

Memo

To: The United Church of Canada
From: Privacy Working Group
CC:
Date: November 2005
Re: Privacy

A Privacy issue which continues to cause confusion and uncertainty is Access to Registers. It is a topic of many emails received by both Archives and the Privacy Office and one that always comes up when we do presentations on Privacy.

When people come into the office requesting access to Baptismal, Marriage or Death registers it is normal to want to be helpful and we tend to be trusting of the people who make those requests. On the other hand we are now faced with the reality of Privacy Legislation and people in general being more protective of their personal information.

This bulletin is to provide some guidelines when handling these requests and some precautionary steps that you should always follow when access to the Registers is requested.

- Don't give the Registers to anyone. The Registers should not be turned over to anyone to browse at their leisure. By doing so you are giving them full access to other people's personal information.
- All requests for information contained in the Register should be received in writing. This will ensure that we have a record of all requests and the ability to trace any requests should the need arise.
- Ask for identification to ensure that the I.D. matches the written request. Photo I.D. would be preferable and driver's licences and most provincial health cards now come with photo I.D.
- If the request is for research purposes the individual should be directed to the Conference Archivist.
- For security purposes ensure that the registers are kept in locked cabinets with limited access. If possible identify one or two people whose responsibility would be to handle these types of requests.

Attached are some sample response letters, request forms, and checklist which may be useful to you when processing these requests for information contained in the various registers.

If you have any questions or comments, please direct them in writing to the Privacy Officer at privacy@united-church.ca

Church Registers Checklist

1. Don't give the church registers to anyone.
2. Ask for the request for information in writing.
3. Ask for identification from the individual making the request.
4. Don't photocopy the register.
5. Transcribe the information in the register in a letter or form.
6. Authorize one individual to authorize such requests.
7. Keep a record of all requests received and answered.
8. Keep registers in a locked cabinet or locked room.
9. Refer all research inquiries to the Conference Archives.

For more information about Church records, please consult the new resource *Archives & Recordkeeping: A How-to Guide for Congregations and Conferences* United Church of Canada 2005 available from the United Church Resource Distribution CH10079 for \$8.00

Sample letters and forms for pastoral charge requests for information in registers

November 9, 2005

Ms. Joan Smith
123 Anywhere Street
Somewhere BC V1P 6B3

Dear Ms. Smith:

Thank you for your request for information from our records.

Enclosed, as per your request, is a certified transcript of your record of [baptism/marriage/burial] as found in the Register of Trinity United Church from 1965.

Sincerely,

Mr. Jack Ledger
Secretary
Trinity United Church

Encl.

RECORD OF MARRIAGE

BRIDEGROOM **Name:** [Name] **Residence:** [Residence]
 Age: [Age]
 Place of Birth: [Place]
 Marital Status: [Status] **Occupation:** [Occupation]
Religious Denomination: [Denomination]
Names of Parents: **Father:** [Name]
 Mother (Maiden Name): [Name]

BRIDE **Name:** [Name] **Residence:** [Residence]
 Age: [Age]
 Place of Birth: [Place]
 Marital Status: [Status] **Occupation:** [Occupation]
Religious Denomination: [Denomination]
Names of Parents: **Father:** [Name]
 Mother (Maiden Name): [Name]

MARRIAGE BY LICENSE OR BANNS:[License No.]

WITNESSES: [Name]

MINISTER: [Name]

DATE OF MARRIAGE: [Date]

I CERTIFY that this is a true copy of the record of marriage of **[Name]** and **[Name]** as found in the Marriage register of Trinity United Church

November 9, 2005

(Mr.) Jack Ledger
The United Church of Canada

RECORD OF BURIAL

NAME: [Click **here** and type name]

AGE: [Click **here** and type age]

CAUSE OF DEATH: [Cause of death]

RESIDENCE AT TIME OF DEATH: [Residence]

PLACE OF DEATH: [Place of death]

DATE OF DEATH: [Date of death]

PLACE OF BURIAL: [Place of burial]

DATE OF BURIAL: [Date of burial]

OFFICIATING MINISTER: [Officiating Minister]

I CERTIFY that this is a true copy of the burial record of **[Click here and type name]** as found in the Burial Register Trinity United Church,
9 November, 2005

(Mr.) Jack Ledger
The United Church of Canada

RECORD OF BAPTISM

NAME: [Click here and type name]

FATHER'S NAME: [Click here and type name]

MOTHER'S NAME: [Click here and type name]

DATE OF BIRTH: [Click here and type date]

PLACE OF BIRTH: [Click here and type place]

DATE OF BAPTISM: [Click here and type date]

PLACE OF BAPTISM: [Click here and type place]

OFFICIATING MINISTER: [Click here and type name]

I CERTIFY that this is a true copy of the record of baptism for
[Click here and type name] as found in the Baptismal Register of Trinity United
Church,

9 November, 2005

(Mr.) Jack Ledger
The United Church of Canada