



3001 Mercer University Dr., Atlanta, GA 30341 • 678/547-6680 • [www.abhsarchives.org](http://www.abhsarchives.org)

### WHY KEEP HISTORICAL RECORDS?

Historical records identify your unique congregation, record its decisions, and leave a visible trail of activities and ministry. Identifying and preserving records of value is an important task for each local church. Records enable a congregation to fulfill its legal and financial obligations, but historical records also can:

- Serve as a resource for current ministry,
- Remind people about mistakes that still apply to the present,
- Provide illustrations for publications,
- Provide information for writing the history of your community, region or state.
- Document the role of churches in political and social movements,
- Assist persons seeking to know more about their family history, and
- Enrich anniversary celebrations.

### GETTING STARTED

1. Appoint a History Committee and Historian/ Archivist
2. Establish Guidelines for which materials will be saved
3. Find space; determine start-up funding and budget for future expenses
4. Select and Organize Historical Materials

Survey the building for materials. Look in files, storerooms, cupboards, attics, and basements, even the furnace room. Clearly mark "to be saved" any historical items you find. Put a notice in bulletins or newsletters or write former clergy or members, asking people to remember and let you know where they have seen things stored or put for future reference.

### WHAT TO LOOK FOR:

RECORDS OF ARCHIVAL VALUE include all documents made or received by the church in its ministry and operation and judged to be of permanent value for legal, informational, or illustrative purposes. The key records to look for and save are

#### **Legal Documents:**

Deeds, mortgages, blueprints, trust agreements

#### **Official Congregational Records:**

Minutes of congregational business meetings and church boards

Membership rosters

Annual financial reports, audits

Biographical material for pastors, paid staff

#### **Official Organizational Records:**

Minutes, publications, and related items from youth, men's, and women's groups, the Sunday School, special committees

#### **Published materials:**

Annual reports, newsletters, worship bulletins, church histories, membership directories, special events (e.g. anniversaries, installations, retirements)

#### **Ephemera/Memorabilia:**

Scrapbooks, pamphlets, photo albums, tangible objects (e.g. various hymnbooks used for worship, communion sets, plaques, etc.) – **if clearly identified.**