

2008 Assembly Report  
Region 6 Archives

Last summer a student from Trinity Lutheran Seminary's Summer Sampler program asked: what would happen if Lutheran records did not exist? It was an excellent question. I asked the students if their families ever told stories—stories about their parents' or grandparents' childhoods, stories about difficult times, or stories about funny times. The students talked about their family stories. Then I asked them to think about how their life would be different if they had never heard these stories. They thought about it. I asked the students if this answered the original question. They made the connection.

Like family stories, the stories of Lutheran history help us to understand who we are, what we believe, what we do, why we believe, and why we act. The ELCA Region 6 Archives works to keep Region 6 Lutheran stories alive through preservation, cooperation, transmission, and outreach.

*Preservation.* The main responsibility of the Archives is to care for the records that contain our church's stories. In 2008, the Archives purchased additional shelving to better house our church's records. In addition, 6 collections were processed—records were transferred to acid-free storage materials for better protection.

*Cooperation.* The ELCA Region 6 Archives can only preserve stories that are recorded and donated to the Archives. In 2008, the Archives launched the fourth annual congregational anniversary campaign. The Archives contacted congregations celebrating major anniversaries in 2008, offering assistance in researching and writing congregational histories, and also ideas for anniversary celebrations. In addition, the Archives contacted congregations that celebrated major anniversaries in 2007, requesting that materials be preserved at the Archives. Some congregations responded to the Archives' offer for research and advice, while even more sent their anniversary histories and other materials.

In addition to congregational histories, the Archives received synod records, closed congregational records, auxiliary organization materials, personal/family papers, photographs, A-V materials, and historical artifacts in 2008. Finally, the Archives fielded 19 advice inquiries in 2008. These inquiries included providing information about how to care for congregational records, how to organize congregational archives, and how to compile a congregational history. The Archives cannot preserve Lutheran stories alone. Keeping Lutheran stories alive requires everyone's cooperation—the Archives, synod staff, clergy, and congregation members.

*Transmission.* Stories are most effective when shared. In 2008, the Archives shared Lutheran stories by answering 127 research inquiries. These inquiries included requests for baptism records, historical information about congregations, biographical information about pastors, and genealogical information.

*Outreach.* The Archives also shares the importance of preserving Lutheran stories. In June and July of 2008, the Archivist mentored a total of four students from Trinity Lutheran Seminary's Summer Sampler program. Activities included a tour of the Archives, a discussion about what archives are and why they are important, researching an inquiry, accessioning items, and processing photographs. The year 2008 also marked the conclusion of a major website update, aimed to better inform the online community.

The Archives thanks everyone who contributed to the preservation of Lutheran history in 2008.

Respectfully submitted by

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