

# PARISH ARCHIVES

## A short outline of retention

### Must Retain:

- Sacramental works: parish registers and service books
- Vestry minutes and supporting documents
- Articles of Incorporation, constitution & by-laws, founders of the parish
- Annual meeting records & Annual reports to the Diocese
- Clergy lists & non-confidential correspondence
- Treasurer & Clerk's reports
- Property records including deeds, construction record
- Newsletters
- Service bulletins

### Other archival materials of interest are:

- Literature about special events (such as Sunday School picnic, fundraisers, and the like) or holidays in the church
- Parish histories (send a copy to the diocesan archives)
- Parish directories
- Music programs
- Christian education programs for children, youth and adults
- Artifacts such as photographs, videos, altar vessels, and so on
- Lay biographies
- Clergy biographies and sermons
- Artifacts

### Other organizations within the parish, such as:

- Missions committee
- ECW
- Stewardship
- Brotherhood of St. Andrew, or Daughters of the King
- Youth Fellowship
- Choirs
- Any other committees with special assignments or missions

### Cooperation with the Diocesan Archives

The diocesan archives is very interested in collecting parish histories, bulletins of special services such as consecrations, dedications, ordinations, & cornerstone services. Pictures of clergy and parishioners (identified) are also welcome. It is strongly recommended that parishes deposit any blueprints with the diocesan archives.

PARISH RECORDS ADMINISTRATION IS A SEPARATE CATEGORY, WITH A SPECIFIC  
LEGAL RETENTION SCHEDULE (Refer to separate publication)

Thumbnail Notes on Preservation

- Storage: preferably in one place such as a fire-proof safe or cabinet, or secure closet. It is best not to store records beneath pipes that might burst, or in attics where heat is excessive. The sacramental texts should always be locked in a safe, and never removed from the premises. The best temperatures are between 65-70 degrees. Low humidity such as 45% is ideal.
- Wooden shelving will corrupt the archives – metal is always better.
- NO LOOSE PAPERS! Anything worth saving should be in acid-free folders or boxes made of acid-free material.
- Flatten out materials as much as possible without damage. Remove old metal staples and paperclips (if this will damage older documents, leave them, knowing they will tend to rust.)
- Blueprints should be laid flat or gently rolled, not folded to fit in a file drawer.
- Check periodically for atmospheric, water, insect, or vermin damage.
- If you are considering repair, restoration, or rebinding consult with the diocesan archivist or a professional conservation specialist.
- Only write on the back of photographs in number 2 pencil.
- Photographs can be stored Melinex™ Mylar, polyester, or acid free photo sleeves.
- Store negatives separately OR DISCARD THE NEGATIVES. They are highly flammable.
- Always photocopy newspaper clippings noting the source and date. Keep the photocopy and discard the newspaper. If you must keep a color news clipping, encapsulate it in Mylar.
- Scrapbooks are often assembled in ring-binders with a plastic coverings. These will degrade the photographs. It is best to “deconstruct” a photo album and reconstruct it in such a way that the history of the occasion will be preserved.
- Some parishes have the resources to periodically bind their vestry minutes, service bulletins, and newsletters. Microfilms are also possible (a copy should be deposited at the diocesan archives for back-up.) Digitizing documents is now a real alternative to microfilm. The digitized images should be stored on a remote server in case of a natural disaster.

YOUR DIOCESAN ARCHIVES

Our Mission: The Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut is the official repository for the Episcopal Acts of the bishops, the records created by and about the diocese, its related bodies, and individual Episcopalians. Its mission is to identify, collect, preserve, describe, classify, and make available the ongoing life and work of the Episcopal Church in Connecticut. The archives offers reference services to Diocesan staff, clergy, laity and the general public. The archives' resources exist as a part of the broader mission of the church to support community life and parish work in the institutional church in Connecticut. \*\*We are happy to offer reference support, and request that researchers call ahead for an appointment to visit the archives. \*\*

