

HANDBOOK
FOR
CHURCH
HISTORIANS

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Prepared by the History Committee
Wisconsin Conference, United Church of Christ
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PRESERVING HISTORY

by Howard W. Kanetzke

The history of our congregations reaches from the past through the present into the future. The memory of the past can inform the present and provide some direction to our tomorrows. It is all too easy, however, to lose part of our heritage by allowing it to fade from memory and record. As a result we are able to retrieve only incomplete glimpses of the experiences of the community of saints in our local congregations. We need individuals or groups in the churches of our Conference to accept the challenge of researching and preserving the history and heritage of each congregation. Churches that already have active programs for preserving historical materials should review that preservation process regularly and make needed changes.

Here are questions that church historians must consider:

What materials record the history of our congregation?

Where are the materials located now? Where is the best place for them to be? What must be done to preserve them? What materials must be collected and preserved on a regular basis from now on?

How can we use materials to interpret the unique history and heritage of our congregation?

What materials may exist in our local community that can supplement our church records?

Materials That Contain History

DOCUMENTS A number of different types of documents contain important historical information. Church records that are especially important include the following:

- * confirmation, baptism, wedding, burial, membership lists
- * wills, deeds, mortgages
- * constitutions, by-laws, minutes of meetings (within a congregation there may be several organizations that have each of these documents)

HANDWRITTEN MATERIALS Handwritten accounts may include letters or diaries written by members and officers of a congregation. Such materials may be found in family collections, at local libraries and in collections of local historical societies and may contain personal reminiscences of the church.

VISUALS Photographs, paintings, drawings and building plans are possible sources of church history. Visual records show us people, events and buildings and allow us to compare the past with the present. You will find visuals in family collections, newspapers, libraries and historical societies.

PRINTED MATERIALS Many volumes of local history have been written which often contain mention of local churches. Examine community and county history volumes. Check to see whether booklets have been published to celebrate 50th or 100th anniversaries of your congregation. Local newspapers often print accounts of churches for celebration and anniversary issues. Old city directories and telephone books may reveal information about churches and members. Check to see whether churches placed advertisements in these publications.

Maps can also be useful. Bird's eye maps, printed in the late nineteenth century, show prominent buildings in some detail. Also Sanborn Insurance Maps contain downtown information about areas of many communities. The State Historical Society has Sanborn maps for 323 Wisconsin communities, dating from 1880 to 1950 together with numerous bird's eye maps. (See Chapter 2)

INFORMATION NOT FOUND IN PRINT Many facts are only found in the memories of people. This important resource is too often overlooked and sometimes lost forever. You may want to interview people and write down or record their memories on audio or video tapes.

SOME RECORDS ARE OBJECTS These are the things that people have made, used, bought and have become important to the history and heritage of a congregation. We can examine objects, touch them, see what they are made of, how they were (are) used, and note how they have worn. We can examine them for information that may be recorded on them (labels, for example). Stained glass windows, altar furniture, tables, chairs and light fixtures all may suggest aspects of the history of our congregations. Of course you will not want to forget the largest object of all – the church building. We can discover the history of objects, determine what they are made of, note special designs, construction features, and determine the use of each object. After identifying, evaluating and analyzing objects, however, it is most important that we interpret them – understand what meaning they have for the congregation and for the future.

SOME RECORDS ARE EVENTS Different types of events happen in our churches, and sometimes these can be of great importance. Some events may confirm a previously made decision or may lead a congregation to move into a new area of mission. Try to identify events of high impact upon your congregation. Sometimes important events are easily recognized once they happen – other times we see them most clearly only by looking back in time.

Location of Historical Records

A first step is to determine the location of important records, a second is to evaluate them – determine how important they are, and the third is to provide safe preservation of this information. The church may want to rent a safe deposit box or acquire a fire-proof container for some objects. Members of a history committee may want to organize materials so that they are useful. All materials may be collected in one location. If this is not possible a master list of locations should be developed and made available to all interested people. Some items might be placed in the UCC archive at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

Many churches have their records – or microfilm copies – stored in one of the State Historical Society's Area Research Centers (located in the libraries of many UW campuses). The ARC's provide a secure, fireproof location where church records may be preserved and used, and where trained archivists are often able to suggest or obtain additional resources that are useful in compiling a church history.

Interpreting our Heritage from Records

While history probably does not repeat itself, questions and issues do recur with some regularity. How have members of your congregation dealt with questions of faith, missions, welfare, suffrage, human rights, civil rights, in whatever guises these topics have appeared in the past? What has it meant to individual people to be members of your congregation in the past? What statements has your congregation made to the community? The state? The nation? How have people's lives been effected by this congregation? What can be taken from the past and used to enrich the present? The future?

UCC Archives

The Historical Committee of the Wisconsin Conference has placed historical information in the Archives Division of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. Here are found records of the State Commissions and Committees in Associations, Women's Groups, Layman's Fellowship, records and correspondence from the

Conference Office and records of the Home Missions Society and the Northern Wisconsin Home Missions Society. There are materials from both the Congregational and Evangelical and Reformed sources. There are some files of materials from local churches that have been lent to the Society for microfilming. You may want to check to discover whether there are materials in this archive relating to your congregation. Correspondence should be addressed to:

Reference Archivist
Wisconsin Historical Society
816 State Street
Madison, WI 53706

Please provide the following information to aid in answering your query:

1. State that some records of your church may be in the UCC Archive
2. List the Association to which your church belongs
3. Give the name of your church
4. Be as specific as possible in listing the types of information you seek.

The United Church of Christ has a number of archives that may be of help to you in your research. All are reached by going to www.UCC.org, then select MENU, under "411 selections" choose "archives" and then "History Council." Here is a listing of the agencies that you will find:

Congregational Library, 14 Beacon St., Boston MA 02108.
telephone 617-523-0470

Evangelical & Reformed Archives, 555 W. James Street, Lancaster, PA 17603.
telephone 717-290-8734. erhs@lancasterseminary.edu

Evangelical Archives, Eden Seminary, Luhr Hall, 475 E. Lockwood Ave, Webster Grove, MO 63119.

UCC Archives, contact Bridget Kelly, 700 Prospect Ave., Cleveland, OH 44115.
866-822-8224, ext.2106.

Amistad Research Center, Tilton Hall, 6823 St. Charles Street, New Orleans, LA 70118.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND CHURCH HISTORY

by Timothy Ericson

Writing your church's history can be one of the most important and interesting projects to undertake during an anniversary celebration. This history will be appreciated both by the older members of the congregation and by newer members who know little of the church's past. It allows everyone to see how the congregation has grown spiritually and physically over the years. It reminds us of some of the issues and struggles that took place in the past, and helps us to remember old friends and family members who were an important part of our lives. Finally, a church history will help us recall the larger community of which our church has been an important part since it was founded.

This latter relationship between church and community suggests an important fact to remember when looking for historical information for a church history. Although much of what we know about the congregation's past will come from church records, there is also much to be gleaned from sources outside our immediate church. By using outside sources, we often can learn much about the founders of the church, past ministers, or early members of the congregation: where did they come from? What were their occupations? How large were their families? How old were they when the church was founded? We may also learn about the social and political issues in which the church was involved. It may be possible to find very detailed information about the church building or the parsonage – even if no photographs are available. In certain instances it is even possible to find out about the founding of our church before it was established! In short, if we remember to consult outside resources as well as church records, we will be able to write a more accurate, interesting history – one which will focus upon our church, but which will also consider the physical community, and the community of faith of which it is a part.

The following are some of the more commonly available resources which can be useful in obtaining information to include in your church history.

County and Community Histories

There are many published histories dealing with counties or individual communities in Wisconsin. They were published either as promotional tools, or as part of celebrations long ago. Many of the earlier histories seem to have been written in the 1880's or around the turn of the century. Some were published as a part of the Bicentennial (or the Centennial of 1876.) Whatever the reason, virtually all have some information relating to the churches in the area. The earlier histories tend to contain substantial biographies, which are often useful as a source of information

about former members of the congregation. Often these histories will be general in nature, but occasionally new facts or photographs will be included with a historical sketch.

Census Records

The federal government has conducted a census every ten years since 1790. However, beginning in 1850, the census became much more detailed – listing the names of every member of the family rather than simply the name of the head of the household. Also included is the information about the age, birthplace and occupation of all persons counted in the census. Some of the censuses have been indexed, making it much easier to locate particular people. Others contain especially detailed information – the 1900 census, for example, lists not only the state or country where each person was born, but in the case of foreign immigrants, it also lists the year they arrived in the United States. Federal census records for Wisconsin are complete through 1910, except for the 1890 census that was destroyed in a 1921 fire. In addition to the federal census, the State of Wisconsin also conducted a census every ten years, beginning in 1855 and ending in 1905. Only the last one contains detailed information, but the earlier years may help to answer questions about individual church members or ministers.

The census records can tell researchers a great deal about the congregation. The occupations of members may explain why the church was or was not involved in certain social causes or movements, or how the congregation was able to finance a particular building project. Knowing the size of families may shed some light on the size and nature of the Sunday School during a particular period of time. The ethnic composition of the congregation may explain certain traditions or beliefs. Wouldn't it be interesting to compare the rate of growth of the church to that of the community? What kind of people did the church attract back at the turn of the century? How did the program at that time reflect apparent or perceived needs? There are many interesting ways to use census records.

Sanborn Insurance Maps

Sanborn maps were created nationwide in the 19th and into the 20th century to help insurance agents assess the relative risk of fire in cities and villages. These maps exist for many Wisconsin communities (although they were not drawn for rural areas). They focus on the downtown districts where buildings were constructed in close proximity to one another and the risk of fire was the greatest. However, the maps generally included other large buildings such as schools, factories, and churches, regardless of where they were located within the city or village.

The Sanborn maps are coded to show the shapes of each the building and also the number of stories, the location of doors and windows, the type of construction, the type of roof and information about the use of the building. In many instances, the information is so accurate that an artist could do a reasonably accurate drawing of the building based only upon the map. The location of the parsonage is sometimes included in the map, along with stables, garages and other outbuildings.

During the 19th century, the “Bird’s Eye View” was a very popular art form in Wisconsin as well as in other places around the country. Itinerant artists traveled to different communities and drew simple and highly accurate pen-and-ink sketches of the buildings and streets as they might have looked to a bird flying overhead. Since the artist made his living by selling the completed Bird’s Eye View to residents of the city or village, the buildings shown are generally drawn exactly as they appeared – down to the number and location of doors and windows. These views are another source of information about how the church and the community looked when the sketch was drawn. They also make excellent illustrations for a finished church history.

Bird’s Eye lithographs of Wisconsin communities may be found in some local public buildings like court houses, city halls, museums and schools. The State Historical Society has an extensive collection of these prints. Contact staff in the Archives Reading Room, 816 State Street, Madison, Wisconsin.

Community Newspapers

After our own church records, the community newspaper is probably the best single source for finding information about the history of the church. Although its role has changed over the years, the church has always been an important and influential force in Wisconsin communities, and interest by the local newspaper reflects this fact. Often local newspaper columns contain facts completely unrecorded in formal church records. For example, in the 1850's and 1860's it was not uncommon for a newspaper to print the entire text of a particularly good sermon, especially if it dealt with a contemporary social issue such as slavery or prohibition.

Newspapers often record facts about organizational meetings and religious services that were held prior to the formal establishment of the church. They usually publish periodic progress reports detailing church and parsonage building projects. They carry publicity on special meetings or revivals; they announce the arrival and departure of ministers.

Past anniversaries are also well documented in the local paper. Columns often contain histories and there are articles that pertain to specific events, the arrival of special visitors, and other aspects of the celebration.

Even the weekly announcements about Sunday services can contain important insights into the history of the church. For example, one researcher was able to document a church's strong involvement in the prohibition crusade as early as the 1880's by simply noting the pattern of sermon titles like "Boys vs. Booze" and "The Drunkard's Reward" which invariably appeared just prior to local elections concerning the licensing of saloons.

Researchers should also take careful note of letters to the editor and articles about community events that may shed light upon the attitudes and the participation of church members.

When using community newspapers, it is often possible to save hours of time by recognizing important dates and investigating these first. For example, if a church was organized in 1855, an efficient researcher will first check the years 1880, 1905, 1930 and 1955—the dates of the 25th, 50th, 75th, and 199th anniversary.

Next, check years when important events occurred in the life of the congregation. In 1976 many historical features in local newspapers were inspired by the Bicentennial. The same was true in 1876, when an earlier generation of Americans celebrated the Centennial. In 1948, Wisconsin celebrated 100 years of statehood and this occasion resulted in hundreds of special edition newspapers—most of which included historical sketches of community churches. You can easily make a list for your own area. Look especially for anniversaries celebrating the founding of: counties, townships, communities, and newspapers themselves. You won't *always* strike "gold" but it's worth a try. For your best rule of thumb, remember few Americans can resist an anniversary divisible by 25!

Records of Church Organizations

Records of larger church organizations may also be an extremely valuable source of information. Two of these collections are worthy of note.

As indicated in Chapter One of this booklet, the Wisconsin Conference of the United Christ has its archival records on deposit at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. A part of this collection includes files pertaining to individual churches throughout the state. These files almost always contain photographs, correspondence relating to particular events, historical articles or publications, annual reports, newsletters and other material. Generally these files are relatively recent (after 1920), but some are very old (back to 1880).

The second especially valuable collection is the bound volumes of *The Home Missionary*, published by the American Home Missionary Society, and located in the State Historical Society Library. The American Home Missionary Society was responsible for founding many of Wisconsin's pioneer Congregational churches and its pages are filled with information about this important work. Virtually every monthly issue for 1840-1880 contains letters from missionaries in various parts of Wisconsin. These letters give a unique perspective on the challenges facing those early missionaries who struggled to bring religion to the frontier. The following account is typical:

The Home Missionary, Vol. 29, February 1957, p. 247.
From Rev. William R. Stevens, River Falls, Pierce County.

A WISE AND LIBERAL PEOPLE

At the beginning of the year, our church, being unable to procure a residence for their minister, developed their energies; and they have nearly completed a small, but, I think, a comfortable parsonage for the cost of about \$700. Adding to the cost of these two buildings the value of the sites on which they stand, we have a sum of not less than \$4000. The secret of our people's success is easily told. In the first place, they are a moral, cheerful, wide-awake people. In the second place, whenever they meet to consult about doing any good thing for the public welfare, they take along with them as a first principle, the more we do, the more we can do. In the third place, when they decide to do a thing, all believe that it is going to be done, and act accordingly.

The Home Missionary also contains information detailing aid given to particular churches as well as missionary offerings received. The publication is especially helpful for tracing the whereabouts of clergymen after they left a particular church.

TASKS AND SKILLS OF CHURCH HISTORIANS

(From *The Leader's Box*, reprinted with permission)

Church historians collect and arrange church records, see to their preservation, and write accounts of church history – all to give identity to the church.

History and Background Our faith has roots in the past and is lived out in specific present events. History can inform us about the actions of God in the lives of people. Since before the time of written records, there have been men and women who have preserved and told stories of events and people of days gone by. In recalling our heritage, our churches can recapture vision and renew strength. Isaiah advised the people of God:

Look to the rock from which you were hewn,
and the quarry from which you were digged. (Isa. 51:1)

Over and over in the Bible the people did look to their history. In Hebrews there is a long recital of history. From the days of entrusting everything to the careful retelling of memorized history to the present when sophisticated technical equipment is used, the preservation of historical memory remains important.

Common Practices Some churches have had historians for generations and have well-documented histories with records collected in safe places and booklets published that sum up the life of the ministry. Historians usually have budgets for supplies and storage of records.

Sometimes there is even an oral history project that preserves memories of “old timers.” Other churches haphazardly kept church records in the office with little or no attention paid to them. In most churches histories combine the duties of interpreter of history with that of an archivist – a person who collects the records.

Responsibilities Your duties will vary depending on whether you are establishing a record of your church's past, updating it regularly or publishing a view of the history. If you are publishing a history, make it as accurate as possible. Consult printers, editors and others in the field. Use illustrations or photos when possible.

As a church historian you will be responsible for:

- * conveying an accurate and understandable picture to future generations. We wouldn't have questions about baptism if someone in the early church had described it. Because they thought everyone knew how it was done we disagree.

- * acknowledging that church history is more than buildings and stories about ministers
- * recording both controversies and agreements with fairness and completeness
- * acknowledging that the church is part of the world by recording stands about local and national issues, telling what it was like, for example, to be an ethnic community at a time of war or to be settlers in a native culture or telling when women were first allowed to be on certain committees
- * providing correct information, including correctly spelled names
- * using **primary** information when possible. When ledgers, minutes, rolls are kept, go to these sources rather than annual reports. But go to these reports before using newspaper stories or people's memories of events. Memories can add flavor, but are not always accurate
- * using inclusive language

Information To Use in a Written History

- * founding date, organizers and how they went about it.
- * setting (rural area, town, Indian reservation) and any changes.
- * names of organizations to which it belonged (conference, synod, etc.)
- * relationships to the denomination and any specific aid received from it.
- * dates of buildings and other acquisitions, such as cemetery, housing for elderly, parsonage.
- * liturgical changes (changing from common cup to individual cups in communion, furniture, arrangement of sanctuary, banners.)
- * official actions and reactions to denominational changes like mergers.
- * description of organizations within the church.
- * participation in activities such as scouting, day care, cooperative projects with other congregations.

Materials To Keep You will be responsible for keeping the following information and records after they have been collected:

- * successive constitutions and bylaws of the church and its organizations
- * copies of deeds to and descriptions of the church's physical properties and blueprints and pictures of the property
- * vital statistics (baptisms, confirmations, marriages, funerals)
- * list of church officers and clergy with biographical information
- * minutes of congregational and committee meetings
- * financial records
- * records of church school and other organizations
- * bulletins and newsletters
- * newspaper clipping, clearly labeled and dated
- * photographs, labeled with names, dates and places

Identifying and Storing Church Records

All church records should be stored at the church or in a public facility like a historical society. Some institutions will accept records on deposit while you retain ownership. However, it is likely that little organization will then be done with the records. Professional organization is more likely to happen when title to records is given to the institution. In Wisconsin, the State Historical Society, Madison 53706, has an archive for the United Church of Christ.

When Your Are Responsible For Records

- * Tag each record book, major document and file identifying the office, committee or organization, dates covered, and type of material. When marking volumes or documents, use only a soft lead (#2) pencil, and record the necessary information in an inconspicuous place—such as on the inside cover of the volume or the back side of the document.

- * Sort into groups according to the origin and file chronologically by activity. For example, the deacon's records should be together, with books and minutes arranged chronologically, followed by account books of the discretionary fund.
- * Type an inventory of records in storage.
- * Store in acid free folders and containers which are kept in fire-proof and climate controlled rooms, if possible.
- * Microfilm, if possible, for a duplicate record, which can be handled without damaging the originals. Store the duplicate in a different location from the original to avoid complete loss in case of disaster.

Skills and Attributes for Historians

- * -a sense of the importance of history
- * -knowledge of the church and the community
- * -ability to sort the important from the unimportant
- * -accuracy
- * -a developing general understanding of the history of the denomination
- * -pleasure in doing research
- * -pleasure in recording details with the ability to look for the "big picture"
- * -pleasure in record-keeping

Things To Do

- * Find out what is already recorded about the history of your church.
- * Join a historical society to gain an appreciation for the way things are done and how they receive attention.
- * Visit museums, libraries and archives.
- * Interview long-term members, former pastors, neighbors and anyone with insight about the church.

- * Search local newspapers, Conference and Association publications for references to your church and a better understanding of issues.
- * When doing research, take notes on one side of 4x6 cards and store them in a box. On each card, indicate the subject, date of event, content, and source of information. Then you can sort and re-sort by topic and/or date. This method will help you when you begin to write reports and articles.

Checklist of Duties for Church Historians

1. Collect newspaper pictures and articles about the church. Include the name and date of the newspaper for each article. Keep all records you collect in acid-free file folders. Do not use scotch tape on any items as it discolors and will fall off in time. Do not use any kind of paste or rubber bands. Discard all paper clips and unfold folded items. All newspaper articles should be copied onto acid free paper. The original may be discarded. Newsprint deteriorates and the acid in it migrates to and stains everything around it. Many brands of copy paper now have “acid free” printed on the wrapper. Information about archival supplies is available in the section **Resources for Church Historians** at the back of this booklet.
2. Any booklets that the church printed for an anniversary or dedication should be saved. The Constitution, By-laws, deeds and other important papers should be kept in the church safe.
3. Save your church newsletters and worship bulletins, Council Minutes, Committee Minutes, annual reports, and congregational meeting reports in document cases in chronological order.
4. Confirmation pictures and photographs of church activities are important to keep and must be housed in archival quality pages. They could be digitally reformatted and kept in digital format.
5. Identify where the church vital statistics are kept. They should be in the church office to be kept up to date. There should be records of baptisms, marriages, deaths (funerals), confirmed members and transfer of membership. Use full names. Parents’ names should be given for children.
6. Make sure the archives are kept in a safe place. A fire-proof safe or filing cabinet is best. Locked closets will also work nicely.
7. When listing pastors, use their full names.
8. Write articles for your church newsletter. These might include brief description of important events in the past or be about current members who celebrate significant birthdays, or anniversaries.
9. Collect items that are related to your church. Older hymnals and Catechism books can be placed in the church library and later used as part of historical exhibits.

10. Displays can be prepared for anniversaries and other celebrations, using documents and photos of important events. Prepare brief paragraphs to help interpret what is exhibited using easy-to-read type. Exhibits acquaint new members with the history of the church.

Preserving Church Records

(reprinted with permission)

Techniques for preserving church records range from simple to complex. Although no two churches have the same records, it is important that each congregation take some steps to insure the safety of its records. The action taken by your church will, of course, be determined by the resources available.

Storage Most church records are paper documents of one kind or another. Paper is sensitive to light and dust, as well as extremes of temperature and humidity. Over time these conditions will result in fading, cracking and discoloration. Deterioration can be slowed by storing records out of strong light, at constant temperature and humidity (70 degrees and 50% humidity are ideal), and away from dust. A small room or large closet can be used if the collection is large; a fireproof filing cabinet is another option for storage. It is always a good idea to limit access to records; this guards against unaccountable disappearances of one-of-a-kind materials.

Most modern paper is made from wood pulp and has a high acid content, which causes it to become brittle and disintegrate quite rapidly. This destructive process can be retarded by storing records in special acid free containers: file folders, document cases or record storage boxes.

Newspaper clippings are particularly high in acid content. Because they discolor any records they touch or rest against, clippings should be separated from other paper by means of folders or sheets of bond paper inserted between items. Another option is to make copies of newsprint articles on archival bond copy paper. (If you decide on this option, be sure that the copy machine is adjusted to assure a firm bond of the image to the paper. Test copies by rubbing the image to assure that it is well fixed.)

Organization If your church records are to be of use, they ought to be arranged in such a way that non-current records can be located quickly and current records integrated easily with older ones. Probably the simplest and handiest way of organizing materials is to sort records first according to type and then according to date. Examples:

Council Minutes 1940-1970
 Sunday School, 1900-1930
 Monthly newsletters, 1960-1969

Put each type in a file folder, binder, acid-free envelope or box. Attach labels indicating the type of records and dates. Individual items should be unfolded, if possible, because, over time, paper will crack and become unreadable along the folds.

Often, some types of records (baptisms, memberships, marriages, minutes and others) are handwritten in a single bound volume. To prevent unnecessary handling of fragile old books, a list of the contents on acid free paper can be inserted in the front of each volume or in each file.

Preserving Church Records Some valuable records, such as photographs or blueprints, may not fit into the basic scheme of organization and storage. Acid-free folders and boxes, available in a variety of sizes may be obtained for records of unusual shapes and sizes. Photographs should be labeled with a soft pencil on the back of each picture with subject and date. Or you may photocopy the original and write the identification information on the photocopy. There are many sizes of photograph pages of mylar or polypropylene available which are safe storage and many of these pages have space for a caption, or the back of the picture is readily seen through the photo page. The pages can be put into ring notebooks.

Repair A key principle to keep in mind is that whatever is done to your church records must be *reversible*. This will prevent doing damage by using inappropriate repairs. Avoid using Scotch tape or other mending tapes as they are stronger than paper and may cause larger tears or holes. They discolor and drop off over time leaving yellow stains that may obscure the writing. Paper clips and straight pins bend the paper and often rust and discolor the paper. Rubber cement discolors paper. Rubber bands contain harmful chemicals. They will disintegrate and stick to paper. Rustless staples may be used. There are now some archival pressure-sensitive tapes which can be purchased but it may be best to simply house the damaged documents in acid free paper or a mylar toploader. Look through the catalogs of archival supplies for the options that are available to you.

Display Records may be used for displays. You may wish to display interesting documents and photographs. If items are mounted on a bulletin board avoid using tacks or pins which will make holes. Glass frames or display cases may be used for particularly rare or fragile documents. Mylar can be used to support and protect documents. Light fades and damages paper so if the display is to be used for a period of time, there are shields for tube lights or plastic film which will filter out the ultra-violet rays. Good photocopies are a better choice for a display of single documents.

STARTING AN ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM IN YOUR CHURCH

A program of contacting members of the congregation and recording their memories and their experiences as members of your church can produce several benefits. It is an excellent way to preserve the story of the communion of saints in the local setting. An oral history program can result in healthy communication and sharing among people who may have had little contact prior to the oral history program. It may facilitate communication between generations.

For many years, oral history tapes were the standard for church archival collections. In the past few years, however, a number of congregations have chosen to expand their program of recording historical information with equipment that adds a visual dimension to the collection of history. This, of course, required additional equipment and people to operate the equipment. Additionally, some churches record worship services on CD's as either audio or audio/visual presentations for those who cannot attend services. Copies of these CD's can be placed on file in the church archives.

Either a formal or ad hoc committee can be formed to plan for an oral history program. Decisions will have to be made as to the scope of the program and the types of equipment that must be acquired. It would be good to have a budget. This might be a line amount added to the budget or might come from discretionary funds available to the church council. Three to seven members should be able to plan and initiate an oral history program in your church. Hopefully these members will include representatives from different segments of the congregation who are able to communicate enthusiasm for the project back to the groups that they represent.

Scope of the Program

An important decision that the committee will make is the scope of the oral history program to be undertaken. This may be the "history of the congregation," but might be more specialized by topics like "The Growth and Development of the Sunday School"; "The Role of the Local Congregation in Its Community"; "The Local Church and Missions"; "Former Ministers", etc.

Once the scope of the program is outlined, members can begin making lists of people to contact for interviews. Most committees select elders in the church as high priority because of the information they have.

If the equipment is available, the committee may choose to combine the oral and visual aspects by using television tapes for some interviews or events.

Developing a Tape Format

Before any taping is done, it is important to make decisions about formats for interview. If all interviews are conducted in the same general way, it will be easier to organize the materials that you collect.

Prior to the Interview

There are several steps that should be taken prior to the interview in order to ensure that the taping session will be enjoyable, and that it will yield the information you hope to obtain.

1. Become familiar with your equipment. Know how to operate all the controls—especially the record, volume and bass/treble. If a video tape is being made of the interview, a second person will probably be needed to operate the equipment as discretely as possible so as not to make the interviewee nervous or uncomfortable with the equipment and recording process.
2. Get to know the person being interviewed. It is often a good idea to have at least one visit prior to the actual interview, during which time you can explain the purpose of taping the interview and the general information you hope to obtain.
3. Conduct research on the subject you will be discussing. The more you know ahead of time, the more you will learn during the interview. Research will enable you to ask better questions.
4. Just before you leave for the interview, make sure you have everything you need. Use a checklist like the example shown on the next page.

Introduction

Develop a standard introduction that may include the following:

1. Name of the interviewer, date, place of interview; and
2. Name of the person interviewed, relationship of person to the congregation, background of that person, the period of time that will be discussed in the take. This may vary from “the night of the church fire” to “memories of the oldest member baptized in the congregation”.

Interviewer's Checklist

- 1. Tape recorder/video camera, including any lighting that may be needed
 - Power cord
 - Microphone
 - Operating instructions
 - Extension cord
 - Adapter plug

- 2. Recording/video tape
 - Two C-60 or C-90 recording tapes

- 3. Legal release form for the interview

- 4. Research notes

- 5. Tablet of paper and clip board

- 6. Pens and pencils

- 7. Pre-operation check
 - No background noise
 - Recorder volume properly adjusted
 - Bass/Treble adjusted
 - Record/Playback operational
 - Lighting

During the Interview

1. An early part of the interview may include a mini-biography of the person being interviewed. Talking about a person's youth and background is often relaxing and sets a good tone for the interview.
2. An interview isn't a 50/50 conversation. The reason for the interview is to get the interviewee to tell his/her story. Be pleasant and guide the conversation, but don't direct it or you may miss important information.
3. Techniques of asking questions are important. Perhaps these suggestions will be helpful.
 - a) Ask questions that require more of an answer than a simple yes or no.
 - b) Ask one question at a time – avoid asking a series of questions
 - c) Ask brief questions
 - d) Ask non-controversial questions early in the interview. Wait with more complicated questions until the interviewee is relaxed and comfortable.
 - e) Don't be upset by periods of silence. You don't have to rush to fill pauses.
 - f) Have a pencil and paper to jot down questions so that you don't interrupt an important story to ask for clarification. You can refer to your notes and ask the question later.
 - g) Whenever possible, try to establish the interviewee's place in the role or event.
 - h) When controversial topics arise, try to get as complete a picture as possible. You may begin questions with a phrase like "I have heard that...; What do you remember of this situation?" Keep notes of names of people with differing viewpoints who may be able to add perspective to controversial topics.
 - i) The following questions can be used to pinpoint information: What? Who? When? Where? Why? How?
 - j) These questions may also be helpful: What was it like? How did it get that way? How do we know? How does this story compare with what happened in other places? And then what? What do you think...?"

Conclusion of the Interview

It is the responsibility of the interviewer to conclude the interview, to bring closure to the session. Interviews that last longer than one hour become less productive. The interviewer may summarize a listing of the topics covered and ask the interviewee whether he/she has any more information that has come to mind that should be added before concluding the session. Concluding remarks alert future listeners to the fact that the interview ended. Without this ending, there may be questions whether the interview continued and was not picked up by the equipment. It is nice to thank the interviewee at the end of the interview.

At the conclusion of the interview it is also important to have the person being interviewed sign a release form like the example shown (see next page). The use of such forms is standard practice among historians, and including one will enable future church historians to use the oral interview with the assurance that permission has been given. It is a courtesy to give the interviewee a copy of the completed interview.

Remember: There are two or more interpretations of every event. A good oral history program will allow as many of these viewpoints as possible to be voiced and preserved.

Church History Interview Release/Interviewer's Release Form

I, _____, wish to share my recollections to help commemorate the history of _____ Church.

I understand that my recollections may be transcribed, cataloged and made available to researchers. I further understand that the church may use the taped interview or a transcript of the interview for educational purposes such as audiovisual presentations, dramatic productions or in the publication of a church history.

By donating this interview, given on this date, _____ I hereby transfer and release all literary property rights, including copyright, as an unrestricted gift unless limiting conditions are specifically noted below:

Restrictions:

Signature

Street Address or Rural Route

City

State

Date

Interviewer's Release

I, _____, hereby release all literary rights, including copyright, to the tapes and/or transcripts listed above.

Signature

Date

Street Address

City

State

Gaining Access To Recorded Information

It is important to plan ways to allow researchers to find information on tapes. Your committee may choose to develop a summary report form to provide an overview of the contents of each taped interview. This can be done by replaying the interview and noting the location on the tape of each topic if your tape recorder has a tape counting device. Be sure to set the tape counting device as "O" before making this index.

Here is a suggested form:

ORAL HISTORY LIBRARY OF FIRST UCC CHURCH, Centerville, Wisconsin

Interviewee _____ Interviewer _____
 Address _____ Address _____
 Birthplace _____ Date of birth _____
 Relationship to interviewee _____
 Occupation (s) _____
 Length of acquaintance _____
 Positions held in congregation _____
 Was interview a special occasion? _____
 If yes, describe _____

Tape Index

Side 1

Location on tape	Subjects covered
_____	_____

Side 2

Location on tape	Subjects covered
_____	_____

Suggestions For Interviewers

1. Find out if the person is willing to be interviewed. You may contact him/her by telephone or letter. Sometimes it may be necessary to ask a relative or friend start negotiations for you.
2. Set up your meeting date at least a week before the interview.
3. Try to find a time when you will not be disturbed by visitors or telephone calls.
4. Set a time limit so you and the interviewee know how long the conversation will last.
5. A recording session should include only one interviewer and the interviewee plus, perhaps, the camera operator. Take another person with you only when it is absolutely necessary, for instance if you need someone to help jog the memory of an elderly person. Extra conversation by third parties can destroy the focus of the interview and make the tape difficult to follow.
6. If the conversation includes information that is already printed in a book, jot down the name of the book and move to other topics. Concentrate on facts that are not available elsewhere.
7. Before you go to the interview, make two copies of your questions and send one copy to the person you will interview to help them begin thinking and organizing their thoughts. Take the second set of questions to the interview.
8. Be on time.
9. Don't ask a lot of questions in addition to what is on the list. If you discover a whole new topic that is important, make another appointment for another interview.
10. Wait until the person has answered each question before asking another one. Ask for spellings of names and places that are unfamiliar to you. You may also want to double check on dates mentioned in the interview.
11. Before you leave, review any information that is unclear to you.
12. Use tact in guiding the interview. This will be a special challenge when the interviewee is a "stream of consciousness" type of person. Keep short written notes of topics that you may want to return to at some future time.

Tips For Audio Taping

1. Use mylar or polyester tapes. Cheap tapes rub off and ruin your tape recorder. A good economical size to get is 60 minutes (30 minutes on a side). Longer tapes tend to stretch.
2. Make sure you have a good tape recorder. Generally it is not a good idea to use equipment with the microphone built into the machine. Select a recorder that has a separate microphone connected by an electrical cord.
3. To clean heads of recorders, use Q-tips and denatured alcohol.
4. Don't use batteries for your interview unless absolutely necessary. Weak batteries record at slow speeds. Electric current is better.
5. To avoid erasing a valuable tape, remove the small tabs in the back of the tape cartridge making it impossible to erase and re-record on this tape unless you cover the holes with tape.
6. Do not leave the recorder or tapes in a hot car or room. Heat destroys. If the recorder becomes chilled, wait until it warms to room temperature.
7. Always do a sample taping to make sure that all persons are speaking at a good recording level. Avoid relying on the built in microphone in the recorder. Place the auxiliary microphone in position to pick up all the voices that you want.
8. Check the room for noises that you don't want on the tape. Turn off radios, televisions and phonographs. Turn off the telephone if there is one. Alarm wristwatches and cell phones should be turned off.
9. Ask that a pitcher of water and glasses be available. People often become especially conscious of a dry throat when making tapes.
10. Don't switch the recorder on and off. It is better to waste some tape than to distract.

Who Should Interview

While interviewing can be done by almost anyone, some people will be more comfortable than others in the process. Different interviewers will produce differing results. A friendly person will interview in one way and a more formal person in another. Interviewers should be able to sit quietly and listen, but also have the ability to make brief interruptions to quietly ask for additional information or clarifications. Compulsive talkers or directors should be encouraged to participate in other aspects of the oral history program. Their special abilities can better be used perhaps in making contact with prospective interviewers or interviewees.

GOOD INTERVIEWERS DO NOT SHOW OFF THEIR OWN ABILITIES. RATHER THEY HELP AND SUPPORT THE PEOPLE WHO THEY INTERVIEW TO SHARE THEIR KNOWLEDGE IN THE BEST POSSIBLE WAYS.

Turning Attention To The Events Of The Past

The committee may want to make up a list of questions to share with members to “jog” memories and help people to remember all of the knowledge they have about the history of the congregation.

Peace Church, Dorchester, organized a program of oral history. Here is the list of questions that Rev. Sam Robbins shared with us as “guidelines” or stimulators to “prime the pump of remembrance!”

History of Peace Church 1894-1946

1. The congregation was organized in 1898 by Rev. Keinath, then was served briefly in 1900 by Rev. Zutz, and in 1901 by Rev. Hermann. From 1904 to 1913 the pastor was Rev. Jahnke. Does anyone have any recollections of any of these ministers—either personal experiences or stories they remember from others?
2. Construction of this building was begun in 1901, completed in 1902. Dedication services were held on June 8, 1902. Then in 1905 the frame building was covered with brick. How did the size and dimensions of that building compare with the present one?
3. A parsonage was built in 1905. Who lived in it? Where was it located?
4. The first persons baptized in this congregation were three Mitzlaff brothers: Arthur, Herbert and Eduard on March 12, 1898. Between 1900 and 1916 at least ten persons were baptized nearly every year—practically all as infants. Do we infer from this that a great majority of the early members of this congregation were relatively young couples of childbearing age?

5. Rev. John Bizer began serving this church, yoked with Medford, in 1913. He had already been serving the Medford Church since 1906. What circumstances led to the yoking between these two churches?
6. Were all the services conducted in German throughout Rev. Bizer's pastorate? Was German also used widely in community affairs during the same period?
7. What time of day were services held? In what ways were worship services similar to those of the present day? In what ways were they different?
8. In the early days of the twentieth century, there were six different churches in Dorchester. What denominations were they? What has happened to them?
9. With so many children being baptized between 1900 and 1916, with only a slight drop off or the next twenty years, there must have been a thriving Sunday School. What recollections do you have of Sunday School days? What materials were used? Was there much memory work? Was the teaching in German or English? Were there special events other than at Christmas? What was a typical class session like?
10. The first confirmation class was completed in 1902. Confirmed on March 13, 1902 were William Lueddecke, Paul Hundt, Emin Braun, Esther Bitter, Anna Helene Salome Rau, Emma Knaack, Emilie Behring, Rosa Distelhorst, and Mary Stumpf. From then on into the 1930's a class was confirmed every second year, usually with 12 to 16 members per class. How long were the classes? Were they in German or in English? What was a typical class like? What kind of ceremonies concluded the class? Was it difficult to maintain the interest and activity of the youth following confirmation?
11. The first wedding recorded for this congregation was on November 27, 1901, uniting Otto Luelloff and Lizzie Krakenberger. Were weddings in pre-World War I days similar to weddings nowadays? Were weddings preceded by long engagements? Were they preceded by pre-marital counseling?
12. How did the church operate financially? What were the main expenses? Was the money raised mainly by Sunday offerings and the money-raising activities of the Ladies Aid? Were there periods when it was very difficult to meet expenses?
13. When did the Ladies Aid start? How often did it meet? What kind of activities did it have?
14. Was there any kind of activity for the men of the church? How often did it meet? What kind of activities did it have?
15. Was there an organization for the youth? How often did it meet? What kind of activities did it have?

16. Some time during the ministry to Rev. R. J. Kalwitz (1930-1936) there was a change from the use of German to English for church services. How did this come about? What other things do you remember about Rev. Kalwitz's ministry?

17. Some time during the ministry of Rev. J. J. Hoffman (1936-1942) stained glass windows were installed. How did it come about? What other things do you remember about Rev. Hoffman's ministry?

18. Rev. G. E. Paulowelt served during the World War II period, 1942-1946. What do you remember about his ministry?

19. Were there other significant changes to the building, in addition to the stained glass windows, previous to the time of Rev. Kolla?

20. Were there individuals who served especially long periods in certain positions of leadership? (Council members, organists, Sunday School teachers, etc.)

Develop your own set of "twenty questions" to provide focus upon the history of your congregation.

REMOVING CREASES FROM HISTORIC PAPERS

By Tom McKay

The admonition “do not fold, spindle, or mutilate” came along too late to help many of the paper items in local church archives. A church taking stock of its collections may find creased, torn, dog-eared, or folded and bundled paper records are the rule rather than the exception. While restoring severely damaged paper items may require the skills of a professional conservator, the local church can take steps to flatten creases and, in special cases, provide support and protection for many of its historic paper records.

Most letters, deeds, and other documents that consist of simply paper and ink or pencil can have creases removed. The procedure involves exposing the papers to high humidity to increase their flexibility and applying pressure to remove the creases. The process begins by carefully examining the paper items. Do not attempt to flatten papers with wax seals, embossed markings, or other features that can be damaged by pressure. Do not attempt to flatten vellum or other special papers made from animal skins. These can be damaged by exposure to high humidity. Papers that show evidence of mold growth should not be exposed to high humidity. Take such items outdoors and brush away the mold with a soft brush. Place such papers in a closed container and store them in a cool, dry area with a temperature below 65 degrees F. Papers which have been infested with mold or which cannot be subjected to high humidity or pressure will require special treatment. The Wisconsin Conservation Service Center at the State Historical Society can provide advice, instruction and assistance. (816 State Street, Madison, WI 53706)

Flattening folded or creased papers require making them more flexible by softening the paper fibers. Paper placed in an environment with high humidity will absorb moisture and become more flexible. You can create a high humidity environment by using a clean plastic garbage can, a smaller plastic waste basket and a heavy mattress pad. Select a large, outdoor garbage can and a smaller wastebasket with a similar shape. Put approximately two inches of water in the garbage can. Place the papers to be flattened loosely in the smaller wastebasket. Set the wastebasket in the garbage can and cover the garbage can with a quilted cloth mattress pad. As the water evaporates, the pad holds the moisture within the garbage can, causing the humidity to rise. However the moisture will not condense on the cloth pad and drip onto the papers as it might with a plastic or metal covering. Holes can be cut in the upper portion of the smaller waste basket to increase circulation within the humidity chamber, but be absolutely certain that there is no possibility of water splashing onto the papers. Put a few thymol crystals in the water to prevent the possibility of mold growth within the garbage can.

The length of time paper items must remain in the humidity chamber will depend on the weight of the paper. However most items will require at least 48 hours for the paper to absorb enough moisture for creases to be flattened without damaging the fibers. When the paper feels slightly damp, it can be flattened under pressure. Spread acid-free blotter paper on a smooth table or

counter. Lay paper items individually on the blotters and cover them with a second sheet of blotter paper. The paper at this stage is weakened and must be handled with care to avoid tearing. Continue to interleaf blotters and the paper items being flattened. Finally cover the top blotter with an appropriate sized piece of Masonite—smooth side down—and apply pressure with weights. A few volumes from an old set of encyclopedias serve nicely as weights. The items must remain under pressure until excess moisture leaves the paper. This depends again on the weight of the paper and will probably be at least 48 hours.

Flattening bundles or boxes of un-cataloged papers requires careful attention to detail. The organization of the papers as they were acquired may be helpful to a cataloger. Do not mix the contents of different boxes or bundles in the flattening process. Maintain the original order of the materials as received until the person responsible for cataloging decides how the papers should be organized for access by researchers.

Relaxing and removing creases from historic papers can increase their life and make proper organization and storage possible. However, some of the items still need extra support or protection. Professional archivists have developed a simple technique that can provide support and protection to some historic papers and records. That technique is called encapsulation.

PLANNING A CELEBRATION

By Dorothy Whitcomb

Planning and celebrating an anniversary can be a truly significant experience in the life of your congregation. The Wisconsin Conference History Committee is eager to help you celebrate with joy and thanksgiving.

Naturally, you begin with a committee. These reliable people will be appointed eighteen to twenty-four months before the beginning of your anniversary year to decide on *dates, events, and who will be responsible for each part of the planned schedule.*

- + If you do not yet have a church historian, see about getting one appointed; this person will be a vital part of the team. Make good use of your archives to research past events and learn about early members.
- + Appoint leaders for publicity, recruiting volunteers, writing articles for local newspapers, contacting TV and radio stations, and for the banquet.
- + Appoint a financial leader and prepare a budget including travel expenses of the pastors' visits, luncheons, publicity, special mailings, history book/video, and the banquet (table decorations, nametags, entertainment and guests' tickets). Explore individual or local business sources to help pay for planned expenses.

Here are some ideas to help committee members choose what your celebration will include:

1. Invite former pastors to visit and preach. Inform them that their family members may attend although you will only be able to pay for travel for the pastor and spouse. Floral decorations and a corsage for the pastors' spouses are special touches. Have a luncheon and coffee hour--if that is part of your usual Sunday morning schedule--for each pastor, on the Sundays they visit. A catered luncheon frees church members for other duties, but check prices and keep costs at a level so all can attend.

Plan for a bulletin board to be on display for several weeks before and after the visit, showing highlights of each pastor's time with the church. The Pulpit Committee members who chose that pastor may help with memories; recognize them for their help. The Chairperson may want to be Master of Ceremonies at the luncheon, where the pastor and spouse can speak informally and share reminiscences of their time with the church.

Remember to honor and give special recognition to living charter members

Ask your current ministerial staff to devote a Sunday to report on the current position of the church, and plans for where God may be leading you in the future as part of the celebration.

2. Plan reunions for special groups: Youth Groups, Confirmation Classes, camping groups or summer activity groups and former church members may enjoy gatherings. A summer picnic during the anniversary year may be added fun.
3. Your church newsletter can highlight events of your celebration years. Long-term members can contribute short essays on special events and people they remember. This will introduce newer members and youth to some of the memorable events of the church's history.
4. Encourage artistic members to submit a logo that will be used for the celebration. Choose a slogan or Bible verse for the stationery, posters, nametags and displays.
5. Write a hymn for all, or special music for the choir to sing at the celebration.
6. Display historical records, artifacts, pictures and memorabilia from your church's history. (See p. 18) List the church's art works and names of donors with dates. Include pictures, stained glass windows, or other special objects from the church history. A quilting group of members may wish to prepare a special quilt to commemorate the anniversary; plan to display it prominently.
7. Make a video of the history of the church. Appoint a leader to write a script; this leader, in combination with the historian or someone best acquainted with the photographic collection, can choose pictures to go with the script. There are companies who will produce a video for you, including titles, background music and any special effects your desire. A church or community member with special knowledge in producing videos can lead this project. High school students often have experience making videos, and this is a good way to help them feel included.
8. Prepare a history of the church, beginning 12 to 18 months in advance. Make use of all church records, some of which may need to be translated. A reliable photographer is essential to record events and people during the celebration year events and to get any pictures your own collection lacks, which you need for the book, and also for the video. Choose an editor plus writers, interviewers, a picture/photo/editor, computer editor and proofreader to prepare the manuscript for publication. Also choose an art editor who will design the book and choose any art and work with someone in the printing and binding field to finish the publication of the book.

The Wisconsin Conference UCC Office has a number of church histories. Look at these and contact the church that produced the book(s) you like for advice on how to prepare your book. There are companies that will produce a history book for you. They have a beautiful product, but it will cost more than a book prepared with your own experts. Locally, you can spend from \$10-\$15 for each copy. A published book may cost at least \$25 each. Selling subscriptions in advance will avoid being left with extra copies. Plan for extra copies to be shared with new member classes, etc.

9. Make a pictorial calendar to sell by advance orders. Many photography shops will help you prepare one. Your women's group may want to produce a cookbook which can be finished by a local company after you have solicited recipes from members. Once again, sell advance orders and use unsold copies for sale at celebrations or for gifts. These projects also can be time-consuming, so choose how to spend your energy and time wisely.

10. Culminate your time of celebration with a special church service and banquet. Decide whether you want to invite a special speaker. Tactfully provide free tickets for those who could not otherwise afford to attend the banquet. Providing nametags for everyone is a polite way to eliminate memory lapses. If a seating chart is used, allow friends to sit together. Invite the choir or a small singing group to entertain, or show the video for the first time. Invite former interim ministers, former choir directors, musicians, Conference and Association staff and the pastors of UCC churches nearby, asking them to bring a message of greeting; introduce them at the banquet.

Planning an alternate concurrent event for children of church members who attend the banquet will help parents of young children to attend. This could be a simple meal followed by a children's' video. Arrange for any necessary transportation for elderly or disabled church members.

You may also wish to plan an "alternate banquet" for the homeless and those who attend free meal sites in your town, with church members helping to prepare and serve this meal. If you choose to do this activity, include these expenses in your budget.

11. Contact other UCC churches in Wisconsin for ideas on how they celebrated anniversaries. Your Association minister can give you names and contact information of churches that have had anniversaries recently. Check libraries to examine church histories in their collections.

RESOURCES FOR CHURCH HISTORIANS

Contact the American Association for State and Local History, 1400 Eighth Ave. South, Nashville TN 37203 for their annual catalog listing pamphlets and books helpful to the amateur historian.

Take notes on one side of 4 x 6 cards and store them in a box. On each card indicate subject, date of event, content, and the source of information. You can then sort and resort by topic and/or date.

The archives for the Wisconsin Conference, UCC is located at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 816 State Street, Madison, Wisconsin 53706.

Sources for archival products such as folders, document cases, acid free paper, Mylar supplies and tools:

Gaylord Brothers, Inc.
Box 4901
Syracuse, NY, 13221-4901
1-800-448-6160
www.Gaylord.com

University Products, Inc.
517 Main St., P.O. Box 101
Holyoke, MA 01041-0101
1-800-628-1912
www.universityproducts.com

Light Impressions
P.O. Box 787
Brea, CA 92822-0787
1-800-828-6216
www.LightImpressionsDirect.com

Church Register (Record) Book

If you need a book for recording Baptisms, Confirmations, Marriages or Funerals, you can order this through Concordia Publishing House. The book called *Church Register* (gold stamped on the cover) has a durable red imitation leather binder with metal spine, four posts and comes complete with index tabs and 92 assorted record sheets as listed below. It will hold

approximately 220 sheets and the size is 16" x 11-1/2". The book comes with all the sheets listed; it does not have any church denomination stamped on the cover.

The following pages are included in this Church Register:

Baptism (10)	Confirmations (6)	Marriages (5)
Funerals (5)	Record of Pastors (1)	Church Council (2)
Membership (15)	Sunday Statistics (20)	Constitution/By-Laws (3)
Communion (20)	Historical Events (5)	

Catalog Number 81-1148G	Cost \$140.00	Additional sheets of 50: 80cents each
Concordia Publishing House		Phone: 1-800-325-3040
3558 South Jefferson Ave		www.cph.org
St. Louis, MO 63118		

Cemetery Receipt Book

If your church has a cemetery and has need of "Cemetery Certificates" as a receipt in purchases of grave lot(s), these can be ordered from H.C.Miller Company in Green Bay. Their contact is Kathy Schultz at 1-800-829-6555 (e-mail: Kathy@hcmiller.com.) She will ask for a copy of the certificate you want printed. The book has a minimum of 50 pages, 15' x 8.5", including the stub. The cost of one book is #119.05 and the cost for two is \$156.20.

Fire Hazard

To lessen fire hazard some churches are replacing wax candles with liquid fuel candles or tube assembly candles. The liquid type is a plastic cylinder, which looks like a candle and is filed with liquid fuel. The tube type is a wax candle inserted into a tube with a bottom spring that keeps the candle the proper height.

SUGGESTIONS TO STANDARDIZE CHURCH MINUTES

By J. D. Peterson

Most churches have many committees and members and officers change regularly. As a result, different secretaries take minutes in a variety of ways. Church historians are often frustrated when reviewing minutes of past meetings because the information they are hoping to find was not recorded. Too often they find something like this: “after discussion the board moved to approve the motion: (the text of the motion) PASSED.” As a result, we know that the topic was discussed and approved, but unfortunately, we are left with no clue about the issues surrounding the motion. Here are some guidelines to share with committee members who take minutes. Hopefully these tips will make the work of future church historians a bit easier.

1. At the top of the page of minutes type the date of the meeting, name of the board/committee, and the name of the church (or print minutes on church stationary)
2. List the first and last names of committee members, noting whether they are present, absent or excused
3. Type the minutes in the same order as the meeting agenda. If there is no agenda, request that an agenda be agreed upon at the start of the meeting, explaining that this will aid in the process of taking minutes.
4. Leave a wide margin on the left side of your typed minutes so that there is room for changes and additions at the next meeting when the minutes are accepted and approved. Be sure to make complete notes on your original official copy of the minutes for the church archives. Also, include in the current minutes you are taking, a note that the minutes of the previous meeting were approved, noting any changes. Be sure that you sign the file copy for the archives of the typewritten minutes.
5. Always notify the committee Chair in advance when you cannot attend to take minutes, allowing the Chair time to find a substitute.
6. Motions can be written as, m/m/2/c (motion made second carried) or m/m (motion made) or just state motion was made.
7. Sometimes the Chair may want to review the minutes before they are distributed to members. After receiving approval, distribute minutes to members as soon as possible following the meeting. Some secretaries use a highlighter on members’ copies to remind them of tasks they have agreed to do before the next meeting.
8. During fast-moving meetings, do not hesitate to ask the Chair to pause the meeting while you “catch up” with notetaking. You will be asked to read motions before votes are taken and it is important that your notes be complete. List the major issues from the discussion leading up to the vote on the motion.
9. Treasurer’s and committee reports should be noted briefly in the minutes that should state that the full report, including the number of pages of each, is attached.
10. Correspondence received since the last meeting should be noted and the letters filed.
11. Include the date of the next meeting (highlighted) at the end of your minutes to make sure that members have this information.
12. Increasingly, secretaries of committees are using laptop computers to take minutes of meetings. Many find that this process eases the task.

CHECKLIST FOR AN ANNIVERSARY BOOKLET COMMITTEE

By J. D. Peterson

The following suggestions are intended to aid church historians and committee members in planning for an anniversary booklet.

1. **Booklet Design.** Perhaps you have a member who has experience in the design of booklets and pamphlets. If not, consider hiring someone who can guide you through the process of selecting paper, typefaces that are easily read, paper stock, and binding. Generally, it is wise to choose standard paper sizes to control printing costs.
2. **Pictures.** Pictures of your current church building and other buildings used for worship and education will be important to find in the church archives, or by asking members to share photos to illustrate the cover or body of the booklet. All illustrations need identifying captions and clergy photos should include a sentence or two about the minister pictured, together with dates, when he/she served the congregation.
3. **Names.** Your booklet will be filled with the names of those who served and supported the congregation through the years. It will be helpful if one committee member will accept the task of verifying full names and spellings and all dates.
4. **Lists.** Lists are a concise way to present information about the congregation. However, by themselves they can be sterile, and it is wise to connect lists to the ministries of the church. Here are categories you may consider: Clergy, moderators, charter members, confirmands, musicians, and educators. You may also list members who may have been ordained in your church* and those who died while serving their country. Lists may also contain organizations like Women's Guild, The Brotherhood, Sunday school, choirs, etc. Lists of baptisms, confirmed members and funerals may also reflect the ministry of your church. You may choose to list some dates or years with various lists.
5. **Memorials.** Survey the memorials in the church. A few paragraphs can be used to describe them and their place in ministry. You may choose to highlight major donations such as stained glass windows, a pipe organ, or building addition. Search out bulletins from memorial dedication services for additional information about these. For example, an organ dedication program usually lists organ stops and the number of organ pipes.
6. **Archives.** The church archives will hopefully provide a wealth of information for your historical narrative. If some of these records are written in a language other than English, this is an excellent time to get them translated. The translations will aid in your booklet research and provide a valuable resource for future church historians.

7. **Credits.** Throughout the development of the booklet keep careful records of any loans of pictures and other materials. Provide credit in the finished booklet, together with the names of the anniversary committee, and any members who have provided help.

*The booklet, *The United Church of Christ Ordained Ministers of Wisconsin*, was published by the Wisconsin Historical Committee and sent to all Wisconsin UCC congregations in 2007.

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