

Estate Planning

The primary goal of estate planning is to protect, preserve and manage your estate if you die or become disabled. Some people may see no need for estate planning until they reach a certain age, or they might believe that it's only for the wealthy. But in truth, **it's wise for everyone to begin the estate planning process as early as possible.**

Why is estate planning so important? Because it allows you to accomplish a number of crucial objectives:

- * Help ensure that your money and other assets go to the people **you choose**. Without a plan, state laws will determine your beneficiaries.
- * Specify who will care for your **minor children** if you become unable to.
- * Opportunity to leave something to a **favorite ministry** or charity.
- * Defuse potential conflicts over the distribution of your assets.
- * **Minimize** estate taxes and other transfer taxes.
- * Help to avoid the costs, publicity and delays of probate, the legal process used to value your estate, settle any debts, pay taxes and transfer assets to your heirs.
- * Help ensure that you and your affairs are taken care of in the manner you wish if you should become **incapacitated**.

Without an estate plan, the fate of your assets and your loved ones may be decided by lawyers, local and provincial government and tax agencies. Taxes and lawyer's fees can eat away at your estate, and distribution of your assets could be delayed at a time when your heirs need them most.

So why doesn't everyone have an estate plan? Aside from a natural reluctance to face our own mortality, some people are put off by the belief that estate planning will be complicated, time consuming and costly. In fact, setting up an estate plan doesn't have to be a complex process.

Nearly 70% of families do not have an estate plan or a plan that meets their needs at this time. To get started in creating your estate plan, call Rev. Geri Johnston, Director of Planned Giving and request the free [estate planning guide](#).

We would like to partner with our Wesleyan churches this year as well through the presentation of our Estate Planning workshop. Your congregation will be given the opportunity to create their own estate plan. The workshop will walk your people through the process of creating estate planning documents. It will cover topics such as wills, probate, estate taxes, power of attorney, and revocable living trusts. Individuals or families will have the opportunity to sit down privately with a qualified lawyer and/or accountant to answer any questions and complete the [estate planning data guide](#). You may complete the estate planning guide and take it to your own lawyer or accountant, or we can do it for you at a low cost. Such Fees for creating these documents will be discussed in person, or during the workshops.

