

BERKSHIRE RECORD OFFICE

SPENCERS WOOD CONGREGATIONAL/UNITED REFORMED
CHURCH RECORDS

D/N 44

Records of Spencers Wood Congregational (later United Reformed) Church, 1812-1995.
(20 vols, 10 bdl, 5 docs)

Deposited in December 2000 (acc. 6665); June 2005 (acc. 8051)

Cat : LS 4/2001; 7/2007

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Schedule of accessions

Acc. 6665: 1/1/1; 1/2/1-5; 1/4/1; 2/1/1-3; 3/1/1-2; 5/1/1-8; 5/2/1; 6/3/1-2; 6/5/1;
7/2/1; 7/3/1; 8/2/1; 9/2/1; 10/1-2; 13/1/1; 13/2/1

Acc. 8051: 6/2/1; 6/4/1; 9/3/1; 14/1

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Summary

CHURCH ADMINISTRATION: church book, 1901-1976; church meeting minutes, 1901-1988; AGM minutes, 1930-1932, 1957-1994 (incomplete); annual reports, 1977-1991 (incomplete).

DEACONS: minutes, 1952-1972.

ELDERS: minutes, 1972-1995.

TREASURER: accounts, 1909-1913, 1922-1986; cash accounts, 1933-1947; annual statements, 1971-1994 (incomplete).

PROPERTY RECORDS: papers relating to title to the chapel, 1824-1949; insurance policies, 1940-1954; papers re new boiler, 1951; correspondence on appointment of new trustees, 1949-1951; quit-rent receipts, 1841-1861.

CHURCH ORGANISATIONS: Young Mens' Institute accounts, 1956-1965; agreement to sponsor Scouts, 1979.

REGISTRATION AND MEMBERSHIP: baptisms, 1901-1907, 1919-1924, 1931-1976; marriages, 1902-1903, 1919, 1926-1964, 1970-1972; funerals, n.d., 1907, 1919, 1931-1937, 1945-1976; members, c.1902-1986.

SERVICE OF THE CHURCH: anniversary order of service, 1993; certificate registering chapel as place of worship, 1817.

MINISTER: applications for grant, 1945-1959; induction and ordination order of service, 1986.

OTHER BODIES: papers re joint working proposals with Three Mile Cross Methodist Church, 1993-1995; letter from King's Church, Spencers Wood, 1995.

MISCELLANEOUS: Act amending Toleration Act, 1812.

Introduction

The church's origins appear to lie in meetings for religious worship held in the house of John Carter on Spencers Wood Common in 1815. A small building comprising chapel and Sunday School was built by Richard Body on land enclosed from the common in 1816, and registered as a place of worship in 1817 (associated with the Wesleyan Methodists of Reading).

A new, larger, chapel was built in 1837. It may have been a direct replacement for one built in c.1800 under the auspices of Reading Evangelical Society and still in existence in 1835.

The church was the only place of worship in Spencers Wood village in the 19th century. Additional buildings were erected in 1885, and in 1903 a new chapel was built.

In the 1890s the church shared an evangelist with Sulhamstead Congregational Church. Later it was supplied by local preachers from Reading, and in the later 20th century employed a minister, usually shared with another church.

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Records in other collections

1947-1950	Correspondence with B S O S B Congregational Union.	D/N 25/1/2/1
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1	CHURCH ADMINISTRATION		
1/1	<u>Church books</u>		
1/1/1 MF 30488	Church book. (Includes minutes of church meetings, January 1901-June 1914, June 1917-July 1923; rolls of church members, c.1901-1965, including details of service as officers of church, occupation, mode of admission to membership and details of death or reason for leaving church; summary register of marriages, August 1902, December 1903, December 1919, September 1926-December 1964, October 1970-September 1972; register of baptisms, April 1901-December 1907, March 1919-[June] 1924, March 1931-October 1976, including mother's maiden name, date and place of birth, and parents' involvement with church; and register of burials [really of funerals], n.d., February 1907, May 1919, September 1931-October 1937, October 1945-September 1976, including date and cause of death and place of burial.)	1 vol	1901-1976
1/2	<u>Church meeting minutes</u>		
	[Minutes before 1901 do not appear to have been kept; it is possible that all decisions were made at the church meeting of Trinity Congregational Church (<i>see</i> D/N 10). For minutes of church meetings, 1901-1923, <i>see</i> D/N 44/1/1/1.]		
1/2/1	Minutes of church meetings, October 1923-October 1943, June 1947-September 1956. (Includes summary of meetings and events (no minutes kept), 1944-1945, and minutes of annual church meetings, 1930-1932.)	1 vol	1923-1956
1/2/2	Minutes of church meetings, September 1956-January 1969, and of annual general meetings, 1957-1958, 1961-1962, 1964-1969.	1 vol	1956-1969
1/2/3	Minutes of church meetings, February 1969-July 1972, and of annual general meetings, 1970-1972. (Includes annual statement of accounts, 1971.)	1 vol	1969-1972
1/2/4	Minutes of church meetings, October 1972-June 1988; and of annual general meetings, 1973, 1975-1988, 1992-1994. (Includes annual statements of accounts, 1972, 1975-1977, 1979-1980; and annual reports, 1977-1981, 1983.)	1 vol	1972-1994 Closed until 2025
1/2/5	Minutes of annual general meeting. [Found loose in D/N 44/1/2/4.]	1 doc	1974

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1	CHURCH ADMINISTRATION		
1/4	<u>Papers presented to church meeting</u>		
	[For annual reports, 1977-1981, <i>see</i> D/N 44/1/2/4.]		
1/4/1/1-9	Annual reports, 1983, 1984, 1987, 1988, [1989]-1991. [Found loose in D/N 44/1/2/4.]	1 bdl	1984-1992

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2	DEACONS		
2/1	<u>Minutes</u>		
	[Minutes of deacons' meetings do not appear to survive before 1952.]		
2/1/1	Minutes of deacons' meetings, October 1952-July 1953, June 1955-April 1958, July 1960-January 1964.	1 vol	1952-1964
2/1/2	Minutes of deacons' meetings, February 1964-January 1972.	1 vol	1964-1972
2/1/3	Minutes of deacons' meetings, February-September 1972.	1 vol	1972
	[From October 1972, the deacons were succeeded by elders.]		

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3	ELDERS		
3/1	<u>Minutes</u>		
3/1/1	Minutes of elders' meetings, October 1972-February 1982.	1 vol	1972-1982 Closed until 2013
3/1/2	Minutes of elders' meetings, May 1982-[May 1995].	1 vol	1982-1995 Closed until 2026

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5	TREASURER		
5/1	<u>Accounts</u>		
5/1/1	Accounts (receipts and expenditure), September 1909-March 1913, April 1922-December 1944. (Includes, reversed, accounts of Physical Culture members' subscriptions and expenditure (equipment, e.g. bar bell and skipping ropes), February-April 1910 [probably connected to the Young Men's Institute].)	1 vol	1909-1944
5/1/2	Accounts (receipts and expenditure), January 1945-June 1951.	1 vol	1945-1951
5/1/3	Accounts (income and expenditure), July 1951-June 1956.	1 vol	1951-1956
5/1/4	Account ledger. (Includes, reversed, general accounts (income and expenditure), July 1956-June 1963.)	1 vol	1956-1963
5/1/5	Account ledger. (Includes, at front, general accounts (income and expenditure), July 1963-June 1967.)	1 vol	1963-1967
5/1/6	Accounts (receipts and expenditure), July 1968-December 1973.	1 vol	1968-1973
5/1/7	Accounts (income and expenditure), January 1974-November 1983, 1986.	1 vol	1974-1986 Closed until 2017
5/1/8	Treasurer's cash accounts, January 1933-September 1947.	1 vol	1933-1947
5/2	<u>Statements of accounts</u>		
	[For annual statement of accounts, 1971, <i>see</i> D/N 44/1/2/3. For 1972, 1975-1977, 1979-1980, <i>see</i> D/N 44/1/2/4.]		
5/2/1/1-6	Annual statements of accounts, 1973-1974, 1978, 1983, 1992-1993. [Found loose in D/N 44/1/2/4.]	1 bdl	1974-1994

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6	PROPERTY RECORDS		
6/2	<u>Title deeds</u>		
6/2/1/1-12	Papers relating to the title to the church building. (Includes account of the acquisition of the site and building of the premises (1815-1816), dated 1824.)	1 bdl	1824-1949
6/3	<u>Fabric papers</u>		
6/3/1/1-2	Insurance policies.	1 bdl	1940-1954
6/3/2	Correspondence and report concerning the installation of a new boiler.	1 bdl	1951
6/4	<u>Accounts</u>		
6/4/1/1-4	Receipts for quit-rents for the chapel site.	1 bdl	1841-1861
6/5	<u>Miscellaneous</u>		
6/5/1/1-2	Correspondence concerning the appointment of new trustees.	1 bdl	1949-1951

- 7 CHURCH ORGANISATIONS
- 7/2 Young Mens' Institute
- [The Institute was built in 1902 by the voluntary labour of members of a bible class at the church, initially for use as a schoolroom.
For accounts of Physical Culture, 1910, *see* D/N 44/5/1/1.]
- 7/2/1 Account ledger. 1 vol 1956-1965
(Includes, at back, general accounts, July 1956-June 1959.)
- 7/3 Scouts
- 7/3/1/1-2 Agreement for church to act as sponsor of 1st Spencers Wood Scout Group. 1 bdl 1979
[Found loose in D/N 44/3/1/1.]

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8 REGISTRATION AND MEMBERSHIP

8/1 Registers

[For baptisms, 1901-1907, 1919-1924, 1931-1976, marriages (summary), 1902-1903, 1919, 1926-1964, 1970-1972, and [funerals], n.d., 1907, 1919, 1931-1937, 1945-1976, *see* D/N 44/1/1/1. The church did not have its own burial ground.]

8/2 Membership registers and lists

[For rolls of members, c.1901-1965, *see* D/N 44/1/1/1.]

8/2/1 Register of members.

1 vol

1965-1986
**Closed until
2017**

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9	SERVICE OF THE CHURCH		
9/2	<u>Orders of service</u>		
9/2/1	Order of service for church anniversary.	1 doc	1993
9/3	<u>Miscellaneous</u>		
9/3/1	Certificate of registration of the building as a place of worship.	1 doc	1817

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10	MINISTER		
10/1/1-10	Applications for grants to supplement minister's stipend.	1 bdl	1945-1959
10/2	Order of service for ordination of Griselda Ellen Louise Langdon at Tilehurst United Reformed Church, and induction to ministry of Tilehurst and Spencers Wood Churches.	1 doc	1986

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13	OTHER BODIES		
13/1	<u>Three Mile Cross Methodist Church</u>		
13/1/1/1-6	Papers relating to proposals for joint working with, and towards eventual union with, Three Mile Cross Methodist Church.	1 bdl	1993-1995
13/2	<u>King's Church, Spencers Wood</u>		
13/2/1/1-2	Letter from King's Church concerning possible use of the United Reformed Church premises for services.	1 bdl	1995

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14

MISCELLANEOUS

14/1

Printed copy of *An Act to repeal certain Acts, and amend other Acts relating to Religious Worship and Assemblies, and Persons teaching or Preaching therein* (52 George III c.CLV).

1 doc

1812