
Christchurch Anglican Diocesan Archives



*Our job is to preserve the past
and record the present for the future*

Part 2: Parish Records

PARISH RECORDS

A Parish is the administrative unit for a local area. It can contain a number of centres, each usually based around a church. The geographical area which a Parish includes may change over time. Parish Records contain within them information as wide as the interests of the parishioners, as well as the material which is essential to the running of the parish.

Information on Registers relating to **Baptism, Marriage, Banns of Marriage, Burial, Confirmation, Admission to Communion** and the **Dissolution of Marriages** can be found in the first pamphlet in this series.

Minutes are a diverse and important source of information on a wide range of topics.

Vestry Minutes not only provide the names of those who attended the meetings, but also record the major decisions in the life of the Parish. These decisions relate to furnishings, architects, parish boundaries, fairs, ecumenical relationships, long term planning, cemeteries and clergy. They often contain reports of sub committees concerned with pastoral care and finance.

Many other parish groups also keep minutes:

- Women's group such as the **Mothers' Union**, and its successor the **Association of Anglican Women** and **Guilds** of various kinds.
- Men's groups such as the **Church of England Men's Society**, and specific parish centred groups.
- Youth and Children's Groups like the **Anglican Bible Class Union**, Server's Guilds, **Sunday Schools** and, where they are associated with a particular parish, the records of **Church Day Schools**.



Sports Groups have always been associated with Church facilities and therefore the minutes of groups like Badminton, Tennis, Table Tennis, Croquet, and Indoor Bowls Clubs can be found in Parish records

Minutes often contain lists of those who belonged to them, either as an attendance roll, or as a record of those who have paid subscriptions.

Churchwarden's Books contain lists of another kind. They were used in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as Parish Rolls and Communicant lists of adult members.

Service Books, sometimes known as Vestry Books, are a record of the daily and weekly services which have occurred in churches, but also in other recognised places for worship. Their particular use in the search for an individual's involvement in a particular community, is that they contain the signatures of layreaders who took services, or of those who counted collections.

Financial Records are of varying kinds: annual accounts with associated reports, ledgers, cash books, subscription lists for buildings and Clergy stipends, can all be found within Parish records. Some parishes have extensive invoice collections which can be used to establish a commercial association with a local community.

Correspondence retention is variable within Parishes. Bound volumes, loose leaf folders and manifold books of inward and outward correspondence can all be found within the archives. When it is associated with Vestry Minutes it is most useful. Often it is necessary to use Diocesan and Church Property Trustee correspondence in conjunction with this material in order to follow the steps in financial and building processes.

NEWSPAPERS AND NEWSLETTERS

The Christchurch Anglican Diocesan Archives has an extensive collection of newspapers and newsletters which provide another valuable source for Parish research. All Newspapers prior to 1976 have been digitized and are available on Pumatomoto <https://kinderlibrary.recollect.co.nz/>

The Church Quarterly Paper (1861-66) **Church Magazine (1876-77)**

There are almost complete sets of these publications and they have been indexed.

New Zealand Church News (1871-1946)

This publication has been indexed for references to the Christchurch Diocese only, although it does consistently contain information about other New Zealand Diocese and overseas. There are particular sections which contain Parish News, but the regularity of their appearance depended on the reliability of the parish correspondent.

Church and People (1946-76)

This is a nationwide publication and therefore the amount of Parish detail is considerable reduced. It has been indexed for the Diocese of Christchurch from 1947-52.

Anglican News (1976-79) , Anglican (1980-84) , The Square Peg (1985-89) and **Anglican Action**(1989-) continue the Christchurch Diocesan Publications, while **Anglican Taonga** (1999 -) is New Zealand wide in its coverage.

MAPS, PLANS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

Maps and Plans are often associated with Parish records.

Maps clarify Parish and Diocesan boundaries and plans are necessary for:

Building Construction and modification

Furnishings and the internal re-ordering of Buildings

Cemeteries to record the location of plots. Some Parishes also have plot books which are used in conjunction with this material.

Photographs record not only ecclesiastical buildings, but also the people who worship in them. Parish collections are usually small and often need to be used in conjunction with larger or local museum collections.



The Archives are open

**on the first and second Wednesday of the month,
by appointment
1.00pm-4.30pm**

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There is a charge for the reproduction of Baptism, Marriage and Burial entries, and written enquires are \$30.00 per hour divided into 20 minute blocks. Photocopying is 20c per page. Donations are always welcome.