

I already
have a will.
Why should
I change it?

© **Planned Giving Resource Center**
PO Box 340003
Nashville, TN 37203-0003

This information is provided as a service. It is not intended to be legal advice on a specific issue. Always consult your own attorney when considering these and other matters.



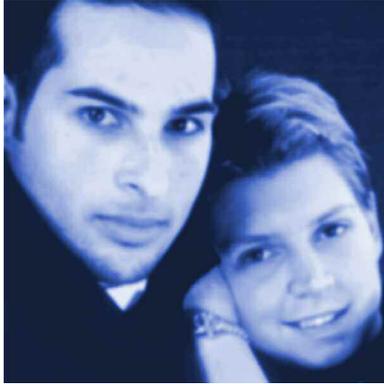
A Christian's
Guide to
changing
and updating
your will

STIM
WILLS

Decisions, Decisions

Perhaps one of the most difficult things you have ever done was to have your will written. You decided important things like: who will care for your children, distribution of family heirlooms, who'll be the executor, the necessity of trusts in your will. You had tough decisions to make, and answers didn't necessarily come easily.

However, once you made these decisions and your will was written, you felt relief and satisfaction. You accomplished an important task. Your will was safely put away and you've not read it for years, and you may still have that good feeling.



- You family has changed! There are additional children or grandchildren; a child has died; or your children are older, and a new set of circumstances applies.
- Tax laws concerning inheritances have changed and could affect the way your estate is handled.
- Since your will was created, you have new and different interests. You support different charities, or you are active in a different United Methodist church.
- You may not have determined how the remainder of your estate (after all other bequests were named) would be distributed.

These are just a few of the many circumstances that can cause a will to be outdated. No, wills don't expire! However, your desires and circumstances may change and make your will obsolete in time.

Having a will that does not accomplish your wishes may be worse than having no will at all.

Isn't a will forever?

That depends! Your will may never need revision. However, for many of us, a will is not forever. It may need to be revised occasionally as circumstances change.

What are some reasons to revise your will?

- The person you choose as executor of your will has died or can no longer serve as executor.
- The value of your estate has increased, and you are re-considering how it should be distributed.
- Some of the people you named in your will have died or for other reasons no longer need or should receive a bequest.

How often should I review my will?

Generally, you should review your will annually. Certainly, review your will when major changes occur in your life or in the lives of those who would be affected by your will. Are there grandchildren now? Are there individuals who need special care now? Are there new United Methodist programs you want to support?

How do I change my will?

You may be thinking, "Can't I simply write any changes in the margin of my will?" No!

It is always best to make changes to your will with the assistance of an attorney. Simply "writing in" changes will not work. In fact, it may invalidate your will.

Many changes can be made with a simple addition called a codicil, which can usually be drafted quickly and at low cost by an attorney. If many changes are necessary, it may be best to have the entire will rewritten.

Is your will forever? It is forever only if your desires remain the same, if tax laws don't change, if your estate remains static, or if no one is born or dies who would be affected by your will.

There are many reasons to review and change your will. Nothing in life stays the same. If it did, we would never need to change our wills. Life changes and wills must change too. You will receive the same relief and satisfaction by revising a will as you did by completing the first one.

We Want To Help

Christian stewardship is stewardship during one's lifetime and at one's death. The gifts you make through your will to your local church, agencies and institutions of The United Methodist Church serve many. By preparing your will and keeping it current, you are a more faithful steward of God's blessings.

The United Methodist Church wants to help. United Methodist Foundations and agencies and institutions within The United Methodist Church have trained professionals who can assist you with estate planning. For more information on wills, talk to your pastor or write your Annual Conference United Methodist Foundation, or Office of Development.