



Give thanks. Give life.

National Donor Sabbath



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Christianity and Organ Donation

The Christian faith is based upon the revelation of God in the life of Jesus Christ. Throughout his life Jesus taught people to love one another and he proved his love for the world upon the cross. It seems in keeping with this that Christians consider donation as a genuine act of love and a way of following Jesus' example. This act of love then becomes the part of Christian discipleship or faith journey that is motivated by compassion to help someone else and demonstrates a sense of social responsibility.

Sacrifice and helping others are consistent themes in Christianity, which teaches the principle of seeking for others what you hope others would do for you. Enabling life to be lived as fully as possible is consistent with the teaching of the Son of God, Jesus Christ.

The Lord demonstrated with his own life how, even in sorrow, love enables us to embrace the needs of others. We can choose to donate our organs to save the lives of many people. The decision to donate at the end of life is the beginning of healing for many others.

Healing and saving life is a great gift. Jesus sent his twelve disciples out with the imperative to heal disease and illness. Christians should be encouraged to help others in need.

Sermon Ideas

Clergy have their own unique way of sermon preparation and delivery. With that understanding and appreciation, the following suggestions are given as ideas.

John 11:25-"I am the resurrection and the life".

Matthew 10:8 - "Health the sick...freely you have received, freely give."

1 Corinthians 15:35-58 - The spiritual body. Texts to teach about the resurrection, emphasizing that the physical body is transformed into a spiritual body, therefore the gift of organ and tissue donation does not affect the ability of one to be resurrected.

Luke 6:31-38- Give to others and God will give to you. This text could be explored as the command to give to others and the various ways that we can give, including organ donation.

Romans 8:28-29- Seeking the good. This scripture could be used to show that in the midst of tragic circumstances of sudden death, God seeks to find good with us. Donation may be one sign of good in an otherwise senseless death.

John 3:16-17- God gave His Son. God gave his son so that we might live in eternal life. We can donate organs when we no longer have need of them so that others may live in this temporary world.

Luke 14:12-14- Giving without reward. In this scripture, we are told to give to those who are in need without thought of reward from them. The need for organ and tissue donation is great.

Revelation 21:4-5 - "In eternity we will neither have nor need our earthly bodies; former things will pass away, all things will be made new."



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Scriptural References for presenting the Charitable Gift of Organ Donation

| Old Testament | |
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| Genesis 2:20-30 | The first transplant: A rib taken from Adam to give life to Eve |
| Leviticus 1:7 | "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." |
| Deuteronomy 30:15-20 | "Choose life so that you and your descendants may live." |
| Psalms 41 | Images of a healing Lord |
| Psalms 100 | Psalm of praise and thanksgiving |
| Psalms 107 | "consider the steadfast love of the Lord." |
| Psalms 111 | "I give thanks to the Lord." |
| Psalms 113 | Praises to the Lord |
| Psalms 116 | "O Lord, I pray, save my life!" |
| Psalms 145 | "The Lord is gracious and merciful." |
| Psalms 147 | "Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving." |
| Ecclesiastes 3:1-17 | "For everything there is a season..." |
| Isaiah 35:1-6 | "Strengthen the weak hands and make firm the feeble knees." "...the eyes of the blind shall be opened..." |
| Isaiah 40:31 | "but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength...they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." |
| Ezekiel 37 | The valley of dry bones: "These bones shall live." |

| New Testament | |
|----------------------|---|
| Matthew 5:7 | "Blessed are the merciful." |
| Matthew 7:7 | "Ask...seek...knock." |
| Matthew 7:12 | "In everything do to others as you would have them do to you..." |
| Matthew 25: 31-46 | Caring for the stranger |
| Luke 4:16-21 | "...and recovery of sight for the blind." |
| Luke 6:37-38 | "Give and it will be given to you." |
| Luke 14:12-14 | Give to those in need without expecting reward from them |
| John 3:16-17 | "God so loved the world that He gave his one and only son." |
| John 10:10 | "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly." |
| John 11:25 | "I am the resurrection and the life." |
| John 15:12-17 | "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you." |
| II Corinthians 9:6-8 | "Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." |
| 1 John 4:11 | "Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another." |
| Revelation 21:4-5 | "In eternity we will not need our earthly bodies. Former things will pass away, all things will be made new." |



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Sample Bulletin Inserts

You have the Power to Donate Life.

One organ and tissue donor can save and enhance the lives of up to 50 people. Talk to your family about your decision to help others in need through organ and tissue donation, and say "YES" to saving lives when you obtain or renew your New Mexico driver's license or ID card. To learn more, visit www.DonateLifeNM.org or call New Mexico Donor Services at 1-800-843-7672.

Give the Gift of Life.

We support organ and tissue donation as an expression of the highest humanitarian ideals of love and generosity. We ask that all members of the congregation consider this gift in the name of Christ, who gave his life that we might live life to its fullest. Sign up to be a donor on your New Mexico driver's license or Identification Card and talk to your family about saving lives. To learn more, visit www.DonateLifeNM.org or call New Mexico Donor Services at 1-800-843-7672.

The Ultimate Gift

Our church supports and encourages organ and tissue donation as the ultimate gift of one person to another. Take a moment to discuss life-saving organ donation with your family. Sign up to be a donor on your New Mexico driver's license or ID card. Please consider making this Gift of Life in the name of Christ, who gave his life so that we might live. To learn more, visit www.DonateLifeNM.org or call New Mexico Donor Services at 1-800-843-7672.

Newsletter Donation Insert

The need for life-saving organ donations is great. Almost everyone has the opportunity to share the greatest blessing, the Gift of Life by signing up to be an organ donor on your driver's license or ID card. Visit www.DonateLifeNM.org or call 1-800-843-7672 for more information.

Your decision to donate...

- May save or enhance the lives of up to 50 people.
- Will not cost you or your family anything. There are no costs for donation.
- Need not interfere with funeral arrangements, since donation does not change the body's outward appearance.
- Is an unselfish act of charity and love supported by all major religions in the U.S.
- Is encouraged regardless of your age or medical history.

Many more need help...

- 97,000 people await life-saving organ transplants in the U.S., including 500 New Mexicans.
- Every 12 minutes, another name is added to the national waiting list.
- 17 people die each day due to a lack of available organs for transplant.
- Organ donors saved the lives of 29,000 people last year in the U.S.
- 1 million people have improved lives thanks to tissue and bone transplant including 46,000 cornea transplants.



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Candlelight Ceremony for Organ & Tissue Donation

This scenario takes less than five minutes and has been very effective in many settings.

Location: Place of worship

Silence: 17 people, each holding a lit candle walk to the front and line up side by side facing the audience. They stand still while a person reads poem:

To Remember Me

The day will come when my body will lie upon a white sheet neatly tucked under four corners of a mattress located in a hospital busily occupied with the living and the dying. At a certain moment a doctor will determine that my brain has ceased to function and that, for all intents and purposes, my life has stopped.

When that happens, do not attempt to instill artificial life into my body by the use of a machine. And don't call this my deathbed. Let it be called the Bed of Life, and let my body be taken from it to help others lead fuller lives.

Give my sight to the man who has never seen a sunrise, a baby's face or love in the eyes of a woman.

Give my heart to a person whose own heart has caused nothing but endless days of pain.

Give my blood to the teenager who was pulled from the wreckage of his car, so that he might live to see his children play.

Give my kidneys to the one who depends on a machine to exist from week to week. Take my bones, every muscle, every fiber and nerve in my body and find a way to make a crippled child walk.

If you must bury something, let it be my faults, my weakness and all prejudice against my fellow man.

Give my sins to the devil. Give my soul to God.

If, by chance, you wish to remember me, do it with a kind deed or word to someone who needs you.

If you do all I have asked, I will live forever.

~Robert N. Test

Announcer:

Today, 17 people will die waiting for a life-saving organ transplant.

Each person blows out candle.

Sign up to be an organ donor. Sign up to Donate Life.

Candle holders exit