

## BEST PRACTICES FOR PAROCHIAL ARCHIVES

**How to Store:** All material stored “in-house” by a congregation or parish should be kept either electronically (computer files with appropriate backup security) and/or in acid-free containers, in a place that is protected from heat and water. Materials should be filed first by subject, then chronologically within that subject.

**What to Keep & Store:** Congregations should keep and store these items “in-house”

- All vestry meeting/bishop’s committee meeting minutes
- All records relating to property and building management (building plans, contracts, bills on construction, etc.)
- All charters, by-laws, deeds, incorporation papers, and other corporate documents
- All contracts and legal records
- Reports of all Annual Meetings
- All employment records, including documents relating to search processes, hiring and firing, and employment contracts
- All financial data and budgets, for as long as is legally appropriate
- Historical records, such as:
  - Photos (both formal and candid, labeled if possible) of parish events and figures, such as:
    - Rectors and Vestry members
    - Holidays and special services
    - Guilds and committees and mission work
  - Parish publications and press releases
  - Records of mission activities
  - Parish registers and Registers of Services
  - All committee meeting minutes, regardless of committee
  - Parish directories
  - Records on policy and governance
- Correspondence, as dictated below:
  - Routine correspondence may be destroyed after 5 years
  - All correspondence that is related to subjects listed above may be kept at the discretion of the parish historian
  - All correspondence that is unrelated to subjects listed above (such as personal correspondence) may be destroyed immediately, there is no need to keep it

**What to Send to the Diocese’s Archives:** Congregations should send these items to the diocese’s Archivists annually

- Copy of all vestry/bishop’s committee meeting minutes
- Copy of all committee meeting minutes
- Copy of yearly budget
- Copy of report of Annual Meeting

If you have any questions, please contact one of the following members of the diocesan staff:

Chet Neumann, Diocesan Archivist, [chesterneu@sbcglobal.net](mailto:chesterneu@sbcglobal.net)  
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*The last word is this: more information on records management for/by congregations can be found under the “Resources” tab on the website of the Archives of the Episcopal Church (<http://www.episcopalarchives.org/resources/html>).*