

Clerks' Tip

The Presbyterian Historical Society



One important part of our connectional church is the Presbyterian Historical Society, located in center city Philadelphia, PA. From their website:” Organized in 1852, the Presbyterian Historical Society is the oldest denominational archives in the United States and serves as the national archives for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its predecessor denominations. PHS exists to collect, preserve, and share the story of the American Presbyterian and Reformed experience with Presbyterians, the scholarly community, and the general public.” If you are on a trip to Philadelphia, you might want to consider a stop at PHS. They encourage visits and will schedule free group tours. You can learn more about them at www.history.pcusa.org.

Besides being of historic interest, PHS is of current assistance to congregations. The Book of Order tells us that the clerk of a council is responsible for preserving the records of the council. Book of Order G-3.0104. Obviously, that would include session minutes and rolls and registers—but there are a lot of other documents that a church has. Which are important to maintain? How long should they be maintained? Where and how should they be stored?

The Presbyterian Historical Society can help with all these questions. For information on identifying a record and how to store records at the church, you can check [here](#). You can also find out about PHS’s digitization service, access a retention schedule for congregations, and learn about PHS’s free record storage (you maintain ownership of and access to the records even though they are stored in Philadelphia) at this [site](#).

Happy New Year to you all. Please call with any questions you have—many of you may be new to clerking this year and Assistant to the Stated Clerk Jan Moody and I will be happy to help any way we can.

Peace, Sara

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