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Inventory

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Rev Mary Levison

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Correspondence, reports, speeches, notes, press cuttings and other papers, 1950-1997, undated, of and relating to Rev. Mary Levison, neé Lusk (1923-), pioneer and campaigner for the ordination of women in the Church of Scotland.

Rev Mary Levison studied Philosophy, Politics and Economics at the University of Oxford and Theology at Edinburgh University before undertaking further theological study at the Universities of Heidelberg and Basle. She was commissioned a Deaconess of the Church of Scotland in 1954 and, three years later, was the first woman licensed to preach in the Church of Scotland. Rev. Levison served as an assistant in Musselburgh. From 1957-1961 she was on the teaching staff of St. Colm's College, Edinburgh, and was Assistant Chaplain to Edinburgh University, 1962 -1964.

In 1963, Mary Levison petitioned the General Assembly of Scotland for the admission of women to the ministry. Four years later she was one of six theologically trained women who wrote an 'Open Letter to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland' asking them to remove the barrier to the ordination of women. The campaign succeeded in 1968 and the following year the first female minister, Rev. Catherine McConnachie, was ordained by the Presbytery of Aberdeen. Mary Levison was herself ordained in 1978 as Associate Minister of St Andrew and Saint George, Edinburgh.

Mary Levison was Convenor of the Diaconate Committee, 1987-1989, and the first female nominee for moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. She was appointed one of HM the Queen's Chaplains in Scotland 1991, the first woman to be accorded this position. She received an honorary Doctorate of Divinity from the University of Edinburgh in 1994.

Rev. Levinson's autobiographical work, *Wrestling with the Church. One woman's experience* (London, 1992), tells the story of her campaign for the ordination of women in the Church of Scotland. Most of the papers were arranged by her in connection with this work. This arrangement has been retained.

Presented 2008.

- 1 Letters, reports and papers, 1955-1959, relating to the Conference of the Order of Deaconesses and the Commission on Order of Deaconesses
- 2 Lectures, speeches, reports, notes, press cuttings and related letters, 1955-1990, of Mary Levison and others on the 'Place of Women' debate in the church especially the diaconate, eldership and ordination. With material relating primarily to Scotland, but also to England, France and Switzerland.
- 3 Printed 'Scheme for Deaconesses, 1962' and typescript reports and papers, 1963-1976, relating to the Diaconate
- 4 Letters, notes, printed papers and press cuttings, 1962-1964, concerning Mary Lusk's petition to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland

- 5 Letters, 1963-1964, on proposed book on the ordination of women, 'A Question of Campaigning'
- 6 Letters, 1964-1967, to Mary Lusk, with notes, press cuttings and related papers concerning the General Assembly's consideration of her petition for ordination
- 7 Typescript of 'Open Letter', 1967, of Mary Levison and others to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland requesting the removal of the barrier to the ordination of women. With related letters and press-cuttings, 1967-1968
- 8 Reports, minutes, letters, notes and press cuttings, 1967-1974, of and relating to the Diaconess Board and the Home Board
- 9 Printed reports of the Diaconess Board of the Church of Scotland, 1972, 1974-1979, 1980-1988
- 10 Reports and papers, 1973-1987, on the worldwide Diaconate
- 11 Letters, speeches, minutes and notes, 1986-1990, of and concerning the Diaconate Committee of the Church of Scotland.
- 12 Typescript minutes and newsletters, 1987-1990, of the Church of Scotland Diaconate Council
- 13 Typescript of 'Does the Church need a Diaconate' a public lecture, 1987, by Mary Levison delivered at the St Colm's Education Centre and College, Edinburgh. With related correspondence and papers
- 14 Letters, press cuttings, programmes, Orders of Service, photograph and notes, 1987-1988, of and concerning the centenary of the diaconate in Scotland
- 15 Letters, 1987-1988, to Mary Levison as Convenor of the Scottish Ecumenical Encounter on the Diaconate [SEED], 1988, with her notes for the conference and programme
- 16 Speech, letters, press releases, Order of Service, press cuttings, 1988, of and concerning the admission of men as Deacons
- 17 Letters to with some copies of letters from Mary Levison, 1987-1989, as Moderator of the Presbytery of Edinburgh. Correspondents include Rev Charles Robertson, minister of the Canongate and Rev Bill MacDonald, minister of Mayfield Church, Edinburgh.
- 18 Presbytery minutes and notes for meetings, Orders of Service and notes for services, prayers, programmes and menu cards, 1988-1989
- 19 Letter, notes, and typescript of speech to the General Assembly, 1989, on the Courts of the Church and the Diaconate

- 20 Reports, letters and notes concerning the Form of Service for the Commissioning of a Deacon or Deaconess, 1991
- 21 Letters, 1991, on Mary Levison's appointment as Chaplain to HM the Queen. Correspondents include Cardinal Keith Patrick O'Brien. With an illustrated card signed by members of the Diaconate Council of Scotland
- 22 Letters and reviews, 1991-2001, concerning *Wrestling with the Church*, London, 1992. Many of the letters are from Denis Duncan of Arthur James, Publishers, London.
- 23 Letters and papers, 1991-2000, on the 'Place of Women in the Church' debate
- 24 Photographs, 1949, of the World Conference of Reformed and Presbyterian Youth, Montpellier
List of delegates and photographs, 1951, of the Anglo-Orthodox Prebyterian Conference
Programmes, passenger lists, menu cards and postcards, 1954, from voyages between Southampton and New York
Photographs, 1963?, taken in Germany
- 25 Printed publications on the role of women in the church:
Rev Prof G D Henderson, *According to the mind of Christ*, Fellowship of Equal Service in the Church
Edith Anne Robertson, *Why Those Fears?* Fellowship of Equal Service in the Church
Elizabeth G K Hewat, *The Life and Work of Women in the Church*, 1947
The Presbyterian World, September 1949, including 'Montpellier seen by Delegates: a Scottish girl's impressions', Mary Lusk's report on the World Conference of Reformed and Presbyterian Youth at Montpellier.
Men and Women in Church and Society, Geneva, 1955, 1957 [2 copies]
Mrs M S Bishop and Miss J A C Murray, *Women in the Eldership*, Church of Scotland, 1957-1958
Church of Scotland's Women's Guild, *The Place of Women in the Church*, 1959 [2 copies]
Board of Women's Work, *Certain Women Amazed Us*, ca.1960