



Legacies and wills

Decisions that will help the PCC



Christ centred | Outward focused

Why your PCC should consider wills and legacies

Making a will: an act of Christian stewardship

For nearly 400 years, the Church of England has been encouraging people to make wills and keep them up to date.

...let him then be admonished to make his Will... for the better discharging of his conscience, and the quietness of his Executors.

(Book of Common Prayer, 1662)

Making wills ensures peace of mind and takes a burden of stress and complication from friends and family. But one third of people worshipping in Church of England churches today have not yet made a will.



Leaving a legacy: a lasting gift for our church

Legacy gifts can make a huge difference to churches. Each year, around a third of Southwark's churches receive gifts in wills, ranging from hundreds to hundreds of thousands. Faithful witnesses leaving generous legacies have enabled churches to invest in their buildings, pioneer new ministries, and sustain a welcoming presence in their communities.

Helping people consider wills and legacies is about pastoral care and Christian stewardship



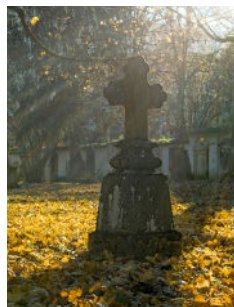
St Mary's Merton (pictured) have been blessed with regular legacies over the last decade. These have helped the church install a sound system, fit a new kitchen in their hall, support organ scholars, and purchase a new church gate.

Three simple steps for the PCC

If there is any community that can have the confidence to talk about death with hope, it is the church of Jesus Christ.

As a PCC, you can take a lead in these conversations by considering practical preparations.

These three steps will help you do this.



1 Pass a legacy policy and communicate it to the congregation

A legacy policy increases the confidence of givers that their gift will make a significant difference to the church. A policy could be along the lines of:

The policy of the PCC is to use legacies to help fund significant development projects in the parish, whether buildings, equipment or staff.

As circumstances change over the years, church members are encouraged to leave legacies for the general purposes of the parish. The PCC will discuss with executors the most appropriate use of the legacy in the light of current projects and the donor's known areas of interest in the church (eg. children & youth, music, buildings).

Unrestricted legacies are recommended as the needs of your church will change over time.

2 Encourage the congregation to make or review their will

Over 30% of worshippers in the Church of England are yet to make a will. When asked why, around 60% simply said that they had not got around to it.

The Church of England has partnered with *Farewill*, so anyone can write a simple will online, for free. Visit farewill.com/southwarkdiocese or use this QR code to find out more.



The Code of Fundraising Practice 2025 states at least two providers should be provided, without recommendation. Using the Law Society Website. Local solicitors can also be found: <https://solicitors.lawsociety.org.uk/>

For more complicated wills, or for people to review their existing will or add a codicil, you may want to investigate local options.

*At **Christ Church, West Wimbledon**, the PCC have researched local solicitors and shared a list with their congregation. One solicitor in the congregation has offered their time so that codicils that solely leave legacies to Christ Church can be added for free.*

3 Seek a Parish Legacy Co-ordinator

It makes a huge difference if a volunteer can take a lead on legacies in a parish. This means:

- Ensuring information about leaving legacies is always available;
- Listening confidentially if anyone has questions;
- Working with a vicar and/or PCC to make sure people and any gifts they leave are remembered appropriately, sensitively, and with gratitude.

Please ask us for more information about being a Parish Legacy Co-ordinator.



“When we make a will, we actively choose what we will do with the gifts we have received in our lifetime. Planning and decision-making about these aspects of our future are important and can bring peace of mind and ensure our wishes are followed. Our gifts can be a legacy to ensure we can act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with our God.”

The Rt Revd Dr Rosemarie Mallett, Bishop of Croydon.

Support for your PCC

Please contact the Giving Team for any support or advice:

gabby.parikh@southwark.anglican.org
southwark.anglican.org/legacies
churchofengland.org/legacy



The Diocese of
Southwark