

HOW TO RUN A GIFTS IN WILLS CAMPAIGN IN YOUR CHURCH

A Simple Guide



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WHY?

GIFTS IN WILLS

Each year around 4,000 people leave a gift in their will to their local church. Legacies help to fund mission projects and maintain beautiful church buildings and are an expression of gratitude and thanksgiving towards God.

Church of England churchgoers are incredibly generous and willing leaving legacies to charities, but not always to churches. The 2020 Anglican Giving Survey found that Anglicans are three times more likely to leave a legacy to charity than to their church, and only 15% have ever been asked to consider including a gift to their church.

Many people would like to know how they could leave a gift in their will to their church but may not know how or who to speak to. It is important for all churches to make information available and to inspire members about the difference gifts in wills, no matter how large or small, can make.

Running an occasional legacy campaign in your church and mentioning the importance of legacy giving throughout the year are essential

WILL WRITING

For nearly 500 years the Church of England has encouraged people to make a will as a simple act of good Christian stewardship. Learn more about why every Christian should have a will. Will writing can often seem like a time consuming and expensive thing to do – and that's a big reason why many people put it off. But writing a will and planning your funeral are two simple acts of good stewardship. God entrusted us to use his gifts wisely, for the good of our loved ones, our church family and the wider world. In thanksgiving, we should also take will writing seriously – setting our affairs in order and stewarding them wisely to the end of our time on earth and beyond.

WHEN

We suggest running a legacy campaign at one of the following times of year, and changing the tone of the campaign to suit the season:

- **January** – *the most popular time for will writing in the UK as people look to tick things off their to-do list done after Christmas. Your campaign could focus on the importance of will writing as a good act of Christian stewardship.*
- **Spring** – *a time of hope and reflection during Lent. Your campaign could focus on how legacies left to your church will fund your vision for mission and ministry in future years.*
- **September/October** – *Harvest time is a great chance to celebrate God's generosity to us. Your campaign could focus on how leaving a gift in a will to a church are an expression of gratitude and thanksgiving to the blessings we have received from God.*
- **November** – *a time of remembrance and thanksgiving for those who have gone before us. Your campaign could celebrate legacies and benefactors from the past and what they have enabled your church to achieve.*

Ideally, you should also mention legacies throughout the year when you talk about giving. See 'Example Communications' for ways in which you can talk about legacy giving throughout the year.

WHO

LEADERSHIP

The success of your legacy campaign depends on leaders who understand the importance and value of legacies and are willing to champion gifts in wills.

You will need the following roles involved in planning and delivering your legacy campaign. The same person may hold more than one of these posts, so don't be discouraged if there are only one or two of you to run the campaign:

Role	Role Description	Who could do this?
Planners	One or two people who take a coordinating role and can plan when the campaign will take place, who will be involved and what is required.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>PCC</i> • <i>Giving/Stewardship/Finance Sub-committees</i> • <i>Church Wardens</i>
Researcher	Someone to find out if your church has received legacies in the near and distant past and what they have funded in your church. Someone to find out who might be a legacy storyteller in your church.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Treasurer</i> • <i>Clergy</i>
Writers	Someone to write some wording about legacies to go on your website, in leaflets and notices etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Anyone involved in your campaign</i>
Designer	Someone who is willing to design simple leaflets and posters, a web page, thank you letter, social media posts etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Web editor</i> • <i>ACNY editor</i> • <i>Social Media lead</i>

Speakers	People who are willing to talk about legacies during your campaign, in sermons, in the notices or during a special presentation. You will need church leaders who can explain why gifts in wills are important and what the vision for your church is.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Clergy</i> • <i>LLMs</i> • <i>Church Wardens</i> • <i>Treasurer</i>
Story Tellers	<p>Has anyone pledged to leave a gift in their will that you are aware of? These can be your most powerful advocates if they are willing to share the reasons why they have left their legacy to your church. For inspiration, see this great pledger testimony from a church in Portishead.</p> <p>Are you in contact with the family and friends of someone who has left a gift in their will to your church previously? They may be willing to share the story of why their loved one left a gift in their will to your church.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Legacy pledgers</i> • <i>Friends and family members of those who have left a legacy in the past</i>
Legacy Champion	A named contact within your church who feels confident to answer questions about gifts in wills and people can talk to about their own legacy in confidence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Clergy</i> • <i>Church Warden</i> • <i>Treasurer</i>

AUDIENCES

Your audiences are those you are aiming your campaign at and ideally who you would like to consider leaving a gift in their will to your church.

The three key groups to reach during your campaign are:

Church Congregation

This group will include your warmest existing supporters who may already give regularly to your church, as well as those who don't currently give financially but support with time and talents too. Your church congregation are likely to be motivated to leave a legacy to your church when you show how a gift in their will can help your church's mission and ministry thrive into the future. You can communicate with this group everywhere they usually meet or get information, particularly during services and in notices, newsletter, social media and emails. Your church building will be a key focus point for making materials available.

Friends Group

This group support your church financially but are not likely to be as motivated by the theological aspects of legacy giving as your regular church family. This group are more likely to leave a legacy if you show how legacies will help to maintain your church's heritage and historic fabric or traditional role in your community. If your Friends Group is managed by a separate committee, make sure you speak to them in good time about your legacy campaign and ask if they are happy to be involved. You can reach this group through the Friends newsletter, website and by hosting a legacy event.

Wider Community

This group may not attend regular services in your church or support at present but likely value your church's role in the local community, especially if you do a

lot of social outreach work with lots of volunteers, or if your church is of heritage significance or a local focal point in your community especially if you have baptisms, weddings or family funerals at your church. People who value these aspects of your church's presence in the local community may well leave a legacy if asked. You can reach this group by hosting a legacy event.

WHAT TO DO

There are 3 steps to running a gifts in wills campaign:

1. PLAN

- Decide who is going to be involved in running the campaign
- Choose when your campaign is going to take place
- Write and agree a PCC legacy policy
- Order a [free PCC Legacy Toolkit](#)
- Find your story tellers and ask if they would be willing to be involved in your campaign by sharing their story (either in person or written down for your materials).

2. CREATE YOUR RESOURCES AND SHARE YOUR VISION

- Order an inexpensive [legacy leaflet](#) or [legacy bookmark](#) designed and customised for your church
- There are lots of other [legacy leaflets, posters and bookmarks](#) available free of charge too
- Create a story of how your church could benefit from future gifts
- Make information available on your church website using the new diocesan resources.
- If you want your audiences to use the Church of England free online will scheme, details on the diocesan website. You may also have a friendly local firm of solicitors that might write or update wills for your church members for a discounted fee or on a donation basis.

- Use our example communications below to create posters, social media posts and newsletter articles to share wherever your church meets in person and online.
- Plan sermons or talks to deliver to your church congregation over the course of your campaign over a few weeks or a month. Each sermon or talk could mention a different aspect of legacy giving, share a different case study, or tie into a different bible passage. Your talks don't need to be long – if there isn't someone to mention gifts in wills in a sermon slot, a few minutes during your notices would be fine.
- Plan and run a gift in wills event

3. LAUNCH AND RUN THE CAMPAIGN

- Make sure all your new resources are freely available in your building
- Deliver your sermons or talks
- Send out emails and letters. Post your social media posts. Include your articles in your newsletter and or magazine.
- Ensure there is someone available throughout the campaign to answer questions
- Run a gift in wills event

WHAT TO DO AFTERWARDS

Once your campaign has ended, you can still talk about gifts in wills little and often to remind people continually of their importance. You should aim to repeat your gifts in wills campaign every other year and talk about gifts in wills throughout the year with the occasional newsletter article, mention in the notices and include in thank you letters (see example in 'Example Communications'). A great way to do this is to share stories when you receive gifts in wills and celebrate what they enable your church to achieve. There are lots of example case studies here to inspire you:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/our-faith/church-legacy/amazing-gift-case-studies>

Finally, ask your clergy to remind people of the importance of will writing at particular moments, especially people preparing for baptisms and weddings.

WHERE CAN I GET HELP?

Your Diocesan Giving Advisor:

Julie Podd, Parish Resources Manager at

emma.denton@cofesuffolk.org

<https://www.cofesuffolk.org/for-parishes/parish-stewardship-resources/legacies/>

National Giving Team

giving@churcofengland.org

Farewill Code: **<https://farewill.com/edsandips-diocese>**

For more information

<https://www.churchofengland.org/our-faith/church-legacy>

<https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/building-generous-church/enabling-giving/giving-mechanisms/legacy>



LEGACY CAMPAIGN PLANNER

Campaign Dates	
Campaign Team and Roles	
Legacy Champion	

Campaign Checklist

Before you launch you campaign, have you:

- Written a PCC Gifts in Wills Promise & Policy
- Designed and ordered gifts in wills leaflets for your church
- Identified gifts in wills stories or gifts in wills story tellers
- Created a gifts in wills page on your church website or ACNY page
- Planned a gifts in wills event
- Planned how you will follow up after the campaign

