



# Lutheran ARCHIVES

## *Preserving our story*

### **Congregation records – Your Story**

Church records tell the story of your congregation and your ministries. They highlight how God is working through your congregation and how you are bringing God's love to life. They are an integral part of our history as the Lutheran Church of Australia. From these records we can gather and tell the stories about who we are, whose we are, and of God's faithfulness to us. Your church records will let future generations know how God has blessed us and how he has been a blessing to others through us.

With our present ability to create so many records, you may wonder what needs to be kept permanently and what does not. Lutheran Archives can help you.

### **Lutheran Archives – Preserving our Story**

You need to keep records to fulfil administrative and legal requirements: recording events, decisions and finances. You also need to keep the 'soul' records that complement these legal records and turn them into the story of God's faithfulness: take photographs of events, document the ministries, the events, the stories of the people who reach out into the community, showing how we live God's love. These are the stories that show us to be a church alive.

And of course, to keep these records, you need to ensure they are being created in the first place!

### **What records should be created and kept?**

- Registers – baptisms, confirmations, marriages and burials (essential)
- Minutes – Parish and congregation meetings (essential)
- Minutes – Management committee (e.g. Parish Council, Church Council, Executive, Elders )
- Minutes – All committees and groups (e.g. Worship, Evangelism, Women's, Men's, Youth, Sunday School, Property)
- Selected correspondence – All committees and groups. If it helps tell the story of the congregation and to facilitate the understanding of the minutes or other documents, it needs to be kept permanently. If it is purely 'administrative' it can be destroyed when it is no longer useful.
- Annual Reports – Congregation, parish, committees, groups
- Annual membership lists – ensure they are dated
- Sunday School records (e.g. attendance rolls) Financial records
- Legal documents – constitutions, property titles, employment contracts
- Building plans
- Newsletters – regular, monthly, quarterly (add the Archives to your mailing list)
- Publications – histories, brochures, anniversary booklets and service orders
- Photographs and audio visual material: tapes, video & film (of e.g. buildings, pastors, members, special occasions)
- Special service orders & bulletins for special services – (e.g. installations, dedications, anniversaries)

## What records should be created and kept? *contd...*

### *Keep at your premises:*

- Records you are regularly accessing
- Records within their statutory & auditable period (e.g. finances for 7 years). Beyond this, the archives is primarily interested in your annual financial statements and details of significant purchases (e.g. an organ or a stained glass window). We do not require weekly finances.
- Bulletins (generally, Lutheran Archives does not accept bulletins, so if you would like a copy permanently retained they need to be kept by your own congregation)

Send to Lutheran Archives all other records. We recommend a periodic review of your records and regular depositing – set an annual reminder in your calendar.

## Benefits of depositing records at Lutheran Archives

Our ministry is to provide access to, and tell the stories of, your ministry. When we gather the stories of the individuals, congregations and departments from all across the nation, we can be encouraged by all the ways God works through us as Lutherans. We ensure these stories are available for generations to come.

- The archives are secure and protected as far as possible from fire, damp, dust, insects and theft.
- Congregation records that are deposited here are still owned by the congregation – but we manage them for you on your behalf. We are professionally trained Archivists.
- Do you have an anniversary coming up and need to do some research or want to display an item? We can send items back to you for temporary loan.

## How to deposit records here

1. Ensure records are clean, sorted & labelled – you know your congregation is St Stephen's in Adelaide, but unless it's labelled with the congregation AND place, we do not!
2. Records to be packed into 'Type 1' archival boxes (available from Archival Survival [www.archivalsurvival.com.au](http://www.archivalsurvival.com.au) – or contact your district office as they may be able to arrange the supply of small numbers of boxes)
3. Provide a contents list for each box and email this to [lutheran.archives@lca.org.au](mailto:lutheran.archives@lca.org.au)
4. Post, courier or deliver the records to Lutheran Archives 27 Fourth Street Bowden SA 5007

## Records Management tips

- Date records - including the year. Label records with your congregation, the place, and the event or committee.
- Photographs – ensure photographs are identified  
Digital photographs - use folders and subfolders to help sort these, e.g. a folder for each year, a subfolder for each event. Send a selection to Lutheran Archives along with identifying details.  
Printed photographs – photocopy the photograph and write identification on the photocopy. Alternatively, use a very soft pencil (4B or 6B) to write on the back.
- Printed records can be more durable than electronic records – print registers of vital records (baptisms etc), minutes and membership lists in addition to the electronic record.
- Regularly back-up your electronic records. Keep a copy of the backed-up records off-site.

## The ministry of Lutheran Archives

*As a church we are blessed to have an extensive collection of records which have been kept from the earliest days of our church in this country. A wide variety of people access these records – congregations, family historians, academic researchers, Aboriginal Australians – to name just a few. These records help write congregation histories, further language research, fill gaps in family trees and restore identity. The power of these records cannot be underestimated. Some of the information and stories cannot be found anywhere else. So it is vital that we keep on gathering these records because of the stories they tell. Please let us know how we can assist you and your congregation in this.*



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