

What a Church Archives Should Keep

- I. Official Records
 - A. Membership rolls, including transfers; and records of baptisms, confirmations, marriages, and funerals. **Note:** Never recopy an old record book and throw away the original.
 - B. Minutes of voting bodies and other church groups: charge/church conference, church council, board of trustees, committees, United Methodist Women/United Methodist Men
 - C. Legal documents, including charters, articles of incorporation
 - D. Property records, including deeds, mortgages, leases, title surveys, descriptions of church property, and architectural plans, drawings, and plats.
 - E. Financial records, including mortgages, loans, and notes paid; annual budgets and end-of-year financial reports.
 - F. Personnel records
- II. Publications
 - A. Histories of the church and its organizations
 - B. Church bulletins and newsletters, opened flat and stored in acid-free folders.
 - C. Pictorial directories, yearbooks
 - D. Programs, brochures, and other materials relating to special events, such as groundbreaking, dedications, mortgage-burnings, anniversaries, and homecomings.
- III. Non-print materials
 - A. A good professional photograph of each minister, acquired before he/she leaves. **Note:** black and white photos last longer than color.
 - B. Photographs of the church, church activities, and members, as well as videos, DVDs, and slides.
 - C. Scrapbooks and albums
 - D. Oral history, in audio or video format, of older members, pastors, and others knowledgeable about the history of the church. **Note:** Be sure to transcribe the interviews.
 - E. Museum items (as space is available), such as old communion sets, baptismal bowls, pulpit appointments and furniture, banners, commemorative items, and old hymnals.
- III. Other materials
 - A. A conference journal for each year of the church's existence.
 - B. Newspaper clippings about the church and its members labeled with the source and date. These can be kept in An archivally correct scrapbook located in the office for all to see.
 - C. Newsletters from missionaries supported by the church.
 - D. Books by members of the congregation.
 - E. Copies or tapes of a selection of sermons of each minister, as well as their written or taped recollections.

For more detailed information, see the Local Church Records Schedule