Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

An Order for the Disposal of Deteriorating Bibles and Other Respected Publications

This order may be used when disposing of respected print materials to add appropriate dignity to the recycling of a loved one's belongings. It is assumed that any books that might be suspected of being "rare books" will have been evaluated by a qualified person prior to disposal.

Leader: Let us pray:
We give thanks to you, O Lord of Knowledge and Truth, that you have provided for us the written word for our guidance and growth. While words written on paper may decay, we ask that the Word made flesh, our Lord Jesus Christ, may always live in our hearts and minds. And may we seek guidance and knowledge in the wonderful array of media that is provided for us in today's world. In the name of the Living Word, Jesus Christ, we pray.

Those Gathered: Amen.

Leader: We remember now the person(s) from whom this/these (Bible, Bibles, book, books) have come.

Those Gathered: (*Speak the name/names or remember in silence.*)

Leader: The pages once read, now brittle and yellowing, are now returned for renewal. May they make new paper on which truth, beauty, and joy may be known.

Those Gathered: Amen.

It is suggested that the Leader or the appointee then place the books in a box for deposit in a paper recycling bin. Recyclers request that hard covers and any metal be removed and disposed of separately. It is suggested that highly decorated or name-imprinted hard or leather covers may make attractive family heirlooms and may be candidates for framing.

Regarding deteriorating Bibles and other respected books . . .

Archivists and librarians are frequently called upon to accept old or unwanted books. These books are often mildewed, yellowed, and malodorous, and may even harbor insects.

Procedure for handling respected publications

It is assumed that any books that might be suspected of being "rare books" will have been evaluated by a qualified person prior to disposal.

Recyclers request that hard covers and any metal be removed and disposed of separately. It is suggested that highly decorated or name-imprinted hard or leather covers may make attractive family heirlooms and may be candidates for framing.

Bibles and other books regarded as sacred by the owners may present questions pertaining to appropriate disposal. This is an order suggested for the dignified disposal of such publications.

While the order assumes a small gathering of family, the order can be adapted for personal or congregational use.

See also these additional guidelines at *elca.org* . . .

Active Records Management: Advice for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran church in America
Maintaining the Parish Register: Advice for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Resources for Congregational Treasurers and Bookkeepers
A Brief Guide for Archives of Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
A Comparison of Microfilming and Digital Technologies

For additional information, please contact the author:
The Rev. Luther W. Oelke
Region 4 South Archives
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
1090 Oestrich Drive
Seguin, Texas 78155
email: loelke@tlu.edu

© Edition current as of 2005. Region Four South Archives, Seguin, Texas. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. This order may be copied for use in the congregation provided copyright is acknowledged.