

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 the diocesan archivist:

Chandler Jackson, Diocesan Archivist, southern@diowestmo.org

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](#).