

**THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA
ARCHIVES**

**FINDING AID #21
CHURCH WORSHIP**

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Introduction

This finding aid describes the records of the Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion and the records of its successor the Committee on Church Worship. The Presbyterian Archives holds only a few publications of the Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion and a few of the orders of services published by the Committee on Church Worship. The minutes and correspondence have not been transferred to the Archives and it is not known whether any of these records still exist. Related records may be found in the records of the Committee on Revision of the Book of Common Order and the Committee on the Revision of the Book of Praise.

The records were re-catalogued in February 1989 by Elspeth Reid.

The finding aid is listed as FA-WRSHP.

Historical Sketch

The Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion was established as a standing committee of General Assembly in 1908. The committee took over the work of two previous committees, the Committee on Uniformity of Public Worship which was a standing committee of Assembly from 1895-1908 and the Special Committee on Aids for Social Worship, 1897-1902. The Committee on Uniformity of Public Worship was appointed as a result of an Overture from the Synod of Hamilton and London, requesting the General Assembly of 1895 to appoint a committee

" to afford direction to the Church to secure the reverent and edifying observance of public worship, with due regard to Christian liberty on the one hand and general uniformity on the other" (Acts & Proceedings 1895 minutes p.37).

The Committee on Uniformity of Worship was initially given the task of preparing a directory for public worship and was then given the task of preparing a manual, Aids for Family Worship which was not published due to financial constraints. The Special Committee on Aids for Social Worship was appointed on the motion of the Convenor of the Committee on Uniformity of Worship in 1898 in order to revise a Manual on Short Sunday Services for Travellers. In 1908 the Committee on Uniformity of Worship recommended the establishment of a new committee, to be called the Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion.

The Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion took over the task of the Committee on Uniformity of Public Worship to publish the booklet, Aids for Family Worship. The Committee then went on to produce a variety of devotional aids and other publications with suggested forms of worship for various occasions. Following the formation of the United Church in 1925 the continuing Presbyterian General Assembly re-appointed the Committee retaining the same name. Between 1930 and 1934 the committee gradually changed its name to the Committee on Church Worship and Aids to Devotion and then to the Committee on Church Worship. Under its new name the committee continued to work mainly on publishing devotional aids, including special orders of services for special occasions. The committee also assisted the General Assembly's Committee on the Revision of the Book of Common Order and the Committee on the Revision of the Book of Praise during the 1950s and 1960s. The committee frequently had to deal with hostility from some in the Church who resisted the idea of written orders of services and devotional aids, fearing that they might lead to the adoption of a more liturgical approach in the Presbyterian Church.

In 1979 the Committee on Church Worship recommended that it become an Advisory Committee within the Board of Congregational Life.

Church Worship

File No.	Date	Description
Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion		
1973-1015-1-1	1919	<u>The Book of Family Devotion</u> 1919; 96pp.
1973-1015-1-2	n.d.	<u>Service Helps for Presbyterian Groups</u> n.d.; 18pp.
1973-1015-1-3	1930	<u>Aids for Worship in Church, Camp and Sunday School</u> 1930; 54pp.
Committee on Church Worship		
1973-1040-1-1	c.1895-1950	Orders of Service Services authorized for special occasions, including the coronations of George VI and Elizabeth II and the 75th Anniversary of the W.M.S.