

Lutheran Archives Center

AT PHILADELPHIA

INVITES YOUR CONGREGATION TO PARTICIPATE

In a Digitization Project with Ancestry.com

The Lutheran Archives Center at Philadelphia is working with Ancestry.com to digitize Lutheran church records. We invite all congregations in ELCA Region 7 to join us in preserving these historical records and making them accessible for research. If you are interested in participating, contact us ASAP as this opportunity is only available in 2023.

WHAT WE ARE DIGITIZING:

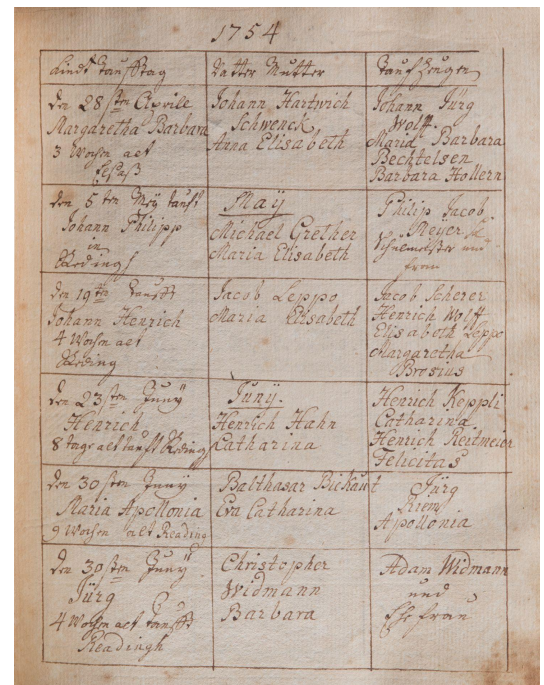
Baptismal, communion, confirmation, marriage, and death records prior to 1970. Other items with genealogical data such as account books, pew rents, membership lists, etc. also considered on a case-by-case basis.

WHY JOIN THE PROJECT:

- ❖ Save history! A digital copy of your church's historical records ensures that the data is never lost and preserves the original records by minimizing the need for handling
- ❖ Save time! Make your historical records accessible to researchers online without having to maintain your own website
- ❖ Save money! A one-time, flat fee of \$250 covers digitization of all your records

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT:

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Ancestry.com Digitization Project FAQ

How long do you keep the records that you scan?

Once records are sent to us, they would be in our care for approx. 2-3 months. All incoming records are treated as a short-term loan and will be returned to the congregation once scanned and indexed. Loan paperwork will include an estimated date of return to the congregation. Once records are scanned, there is a “quality control” period of time for Ancestry.com to check the digital images to ensure the files are readable and not corrupted. If images are corrupted, the book will need to be rescanned. Keeping the records in our possession for this length of time ensures that the books will be scanned and checked for quality control prior to their return.

How can we get the record books to you?

You may deliver the records in-person or ship them to us.

Can we send you council minutes or photographs to be scanned?

Ancestry.com is focused on scanning documents of genealogical interest, primarily parish registers with baptismal, marriage, burial, confirmation, and communion records. However, genealogical information may also be found in church records such as pew rents, account books, membership lists, etc. Please contact us to discuss any such items on a case-by-case basis.

If Ancestry.com scans a church record, who then owns the rights to the material? Are any restrictions placed on the records? Does the church receive a copy for its own use, or can it access the copy LACAP receives?

Ancestry.com will own the rights to the scans and indexes that they are making. The congregation of course still owns the original records and can reproduce them in the future however they wish (taking their own photos and sharing them, for example). The congregation will receive a copy of the digitized images for their own use, upon request. That scan is for the congregation's internal use and should not be put online in its entirety. The congregation will be able to access all of their own digitized records via LACAP once we have access to them ourselves (LACAP will be getting free access to Ancestry.com for us to use on site and for our members to

use from anywhere via a password-protected access). The records will also be made available online by Ancestry.com to their paid subscribers.

Would this project be open to having Reformed records for the same church digitized at this time, or is this project restricted to Lutheran records?

There is a long history of Lutheran and Reformed congregations sharing the same church, especially in Pennsylvania. Ancestry.com is happy to digitize both Lutheran and Reformed records, including those from union churches.

How soon must we make a commitment to participate? How long will a window of opportunity remain open?

We would like confirmation from churches that are interested by the end of March 2023, but your commitment to the project does not mean you will need to get the records to us by then. We are expecting the project to continue into summer 2023.

Will congregations receive a digital copy of scanned records and index?

Your congregation will receive copies of its digital images, upon request, for no additional fee beyond the \$250. The images will be in TIF format, which is a larger size format, yet the images are easy to open and use internally. An index will not be provided to congregations.

What hardware and/or software will be required to view the images?

The TIF images will be viewable on any device (laptop, desktop, tablet, phone), however a laptop or desktop computer would be recommended for optimal viewing. Tablets and phones will require downloading an application to view the TIF format.

What online access will congregations have to their digitized records?

Congregations will be able to access their records at LACAP's research library subject to our current access policy and research guidelines. We will also be creating a "Friends of the Archives" type membership structure to provide dues-paying members with online access to all of LACAP's digitized images via password-protected access to Ancestry.com. This "Friends of the Archives" membership will require an annual dues

payment that has not yet been determined. Further details will be released in the future once the digitization project is completed.

Will there be ongoing fees?

There are no required ongoing fees beyond the initial, one-time \$250 fee to participate. In the future, there will be an optional “Friends of the Archives” annual membership dues to obtain online access to all of LACAP’s digitized records and index on the Ancestry.com database.

What provision is there for congregations’ continued access to the digital records if LACAP or Ancestry.com ceases operation?

Your congregation has the option to request a copy of your digitized images.

What kind of physical manipulation and light exposure of records will take place during the digitization/indexing process? (i.e. what is the potential for damage in this process?)

All records will be handled by our trained staff with the utmost care according to professional archival standards. Light exposure is brief and will be from the overhead lighting equipment used to ensure a clear and high-quality image. It takes approximately 20-30 minutes to scan a single record book, depending on how large it is. Each page takes only a few seconds to scan, so the exposure to light is very minimal.

What has been the track record of Ancestry.com for timeliness, care of material, and general cooperativeness as a project partner?

Ancestry.com has a well-established track record in digitizing historical records and has successfully partnered with many other denominations, including the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania and the Presbyterian Historical Society. LACAP’s archivist, Sheila Joy, is supervising this digitization project and has had a great experience communicating and working with Ancestry.com so far. The digitization specialist, Megan Genovese, was trained by Ancestry.com in standard archival procedures for the handling of historical records and documents. The digitizing station is set up in our research library and operates under our staff’s supervision during our regular operating hours.