



*The Episcopal Diocese of Olympia*

*The Episcopal Church in Western Washington*

[www.ecww.org](http://www.ecww.org)

# DIOCESE OF OLYMPIA ARCHIVES: POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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From the Office of the Bishop

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# Policy Statement

The Diocese of Olympia Archives exists to:

1. Collect, preserve and make available the historical records that document the development and chronicle the works of the Diocese of Olympia - including its congregations, institutions and ministries.
2. Arrange and describe these materials according to archival principles and make them accessible to the administration, staff and members of the Diocese of Olympia as needed and to the general public as appropriate.
3. Provide adequate and appropriate conditions for the storage, protection and preservation of archival materials.
4. Provide reference services to administration, staff and members of the Diocese as required and to the general public as appropriate and as time allows.
5. Provide educational and outreach programming to diocesan congregations, institutions and ministries to increase awareness and appreciation of their individual and diocesan history and to assist them with their archival and records management needs.

Materials acquired by the Diocese of Olympia Archives shall become the permanent property of the Archives and, therefore, the Diocese, until such time as the Archivist deems it no longer relevant to the Archives. De-accessioning will not take place without the written approval of the Canon to the Ordinary. All information pertaining to the de-accessioning and disposition of materials will be retained in the Archives' records according to procedures outlined in the Diocese of Olympia, Records Management Program - Policies and Procedures Manual.

The Archives retains the right to reproduce materials by mechanical, electronic or photographic means for security, conservation or research purposes.

The Archives will accept historical materials that "document the development and chronicle the works of the Diocese of Olympia," in the following formats, if they do not duplicate current holdings: textual records; photographs, and other visual records; maps, plans and architectural drawings; sound recordings and audio cassette tapes. The Archives will only accept books, serials and other published material, textiles, artifacts and electronically stored data at the discretion of the Archivist.

The Archives retains the right to charge for any reproduction or other research service.

The Archives will only accept material on a permanent basis, except when borrowing material for short- term loans to reproduce or to include in displays or exhibits.

Donors will complete and sign a Deed of Gift when donating materials to the Archives.

Materials from the Archives may be loaned to other institutions or organizations only under the following circumstances:

1. When written authorization is obtained from the Archivist and the Canon to the Ordinary.
2. The borrower ensures adequate care and handling of the material on loan.

If at any time the Archives determines that the material on loan is not being cared for adequately, the Archivist may cancel the loan and request the immediate return of the material.

Persons desiring to use archival material will abide by the policies of the Diocese of Olympia here appended.

## Public Access Policy

The Diocese of Olympia Archives is the repository for the official records of the Diocese of Olympia. The Archives has a primary responsibility to serve the administration, program and mission of the Diocese by meeting its information and research requirements.

As an extension of its mission, the Diocese of Olympia Archives welcomes research inquiries from the public. Public access to the records of the Diocese are governed by policies adopted by the Board of Directors of the Diocese of Olympia and by agreement with private donors. These policies require that a researcher complete an Application for Use of the Archives. The researcher must state the purpose of the research and identify the objectives and intended products of the research inquiry. The researcher will be notified of acceptance and an appointment scheduled. Researchers returning after an absence of more than a year will be asked to update their application form. If a researcher is unable to visit the Archives in person, the Archivist will respond to inquiries by mail and phone as time permits.

Access to the Archives is granted on the basis of the age and content of the records and is always at the discretion of the Archivist. In general, diocesan records older than 30 years are open to researchers with the exception of confidential records. See: Sacramental Records Access Policy

and Confidential Records - Policies and Procedures. All diocesan records 30 years old or less - with the exception of those created for public dissemination and those which must remain open by law - are closed to the public. There are also special conditions under which access to records older than 30 years and not usually considered confidential may be restricted by the Archivist; if the records have not been processed or appraised, if they contain unseparated personal information on individuals, if they are in a highly fragile condition, if restrictions have been placed upon them by the donor. Special access to restricted records may be granted only in the unusual case when release of the information serves an essential public interest over and above a private research agenda or when it fulfills a vital personal need.

All records and papers of the Archives, unless otherwise noted, are the property of the Diocese of Olympia. Expenses incurred during the research process are the responsibility of the researcher. Researchers are required to request permission to publish and to note copyright permission and credit in print. Proper citation formats are available upon request. Researchers are respectfully requested to deposit copies of their work with the Archives when significant use has been made of its primary resources.

NOTE: This policy is based on the provisions of the Public Access Policy of the Archives of the Episcopal Church.

## Diocesan Access Policy

The Diocese of Olympia Archives is the repository for the official records of the Diocese of Olympia. The Archives has a primary responsibility to serve the administration, program and mission of the Diocese by meeting its information and research requirements.

### **DIOCESAN STAFF:**

Diocesan staff has access upon request to the current and non-current records of their immediate departments. In addition, diocesan staff will be allowed access to the records of other departments on a need to know basis if their request for access is in conformity with the diocesan confidential records policy. All requests for access are to be made to the Archivist. If the Archivist is not available and there is an immediate need for access, the Canon to the Ordinary is to be contacted. No files are to be removed from the Archives without permission of the Archivist.

### **CLERGY AND DIRECTORS OF DIOCESAN CONGREGATIONS, SPECIAL MINISTRIES AND AFFILIATED INSTITUTIONS:**

Clergy and directors of diocesan congregations, special ministries and affiliated institutions have access upon request to the current and non-current records of their respective congregations, ministries and institutions. All requests for access are to be made to the Archivist.

**MEMBERS OF DIOCESAN CONGREGATIONS, SPECIAL MINISTRIES AND AFFILIATED INSTITUTIONS:**

Members of diocesan congregations, special ministries and affiliated institutions requesting access to a congregation's, special ministry's, or institution's records for the purpose of researching a specific topic or preparing a history, must obtain a letter of authorization from the priest-in-charge or director of the congregation, ministry or institution. This letter must be sent or presented to the Archivist and should introduce the individual or individuals as official representatives of the congregation or institution and request access to the records for a specified purpose. In addition, individuals seeking access to the records will need to schedule an appointment with the Archivist and to fill out the Application for Use of the Archives.

**CHAIRPERSONS OF DIOCESAN COMMISSIONS, COMMITTEES AND TASK FORCES:**

Chairpersons of diocesan commissions, committees and task forces have access upon request to the current and non-current records of their respective commissions, committees and task forces. All requests for access are to be made to the Archivist.

**MEMBERS OF DIOCESAN COMMISSIONS, COMMITTEES AND TASK FORCES:**

Members of diocesan commissions, committees and task forces requesting access to the records of their respective groups must obtain a letter of authorization from their chairperson or director. This letter must be sent or presented to the Archivist and should introduce the individual or individuals as official representatives of the group and request access to the records for a specified purpose. In addition, individuals seeking access to the records will need to schedule an appointment with the Archivist and to fill out the Application for Use of the Archives.

## Sacramental Records Access Policy

The Diocese of Olympia Archives is the repository for the sacramental records (parish registers) of closed churches in the Diocese and for confirmation records for which the Bishop's Office is the Office of Record.

Sacramental records are both public and private in nature. Baptisms, confirmations, marriages, and burials are recorded to document sacred acts and are, as such, private records. Sacramental records are also private because the information they contain is often confidential and are created with the presumption of privacy.

Sacramental records are not civil records. They are, however, sometimes treated as civil records because they are accepted as valid evidence when the appropriate civil record does not exist. The passage of time, however, affects the sensitivity of these records and the need for restricting their use diminishes. Therefore, public access to sacramental records is unrestricted to those created eighty (80) or more years ago.

Access to information contained in sacramental records created less than eighty (80) years ago is, however, restricted to the individual or individuals named in the record as having received the sacrament; the Episcopal clergy or his delegate involved in canonical procedures; the parents of the subject if the subject is a minor; and government agencies (such as Social Security) who present a signed release from the individual whose record is requested.

**See also: Confidential Records - Policies and Procedures.**

Requests for information must be made in writing and signed by an authorized party as detailed above. Identification may be requested.

Once right to access has been determined, the Archivist will issue a letter in which the information as it appears in the record is transcribed and will affirm its authenticity.

If a person representing a civil authority (law enforcement, court official, lawyer, etc.) requests a record for civil or legal purposes, that person will be referred to the Chancellor who will handle the request.