

## CHURCH RECORDS OVERVIEW

1. Importance of congregational records
  - Alternative source for public vital records
  - Additional information about ancestors outside of public records
  - Status/problems within the church
  - World view/politics of church tells a lot about ancestor
2. Common fallacies about church records and ancestral religion
3. Common steps for beginning research:
  - Survey all relevant documents from home/family sources, ie. Bibles, certificates
  - Expand search to Internet and websites
  - Research in a genealogy library, historical society, or denominational archives
  - Contact the church itself directly, if you can identify it (problem w/ mergers, defunct churches)
4. Sources for finding the Denomination and Congregation (county histories, obits, cemetery records, directories, marriage licenses, archival guides, PERSI)
5. Etiquette (church records are not public records)
6. Sacramental church registers (Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed, & Episcopal)
7. Mainline Protestant denominational records (some parish registers, always meeting minutes, membership lists) Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, Congregational

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