

Church Archives

There is a designated area in the Church basement for the accumulation and storage of the Church archives. This area shall be uniquely maintained for such purpose and no other.

Suggested Foothills Archive Practices

Drafted November 2025 By Rev. Gretchen Haley, Senior Minister

For now, we are only focusing on the printed materials we already have. After this, we will move towards a practice of printing some of our digital materials. And then we will organize our digital materials.

Suggested Categories for Archival Materials

1. Foundational and Historical Documents

- Founding charters, constitutions, and bylaws
- Unity Records (volumes from 1898 onward)
- Key congregational minutes (e.g., early foundational meetings, mergers)
- Historical narratives written by members
- Artifacts tied to milestones (e.g., the 100th anniversary, original architectural sketches)

2. Governance, Property, and Financial Records

- Board of Trustees minutes
- Congregational meeting minutes
- Annual reports

- Treasurer's reports and endowment records
- Fundraising and campaign materials
- Building and property plans (significant renovations or expansions)

3. Worship and Ritual

- Orders of Service
- Memorial records, weddings, dedications, and other special services
- Sermons (printed and recorded)

4. Membership and Community Life

- Membership books, membership lists and directories
- Obituaries and memorials
- Family information files
- Records of births, deaths, marriages, and major life events

5. Programmatic and Committee Work

- Reports and minutes of key committees (e.g., Religious Education, Women's Alliance, Search Committees)
- Historical overviews of programs like Religious Education, music, and social justice initiatives
- Special projects (e.g., Medieval Faire, interfaith collaborations)

7. Denominational and Interfaith Connections

- UUA-related materials (keep summaries; defer to national archives where appropriate)
- Records of Mountain Desert District involvement
- Correspondence with other UU or interfaith organizations

8. Non-Foundational Artifacts

- Photos, posters, and promotional materials
- Historical plaques, banners, and memorabilia

Guidance for Storage Practices

High-Priority to Keep Indefinitely:

- Founding and governance documents (e.g., Unity Records, constitutions, bylaws)
 - Unity Church Charter kept in ministers' office
- Membership books and annual reports
- Congregational and Board minutes
- Search Committee Records
- Records of ministers, staff, and elected leadership at least once per year
- Worship-related records of historical or liturgical significance (e.g., dedications, milestone services). Here is specific guidance for orders of service:
 - Keep all orders of service through 2014 that we have on file, after that, keep the following:
 - Water Communion Ceremony
 - Flower Communion Ceremony
 - Remembrance Sunday
 - 1-2 from Holiday Season
 - Easter Sunday
 - 1-3 others from the "regular" church year
 - Installations, Ordinations, Retirement services
- Historical narratives written by members or about the church's role in the community

- Results / Final Reports of Visioning and Strategic Plans

Representative Sampling (Keep Highlights):

- Routine committee notes, i.e. Endowment, Finance, Religious Education, Music, and other committees
- Notes from Strategic Planning and Visioning Sessions and their supporting committees
- Newsletters: After 2014, keep annual or quarterly highlights instead of all issues.
- Sermons:
 - Focus on sermons that reflect key themes or turning points in the church's history. For example at the start, or end of the church year. Around major social events.
- Newsclippings, photos and posters: Prioritize articles and images depicting significant events, milestones, and changes in church life.

Let Go:

- Duplicates of histories, newsletters, or promotional materials
- Denominational conference records (available elsewhere)
- Routine financial records (e.g., weekly offering data, minor transactions)
- Objects or plaques with unclear relevance or duplicative recognition
- Storage types that are no longer accessible due to outdated technology

If you have any question about keeping an item or not, consult with a group of still-invested members who have been in the church for more than 30 years, and ask them if it is acceptable to let go of an item. The majority of their group can rule on this. So that we don't wonder later if we have retained an item or not, keep a record of what we have let go of, and in what method (i.e. given to other archives, recycled, etc.)

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