

Church Closing Checklist



Church closings can occur for a variety of reasons including amalgamation, voluntary disestablishment or, in extreme cases, the deterioration of the building itself. Whatever the cause, the process of a church closing is a stressful and difficult time for all involved. The Church Closing Checklist is provided to assist the Churchwardens with the final winding-up of the church's affairs. Additional questions can be directed to the appropriate Diocesan staff contacts listed in the Checklist (Diocesan Centre tel no.416-363-6021).

Under the Canons, Churchwardens have 90 days from the Declaration of Disestablishment to complete all church business, including the disposition of memorials, and other fixtures, furnishings, and equipment. For more detailed information, please refer to [Canon 13](#) and the [Policy on Memorial Gifts to Parish Churches](#).

Churchwardens initial duties upon the taking of a decision to close:

1. Forward a certified copy of the Vestry motion to the Secretary of Synod.
2. Identify a contact person who will assume responsibility for:
 - a. Serving notice to all existing tenants;
 - b. Regularly inspecting the property for insurance purposes;
 - c. Disconnecting phone/internet; monitoring water/heating (during winter conditions);
 - d. Arranging for all bills (ie. utilities) to be forwarded to the Synod office (135 Adelaide St. E, Toronto, Ont. M5C 1L8) attention of the Director of Property Resources;
 - e. Providing copies of existing contracts to the Director of Property Resources (e.g. water heater, elevator maintenance, snow removal/lawn care, License & Lease Agreements, Tower Site Agreements (TSA) with telecommunications companies, fire/security system monitoring etc.);
 - f. Making arrangements for Diocesan staff to meet on site to conduct an inspection and receive an inventory list. This is to be coordinated in conjunction with the Archives Department;
 - g. Assisting/consulting on disposition of contents;
 - h. Ensuring all filing cabinets are emptied and that appropriate files/documents are transferred to the Diocesan Archives (as per below).

3. The Incumbent and Churchwardens may also be required to sign legal documents transferring title to the Diocese, once the Diocesan solicitor has prepared such documents.

	CATEGORY	ITEM	✓	NOTES
1. Secure all Buildings		i) Advise the parish insurer (via Aon Reed Stenhouse) of closure. ii) Turn off water (<u>only if not required for heating</u>), drain all pipes, and flush toilets. iii) Arrange for regular building walkthroughs (Building Inspection Log). iv) Utilities (accounts transferred to the Diocese where applicable). v) Alarm monitoring.		
2. Building Contents		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Items to be made available to other parishes can be advertised through Regional Dean's meetings, and the Diocesan online Bulletin Board. Please consult the Policy on Memorial Gifts to Parish Churches 		
	a) Sacred Items:	Identify recipients for: i) Eucharistic vestments & vessels; ii) Linens; iii) Frontals. Recipients should also be identified for: hymn books, bibles, altar missals, and sheet music etc.		
	b) Equipment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leases should be wound up and rented office equipment returned to the appropriate provider. Office furniture and filing cabinets can also be made available. 		
	c) Furnishings:	After confirmation from Diocesan staff as to the ultimate disposition of the building(s), liturgical furnishings may be offered (in the methods mentioned above) to other parishes first in the Deanery, then the Episcopal Area, and finally the remainder of the Diocese. These items include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Altars Fonts Pulpits 		

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ambos ○ Aumbries ○ Credence tables ○ Organs & stained glass windows may also be offered provided that the existing fabric of the building is maintained. ○ Items such as windows, doors and carpets may not be removed ○ If the building(s) are to be sold, depending on the <i>Agreement of Purchase & Sale</i>, the above items may need to remain until the closing of the sale, or they may be included as part of the sale. ○ Please see the Policy on Memorial Gifts to Parish Churches 		
	<p>d) Documentation:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>All of the following documentation must be deposited in the Diocesan Archives:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) LITURGICAL RECORDS (for more information please contact Canon Mary-Anne Nicholls – Archivist/Records Officer/Privacy Officer at ext. 219): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Baptismal, confirmation, marriage & burial registers ○ Parish minutes ○ Parish photos that can be identified & dated ○ Parish histories may also be deposited ii) FINANCIAL RECORDS (for more information please contact Kathryn Rogers – Treasurer & Director of Finance at ext. 238): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All bank accounts are to be closed with balances transferred to the Diocese ○ Accounting records & donation receipts ○ All insurance policies ○ Information Returns filed with the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) ○ Communication with CRA requesting cancellation of charitable registration number 		

	CATEGORY	ITEM	✓	NOTES
		<p>iii) <u>PROPERTY DOCUMENTS</u> (for more information please contact David Badian – Director of Property Resources at ext. 245):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Architectural Drawings ○ “As-builts” ○ Memorials – lists of memorial gifts or photographs of the memorial ○ Title documents (deeds etc.) ○ Surveys ○ Building Inspection Reports ○ Cemetery Information (if applicable) ○ Contracts (existing/continuing) <p>iv) <u>HUMAN RESOURCES DOCUMENTS</u> (for more information, please contact Amy Talbert, Human Resources Manager at ext. 241)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Parish staff files (eg. employment agreements, job descriptions, performance documentation, termination agreements) ○ Screening in Faith: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Individual screening documentation as outlined in the <i>Responsible Ministry: Screening in Faith</i> policy (eg. application form, training records, ministry description, police record check, confirmation letter) ○ Parish Sexual Misconduct Policy training records ○ Parish documentation related to parish decisions that establish their policy, standards and guidelines ○ Documentation from third party organizations using parish facilities (eg. schools, day cares) that verify their screening compliance 		
<p>For more information on materials to be Archived, please contact Canon Mary-Anne Nicholls, Archivist/Records Officer/Privacy Officer, at ext. 219.</p>				