

Are **YOUR** Affairs in Order?

This Long-Term Planning Checklist is to help you and your family discuss the uncomfortable topics to minimize confusion and smooth transitions when they happen. For more information, please contact Virginia Porta, PHUMC Foundation Director, at vporta@phumc.com or 501.978.0510.

1. Last will and testament

- Name a financial and/or custodial guardian for minor children.
- Name a financial and/or custodial guardian for your pets.
- List all personal property with instructions for distribution to people/charities.
- Name an executor to carry out the terms of your will.

2. Revocable living trust

- List all personal property with instructions for distribution to people/charities.
- Transfer your personal property into the trust.
- Name a successor trustee to manage your trust after you pass away.

3. Beneficiary designations

Name a beneficiary for all non-probate assets, including:

- 401(k) and IRA accounts
- Life insurance policies
- Pensions

4. Advance healthcare directive

- Outline your medical care preferences in your **living will**.
- Name a healthcare agent to make important medical decisions for you in your **medical power of attorney**.

5. Financial power of attorney

- Choose a financial agent to make important financial decisions for you including real estate transactions and naming charities and amounts you want them to receive.

6. Insurance policies/financial account information

- Gather copies of your life, health, auto, and home insurance policy documents. Include login and password credentials.
- Create a list of your financial accounts and institutions (e.g., bank accounts, credit

cards, mortgages, loans, subscriptions). Include login and password credentials.

7. Proof of identity documents

- Gather your proof of identity documents:
 - Social Security card
 - Photo identification card
 - Medicare/Medicaid card
 - Birth and marriage certificates
 - Divorce decrees
 - Prenuptial agreements

8. Titles and property deeds

- Gather the titles and deeds for your homes, vehicles, and real estate. Confirm the listed owner is correct.
- If you have established a trust, retitle your property so the trust is the owner (See #2).

9. Digital logins and passwords

- Consider naming a digital executor in your will (See #1).
- Create a list of your digital assets
 - Bank and financial accounts
 - Social media and email accounts
 - Logins for streaming services and other subscriptions
 - Digital files such as photos and documents
 - Administrative credentials for digital content (websites, blogs, etc.)

10. Funeral pre-planning

- Complete the PHUMC Celebration of Life Planning Guide:
 - Burial/cremation
 - Location (burial plot details or PHUMC Columbarium information)
 - Type of service you prefer
 - Preferred music choices, Biblical passages, speakers
 - Flowers
 - Preferred charities for donation

ESTATE PLANNING

The term “estate planning” or “legacy planning” often suggests a large portfolio full of legal documents, meeting people outside your family about your end-of-life wishes, and potential discord and disagreement instead of a sense of celebration of the wonderful and glorious life you have lived. But that doesn’t have to be the case. There is nothing that can address all of the unknowns which accompany the end of our earthly life. But YOU, yes, you, can take proactive steps to reduce the decision-making fatigue for your family and friends by making decisions now and informing others of your wishes.

This isn’t proposed as a task list to “get done” over a weekend. This list covers several opportunities you have to express your wishes and to have hard conversations now instead of in a moment of distress with your family and friends. By working through this tool and other resources, estate planning is easier than ever. What a wonderful gift you can give your family and friends to discuss options and document your decisions and wishes now.

In basic terms, estate planning is the process of deciding who will help manage your estate and who will receive assets when you die. The following discusses important legal documents you should include in your estate plan, why an estate plan is important, and how to create the plan.

1. Last will and testament

In your will, you specify who you want to look after your surviving family (in the case of minor children), pets, and who you want to inherit specific assets and property after your death. This covers tangible assets (real estate, personal possessions) and intangible assets (bank and investment accounts). Recipients of your assets are called your beneficiaries and can be your family members, friends, or institutions important to you.

You can also name guardians (both custodial and/or financial) for your minor children and pets and choose an executor to carry out the wishes in your will. By taking care of this first step, you can ensure the people and causes you care about are looked after when you are gone.

2. Revocable living trust

A revocable living trust is a legal instrument that lets you protect and distribute your assets after you die. The trust becomes a legal entity that “owns” the assets you put into the trust but allows you to use and control that property while you are alive. A trust is a bit more complicated and takes more work to create and maintain than a will, but it allows your assets to avoid the time and expense of probate. After your death, assets in a revocable living trust can be distributed to your beneficiaries quickly and privately.

A revocable living trust is usually created by an attorney, signed by you, and notarized. In it, you will name a successor trustee, the person responsible for managing the trust after your death. Once a living revocable trust is created, you should transfer your property to the trust.

3. Beneficiary designations

Certain types of assets can skip probate and instead be transferred directly to a beneficiary after your death. These assets are called non-probate assets and include 401(k) pension proceeds and life insurance policies and may not be included in your will. As the account owner, you are responsible for contacting each institution where you have non-probate assets (e.g. bank and life insurance provider) and name your beneficiary(ies) or trust. Beneficiary designations override what is written in your will, so it is important for you to keep them updated.

4. Advance healthcare directive/living will

The purpose of an advance healthcare directive is to outline how decisions should be made regarding your medical care if you are unable to make those decisions yourself. This is typically a two-part document. Part one is the living will, and part two is the medical power of attorney. With a living will, you define your medical care preferences in case you cannot communicate with them. Choices can be made about medication, treatment protocols, surgical procedures, end-of-life care, etc. Note: many care facilities request specific end-of-life decision documentation.

A medical power of attorney, someone who will be called your healthcare agent, can make healthcare decisions for you if you are unable to do so (e.g., you are in a coma or unconscious). The purpose of these documents is to declare your medical wishes for a “future you” that cannot. Many hospitals and doctors’ offices have these forms available for your use.

5. Financial power of attorney (POA)

You are also able to give legal authority to manage your finances and property through a financial power of attorney. This covers paying bills, making bank deposits and managing real estate property. Banking institutions require this document to be notarized.

Your financial agent can access your assets to pay your medical bills and support your family if you are incapacitated. Your healthcare agent and financial agent may work together to ensure you can afford the medical care chosen for you. There are many simple financial POA template available online.

6. Insurance policies/financial account information

It is a good idea to gather and keep all your insurance policy documents together (home, auto, life, etc.). This is also a good time to ensure you have appropriately updated the beneficiary information as well as any login and password credentials.

You can also create an Excel spreadsheet or a notebook including information for all bank accounts, credit cards, mortgages, loans, tax returns, pension plans, retirement benefits, and other investments. It is important to include the account numbers/names, login credentials, those who are authorized to access the information and the date this information was last updated. If included in a spreadsheet, it is easy to include hyperlinks to the login page for electronic access to each account.

7. Proof of identity documents

To provide the most and best help to your executors and your loved ones, collect any of your identification documents in one place. This includes your Social Security card, a photo identification card, Medicare/Medicaid card, birth and marriage certificates, divorce decrees, Armed Forces service/discharge papers, real estate documents that placed assets into a trust, and any prenuptial agreements.

8. Titles and property deeds

Make sure you have the title and deed for all your property — home(s), vehicle(s), and other real estate. If you have created (or are planning to create) a revocable trust, transfer these pieces of property into the trust to skip probate (See #2). Confirm that the owner of these assets is listed as the trust. Note: Names on deeds or titles override what is included in your will. For example, if you include your surviving spouse or the trust as a co-owner on a property deed, they will be the legal owner of the property even if you try to give it to someone else in your will.

9. Digital logins and passwords

It is estimated that the average person may have more than 250 passwords. It can be challenging to maintain and ensure security of that number of login credentials. You should begin now to create a listing of all digital assets. This includes the obvious ones like your email accounts, banking and financial

accounts, and all social media accounts. But you must also remember to include access to electronic health records, subscription services, photo sharing or storage platforms, and any other digital assets (blogs, online journals, websites, etc.). There are several password manager programs available in addition to using a written record.

In addition to creating a list of all digital assets, you can also consider naming a digital executor in your will (See #1.). This person will have the responsibility of accessing, managing, archiving, distributing digital property, and/or closing your digital accounts as you define in your will.

There are both pros and cons to designating a digital executor. Often, people will choose the same person to manage their digital property as the executor of their will. If you choose to designate different people as executor and digital executor, it is common to include language in your will so that they must work together to best fulfill your wishes.

10. Funeral pre-planning

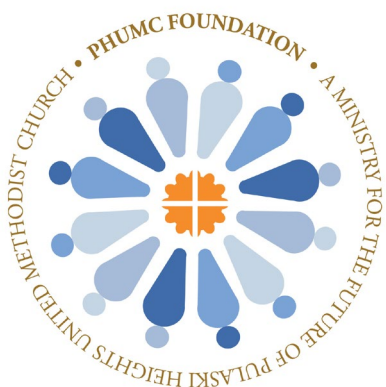
One of the greatest gifts you can make for your family and loved ones is to pre-plan your funeral or memorial service. PHUMC has a tool to help with those difficult or awkward conversations. Contact a clergy member to begin those discussions.

Details you will need to consider include but are not limited to the following: burial or cremation, location in the PHUMC Columbarium or cemetery, type of service you prefer along with Biblical passages, music choices, speakers, flowers, visitation or reception, and preferred charities for memorial gifts.

11. Now what?

Once you have worked your way through this checklist, have all your estate planning documents in hand and store them in a safe, but easily accessible, location. Consider sharing the location information with your loved ones. Also, it is wise to share a copy of the documents with the people who may need them (e.g., your healthcare agent should receive a copy of your advanced healthcare directive).

Changes in lifestyles and expectations occur almost daily. Set a reminder to revisit these documents every three to five years unless you have a major life change such as a change in marital or family status, the death of a beneficiary or executor, significant changes in your financial status, relocation to a new state, changes in your health or the tax laws.



For additional information regarding donations to PHUMC Foundation, please contact Virginia Porta, PHUMC Foundation Director, at vporta@phumc.com or 501.978.0510.

For more information regarding the PHUMC Columbarium, contact Jennifer Shannon, PHUMC Columbarium Director at jshannon@phumc.com or 501.425.3996.