

**Lutheran Archives Center**

The Lutheran Archives Center at Philadelphia, the Northeast Regional Archives of the ELCA, is located in the Brossman Center on the Philadelphia Campus of the United Lutheran Seminary. One of nine ELCA regional archives programs, the Center serves Eastern Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Upstate New York (excluding the Metropolitan New York City area) and New England. The Archives collections are completely contained in a large vault area with compact shelving and a reference library room that provides books frequently used, as well as space for researchers to work in comfortable surroundings. Open Tuesday – Fridays, 1 to 4 p.m., the Center welcomes visitors who wish to read archived materials or to conduct research.

Congregations, as well as the synod, may not think about the Archives Center except at times when they wish to reduce the items stored at their church or when closing. There are some important things to know about archiving church records.

* **What needs to be preserved?** The parish registers; parish council, committee, and congregational meeting minutes; official parish correspondence; parish constitution(s), by-laws, and amendments; regular and charter membership lists; records of receptions of new members and transfers; copies of parish newsletters and bulletins; articles of incorporation, and similar materials; histories of the congregation; local newspaper articles on the congregation; mortgages, deeds, titles, blueprints, and leases; photographs; letters of call to all pastors who have served the congregation; treasurers’ reports; current and all previous insurance documents.
* **Who is responsible for transferring records to the Archives Center?** The Upstate New York Synod’s constitution addresses this question in constitution provision **S13.26.** which states: ***“****The parish records (including membership, baptism, confirmation, marriage and funeral records) of a congregation that disbands, is declared defunct by the Synod Council, or leaves the ELCA by any of the provisions of the Chapter 6 of the Model Constitution for Congregations, become property of this synod and shall be placed in the synod archives as designated by the Synod Council for reference and safekeeping.”* Additionally the related constitution bylaw, **S13.26.01.** reads, “*Parish records under provision S13.26. shall be transferred to the official archives designated by the Synod Council. Any fees and costs and transportation expenses are the responsibility of the congregation and shall be paid prior to closure or departure of the congregation. The Synod archivist may be consulted in regards to the care of the congregational records during this process.”* Currently, the official archive designated by our synod is the Lutheran Archives Center at Philadelphia.
* **What does it cost?** It is important for congregations to budget for the costs related to transferring records to the Archives Center. The Archives Center requests a tithe (ten percent) from the assets of the closed congregation, or a minimum of $5000, that goes into an endowment ensuring the preservation of the parish archives for future generations. These funds are used for processing the records transferred to the Center and for the ongoing preservation of the records. Congregations may also wish to designate an additional gift to the Lutheran Archives Center as a memorial or legacy gift that can help the continued work of the Center and its work of preserving the heritage of Lutheranism in the Northeastern United States.

Before a congregation sends any material to the Lutheran Archives Center contact should be made with the synod’s Archivist, Ms. Karen Kolb, [klkolb@roadrunner.com](mailto:klkolb@roadrunner.com) or the Archives Center either by email at [mtairyarchives@ltsp.edu](mailto:mtairyarchives@ltsp.edu) or phone at 215.248.6383. The [Center's brochure](http://upstatenysynod.org/download/general/Philadelphia-Archive-Ctr-brochure-2012.pdf) is posted on the synod website.