



Diocese of Toronto
Anglican Church of Canada

Guidelines Regarding Parish Photo Directories

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Note to Reader: This information was prepared as guidance to parishes in response to parish inquiries. It is intended to demonstrate the principles and issues to consider when making decisions about the content of parish directories.

People in a parish are members of a community organization. As such, they may find that it helps their organization if they have directories or lists that help them communicate with one other and get to know one another. However, published directories can get into the hands of outsiders. If the directory contains addresses and phone numbers, this could lead to intrusions or worse. Therefore, the undertaking of a directory would be a good topic to discuss at a vestry meeting.

There are a number of ways that a directory can be done – it could include names and photos; or names and photos and interests/groups they belong to. It may or may not include addresses and phone numbers. Having parishioners talk about what goes in a directory can be very helpful. It publicizes the fact that there are choices to be made; it can get conversations going and can clarify issues and concerns.

1. Consider the purpose of the directory. Is it to be able to recognize other parishioners in the community? One recommendation is that the directory not have phone numbers and addresses, just first name or initial, surname and photos. To take this further, you might include the group that each person belongs to.
Principle – It would not be used as a contact list. People who are members of a parish group, e.g., the choir, would have provided their phone number to the appropriate person to be contacted for the purpose of choir activities.
2. If the undertaking of a directory is publicized and people show up and have their picture taken, there is a presumption that they have given consent. They had knowledge and participated. However, to be very sure that there are no misunderstandings, have people fill in an information form when they have their picture taken and clearly label the form "INFORMATION TO BE PUBLISHED IN THE PARISH PHOTO DIRECTORY." Make sure that there is a spot for them to sign or initial.
3. The vestry meeting might be an opportunity to make people aware of the potential for misuse of the directory. Some parishes might still go ahead with a directory containing addresses etc., if it helps them run their parish and if they all agree that the list does not go to outsiders and that they trust one another. If you do have this approach, it would be best for parishioners to sign off on all information to go in the Directory (as in item 2) above), and parishioners **should have a chance to opt out or put in less information.**

Parishes must be very careful not to include people who do not show up for the photos – to be on the safe side, their absence should be interpreted as them withholding their consent. If anyone wanted to be included without a photo, you should have written permission from them. There must always be a clear opt out for those people who don't want to participate, and they should never feel pressured to participate.