

WHAT CHURCH RECORDS SHOULD YOU BE SAVING?

Your congregation is a family, it is people who are neighbors and friends who get together not only on Sunday morning to worship God, but who also gather for picnics, celebrations, anniversaries, and other joyful occasions. A congregation also meets for business and you regularly receive information in the form of worship service bulletins, newsletters and special announcements.

Because of all of the things going on, your church should have family picture albums, scrapbooks that bring back remembrances of old times, video recordings by older members of the congregation who still remember the earlier days of the church. We all realize the need to preserve church records and church business, but these are only a small part of the life of each congregation.

The questions archivists have faced in the past are two-fold, first, what records should we keep, and second, how should we preserve them?

Records that should be saved:

- 1. Legal records, contracts, corporate charter, constitution and by-laws, lists of church-board members over the years, minutes of meetings, pastoral call documents.**
- 2. Architectural Documents, plans and blueprints, title certificates, deeds that should be kept which may not be needed for twenty or more years down the road when a plumber is trying to find a broken pipe under the foundation.**
- 3. Newsletters and weekly bulletins.**
- 4. Anniversary and event programs, dedications, installations, ordinations, Sunday school open house programs.**
- 5. Important sermons for it's impossible to keep all of the sermons, but the first and last sermon, anniversary sermons by former pastors, special times.**
- 6. Photos, slides, video. Somebody has pictures of members of the church working in the kitchen or ACT hay ride or clean-up day. Keep them in an album. And, of course, we should have a special place for confirmation pictures and baptisms.**
- 7. Newspaper clippings about your church.**

These are starters for getting it organized. Find someone interested in putting together the history of your church and put them to work.

Rev. Gunard Heikkila
Trinity Lutheran Church, Deer Creek
Minnesota North District Archivist