

Updated ELCA Region 3 Archives Report to 2022 Synod Assemblies

Introduction

2022 marks the 34th year of the ELCA Region 3 Archives. Paul Daniels continues in the archivist position at 80% time, half-time for the 9 synods of ELCA Region 3 and half-time for Luther Seminary. This shared position works well with Luther providing office and storage space as well as access to a much-needed volunteer pool and IT support. Luther profits from hosting the largest of the 9 ELCA regional collections as the materials are available for use by the entire seminary community.

As with so much else over the past 2 years, however, everything else was different due to the pandemic. As the statistics below indicate, many more of the Region 3 Archives services to synod offices and congregations were provided virtually. Thankfully, an increasing number of the program's offerings were already available online. Additionally, records collection and delivery trips were not done in person, but relied on the USPS and UPS for safe transport of valuable records of all kinds to and from the ELCA Region 3 Archives.

Use of the ELCA Region 3 Archives

The Archives website, www.luthersem.edu/archives, continues to work well as our "front door" for promoting archival services to congregations and individuals. Luther Seminary provides IT support for the site and its regular updates. Researchers use the site for information on the collections as well as articles like "Ask the Archivist", focusing on particular archival topics pertinent to their church settings. Reference uses for the year were:

+Assisted a total of 868 reference patrons in the past year with a range of research interests. The majority (62%) are congregational committees working on records scanning projects, anniversary celebration planning, church history writing and general records care questions. Other significant user groups include synod leadership, church wide offices and individual researchers.

+Worked on a regular basis with all 9 synod offices, collecting valuable office records and assisting with retention plans for each office. Unlike years past, though, I dramatically reduced my on-site visits to each of the 9 synod offices. In most cases, email, phone calls, and Zoom meetings took the place of on-site meetings with synod offices staff and with congregational archives committees. These virtual visits were coordinated with 22 Zoom congregational visits throughout the 3 states of ELCA Region 3.

Collection Growth

+Collected 228 linear feet of additional synod office records from the 9 offices. These include legal, financial, personnel and program files. Much of this material is stored off-site in space leased from the Iron Mountain Co.

+Gathered 174 congregational pieces adding to a collection now totaling 6,855 files.

+Received 525 biographical pieces on clergy and lay leaders – total is now 8,826 files.

+Assisted 12 closing congregations in Region 3 with records care (scanning) and critical records collection.

Outreach and Education

+Distributed 78 copies of "Memory Work: A Guide for Congregational Archives and History" to congregations and individuals. The guide is frequently accessed digitally via the Region 3 Archives website.

+Managed off-site secure storage program via Iron Mountain Co. for permanent care of sensitive files, including candidacy, camping staff, and synod financial records.

+Promoted and managed the congregational records scanning program through Mid-America Business Systems.

Professional Development

+Daniels is an active member of the Society of American Archivists, the Midwest Archives Conference, the Twin Cities Archives Roundtable and the Lutheran Historical Conference. Daniels renewed and maintained his professional certification in the Academy of Certified Archivists.

Respectfully submitted 3.10.22 by Paul A. Daniels, ELCA Region 3 Archivist and Luther Seminary Archivist