



*Archives of the Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island*  
*Preserving the records that bear witness to the life and ministry of our Church*

**PARISH RECORDS of Permanent Value – A Guideline for Parishes**

Parish records that can be archived at the Diocesan Archives are as follows (The ones that ***must*** be archived have an asterisk \*):

- **\*All Registers** of baptisms, marriages, confirmations, first communions and burials that are “closed” that is, no longer being written in, whether full or not.
- **\*Keep and archive all documents that are found in the registers, especially deeds, grants, and burial plot plans**
  
- **\*All MINUTES** of parish committee and congregational meetings, that is, parish and church council **minute books, as well as Annual Reports and accompanying documents issuing from other groups or meetings.**
  
- **\*All ledgers, financial journals and cash books of the parish and of groups who raise money for the parish. NOTES:**
  1. Receipts, invoices and cheque stubs must be saved as “semi-active” records for 7 years, by government regulation, and then destroyed, the information having been recorded in the ledgers for permanent corporate history.
  2. Offering envelopes are considered receipts and invoices, in fact, both in one, and should be retained for a 7-year period, then destroyed, as long as the financial information has been recorded elsewhere, including the names of donors and the trusts, funds or guilds, etc. to which they have contributed that are marked on the envelopes.
  
- **\*All vestry books (Registers of Services)** that are “closed” or full.
  
- **Visitors Books OR VISITORS BOOK PAGES (Vinyl binders cannot be archived, they off-gas and deteriorate rapidly).**
  
- **\*All property documents: MUST BE SAVED.** Deeds, mortgages, insurance papers, consecration petitions or decrees, plot plans, architectural plans and diagrams, except the most recent as they may be needed for renovation plans. These are your own choice – the Churchwardens may like to keep these documents on hand, but if they do, they must be kept dry and safe from fire. If they can’t be, we would prefer to keep them for you. **NOTE:** We can make copies for use in the parish and store the originals in our safe.
  
- **\*All minute books and cash books from your parish guilds and organizations,** such as the W.A./A.C.W. and any special missions and clubs.

- **\*Sunday School records** – roll books, library borrowing records, financial records, lists of teachers, and anything else – these are becoming very rare and are of interest to historians.
- **Clergy papers and correspondence** dealing with parish business are of value to your parish history. Archive anything over 50 years old. Those that are less than 50 years old, may be kept as semi-active (confidential) until archived.
- **Service leaflets, parish magazines, newsletters, Parishioners Directories, and photographs.** These are extremely valuable to parish history.

**Sorry, the Diocesan Archives cannot collect (with rare exception):**

- Artifacts or paintings.
- Bibles, Prayer books or Hymn Books. An extremely rare edition (pre-1852) of a book can be archived in our cold vault.
- Memorials, windows, antique or dedicated “furnishings” and artifacts. These should be preserved and documented by the parish as part of your “material heritage”.

**Useful Reference material on the Diocesan Webpage “Archives” link:**

<http://www.nspeidiocese.ca/page/archives.aspx#.VG4RMdh0zcc>

The General Synod “Keeping Track” booklet can help you to document material heritage – this should be done for the sake of the donors and also for INSURANCE PURPOSES.

Our Archives Policies document is a reference to keep on hand so that you know how we handle things once they are in our custody.

Also refer to Diocesan Canons 23, 24, and 40.

Our Report to Diocesan Council of April 2013 is also a useful document to understand the measures taken by the Diocesan Archives to protect the privacy of personal identifying records in our registers, and how we balance public access to information in parish records in the form of microfilm with the long-term preservation of the originals.

**Useful points to know:**

- Depositing records at the Diocesan Archives is not giving them away --Your records remain the legal property of the Parish Corporation – we are the custodians only.
- The public are NEVER given access to these records – only the Archivist or the Rector can handle them, or a person authorized by the Rector such as a churchwarden or Parish administrator, upon special request.
- Public requests for genealogical information are referred to the Nova Scotia Archives for access to the microfilm of our parish records, where the staff enforce the same restrictive policies as we do regarding photocopying.

***QUESTIONS?*** Call or email Lorraine Slopek, your Diocesan Archivist,  
Wednesday – Friday at: **902-406-8982** or [archives@nspeidiocese.ca](mailto:archives@nspeidiocese.ca)