



Faith
Will...

Worship resources



An uncertain world can test faith. Yet when we are united by hope, our faith will tackle injustice – and help communities everywhere achieve lasting change.

Your faith is powerful, and so is your Will.

Christian Aid is bringing together the Church of England, the Church of Scotland, the Quakers and the United Reformed Church to encourage people of all denominations to remember their own church, and Christian Aid, in their Will.

Whether you've got five minutes or one hour, whether you're a huge congregation or a small group, in this guide you'll find everything you need to inspire everyone in your congregation to think about their legacy.

**Faith
Will...**



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Faith
Will...

...inspire your worship

This section of your guide will support you in holding a Faith Will service to tell people about gifts in Wills. As well as transforming communities, gifts in Wills are a way for us to give thanks for God's generosity. And to help our faith to live on, long after we're gone.

Esther Saizi in a church near her home.

'We are a community that helps one another a lot... if people face a problem, we do not allow them to suffer alone.'

Esther

Why Faith Will?

By leaving gifts in their Will to your church and Christian Aid, your congregation can:

- Tackle injustice and help communities in the UK and globally to achieve lasting change.
- 'Let their lives speak' and let their values live on.
- 'Pay forward' the generosity they have received in their lifetime – see the prayer activities on [page 12](#) for more on this.

'Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.'

Hebrews 11.1

Faith
Will...

Hymns and worship songs to inspire generosity

There are plenty of hymns and worship songs that speak to the power of faith and that could help inspire your congregation:



Maurice Omorojie, URC Minister in training, Christ Church Petts Wood.

Beauty for brokenness (Graham Kendrick)

A prayer for healing in God's world.

For the healing of the nations (Fred Kaan)

A hymn that asks for peace and an increase in hope in the world.

Great is thy faithfulness (Thomas Chisholm)

A hymn that chimes with the message of Hebrews 11, focussing on God's faithfulness and provision.

Give thanks with a grateful heart (Henry Smith)

A song of gratitude for God's gifts.

Make me a channel of your peace (trad)

A suitable hymn for the 'let your life speak' theme, asking for God's help to be an instrument for his work in the world.

Take my life and let it be (Frances Havergal)

A hymn consecrating ourselves and all that we have to God's service.

Thanks be to God for his saints of each past generation (Timothy Dudley Smith)

A hymn inspired by Hebrews 11, the focal passage for this service.

We are an offering (Dwight Liles)

A worship song of consecration and dedication to God's service, tying in with the theme of letting your life speak and your values live on through gifts in Wills.

Come you thankful people come (Henry Alford)

A hymn of thanks for the harvest and of gratitude for God's provision.

For the fruits of all creation (Fred Pratt Green)

Ideal for Harvest festivals which also focus on gifts in Wills, with its thankfulness for gifts in creation and our worldwide task of caring for God's world.

Your Faith Will service

Feel free to use this service outline for your gifts in Wills service, or tailor it to suit your own context.

1. Opening response

Loving God, we have come to worship you.

Help us to pray to you in faith,
to sing your praise with gratitude,
and to listen to your word with eagerness.

Thank you that you are a generous God,
Who is faithful across generations.
Amen.

2. Hymn or song

Choose from the list on [page 6](#).

3. Opening prayer

Eternal and unchanging God,
We give thanks for those who have left us a legacy of faith: those known to us personally and the countless generations before them, as numerous as the stars in the night sky.

Guide our hearts as we consider the power of legacies to transform the world.

Make us generous in spirit, knowing that all we have comes from you.

Help us to work towards a world in which all may live life to the full.

For your name's sake.
Amen.

4. Optional: Confession and absolution

NB If you are in a Church of England congregation and this is your main Sunday service, you should include a confession and absolution (which must take an authorised form).

‘Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses,
let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely,
and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.’

Hebrews 12:1-2

5. Bible reading

Read Hebrews 11:1

If you focus on the whole chapter and it's an all-age service, **end at verse 16**.

6. Sermon or talk

Choose from one of our [suggested sermon themes on page 14](#) about giving and legacies, like **Genesis 15:5**.

‘(The Lord) brought him outside and said, “Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your descendants be.”’

Alternatively, use these suggestions to help inspire your sermon to fit with your set readings for the day.

Ideas for an interactive sermon

Something that might seem like a small act of faith now, such as pledging to leave a gift in your Will, can be like a tiny acorn, which grows over time into a mighty oak tree. You could use an acorn and a picture of an oak tree to show this visually.

Or you could use invisible writing to show things that are invisible now can become visible in the future. Take a piece of paper and write a message of hope in **white** crayon. Then go over the message using a dark watercolour paint – the message will be revealed!

7. Hymn or song

Choose from the list on [page 6](#).

8. Offering

If your church normally takes an offering or collection, this would be a moment to introduce the idea of leaving a gift in your Will to your local church and to Christian Aid.

You could introduce this in the following way:

We've been thinking about how our faith might carry on after us and what our legacy might be.

One way you can let your values live on is by supporting your church and Christian Aid long into the future.

During our collection today, why not think about making a pledge to leave a gift in your Will to the church and to Christian Aid? Your generosity can transform lives now and in the future.

If you'd like to find out more, please find all the information you need in the Faith Will leaflet you have been given or visit caid.org.uk/faith.

9. Prayer

On [pages 19 to 20](#) of this guide, you'll find plenty more ideas for intercessory prayers and reflections.

[Read 'a Faith Will' prayer in full on page 17](#)
[Go to page 19 for more prayers](#)

10. Ending of your service

Remind everyone of the theme of today's service, and if you did not do so at the offertory, invite people to take away a Faith Will leaflet at the end of the service.

You could also make these available on a table at coffee time, and have a few people ready to discuss them with others.

11. Final blessing

May God, who kept his promises to the great heroes of faith, inspire you to hold on to hope and persevere to the end, knowing that faith will move mountains and can transform the world.

And the blessing...

May God the Father,
who loved the world so much that he sent his only Son to come among us in great humility,
open your eyes to look for his coming again.

Amen.

May God the Son
give you grace to live in the light of his coming as redeemer and judge.

Amen.

May Christ,
who out of defeat brings new hope and a new future,
fill you with his new life;
and the blessing...

12. Final hymn or song

Choose from the list on [page 6](#).



Reverend Canon Giles Goddard,
Vicar and Christian Aid supporter.



Faith Will...

...inspire all ages

This section of your guide will help you inspire all ages about Faith Will, and teach children and young people about the power of faith.

In this section you'll find:

- An all-age talk based on **Hebrews 11:1**.
- An activity for young children called '**Mighty oaks**'.

What can you do to involve young people?

Children will love the all-age 'Mighty oaks' talk which is based on Hebrews 11:1.



Church members, Christ Church Petts Wood.

1. Bible verse

'To have faith is to be sure of the things we hope for, to be certain of the things we cannot see.'

Hebrews 11:1, Good News Bible

2. Suggested talk: Mighty oaks

To deliver this talk, you'll need an acorn (or a picture of one), and an image of an oak tree.

[Read 'Mighty oaks from tiny acorns grow' on page 17](#)

3. Prayer

Dear God,

Thank you for the small things of the world: the acorn that grows into a mighty oak, the smallest acts of kindness to others.

Sometimes the problems of the world feel too big for us to change.

Help us to have faith that even our little actions can make a difference, and that we can make a better world, in our local community and beyond.

In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.

4. Mighty oaks: Activity for young children

If your congregation includes young children or if you are running a separate children's group you may wish to use this version of the talk.

Try making the talk interactive. You could combine it with a craft activity, like making a collage or picture of a mighty oak growing from a tiny acorn.

To deliver this talk, you'll need an acorn (or a picture of one).

[Read Mighty oaks talk for young children on page 18](#)



Taindonzwa Kapfudzaruwa on her farm in Mudzi district, Zimbabwe.



...inspire reflection

This section of your guide will help you use creative activities for self-reflection during your Faith Will conversations.

In this section you'll find:

- Reflective activities and prayer stations.

How can you help people think and reflect?

There are plenty of ways you can make your service interactive and engaging. Try setting up one of these activities as a prayer station, or a response to a sermon or talk.

'Faith Will... leave a legacy'

An activity about faith, and trusting in God's promises even if we sometimes don't see the results immediately, or even in our lifetimes.

[View in full on page 25](#)

'Faith Will... let our values live on'

An activity that reflects on Hebrews 11, and the old Quaker saying of 'Letting your life speak'.

[View in full on page 26](#)

'Faith Will... pay it forward'

An activity about generosity, reflecting on when we've received it in our lives and how we can pay it forward.

[View in full on page 27](#)





Rev Rachel Curley, St Nicholas Church, Chislehurst.

...inspire sermons

This section of your guide will help you choose the right Bible passages and inspiring words to spark your congregation into action.

In this section you'll find:

- Sermon and talk ideas that speak to the values of Faith Will.

Which sermon theme could you use?

The Bible is full of passages that speak to the values of charitable giving, and the impact we can all have by leaving a gift in our Will.



The many products grown and harvested from the wild through the BRAC project to diversify incomes and diet and increase resilience.

Legacy as Gift: Faith Will... let your values live on

‘(The Lord) brought him outside and said, “Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your descendants be.”’

Genesis 15:5

[View sermon notes on page 21](#)

Legacy as Commitment: Faith Will... act

‘But someone will say, “You have faith, and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from works, and I by my works will show you faith.’

James 2:18

[View sermon notes on page 22](#)

Legacy as Resolution: Faith Will... move mountains

‘Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.’

Hebrews 11:1

[View sermon notes on page 23](#)

Legacy as Harvest: Faith Will... bear fruit

‘The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. The earth produces of itself first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head.’

Mark 4:26-28

[View sermon notes on page 24](#)



Faith
Will...

...inspire action

Whether you have five minutes or an hour, there are plenty of other ways you could choose to talk to your church about gifts in Wills. Every word, every conversation and every presentation could help create lasting change.

What other ways could you inspire your congregation about gifts in Wills?

Use our free resources and these ideas to hold a legacy moment. There are many ways to inspire your congregation to consider leaving a gift in their Will.

Mandigona helping to feed her community, Zimbabwe



How? Get the conversation started in **5 minutes**:

- **Show our short campaign film to your congregation.**
This could be at a coffee morning or a church meeting – go to caid.org.uk/resources to view and download the film.
- **Give away seeds** to show what's planted now grows and bears fruit later (foxgloves and poppies are seeds that like to be planted in the autumn).
- **Upload information** on Faith Will to your church website giving page.
- **Order and give out Faith Will leaflets** and highlight this information in your meeting or service.

If you have **10-15 minutes** free:

- **Share testimony from a community project** that benefitted from church funds.
- **Show a local map of your church's impact.**
- **Show a global map of Christian Aid projects around the world.**
- **Highlight stories of ordinary people** from your church or denomination's history who have left a lasting legacy.

If you have **longer** free:

- **Hold a legacy supper.**
- **Hold an in-memory celebration** of loved ones in your congregation and their legacies.
- **Encourage conversation about legacies in café church** eg, how you would like to be remembered or what you hope your legacy of faith will be.
- **Hold a small group discussion** using questions on [page 31](#).

Appendix

Please
remember to print
in black and white
to save ink!

Service outline: A Faith Will prayer

Transforming God,
who brought the worlds into being through your word,
making visible what was invisible,
hear us as we pray in faith.

In a world where resources are not shared equally,
where crops fail and parents go without to feed
their children,
in a country where too many rely on
foodbanks to get by,
we ask that our faith will...
help us to feed the hungry.

In the midst of wars and conflicts,
where neighbour attacks neighbour
and the innocent suffer most,
we ask that our faith will...
bring peace between nations.

In the face of a climate emergency,
where land is scorched or flooded,
and habitats destroyed,
we ask that our faith will...
protect God's creation.

In a culture of fear of the other,
where the vulnerable are despised
and rejected,
we ask that our faith will...
give sanctuary to the persecuted.

Standing in a long line of people of faith,
we pledge ourselves to your service
and to working for a transformed world.
We ask that our faith will...
leave a legacy.

Merciful God,
you have promised to hear our requests.
We pray for the coming of your kingdom
of justice and peace,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

All age talk: Mighty oaks from tiny acorns grow

Today in our service we are talking about leaving a legacy. Does anyone know what this means? *[take suggestions]* Well, leaving a legacy is a bit like planting a seed and watching it grow – we don't always see the results but planting the seed can have a huge impact.

[optional Harvest introduction] Harvest is a time when we say 'thank you' to God for all that we have, especially for the food we eat and those who produced it. When a farmer or a gardener plants a seed or a bulb, they have faith that it will grow up into a healthy plant.

Some plants grow quickly. I wonder if anyone has ever sown any cress? If you've done that, you may have seen the seeds sprouting within a day. Or if anyone has planted a sunflower seed? A sunflower seed can grow to a plant that is 12 feet tall in three months!

But some plants take much longer to grow!

Today I want to talk to you about oak trees *[Show picture of an oak tree]*. Does anyone know how an oak tree starts? *[take suggestions]*

That's right – an oak tree starts off life as a tiny acorn. *[Show acorn or picture of one]*

There is a well-known expression, 'Mighty oaks from little acorns grow.' But do you know how long it takes an oak tree to grow from an acorn? *[take suggestions]*

Most oak trees won't produce a crop of acorns until they are 50 years old. They then take another 100 years to grow into adult trees. So they are not regarded as adult trees until they are 150 years old! A mature oak can grow up to 45 metres tall and nearly as wide.

At 700 years old, the oak has reached old age and its growth starts to slow. At 1,000 years old, it is approaching the end of its life.

Do you know how old the oldest oak tree in the UK is? *[invite guesses]* Well there are several that are over 1,000 years old, including one at Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire that is said to be about 1,050 years old.

[hold up the acorn again] How many acorns do you think an oak tree can produce in its lifetime? *[invite guesses]*

(All age talk: Mighty oaks from tiny acorns grow – continued)

It's actually 10 million! 10 million of these tiny acorns *[hold up acorn or show picture]* – all of which have the potential to grow up into tall oaks like their parent tree!

When we plant seeds, we have faith that they will grow up into tall and healthy plants. Of course, we don't sit back and do nothing – we look after the plant by watering it, feeding it if necessary and weeding it. As we have talked about, some plants grow quickly – and we see the results of our work quickly. Other plants, such as trees, like the oak, take much longer to grow. But having faith means believing that the plant will grow – that something mighty like an oak tree will come from a tiny acorn and may live for 1,000 years.

The Bible verse we read at the beginning from the book of Hebrews reminds us that we can't always see the results of what we do immediately, and the impact might not be seen until long in the future – but it reminds us to have faith that good results – that may last forever – will come from the right actions.

That can happen when someone leaves a legacy to the church and to Christian Aid, a charity who work with people across the world to help them live full lives, free from poverty.

Think about how small acts of kindness can make a big difference to someone else's life. Can you think of some small acts you can do this week *[take suggestions]*. Can you be kind to someone at school who is being bullied or feeling left out? Can you pray for someone who is unwell and send them a card? Can you help out a bit more at home? Can you save something from your pocket money to give to charity? Or can you think of ways to raise money for charity – for example by doing some baking or washing some cars?

Are there any things you feel passionate about and want to change in the world? What can we do to help people who live in our local area? What can we do to help people who live further away?

Let's remember that 'mighty oaks from tiny acorns grow', but that it can take a long time – 150 years in fact! And just like the one oak tree that can produce 10 million acorns, by having faith that God will bless our small actions, they can all add up to something much bigger – a movement of kindness that can change the world for the better, long into the future! (Just like leaving a legacy).

Now let's pray together...

Young children's talk: Mighty oaks

Invite the children to stand in a circle around you, and lead them in the following:

We can see trees and flowers all around us.

We can see the mighty, tall oak that grows from a small acorn like this one *[show acorn]*.

When we pray for others, or do kind things, it is like planting an acorn. Over time, the acorn will grow into a mighty oak tree.

I wonder if you can pretend to be a little acorn, fallen from the oak tree and now sleeping in the ground, waiting for the sun to wake it up?

Let's curl up into a tiny ball.

Lead children in curling up into a ball.

In the spring, as the sun comes out and the ground warms up, we begin to grow. The seed in the acorn sends out a taproot.

Let's show our roots with our fingers.

Lead the children in wiggling fingers.

We need to let our roots grow down deep into the earth.

Lead the children in wiggling fingers down.

Then, after three, let a little shoot pop up.
1,2,3... Pop!

Lead the children in poking hands up above your head like a little shoot.

As the sun warms up and the rains fall, we begin to grow tall!

Gradually stand up, swaying like a growing stalk.

Taller and taller, onto our tiptoes...

Reach up with pointy hands and on tiptoes.

Let's turn our faces to the sun!
Then let our branches spread out wide.

Stretch arms slowly outwards.

Now we're an adult tree, producing acorns of our own that can grow up into more mighty oaks.

(Young children's talk: Mighty oaks – continued)

Wiggle arms about.

Now we're ready to stand tall for 1,000 years!

Stand tall and proud, wiggle about if you want to.

Now invite the children to sit in a circle. Praise their actions – eg, saying 'What fantastic growing you did! What beautiful oak trees you grew into.'

Then conclude with the following prayer with actions.

When we do kind things or pray for others, it is like planting an acorn. It may seem like a small thing but it can have a big impact.

Let's pray together, using our hands to make the actions.

For our world:

Make a circle shape.

Jesus, hear our prayer!

Open hands upward to God.

For our church:

Praying hands.

Jesus, hear our prayer!

Open hands upward to God.

For our friends and families:

Arms around yourself.

Jesus, hear our prayer!

Open hands upward to God.

For the sick and lonely:

Fingers imitating tears falling down cheeks.

Jesus, hear our prayer!

Open hands upward to God.

For the hungry:

Both hands rubbing tummy.

For everybody!

Circle action above head.

Lord Jesus, hear our prayer!

Open hands upward to God.

Adapted with permission from Sharon Moughtin, *Diddy Disciples, Book 1: September to December*, SPCK, 2017, p.98 and p.96

Alternative prayers

1. A prayer based on Hebrews 11:1

Faithful God, the same yesterday, today and forever.

Thank you for the witness of those who trusted your promises, even when the way ahead was uncertain.

When difficulties and obstacles arise, give us their hope and conviction that faith can make a difference, and that lives can be transformed so that all may flourish.

In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.

2. A prayer suitable for Harvest festivals

Generous God, at this Harvest time, we give you thanks for the bounties of the world you created: for our food and all those who grow, harvest and transport it.

Open our hearts as we consider how to live out our faith and share the generosity we have received with others, that our values might live on and we may leave a legacy that transforms the world.

In Jesus' name.

Amen.

3. Alternative intercessory prayer 1

Compassionate God, trusting in your promises and unfailing love, we bring before you the needs of our world.

We pray for our local community and for all who work for good within it:

for our schools, community centres and places of work. We extend our gaze outwards to the wider world, asking in particular that where there is conflict, you would bring peace, and where there is famine, you would bring a bountiful harvest.

Help us to not despair but to hold on to hope. Inspire us to act to make a better world, help us to be wise stewards of our resources,

(Alternative intercessory prayer 1 – continued)

be with us as we consider how to leave legacies of faith that can transform the world.

May we have confidence that even our smallest actions can have a mighty impact, now and forever.

Amen.

4. Alternative intercessory prayer 2

God of all comfort,
You promise to be with those who pray to you in faith.
Hear us now as we pray for the needs of our world.

We pray for those who are discouraged and in despair, and for those in our local community who are struggling to get by.

Show us how to help them, Lord,
and inspire us to leave a legacy of hope.

We pray for those who labour but see little reward, who toil yet see their crops destroyed through drought or disaster.

Show us how to help them, Lord,
and inspire us to leave a legacy of hope.

We pray for our church community, forgive us when we are distracted by our own internal concerns.

Help us to be better servants of our community
and inspire us to leave a legacy of hope.

Lastly, we pray for ourselves.
Make us good stewards of all that we have.
Help us to let our lives speak through our actions now and in the future,
and inspire us to leave a legacy of hope.

**God of hope,
you love us,
and hear our prayers.**

**Make us one in heart and mind
to serve you with joy for ever.
Amen.**

Legacy as gift: Faith Will... let your values live on

‘(The Lord) brought Abraham outside and said, “Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them.” Then he said to Abraham, “So shall your descendants be.”’
Genesis 15:5

- **The legacy churches have received**

We are people who know what ‘legacy’ means. In our worship we celebrate a legacy that has been passed on for more than 2,000 years to reach us and enrich our lives today. Scripture carries legacy in words and stories of faith. We remember those whose lives shape our own because they demonstrate faith, hope, love, courage and sometimes even just the capacity to endure.

- **The legacy of our ‘faith heroes’**

Faith is not just a conviction in our heads that God exists, but is a commitment to follow God and serve his will with everything at our disposal in our lives. The people we meet in scripture who leave a legacy of hope include Abel, the first human being to make an offering and give a gift – he wanted to give the very best he had. The world thought Noah was crazy, but he built an ark to create a refuge for life in the face of destruction and emerged to shape creation anew.

Moses wanted to help his oppressed people. His action on their behalf was shaped by a vision of the future he could imagine but would not be part of himself. He followed God’s command; he trusted that the path he took would enable God to fulfil this plan. The values we hold make us eager to anticipate a different world and fullness of life for all.

- **The legacy of Abraham**

In the book of Genesis, Abraham followed God’s call to move with his family and flocks on a journey without an assurance that there would be a final place to settle. Abraham had to have faith in God’s promise

to make something then invisible to him – a family line enjoying the legacy he had left them – visible in the time to come; in the new life of a child, despite the physical obstacles of the age of the parents. This child would be the one from whom numerous descendants would spring, bringing glory to his story of faithfulness and to the God he followed. He pledged his own son as a legacy to that faith in God’s word and was rewarded.

- **What will our legacy be?**

Is it hard to talk about a time when we might not be here but great to think that what we believed in and cherished will live on. We will all have a legacy, in the sense that some part of our world will have been changed by our passing through it. We might have changed the world for our family and friends. Or for local causes we care about. Or for our global neighbours living in poverty. We might have made an impact – paying attention to how that impact might be intentionally shaped and not left to chance leaves evidence of our faith behind us. This includes the decisions we make in terms of passing on our material wealth to others beyond our lifetimes.

- **How will we be remembered?**

Making a Will and including a legacy to a cause near to our heart takes us into a future where our generosity can be both ensured and remembered. It enables us to time-travel a bit. It is our faith in the future made explicit, and an expression of hope through a gift that others will make fruitful. Legacy gifts are not just matters for the rich among us who might want to ensure resources pass to our children and family.

Writing a gift for our church or favourite charity in our Will gives us the opportunity to share our passions and our values with the world and tell them who we are. It also enables us to get past our current economic situation where our immediate needs might limit our desire to be generous. When we intentionally leave a legacy gift we cultivate a freedom within ourselves with regard to our resources. We are planning carefully for an outcome we will never see.

A legacy gift embeds possibilities that we cannot fully anticipate and carries our love and concern beyond us for others to know and for their futures to bear fruit. It enables us to live on in the memories of others and continue to help local and global causes to thrive in our name. There can be no greater way to be remembered.

Legacy as commitment: Faith Will... act

‘But someone will say, “You have faith, and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from works, and I by my works will show you faith.’ James 2:18

- **What does faith look like?**

Is it only believing and talking about believing: in God’s love, in God’s power to change the world? No, it is about our head and heart working together to give us meaning and purpose in our world. But it is also a matter of hands. Faith is active and it impels those who share it to seek a way of living that makes faith visible. James was writing for a Christian community who were trying to find a way of living a new faith in an old world.

This community was encouraged to follow the way of Jesus that was characterised by practical ministry and explicit choices: to seek out those who were marginalised and vulnerable and bring compassion and healing, often including a restoration of life in relationship with others. These people were encouraged to act in faith so that God could work through them for good in a difficult world that God cherishes.

- **A legacy of faith in action**

The book of Acts gives us their story of commitment and solidarity to each other as they put their faith into action. This even extended to seeing what they possessed as common to all – gifts which they made available for the wellbeing of others. This is the legacy they have left us and, as we read in many places in scripture, this practical action and care is the faith-inspired sacrifice that pleases our God more than pious words. You cannot be faithful only in principle. It must show itself in action.

- **Future action inspired by the past**

Legacy gives our faith a history and a future. The stories of our forebears inspire us to make a future possible for others by intentionally gifting something

of ourselves through our possessions in life but also beyond life and after our death. Our faith put to work enables future Noahs to create disaster preparedness shelters for people threatened by cyclones in Bangladesh, or to provide warm and safe refuge for the homeless on our streets.

Like Moses we can make it possible for others to organise themselves and stand up to the power of those who displace communities from land or exploit vulnerable workers: to speak truth to power in our own generation. We can be inspired by Naomi’s loyalty, Ruth’s ingenuity, and Esther’s courage, to support the vulnerable in our own communities, or to support peacemakers working in places as far apart as Colombia and Sudan.

- **Legacy giving is faith in action**

So are we ready today to talk together about how making a Will and leaving a legacy gift to a cause we hold dear arise from the faith we profess, and give that faith a practical form? As followers of Jesus we are not embarrassed to address the challenge of assessing what we have in material terms. We choose to believe that through our faith we can release the potential of our possessions even when we are not around to direct their energy.

- **Expressing our faith through a legacy gift**

A legacy gift can pay tribute to the blessings we have received in our own life from our local church membership. It can be instrumental in enabling the witness and service our church delivers in our community and nation to continue. Legacy acts through connections we have with people we call brothers and sisters even though we may never know each other. And in places we will never visit, life and livelihood become possible for that faith family because of the inheritance we made possible.

Our faith needs to be expressed relationally, both vertically as we draw closer to God in worship, and horizontally, as we put our faith into action and allow it to bring change and transformation into our challenged world, both locally and globally. All of this can be made real through a gift in our Will to our church or to Christian Aid. Our faith and love can live on beyond our lifetimes and bring blessings to future generations.

Legacy as resolution: Faith Will... move mountains

'Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.'
Hebrews 11:1

- **Giving has been made difficult by current economic challenges**

We live in difficult times. The world is now so small in terms of communication it can make it harder for us to be sure how to live a compassionate life of faith. Public media bring us need and conflict and environmental emergency and leave us struggling to respond. It is particularly hard if we know that what we have and are truly thankful for is not immediately available for giving. For we also need to eat and have shelter and the means of life, and we also face difficult decisions about spending, saving and giving. We want to give but may be constrained by current circumstances.

We all have mountains to climb. How can thinking about legacies help us here?

- **Legacy as a form of 'paying forward'**

This type of giving has grown in popularity in these days of hardship. As we acquire something for ourselves, we are prepared to put on account something good and helpful for another. When we make a Will and leave a legacy gift to our church or to Christian Aid we are similarly 'paying forward' with resources we cannot mobilise today but which we expect to be freed up later when we no longer need them.

- **Legacy giving as thankfulness**

As people of faith, we believe that all that we have comes from God. Thankfulness can impel us to get over the awkwardness of considering what will happen after our death. How can that grace-filled response continue and bring life to others even without us? We all hope to be remembered; a legacy

creates a link with a future where what we have done will be celebrated because it has connected our brief human life with another's.

- **Legacy giving as hope for the future**

Abraham's journey of faith to understand the reality of the inheritance he was promised was not straightforward or short. God called him to leave what was comfortable and known to travel forward to uncertain new pastures. Abraham lived a long human life before he saw the promise of the Lord come to fulfilment. We have hopes and dreams for the life we lead and the world we want to live in. Sometimes it seems that God's idea of time is not ours at all. Our place is rocky and impassable and our time is running out. Abraham's legacy lay in a future he could not see but believed in. And on his journey he learned to be faithful and generous to those the Lord put alongside him. You may remember the hospitality he showed to the three strangers he welcomed, and how blessed he was personally as a result of entertaining them.

We cannot know when we leave a legacy to Christian Aid or to our local church that has nurtured us, who will be welcome to the table we set or draw nourishment from the offering we make. We can only have faith that such hospitality will be life-giving.

- **What mountains could our legacy gift move?**

Practically, mountains are difficult to move. But mountains can be climbed, step by step. A legacy gift can support those who are building new communities after a disaster and brings possibilities to make what is currently difficult possible. A legacy gift can help us as a church to provide a welcoming space for the local community for generations to come. Mountains can also be circumvented, and people may need support and resources while they try new routes and test other ways to get to those new pastures and horizons. Our gift could enable them to view the mountain from another perspective and find a new, previously untested, solution.

Do we have mountain-moving faith? Faith can move us on a journey from thankfulness for the place we inhabit now through to a commitment to the new earth that we can help to usher in. A legacy gift can make that commitment real and transformative.

Legacy as Harvest: Faith Will... bear fruit

'The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how.

The earth produces of itself first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head.'

Mark 4:26-28

- **The promise harvest brings**

Harvest is a wonderful moment for any cultivator. It is both practical work and an example of faith in action. Harvest begins with small things: a seed, a graft, a cutting; and it is vulnerable to time and external threats of pest and weather. Growers have faith that if we plant in the right soil and nurture in the right way the harvest will come. It takes a while; it can often be a year from sowing to harvest. There is plenty of time to lose hope. Some crops are the fruit of years, even decades. A Chinese proverb instructs us: the best time to plant a tree is twenty years ago! We may think we have left it too late, yet we still have opportunity to think about the future and the difference we can make for others.

- **A legacy gift is a gift for tomorrow**

A legacy is a harvest which is often only appreciated after a long time of maturation. The desire to give generously to causes we care about may be limited in our lifetime by our own needs for wellbeing and security, but we can sow a seed for the future now by our willingness to write a legacy gift into our Will. Nothing much may happen for a while, but the fruits will be appreciated beyond our span of life – 'To plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow.' – as Audrey Hepburn once said. As those fruits grow they will be a practical witness to our faith.

Our faith yields a harvest when we reach out in our communities to those who are most vulnerable, and support local need. Or help people plant saplings in drought-stricken East Africa, trusting that the trees that they will become will hold water in the earth and enable crops to grow in perhaps a decade's time. We are investing in a future harvest we may not see ourselves. We are choosing to stand with local and global communities by investing in their future with a promise from our present.

- **Patient planting**

To choose to leave a legacy to others from what we enjoy during our time on earth is a statement of faith in a different sort of time than the one our world works on. We are linear people who understand that one thing follows another. We expect results and we prefer them to be in the short term. But a legacy takes us into God's time where the immediacy of action and result is not so obvious. It enables us to challenge the short-termism of our culture and look to a future we may only perceive dimly but where we can still make a difference.

- **What are we cultivating?**

Cultivation is always a display of faith in the future – being willing to undertake the work even when times are unpromising is something we see in scripture. Jeremiah instructs the people who have been displaced from their own homes to 'Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce' in the face of the uncertainty that the rewards will be theirs. This is faith made manifest in something very practical and very straight-forward. It mirrors God's commitment to Creation; what is sown will bear fruit even if it is a harvest in times yet to come.

As we said earlier, a Chinese proverb instructs us: the best time to plant a tree is twenty years ago. But it continues: the second-best time is now. Even if there is no harvest in our own lives, perhaps, a legacy gift to our church or to Christian Aid can help us plant the seeds of fruitfulness in someone else's future. What a harvest this would be!

Inspire reflection

Activity 1: 'Faith Will... leave a legacy'

You will need:

- A table.
- A large tray filled with sand.
- A picture of the night sky or the cosmos, filled with stars.
- Copies of key verses below about Abraham from Hebrews 11.
- Strips of paper and pens.

For reflection

'Having faith' means doing what is right and trusting in God's promises even if we sometimes don't see the results immediately, or even in our lifetimes. Hebrews 11:1 expresses it like this:

'Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Indeed, by faith our ancestors received approval.'

Hebrews 11:1-2

One of those 'ancients' or ancestors in faith commended in Hebrews 11 is Abraham.

Abraham trusted in the promises of God, even though at the time they seemed unlikely to come to fruition. Abraham was promised descendants even though he had no children with his wife, Sarah, and they were both past childbearing age.

Yet we are told:

'By faith, with Sarah's involvement, he received power of procreation, even though he was too old, because he considered him faithful who had promised. Therefore from one person, and this one as good as dead, descendants were born, as many as the stars of heaven and as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.'

Hebrews 11:11-12

In the same way, leaving a gift in our Will to our church and Christian Aid is an act of faith. We may not see the results in our lifetimes, but the number of lives we can transform through our gift might be as numerous as the stars in the sky or the grains of sand on the seashore.

Actions

- 1 Run your fingers through the sand tray and think about how many grains of sand might be in this one small space. Now ponder how many more there might be on a favourite beach. Abraham was promised numerous descendants – but only one was born to him and Sarah. Consider God's promises in your life: what has been brought to fruition? What do you hope is still to come – for yourself, for your local community and for the wider world? What impact would you like your life (and your giving) to have?
- 2 Look at the image of the night sky. Think about your own experiences of looking at the night sky. Often, we cannot see all the stars – some are invisible to us, certainly to the naked eye, but they are still there. Or we may have had the experience of being spellbound by a sky full of stars, too many to count. Abraham did not see his many descendants in his lifetime, yet he had faith in God's promise that he would leave a legacy. It can be the same with the fulfilment of our hopes and prayers – we may not be able to see the results of what we hope and pray for immediately. What hopes and prayers for the future would you like God to bless and multiply? Again, think on a personal, local and global level.
- 3 Write your hopes and prayers for the future on a slip of paper, fold it up and hide it in the sand.

Inspire reflection

Activity 2: 'Faith Will... let our values live on'

You will need:

- Copies of the reflection below, including the quote from George Fox and from Hebrews 11:4.
- Speech bubble or fruit-shaped post-it notes or cut-out shapes.
- Some pens.
- [Particularly suitable for Harvest] If using the fruit shapes, you may want to include a photograph or drawing of a tree onto which people can stick their cut-out shapes or post-it notes.

For reflection

In the passage, Hebrews 11, one of the 'ancestors' commended for their faith is Abel, who was killed by his jealous brother Cain:

'By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain's. Through this he received approval as righteous, God himself giving approval to his gifts; he died, but through his faith he still speaks.'

Hebrews 11:4

'Let your life speak' is an old Quaker saying, and the title of a book on vocation by the contemporary American Quaker author, Parker Palmer. It is a paraphrase of something written in a letter by George Fox, the founder of the Quakers. Fox wrote:

'Let your lives preach, let your light shine, that your works may be seen, that your Father may be glorified; that your fruits may be unto holiness, and that your end may be everlasting life.'

George Fox, 200th epistle

Think about your own life and consider these questions:

- How does the way you live 'speak' of your faith and values?
- What 'fruit' do you show in your life? What would you like to show?
- What would you like your legacy to be? How would you like your life to 'speak' to others after your death and to people you will never meet?
- How can you make that happen?

Action

- 1 Write your thoughts on the post-it notes or cut-out shapes (and add to the tree, if using this option).

Inspire reflection

Activity 3: 'Faith Will... pay it forward'

There are three options for this activity – choose the one that suits your context.

For reflection

What are we grateful for in our lives?

We are a part of God's creation. Across the year we give thanks for our food, and for all those who have grown and made it. We praise God for the fruitfulness of the earth. We also think of those in need and how we might help them. It's an example of 'paying it forward' – gratitude for the generosity we have received motivates us to share generosity with others.

Robert Emmons is a researcher who has studied the impact of gratitude on our lives. He writes:

'We like to think that we are our own creators and that our lives are ours to do with as we please. We take things for granted. We assume that we are totally responsible for all the good that comes our way. After all, we have earned it. We deserve it. A scene from *The Simpsons* captures this mentality: When asked to say grace at the family dinner table, Bart Simpson offers the following words: 'Dear God, we paid for all this stuff ourselves, so thanks for nothing.'

'In one sense, of course, he is right... But on another level, he is missing the bigger picture... Gratitude implies humility – a recognition that we could not be who we are or where we are in life without the contributions of others... Gratitude serves as a key link between receiving and giving: It moves recipients to share and increase the very good they have received.'

'Pay it forward', Robert Emmons, 1 June 1997, accessed at greatergood.berkeley.edu



Fellowship at Palmerston Place Church, Edinburgh.

Inspire reflection

Activity 3, option 1: Pay it forward web

You will need:

- A large pin board.
- A few balls of string and scissors or pieces of cut string.
- Some pins.
- Post-it notes.
- Some pens.

Actions

1 What am I grateful for in my life?

Write this on one colour of post-it note and stick it on the board.

2 Who has helped me in my life – through acts of kindness, generosity, time?

Think of specific people, their actions and the impact it had and write this on a post-it in a different colour. Place this second post-it at a little distance from your first post-it, then using the pins place a piece of string between the first and second post-it notes.

3 How can I 'pay forward' the generosity I have received? What do I want my legacy to be?

It might be an act of kindness, charitable giving or leaving a gift in my Will to my church and Christian Aid so my values and beliefs will live on. Write your thoughts on a third post-it (in a different colour from the previous two) and use two other pieces of string to connect your third post-it note to your previous two.

Stand back and look at the web of interconnectedness you have created, one that stretches back into the past and into the future and give thanks to God for it.



Inspire reflection

Activity 3, option 2: Paying it forward locally and globally

You will need:

- A large pin board.
- A few balls of string and scissors or pieces of cut string.
- Some pins.
- Post-it notes.
- Some pens.

Actions

Beforehand, prepare the three boards with the following images:

- 1 One with a picture of your church, or a church shape.
- 2 The second with a map of your local community, or pictures that represent it and some of the institutions within it, eg, schools, places of worship, factories and other places of work, food banks, shelters for the homeless people.
- 3 The third with a world map, and images of any projects overseas supported by your church already.

Invite participants to reflect on how they would like to pay generosity forward in each of these three locations, using the following questions.

For all three questions below, you might want to consider the difference leaving a gift in your Will would make to these communities.

1. **Reflect on all you have received in your life from others, perhaps from some in the local church community.** In an attitude of gratitude, think about how you would like to pay this generosity forward in your local church community. Write your thoughts on a post-it note and add it to the board.
2. **Think about your wider local community. How can you 'pay it forward' here?** Write your thoughts on a post-it note and add it to the board.
3. **Do the same for the wider world – the global community of which we are all a part. How can you pay it forward here?** Write your thoughts on a post-it note and add it to the board.

Inspire reflection

Activity 3, option 3: Paying it forward paper chains

You will need:

- Paperchain strips.
- Some pens.
- Glue sticks.

Actions

- ① Use the same questions as for activity 1, but instead of writing answers on post-it notes and adding it to a pin board, invite people to write their thoughts on paperchain strips (one per answer) and to then join these together using the glue sticks.
- ② Then join these to those made by others to create one large paper chain.
- ③ At the end of your service, invite someone to bring up the giant paper chain as an example of how we are all connected: to our past, present and future, and how powerful a chain of people 'paying it forward' can be.



Small Group Questions

Legacy as gift

- 1. Can you think of someone in your life or in the life of your church who has had a profound impact? What has their legacy been? What have their gifts enabled you to do?**
- 2. It can be difficult to be a 'cheerful giver' (2 Corinthians 9.6) when we feel we have limited resources. How can we help one another see the value of small gifts and actions? Can you think of something small that someone did for you that made a big difference in your life?**
- 3. What would you put in a time capsule to represent your church community or your personal journey of faith? What would you want to share about the practice of your faith with future generations?**

Starter for small group leaders:

Prior to the session you might like to find out about and share some pictures of individuals from the history of Christianity whose faith has left a legacy of change. For example:

- *Saints and martyrs, including modern day figure like Maximilian Kolbe (1894-1941)*
- *Founders of religious orders that continue to exist to this day*
- *Reformers like Elizabeth Fry (1780-1845) and Josephine Butler (1828-1906)*
- *Civil Rights campaigners like Dr Martin Luther King Jr. (1929-1968) and Archbishop Desmond Tutu (1931-2021)*
- *Musicians, artists and writers who expressed their faith through their works*

As a conversation starter, ask your group what they know about the people you have chosen. Come prepared to briefly share their stories.

Legacy as commitment

- 1. How do you put your faith into action? How can we show love towards our local and global neighbours in practice? What action for change is your church involved in?**
- 2. Have you ever had a sense of calling or vocation? This could be calling to a particular kind of service to others, to a type of work, or to caring for family and friends. Or perhaps you find it hard to discern what God is calling you to? Share your experiences with the group.**

Starter for small group leaders:

Choose an occasion in scripture when someone receives a call from God (e.g. Moses in Exodus 3; Samuel in 1 Samuel 3; Deborah in Judges 5; Mary in Luke 1; Matthew the tax collector in Matthew 9; the Samaritan Woman in John 4; Saul in Acts 9). Read this aloud to the group and ask what they notice about the story. Then offer pencils and paper and invite people to draw a simple 'map' of their journey of faith so far. Is their journey a straight line from A to B or does it have lots of changes of direction? What happened at key points of change?

Legacy as resolution

- 1. Many of us are planners. We like to know exactly what will happen next. But life doesn't always go according to plan. Can you think of an unexpected turn in your life? How did you handle it? Has it made you see the future differently?**
- 2. What are you most thankful for in your life?**
- 3. What ways do you have to remember important people in your life who have died? How would you like to be remembered?**

Starter for small group leaders:

Invite members of your group to bring with them an object or photograph that is connected to a special memory. If they are comfortable doing so, ask them to share this memory with the group.

Legacy as harvest

- 1. Do you find it easy to be patient? Have there been times when you have felt impatient with God? What helps you to wait and listen in your prayer time?**
- 2. Can you think of a place which is special to you? Share with others in your group what you value about this place. What do you know about its history? Who is involved in looking after it for the future?**
- 3. Waiting and hoping go hand in hand. When you plant a seed, you hope that it will grow and flourish in time with the right care. How do you hold on to hope for the future? What in our world gives you hope?**

Starter for small group leaders:

Invite your group to bring with them anything that helps them to pray. This could be a prayer card, an object they hold, their Bible, or a candle. Ask those present about where and how they pray. Acknowledge that it can be difficult to know how to pray.

Talk to your group about some different methods for taking time with God. These may be methods that you regularly use in your church or they could be something new for those present to try.