

ARCHIVES

Step Into Your Archives

April 2018

Welcome Spring!

Greetings! Here we are amidst spring once again—a time of great anticipation and renewal. Most of us feel the need to refresh and so our minds wander to the various clean-up projects we can tackle at home and beyond. Perhaps spring can also be a time to take on an improvement project with your local church—maybe even related to your church records management practices!

The Presbyterian Church Archives (located at the national church offices at 50 Wynford Drive in Toronto) staff is available for you to access in terms of any questions you may have concerning your congregational archives and the management of your various church records. We really enjoy hearing from you—by phone, email or in person. As well, the Archives office provides a dedicated website which can be accessed from the PCC homepage or by searching in your browser under “The Presbyterian Church in Canada Archives.” The link is presbyterianarchives.ca where you will see that our extensive website is divided into six sections:

- Home or Welcome page
- About (what we do; interesting facts)
- Research (finding aids; our services)
- Exhibits (narrative and photo features on a myriad of historical topics)
- Resources (archives and records management, genealogy, historical publications, microfilming/digitizing)
- Contact information for office and staff. You will also discover a large sampling of our historical photographs as you browse through our website.

Creating Oral History

Oral history interviews are an effective way to capture the memories of involved individuals in your church. You will likely be able to rhyme off a number of people that should be interviewed as having played a significant role in the life and work of your congregation and/or beyond. They may be past ministers/present ministers, missionaries of our national church, Sunday School teachers, professors, long time members of your congregation, involved young people, or national church committee members, just to name a few examples.

Interviews provide a unique historical record and recollection of a period in time. They offer the added element of voice and personality. You may also choose to create an audio (sound)/video (image) recording. As these recordings become historical records themselves, they are especially important when there are no other personal papers in existence relating to that individual and their life story.

A completed interview will result in an audio/visual recording, hard copy transcript of the interview, and all necessary forms relating to the interview, issues of ownership, and future use of the recording. Securing a good quality photograph(s) of the interviewee can add a helpful dimension to the overall product for future users.

You are welcome to contact us for additional guidance should you be considering this type of program in your local church. The Presbyterian Church Archives accepts select oral histories for their national collection.

An Invitation to Congregations

Is your congregation working on an anniversary or other type of celebratory project? The Archives would welcome select photos of any special events—anniversary suppers, plays, unveilings, picnics, participation in a community event, etc.—that you might be willing to share. Please include some descriptive information including: church name, event, names of featured individuals and the date the photo was taken. We would welcome either hard copy prints or digital images. For the latter, please send to either of the following email addresses:

Kim Arnold, Archivist,
karnold@presbyterian.ca

Bob Anger, Assistant Archivist,
banger@presbyterian.ca

You might also want to take a look at a helpful book which is available for download under the “Resources” section of the website. It is entitled *Preserving Your Heritage*, and offers information on how to organize a congregational archives, how to write a congregational history, and also how to celebrate your congregational history using creative ideas and the documents you have at hand. The Archives encourages you to donate a copy of your congregational history for their holdings.

Please note: The General Assembly’s Committee on History offers an annual adjudicated *History Prize* for the best congregational history.



Explore the Archives Holdings!

The records in the Presbyterian Church Archives date back to the mid 1700’s, documenting life in our denomination. Imagine all of the topics that reside amidst the pages of our collections! As the place of the church was very present within our broader society through the decades, virtually any topic that the secular world was concerned with was addressed in our administrative records, in our personal papers, and in our historical periodicals. We invite you to explore these narratives by contacting Archives staff.

In order to make the collections we house more visible to those in the church, and beyond, we endeavour to place new web exhibits online that tell some of the stories reflecting the history of our denomination. We aim to select a broad spectrum of people and stories from our collections in these exhibits and some examples include:

- Life of the Rev. Dr. D.G. McQueen, Edmonton (twice elected Moderator)
- Presbyterianism in Canada, 150 years ago
- 100th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge
- Life of Lillian Dickson, missionary to Taiwan
- The Rev. William King of Buxton mission
- Residential Schools legacy
- 50th anniversary of the ordination of women in the PCC
- History of Knox College and Presbyterian College

~ As a reforming church we must take into account the past
as it provides us with the knowledge needed to better understand and discern the future ~