

Jacob Schmalzle Says Churches Need Better Probate Support Systems for Families

Spirit of Service founder Jacob Schmalzle is raising awareness about the growing need for churches to help families navigate probate and estate administration after the loss of a loved one.



Orlando, Florida Jun 8, 2026 (Issuewire.com) - Jacob Schmalzle, founder of the faith-based estate executor and trustee organization Spirit of Service (SOS), is calling for churches to play a larger role in supporting families through probate and estate administration.

Schmalzle says many congregations already provide emotional and spiritual care after a death, but often lack practical systems to help members manage the legal and administrative responsibilities that follow.

“Churches do an incredible job supporting families emotionally,” Schmalzle said. “There are meals, prayer groups, funeral support, counseling, and even estate planning. But once probate starts, many families suddenly feel like they’ve been dropped into a completely different world.”

According to recent estate-planning surveys, only about one-third of Americans have a will, and many families never discuss executor responsibilities in advance. Probate administration can also take more than a year, depending on the estate and state requirements.

Schmalzle says that lack of preparation often creates confusion during an already difficult time.

“Most people don’t know what an executor actually does until they become one,” he said. “Suddenly they’re dealing with court filings, financial accounts, property issues, tax paperwork, and family communication while they’re still grieving.”

The issue became personal for Schmalzle after the loss of both his father and grandmother within a short period of time. Navigating probate firsthand changed how he viewed estate administration and inspired him to create Spirit of Service in 2025.

“What stood out to me was how operational grief becomes,” he said. “Families are not just processing loss. They’re also trying to manage deadlines, paperwork, and major decisions with no roadmap.”

Spirit of Service was founded to provide estate executor and trustee services while working closely with church communities and families in need of fiduciary support.

Schmalzle believes churches are uniquely positioned to help because they already serve as trusted centers of community care.

“In many cases, families trust their church long before they trust a law office or financial institution,” he said. “That relationship matters when people are overwhelmed.”

He says churches do not need to become legal experts to make a meaningful difference. Instead, he believes congregations can help by encouraging estate planning conversations, educating members about executor responsibilities, and connecting families with trusted fiduciary resources when needed.

“Even simple conversations can reduce a huge amount of stress later,” Schmalzle said. “Families should talk openly about who will handle the estate, where documents are located, and what responsibilities come with probate.”

Spirit of Service has also begun expanding through church referral partnerships nationwide. The organization offers no-cost participation agreements for churches seeking estate administration resources for members.

The goal, according to Schmalzle, is to create stronger support systems around families during difficult transitions.

“For many families, probate becomes the first time they realize how complicated estate administration really is,” he said. “We believe churches can help bridge that gap with compassion, structure, and trusted guidance.”

Schmalzle also notes that churches increasingly discuss stewardship and legacy giving with members,

but practical probate administration is often left out of those conversations.

“A will is important,” he said. “But somebody still has to carry out the responsibilities after a person passes away. That part deserves more attention.”

As conversations around aging populations, family caregiving, and estate planning continue to grow nationwide, Schmalzle believes probate education will become an increasingly important topic for faith communities.

“Families need more than emotional support after a loss,” he said. “They need operational support too.”

Church leaders, families, and community organizations interested in learning more about probate preparation and estate administration resources can visit Spirit of Service online.

About Jacob Schmalzle

Jacob Schmalzle is the founder of Spirit of Service (SOS), a faith-based estate executor and trustee organization that helps families navigate probate and trust administration. Inspired by his personal experience managing family estates after the loss of his father and grandmother, Schmalzle founded SOS in 2025 to provide compassionate, service-oriented fiduciary support for families and church communities. Spirit of Service works nationwide with churches and families seeking trusted estate administration guidance and executor support.

About Spirit of Service

Spirit of Service (SOS) is a Christian Fiduciary Estate Management organization founded in 2025 by Jacob Schmalzle. The organization provides estate executor services, trustee support, probate coordination, and estate administration guidance for families navigating loss and transition. Spirit of Service was established to bridge the gap between churches and estate administration while promoting stewardship, compassionate service, and charitable giving. The organization donates a portion of its earned fees to churches and charitable organizations selected by clients. Learn more at www.mySOS.care.

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