



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 HERITAGE, or, What a Heritage Committee (or a few volunteers) can do:

- **Create a mandate** to preserve and maintain the church's heritage objects and official records and to foster the keeping and preserving of such by those already doing it.

- **Inventory the church records of current and permanent value;**
 - ✓ Quick method: MAKE A SIMPLE DESCRIPTIVE LIST OF YOUR RECORDS AS YOU FIND THEM that says where they are and gives each register or binder or file cabinet and file source a unique location number. **NOTE:** If you think you will discover old records, wear gloves and a dust mask.

 - ✓ You can write numbers using a PENCIL on the inside of a register TO HELP KEEP THEM IN ORDER. Always return them to the same place.

 - ✓ Create a Records Management retention and disposition policy and procedure for the bodies of the church that are creating records on a regular basis: Parish Council, Treasurer, finance Committee, Churchwardens, Church office administrator, Rector and clergy, organist/choir, Sunday School, parish newsletter and magazine editors, all other committees, organizations and church groups and guilds.

- **Inventory the material artifacts**, windows, memorials and furnishings of the church using PHOTOGRAPHS and written descriptions.

- **Know preservation:** When in doubt, ASK THE DIOCESAN ARCHIVIST. Research specific ways of preserving the different substances: wood, metal, stone, animal vellum, textiles. For those interested in learning more on their own, The Canadian Conservation Institute has a team ready to answer questions by phone or email from ANYONE. (See: www.cci-icc.gc.ca). It also has free downloadable preservation booklet resources, and a virtual tour of common home records that people preserve (newspapers, books, graphics).

- **Monitor ACCESS to the permanent PARISH RECORDS – maintain security.** Be aware of Protection of Privacy recommendations and Laws WITH REGARD TO PERSONAL IDENTIFYING INFORMATION CONTAINED IN YOUR RECORDS. Do not allow the public to handle your registers for genealogy. Refer them to the Diocesan Archivist, who will refer them to the microfilm at the Nova Scotia Archives.

- **Regularly check the environments** where records are produced, gathered and stored, shelves, cabinets, safes, vault, and so on, and monitor for changes in structure, temperature, humidity (churchwardens often do this, so join them.)

- **Create a Disaster Preparedness and Recovery Plan** for the church buildings. Make a PHONE TREE to gather people quickly in an emergency. (Make sure one of them has a camera). Keep a plastic bin for equipment stocked for power outages and rain storms breaking windows, etc. (flashlights and NEW batteries, gloves, paper towels, mops, etc.)
- **INSURANCE:** You cannot insure the actual parish records, papers and artifacts or framed pictures for their intrinsic value, but you CAN insure them for the cost of RECOVERY and REPLACEMENT. Do the measuring and call up suppliers and framers for estimates, assess the costs per volume of paper for drying and recopying. These costs can be insured.

The above activities are essential for good management. Here are some Extra things you can do:

- Create awareness of the history of the parish by creating exhibits or writing small articles, insert an historical photograph, in a parish magazine if you have one. Dig out the old ones – any inspiring newsletters, parish magazines, official dedications, anything graphic and interesting – **NOTE:** Use COPIES of the artifacts or documents for display, NOT the originals.
- Provide historical reference materials for summer tour guides of your church.
- Create programs for the youth and children in the congregation to learn about their history, the significance of the artifacts and windows, the people who are memorialized, the families that donated things and why.
- Collect reference manuals and updates on the care of records and artifacts and distribute them to clergy, guilds and churchwardens as guidelines. Keep a handy reference file for when people come back and ask for another copy. Be the resource; and make recommendations.
- Foster participation and ownership of heritage in the congregation, committees, guilds and parish and church councils.
- Make church outreach events also heritage events - it may actually draw the individual into the church (When people identify history with their personal lives, they are instantly engaged.)
- Communicate and share with other heritage committees, historical societies, museums, and other heritage institutions in your region. (Invite people to talk).

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