

# Evangelical and Reformed Historical Society Collection Development Policy



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## Collection Development Policy

### **Mission and Purpose of the Collection**

The mission of the Evangelical and Reformed Historical Society is to stimulate and cultivate interest in the continuing legacy of the Evangelical and Reformed Church. To accomplish this, we will:

- Collect and preserve historical material;
- Make information and resources accessible to all;
- Provide engaging educational opportunities;
- Foster cooperation with other interested organizations;
- Ensure the Society has the optimal infrastructure and funding to support its ongoing mission.

### **Collecting Scope**

The Society is committed to preserving the work of individuals, congregations, synods, classes, districts, councils, committees, cabinets, departments, boards, commissions, auxiliary organizations and other entities affiliated with the former Evangelical and Reformed Church and its predecessor denominations. We aim to serve the research needs of active churches, scholars, genealogists, and theologians.

### **Collecting Areas**

The sections below represent the primary collecting areas of the Society. We collect a broad variety of formats which include (but are not limited to) paper documents, artifacts, photographic media, audio, and moving images. In addition to subject content, we also consider long term preservation needs and capabilities, as well as duplicate copies when adding materials to our holdings.

#### *Denominational Records*

Records covering the entire denominational structure (General Synod, General Conference, General Council and various committees, cabinets, departments, boards, commissions, auxiliary organizations) will be accepted. These include minutes (manuscript and print), reports, financial records, legal documents, program files, publications, correspondence and subject files.

### *Regional Records*

Records of all synods, classes, and districts of the denominations will be accepted. These include minutes (manuscript and print), reports, financial records, legal documents, program files, publications, correspondence and subject files.

### *Congregational Records*

The preference is that local churches keep, organize, and preserve their historical records. However, if a local church feels that they are unable to adequately care for their records or has a lack of space, the Society will accept them.

All closed or merged congregations that originated in the former Evangelical and Reformed Church and its predecessor denominations should send their records to the Society.

Please refer to the "Guide to Arrangement" for the acceptance of local church records.

### *Affiliated Entities*

The Society will accept the records of organizations or institutions affiliated with the former Evangelical and Reformed Church and its predecessor denominations. Existing entities are encouraged to keep, organize, and preserve their historical records. However, the Society will accept records from an entity that feels they are unable to adequately care for their records or has a lack of space.

### *Manuscripts*

The Society accepts manuscript collections of individuals who held positions at the denominational or regional levels. Collections from local church clergy will be evaluated on a case by case basis. Criteria for evaluation includes: (1) format, (2) dates of coverage, (3) position held, (4) size of manuscript collection, and (5) relevance.

Typical materials in manuscript collections include: (1) diaries, (2) journals, (3) correspondence, (4) pastoral records of baptism, confirmation, marriage, and death, (5) publications, (6) sermons, (7) reports, (8) certificates, (9) scrapbooks, and (10) biographical and genealogical information.

## *Books and Pamphlets*

Books and pamphlets directly related to the Evangelical and Reformed Church and its predecessor denominations will be accepted. Any publications written by agents of or published by the denomination(s) will also be accepted. Books and pamphlets written by or about members of the denominations will also be accepted. Any books and pamphlets containing translations or transcribed records of local churches, cemeteries, or pastoral records will be accepted.

## **Materials and Formats**

The collecting scope is not limited by format; the Society actively collects materials in all textual, non-textual, and digital formats.

## **Language**

The collecting scope is not limited by language, although the primary language of the collection is English, German, and Hungarian.

## **Dates of Coverage**

The collecting scope is not limited by date, although the primary dates of the collection are 1725-present.

## **Geographical Coverage**

The collecting scope is not limited by geographical region.

## **Strengths and Focus**

The strengths of the collections include the denominational and regional records of the Evangelical and Reformed Church and its predecessor denominations. The Society also maintains local church records of closed and active churches that originated in the denominations. Especially noteworthy are the original manuscripts of John W. Nevin, Philip Schaff, Henry Harbaugh, Emanuel Gerhart, and James I. Good. Prominent artifacts include items from the various mission boards of the denominations, 17th Century pewter communion ware, the Louis Nollau and Henry Harbaugh desks, a sculpture designed by German artist, Käthe Kollwitz, and the Louis Nollau and Michael Schlatter bibles.

## **Exclusions**

Below are the areas and resources that we either do not collect or are no longer collecting.

- Material unrelated to the Evangelical and Reformed Church and its predecessor denominations
- Local history collections unrelated to the Evangelical and Reformed Church and its predecessor denominations
- Family genealogies or histories unrelated to the Evangelical and Reformed Church and its predecessor denominations
- Rare books unrelated to the Evangelical and Reformed Church and its predecessor denominations
- Personnel files of employees
- Plaques, awards, trophies
- Communion ware - *exception*: early Pewter communion ware used in affiliated churches
- Bibles, catechisms, and hymnals
- Large items that are better suited for museum displays
- More than two duplicate copies of serial publications and other items (determined on a case by case basis)
- Human and animal remains
- Materials exhibiting mold or exposure to rodents/pests
- Severely damaged or extremely fragile items
- Materials to which access is restricted in perpetuity or for a period of time deemed by the staff to be beyond a reasonable limitation

## **Access and Use**

It is the goal of the Society to provide open and equitable access to as much of the collection as possible while protecting confidential, restricted, and regulated information that may be present in it. The Society complies with all applicable laws to protect confidential information.