

Guidelines to Assist Parishes in Responding to Requests for Parish Records



The Diocesan Archives department receives inquiries from time to time from parish staff who want to know how to respond to requests for records of baptism, marriage and burial.

In the interest of responding consistently to these enquiries, the Diocesan staff has prepared the following points which reflect the practices in the Synod office:

- Is the inquirer asking for his or her own record?
- If yes, access is readily available.
- If not the subject, is the inquirer, a member of the immediate family? Are they making the request on behalf of the subject? Is the subject aware of the request?
- How much information does the inquirer have? The Diocesan Archives requires that specific information be offered in order to fulfill a record request. In terms of a baptism record, for example, we will not search for “any child born ondate.” We would require name, birth date and some specifics about the baptism.
- What is the purpose of the request? Why is the record needed? If it doesn’t sound reasonable, it probably isn’t.
- How old is the record? If it is 100 years old, our response will be different than if it is 10 years old. The Diocesan Archives staff are aware of, and keep in mind, the access permitted to Ontario vital statistics (currently births to 1917, marriages to 1938 and deaths to 1948) and we do refer to these guidelines if appropriate.
- In the Diocesan Archives, all of the above information is kept on file.
- The Diocesan Archives staff do not permit browsing of registers at any time. Inquirers must come in with a specific and legitimate request.

On occasion, access will, and should be, denied.

We encourage parishes to deposit non-current parish registers with the Diocesan Archives. We are here to assist you and are happy to respond to requests for records on your behalf. For further information, please contact Claire Wilton (1-800-668-8932 ext. 219) or Sue Halwa (ext. 218) or send us an email (cwilton@toronto.anglican.ca or shalwa@toronto.anglican.ca).