

LIVE FORWARD, GIVE FORWARD

INTRO LETTER



Welcome to the Live Forward, Give Forward Program

Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. – 1 Peter 4:10

What if you could get church members to enjoy being good stewards in ways that keep your mission going - and growing? What if they got excited about laying a foundation for vibrant new outreaches that changed lives? And what if they embraced the opportunity to fund the future through a simple gift in their Wills?

It can happen.

Gifts that come from Wills can play a critical part in continuing any church's mission. Research shows that when faithful members understand the impact such gifts can have, they are likely to make a bequest when asked. But far too few churches are making that invitation.

As part of the *Live Forward, Give Forward Wills Program*, this Kit is designed to make it easier for you to communicate with the people in your church about the power of bequests.

The resources here can be used to put together a practical, year-long communication plan in just one day.

Why year-round? By making the subject of Wills and bequests part of a natural, on-going conversation, you can:

- remove some of the barriers people have to discussing this topic.
- help them see how planning a legacy gift is a simple, joyful way to carry their values forward to the next generation.
- show them that planning for end of life issues is a faithful act of Christian stewardship.

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WILLS PROGRAM

How we live now affects not only *our* future, but the future of our families, our community and even our world. Whether it's through greener living, improving the community, or making life better for our children, the choices we make matter - both now and down the road.

Live Forward, Give Forward is about making a choice to live and give toward making a better future for those we care about - including our church family. And one thing you can do right now to help ensure that better future is to make a Will that provides for your family and blesses your faith community's work.

Your home church believes in being able to meet people's needs through ministry in a few months, years, and even decades. Including a gift to the church in your Will can help do that - without affecting your finances now. No matter how much you can give, with a bequest, you can strengthen your church family and make a difference for the future.

Please consider making a gift that lets you live forward by giving forward.

BEQUESTS HAVE THE POWER TO BLESS FUTURE GENERATIONS.

Please consider including the church in your will with a simple statement like this:

I give and bequeath the sum of \$____ (or the % of) to be used for the general program of (Name of Church), in (City, State), USA.


A Will is unique and must be structured to fit the needs and estate plans of each individual in accordance with the laws of the state in which they live. For this reason, you should consult a lawyer to assist you in drafting your will and estate plan.

Your Presbyterian Foundation Ministry Relations Officer can guide you through this important giving process.

Find an MRO at PresbyterianFoundation.org/Our-Services.



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How lovely to think that no one need wait a moment; we can start now, start slowly changing the world! – *Anne Frank*

You can start changing your world right now by making a gift to the church through your Will. Find out how.



We are only trustees for those
that come after us. – *William Morris*

A gift to the church in your Will may be the most important gift you
ever give. Ask how your gift today can bless future generations.

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What's in the Kit

Program Guide

Helpful tips to make it easy to establish your communication plan in a day, then carry it out all year long.

Legacy Vision Worksheet

To help you articulate a compelling future vision for your church that inspires people to support it.

Communication Plan

A simple guide to help you promote bequest giving throughout the year.

Additional Tools and Support

52 Touch Points - Quotes, statistics, questions, and more that can be used to communicate about bequests via social media posts, newsletters, bulletins, and emails.

Sample letters - 2 downloadable print and digital examples you can customize for your congregants.

Bulletin Insert - Downloadable bequest insert you can use on Wills Emphasis Sunday*, or for any Sunday you choose.

Ideas & Inspiration - More ways you can incorporate bequest messaging throughout the year.

Communication Tips - Simple ideas to help you communicate about the joy and impact of giving through a Will.

Posters - Two downloadable posters you can print and use to promote *Live Forward, Give Forward*.

Microsite - LiveForwardGiveForward.org is a useful starting place to help church members catch the vision and understand the power of Wills gifts

Ministry Representative Officers are available to assist you. They want to help you make your program successful and to help you find fiscal success in other ways you may want to investigate.

Thank you for downloading the Program Kit. We think it will help you cultivate a culture of giving that will support your church's mission for years to come.

* Wills Emphasis Sunday is traditionally held on the first Sunday in May, but can be emphasized on any Sunday you choose, or integrated into every Sunday as part of a larger awareness campaign.



This guide will help you set the foundation for an effective Wills Program. It's based on the Legacy of a Lifetime Leadership Guide, a more expansive planned giving guide.

Assemble Your Team

Put together a Wills program team to provide consistent leadership and clear communication. In addition to people on your Stewardship Committee, include people with different skill sets and relevant experience, as well as those who can be enthusiastic champions of the program to various segments of the congregation.

Create a Legacy Vision

People need to know why they should give toward the future. As a team, create a compelling, passionate, ambitious yet realistic statement of the future of your church's mission. Use the *Vision Worksheet* to help you with the process.

Set a Goal

As a team, ask yourselves questions that help you determine clear, measurable program goals and help guide the development of your communication plan. Do you want to establish an endowment fund, or encourage gifts that will support a particular initiative? How many commitments to include a bequest do you expect to receive each year? What is your timeframe? How will you measure success? It may be helpful to break down goals by particular groups. For example, you could set a goal of increasing the number of bequest commitments from Session members by X% by a certain date. You can also reach out to other groups such as the choir and church members who have given faithfully for three years or more.

Determine Program Logistics

These are the nuts and bolts of how your team will launch and run the program. Determine how much time you can devote to this program. What will the meeting schedule be? What are the specific responsibilities of each team member? What is your timeframe for achieving your goals, and what are the milestones along the way?

Develop/Refine Gift Acceptance Policies

Do you have guidelines in place for the types of gifts that will be accepted? Do you know how gifts of securities or property should be addressed? How will these gifts be invested and used? These are important issues that need to be resolved in advance. You will probably need to set up separate meetings with additional team members, and perhaps Session members, to explore these issues, and to make sure you understand the legal and tax implications for different kinds of gifts. You can find some resources to get you started [here](#).

Know Your Congregation

While knowing the demographics of your congregation is important, you also need to understand their needs and desires for mission, as well as their giving patterns. For example, people who make annual gifts at least 3 years in a row are more likely to make a bequest when asked¹. Understanding this kind of information can help you target your efforts and your communication to the most likely donors.

Create a Year-in-a-Day Communication Plan

A communication plan is key to an effective program. Good communication is about more than mailings and asks. Set aside one day with your program team, and use the *Communication Plan* and *Ideas & Inspiration* in this Kit to brainstorm and plan various ways you can cast the vision for living forward and giving forward all year long.

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VISION LEGACY WORKSHEET

David Love, from Agents of Good, writes that, in order to help foster an atmosphere in which people are more likely to make a gift in their wills, “The need for legacy gifts needs to be clear - to everyone. This means our organization needs a compelling, passionate, relevant, ambitious, realistic future vision.”

Live Forward, Give Forward is about encouraging people to provide for the long-term mission of the church. To understand how the way they give now can have future impact, they need a compelling vision of what that future can hold. This goes beyond programs, facilities and general operating budgets - they need to know what their investment in the mission of the church will help accomplish 10, 20, 50 or more years down the road.

Draft an inspirational legacy vision, in 300 words or less, that shows the need for bequests and shows the difference that such gifts can make to build and protect the future of the church. Then incorporate this vision into your communication materials, messages and presentations.

These questions can help you get started. For more information, check out this [video](#).

Questions to Ask

How do you see your church’s role in the community now? What do you want it to be?

Is there a particular people group or felt need that your church is committed to? How will your commitment grow or change in the future? Is there a group or need that is not being addressed yet? What would it look like for your church to begin to address it?

How will gifts made in wills contribute to realizing this vision?

Legacy Vision Statement

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COMMUNICATION PLAN

Why is it important to have a year-round communication plan? People make their wills based on life events, not calendar events. The most common life triggers for making a will are:

- Marriage
- Birth of a child
- Onset of serious illness
- Significant change in financial situation
- Retirement
- Late in life to get affairs in order
- Purchase or sale of property

Since there is never one “right time” to talk about it, make sure you’re giving your church community plenty of opportunities to catch the vision for just how easy it is to make a bequest, and how much it can make a positive impact on the future.

Once you have a program team and the background information outlined in the *Program Guide*, gather your team and craft a *Legacy Vision Statement*. This will guide all your communication with church members.

Now you’re ready to plan ways to reach out to members consistently and effectively all year long. Start by planning your written communications, using this calendar as a guide.

Written Communication Calendar

Wills Emphasis Sunday - Wills Emphasis Sunday is traditionally held on the first Sunday in May, but can be emphasized on any Sunday you choose, or integrated into every Sunday as part of a larger awareness campaign. You can use it as a launching point for your program, or plan a Wills Emphasis Sunday several times a year.

Year-Round - Include a simple bequest reminder in your weekly bulletin, email or print newsletters. (See the *52 Touch Points* for ideas.) In those communications, don’t forget to refer members to LiveForwardGiveForward.org for more about the program.

Monthly - Schedule monthly social media posts with helpful and interesting information about Wills, bequests, and the vision for your church’s future. Use the *52 Touch Points* as they are, or as a springboard for your own ideas. Include the hashtag #LFGF.

1st Quarter - Send an annual bequest reminder letter to church members. Follow up with a special letter to those who have been giving consistently for at least the past three years – they are most likely to make a bequest when asked. (See the *Sample Letter*.)

2nd Quarter - Add a bequest reminder to your Spring fundraising letter. It can be a short paragraph in the body of the letter, or included as the PS.

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COMMUNICATION PLAN

3rd Quarter - Include a “lift note” with your Fall fundraising letter. A lift note is a secondary letter included with the main mailing. It should be smaller than the letter, be more casual in look and tone, and come from a different writer, such as someone who has recently planned a bequest and wants to encourage others to do so, or someone who has benefited from a bequest. (See the *Sample Lift Note*.)

4th Quarter - Include a bequest reminder in your end-of-year donor newsletter or annual thank you letter. It can be a short story of how a bequest has benefited your church, or one of the 52 *Touch Points*.

Continuing Communication

Use the *Ideas & Inspiration* page to start brainstorming other ways you can incorporate bequest messaging. With your team, put these ideas on your communication calendar.

1st Quarter

Activity:

Approximate date:

2nd Quarter

Activity:

Approximate date:

3rd Quarter

Activity:

Approximate date:

4th Quarter

Activity:

Approximate date:

Taking the Sting Out of Wills Talks

Legacy giving is really not about death - it's an affirming experience that celebrates the people, values and goals that people cherish most. As legacy expert Richard Radcliffe puts it, bequests are "life driven, death activated."

Keeping that in mind makes talking about bequests and Wills a whole lot easier. You're simply giving people the opportunity to live out their values now by giving to the next generation: They'll be living forward and giving forward.

When you make *Live Forward, Give Forward* a regular part of the giving and stewardship conversation, it will become more natural both for your leadership team to talk about Wills and for your congregation to overcome reluctance to think about them.

Here are some more tips to help you communicate future needs and ask people to help meet them.

What to Say

Cast the vision for the future. There are many reasons people give, but you can find ways to tie those different motivations to your church's mission in the future.

For those who are motivated by:

Wanting to help those who have less

Demonstrate how your current efforts in this area will benefit from long-term financial support.

Leaving a personal legacy

Offer endowment funds that will carry their names and share their generosity for years to come.

Making a better future

Show them how their generosity will benefit the church, local community or other mission efforts.

Supporting their church family

Invite them to support the future of the existing ministries and programs they have a passion for, or to help fund new programs for needs that are not currently being met.

Share hope and joy from scripture. Innumerable Biblical passages underscore the joys of giving, our call to take care of God's earth and people, the promises of the life to come....

Choose one or two passages that truly speak to you and your congregation.

Let the Holy Spirit work through those passages and through you as you help people see the importance and power their gifts could have on ministries closest to their hearts.

Keep in mind that you are giving them a gift by helping them understand this way of giving.

Tell stories. People want to know that their donations will have an impact. And they are more motivated to act when they know that others are doing the same.

Tell the stories behind the bequests that are making a difference to your church today.

Let today's bequest makers share their stories about why they are choosing to bless the church in this way.

Share these stories in different ways:

Written - in newsletters, bulletins, emails, donor letters, etc.

In person - let people share their story during a sermon, minute for mission, workshop or class.

Video - put together short testimonial videos that can be shared on your website, online video channel and in emails. No need for high production levels – video captures from a smart phone work just fine!

Assure them they don't have to be rich. Many people assume that in order to make a bequest, they need to be wealthy. While large gifts certainly help, they are the exception, rather than the rule.

Let people know they can give smaller amounts that will be invested so they'll grow over the years to come - and that it doesn't cost them anything now.

Be sure they know they can give from other assets they holds, such as retirement accounts, life insurance, and real estate.

Ask. The primary reasons people don't make bequests are that:

- 1) no one has ever asked them, and
- 2) they don't know you need their help.

But when faithful givers are asked to make a bequest, most are quite likely to say yes. While seeking a bequest can be a lengthy process, when it comes time to ask, don't shy away. Keep the request simple - "Consider leaving a gift to the church in your Will".

Say thank you. Thank donors and prospective donors often.

Follow up on any contact you have, and thank them for their time, interest, input, etc.

If they decide to make a gift, write a personal note thanking them for that decision, and reinforce the vision they are supporting.

Ask donors if they wish to be publicly acknowledged, either through your recognition program, or by a notice in the bulletin or newsletter

How to Say It

Use conversational language. Stay away from formal language and jargon. Your written communication should be simple, clear and conversational. For example:

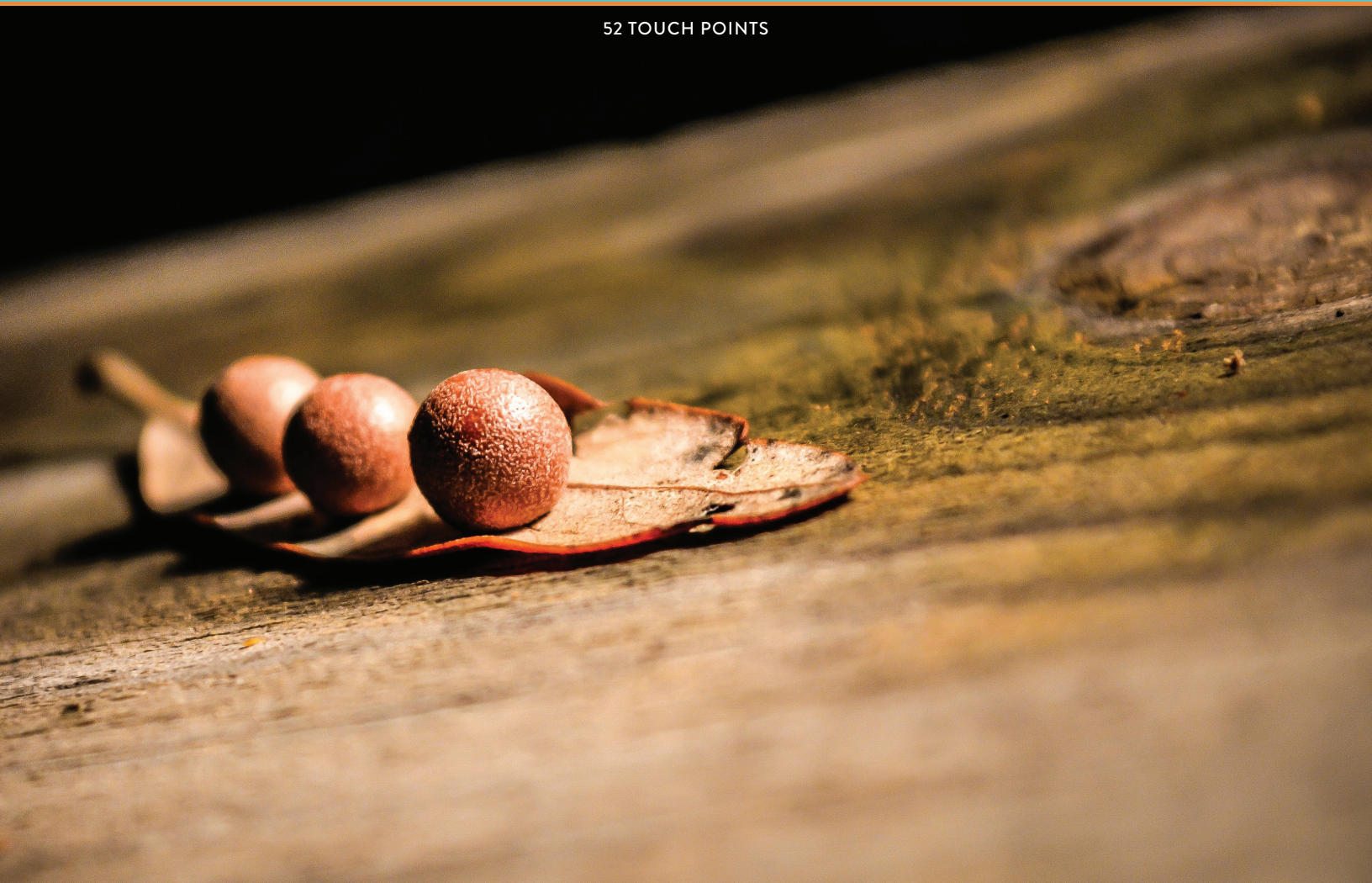
What's a bequest? It's the act of giving personal property made in a will. It's a way for you to designate a certain dollar amount, percentage of your net worth, or certain items to be given to a specific person or organization - like your church.

As a church, we believe in planning for the future so we can be ready to meet people's needs in a few months, years, and even decades. Including a gift to the church in your will can help us do that. With a bequest, you can strengthen our faith community and make a difference for the future. Please consider making a gift that gives forward.

Use a joyful tone. With a gift in their wills, *people can give the way they want to live* - by making a better future for their loved ones and a lasting impact on their faith community.

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52 TOUCH POINTS



These Touch Points are designed to help people catch the vision behind *Live Forward, Give Forward* - that we all have the power to impact the future with the way we live and give. As part of your overall communication plan, use them in your bulletins, social media posts, newsletters and other outreaches to members of your faith community. Keeping the idea of giving a gift to the church in your Will fresh in people's minds is critical to making this life-event-triggered task happen.

There are four categories of Touch Points here. Try rotating which form you use throughout each month to maintain people's attention. Feel free to use them as is, edit, add or customize. You know your church family better than anyone. Communicate with them in ways you know they'll hear.

Quotations

I've learned that you shouldn't go through life with a catcher's mitt on both hands. You need to be able to throw something back. – *Maya Angelou*

Deeds of giving are the very foundations of the world. – *Jewish proverb*

What is the use of living, if it not be to strive for noble causes and to make this muddled world a better place for those who will live in it after we are gone? – *Winston Churchill*

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52 TOUCH POINTS

What we do for ourselves dies with us. What we do for others and the world remains and is immortal.
– *Albert Pike*

In our good works, nothing is our own. – *John Calvin*

We are only trustees for those that come after us. – *William Morris*

How lovely to think that no one need wait a moment; we can start now, start slowly changing the world!
– *Anne Frank*

I want to live in such a way that small gifts are meaningful. – *William S. Coperthwaite*

Give what you have. To someone, it may be better than you dare to think.
– *Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*

Even if I knew that tomorrow the world would go to pieces, I would still plant my apple tree.
– *Martin Luther*

No man has a right to leave the world as he found it. He must add something to it: either he must make its people better or happier, or he must make the face of the world more beautiful or fairer to look at. – *Edward Bok*

‘Tis in the act of giving that we live. – *William Hall*

We live in a world in which we need to share responsibility. It’s easy to say ‘It’s not my child, not my community, not my world, not my problem.’ Then there are those who see the need and respond. I consider those people my heroes. – *Fred Rogers*

Giving Forward

Financial and legal terms can get in the way of people understanding the many options they have for making a gift to the church in their Wills. These brief definitions can help make it easier for people to see new ways of giving forward. Use them in your bulletins, newsletters, appeal letters and even social media posts.

BEQUEST: a gift of personal property, made in a Will. It can be a specific dollar amount, a percentage of your net worth, a remainder amount (what’s left after family and other obligations are met), or specific assets to be given to a person or organization - such as your church.

DIRECT CHARITABLE BEQUEST: a Willed gift that goes directly to the named person or organization. For example, “I bequeath to (name of person or organization) the amount of \$10,000, and 5% of my remaining estate to (name of church).”

CONTINGENT BEQUEST: a Willed gift that is only given if one or more conditions are met. For example, “If [name] predeceases me, I give (describe gift) to First Presbyterian Church.”

DEMONSTRATIVE BEQUEST: a gift of a certain amount of property from a specific source or particular fund. For example, “I bequeath (\$____) to (name of church) to be paid out of the proceeds from the sale of my stock in (name of company).”

RESTRICTED BEQUEST: a Willed gift that provides a sum of money for a specific project or program. For example, “I bequeath (amount or property) to (name of church) to benefit the children’s education program.”

UNRESTRICTED BEQUEST: a Willed gift that can be used wherever the need is greatest. This allows the church to respond to the changing needs as they arise, and eliminates the problems that occur when a gift is given to a program that ceases to exist. For example, “...to be used for the benefit of (name of church) as its Board of Trustees sees fit.” Or, “...to be used for _____, or if such use, in the judgement of the Board of Trustees, becomes unwise or impractical, then for such purpose as the Board shall determine.”

ENDOWMENT FUND: a Willed gift that is invested to provide income to the named beneficiary. Also called a memorial fund, endowments can be named to honor a loved one. For example, “...to (name of church), the sum of \$_____ to establish an endowment fund in memory of my parents, to be known as the John and Jane Doe Memorial Fund. The income may be used for...”

NON-TRADITIONAL ASSETS: Willed gift non-liquid assets. These include real estate, business interests, artwork, restricted securities, life insurance policies, precious metals, royalties and copyrights. The Presbyterian Foundation can receive, manage and liquidate these types of assets; then you can decide what to do with the net proceeds, such as bequeath them to your church.

CHARITABLE LIFE INCOME PLAN: a plan that provides income to loved ones during their lifetimes, while deferring a gift to charity. After the lifetime of the income recipient, the remainder will go to the organization named in the donor’s Will, such as a church.

CHARITABLE REMAINDER TRUST (CRT): a managed trust fund that provides income to the donor throughout their lifetime. Afterwards, the assets in the trust are transferred to the charitable organization or church designated in the donor’s Will.

CHARITABLE GIFT ANNUITY: a fund that provides payments to you for life, and a gift to support a specific mission or ministry of your choosing after your lifetime. Annuity payments are based on the amount of the gift and the age of the donor.

ESTATE-TAX CHARITABLE DEDUCTION: Your estate may be entitled to a charitable deduction for the value of any property you give to a qualified charitable organization. The estate-tax charitable deduction isn’t subject to percentage limitations, so your executor or personal representative may claim a charitable deduction for the full value of the gift.

BEQUEST INTENTION: a donor’s indication of intent to leave a future gift. This is a courtesy notification, rather than a legal or binding commitment. Letting your church know you plan to make a bequest can give the leadership a clearer picture of future revenue possibilities.

Did You Know...?

Several of these facts and thought-starters bear repeating. Feel free to either repeat them verbatim or re-word.

61% of Americans don’t have a will (Harris Interactive survey, March 2013). Reasons include, “Haven’t gotten around to it,” “It’s not urgent,” and “I don’t have a lawyer.”

You don’t have to be wealthy to bless the church with a gift in your Will. Small amounts can be put to good use right away, or invested so they grow in the years to come.

The word “bequeath” comes from an Old English word that means “to say, speak to, exhort.” Making a bequest to the church in your Will is a simple, effective way to speak into the future of your faith community, and encourage growth for the long term.

You can give different kinds of gifts to the church in your Will. You can give a dollar amount, or real estate, stocks, business interests, artwork, and copyrights or royalties.

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52 TOUCH POINTS

If you don't have a Will, the distribution of your estate - no matter how small or large - is determined by the laws of your state. The state may not include all the people you would like to benefit, and it won't include any charities or religious organizations you wish to support. Have you made a Will yet?

Generosity is good for your health. The National Institute of Aging found that making charitable donations triggers the brain's reward center, which is good for your mental health. And volunteering can lower rates of depression, heart disease and high blood pressure.

A Harvard study showed that giving is contagious. It found that acts of altruism can spread by three degrees - from person to person to person. That means one generous act from you can influence dozens or even hundreds of people.

One of the simplest things you can do to make a positive impact on the future is to make a will. Including a gift to the church in your Will can make a lasting difference in our church family and our community.

While bequest giving topped \$23 billion dollars in 2012, most of it did not come from the super rich. In fact, most charitable bequests come from middle class households.

King David bequeathed assets to his son so that Solomon could build the Temple. His prayer: "But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you...all of this abundance we have provided for building you a temple for your holy name, comes from your hand, and it all belongs to you." (1 Chronicles 29:14 & 16)

Churches have a positive impact on their local communities. On average, congregations aid 2 direct service programs, 2 educational, health or cultural programs, and 1 community development or political/social advocacy program - all of which helps the local economy, and the health and well-being of its people.

Making a bequest is easy and costs you nothing during your lifetime. Your assets remain in your control. After you make provisions for your family, you can give a gift to your church by including a bequest statement in your Will.

Gifts in your Will may reduce or avoid potential estate taxes, leaving more for your family and the causes you care about.

Inspiration

These words of inspiration can help keep the idea of living and giving forward in the minds of church members. Use them as they are in bulletins, newsletters or emails, or edit them down for social media posts. You can even use them as inspiration for a message on mindful living and giving.

The word "Give" appears 921 times in the bible - almost as many times as "Faith," "Hope" and "Love" combined. Giving can be an expression of your faith in God, your hope for the future, and your love for others. Consider expressing your faith, hope and love with a gift to the church in your Will.

"A legacy speaks not about how we died but how we lived. It speaks about the things that move us in life, the things that matter to us. A legacy is an expression of gratitude and thanks to God for all that has been given and enjoyed in life." (Stewardship.org.uk) What will your legacy say about you?

mindful (adjective): bearing in mind; inclined to be aware; conscious, alive.

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52 TOUCH POINTS

What kinds of mindful choices are you making today? Are you purposefully investing your time, skills and money in ways that make the people and places around you better both now and for the future?

Numerous studies have shown that churches have a positive economic, social, educational and physical impact on their communities. You can be a part of that positive influence for years to come by making a gift to the church in your Will.

Because of gifts made to churches in Wills (also known as bequests), kids have been able to go to youth camp, the hungry have been fed, and missions have thrived. What will a bequest from you be able to accomplish?

“But I will say this to encourage your generosity: the one who plants little harvests little, and the one who plants plenty harvests plenty. Giving grows out of the heart...God is ready to overwhelm you with more blessings than you could ever imagine so that you’ll always be taken care of in every way and you’ll have more than enough to share.” 2 Corinthians 9: 6-8 (The Voice)

What part of church life means the most to you? Is there a ministry or program that has made a difference in your life, or a family member’s life? A gift to the church in your Will can keep that vital aspect of our community growing so it can bless others in the future.

Have you ever “paid it forward”? Bought coffee or paid the toll for the next person in line? Or gave a person something they needed because someone had once done the same for you? It feels good to take care of someone like that, right? A bequest is a simple, beautiful way to pay it forward for the next generation and take care of them in lasting ways.

What are the 5 things that matter most to you? In addition to family, your list might include education, the arts, health, or even your church. Consider supporting those things that matter with a gift made through your Will.

Generous living is about approaching each day with an open heart, an open mind, and an open hand. What can you do today to live more generously? What generous living choices can you make today that will make a difference in the future?

“Don’t hold back - give freely, and you’ll have plenty poured back into your lap - a good measure, pressed down, shaken together, brimming over. You’ll receive in the same measure you give.” Luke 6:38 (The Voice)

What is your vision for the future of your church? What kind of needs could be met, or people served in 10, 20, even 50 years? You can help make that vision a reality with a gift to the church made in your Will.

When supervising the rebuilding of St. Paul’s Cathedral in London (which took about 50 years to complete) architect Christopher Wren asked three different laborers what they were doing. One said he was cutting stone. The second said he was earning six shillings. The third said, “I’m helping Sir Christopher Wren build a great cathedral!” How are you helping build something great for the future?

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SAMPLE BEQUEST APPEAL LETTER

Dear [name],

First, I want thank you for your faithful support of your church family and our shared mission. And to let you know why your generosity is so important, I'd like to tell you a story.

Back in the late 1600s and early 1700s, architect Christopher Wren was supervising the rebuilding of St. Paul's Cathedral in London, which took about 50 years to finish. One day he asked three different laborers on the project what they were doing. They had no idea who he was, and each answered honestly. One said he was cutting stone. The second said he was earning six shillings. The third said, "I'm helping Sir Christopher Wren build a great cathedral!" That cathedral is still a beautiful, active place of worship today.

You may not realize it, but right now **you are helping build something lasting and beautiful**. More than just a physical structure or a series of programs, your support is building a thriving community that is making a difference in the lives of people in our church, in our neighborhood, and in the world.

And to ensure that continues, I'm asking you to consider making a gift to the church in your Will. A bequest is a simple way for you to bless not only your immediate family, but your church family as well. It's a way to live forward and give forward, blessing those who come after us through the choices you make today.

Just think - a gift that costs you nothing now can:

- give youth a safe place to gather and grow
- provide food and shelter to battered women in our city
- make our church more accessible to seniors
- enrich worship with music and art
- The possibilities are endless - and exciting!

Thank you for everything you're doing to make this church—this community—a better place for all of us. **And thank you for considering making a gift that will make our little piece of the world better—and more beautiful—for the next generation.**

If you have any questions, or want to know more about making a bequest, don't hesitate to contact me.

In Christ,

PS: Making a gift of any size to the church in your Will takes just a few minutes - and it can make a difference for generations. Please consider making a bequest that gives forward to future members of our faith community.

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SAMPLE LIFT NOTE

Dear [name],

When Michael got back from church camp last summer, he was a changed guy. He went off a typical moody teenager, full of restless energy and questions about faith, God and everything. But when he came home - well, I hardly recognized him. He was smiling and his energy seemed more focused somehow. And you know what he said? "Dad, I get it now!"

Michael's time at camp brought him into a real relationship with God and into deeper relationship with his peers and youth leaders. And the reason that was possible? **Because someone like you made a gift to our church in their Will.** That simple bequest helps keep our camp going - and keeps giving kids like Michael the opportunity to explore faith in a safe, fun environment.

Will you consider making a gift in your Will? I've seen firsthand how that simple, generous gesture can change a life. Join with me in giving forward so that the next generation of Michaels can come home and say, "I get it now!"

With gratitude,

[name]

LIVE FORWARD, GIVE FORWARD

IDEAS & INSPIRATION

In addition to communicating through print and digital mailings, incorporate bequest messaging in other ways throughout the year. For example:

Offer a Wills or financial planning workshop. A well-run workshop on how to make a Will can show church members how simple it really is. It can also show them how they can bless not only their families, but their church with a simple bequest. Be sure to invite newlyweds, new parents, recent retirees, and other members of your senior age group. If you would like assistance with a workshop, can contact a [Ministry Relations Officer](#).

Wills Emphasis Sunday - Wills Emphasis Sunday is traditionally held on the first Sunday in May, but can be emphasized on any Sunday you choose, or integrated into every Sunday as part of a larger awareness campaign. You can use it as a launching point for your program, or plan a Wills Emphasis Sunday several times a year.

Include it in stewardship and generosity sermons. In addition to promoting Wills Emphasis Sunday, make bequests a natural part of your teaching on stewardship and generosity. Include compelling stories and personal testimonies of why people have made bequests and the impact they've had on the church. Need some inspiration and ideas?

[Living and Leaving a Legacy Video](#)

[The Pastor as CEO Video](#)

[Sermon CDs](#)

[Stewardship Resources](#)

Write a special letter to your regular annual donors. Research has found that those who make annual gifts for at least 3 years in a row are more likely to make a bequest when asked. Thank those donors for their faithfulness, and invite them to carry the mission they've been supporting into the future by making a gift in their Wills.

Invite donors to be on a Generosity Team. Have them create a calendar of activities to encourage generosity within your congregation.

Practice Live Forward, Give Forward. *Live Forward, Give Forward* is about being mindful today so you can leave a legacy for tomorrow - and that means current lifestyle choices as well as financial choices for the future. Gather a team and brainstorm ways your church can help people practice that mindfulness every day so they can make choices that matter both now and down the road. Challenge your leadership team to lead by example.