

BEQUEST LANGUAGE: HOW TO WRITE A GOOD WILL

Where there is a will...there is a way...to support your church for years to come. But a well-written bequest has two elements: focus and flexibility. Avoid writing a restrictive will that is difficult to enforce. See samples below.

*“I give, bequeath and devise [dollar amount or description of property] **OR** [all, or ___percent of] of the rest, residue and remainder of my estate, both real and personal, wherever situated, which I may own or be entitled to at my death, to my church [name _____ include full physical address]*

- ❖ *to be used at the discretion of its Board of Trustees; (not designated; best!)*
- ❖ *or for a designated church or ministry; (a stated percentage is always better)*
- ❖ *or to establish an endowment or support the endowment fund;*
- ❖ *or for a designated purpose.” (important: see suggestions below)*

#####

Goal: Help erase indebtedness. Not good: “...debt retirement”. By the time your will is executed there may be no debt to retire, then your will becomes unusable. It can set up a legal fight with members of your family.

Better: “first for debt retirement, then for any such needs as the building may require (or some other purpose....or for the general fund...). This wording offers flexibility.

#####

Goal: Young people and education. Not good: “scholarships for high school graduates who are members of this church going to a UM related university....”

Better: “first, scholarships for high school graduates from this church going to a UM related university or seminary, and then high school graduates from the church and community to any university, or seminary/career training/educational facility.” A great gift for many.

#####

Goal: Help the poor. Not good: “the church’s food pantry ministry....” There may come a time when the church no longer has a food pantry ministry.

Better: “first, the food pantry, secondly, any ministries the church uses to support the needy in our community...” Very generous and helpful.

This advisory prepared by Rev. David A. Rash, Stewardship Matters of Virginia LLC. Rev. Rash is a pastor with a heart for the church, not an attorney, nor a tax advisor, nor a certified financial planner. Consult a professional for expert advice.

www.StewardshipMattersVa.org info@StewardshipMattersVa.org 540-335-5175