

Uniting Church SA Historical Society

Dealing with **Historical Records**



One of the important roles of Presbyteries and Synod is to ensure that records are retained and preserved in accordance with UCA Assembly Policy.

In South Australia the Synod has signed an agreement with the State Library to hold the principal records of the Church.

The Synod appointed Archivist/Historical Records Officer works with the UCSA Historical Society at their Black Forest premises, and determines whether records will be lodged at the State Library, held at the History Centre, or confidentially destroyed.

Records required for deposit at the State Library or History Centre

When full and/or no longer required for Church administration:

- Minute books of all main Committees
– original, signed, dated minutes only
e.g. Church or Parish Council, Elders, Congregational, Property and Finance.

When full and/or no longer required:

- Baptismal Registers
- Marriage Registers
- Birth, Death or Burial Registers
- Church Membership Rolls.

When no longer required for Church administration:

- Significant correspondence e.g. building programs, plans
- Reports/correspondence on Property and other assigned subjects.

Records received by the Synod Archivist that are no longer required for lodgement at the Library, or are unsuitable to the History Centre's collection will be destroyed.

Note: Where minutes or other records are kept in loose leaf folders, they must be removed from the folders and placed in suitable (unsealed) envelopes in date order with details recorded on the face of the envelope, including name of council or committee and date period covered.

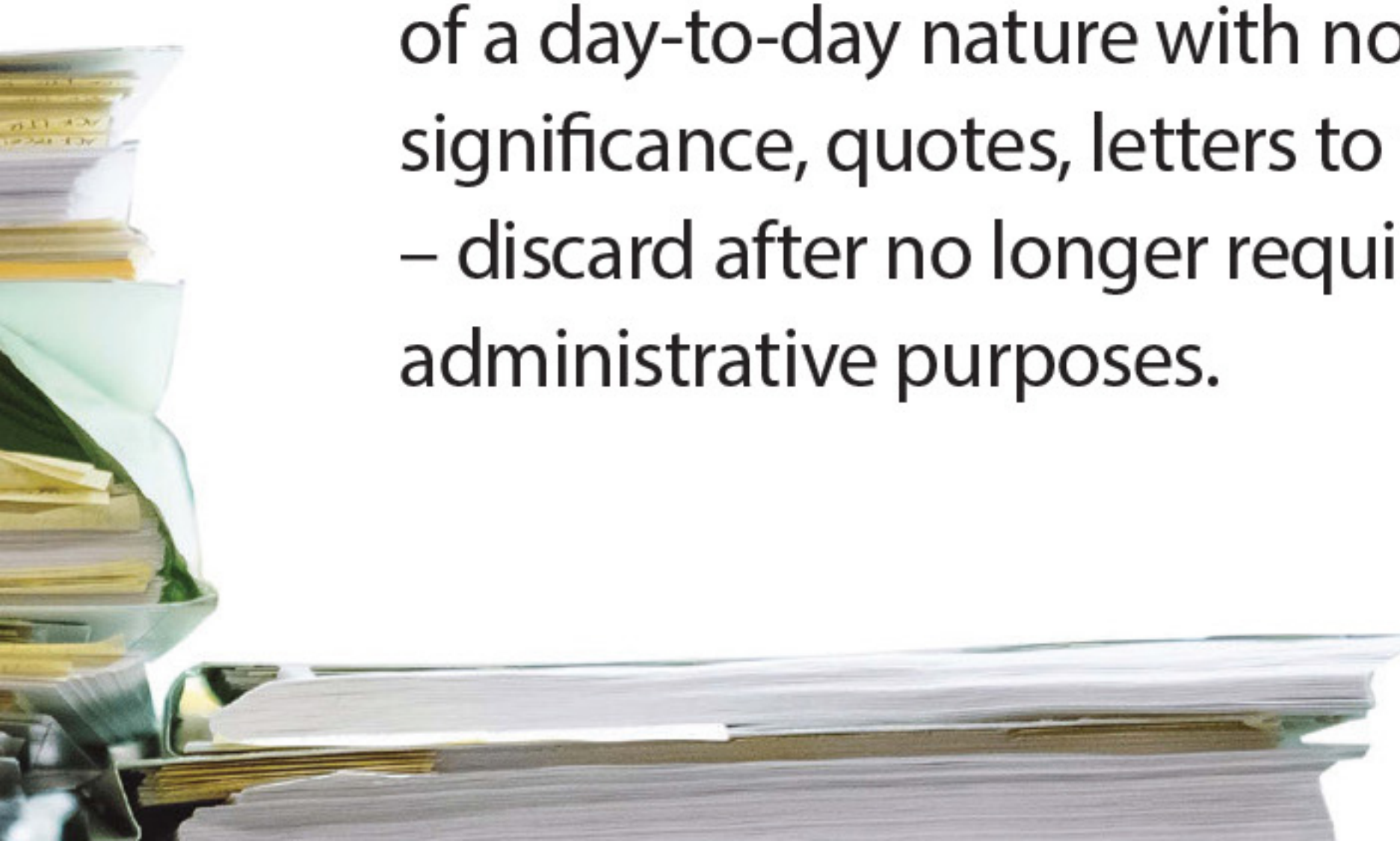


Records held in the History Centre

Other records may be of value to the UCSA Historical Society's Collection and can be held in the History Centre when no longer required, or stored by a congregation:

- Minute books – e.g. Fellowship groups, Sporting groups, Sunday School rolls
- Newsletters, church or parish magazines, church histories, copies of any formally published material can also be lodged with the State Library under the legal deposit scheme
- Photographs – e.g. buildings, church interiors, ministers, special events, people. Of particular interest are interior and exterior photographs of churches where congregations are to be disbanded; all photographs should be clearly labelled with location, date, names, event etc.
- Reports on special events and celebrations
- Other records of local interest e.g. Visitors books, photograph albums, preaching plans, orders of service for special events, oral histories.

Other records

- **Financial Records** – e.g. general financial records, tax documents, invoices, bank statements, collection registers – these must be retained by the Congregation for 7 years, and then may be destroyed in a secure manner.
 - **General correspondence** – e.g. correspondence of a day-to-day nature with no lasting effect or significance, quotes, letters to tradespersons – discard after no longer required for administrative purposes.
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In February 2021 a gold watch dating back to 1865 was found hidden in a rusted, locked metal box in the Pilgrim archive room.

The watch bears the inscription *Presented to the Revd C.N. Evan B.A., by the ladies of his Congregation, Adelaide 8th March 1865.*

Mr Evan was Co-Minister with the Rev TW Stow from 1855 to 1856 and then assumed the full responsibility of the Pastorate which he carried on until his retirement in 1871.

It was largely through his efforts that the present fine Pilgrim building was erected. It seems likely that the watch was presented to C.N. Evan in appreciation of all that he had done to make the erection of Stow Memorial Congregational Church possible.

Privacy

The agreement with the State Library restricts public access to Marriage and Baptismal Registers:

Marriage Registers – for entries after 1974 access is restricted for 60 years. The Synod Archivist can authorise access. If you are the registered person or a child of the marriage, you are able to obtain information.

Baptismal Registers – for entries after 1974 access is restricted for 75 years. The Synod Archivist can authorise access. If you are the registered person, spouse, parent or child, you are able to obtain the information.

Note that more recent general records are also restricted – any records less than 30 years old held in the State Library may only be accessed with the written permission of the Synod Archivist.

Please contact the Synod Archivist for assistance with accessing restricted records.

Local records

Where a Congregation is holding Marriage or Baptismal Registers and a request is received for information, detail supplied must be in accordance with the above privacy restrictions. The registers **must not** be given to the enquirer but the detail is to be researched by the Minister or Officers of the congregation.

Access to these registers must not be given to the public under any circumstances.

Members of the public may be given access to other records held by the Congregation with the permission of the relevant Church officer.

Funeral Registers

Whilst not a requirement of Assembly or Synod it is suggested that Congregations might consider maintaining a register of Funerals. This would be a useful historical record for future generations.

Closed/disbanded congregations

When a Congregation is closed and/or disbanded, please contact the Synod Historical Records Officer who will advise and assist to determine which records are required to be archived or are possibly suitable for the History Centre. Collection and transport of records can be discussed at this time.

Please contact the History Centre in relation to the donation of other artefacts from disbanded congregations e.g. banners, foundation stones, plaques, significant furniture items.

Where to send records

Records must be packed in suitable boxes, labelled and delivered to:

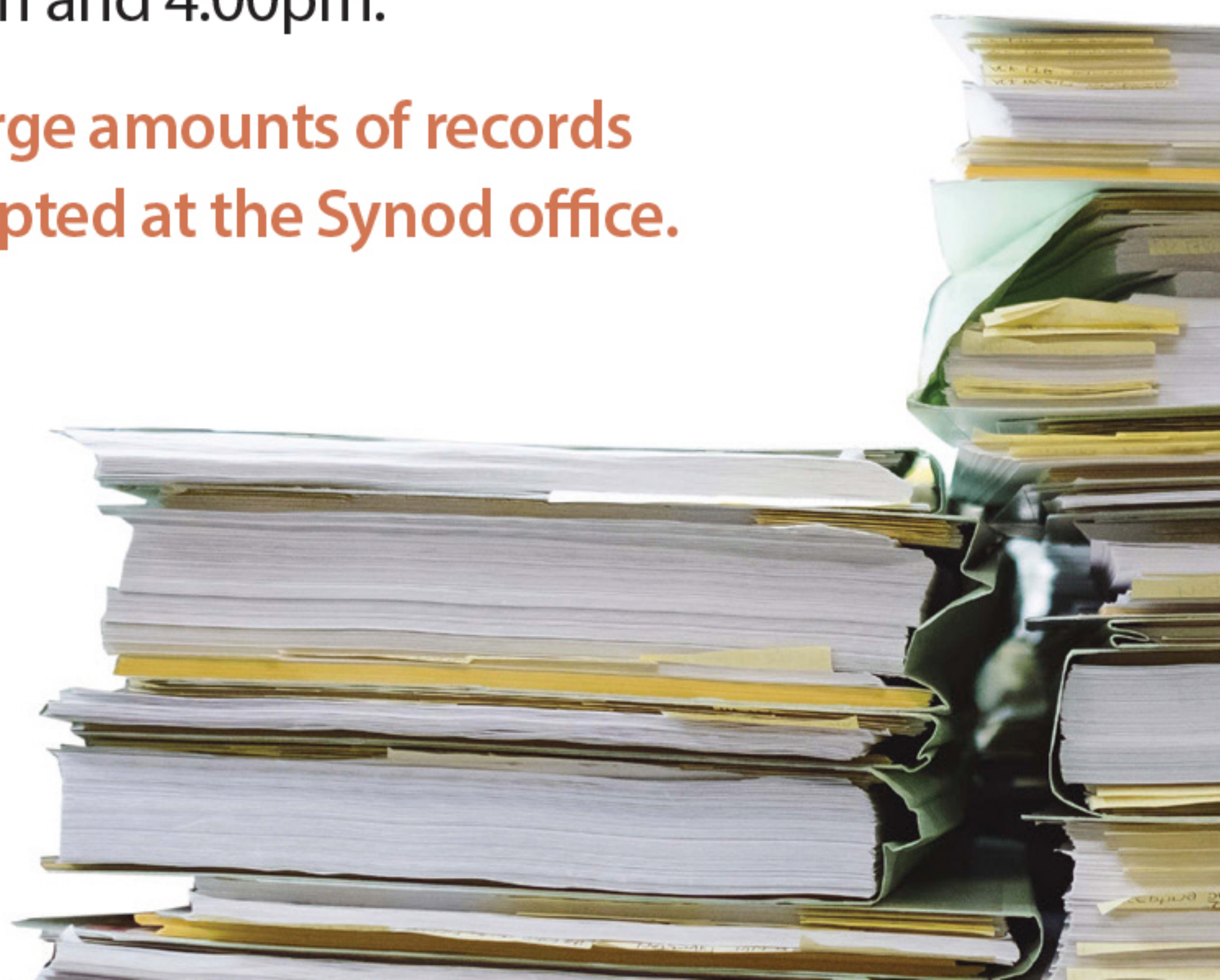
Uniting Church Synod Archivist

Uniting Church History Centre

44a East Avenue, Black Forest SA 5035

The Centre is normally open Wednesdays between 1.00pm and 4.00pm.

Please note: Large amounts of records will not be accepted at the Synod office.



**Thank you for your
co-operation in
complying with the
requirement of the
Synod and Assembly**

Contact us

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Synod Archivist & Historical Records Officer

Uniting Church of Australia

Synod of South Australia

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Historical Records Officer

UCSA Historical Society

Phone (08) 8297 8472 (Tue, Wed)

Email records@ucsahistory.org.au

Web historicalsociety.unitingchurch.org.au

Malcolm Wilson and/or Rosemary Hocking are available to answer any questions, or to visit a congregation for more detailed advice and/or to collect records.



The Uniting Church in Australia
Synod of South Australia