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## **Central Church of Christ (Birmingham, AL) Records, 1961-1969**

Central Church of Christ (Birmingham, AL)

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**Central Church of Christ  
(Birmingham, AL) Records, (1961-1969)**

Center for Restoration Studies  
Manuscripts #508

Abilene Christian University Special Collections and Archives  
Brown Library  
Abilene Christian University  
Abilene, TX 79699-9208

21 January 2021

## **About this collection**

**Title:** Central Church of Christ (Birmingham, AL) Records

**Creator:** Central Church of Christ (Birmingham, AL)

**Identifier/Call Number:** Center for Restoration Studies Manuscripts #508

**Physical Description:** 3 folders

**Dates (Inclusive):** 1961-1969

**Dates (Bulk):** 1961-1969

**Location:** Center for Restoration Studies

**Language of Materials:** English

**Scope and Content Note:** These materials include three folders of correspondence, pamphlets, and other print material related to segregation and integration events.

**Biographical Note:** From Palisades Church of Christ history page: "To understand the history of the Palisades Church, we must go all the way back to the beginning of the Church of Christ in Birmingham:

As early as the 1870s, a small group was meeting with some regularity in homes in the young mining community, with occasional help from Justus McDuffie "Mack" Barnes from the Montgomery area.

Through the efforts of a tent meeting in the summer of 1895, G.A. Sharitts and others formed a more firmly established congregation of about 22 members which rented a third floor loft, known as Fox Hall, at the corner of what is now 4th Ave and 19th St N in downtown Birmingham. The congregation met there for the next 15 years with the support of Sharitts, Barnes, and John T. Lewis, who came to work with the congregation in November of 1907.

At that time, membership in the congregation numbered about 30. This number grew to about 100 in two years time. In September of 1909, the church bought a lot on Charles St in West End for \$800 and built a frame building there at the cost of \$2250. The congregation moved into the new building in 1910. This was the formal beginning of the West End Church of Christ.

In 1913, the West End church purchased a building from a Presbyterian church in Woodlawn. In doing so, they planted the Woodlawn church, now known as Roebuck Parkway, with Lewis serving both congregations from 1914-1917.

Beginning in 1921, the West End church matched dollar for dollar the efforts of the city's African-American Christians, which resulted in the establishment of more than eight congregations in Birmingham. Almost from the start, the West End congregation was a leader in

the efforts to plant churches in the greater Birmingham area, continually promoting the heritage of congregational cooperation instilled in the hearts of its members by John T. Lewis and others. In November of 1926, shortly after James Shepherd came to preach at West End (1926-1930), a building fund was established for a new West End church at Lomb Ave and 7th St SW, which was completed in 1927. Over the next decades, West End steadily grew, reaching a membership of approximately 500 in the late 1930's, and continued its efforts to promote growth in other area churches.

In 1941 West End purchased the Simpson Methodist church building at 7th Ave and 25th St N and established the Central Church of Christ, giving about 100 members to this new work. This new congregation began on June 1, 1941 and was self-supporting within a matter of weeks. In other efforts, West End provided members to help begin the Homewood and Shades Mountain congregations.

From the very beginning, Central became a thriving congregation, reaching a membership of about 700 in the early 1960's, and planting churches in Leeds, Montevallo, and Riverchase. One of Central's most well-known and influential works was Jimmy Fowler's "Messages from the Master", heard on radio stations in a number of cities.

By the late 1980's, it became apparent to both congregations that relocation would be necessary to effectively continue their ministries to the Birmingham community. After almost a half-century of separate existence, Central and West End decided to reunite to begin a new chapter, together in Christ. Property was purchased on Palisades Boulevard on the southern edge of Birmingham, and construction began on a building.

On December 2, 1990 the Palisades Church of Christ conducted its first service in the Shades Valley High School building. Edsel Burlison from West End, and Tom McLure of Central were co-ministers at Palisades until Burlison's passing in July 1992.

The congregation finally moved into its new building on July 5, 1992.”<sup>1</sup>

### **Administrative Information**

**Immediate Source of Acquisition:** Palisades Church of Christ Elders

**Date of Acquisition:** 1 July 2019

**Accession Number:** R 2021.001

**Date of Accession:** 21 January 2021

**Accessioned by:** Amanda Dietz

**Processor and Date of Processing:** Amanda Dietz, 21 January 2021

**Finding Aid Creator and Date:** Amanda Dietz, 21 January 2021

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<sup>1</sup> Palisades Church of Christ website history page, <http://www.palisadesfamily.net/about/history.aspx>

## **Using this collection**

**Processing Status:** Processed

**Conditions Governing Access:** Materials are housed in the Abilene Christian University Special Collections and Archives, Brown Library, Abilene Christian University in Abilene, Texas and are non-circulating. Access is available during normal business hours; prior appointments are preferred.

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**Preferred citation:** [identification of item], [file or folder name], Central Church of Christ (Birmingham, AL) Records, 1961-1969. Center for Restoration Studies MS #508. Abilene Christian University Special Collections and Archives, Brown Library. Abilene Christian University, Abilene, TX.

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**Arrangement of Materials:** The materials are housed in three folders and remain in the order they were received.

**Separated Materials:** none

### **Subjects and Keywords**

Churches of Christ -- History -- 20<sup>th</sup> century

Restoration Movement

Churches of Christ

Stone-Campbell Movement

Palisades Church of Christ

Central Church of Christ

Churches of Christ -- Alabama

## **Inventory**

[First Folder] Finding Aid

Race relations

Desegregation materials

Miscellaneous materials