and includes a wide variety of projects and activities.

Sub-Series 9: Ecumenical Agencies, 1960s-present

The majority of this section is no longer active. The Council used to have stronger ties to the independent local and regional ecumenical agencies, but over time, the quantity of communication has decreased dramatically. The most active part of this section is the Greater Boston Church Leaders' Covenant.

Sub-Series 10: Photographs, circa 1950 - 2006

Photographs of the activities of MCC and MCC affiliated groups. New analog additions dating after 2006 are not expected in any great volume due to the favoring of digital technologies. A more in depth guide to the photographs has been appended to this guide.

Sub-series 11: Publications.

3 boxes of material created by the MCC- newsletters, informational booklets, speeches, essays.

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 Hamilton S. Conant, "Quarter of a Century Review", April 1, 1895; revised, 1921
 Brief history of Religious Educational work in Massachusetts
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 E. Morris Fergusson, "District Officer's Manual", [n.d]
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Bishop Tutu Luncheon, May, 1979
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Civil Service Reform, 1966 - 1970
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Clergy and Laity Concerned, 1971 - 1973
Columbia Point Christian Center, 1970 - 1974
Columbia Point "Report on the Columbia Point Christian Center", 1971
Community of Peace, April 1971
Consultation on Reorganization of National Council of Churches 1989
Court Monitoring, 1970
Covenant of Justice, Equity, and Harmony, 1979 – 1982
Danielson Fund, Inc.. 1955 - 1968
Danielson Pastoral Counseling Services, 1973-74
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 Award (Forrest Knapp) 1977 - 1989
 Luncheons, Breakfasts, etc, misc. 1968 - 1989

Ecumenical Partnership - draft brochure 1989
Open House for Seminarians, 1989
Luncheon for Seminarians, 1989
Relations, 1965 - 1975
Trends in Christian Spirituality 1990
Energy Crisis, 1974
Episcopal Church Women, 1972 - 1974
Episcopal Diocese of Western MA, 1971 - 1974
Essay Contest: Action for Peace in Local Church & Community 1964
Evangelistic Committee for Urban Ministries in Boston, 1973
Fundraising Letters, 1979 - 1994
Geneva Point Committee, 1969 - 1973

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General Theological Library, 1970 - 1972
Governor's Meeting, 1989
Gordon, Yuri, 1989
Graham, Billy, Luncheon, April 2, 1982
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History and Profiles of MCC 1940s-1970s
Installations:
 General guidelines
 Executive Directors:
 Rev. C. Joseph Sprague, 1974
 Rev. James Nash, 1976
 Rev. Diane Kessler, 1988
 Jack Johnson, 2008
Inter-religious Legislation Action Council 1969 - 1979
Jewish Community, 1972 - 1974
Knapp, Forrest
 Writings
 Correspondence, 1953 - 1978
Koch, Anna: Archival Collection of the Mass Council of Churches, 1991
Levy, Yaakov, 1989
Local Cooperation in Western MA., (P.H. Steinmetz) 1968 - 1969
Mass. Catholic Conference, 1969 - 1974
Mass. Research Center
Member Churches
 A.M.E. Zion, Correspondence 1970-74
 Episcopal Diocese of MA, Correspondence 1970 - 1974
 Friends (Society) 1972 - 1974
 Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Boston
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Middle East Conflict, 1968 - 1972
Muelder, Walter: Endowment Fund Campaign 1972
Papal Visit, 1979
Personnel:
 Rev. Robert Dodds
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Professorship Search Committee, 1983 - 1986
Nash, James: Event, June 23, 1988
News Clippings, 1973, 76, 83, 84, 85, 88, 90
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Box 4

Policies/Procedures for Issuance of Statements, Resolutions & Documents 1964, 1966
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General- Positions and Policies- 1975-1996

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Abortion, 1967, 1972, 1976
Armenian Genocide (1915-1923) Resolution, 2007
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Capital Punishment, 1974
Central America/Sanctuary 1984
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Graduated Income Tax 1994
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Patient's Right of Refusal Bill: 1986
A Critical Response from the Board
Physician Assisted Suicide/ Euthanasia, 2001
Principles: Relating to charges of communism against clergymen, 1953
Prison Reform, 1973
Prop. 13, 1978
Public Activities on Sunday Mornings, 1990
Question 1, 1978
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Shared Letter of Common Concern to the Citizens of Boston, 1989
State Aid to Non-Public Schools, 1971
United Farm Workers, 1973 & 1974
Vietnam War, 1972
Voting Rights Act, 1981
Welfare, 1969, 1973
Presidents list, 1934
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Protestant Guild for the Blind, Inc.
Publication: Action Update - correspondence
Purpose and Goals, 1983 – 1991
Radio Deregulation - MCC Comments, 1980
Religious Programming in Mass., 1973 - 1980
Reorganization of MCC, 1972 - 1973
Resolutions Adopted by the Assembly/Board (Packet: Resolutions adopted 1963-1964)
 Annual Meeting Resolutions, 1944 – 1951 SEE ALSO: Christian Outlook
 Boston School Situation, 1965
 Capital Punishment, 1957
 China Question, Sept., Nov. 1965
 Equal Rights Amendment, 1976
 J.P. Stevens Boycott, 1978
 Letters to the Churches, 1967
 Protestant Principles, 1963
 Racism - Vietnam, 1968
 Social Action in Behalf of Human Rights
 United Nations, 1946
 Universal Military Training, 1951
 Vietnam, 1969
 War in Vietnam, 1966
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Sun Day Liturgical Committee, 1978
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 Aids, 1989
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 Churches and Human Sexuality, 1971 – 1977
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 Protestants in the Press, 2000
 Ecumedia, 1973 - 1975
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Vietnam War: General (also see box 54)
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Whitehouse, T.C., Event, 1973

Sub-Series 9: Ecumenical Agencies

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Ecumenical Conferences, 1995-1997

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Association of Council Secretaries, Northeast, 1965-1966

Black Ecumenical Commission, 1969-1983

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Boston Faith and Justice Network, 2006-2009

Church Covenant for Urban Justice, 1980-1984, 1989-1991 (see also Greater Boston Church Leaders' Covenant)

Church Leaders Covenant in Massachusetts, 1995-2006

Council on Religion and International Affairs, 1970 - 1971

Consultation on Interchurch Cooperation in Metropolitan Boston, 1966-1967

Draft Counseling

Ecumenical Commission 1997-2002

Envoys for Ecumenism, 1996-2002

Greater Boston Church Leaders' Covenant 1985-2001 (see also Church Covenant for Urban Justice)

Box 2

Local Councils of Churches, Correspondence:

Allston-Brighton - Beverly Interchurch

Boston

Bridgewater- Cambridge

Cape Cod

Central Middlesex- Framingham Area

Fall River (Greater)

Greenfield (Greater) - Jamaica Plain

Lawrence (Greater), - Lynn (Greater)

Malden- Methuen Christian League,

Milford Area Ecum. - Montachusett,

Nantucket- Newton Council

Northampton- Pittsfield Area

Plymouth- Southbridge Area

Springfield (Greater),

Stoneham- Wollaston, North Quincy Interchurch

Worcester, Worcester County Ecum.

Massachusetts Commission on Christian Unity, 1967-1990

Mass. Coalition for Christian Unity

National Association Ecumenical Staff, 1972-1990, 1999, 2000, 2004-2005

National Council of Churches Commission on Regional and Local Ecumenism (CORLE), 1977-1989

Committee on Academic Training for Church Planners, 1964-1966

Committee on Future Ecumenical Structure, 1971

Dept. of Educational Development, 1966

Division of Church and State, 1976-1984

General Correspondence, 1968-1989

National Council of Churches

Listening Team, 1978-1979
Peace, Justice, Liberation Action Network, 1971
National Workshop on Christian Unity, 1977-1986
Workshop on Jewish-Christian Relations, 1981-1983
60 Minutes, 1983
New England Association of Denominational & Council Executives, 1968-1969
New England Consultation of Church Leaders, (NECCL) 1971-1973
Annual Assemblies, Education and Renewal Committee, Race/minorities Committee
Conference on Church, State and Community in the Education of the Public, 1972
New England Town and Country Church Commission, 1971
Northeastern Ecumenical Council, 1971-1974
Northeast Ecumenical Institute, 1992-2002

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Northeast Ecumenical Institute, 2003-2009
State Council of Churches:
Connecticut- Virginia, 1973-1974
World Council of Churches:
Faith & Order Commission Boston, 1988
World Conference on Faith, Science, And the Future, 1979
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Sub-Series 10: Photographs

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Activism and Rallies
Farmworkers' Protests, 1973-1974
Clergy Lobby Day Against Gambling, 1994
Anti-Casino/Gambling, 2000-2008
Anti-Death Penalty Rallies, 1997 and 2005
Conference on Decade to Overcome Violence, 2005
"Cut No More in 2004," 2002
Ecumenical Memorial Service for Philippine Martyrs, September 11, 1985
Good Friday Witness for Peace, circa 1998
Labor Protest (Possibly against Senator Litton) , circa 1975
Religious Fast for Welfare Justice, April 3-7, 1995
Rx for Survival Campaign, 2005
Stewards of Hope: Points for Peacemaking, 2002
Unlabeled Negotiations with Politicians, circa 1970-2000
BCTV – Week of Prayer TV Program, 1998-2004
Conferences and Events, circa 1955 - 2004
Churches, Seminaries, and Religious Gathering Places, circa 1950-2005

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Dialogues Between Faiths, circa 1995-2005
Ecumenical Institute of New England, 1998 - 2005
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MCC Board, Committee, and Commission Meetings, 1998-2002 bulk
MCC Office, Staff, and Meetings, circa 1965 -2000
MCC Officers/Board, 1976-2000
People, Undated, circa 1950-2000

People, Dated 1952-1997

Portraits ca.1950-2000

Anderson, David – 1 photo, black and white, circa 1990
Barker, Glen – 1 photo, black and white, circa 1970
Bergstrom, Charles V. – 4 photos including 1 duplicate, black and white, circa 1965-1975
Carper, Eugene – 1 photo, black and white, November 1969
Day, T.C. - 1 photo, black and white, circa 1960
Horton, Mrs. Douglass – SEE McAfee, Mildred H.
Kessler, Diane – 1 photo, color, circa 1997
Knapp, Forrest L. – 4 photos including 3 duplicates, black and white, circa 1950-1970
McAfee, Mildred H. – 1 photo, black and white, circa 1960–1975
McGinty, John - 1 photo, black and white, circa 1990
Mitchell, Robert - 1 photo, color, circa 1980
Mueller, Rueben - 1 photo, black and white, 1964
Nash, James A. - 1 photo, color, circa 1980
Porter, Jo - 1 photo, black and white, circa 1955
Porter, Joseph E. - 1 photo, black and white, circa 1965
Post, Avery D. - 1 photo, black and white, circa 1980
Raiser, Konrad - 1 photo, black and white, 1995
Sprague, C. Joseph - 4 photos including 3 duplicates, black and white, circa 1970-1985
Stearns, Howard O. - 1 photo, black and white, circa 1958-1959
Sullivan, Emmanuel - 1 photo, color, October 1988
Walmsley, Arthur E. - 1 photo, black and white, 1967
Watson, Frederick - 2 photos, black and white, circa 1970-1980
Watson, W.C. - 1 photo, black and white, circa 1990
Wiley, Jill - 1 photo, color, 2000
Wedel, Cynthia - 1 photo, black and white, circa 1970
Wilkins, Roy - 1 photo, black and white, circa 1968

World Council of Churches 1965-2000, 1998 bulk

Sub-Series 11: Publications

Box 1

MSSA:

Publications: Removed from collection, integrated into periodical/journal section

"The Massachusetts Interdenominational Sunday School Record", 1892; 1894
"The Massachusetts Sunday School Worker", 1903
"The Massachusetts Sunday School Bulletin", 1906
"The Message", 1906-1909
"The Sunday School Message", 1910-1919

MFC

Publications: Separated

Rev. E.T. Root, "State Federations", 1908
"National Federation of Churches, New England Office, Bulletin", nos. 5-16, 1906-1910
"Mass. Federation of Churches, Bulletin", nos. 2-64 (new series), 1912-1930 (gaps)
"Facts and Factors, Quarterly Bulletin", 1911-1931 (gaps)
"Bay State Church Bulletin, 1931, nos. 5-7, 1931

New England Council of Federated Church Women

Midwinter Bulletin, 1935-1936

United Church Women of Massachusetts

“Massachusetts Church Woman” 1939- 1940; 1945-1956
Massachusetts Federation of Women’s Church Societies
Brochures and Pamphlets
Bulletin, 1933-1938

Religious Education Department
“Adventures in Discovering God”
“The Bible Jesus Knew”
“Christian Church”
“Early Church”
“Good News and How it Travels”
“Home Life in Bible Times Today
“the Later Church”
“Looking at Life with Jesus”
“Reading Book on the Christian Church”
“Training of a Nation”

Box 2

Population Data, 1950's and 60's

Publications:

Affirmative Action Study Guide, 1998
"The Church as Consumer" [Project Equality of Massachusetts]
Churches in Massachusetts, 1956
Council's Position: 1954-1966, 1967, 1994
Directory of Ecumenical Colleague Groups, 1994
Ecumenical Accountability, 1990
Ecumenical Artists Directory, 1993
"Ecumenical Dissent-a Functional Response to LIMA on Ministry"
[J.A. Nash], manuscript copy
Ecumenical Model for Ministry: Constitution of the MCC, (adopted 1974)
Ecumenical Network of Church Resource Centers 1994
Federated Churches-a Manual [New York State Council of Churches]
Guide to Some Immigration and Refugee Services, 1992
Guide to Provide Ministers with Information on Services for Young People, June 1970
Handbook for Local Councils of Churches, [Forrest Knapp], 1955
Labor & Leisure, 1994
Media Directory to Massachusetts Protestant Churches, 1993
Metropolitan Boston: Its Churches and its People, 1962
Migrant Farmworkers in Massachusetts [J.A. Nash], 1974
Odyssey Towards Unity, 1977 & 1993
Odyssey Towards Unity Study Guide 1995
Protestants in the Press, 1990
Relations between Church and State 1960
"Report on the Columbia Point Christian Center", [Moreen P. Jones], 1971
Studying the Bible Together, 1998
Suggested Next Steps in Latin America [Forrest Knapp], [n.d.]
Sunday Closing Laws Revisited, 1993
Taxes: Fair or Foul?, 1977
Toward Christian Unity, 1958
Toward Oneness in Mission, 1968 & 1969
"Your Church and Metropolitan Boston", 1963
"Your Will - And God"

Newsletters: 1980s; 1990-1992
Personnel Policies, Constitutions- Knapp era

Box 3

Brochures, misc., 1944- to present

Newsletters:

Action Update, 1970- to 1999

Bay State Church Life, 1930s-1945 (becomes Christian Outlook)

Christian Outlook, 1945-1971 (becomes Outlook)

Ecumgram, 1974

Guide Lines, 1958-1961

Impact, 1961-1967

In-Depth Reports, 1974

Intersect, 1975- to present

Legislative Bulletin, 1946-1953

Outlook, 1971-1973

Trends/Issues, 1970-1973

Department Newsletters:

Dept. of Communication,

Newscript, 1973-1977

Dept. of Mass. Council of Church Women,

Massachusetts Church Women, 1946-1955

Dept. of Social Relations,

Social Relations Bulletin, 1953-1961

Social Relations Newsletter, 1964-1972