

District Archivist Report March 2018

The archives at the Northern Illinois District headquarters contain a history file for each congregation in the district. Congregations and organizations are encouraged to send two copies of historical material such as anniversary booklets, pastor installation programs, etc. to the district archives. One copy will be forwarded to the Concordia Historical Institute (CHI) in St. Louis for permanent preservation. Congregations are encouraged to check the resources on the CHI website (<https://concordiahistoricalinstitute.org/>) for information on anniversary celebrations and record retention/preservation.

Congregational records from disbanded congregations should be forwarded to the Concordia Historical Institute in St. Louis for permanent preservation. Since the last convention the congregations of Bethany (Chicago), Bethlehem (Chicago), Ebenezer (Chicago), La Santisima Trinidad (Chicago), Trinity (Pontiac) and Zoar (Elmwood Park) have disbanded. And Our Savior (Chicago) has merged with St. John (Niles) to form Ascension (Niles). The location of records from St. Peter, Chicago (disbanded in 1998) are currently unknown and any anyone with information is encouraged to contact the archivist. The missing records from Bethel, Chicago (disbanded in 2008) were located but unfortunately they have been destroyed. The congregation left the records in the building after it was sold to a new church and they were damaged in a subsequent flood. Even though there are modern techniques to salvage flood damaged items the church (non-LCMS) decided to dispose of them. This represents a loss of 123 years of history for Bethel shows the importance of sending all records to the Concordia Historical Institute or the district office for preservation.

All congregations are encouraged to consider the preservation of their record books. This typically involves microfilming the books. Digital preservation is often considered and it will provide ready access to the information without the wear and tear on the paper documents but it is not considered preservation. Any congregation considering either microfilming or digitization is encouraged to contact the archivist. Also any congregation using digital media for any records (sacramental records, meeting minutes, budgets, etc.) should print out a copy at regular intervals for preservation. Technology advances so rapidly that this is the only way to ensure availability of records in the future (remember floppy discs?)

John Hallman
johnhallman@prodigy.net