

Definition of Access Policy, General Synod Archives

The General Synod Archives of the Anglican Church of Canada under the *Access and Restrictions Policy Guidelines* approved by the National Executive Council of the Anglican Church of Canada in March 1989 defines three levels of access to Official Church Records:

1. Open Access
2. Closed Access and
3. Restricted Access.

1. Open Access

All minutes, reports and correspondence of synods, executive committees, standing committees, commissions, task forces, etc. are open after distribution. Official correspondence of metropolitans, bishops and other officers and staff are open except where they are defined as restricted or closed.

Researchers may consult open records upon completion of the researcher registration form.

2. Closed Access

Closed Records are closed for a period of time negotiated between the depositor or donor of the records; or closed due to the policies of the General Synod Archives.

These records are closed to all researchers with the exception of the Primate or his or her representative, the General Secretary and / or the General Synod Archivist who may have access to the records during the closure period.

Closed Records Containing Personal Information

Personnel records or records which contain personal information include:

- yearly records of candidates for ministry
- medical information
- General pension information
- General retirement information
- General salary/re-location information
- Files concerning problems with individual ministers
- Donor or bequest information

Files that contain Personal Information will be closed for a period of 75 years.

Where personal information exists in a file, restrictions will be applied on a file by file basis from the last dated item in each file to the first day of the year following the year that the restrictions are lifted (i.e. a file which has on its latest item a date of April 20, 1957 will be open January 1, 2033 and not April 20, 2032).

Permission to examine the records and, where necessary, to photocopy them, must be in written form from the General Secretary.

In cases where an individual has obtained permission to examine records the General Synod Archivist will vet correspondence files to ensure that the personal information is protected.

3. Restricted Access

Certain holdings of the General Synod Archives are subject to access restrictions:

Parish Registers

In accordance with the General Synod Policy on access to Parish Registers, full access to information contained in the parish registers will be granted 100 years after the event described in the records including baptism, confirmation marriage and death. Individuals who are the subject of the record or their legal representative who have written authorization may be granted access to their specific records at any time.

Researchers may take notes based on the information in the registers

Parish registers are not to be copied.

Researchers wishing to receive a copy of an entry from a church register will be required to fill out a Parish Register Inquiry form and will only be given a copy of the requested record and/or a verbatim transcript of the record, according to the established procedure of the General Synod Archives.

Research projects involving more extensive use of the church registers would be considered upon signing of a research agreement that protects the privacy of the individuals in the records.

Files containing Personal Information

Files containing sensitive or personal information will be given restricted access. Personal information in the file will be severed so the rest of the information in the file can be made accessible. Example of this is missionary files, which may contain personal information but also reports on the activities of the mission.