

# *Archives & Recordkeeping*

**A How-to Guide for Congregations and Conferences**



**Committee on Archives and History, The United Church of Canada**

Archives and Recordkeeping:  
A How-to Guide for Congregations and Conferences  
Committee on Archives and History



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This how-to guide contains the core tools for those keeping records at the congregational level. More detail and additional regional samples are available online at: [www.united-church.ca/archives](http://www.united-church.ca/archives)

# Why Maintain Archives?

In a time of scarce resources, many question the value of maintaining archives. They doubt that archives are relevant in a fast-paced information age. Not relevant? Just ask these people:

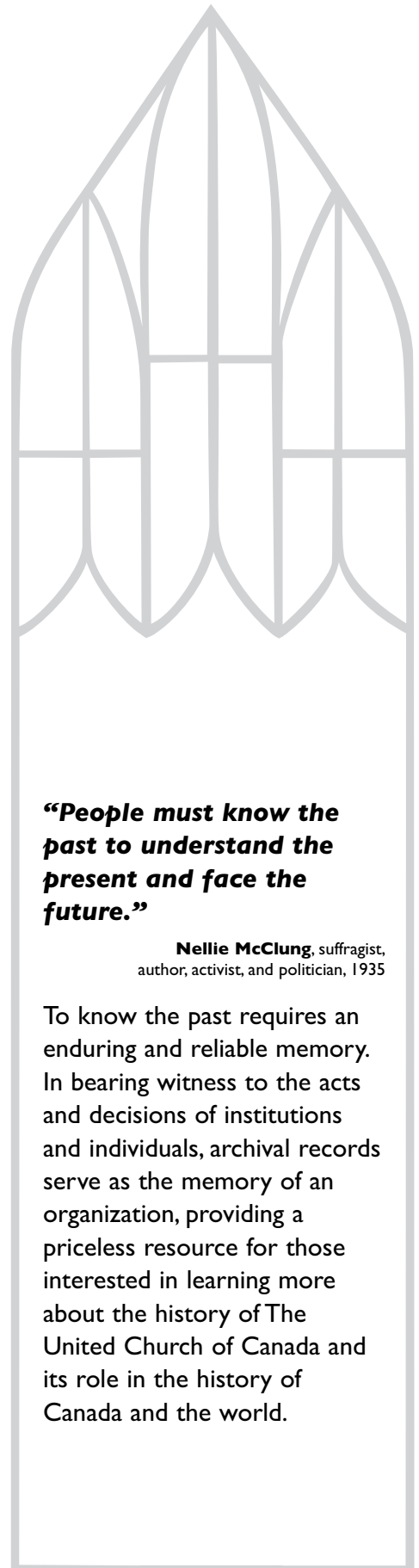
- the senior citizen needing her baptismal record to prove her age in order to qualify for a pension
- the presbytery secretary seeking proof that a property was sold and when
- the editors of *Voices United* wishing to verify that copyrights for a particular hymn were properly acquired
- the academic historian writing a book on the church's involvement in residential schools
- the film producer needing photos of missionaries for a documentary on Christian missions in Japan
- the genealogist overjoyed to find her Methodist great-grandmother's marriage record

The records of a church are not merely ink on a page or solemn faces in an old photograph. They represent events, great or small, in the life of the organization and in the lives of individual members. They hold information that has not been recorded elsewhere and provide keys to understanding how our society has evolved.

The records documenting the history of The United Church of Canada and its antecedent denominations are preserved in the network of United Church Archives across the country. By preparing lists and indexes for these records (with the increasing use of advanced technology), the church's archivists provide access to information that is assisting researchers from all around the world.

"Archives constitute the memory of nations and of societies, shape their identity, and are a cornerstone of the information society. By providing evidence of human actions and transactions, archives support administration and underlie the rights of individuals, organisations and states. By guaranteeing citizens' rights of access to official information and to knowledge of their history, archives are fundamental to democracy, accountability and good governance."\*

\*Quotation from "Welcome to ICA" on the website of the International Council on Archives. Retrieved May 25, 2005, from [www.ica.org](http://www.ica.org). Used with permission.



***"People must know the past to understand the present and face the future."***

**Nellie McClung**, suffragist, author, activist, and politician, 1935

To know the past requires an enduring and reliable memory. In bearing witness to the acts and decisions of institutions and individuals, archival records serve as the memory of an organization, providing a priceless resource for those interested in learning more about the history of The United Church of Canada and its role in the history of Canada and the world.

# Introduction

The Committee on Archives and History is accountable to the General Council for the coordination and promotion of archival and historical activity in and for The United Church of Canada and all its Conferences and for policies affecting the same (*The Manual*, Section 537). It encourages the return of United Church records held by non-church repositories to United Church Archives and educates others about the importance of the church retaining its own records.

Comprised of 11 archival repositories across the Conferences (see Appendix A), the Archives Network collectively forms Canada's largest religious archives. Two of these Conference Archives are housed within Conference offices, others have partnered with provincial and university archives to share storage space and facilities. Significant records are regularly added to the archives, and professional staff acquire, arrange, and describe records; prepare finding aids and indexes; and make the material available to researchers.

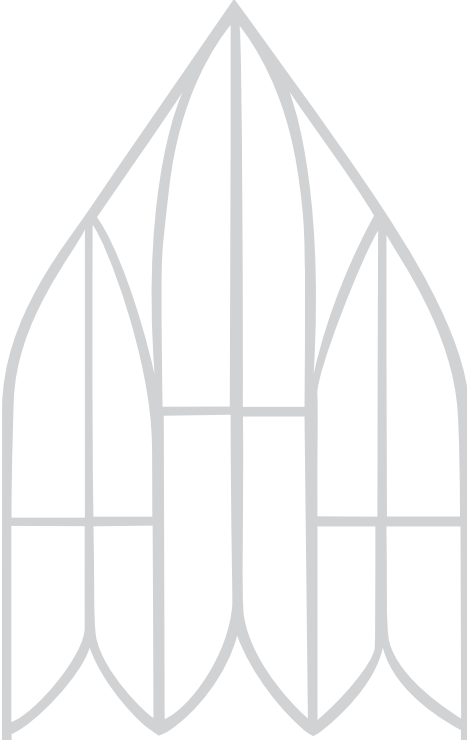
The Committee has prepared this resource to assist congregations in making decisions on the best ways to create and maintain records. It answers such questions as how long to keep various types of records, what to throw out, and what to send to the Conference Archives and when. Its guidelines will ensure the systematic preservation of the permanently valuable records in the Conference Archives once they are no longer needed for current operations.

Research for this resource was based on professional archival and records management theory, legal requirements for records retention, and consultation with Conference Archivists. The Committee is grateful to the authors and editors of earlier versions of *Guidelines for Recordkeeping in the United Church of Canada* and *Managing Your Congregation's Records*. As congregations use this resource, we encourage them to suggest ways in which it might more fully meet the needs of those who are responsible for the management of their congregation's records.

Throughout its history, The United Church of Canada has emphasized the importance of keeping accurate records. In *The Manual*, the denomination's official "book of rules," there are three sections that specifically pertain to recordkeeping—Sections 090, 091, and 092.

The information contained in this guide aims to encourage greater uniformity in following *Manual* requirements.

Sharon P. Larade, Secretary,  
Committee on Archives and History (*June 2005*)



Section 090 of *The Manual* states that church records “have an historical and legal value that necessitates their being correctly kept and carefully preserved.” It also states that church records belong to the United Church and that individuals “may not alienate them or in any way assume personal control of them.” *The Manual* sections indicate why accurate, well preserved records are essential. All courts of the United Church, and committees associated with them, need to centralize their record holdings and maintain records consistently.

All references are to *The Manual of The United Church of Canada, 33rd Edition* (Toronto: United Church Publishing House, 2004).

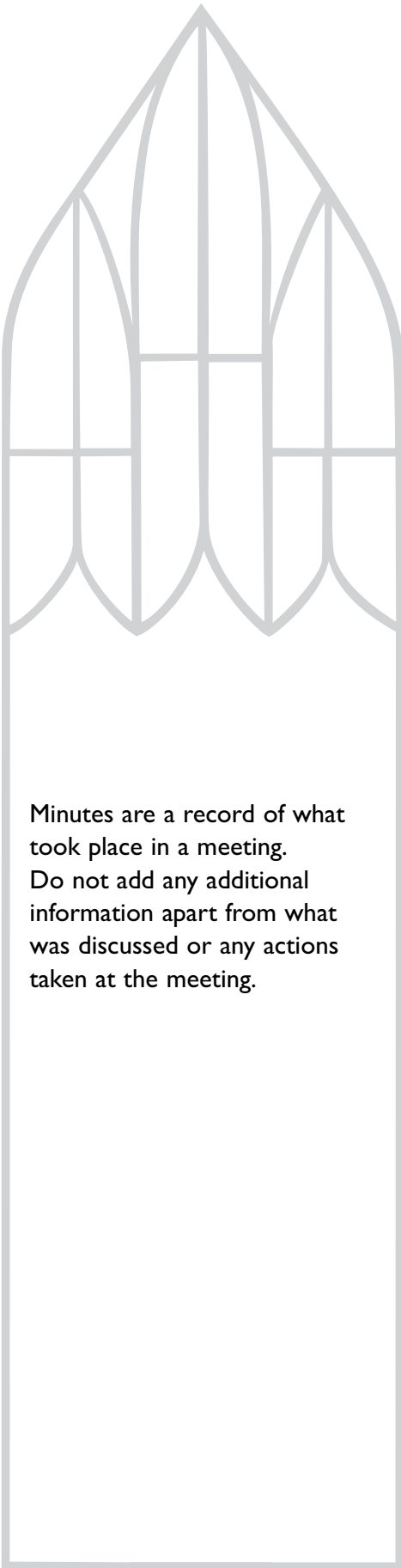
# *Creating Good Records*

## **Checklist for Church Archives and Records Committees**

Use this list to prepare, maintain, and review records. For detailed guidelines see pages 4–8.

Records should

- 1.** be complete and accurate and exclude extraneous or irrelevant matter
- 2.** be typewritten, printed, or if necessary, hand-written in permanent ink
- 3.** be compiled into volumes at suitable intervals
- 4.** be paginated, with numbers at the upper outside edge of each page
- 5.** be signed or initialled on each page by the secretary
- 6.** be signed by the secretary and presiding officer
- 7.** indicate in words the time and place of each meeting
- 8.** indicate the date, the place, and the name of the group that is meeting at the top of each page
- 9.** state the authority under which the meeting was held
- 10.** state that a quorum was present
- 11.** record that the meeting opened with prayer
- 12.** record that the meeting closed with prayer and/or a benediction
- 13.** state the name of the presiding officer
- 14.** record the names of those present for meetings of session, the official board, the church board, the church council, or the presbytery
- 15.** use paragraph headings or marginal notes for subject headings
- 16.** record numbers in words (excluding those figures cited in budget statements and financial reports) with numeric figures in brackets
- 17.** include appendices referred to within the minutes using consecutive numbering
- 18.** record all motions in full, with the names of the mover and the seconder
- 19.** state clearly within the minutes the disposal of all motions and reports
- 20.** avoid the use of initials and abbreviations
- 21.** use the full names of people
- 22.** fill vacant space on the page between the records of meetings with diagonal, ruled lines
- 23.** show that all erasures and changes have been initialled in the margin by the secretary
- 24.** have no loose pages



Minutes are a record of what took place in a meeting. Do not add any additional information apart from what was discussed or any actions taken at the meeting.

## Detailed Guidelines for Church Archives and Records Committees

The following expands the general information on recordkeeping outlined in *The Manual*, Section 092.

**(a) the Secretary shall keep full and accurate minutes of the proceedings of all meetings**

In the minutes, include a short summary of the opinions, facts, and ideas to indicate that the meeting considered all sides of an issue. It is particularly important to do this when decisions are significant or controversial, or if they concern matters that are the responsibility of one court only (for example, the congregation's governing body and its responsibility for church membership). See section (o).

In the summary of discussion, avoid including names unless people specifically ask to have their names recorded.

**(b) the minutes shall be written in ink in a legible hand, or typewritten, or printed**

Recorders are urged to have minutes typed wherever possible. The phrase "typewritten or printed" also includes other methods of reproduction such as computer printer or photocopier. When minutes are reproduced mechanically, ensure that the copy for the Archives is clear and printed on permanent paper. See section (c).

If minutes must be handwritten, recorders should ensure that their writing is legible. Use permanent ink that is not water soluble. If a ballpoint pen is used, ensure that it is one of high quality. Minutes completed in pencil are unacceptable.

Consider a paper copy of minutes to be the permanent archival record until the criteria for the long-term preservation and use of electronic formats (computer diskettes) have been established. Computer diskettes are not a stable medium for long-term preservation. There is at present no process or technology to ensure that the information on diskettes will continue to be readable over the long term.

Most minutes are now word processed on a computer. Designate the original (or one other copy) as the archival copy and ensure that it is signed by the presiding officer and secretary. See section (f).

Use permanent paper for the official signed copy of records. Permanent paper will not turn yellow and disintegrate over time,



thereby enabling the permanent preservation of important records. Information on ordering permanent paper is found in Appendix B.

Use stainless steel staples or paper clips (plastic preferred) when necessary. Do not use adhesive tape of any kind because the adhesive backing deteriorates and stains the paper.

The archival set of minutes produced on computer no longer has to be formally bound by a bookbinder. Minutes may be sent to the archives in whatever form they are kept, for example, in file folders or binders; they will be transferred to archival folders and archival boxes for permanent storage.

Those who wish to keep their current minutes in accordance with the method recommended by the Committee on Archives and History will find information on where to order the necessary supplies in Appendix B.

Those who write their minutes in pre-bound minute books may continue to do so. However, do not paste photocopies or computer printouts of minutes into already bound volumes. This damages the binding, and over time, the glue stains the paper. If recorders are currently keeping a “pasted” volume of records, they should close that book immediately, even if it is not completely filled.

**(c) if the minutes must be written by hand, they shall be written in a bound book provided for that purpose. If the minutes are produced by other means, one signed original set of minutes shall be bound at suitable intervals in accordance with the methods specified by the Committee on Archives and History**

**(d) the pages shall be numbered, and the number of each page written or printed at the top of the page**

Record page numbers at the upper outside edge of the page, away from the inside margin. Number all pages consecutively to ensure that pages cannot be added or removed.

Begin a new series of consecutive numbering at appropriate intervals (for example, after one volume of minutes has been bound, or at the beginning of a new Conference year, or at the beginning of a new calendar year). Pages should be numbered 05-01, 05-02 (05 being for the year; 01 being for the page within that year). When one book is full and another one is started, note on the last page of the completed book that it is the last page of the volume and indicate the first page number in the next volume.

Appendices should be included in the consecutive numbering system. Each page of the appendix should have its own specific number. See section (m).

**(e) every page shall be signed or initialed by the Secretary**

Sign or initial minutes at the bottom outside edge of the page away from the interior margin. Signing indicates that the secretary who has written the minutes takes responsibility for their accuracy, that all pages are included, and that pages are in proper order.

**(f) the record of each meeting of the Court shall be signed by the Presiding Officer and the Secretary**

Signatures of the presiding officer and the minute secretary ensure responsibility for the record. Print or type the full name and title of each of the two officers directly below their signatures. The presiding officer who signs is the person who chaired the meeting at which the minutes were read, approved, and corrected. The secretary who signs the minutes is the person who prepared those minutes.



More information on minute taking is available on the United Church website. See: [www.united-church.ca/archives/minutes.shtm](http://www.united-church.ca/archives/minutes.shtm)

**(g) the time and place of each meeting shall be fully stated in words, and the date of the meeting shall be indicated on the margin at the top of each page**

Put the complete date (including the year), the name of the group that is meeting, and the place of the meeting in the middle to outside of each page. Write out the time, place, and date of each meeting to ensure accuracy. To avoid confusion, indicate the month in words rather than numbers. Dating is essential when minute searches are required.

**(h) the minutes shall state by whose or what authority the meeting is held, “at the call of the Chairperson,” “according to adjournment,” or as the case may be; and that a quorum was present**

Clearly state the authority for calling any special meetings. The phrase “regular meeting,” for example, indicates the authority under which the meeting is being held. The phrase “according to adjournment,” may also include the “regular meeting” when the information is included in the adjournment recorded at the previous meeting.

Include the quorum. This is helpful to someone who is reviewing the minutes but who may be unsure as to the group’s size.

**(i) the opening of the meeting with prayer and closing of the meeting with prayer and/or the benediction, shall be recorded in the minutes**

The meetings being recorded are meetings of the church. Such formalities are expected and should be noted accordingly.

**(j) the name of the Presiding Officer shall be recorded and, in the minutes of Sessions, Official Boards or Church Boards or Church Councils and Presbyteries, the names of the members present. The minutes of the Conference shall include the roll of the Conference**

State the name, title, and office of the presiding officer when the call to order is recorded. List the full names and titles of all persons present at the meeting. Use the same full name in the body of the minutes to eliminate confusion between names that may be similar. Use distinguishing initials or middle names if needed. Use the name by which the person is generally known. Finally, record the names of any guests and/or visitors who may be present.

**(k) the items of business shall be briefly indicated by paragraph headings or marginal notes, for ready reference**

Headings are useful when minutes have to be searched. Headings in the text of the minutes are also useful when preparing an index. See section (t).

**(l) care shall be taken that all numbers are distinctly written**

All numbers in the text should be written out in words, with numeric figures in brackets immediately following. This directive does not include amounts in budget statements or financial reports.

**(m) Committee reports and other documents necessary for the understanding of the records shall be embodied in the minutes or added in an appendix. If the latter, the number of the page on which they will be found shall be given in the minutes**

When documents are added as an appendix to the minutes, number each page of the attachments consecutively. See sections (c), (d), and (e). Separate numbering of appendices is discouraged because, if an appendix becomes detached, it is difficult to determine its proper place.

**(n) the minutes shall record all the proceedings of the Court and shall state clearly what disposal is made of all motions, Proposals, reports, etc.**

This step is essential. State clearly in words, not abbreviations, the disposal of motions.

**(o) extraneous and irrelevant matter shall be excluded from the minutes**

It is essential that no information discovered after the end of the meeting is incorporated into the minutes. Extraneous or irrelevant matter includes such things as editorial comments from the secretary and the opinions of others not expressed at the meeting, or not relevant to matters discussed.

**(p) all erasures, cancellings, interlineations, or other changes shall be initialled in the margin by the Secretary**

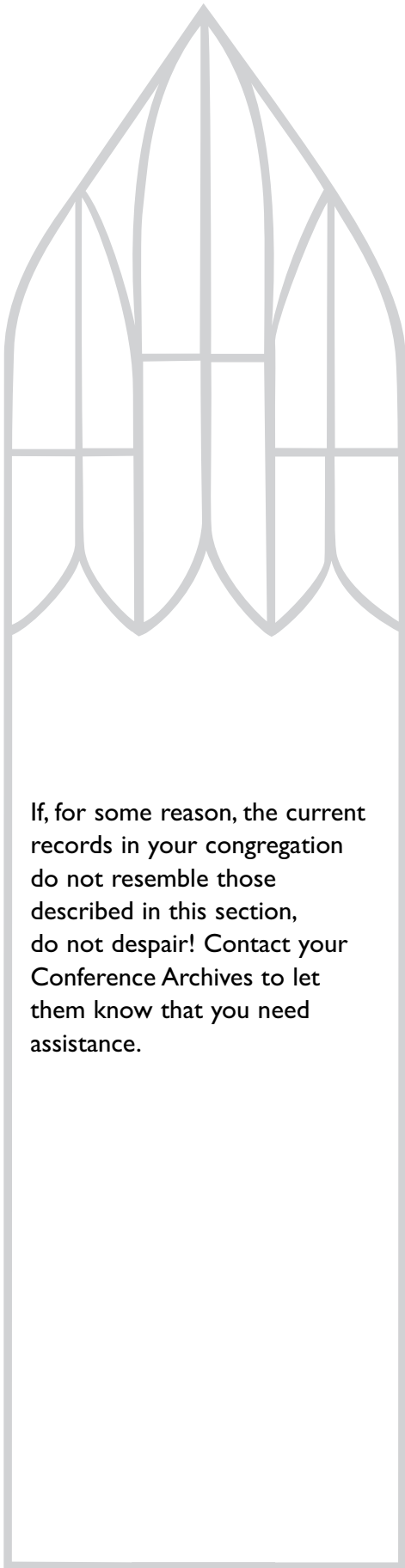
Initialling ensures that changes made in the minutes are accurate and valid. The use of correction or white-out fluid is discouraged. If used, the change must be initialled by the secretary.

**(q) no erasures or alterations may be made after the record has been confirmed, except by resolution of the Court or by order of a higher Court, and then suitable annotations shall be made**

The secretary must make, and then initial in the original minutes, any changes authorized by the court. Changes should also be listed in the minutes of the meeting that approved them. This action provides a second copy of the changes as approved. The secretary should also cross-reference the original to the recorded source of the change.

**(r) no unnecessary vacant space shall be left between the minutes of successive meetings. If any such vacant space be left, it shall be ruled in plain lines from the writing to the bottom of the page**

Initial but do not number vacant pages. Rule vacant pages, or vacant space on a page, diagonally from top to bottom.



If, for some reason, the current records in your congregation do not resemble those described in this section, do not despair! Contact your Conference Archives to let them know that you need assistance.

**(s) *the use of initials for organizations and other abbreviations should be carefully avoided***

Give the full name of the organization when it is mentioned for the first time and then immediately follow that full name with the abbreviation of the name in brackets. After the full name with abbreviation has been used once, then the abbreviation may be used thereafter. Full names are essential because the use of initials and abbreviations may differ from organization to organization and may change over time.

**(t) *an index shall be appended to the minutes of the Conference each year***

***and***

**(u) *the records of Pastoral Charges, Congregations and other organizations, and of the Courts, units, Departments, Sessions, Boards, Councils, and Committees of the United Church, along with correspondence and other documents of historical value, when no longer regularly needed, should be deposited in the Central Archives or the Conference archives either directly or through the Committee on Archives of the Presbytery or the Conference***

An index is useful for presbytery and pastoral charge minutes as well as for Conference minutes. The secretary of the group should prepare the index. See section (k). This important directive ensures the long-term preservation of the church's documents and records.

When transferring records to Archives, follow any guidelines that the Archives may have established about what should be permanently preserved. Any transfer of records to Archives should be fully recorded by the court or committee that created the records.

## Records to Be Reviewed by Church Archives and Records Committees

1. Minutes of the meetings of the congregation(s) within the pastoral charge and of the pastoral charge itself.
2. Minutes and records of session (or its equivalent body).\*  
These records would include the historic roll of membership, the current membership list, and the baptismal, marriage, and burial registers for all congregations within the pastoral charge.
3. Minutes and records of the committee of stewards (or its equivalent body).\*
4. Minutes and records of the official board (or its equivalent body).\*
5. Minutes and records of the board of trustees.

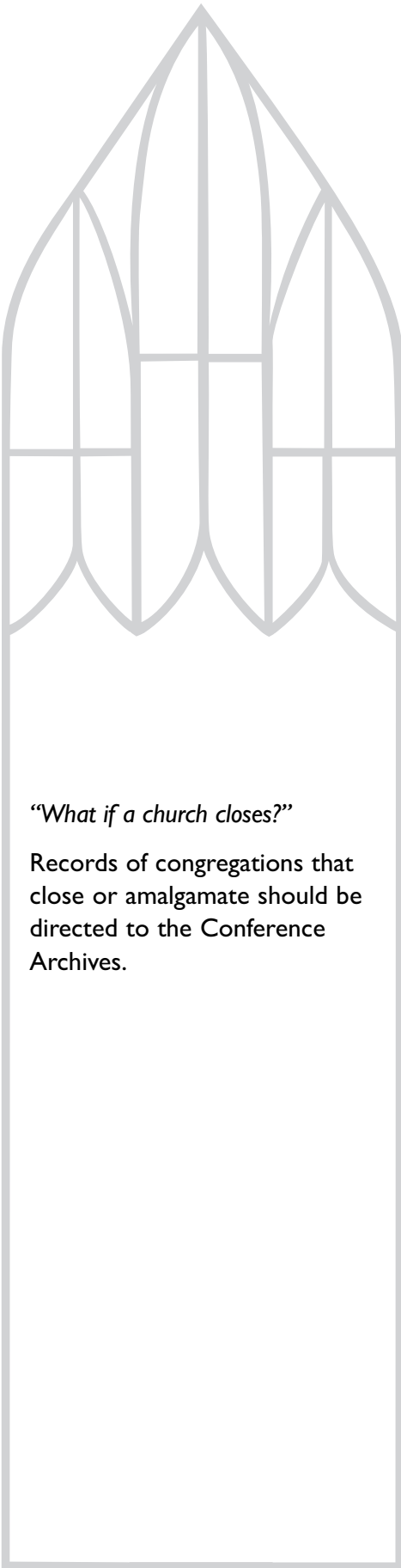
If the pastoral charge has adopted a unified board structure, then the church board, church council, and any committees associated with them should have their minutes reviewed by the church archives and records committee.



Records should be reviewed annually. Where resources are limited, the review might be carried out less frequently, but at least every three years.

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\* **Note:** Sections 200 to 228 of *The Manual* outline alternative forms of local church government that a pastoral charge may assume. If the pastoral charge has chosen to adopt a unified board structure (either a church board or a church council), all required functions within the traditional official board structure (including session and committee of stewards) must be carried out by its equivalent body. Each congregation must have a separate board of trustees.



“What if a church closes?”

Records of congregations that close or amalgamate should be directed to the Conference Archives.

## Frequently Asked Questions Concerning Recordkeeping

Section 091 of *The Manual* requires that the records of church courts be examined regularly. Individuals reviewing church records on behalf of presbytery and Conference Archives Committees, and those responsible for preparing those records, have raised these questions pertaining to matters not mentioned in sections of *The Manual* dealing with church records.

**Q. “Who has overall responsibility for a congregation’s records?”**

**A.** The official governing body. In the traditional system of church government, the official board (comprised of both the session and the committee of stewards) has responsibility for matters affecting the pastoral charge that are not assigned to any other bodies within the church.

In a unified form of church government, these responsibilities would fall to the overall governing body of the church, either the church board or church council. This suggests the overall governing body may take responsibility for the records of various church committees that are not specifically directed to have their records reviewed by presbytery. This may include the United Church Women (UCW), Christian Education, Sunday school, choirs, men’s groups, ad hoc committees, and so on.

**Q. “Are the minutes of a church’s governing body confidential to members of that body?”**

**A.** No, they are *not* confidential. *The Manual* does not address the issue of confidentiality per se, but it clearly states that records of a congregation’s governing body—minutes of meetings, congregational registers, and membership rolls—should be reviewed annually. See *The Manual*, Section 157.

Some congregations are reluctant to assist presbytery archives committees in the review of records. Congregations should be encouraged to see the process as a review of the *form* in which those records have been completed, and *not the content*. Form is necessary to ensure accuracy, consistency, and clarity. The group producing the minutes is responsible for reviewing their content carefully for accuracy and clarity.

**Q. “What types of information should the minutes of a church’s governing body contain?”**

**A.** Minutes must contain a complete record of a meeting’s activities, that is, they must also contain all information that pertains to the changes in the church’s membership roll (additions by profession of faith [confirmation], by reaffirmation of faith, by certificate of transfer, and by action of the church’s governing body; removals by death, by certificate of transfer, or by action of the church’s governing body) and the names of persons to be baptized.

**Q. “Is an action column acceptable for church minutes?”**

**A.** Yes. An action column indicates who is responsible for specific matters that arose out of a meeting. However, an action column should be included with the minutes *only* if the designation of who is to follow up on any action has also been clearly outlined *within the body* of the minutes. Designation within the minutes will ensure clarity should any questions arise.

**Q. “Our congregation has a unified governing structure (church board or church council). Does this make a difference as to how records are kept?”**

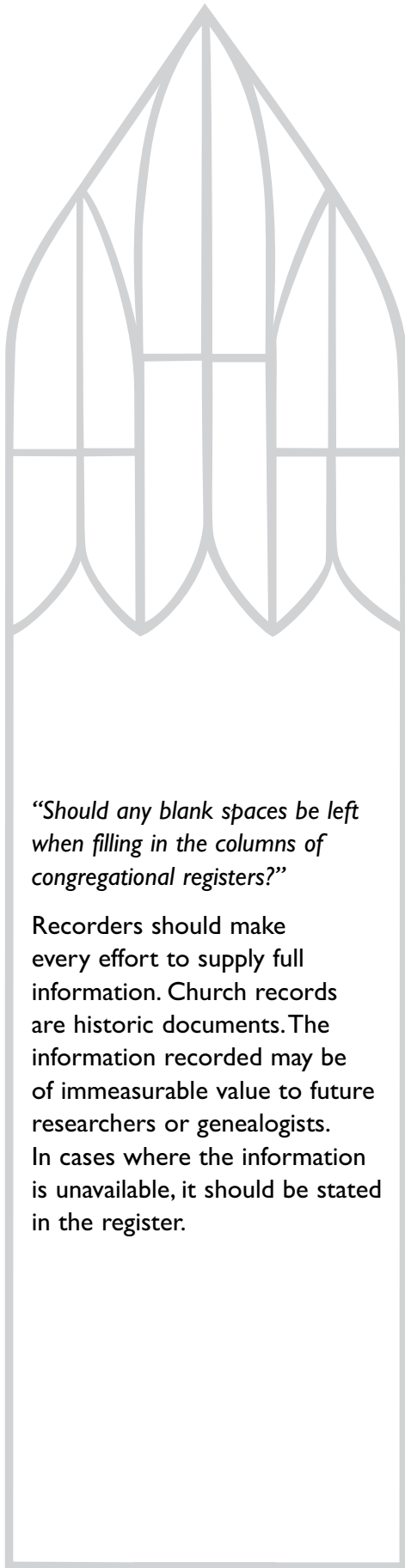
**A.** No. Some pastoral charges have combined their official board, session, and committee of stewards into one unified church board or council. See *The Manual*, Sections 200 to 228. The need to keep records that contain certain types of information remains unchanged. Functions formerly delegated to an official board, session, or committee of stewards must be picked up in whatever system of church government a pastoral charge adopts, including the function of recordkeeping.

**Q. “What is an historic roll?”**

**A.** An **historic roll** of membership is a permanent, comprehensive record of the names of all persons who have been confirmed members (that is, made their profession of faith) of the local congregation throughout its history. The historic roll is usually a handwritten list of names that is recorded in a bound book or ledger called an historic roll book. If the congregation was established many years ago, a complete list of all persons who had ever been confirmed members of that congregation could encompass several books. Historic roll books may be obtained through the United Church Publishing House.

Ideally, an historic roll includes the names of all confirmed persons ever associated with a congregation. However, most local congregations cannot do this because a formal system of recording names has not been followed consistently from the founding of the congregation, or because records have been lost. An historic roll may be started at any time by recording all those who are currently confirmed members of the congregation. The historic roll is then maintained by adding the names of all new members as they join the congregation (either through confirmation or profession of faith, by reaffirmation of faith, by certificate of transfer from another congregation, or by action of the congregation’s governing body) and accounting for the loss of members (by death, certificate of transfer, or by action of the congregation’s governing body).

When two congregations amalgamate, the historic rolls of the joining congregations should be closed and a new historic roll begun, as of the date of amalgamation. The new historic roll book would include the names of all confirmed members who affiliate with the new congregation.



*“Should any blank spaces be left when filling in the columns of congregational registers?”*

Recorders should make every effort to supply full information. Church records are historic documents. The information recorded may be of immeasurable value to future researchers or genealogists. In cases where the information is unavailable, it should be stated in the register.

**Q. “What information should be included on an historic roll?”**

- A.** An historic roll should contain the full name of the confirmed member at the time the member joined the congregation; residence address; date the person was received as a confirmed member; how that person was received as a member (by profession of faith, by reaffirmation of faith, by certificate of transfer, or by action of the congregation’s governing body); from where that person was received as a member (if by certificate of transfer); date the person was removed as a member; how that person was removed as a member (by death, certificate of transfer, or by action of the congregation’s governing body); and other comments if required.

*No names are ever erased from an historic roll.* The name of each person who has ever been a confirmed member of the church should appear on the historic roll of that congregation, even after that person has ceased to be a member. Those who have ceased to be members will have that fact noted after their name in the historic roll book. Names beside which there is no notation of removal would still be considered current members of the congregation. Names beside which there is a notation of removal would be considered former members of the congregation.

**Q. “Should the names of baptized infants be included on the historic roll?”**

- A.** No. Children who receive baptism are members of the church universal, but they are not members of a particular denomination until they make a public profession of faith and are confirmed as members of a local congregation. The historic roll is exclusively a list of names of persons who are confirmed members of the local church, and United Church polity states that only those who have made their profession of faith and been confirmed are added to the historic roll of a particular congregation as confirmed, adult members.

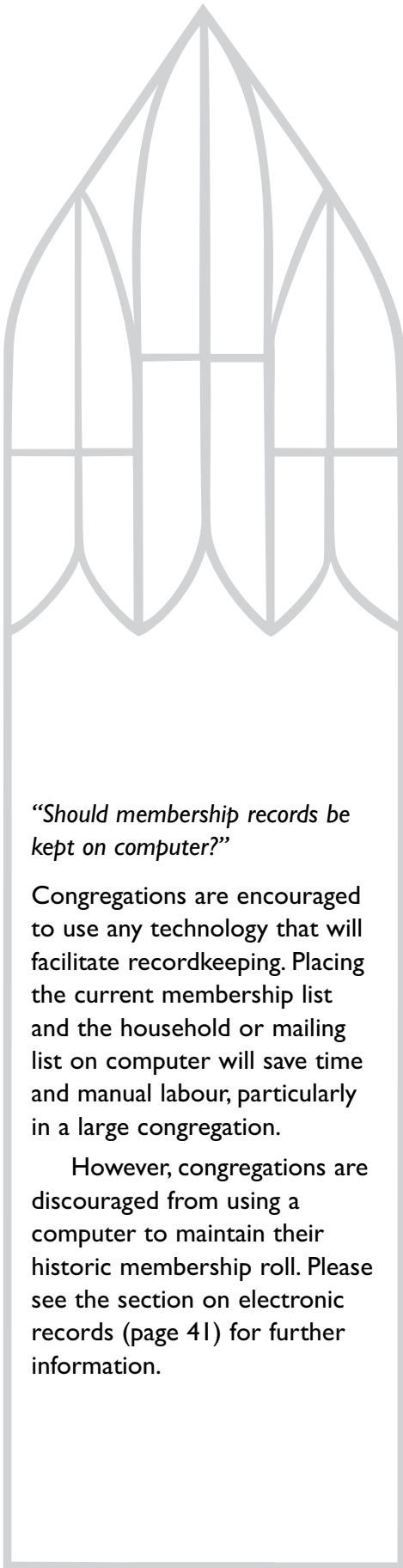


**Q. “Should the historic roll of a congregation’s membership be alphabetical by name of member, chronological by date the member was received, or some combination of both?”**

**A.** Congregations differ in how they maintain their historic rolls. Of the methods that follow, congregations should choose the one that best suits them.

- Congregations may list members’ names on their historic roll alphabetically. When people are received as new members, their names are recorded under the appropriate letter of the alphabet. When the alphabetical sections of the historic roll book are filled, names are then recopied into a new historic roll book. When recopying the historic roll, only the names of current members of the congregation are re-recorded into the new list. The names of persons who are no longer current members of the congregation are not transcribed, and for future reference, their permanent record of membership may be found in the previous volume of the historic roll book. When a new historic roll book is begun, the previous volume of the historic roll should be closed. The date of closing and a statement that a new book has been started should be clearly indicated. The current historic roll would then be contained in one volume.
- Congregations may list members’ names on their historic roll alphabetically, as above. However, when one book becomes full, a new one is started without recopying any names. New names would be added to the new book only. The current historic roll would be contained in two (or more) volumes.
- Congregations may list members’ names chronologically by date of admission into membership. An exclusively chronological list, however, makes it difficult to locate people, particularly if the congregation is large and the date of admission is unknown. Some congregations maintain both an alphabetical list by name and a chronological list by date of admission.
- A variation on the chronological system uses roll numbers to solve some of the difficulties inherent in a straight chronological listing. Congregations may enter the names of individuals into the historic roll chronologically. In the column headed “Roll Number,” each person is assigned a unique and permanent consecutive number. That number is always associated with that member. To ensure easy access to the information on the roll, congregations should maintain a separate alphabetical index. Such an index would consist of two columns—one for the name, and one for the unique roll number for each person. The index need not be strictly alphabetical. All “A” last names would be kept together with room to add additional “A” last names before beginning a list of last names beginning with the letter “B.” This method would save time searching for a particular name.

Regardless of the means by which historic rolls are maintained, all changes to a congregation’s historic membership roll must also be recorded in the minutes of the congregation’s governing body.



*“Should membership records be kept on computer?”*

Congregations are encouraged to use any technology that will facilitate recordkeeping. Placing the current membership list and the household or mailing list on computer will save time and manual labour, particularly in a large congregation.

However, congregations are discouraged from using a computer to maintain their historic membership roll. Please see the section on electronic records (page 41) for further information.

**Q. “How does an historic roll differ from a current membership list?”**

**A.** They are distinctly separate documents, and each congregation should maintain them separately.

An **historic membership roll** records the name of everyone who has ever been a confirmed member of a congregation from a given point in time, ideally from the beginning of the congregation.

A **current membership list** is a separate document containing information taken from the congregation’s historic roll. The current membership list of a congregation includes the names of all those persons on the historic membership roll beside which there is no indication of removal, either by death, by transfer, or by action of the congregation’s governing body.

Along with a current membership list, a congregation should also keep a comprehensive list of adherents. Adherents are those adults and children who have some affiliation with the congregation but who are not confirmed or professed members of that congregation. The list of confirmed members and the list of adherents together comprise a complete record of all persons currently associated with a local congregation.

The governing body of a congregation is responsible for maintaining the current membership list based on the information taken from the congregation’s historic membership roll. The current membership list should be updated at least annually, usually in conjunction with a review of the historic roll. A complete list of a congregation’s current members, along with its list of adherents, should appear at least annually in the minutes of the congregation’s governing body.

A current membership list should not be confused with a congregation’s **household list** or **mailing list**, terms that are often used interchangeably. A current membership list is a list of members’ names. A congregation’s household list includes the names of all households, be they member or adherent, and is used for congregational mailings.

**Q. “What is the difference between resident and non-resident members?”**

**A.** Names on the historic roll of a congregation, beside which there is no indication of removal, are used to compile the current membership list of the congregation. United Church polity states that all persons on the current membership list must be categorized as either resident members or non-resident members.

A **resident member** is a confirmed member of a congregation who lives close enough to the local church to take part in its worship services and activities regularly. A **non-resident member** is a confirmed member of a congregation who has moved to such a distance from the congregation that the governing body of that congregation no longer expects that person to attend regularly.

Categorization of the current membership list into resident members and non-resident members is important because a congregation’s financial assessment from presbytery and Conference may be determined, at least in part, by the number of resident members in the congregation.

The line between these two definitions—resident and non-resident—can be blurry. A congregation must determine on a case-by-case basis an appropriate status for each member, depending on that person’s geographic location and amount of involvement in congregational life. For example, a member of a local congregation in Montreal who has moved to Vancouver, but who has not formally transferred church membership, would be classified as a non-resident member of the Montreal congregation. A member of that same congregation in Montreal who moves 50 miles away from the city, but who still attends that church regularly, could logically be considered a resident member. If the same person no longer attended that congregation regularly, the person could and should be classified as non-resident.



For more information on maintaining membership rolls, see “How to Maintain and Use Your Church’s Membership Rolls” by Douglas Flanders (*Exchange*, Winter 1992), available online at: [www.united-church.ca/statistics/churchrolls.shtml](http://www.united-church.ca/statistics/churchrolls.shtml)



Recommendations made by record review committees should be followed in a timely fashion. This will ensure the integrity of records is maintained according to the standards outlined by *The Manual*.

**Q. “What is a communion roll?”**

**A.** The list of current members of a congregation is sometimes called the **communion roll**. The term communion roll dates from the time when it was customary for only confirmed members or “members in full communion” to partake of the sacrament. Formal bound communion rolls contain the same information as current membership lists, except that there is space to record a member’s attendance at communion. In the United Church, an individual’s attendance at communion is now only rarely recorded.

**Q. “What suggestions can be offered for those responsible for keeping presbytery minutes?”**

**A.** All matters that are the sole responsibility of presbytery need full and careful documentation for both legal and historic reasons. This is particularly important when presbytery is dealing with property matters.

Be thorough in what you include in presbytery minutes, for example, reports of covenanting services between members of the Order of Ministry and congregations, funerals and memorial services for deceased members of presbytery, agendas, and at least annually, the roll of members of the Order of Ministry for the presbytery. All changes in the status of Order of Ministry persons should also be fully noted.

Presbytery executive often acts for the presbytery between its regular meetings. The minutes of presbytery executive should be inter-filed with those of presbytery, and within the consecutive numbering pattern. It is recommended that the motion naming the specific powers delegated to the executive of presbytery by the presbytery be included in the minutes of each meeting of presbytery.

**Q. “To whom should committees assigned to review records report?”**

**A.** Section 091 of *The Manual* instructs records review committees to report their findings to their respective church courts and include those reports in the records of those courts. Presbyteries should also report to Conference how they have responded to instructions arising out of the Conference’s previous annual review of its records.

# Maintaining Records

## Managing Your Congregation's Records

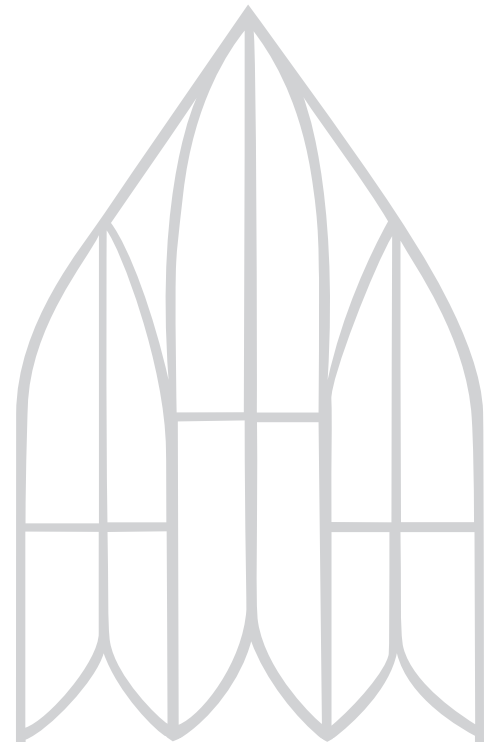
Often records are used for purposes beyond the support of the business activity which created them, or accountability for that activity. They become part of the cultural domain—a resource for the study of society. Records have a particular importance in The United Church of Canada. Since ours is a conciliar rather than a confessional church, our theology and faith can be found by reading the lines—and between the lines—of the minutes of our church courts.

## Understanding Records

**Records** include any documentary materials created or received by the congregation in the course of its everyday activities. Paper documents (such as files, record books, and reports), plans and drawings, maps, photographs, film and videotapes, sound recordings, databases, and computer files or diskettes are all records.

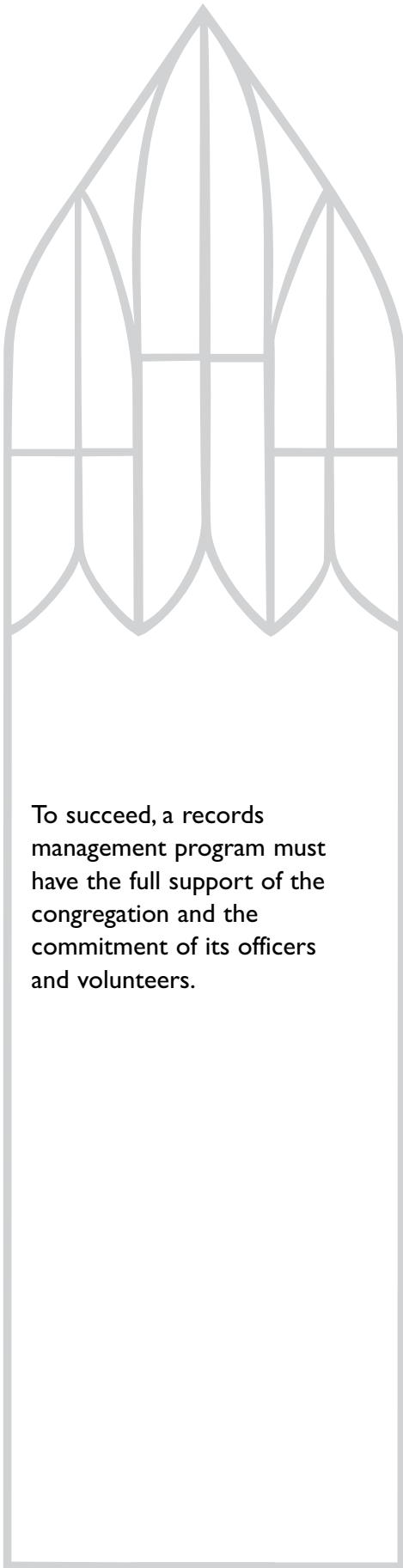
Records created or received by the congregation are its **official records**. These belong to The United Church of Canada as a whole, not to any one individual or congregation. They may not be removed from the custody of the congregation or destroyed without express permission of the official board. It is important to keep personal papers and non-official record items separately from the official records of the congregation.

Records, like human beings, have a life cycle moving from an active period through to retirement. This section provides guidance on how to manage records through these various stages and on how long records need to be kept. **Active records** are recent in date and may be in frequent use for several months after their creation and distribution. They are needed for conducting current business and so must be stored in a location accessible to the congregation's staff and/or volunteers. Most active records outlive their usefulness in less than three years.



As witnesses to the church's mission in society, all of us have a responsibility to ensure that full and accurate records are kept and properly managed.

*Rule of Thumb: If a record is being referred to on a regular basis in order to conduct a congregation's business, it should be retained.*



To succeed, a records management program must have the full support of the congregation and the commitment of its officers and volunteers.

Some **inactive records** may have reference value, or may be kept for a specified number of years for legal reasons (certain financial records fall into this category). Since they are referred to less frequently, they may be placed in storage. After a set number of years those records which do not have permanent archival value should be destroyed.

A small proportion of a congregation's records, those which are deemed to have permanent value, are designated **archival records**. These are the documents that record important legal transactions or administrative decisions, or contain vital historical information. Archival records document the circumstances of a congregation's founding and its contributions to the life of the church. Without these records it is difficult, if not impossible, to understand how a congregation's mission and activities evolved over time, to discover the issues with which it was concerned or the motivating ideas behind its actions, or to remember the contributions of clergy, staff, and volunteers.

A **records schedule** can be developed by a congregation's staff and/or volunteers as a tool to determine when records can be moved to inactive storage, destroyed, or transferred to the Archives.

A **records storage** space should be clean, dry, and secure. The ideal storage equipment is a filing cabinet or storage boxes on metal shelving. If filing cabinets or shelves are not available, items should be packed neatly and loosely in boxes which are suitably labelled.

## Accountability for Records Management

Ideally a small committee responsible for overseeing records management will be appointed by the congregation. This committee should be chaired by, or report to, the clerk of session or secretary of the official board. The input of administrative staff (paid or volunteer) is crucial to the success of the committee. The mandate for the committee should be clearly defined in the congregation's constitution and procedures outlined in a policy manual or statement.

It should be the responsibility of the Records Management Committee to

- recommend policy on all matters related to records management
- ensure that records are kept appropriately
- develop a records schedule for the congregation and ensure that it is followed
- oversee records disposition

## Records Creation

The first step in any records management program is to ensure that appropriate records are created. Requirements for some aspects of records creation are found in *The Manual* of The United Church of Canada. Other resources have been produced to assist church staff and volunteers. These resources also include guidelines that may be useful in developing your records schedule:

- *Financial Handbook for Congregations*, 2005
- *Employment Guidelines for Lay Employees in Pastoral Charges and Other Church-Related Organizations*, 2004
- *Congregational Board of Trustees Handbook*, 2004
- *Faithful Footsteps: Screening Procedures for Positions of Trust and Authority in The United Church of Canada*, 2000

## Developing a Records Schedule

Development of a records schedule will help you maintain control over records. Congregation staff and/or volunteers will know

- which records can be destroyed, when, and under whose authority
- which records can be housed for a specific period in storage areas
- which records have permanent value and when to deposit them with the Archives

There are several advantages to developing a records schedule for your congregation:

- Files are closed and placed in storage or transferred to the Archives at the appointed time leading to saving in filing and retrieval time. Office space can be freed up and the need to purchase additional file cabinets is reduced.
- Staff/volunteers can determine quickly which records must be retained by law for set periods of time, in case they are needed for an audit, lawsuit, or some other legal purpose.
- Records of permanent value can be identified and placed in the Conference Archives for safekeeping.

The first step in developing a schedule for your congregation is to undertake a records survey.



A records survey identifies all the types of records created by the congregation. It forms the basis for all decisions for records retention and disposal.

## Records Survey

A records survey

- determines the effectiveness of current filing practices
- lays the foundation for the adoption of a records schedule
- determines the quantities and types of records stored
- provides an overview of the congregation's current and past activities
- helps make clear the value of records in storage

The records survey can be undertaken by an individual or a team. Be certain that team members understand the survey form and that each individual records the same type of information in the same way.

The survey should include records held in the church office, in the basement, attic, and cupboards of buildings owned by the congregation. Ask both current and former church officers and volunteers to return records which they hold in their homes. Publicize the survey early in the project in order to locate records which may be in the hands of family members of former staff, officers, or volunteers. Arrange for the return of records which have been placed in local municipal offices, museums, or any other archival repositories.

Do not confine the survey to paper documents alone. Photographs, sound recordings, films, videotapes, publications, architectural drawings, databases, and computer files should all be surveyed. However, short-lived materials and artifacts such as memorial tablets, artwork, and vestments should not be included as part of the records survey; these are more appropriate for a church museum and are outside the parameters of the Conference Archives' mandate.

### ***Study How Your Congregation Works***

This will help to identify how records are created and to forecast what records are being or will be created. What boards and committees are in place? What are the functions and activities of these bodies? Identify the offices that exist, for example, secretary of the official board, not the individuals holding the positions today. Your survey will help show which office is creating what records—how the congregation has been and is organized and managed.



### **Study How Records Are Kept Currently**

This will help you establish what records are created and received by staff and other representatives of the congregation. As you survey the records consider how they are kept. Alphabetically? In a grouping related to subject or function? Does current practice allow for quick retrieval of a file or document? Will it facilitate records disposition?

### **Identify Records Series**

As you carry out your survey you will notice that most records fall into natural groupings: legal papers, financial records, registers, and membership rolls. Effective filing systems make use of these groupings or series.

A **records series** consists of *materials which are kept together* because they:

- relate to a particular subject or function
- result from the same activity
- document a specific kind of transaction
- take a particular physical form (e.g., registers)
- have some other relationship arising out of their creation, receipt, or use

### **Identify a Retention Period**

To determine how long records should be retained consider:

- **Is the retention period specified by law or in *The Manual of the United Church*?** Establishing the retention period for some records is easy. The *Income Tax Act* requires that most financial records be retained for a period of six calendar years after the year in which the record was created. As well, certain administrative records such as minutes, bylaws, and general ledgers must be kept permanently under the Act.
- **Legal value:** Is the record required to fulfill legal requirements or provide legal information or evidence?
- **Historical value:** Is the record something which the congregation needs permanently? Examples include minutes, registers, and historic rolls. Consult your Conference Archivist about the historical value of records.

## **Managing the Current Records**

Large congregations with paid staff may wish to develop a **file classification plan**. Your Conference Archivist can provide a copy of the Conference File Classification Plan to use as an example. However, most congregations can create effective filing systems using the records series identified in their survey.

Since volunteers are the lifeblood of congregational life, important records are often kept away from the church. Educate volunteers on the preferred method of recordkeeping (for example, minutes for their committee or group should be kept together, not interleaved with other documentation in a file). Require volunteers to deposit records with the records management committee on a regular basis during their terms of office. It is especially important that all records be turned over on completion of their term in office.



It's a good idea to recycle paper records designated for destruction. However, take care that confidential and sensitive documents are shredded, not recycled; many commercial shredding companies offer confidential shredding on-site for a reasonable fee.

## Some Tips for Improved Filing

- File regularly. Set aside time weekly or monthly to keep the “paper monster” in control.
- Weed out duplicate copies; keep signed originals, not photocopies.
- Do not fill folders beyond their capacity, normally 1/2" to 3/4" (corresponding with the creases provided on the folder by the manufacturer).
- If the materials from a committee or organization occupy more than one folder, select a secondary criterion for arrangement. For example, the first folder may contain minutes, the second correspondence, the third reports, and so on. Start a new folder for each category as needed and label as Part #1, Part #2, etc. Consider using files which have permanent attached fastening clips (available from your local stationary store) to hold documents in order.
- Keep personal material and resource material (e.g., catalogues, copies of articles, pamphlets) separate from official records.
- When placing records in files, put the most recent record on top. Place the top of the sheet toward the left of the file drawer, so folder contents can be read like a book. Keep records completely within folders to avoid damage and to keep file folder labels visible.
- Close files and begin new ones at the beginning of each fiscal year or program year.
- Copy documents on facsimile transmission paper and newsprint onto high-quality bond, preferably acid free.
- The overall appearance of a file system plays a large part in the rapid retrieval of material. Guides and labels should be positioned consistently. Care should be taken to use the same format when generating new labels and guides.

# Records Disposition

**Records disposition** is what happens when records are referred to infrequently and they no longer need to be filed in current office space. These actions include

- transfer to inactive storage
- transfer of permanently valuable records to the Conference Archives
- destruction of records which do not have permanent value

Several precautions must be followed to ensure that records disposition is carried out in a timely manner and that no records of permanent value are destroyed.

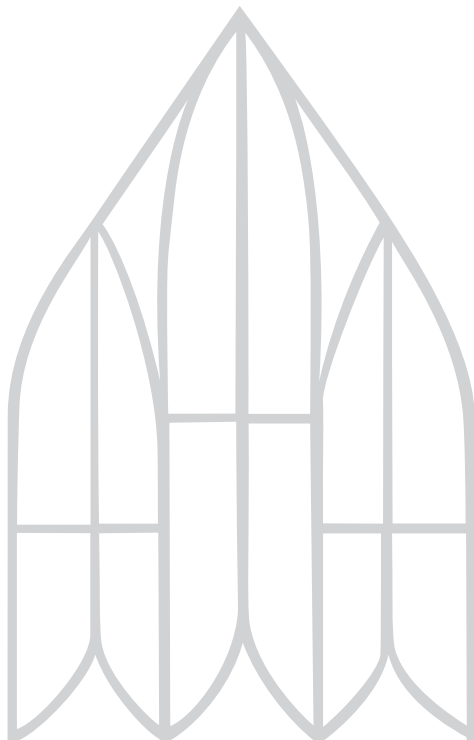
- Be consistent, careful, and punctual in following the records schedule. Set an annual date at which time the Records Management Committee will meet to determine the disposition of records.
- Never mix records with varied disposal dates in the same carton. Separate and store records to be retained permanently from those destined for destruction.
- Review retention periods before records are destroyed and review retention schedules annually. If records are still being actively consulted, the retention period for that series may need to be revised. Ensure that schedules for financial and personnel records follow current General Council policy as specified in the most recent *Financial Handbook for Congregations*.
- Destroy records only with the written permission of the session and/or official board. This action should be documented by motion (by both session and official board or equivalent) noting which records have been destroyed.
- Transfer records to the Conference Archives following authorization by the session and/or official board. This action should be documented by motion (by both session and official board) noting which records have been transferred.

## The Life Cycle of a Record

1. **Active** (in office)
2. **Semi-active** (in storage)
3. **Inactive** (transfer to Archives  
*or*  
authorize destruction)



Records should not be transferred or destroyed until they have been included on the records schedule, the mandated time period has elapsed, and a transfer form has been filled out.



*Rule of Thumb:* Could you easily re-establish congregational life without the particular record?

Without a plan for the preservation of vital records, an organization may not survive a fire or major natural disaster. If a church building burns, destroying the entire record of a congregation, the congregation would undoubtedly find a way to continue. However, it would face overwhelming inconvenience and the understanding of its heritage would be permanently weakened.

## Vital Records

**Vital records** contain information which is essential to the continued functioning or rebuilding of an organization during and after an emergency. They are also those records essential to protecting the rights and interests of the organization and of the individuals directly affected by its activities. Vital records make up a very small—but crucially important—percentage of the records created and maintained by an organization.

Each congregation should determine what records would be vital to its continued operation following an emergency. Remember that copies of many types of records will exist elsewhere, for example with Revenue Canada, in insurance offices, and so on.

Transfer permanently valuable records to your Conference Archives on a regular basis (minimum of every five years). Copy vital records required for current use and store these in a location different from than the originals.

## Sensitive Information in Records

Congregational life does not always run smoothly. It may be tempting to discard records which include information on disputes or divisions, or otherwise shed a negative light on your congregation. Use and access of such records must be managed with care, but selectively destroying them could cause even more negative results. Some records, such as those related to a dispute over church property or personnel matters, for example, may have legal value, and destruction of this documentation would be a serious matter.

Consult your Conference Archivist for advice on how to handle records which contain sensitive material.

# Transferring Records to Your Archives

Congregational records which are of permanent historical value should be deposited with your Conference Archives on a regular basis. Before records are transferred, the church session should recommend to the official board that the records be deposited with the Conference Archives. The minutes of both the session and official board (or equivalent) should include a list of the records deposited.

Follow these steps when preparing your records for transfer:

- Weed out duplicates.
- Label and date file folders, registers and other volumes, and cartons.
- Ensure that a **transfer form** is completely filled out for each carton. It is important to give the name and phone number of a contact person who is knowledgeable about the files. A brief description of the subject matter and dates, and a listing of the file folder headings and dates, will allow the archives staff to process and catalogue the records correctly.
- Place one copy of the form in each carton, and retain a copy in the congregation's files for future reference.
- Do not mix the files of different committees, task forces, and officers. Do not transfer hanging files, just the inside manila file folders. Be certain that these are labelled with the correct file title and outside dates range (for example, 1985–2000).

Archival records are unique and irreplaceable. If possible, transfer records to the Archives in person. If records must be shipped, use a courier or registered mail. Always consult your Conference Archivist before transferring records to the Archives.



*Rule of Thumb:* Transfer permanently valuable records to the Archives at five-year intervals whenever practical, or when a particular book or register is full.



## Services Provided by the Conference Archives

When the records of a congregation arrive at the Conference Archives they are

- arranged and described in accordance with archival standards
- placed in acid-free file folders and boxes
- housed in a secure temperature and humidity controlled storage area
- made available for research

Each Conference Archives has its own policies on the amount of research it will do, and on the lending of records. In most cases, the Conference Archivist will conduct necessary research in a particular document on behalf of a congregation on an occasional basis. If the document is required routinely, it should be retained by the congregation.

Only in special circumstances may some Archives lend the records of a church to the depositing congregation. Loans may be undertaken when the records are required for such projects as the preparation of a church history, or for administrative and legal purposes. In order to lend material, the Archives requires a letter from the official board authorizing the release of the records.

For legal requests, the Conference Archives may be able to issue a certified and true copy of a document such as a vital statistic. This service is dependent upon the resources of each of the Conference Archives.

*Your Conference Archives can provide additional information on records creation and management.*

# File Classification Plan for Congregations

The Committee on Archives and History has developed a file classification plan for use in congregations and pastoral charges. The plan is designed for use as a general template, with the ability to tailor headings to suit the individual needs of the congregation.

## What Is a File Classification Plan?

A **file classification plan** is a way of organizing and grouping files using numbers, letters, or a combination of both. The plan is based on the concept of the **records series**.

What is a records series? It is a group of records that have the same function. A series of records is used and filed as a unit. For example:

<b>Series</b>	<b>Function</b>
Finance	= Records that deal with money
Human Resources	= Records that deal with employees

The file classification plan recognizes two categories of records:

**Administrative:** those records required to carry on the work of the congregation: administration, buildings and property, equipment and supplies, finance and personnel.

No organization can operate without staff, money, equipment, a location, and procedures.

**Operational:** those records generated by an organization in the course of performing its business or carrying out its functions. A church exists for a specific purpose and creates records as it undertakes various functions to accomplish that purpose.



The File Classification Plan  
for Congregations is  
available online at:  
[www.united-church.ca/archives](http://www.united-church.ca/archives)

The plan is based on headings that are organized in hierarchical levels. For example, here is a file structure within the broad section heading of **600–699 (Government and Structures, Internal)**:

- 610. Official Board (or Council)**      Primary heading (top level) shows function
- 1. General**
  - 2. Minutes**    }      Secondary heading (second level) shows activity
- 1. Current Year**
  - 2. Previous Year**    }      Tertiary heading (third level) shows date

The numbering system is known as “block numeric,” where blocks of numbers have been assigned to different sections of the plan. Together, the blocks form the file number that is assigned to the file based on the function and activity involved in each series of records. For example, a file title that follows the above plan is **610-2-1 Minutes of Church Council, January–March 2005**.

## Paper and Electronic Records

Congregations are encouraged to use any technology that will facilitate recordkeeping. The file classification plan can be used for both hard copy paper records and electronic records, including e-mail. The file classification plan can be set up for Windows Explorer and e-mail folders to mirror a paper classification system to facilitate the filing of the hard copy version of the computer-generated records into the main paper system.

The official record is still considered to be the hard copy paper record, even if it was created through e-mail or a computer system and software. Check the section on electronic records, page 41.

## A Filing Plan That Everyone Can Use

The file classification plan accommodates all facets of congregational life, including the records created and maintained by your congregation’s volunteers who serve in many capacities.

The use of the same filing plan will make it easy to return the records to the system once a volunteer’s term of office is finished.



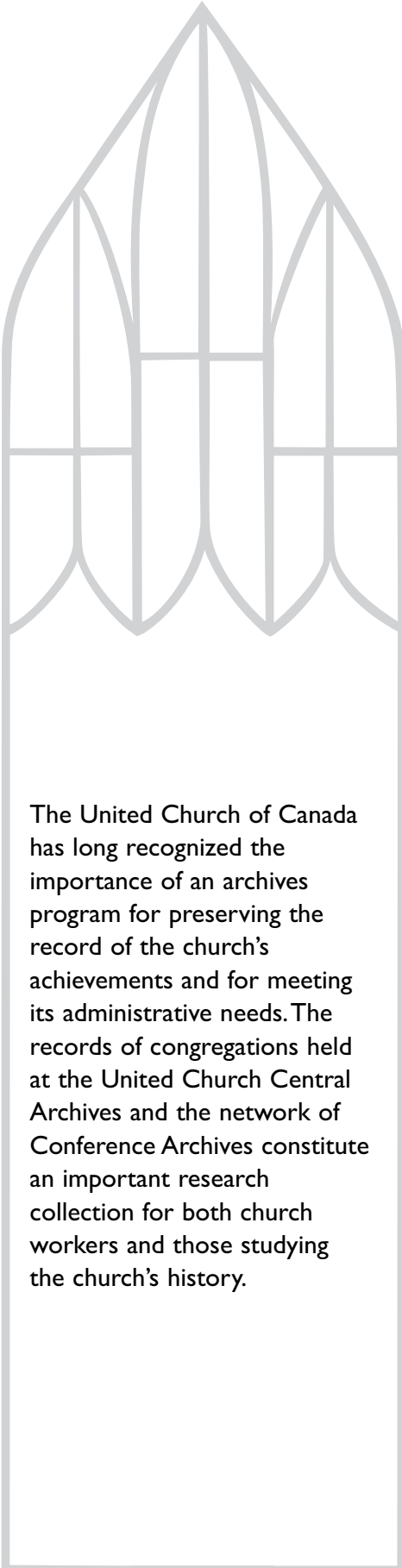
## Why Should We Use This Plan?

- It assists church staff and volunteers in managing the records, both paper and electronic.
- It is flexible enough to fit any congregation's needs and permit the addition or contraction of subject groupings and numbers as need dictates.
- It ensures everyone is filing to one standard.
- It eliminates the guesswork on where to file things.
- It provides filing continuity.
- It ensures swift and easy access to files.
- It creates a filing system that everyone in the congregation can understand and use so that when the "primary filer" leaves the records are still accessible.

## The Importance of Local Church Records and Archives

Maintaining church records ensures that the legal, financial, and administrative needs and obligations of a congregation are met. Over a period of time, properly prepared and preserved church records form a congregational memory; they serve as a source of information for church histories, celebrations, and for genealogical research.

Increasingly, historians and other academics are drawing on the records of congregations in order to describe and interpret the role of the United Church within Canadian society and to understand its internal growth and development.



The United Church of Canada has long recognized the importance of an archives program for preserving the record of the church's achievements and for meeting its administrative needs. The records of congregations held at the United Church Central Archives and the network of Conference Archives constitute an important research collection for both church workers and those studying the church's history.

# Preserving Church Records

Records, no matter how accurate and complete, are of little value unless they are carefully preserved. Here are some of the records created by congregations which have archival significance:

- official minutes of church courts
- official minutes of annual congregational meetings
- baptismal, marriage, burial, and membership registers
- historic and communion rolls
- annual reports and financial statements
- reports and other records of standing, sub-, and ad-hoc committees appointed by the official board
- staff directories, manuals, and organization charts
- correspondence files
- reports and plans regarding church property
- records and substantive correspondence of all groups and associations
- published and unpublished histories
- biographical material about ministers serving a congregation and other prominent individuals
- church bulletins (they provide an overview of a congregation's activities)
- church newsletters, and pastoral and executive letters
- clearly identified and dated photographs of personnel, executives, boards, buildings, properties, and special events

## Handling and Storing

Whether preparing records for transfer to the Archives or storing material in the church, all items should be clearly labelled, dated, and identified. A records storage space should be clean, dry, and secure; the ideal storage equipment is a filing cabinet or metal shelving. If filing cabinets or shelves are not available, items should be packed neatly and loosely in boxes which are suitably labelled.

Scrapbooks can hold interesting collections of memorabilia, but it takes careful planning and investment in proper materials to ensure such collections are long-lasting. Many of the materials used to prepare a scrapbook seriously damage documents. The paper of most commercially available scrapbooks, newspaper clippings, and most commonly used tapes and glues deteriorate over time and adversely affect all materials included in a scrapbook. If it is necessary to prepare a scrapbook then it is important to invest in a book with acid-free paper, purchase special glue sticks which meet archival standards for adhesives, and photocopy newspaper clippings onto good quality paper.

The preparation of photograph albums should also be carefully considered as the self-adhesive album pages commonly available are very harmful to photographs. If a photograph album is to be prepared, the prints should be placed in an album which meets archival standards. Use mounting corners rather than applying adhesives directly to the photographs. Prints can also be put in the pockets of archival quality photo pages or in individual polyethylene sleeves. The use of captions is the best means of identifying prints but where this is not possible, prints may be identified in pencil on the back, taking care not to damage the image.

# Frequently Asked Questions Concerning Congregational Archives

**Q. “What records should be sent by the congregation to the United Church Archives?”**

**A:** The Manual specifies that congregations are to send their inactive records to the appropriate repository. The Archives is interested in receiving the types of archival material listed under “Preserving Church Records” p. 30.

**Q. “What records are not required by the United Church Archives?”**

**A.** Not all the records created and received by a congregation have archival value. Specifically, the Archives does not want

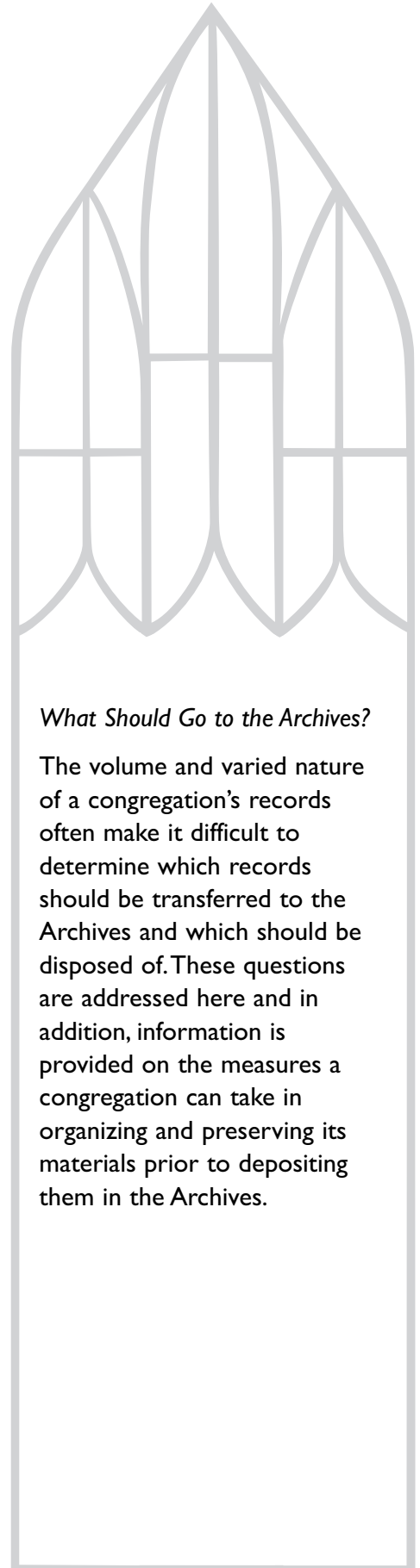
- copies of presbytery or Conference minutes
- invoices, cancelled cheques, or other financial records such as bank statements, bills, and budgets
- conference or national church publications
- pulpit or family Bibles unless they contain unique, important historical information
- duplicate congregational materials

**Q. “When should records be sent to the Archives?”**

**A:** A useful rule of thumb is that only records which are inactive or rarely consulted should be deposited in the Archives. The Archives staff provides reference service on records of congregations. However, if the documents are regularly referred to, they should be retained in the local church.

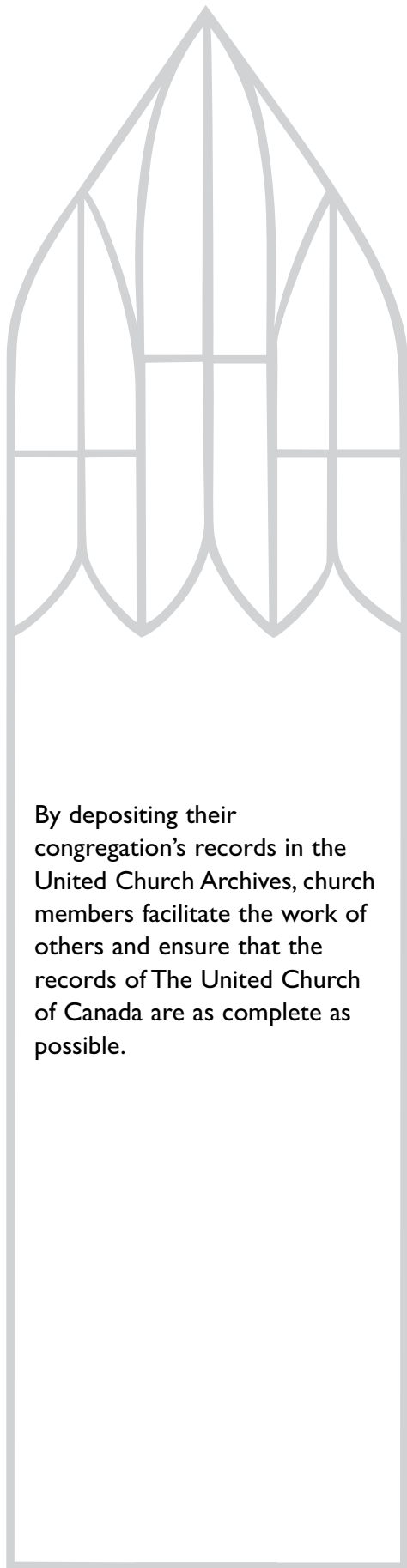
**Q. “What steps should be taken before depositing a congregation’s records?”**

- A.**
- The church session should recommend to the official board that the records be deposited with the Conference Archives.
  - At least three lists of the records being deposited should be prepared.
  - The minutes of both the session and official board should include a list of the records deposited, and one list should be sent to the Archives with the records.



*What Should Go to the Archives?*

The volume and varied nature of a congregation’s records often make it difficult to determine which records should be transferred to the Archives and which should be disposed of. These questions are addressed here and in addition, information is provided on the measures a congregation can take in organizing and preserving its materials prior to depositing them in the Archives.



By depositing their congregation's records in the United Church Archives, church members facilitate the work of others and ensure that the records of The United Church of Canada are as complete as possible.

- Records may be usefully arranged to the following order: minutes of boards and church court; financial records; building and property files; civil registers; membership rolls and registers; correspondence and reports of groups and committees; and photographs.
- It is important to package records carefully when shipping them to the Archives.
- Where possible, the records should be sent by courier or registered mail if they cannot be delivered in person.

## **Services Provided by the Archives**

When the records of a congregation arrive at the Archives they are arranged and described in accordance with archival standards, placed in acid-free file folders and boxes, housed in a temperature and humidity controlled storage area, and made available for research. The Archives staff is pleased to assist researchers using records of congregations and to suggest additional sources of information. However, owing to the pressures on staff time and resources, archivists cannot undertake major research projects on behalf of congregations. Appointments to use material in the Archives may be necessary.

# File Classification Plan for Conferences

The volume and varied nature of Conference records often make it difficult to determine which records should be transferred to the Conference Archives and which should be disposed of. This section provides some basic information on the measures the Conference office can take in organizing and preserving its material prior to depositing it in the Conference Archives. If you have any questions, please contact your Conference Archivist to discuss.

The benefits of using the filing plan are the following:

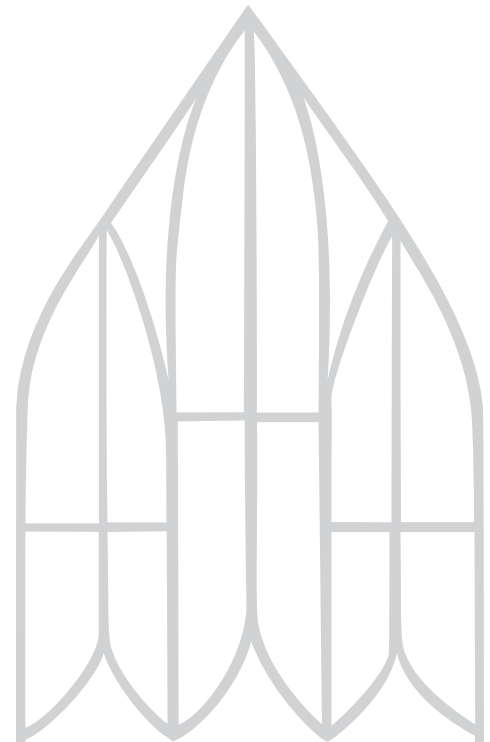
- It is a ready-made filing plan that can be easily implemented in the Conference office.
- Conference office staff may tailor the plan to their own needs.
- A standardized filing plan eliminates the subjectivity of filing.
- The plan acts as a finding aid for all staff to use in order to file and retrieve records quickly and easily.

## Records Retention and Disposition Schedule

All records have some value, or they would not have been created in the first place. However, all records do not remain active for the same period of time and most (approximately 90 percent) will not have permanent archival or historical value.

A **records retention and disposition schedule** assists staff and members in maintaining control over the records created in the Conference office. A schedule assists Conference staff and church members in knowing

- which records can be destroyed, and when and by what means (for example, shred, if records contain personal information)
- which records can be housed for a specific period of time in an in-house storage area
- which records have permanent value and when it is time to deposit them in the Conference Archives



A Conference File Classification Plan has been developed for implementation and use in Conference offices. Copies are available online at: [www.united-church.ca/archives](http://www.united-church.ca/archives)

### **What Is a Record?**

The term “record” includes any documentary materials, regardless of physical form, created and/or received by the Conference in the course of its everyday business and activities, and retained for a specific purpose.

At present, a sample records schedule has not been developed for use in Conference offices. However, this how-to guide gives general guidelines on what records are archival in nature and should be routinely transferred to the Conference Archives. Please contact your Conference Archivist to discuss further questions.

## Physical Format of Records

Records come in many different physical formats, including

- paper (files, record books, reports, and so on)
- maps, plans, blueprints, photographs
- audio, film, video
- digital records, including electronic computer records and e-mail

## Series of Records

Examples of series include

- official minutes of annual Conference meetings, including agendas
- Conference annual records of proceedings
- official minutes and agendas of Conference Executive meetings
- reports and other records of standing, sub- and ad hoc committees appointed by Conference and Conference Executive
- staff directories, manuals, and organizational charts
- substantive correspondence files
- audited financial statements
- church property records, including reports and plans
- records and correspondence of Conference groups and associations
- summary financial records, including general ledgers
- committee or division records, including minutes, substantive correspondence, and reports
- ad hoc project files
- clearly identified and dated photographs of personnel, executives, boards, buildings, properties, special events, and so on
- audio, film, and video records
- records of special events, ordinations, and anniversaries
- historical data, including published and unpublished histories
- newsletters and Conference publications (such as the regional inserts to *The Observer*)
- biographical material about ministry personnel, staff, and officers serving the Conference

# *Guidelines for Closing and Amalgamating Churches*

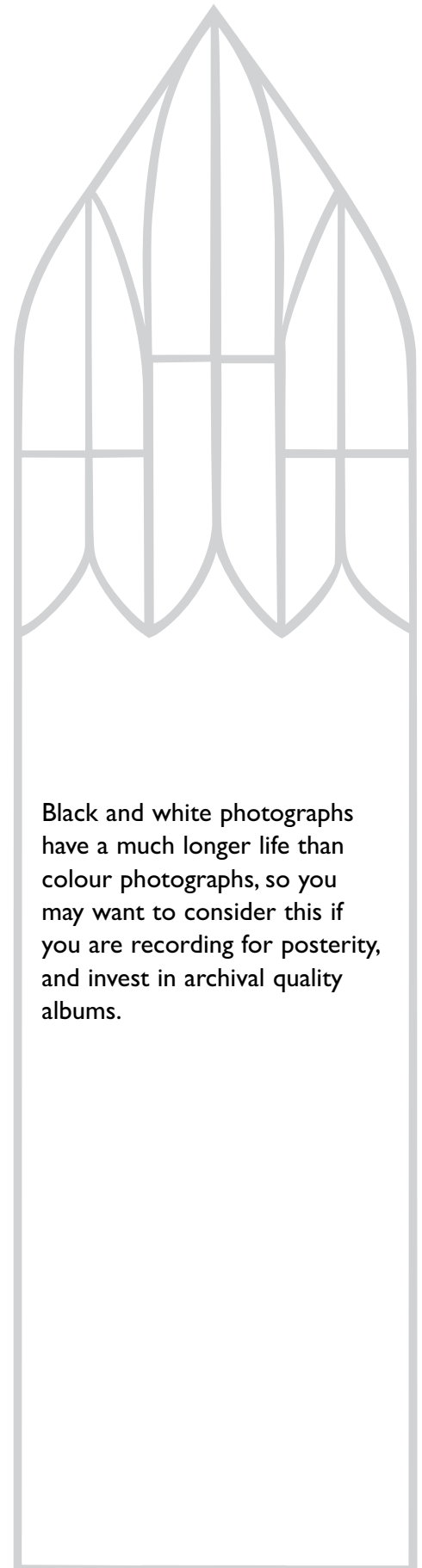
## **Records Heritage**

The official records of the congregation (baptism, historic roll, and/or any other membership rolls, marriage records, burial records, minutes of session, stewards, trustees, congregation, official board, etc.) are the property of The United Church of Canada. Such records should be sorted and sent to the Conference Archives for safekeeping. It is not legal for such records to be held by an individual, nor is it appropriate to have them deposited in other archives.

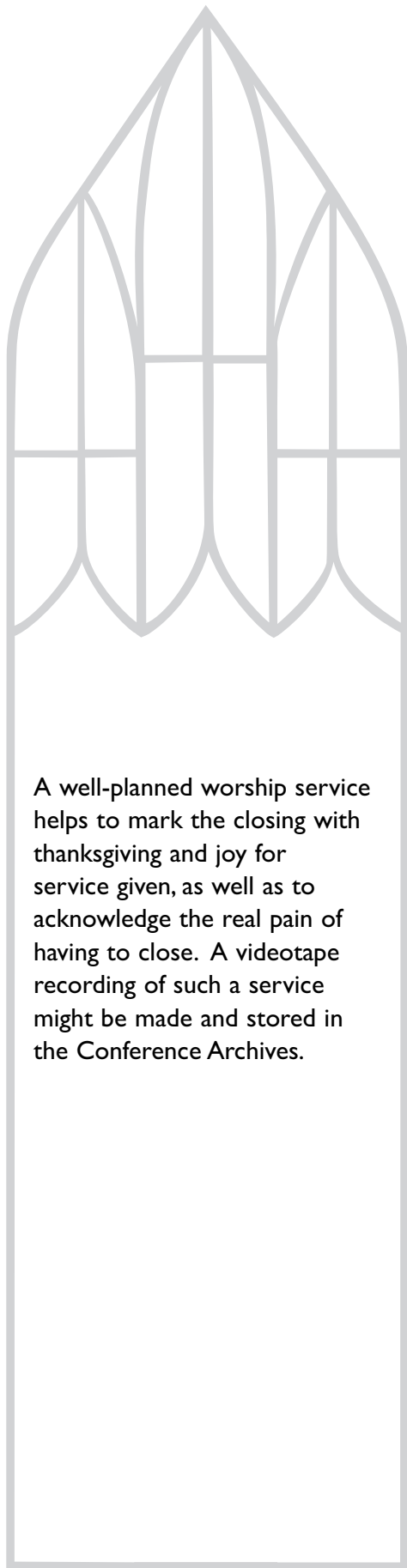
Consideration should be given to amalgamating the congregation with another, preferably on the same pastoral charge, as a preliminary step before closing. In cases of amalgamation with a neighbouring congregation or pastoral charge, it may be necessary to transfer some of the records to the new congregation or pastoral charge. If this should occur, a written statement shall be sent to the presbytery and to Conference Archives giving details of this action.

Arrangements need to be made for the safekeeping of the financial records. The Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) should be consulted with regard to its requirements for retention of records, the filing of the final charitable status return, and the revocation of charitable status number. Financial records are not normally kept at the Conference Archives.

A photo album of the building and congregational activities might be prepared and later placed in the Conference Archives. Make sure that all photographs are clearly and carefully labelled to identify people, places, dates, and so on. Otherwise, they will be of little use in the future.



Black and white photographs have a much longer life than colour photographs, so you may want to consider this if you are recording for posterity, and invest in archival quality albums.



A well-planned worship service helps to mark the closing with thanksgiving and joy for service given, as well as to acknowledge the real pain of having to close. A videotape recording of such a service might be made and stored in the Conference Archives.

## **Building Heritage**

First and foremost, decisions about property need to be made in accordance with The Manual, Sections 265–272; 334–335; 428. If a building is to be demolished or sold, the congregation should make a complete inventory of contents and decide on their disposal in consultation with the appropriate board and presbytery. A copy of this list should be sent to the Conference Archives.

In the case of amalgamation, consider inclusion or incorporation of artifacts and memorabilia into the new congregation.

## **Heritage Celebration**

A service of worship to honour the years of life, work, and worship of the congregation should normally be held. This is an appropriate way to mark the closing of a congregation. Former members and friends, as well as former ministers, can be invited to this service.



# Privacy Legislation

## The United Church of Canada Privacy Policy Summary

The United Church of Canada has a privacy standards policy that allows for the collection, use, management, retention, protection, disclosure, and disposition of personal information held at church offices in compliance with all applicable federal and provincial privacy legislation including, but not limited to, *The Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act* (S.C. 2000, c. 5). The privacy standards policy is applicable to all records of individuals that are maintained by the church under the jurisdiction of General Council. Any questions on this policy should be directed to the General Council Office Privacy Officer.

For a copy of the full text of The United Church of Canada privacy standards policy approved by the General Council Executive April 23–26, 2004, contact the Privacy Officer at [privacy@united-church.ca](mailto:privacy@united-church.ca) or:

3250 Bloor St. West, Suite 300  
Toronto, Ontario M8X 2Y4

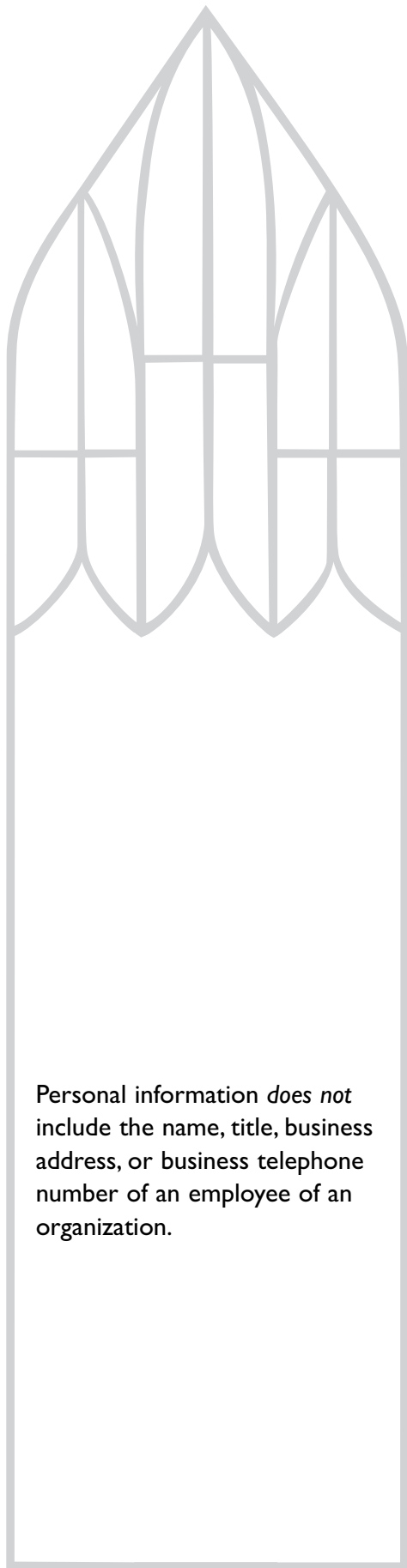
## Highlights of the Legislation

Personal information can only be used for the purposes for which it is collected. Specific permission must be sought if personal information is to be used for any other purpose than that for which it was initially collected. Personal information is to be stored under lock and key and only certain authorized individuals should have access to it.

Once the personal information is no longer required it should be destroyed, except in cases where federal and/or provincial retention rules apply. Conferences and presbyteries should consult with their Conference Archivist.



The Privacy Working Group is of the view that the federal legislation applies to The United Church of Canada. Even if there were parts of the church's operation that might not be subject to the legislation, it is a prudent practice to adopt a policy for the protection of personal information. Adopting one policy which meets the highest standards of the federal and any provincial legislation will serve the church's best interests nationally and regionally.



Personal information *does not* include the name, title, business address, or business telephone number of an employee of an organization.

## Collection

General Council has a centralized records and archives management process for the collection, management, retention, and disposition of personal information. Categories of individuals for which personal information is being collected and maintained include ministry personnel, employees, elected and appointed members, volunteers, donors, and retail customers. Personal information is contained in paper and electronic records at The United Church of Canada. Each employee and pensioner of the church, whether full-time, part-time, contract or retired, has confidential and secure personnel, pension, benefits, and payroll files. Donors and retail customers have files that include confidential personal information. General Council and youth event databases collect personal information required to accommodate event attendance and programs.

All personal information is the property of the church and all individuals have controlled access to their personal information. All personal information obtained, compiled, maintained, and disclosed for the church by third-party agents and contractors must comply with standards comparable to the privacy standards policy and applicable federal/provincial privacy legislation. Contractual provisions requiring such compliance should be incorporated into all third-party agent and contractor agreements.

## Definition

Personal information includes any factual or subjective information, recorded or not, about an identifiable individual—that is, it is information which can, directly or indirectly, identify an individual.

Personal information includes information in any form (for example, printed/electronic) including home address, home phone number, age, personal e-mail address, race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, mental or physical disability, family members' names, employee files, identification numbers, evaluations, disciplinary actions, the existence of a dispute, opinions, comments, social status, income, credit and bank records, donation information, loan records, or medical records.

# Principles

The United Church of Canada will follow the ten principles for handling personal information as set out in Schedule 1 of *The Personal Information Protection and Electronics Document Act of Canada* (PIPEDA). These principles are accountability, identifying purposes, consent, limiting collection, limiting use, disclosure and retention, accuracy, safeguards, openness, individual access, and provision of recourse.

Personal information will be inventoried and assigned to one of the three levels:

## **Level 1—Highly Restricted Personal Information**

Information is very sensitive, and if shared or published inappropriately or harvested electronically for fraudulent activities such as identity theft, has the potential of damaging people's lives and/or their well-being and would likely bring about legal action against the church. The information is used for internal judicial decisions, identifies donor designations, career development, compensation determination, and legal action.

## **Level 2—Confidential Personal Information**

Information is somewhat sensitive and if inappropriately shared, published, or harvested electronically could contribute to fraudulent activity such as identity theft, and bring about hardship or embarrassment to an individual and/or the church, or may bring about legal action against the church. The information is used for career development and legislative compliance. This information is considered private, but more individuals have controlled access to it than the information in Level 1.

## **Level 3—General Information**

Information is not sensitive and can be shared. This information is not restricted and many can have access to it. It is collected to assist the departments in the accomplishment of their tasks. There is no confidential or restricted personal information included in this level.

If you have any specific questions about how to apply the privacy standards policy, please contact your Conference Archivist or the privacy officer at [privacy@united-church.ca](mailto:privacy@united-church.ca).

Members of the privacy working group will be preparing detailed resources for use at the Conference, presbytery, and pastoral charges.

# Privacy Compliance Roles

## **Privacy Commissioner**

- directs staff in compliance orders and advises privacy officer on coordination of cross-unit resources required for compliance orders with legal/time-sensitive deadlines
- communicates with news media and federal/provincial privacy commissioners
- authorizes official communications that bind the church legally
- champions the benefits of compliance throughout the wider church and at the governance level
- champions administrative, structural, policy, and governance changes in the wider church to comply with trends in privacy policy, legislation, and complaints

- reminds minute-taking staff and elected and appointed members on a point of procedure with respect to General Council agenda items containing personal information and may recommend when it is necessary to move to “in camera” discussion to enable public minutes without the need to screen for personal information before publishing minutes for public distribution

### ***Privacy Officer***

- front-line responsibility for processing requests and promoting compliance with privacy standards, policies, and legislation
- ensures regular training for new and existing staff/volunteers as to the policies and procedures that protection of personal information requires
- maintains and audits inventory of personal information including location and access to records
- coordinates inventory maintenance, personal information requests, and privacy issues with the privacy commissioner and designated privacy officials in units and at Conference offices
- consults with the Church Archivist on the maintenance and sharing of inventory/location information to facilitate records and archives management policies and schedules
- consults with the Church Archivist on complicated requests, records-collection management and retention schedules, and disposition of personal information records as overseen by the Archivist
- consults with the Church Archivist on promotion and education of the wider church through the Archives Network/Committee
- consults with privacy working group, unit leaders, and Conference executive secretaries on policy development and amendments, and incorporating feedback from stakeholders
- consults with the IT Services executive officer on policies related to creation, storage, access, and retention of electronic records maintained by church house systems or through systems of third-party agents involved in contracted management of personal information
- advises the privacy commissioner on compliance issues and delegation of compliance
- advises the privacy commissioner on requests for access to personal information as defined in the federal act
- oversees amendments and distribution of The United Church of Canada privacy policy

### ***Privacy Working Group***

- consultation group for developing and amending policy and inventory maintenance
- key stakeholders involved in other policies related to collection, use, retention, protection, disclosure, controlled access, and disposition of highly restricted and confidential personal information (MEPS, Archives, Finance, IT Services)
- chaired by privacy officer

### ***Privacy Official***

- acts as the point person in the unit, Conference, presbytery, and so on
- understands and promotes the importance and compliance of PIPEDA
- coordinates the annual privacy information audit and maintain related records
- responds to requests for personal information at the unit, Conference, presbytery, and/or pastoral charge level

# Electronic Records

## Keeping Pace with Technology

“With the increasing number of electronic records in office systems, including networked environments, there is a growing concern about their maintenance and long term preservation. In order to preserve electronic records, it is important that archival requirements are incorporated when systems are designed and that records are carefully controlled throughout their life cycle to ensure their ongoing quality and integrity.”\*

The definitions of records and recordkeeping apply to all records regardless of form and medium. A record is “recorded information produced or received in the initiation, conduct or completion of an institutional or individual activity and that comprises content, context and structure sufficient to provide evidence of the activity...”

“A record keeping system is an information system that has been developed for the purpose of storing or retrieving records, and is organized to control the specific functions of creating, storing and accessing records to safeguard their authenticity and reliability.”\*

Consider the purpose of the computer record when making decisions about what to keep:

- If its use is primarily for reading/reference and its value is *permanent*, print and preserve a *paper copy* as the original.
- If its use is primarily for reading/reference and its value is *temporary*, preserve in whatever form is most convenient for use at the active and inactive stages of its life.
- If its use is primarily for data control and manipulation (for example, accounting files, membership databases), preserve standard reports (such as annual financial reports) in paper form. Preserve the computer records in electronic form. However, these records must be maintained on media (such as disks) compatible with current hardware and *kept compatible* with upgrades or changes in software.

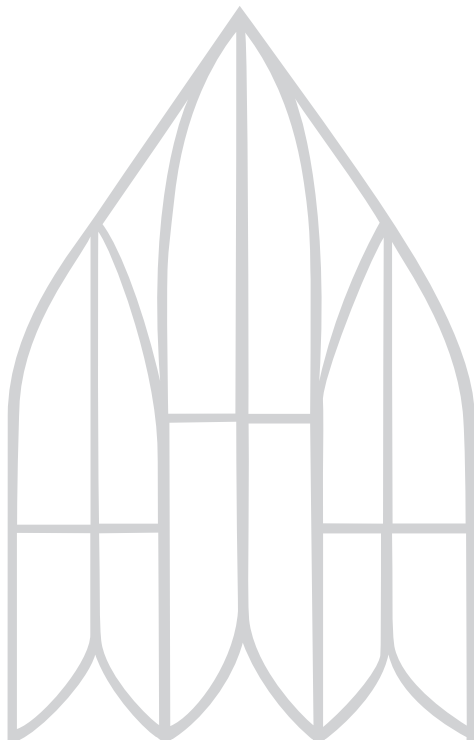
With these new technologies come questions on how to efficiently manage your electronic records. How do you distinguish e-mails

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\*From *Electronic Records: A Workbook for Archivists*, ICA Study 16, International Council on Archives, Committee on Current Records in an Electronic Environment (CER), © ICA, April 2005, pp. 5, 10, 12. Used with permission.



Information technology has revolutionized the way in which church offices create, store, and manage their records. Information has moved from paper letters to e-mail messages. Calendars, annual reports, leaflets, and other publications are now more likely to be accessed through websites. Relational database systems have replaced transcript cards, paper forms, and case files.



Electronic records are as much a part of our documentary heritage as are the oldest of our textual and photographic records. They are by their nature very fragile. Many documents are published on Internet websites, but come and go with great ease and regularity. E-mail messages are always a click away from destruction. The digital information we create today could easily disappear tomorrow.

*When digital data fails, it fails completely. In contrast, archival quality paper and microform can last up to 500 years.*

worth saving from other messages, such as personal or routine e-mail? How do you ensure that electronic records having long-term administrative, legal, or research value can be accessed and read 10 or 15 years from now? How can you quickly find a document in your computer directory?

The following tips provide guidance in establishing good business practices to manage the church's electronic information resources. Implementing these tips will help to ensure that electronically stored records are easily retrievable, usable, and protected for years to come.

- Apply records management principles to all of your office's records, including those that are produced electronically. If you wish to learn more about records management practices, talk to your Conference Archivist about resources.
- Keep in mind that many of the electronic documents you create are church records. A church record is any document created in the course of church activity that is recorded evidence of that activity, such as a letter, memorandum, report, computer database file, e-mail, videotape or film, photograph, map, drawing, and any other thing on which information is recorded or stored.
- Remember that electronic records are subject to the same legal and legislative requirements as any record produced in any form or media.
- Purge regularly electronic documents that are routine administrative messages, personal notes, minor redrafts, and duplicates of paper copies.
- Establish an electronic classification plan in your file directory that follows the one created for your office's textual records. This practice allows for similar retention and disposition of similar types of information despite their format.
- Determine retention periods and final disposition for electronic records just as you would for paper files. Scheduling electronic records must follow appropriate church procedures and include the Conference Archivists' approval.
- Develop naming conventions and version control for your electronic documents to support quick access and easy retrieval.
- Ensure that new software applications permit ready conversion of files from other systems.
- Save and protect software, systems documentation, and data management tools needed to operate your system.
- Guard networks and computers against threats such as viruses, tampering, and unauthorized access.
- Plan adequate backup systems. "Refresh" data regularly by copying onto a new disc or tape.

## Preservation Issues

While digital documents do not fade or crumble like paper, and can be quickly and inexpensively copied, digital media are far more fragile than paper or microform. All digital documents are stored as computer files on magnetic or magneto-optical media such as computer disks or tapes. Computer files may be erased by accidental exposure to a magnetic field or a surge in electric current. Even with proper storage, digital media degrade over time. According to recent studies, a CD may last from five to 50 years, depending on the quality of its manufacture. The lifespan of magnetic tape, under the best of conditions, is measured in decades. Unless the data is periodically “refreshed” by copying it from one tape or disk to another, it will become unreadable.

An even greater problem is that digital data is created to work within a particular software and hardware environment. As the software and hardware become obsolete, the data becomes less accessible, and finally, inaccessible. Two possible solutions exist to rescue older documents from a premature digital demise: migration and emulation.

### **Migration**

The method most widely used to keep electronic documents accessible is **migration**—the periodic transfer of electronic materials from one hardware/software configuration to another, or from one generation of computer technology to a subsequent generation. Migration is a more costly and labour intensive method of preservation of data than simply refreshing the data, but it is necessary if the document is to remain usable beyond the short lifecycle of the software in which it is embedded.

A simple example of migration is moving a document created in one version of word processing software to a newer version. Most word processing software will read the last few generations of the same program without problems or any loss of content or formatting.

Documents that are created in open, standardized formats are usually easier to migrate than documents embedded in complex formats of word processing software. Two widely used coding standards are the American Standard Code for Information Interchange (ASCII) and Unicode, a standard that embraces a much larger character set than ASCII. Most word processors will save a



The Committee on Archives and History has drafted basic guidelines for Conference Archivists to assist in managing electronic records, and will continue to communicate standards in digital preservation as they emerge.

document in ASCII format when the author selects the “txt” file extension. A universal format for graphic images, Tagged Image File Format (TIFF) was developed in the 1980s.

Many documents, however, are created in proprietary software formats that become obsolete after a few years. Saving a master copy of an electronic document in open standard formats such as ASCII, Unicode, and TIFF will increase a document’s longevity and make migration to newer formats easier.

Through the use of basic file formats and careful refreshing and migrating of data, textual documents can be preserved for many years.

### **Emulation**

To maintain complex electronic files, some advocate another preservation method known as **emulation**. More complex Internet documents, which combine text with graphic images, sound files, and videos, or contain embedded programs (e.g., Java applets), are more difficult to preserve. In migrating multimedia electronic documents, crucial elements of the formatting may be lost.

Emulation seeks to recreate an electronic document’s original functionality, look, and feel. Emulation creates software that would mimic the functionality of older software and hardware, allowing legacy electronic documents created in obsolete software and hardware environments to be viewed on current computer systems. Emulation offers the promise of preserving complex electronic files, but finding a practical method of emulation requires much more research.

To facilitate both migration and emulation strategies, electronic archivists advocate applying descriptive metadata to a document at or near the time of its creation.

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#### **Based on:**

“Dealing with the Digital: Preservation of Electronic Records in The United Church of Canada,” Bob Stewart and Sharon Larade, 30 October 2001.

*Staying Digital: Recommendations on Preserving New Jersey Government Information in the Digital Age*, State Department Interest Group of the Documents Association of New Jersey, June 2001.



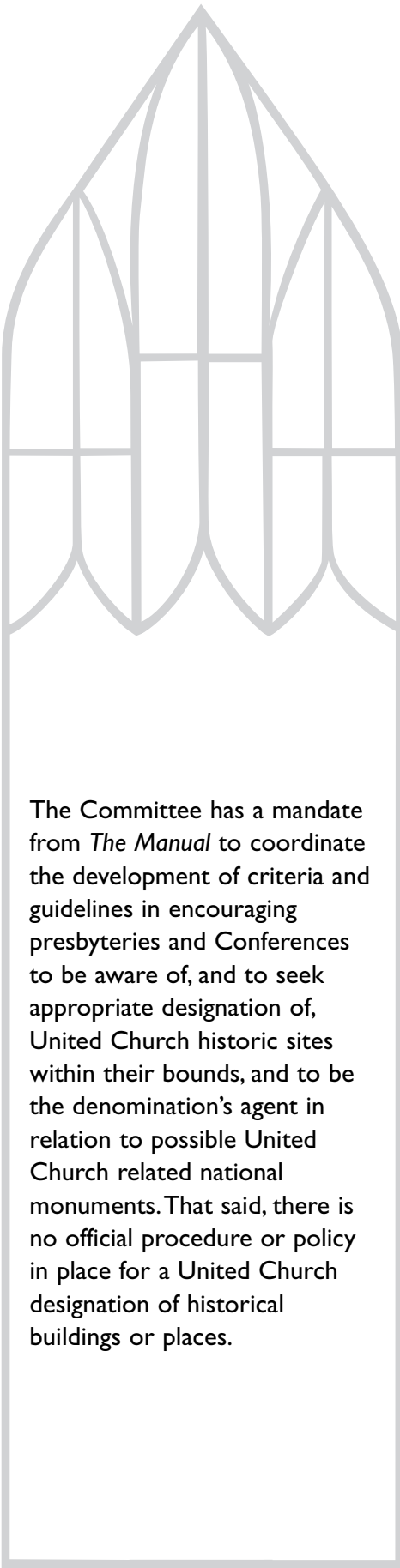
# Historic Sites and Artifacts

## Historic Sites

There are many places and buildings of historical importance to the wider church community. The Archives Committee encourages individuals to pursue designation at the local level through their existing municipal or provincial jurisdiction. A major concern around designated historical sites is the ongoing maintenance of the structures or sites, and it has been decided by the wider church that this is better addressed by the local community.

No funds are available across the system to address designation, although some conferences to date have had energetic teams helping to document the built church heritage. In Alberta and Northwest, there is an Historic Sites and Archives Committee who have provided additional guidance for their jurisdiction. In 2003, Toronto Conference developed the flyer “Get the Word Out” to be sent out to local congregations for use in outreach initiatives.

In the Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario, *Steps to Be Followed when Considering Heritage Designation for Church Properties* was developed by the Church Property Advisory Group and endorsed by Conference Executive, November 1997 (revised July 2000).



The Committee has a mandate from *The Manual* to coordinate the development of criteria and guidelines in encouraging presbyteries and Conferences to be aware of, and to seek appropriate designation of, United Church historic sites within their bounds, and to be the denomination’s agent in relation to possible United Church related national monuments. That said, there is no official procedure or policy in place for a United Church designation of historical buildings or places.



We encourage individuals to preserve heritage artifacts in the congregation where possible, or offer them to a local museum that has a close connection to the community of origin.

## Artifacts

Due to limited resources, the United Church archives do not acquire three-dimensional objects or artifacts as part of their acquisition program. Storage facilities for artifacts require a different kind of space, and are often not able to be stored in standard boxes.

Similarly, we do not acquire pulpit or family Bibles unless they contain important historical information not obtainable elsewhere. Bibles are precious objects to a family or a congregation, and we encourage their retention closer to the community. We are no longer acquiring examples of Bibles for our holdings.

# Appendices

## Appendix A: United Church Archives Network

Please check [www.united-church.ca/archives](http://www.united-church.ca/archives) for the most up-to-date contact information.

### The Congregation and the Church Archives

In order to care properly for its records, the United Church has established a number of archival repositories across Canada. The Central Archives in Toronto houses the records of the national church, and serves as the repository for the records of the five Ontario Conferences. The other eight Conferences have their own arrangements for maintaining their records.

**Central Archives:** Sharon P. Larade, Chief Archivist,  
United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, 73 Queen's Park Crescent East, Birge-Carnegie Building, Victoria University, Toronto, ON M5S 1K7

*Website:* [www.unitedchurcharchives.ca](http://www.unitedchurcharchives.ca)

*Phone:* 416-585-4563

*Fax:* 416-585-4584

*E-mail:* [info@unitedchurcharchives.ca](mailto:info@unitedchurcharchives.ca)

*Hours:* Mon.–Thurs. 10 a.m.–4:45 p.m. Closed on Fridays, weekends, statutory holidays, and dates determined by the University of Toronto calendar

**All Native Circle Conference:** Includes presbyteries with congregations in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, and Quebec. For Keewatin Presbytery and ANCC Conference records, please contact MNWO Conference Archives. For all other presbyteries, contact:

ANCC, The United Church of Canada, 367 Selkirk Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R2W 2M3

*Phone:* 204.582.5518

*Fax:* 204.582.6649

*E-mail:* [allnative@mts.net](mailto:allnative@mts.net)

**Newfoundland and Labrador Conference:** Alison Piercey, Conference Archivist,  
Newfoundland and Labrador Conference Archives, 320 Elizabeth Avenue,  
St. John's, NF A1B 1T9

*Phone:* 709-754-0386

*Fax:* 709-754-8336

*E-mail:* [unitedchurch@nfld.net](mailto:unitedchurch@nfld.net)

**Maritime Conference:** Judith Colwell, Conference Archivist,  
Maritime Conference Archives, 32 York Street, Sackville, NB E4L 4R4

*Phone:* 506-536-0998 for an appointment

*Fax:* 506-536-2900

*E-mail:* [ucarchiv@nb.sympatico.ca](mailto:ucarchiv@nb.sympatico.ca)

*Hours:* Tues.–Thurs. 9 a.m.–4 p.m.

## **Montreal and Ottawa Conference**

**A. Quebec-Sherbrooke Presbytery** (*records outside of the Eastern Townships*): Gilles Durand, Archivist, Archives nationales du Québec, Centre regional de l'Estrie, 225, rue Frontenac, bureau 410, Sherbrooke, QC J1H 1Z3

*Phone:* 819-820-3010      *Fax:* 819-820-3930      *E-mail:* anq.sherbrooke@mcc.gouv.qc.ca

**B. Quebec-Sherbrooke Presbytery** (*Eastern Townships records*): Sophie Morel, Archivist, Eastern Townships Research Centre, Archives Department, Bishop's University, Lennoxville, QC J1M 1Z7  
*Phone:* 819-822-9600, ext. 2261      *Fax:* 819-822-9661      *E-mail:* etrc2@ubishops.ca

**C. Montreal and area records** (*Montreal Presbytery, Consistoire Laurentien, and Ottawa Presbytery-Quebec congregations only*): Beverly Anderson-Levine, Conference Archivist,  
*Mailing address:* Montreal & Ottawa Conference Archives, 225-50th Avenue, Lachine, QC H8T 2T7  
*Street address:* Archives nationales du Québec, Centre de Montreal, 535 Viger East, Montreal, QC H2L 2P3  
*Phone:* 514-634-7015 ext. 4      *Fax:* 514-634-2489      *E-mail:* archives.mo@istar.ca  
*Hours:* Tues., Sat. & Sun. 10 a.m.–5 p.m., Wed.–Fri. 10 a.m.–10 p.m. Closed Mondays.

**D. Ottawa Presbytery & Seaway Valley Presbytery** (*Ontario records only*): Donald McKenzie, Deputy Conference Archivist, City of Ottawa Archives, Whitton Hall, 111 Sussex Drive, First Floor (Bytown Pavilion), Ottawa, ON K1N 1J1  
*Phone:* 613-580-2424 ext. 13333      *Fax:* 613-580-2614      *E-mail:* archives@ottawa.ca

**Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario:** Diane Haglund, Conference Archivist, Rare Book Room, The University of Winnipeg Library, 515 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R3B 2E9  
*Phone:* 204-783-0708      *Fax:* 204-786-1824      *E-mail:* d.haglund@uwinnipeg.ca

## **Saskatchewan Conference:**

*Mailing address:* Saskatchewan Conference Office, Archives Inquiries, 418A MacDonald Street, Regina, SK S4N 6E1  
*Street address:* Saskatchewan Archives Board, The University of Saskatchewan, Murray Building, Room 913 Campus Drive, Saskatoon, SK S7N 5A4  
*Phone:* 306-721-3311      *Fax:* 306-721-3171      *E-mail:* ucskco@sk.sympatico.ca  
*Hours:* Mon.–Fri. 9 a.m.–5 p.m.

**Alberta and Northwest Conference:** Jane Bowe-McCarthy, Conference Archivist, Alberta and Northwest Conference Archives, c/o Provincial Archives of Alberta, 8555 Roper Road, Edmonton, AB T6E 5W1  
*Phone:* 780-427-8687 (*general*) | 780-435-3995 ext. 230 (*direct*)      *Fax:* 780-427-4646  
*E-mail:* Jane.Bowe-McCarthy@gov.ab.ca

**British Columbia Conference:** Bob Stewart, Conference Archivist, British Columbia Conference Archives, Vancouver School of Theology, 6000 Iona Drive, Vancouver, BC V6T 1L4  
*Website:* www.bc.united-church.ca/archives  
*Phone:* 604-822-9589 for an appointment      *Fax:* 604-822-9212      *E-mail:* bstewart@bc.united-church.ca

## **Appendix B:**

# **How to Keep an Archival Copy of Minutes**

The Committee on Archives and History recommends the following method for keeping the official archival copy of minutes. This method provides a means of maintaining the secure order of the pages without the expense and long-term preservation concerns associated with book-binding. The method consists of three parts: archival permanent paper, ACCOPRESS binders, and Chicago screws and posts.

### **Archival Permanent Paper**

Archival permanent paper meets the international standards for permanence, that is, it is acid-free and has minimal lignin content and low tear resistance. It is available in packages of 500 sheets, pre-punched for three-ring binders. Product #800000643.

Archival permanent paper may be ordered from:

United Church Resource Distribution (UCRD)  
Attn: Order Desk  
25 Connell Court, Unit 2  
Toronto, Ontario M8Z 1E8

*Call toll-free* 1-800-288-7365 or locally 416-253-5456, Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. ET and speak with a customer service representative. *Fax toll-free* to 1-888-858-8358 or locally to 416-253-1630 along with church account or credit card payment information.

*E-mail* your order to UCRD at [ucrd@united-church.ca](mailto:ucrd@united-church.ca). In your e-mail, please include: church name and address; a "ship to" address if different from church address; phone number; contact person; method of payment, e.g., UCRD account number; information about the resource including full title or description, price, quantity; and where necessary, desired delivery date.

### **ACCOPRESS Binders**

ACCOPRESS binders are readily available from any office supply store. The metal strip with the prongs will have to be removed to insert the screws.

### **Chicago Screws and Posts**

Use aluminum (not plastic) flat-headed posts and matching slotted flat-head screws. Recommended sizes for the posts are: 1/4", 3/4", 1 1/4".

These screws may be ordered directly from the supplier:

MC2 Office Binding Systems-Canada  
1261 Amherst,  
Montreal, Quebec H2L 3K9  
*Phone:* 1-800-435-6623  
*Toll-free fax:* 1-877-228-0702  
*E-mail:* [infobook@mc2binding.com](mailto:infobook@mc2binding.com)

# Appendix C:

## Sample Records Schedule

This schedule is intended to provide an example only. A records schedule identifies the types of records created by a congregation and its officers and governs their retention and disposition. Each congregation should develop its own schedule based on the results of its records survey.

### **Anytown United Church: Records Schedule**

Authority: Approved January 1, 2005, by Anytown United Church Official Board. Responsibility for implementation rests with the Records Management Committee. No records may be destroyed or transferred to the Conference Archives without the approval of the Official Board.

<b>Record Type</b>	<b>Retention Period</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Unless otherwise indicated one copy only is retained.		
<b>[Administrative]</b>		
Agendas	7 years	
Annual reports	Permanent	
Ballots	Retain until results are confirmed	
By-laws/constitution	Permanent	Retain all historical versions
Correspondence & memoranda: general	3 years	
Correspondence & memoranda: substantive (e.g., dealing with legal or other important matters; potential value for historical research on policy or issues)	Permanent	
Legal documents (e.g., deeds, titles, mortgages, bills of sale)	Permanent	
Minutes: of congregation (all boards, committees, organizations within the congregation)	Permanent	
Minutes: of other church courts/committees (e.g., outside of the congregation)	While current	
Organizational charts	Permanent	Unless included in reports or other documents

<b>Record Type</b>	<b>Retention Period</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>[Administrative (cont.)]</b>		
Planning documents (e.g., goals & objectives; priorities)	Permanent	
Policy statements & procedures manuals	Permanent	Maintain all historical versions; policies are defined to include all written policy statements, procedures, standards, protocols, and practice guidelines and directives
Reports (generated by board/organizations/committees of congregation)	Permanent	
<b>[Finance/Property]</b>		
Audited annual financial returns	Permanent	Includes external auditor & federal
Bank statements, pass books, reconciliations & cancelled cheques	7 years	(a requirement of the <i>Income Tax Act</i> )
Budget planning documents	Retain until budget approved	
Capital construction records Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• survey &amp; title search</li> <li>• contracts (incl. change orders)</li> <li>• equipment listing</li> <li>• funding approvals</li> <li>• testing reports &amp; certificates</li> <li>• “as built” drawings</li> </ul>	Permanent	
Cash receipts	7 years	
Contracts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• supplies</li> <li>• service</li> <li>• maintenance</li> </ul>	Permanent	
Deposit books/slips	7 years	

<b>Record Type</b>	<b>Retention Period</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>[Finance/Property (cont.)]</b>		
Donor files (e.g., objective forms)	While active	
Donor receipts	7 years	
General ledgers	Permanent	
Inspection reports (including fire, elevator)	Retain until next inspection	
Insurance policies: liability	Permanent	
Insurance policies: other (including property, boiler & machinery, travel, accident, course of construction)	7 years	
Invoices: construction	Permanent	
Invoices: other capital	5 years	
Invoices: operating	5 years	
Journals & subsidiary ledgers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• accounts payable</li> <li>• accounts receivable</li> <li>• cash receipts</li> <li>• misc. &amp; other</li> <li>• payroll</li> </ul>	7 years	
Plans, drawings, & specifications (i.e., architectural engineering)	Permanent	
Property records: deeds, titles, leases	Permanent	
Subscription files (e.g. <i>The Observer</i> )	While current	
Tax returns <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• charitable</li> <li>• GST</li> </ul>	7 years	
Tax bills: property, municipal	7 years	
Utility contracts	7 years	



<b>Record Type</b>	<b>Retention Period</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>[Personnel]</b>		
Payroll records: time cards/sheets	2 years	
Payroll records:T4s	7 years	
Payroll records:T4As	7 years	
Payroll records: deductions CPP, UI	7 years	
Personnel policies (re. lay personnel hired by congregation)	Permanent	
Personnel records: ministry personnel	While active	Only at pastoral charge level; following changes in employment, contact Conference personnel minister for advice re. culling file
Personnel records: lay personnel	Permanent	Working file
<b>[Membership]</b>		
Communion rolls	Permanent	
Directories (i.e., members, staff)	While active	
Historic rolls	Permanent	
Mailing lists	While current	
Registers: baptism/marriage/burial	Permanent	
<b>[Other]</b>		
Bibles/hymnals	Copied information Permanent	These are not records; photocopy significant historical information written in margins, etc., if not available elsewhere
Biographical material of key members and clergy who have served congregation	Permanent	

<b>Record Type</b> <b>[Other (cont.)]</b>	<b>Retention Period</b>	<b>Comments</b>
News clippings of congregation activities	Permanent	Must be dated and include name of newspaper; photocopy onto acid-free paper
Newsletters	Permanent	Complete set
Bulletins/order of service	Permanent or selective retention	Complete sets are a valuable historic resource; if space is limited select samples, e.g., special events/overview of year
Histories of congregation (published or unpublished)	Permanent	
Film/videotape produced by congregation/ of historical importance; identified	Permanent	
Oral history: tapes/transcripts	Permanent	
Press releases: those issued by congregation	Permanent	
Publications: by congregation	Permanent	
Publications: non-congregation	While in use	
Photographs (identified and dated)	Permanent	
Scrapbooks (historical contents identified and dated)	Permanent	
Slide/tape shows (subjects identified and dated)	Permanent	
Sound recordings (of congregation event/ activity; key speakers identified; date of event)	Permanent	
Speeches (congregation: clergy/officers/ guests; dated)	Permanent	

# Appendix D: Sample Records Survey Worksheet

Creating board/committee: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact person/phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Record name: \_\_\_\_\_

Inclusive dates: \_\_\_\_\_

Volume (in linear or cubic feet): \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Description: \_\_\_\_\_

Record purpose or function: \_\_\_\_\_

## Arrangement (select one)

- Chronological
- Alphabetical
- Numerical
- None
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## Format (select one)

- Paper
- Computer disks
- Audio tape
- Plans/drawings
- Film/video
- Photographs
- Books/publications
- Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

Physical condition: \_\_\_\_\_

Period of active use: \_\_\_\_\_

## Retention Recommended

Office: \_\_\_\_\_

Storage: \_\_\_\_\_

Total retention: \_\_\_\_\_

## Disposition Recommendations (select one)

- Transfer to Archives
- Destroy

Surveyed by: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Appendix E: Archives Transfer Form

Place one copy of this form in each carton shipped; a copy should be appended to the minutes of the session and official board.

Archival records are unique and irreplaceable. Transfer to the Archives in person. If records must be shipped, use courier or registered mail.

**Always contact the Conference Archivist before transferring material.**

Date of transfer: \_\_\_\_\_

Congregation name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Has transfer been approved in minutes?     Yes         No

Date of minutes: \_\_\_\_\_

Session: \_\_\_\_\_

Official board: \_\_\_\_\_

**Carton: \_\_\_ of \_\_\_**

Records not retained by the Archives should be (pick one):

Returned to the congregation     Destroyed

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Secretary of official board: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please list all volumes or files on an attached sheet.** Records may be arranged in the following order: minutes of boards and church courts, financial records, building and property files, registers, historic and communion rolls, correspondence, reports of groups and committees, photographs, and other media. File folders must be labelled.