

MORE PRACTICAL TIPS ON PRESERVATION

Fireproof cabinets, a secure closet, or a safe is best, in neither dry nor humid conditions. Attics are often extremely dry and too warm. The area should not be near pipes, such as in the basement. The rule of thumb is 65-68 degrees, and 45% humidity, although such a stringent requirement may be difficult in your parish.

Periodically check the storage area for temperature and humidity.

Loose papers, minutes, and official documents should be kept in file folders & boxes, ideally made from acid-free materials (see Internet links to companies with archival catalogs.) **NO LOOSE PAPERS!**

Bulletins may be bound or boxed (flat) at the end of the year.

Materials should be flattened as much as possible without damaging the item.

Metal fasteners and staples should be removed because they tend to rust. However, if an item is old, and removing the staple will actually cause harm to it, then it should be left as it.

Of you are considering restoration & repair, consult the Diocesan Archivist or the town historical society for recommendations for professional services.

When identifying documents or photographs, write on the back with a soft lead #2 pencil or archivist's pen.

Photographs can be filed in acid-free envelopes or Mylar envelopes that you can make with Mylar and 2-way tape. If photos are filed in scrapbooks, the adhesives and the plastic sleeves generally degrade the photos. If possible, take the scrapbook apart, file the photographs in envelopes (no more than 8 to an envelope) and label the envelope. Names and dates and the event on the back of the photographs or the container is very helpful and more meaningful to the history of the church. Lay photographs flat, alternating the glossy sides, or placing acid-free papers between them. Photographs are generally stored separately from print documents, because they generally need to be laid flat so that they do not curl.

If blueprints and contractor's agreements are in the parish records, the parish should consider storing these important documents off-site at the Diocesan Archives.

Though few parishes can afford to do so, parishes might consider periodically microfilming parish registers and vestry minutes and storing them in a safe-deposit box.

Any and every document in your parish archives should not be loaned or removed from the church.

Electronic newsletters, born-digital media, and newsletters should be preserved (we use .pdf/a for digital preservation) and backed up, and a second copy stored off-site.