

PRESERVATION OF RECORDS -- G-9.0406

Do you know where your old session records are?

Proper care of church records is essential. If you do not know the answer to the above question, find out and write it in the front of your current session record book!

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Minutes and all other official records of church sessions, presbyteries, synods, and General Assemblies are the property in perpetuity of said governing bodies or their legal successors. When congregations, synods, or presbyteries are dissolved, their records are held for them by the next higher governing body within whose bounds they were before dissolution. All minutes and other official records of existing and dissolved sessions, minutes and other official records of existing and dissolved presbyteries and synods that are no longer required for frequent reference, are to be deposited for preserving and servicing with the Department of History or in a temperature and humidity controlled environment of a seminary of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). It is the responsibility of the clerk of each governing body to make recommendation to that governing body for the permanent safekeeping of the governing body's records. All governing bodies are strongly encouraged to microfilm their official records. Remember, the minutes are the history book of the life of the church. Do not let them disappear.

At the minimum, keep them in a fire-rated file or cabinet.

For detailed instructions about records management, see *Managing and Preserving Official Records for Congregations* Published by the Presbyterian Historical Society <http://history.pcusa.org>

PAPER, COPIERS, PRINTERS, COMPUTERS

Paper -- Use archival quality (at least 25% cotton), non-acid paper. This is mandatory.

Copiers -- It is permissible to use copiers to transfer printed material onto archival paper.

Printers -- It is permissible to use laser printers to print directly onto archival paper. Do not use ink jet printers for this purpose; the long-term stability of their ink has not been established.

Computers -- One hundred (or even ten) years from now, computer hardware and software that can read your current files probably will not exist. So, **you must keep session and congregational minutes on archival quality, non-acid paper. Other permanent records should also be kept in paper form.**

BINDING YOUR RECORDS

If your session minutes are in one of the heavy post binders and copying on both sides of the paper is time-consuming and difficult, you may move to a good three-ring binder rather than purchase another post binder when it is time for replacement. Your church register can be kept on a computer as long as a report is printed out at the end of each year and this record is kept in its own binder. This should continue to be a cumulative report in each section.