

Yale University Library  
Yale Divinity Library

# Guide to the Edward Curtis Dahl Papers

RG 169



Compiled by Brian K. Phillips and Martha Lund Smalley

2001

409 Prospect Street  
New Haven, CT 06511  
divinity.library@yale.edu

<http://web.library.yale.edu/divinity/special-collections>

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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Yale Divinity Library  
409 Prospect Street  
New Haven, CT 06511  
divinity.library@yale.edu  
<http://web.library.yale.edu/divinity/special-collections>

**CALL NUMBER:** RG 169

**CREATOR:** Dahl, Edward Curtis, 1916-1993

**TITLE:** Edward Curtis Dahl Papers

**DATES:** 1939-1986

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 13 linear feet (32 boxes)

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** The E.C. Dahl Papers provided documentation of the life and work of a YDS graduate who was a Congregational minister. They contain correspondence, biographical materials, sermons, publications, and pastoral materials. Edward C. Dahl was ordained by the Congregational Church in 1941, and served churches in Massachusetts, Vermont, Connecticut, Wisconsin, New York, and New Hampshire. He authored numerous articles and sermons in various ministry publications, including *Pulpit*, *Pulpit Digest*, *Church Educator* and *Advance*. He died in 1993, survived by his wife, daughter Mary and sons Christopher and Edward.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/divinity.169>

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## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use on site, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/divinity.169>.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b.      box  
f.      folder

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of the Christopher and Edward Dahl Families, and Mary Dahl.

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### Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

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## Preferred Citation

Edward Curtis Dahl Papers (RG 169), Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library.

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## Biographical / Historical

Edward Curtis Dahl, son of Professor George Dahl and Elizabeth Curtis Dahl was born in New Haven, CT on April 5, 1916. His father was professor of Old Testament at the Yale Divinity School. E.C. Dahl attended schools in New Haven, and then Harvard College, graduating Magna cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa in 1938. He attended Union Theological Seminary and Yale Divinity School, graduating Magna cum laude from the latter in 1941.

Prior to graduation from YDS, Edward Dahl served during the summers of 1939 and 1940 as a student pastor in Eden Mills, VT, a resort community near the Canadian border. Correspondence and photographs suggest this was an especially pleasant and memorable period of time for young Dahl. Following graduation from Yale Divinity School, he spent the summer of 1941 in postgraduate study at both Union Theological Seminary and Mansfield College in England.

Upon his return, he chose pastoral ministry over the academy, accepted a call to Trinitarian Congregational Church in East Northfield, Mass., and was ordained in October of 1941. He spent the next three years in service to that congregation, and in 1944 accepted a call to Centre Congregational Church in Brattleboro, VT. This position was followed in 1952 by a call to the First Church of Christ, Congregational, New Britain, CT. In 1962, Dahl accepted a position at the First Congregational Church of Appleton, WI, and in 1967 to the Garden City Community Church, Garden City, NY. Finally, in 1972, Dahl accepted a call to the Union Congregational Church of Petersborough, NH, where he served until his retirement in 1980.

During the course of nearly forty years of Congregational ministry, Edward Dahl also published extensively in devotional and ministerial publications, including numerous meditations for *Church Educator*, and a particularly well-received thirteen installment series on "The Christian Funeral" for *Pulpit Digest*. He also served on numerous local, state and national committees and boards within the Congregational (UCC) Church, and as President of the Yale Divinity School Alumni Association from 1965-67.

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## Scope and Contents

The Edward Curtis Dahl papers consist of 13 linear feet of material divided into 6 series:

Correspondence in Series I pertains to personal, academic and professional matters, and extends from 1937 through 1986. It includes letters of a personal nature from Amos Wilder and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., and a great deal of correspondence pertaining to Dahl's career. Biographical materials in Series II include numerous newspaper clippings related to Dahl's career transitions, early photos from Eden Mills, VT, and obituaries and eulogies.

The bulk of the collection consists of hundreds of sermons arranged in two subseries, chronological from 1939 to 1984, and a topical series, presumably arranged by Dahl himself, and generally arranged alphabetically. These subseries variously include notes for sermons, working drafts and "pulpit copies." This is a substantial collection covering a long era, and would seem to have historical significance, given its range and depth.

The publications of Series IV consist of drafts, manuscripts, and copies of Dahl's contributions to the ministerial and devotional press, including extensive devotions, and in particular a thirteen part series for *Pulpit Digest* concerning the Christian funeral. Dahl was also an ongoing contributor of meditations to *Church Educator*. Although this collection does not contain copies or drafts, save one, Dahl also had several sermons published in *Pulpit*.

Pastoral materials in Series V include various folders of notes and miscellany on given themes (humor, Bible study, etc.), and extensive prayer and quotation files, from which Dahl apparently drew when developing

sermons, devotions, etc.. In addition, annual minister's reports, dated intermittently from 1939 through 1980, contain a plethora of detailed information regarding everyday Congregational ministry during those decades. Finally, personal materials include a limited amount of matter pertaining to extra-professional and alumni associations

These papers may be of considerable interest to students of Congregational pastoral ministry from the 1940's through the 1970's, or to historians concerned with religious life in the mid-twentieth century. The collection offers an abundance of detailed documentation of an extensive and very accomplished career in parish ministry in New England and elsewhere.

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## **Arrangement**

- I. Correspondence, 1939-1986, n.d.
- II. Biographical Materials
- III. Sermons, 1939-1980
- IV. Publications
- V. Pastoral Materials
- VI. Personal Materials

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## Collection Contents

### Series I: Correspondence, 1939-1986, n.d.

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b. 1, f. 1	Correspondence, including from Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., and Amos Wilder	1939-1945
b. 1, f. 2-5	Correspondence	1944-1986, n.d.

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## Series II: Biographical Materials

b. 1, f. 6      Photographs

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b. 1, f. 7      Newspaper clippings

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b. 1, f. 8      Obituaries, eulogy

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**Series III: Sermons, 1939-1980**

General		
b. 2, f. 9	Sermons, list of titles	1972-1980
	Sermons, Chronological	1939-1984
b. 2, f. 10-13	Eden Mills, VT	1939-1940
b. 2, f. 15-16	East Northfield, MA	1941
b. 3, f. 17-22	East Northfield, MA	1942-1943
b. 4, f. 23-28	Brattleboro, VT	1947-1959
b. 5, f. 29-34	Brattleboro, VT	1959-1962
b. 6, f. 35-39	Brattleboro, VT	1963-1965
b. 7, f. 40-45	Brattleboro, VT	1965-1968
b. 8, f. 46-51	Brattleboro, VT	1968-1971
b. 9, f. 52-57	Brattleboro, VT	1971-1973
b. 10, f. 58-63	Brattleboro, VT	1973-1975
b. 11, f. 64-69	Brattleboro, VT	1975-1977
b. 12, f. 70-76	Brattleboro, VT	1978-1984
Sermons, Topical		
b. 13, f. 77-81	Lenten	1949-1957
b. 14, f. 82-86	Lenten	1958-1964
b. 15, f. 87-89	Lenten	1966-1974
b. 15, f. 90	AA, Advent	
b. 15, f. 91	Apostles, Ash Wednesday	
b. 15, f. 92	Basic Christianity	
b. 16, f. 93	Basic Christianity	
b. 16, f. 94	Bible Sunday	
b. 16, f. 95	Bible Sunday, Brotherhood	
b. 16, f. 96	Christian Attributes	
b. 16, f. 97	Christian Education, Christian Life	
b. 16, f. 98	Christmas	
b. 17, f. 99	Christmas	



## Sermons, Topical (continued)

b. 17, f. 100	Christmas
b. 17, f. 101-102	Church Ministry
b. 17, f. 103	Church School, Church Union, Communion
b. 18, f. 104	Congregationalism, Conversion
b. 18, f. 105	Easter
b. 18, f. 106-107	Everymember canvass
b. 18, f. 108	Evil, problem of
b. 19, f. 109	Faith
b. 19, f. 110	Faith, family
b. 19, f. 111	Fellowship, God
b. 19, f. 112-114	God
b. 20, f. 115	God, Good Friday
b. 20, f. 116	Health, Hope
b. 20, f. 117	Immortality
b. 20, f. 118	Installation, Jesus
b. 20, f. 119-120	Jesus
b. 21, f. 121	Labor, Learning to See, Love
b. 21, f. 122	Man, Maundy, Memorial Day, Membership
b. 21, f. 123	Miscellaneous
b. 21, f. 124-125	Miscellaneous
b. 22, f. 126-128	Miscellaneous
b. 22, f. 129	Missions, Mother's Day
b. 22, f. 130	New Year's Day
b. 23, f. 131	Palm Sunday, Peace
b. 23, f. 132	Pentecost, Personal Religion
b. 23, f. 133	Prayer
b. 23, f. 134	Protestantism
b. 23, f. 135	Radio Broadcasts
b. 24, f. 136	Religion Christianity
b. 24, f. 137	Religion Christianity

## Sermons, Topical (continued)

b. 24, f. 138	Salvation, Scouting, Social Action
b. 24, f. 139	The Beatitudes
b. 24, f. 140	The Parables
b. 25, f. 141	The Parables
b. 25, f. 142	Thanksgiving
b. 25, f. 143	World Service, Worldwide Communion

## Series IV: Publications

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b. 25, f. 144	Articles entitled "The Christian Funeral" ( <i>Pulpit Digest</i> )
b. 25, f. 145	Correspondence in re "The Christian Funeral"; sermon; devotionals
b. 26, f. 146	Devotionals in <i>Church Educator</i> , "Educator's Meditations"

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**Series V: Pastoral Materials**

b. 26, f. 147-151	Annual minister's reports
b. 27, f. 152	Church governance
b. 27, f. 153	Church governance, by-laws
b. 27, f. 154-155	Funerals, eulogies
b. 27, f. 156	Marriages
b. 28, f. 157	Stewardship, children's ministry
b. 28, f. 158	Humor
b. 28, f. 159	Music, deacons
b. 28, f. 160	Bible study
b. 28, f. 161	Youth ministry
b. 28, f. 162	Christmas, Advent
b. 29, f. 163	reconfirmation, student ministry
b. 29, f. 164-165	Miscellaneous
b. 29, f. 166-167	Installation, ordination
b. 30, f. 168-170	Prayers, liturgy
b. 31, f. 171	Prayer, quotation files

## Series VI: Personal Materials

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b. 32, f. 172	Alumni associations
b. 32, f. 173	Saturday Night Club (New Britain, CT)

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## **Selected Search Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

### **Subjects**

Clergy  
Congregational churches -- United States

### **Names**

Dahl, Edward Curtis, 1916-1993

### **Corporate Body**

Yale University. Divinity School