

Clergy Resource Materials

Worship Resources*

A sermon outline, sermon ideas, sample sermons, bulletin inserts, biblical passages, hymns and inspirational poems are included here to assist clergy in locating appropriate materials and preparing for donor events, memorial ceremonies and other related services.

Sermon Outline (Protestant)*

Scripture – John 3:16

- I. The theme through the Bible is God giving of His life.
- II. The principle theme of the New Testament is Jesus giving of His life so we can live.
 - a. Jesus gave His life.
 - i. No greater love demonstrated than this.
 - ii. No greater reward than giving so others can live.
 - b. Jesus gave His body—that we may be whole.
 - c. Jesus gave His blood—so we need not struggle for our own cleansing.

Scripture – Luke 10:25-37

- III. It is understood that we love ourselves enough to know we are worthy to give of ourselves.
 - a. The command is to love one another as ourselves.
 - b. We would certainly want others to give of their materials possessions, talents and time to improve our life.
 - c. We should do unto others, as we would have them do unto us.
- IV. Many are uncomfortable about what others think if we were to give to those in need.
 - a. But the Samaritan who had every cultural reason in the world not to help – did help.
 - b. Could we not/should we not be available to give to those in need of life saving procedures and gifts such as organs, tissues and blood?
 - c. We may feel uncomfortable about giving, but reality points out we shouldn't be.
 - i. Many people throughout history have cremated their bodies, as they saw no more need for the body.
 - ii. We need to remember, as the Moravians did, that death is the great equalizer.
 1. We may be rich or poor materially, but at death we are all equal because we don't take it with us.
 2. We should give that which will only be left behind to decay.
 - d. We should always be reminded that we go to God with only a rich or poor soul.

In Acts 3:1-10, Peter comes across a man crippled since birth sitting at the gate called Beautiful. Peter wasn't bothered by the man's plea for alms. Instead, Peter associated with this man (supposedly unclean because of impairment). Peter didn't have gold or silver, but instead he gave the man something more precious—new life through new legs. This nearly cost Peter his life (Acts 5), but Peter courageously gave the man the power to be whole so he could walk through the gate called Beautiful.

The gift of giving life is an eternal heritage left behind by the donor. Jesus, Peter and many others are known for their life-giving gifts. Today (many) places remember organ donors with a tree planted in their memory (or with memorial services).

We all have the opportunity to help our impaired neighbors live again with whole or nearly whole lives. We may not even know our “neighbor’s” name, but it is apparent that the giving of ourselves to help someone else certainly pleases Christ and God. It doesn’t matter if we are rich or poor materially, we can all give our organs, tissues and blood so that others can go through the gate called Beautiful.

*Adapted from “GIVING FOR LIFE: ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION” memorial services by Wayne Lanham, Director, Pastoral Care, Lynchburg General Hospital, Lynchburg, VA

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 and starting points.

John 11:25 – *“I am the resurrection and the life.”*

I Corinthians 15:35-58 – *The spiritual body*

These texts could be used to preach about the resurrection, emphasizing that in the resurrection the physical body is transformed into a spiritual body. Therefore, the gift of organs and tissues 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 to the command to give to others and various ways that we can give, including the giving of our bodies.

Romans 8:28-29 – *Seeking the good*

This text could be used to show how, in the midst of tragic circumstances of sudden death, God is seeking with us to find good. Donation may be one sign of good in an otherwise senseless death.

John 3:16-17 – *God gave His Son*

God gave His Son to us so that we might live in eternal life. Can we not give of our organs and tissues when we no longer have need of them so that others may live in this temporary world?

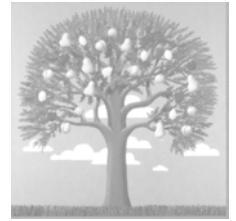
Luke 14:12-14 – *Giving without reward*

In this text 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.

Genesis 2:26-31 – *Responsible power*

In the moment of our creation we were given power over all things. Responsible use of this power would include using our own bodies to give life.

Scripture and Hymn References



Worship Resources*

The following scriptures are selected because of their message of giving, healing and understanding of the relationships between human beings. They could be used as calls to worship, responsive readings, affirmations of faith, etc. Be creative; use these or other scriptures in your formal and informal worship gatherings to share the good news of God and the blessing of God on healing. This list is not meant to be exhaustive but is meant as a starting point for worship resources and possible sermon ideas.

Genesis 2:20-30	Luke 6:31-38	Luke 14:12-14	Ecclesiastes 3:1-17
Psalms 8	Psalms 100	Psalms 116	Deuteronomy 30:15-20
1 John 4:7-12	Matthew 10:1-8	Matthew 25:31-46	Mark 3:1-5
Psalms 23	Psalms 103	Psalms 121	Luke 6:37-38
John 14:12	Luke 3:10-11	Romans 8:28-39	John 3:16-17
Psalms 34	Psalms 107	Psalms 145	II Corinthians 9:6-8
John 15:12-17	Luke 4:16-21	I Corinthians 1:45-58	James 5:13-16
Psalms 41	Psalms 111	Psalms 146	Ezekiel 37
Matthew 7:7-12	Luke 6:43a	Isaiah 35:1-6	
Psalms 82	Psalms 113	Psalms 147	

Suggested Hymns*

The following list of hymns is a start in your efforts to locate appropriate hymns from your own religious tradition that bring the message of hope and giving that organ and tissue donation and transplantation provide.

I'll Praise My Maker While I've Breath	Jesus, United By Thy Grace
Amazing Grace	Lift Up Our Hearts, O King Of Kings
Heavenly Father, Bless Me Now	O Son Of Man, Thou Modest Known
Come, Sinners, To The Gospel Feast	The Voice Of God Is Calling
Jesus, Lover of My Soul	O Thou Who Art The Shepherd
Have Thine Own Way, Lord	Open My Eyes, That I May See
Immortal Love, Forever Full	Blest Be The Tie That Binds
Hope Of The World	Jesus, Lord, We Look To Thee
O Young and Fearless Prophet	O God, Whose Will Is Life
We Give Thee But Thine Own	What Wondrous Love Is This
Take My Life And Let It Be Consecrated	Lord, Whose Love Through Humble Service

*Contributed by Tennessee Donor Services

SAMPLE BULLETIN BITS

Our church recognizes the lifesaving benefits of organ and tissue donation and encourages all members of our congregation to sign up on the donor registry and tell their family. To help save lives call Tennessee/Mountain Region Donor Services toll-free at 1-888-562-3774 or visit www.donatelifetn.org .



Give the GIFT OF LIFE. Our church supports organ and tissue donation as a gift of life, an expression of the highest humanitarian ideals. We ask that every member of the congregation make a decision about donation. Then, sign up on the donor registry and tell your family. Consider this gift in the name of Christ, who gave his life so that we might have life in its fullest. To help save lives contact Tennessee/Mountain Region Donor Services toll-free at 1-888-562-3774 or visit www.donatelifetn.org .



To think of others in our hour of grief and sorrow is truly compassionate and selfless. Please consider the gift of life...organ and tissue donation. Our church supports this gift in the spirit of love and generosity. Remember to sign up on the donor registry and tell your family. To help save lives contact Tennessee/Mountain Region Donor Services toll-free at 1-888-562-3774 or visit www.donatelifetn.org .



We all recognize the lifesaving benefits of organ and tissue donation. Take a moment right now to fill out donor registry form and then tell your family. To help save lives contact Tennessee/Mountain Region Donor Services toll-free at 1-888-562-3774 or visit www.donatelifetn.org .

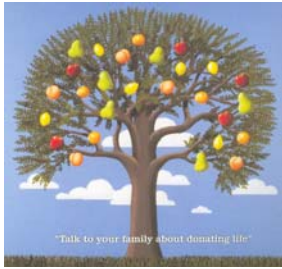


Over 100,000 people nationwide currently wait for a lifesaving organ transplant. Thousands of others are in need of tissue transplants such as corneas, bone grafts, skin grafts, etc. to restore their health. For many, the chance to live a full life won't come unless we decide to share the GIFT OF LIFE. Take a moment right now to fill out a donor registry form and tell your family. To help save lives contact Tennessee/Mountain Region Donor Services toll-free at 1-888-562-3774 or visit www.donatelifetn.org .



Our church supports and encourages organ and tissue donation as the ultimate gift one person can bestow upon another. Take a moment right now to fill out a donor registry form and tell your family. To help save lives contact Tennessee/Mountain Region Donor Services toll-free at 1-888-562-3774 or visit www.donatelifetn.org .





Religious Views Concerning Organ and Tissue Donation

Summary Statements of Various Religious Groups



AME & AME ZION (African Methodist Episcopal):

Organ and tissue donation is viewed as an act of neighborly love and charity by these denominations. They encourage all members to support donation as a way of helping others.

AMISH:

The Amish will consent to transplantation if they believe it is for the well-being of the transplant recipient. John Hostetler, world-renowned authority on Amish religion and professor of anthropology at Temple University in Philadelphia, says in his book, *Amish Society*, "The Amish believe that since God created the human body, it is God who heals. However, nothing in the Amish understanding of the Bible forbids them from using modern medical services, including surgery, hospitalization, dental work, anesthesia, blood transfusions or immunization."

ASSEMBLY OF GOD:

The Church has no official policy regarding organ and tissue donation. The decision to donate is left up to the individual. Donation is highly supported by the denomination.

BAPTIST:

Though Baptists generally believe that organ and tissue donation and transplantation are ultimately matters of personal conscience, the nation's largest protestant denomination, the Southern Baptist Convention, adopted a resolution in 1988 encouraging physicians to request organ donation in appropriate circumstances and to "...encourage voluntarism regarding organ donations in the spirit of stewardship, compassion for the needs of others and alleviating suffering." Other Baptist groups have supported organ and tissue donation as an act of charity and leave the decision to donate up to the individual.

BRETHREN:

While no official position has been taken by the Brethren denominations, according to Pastor Mike Smith, there is a consensus among the National Fellowship of Grace Brethren that organ and tissue donation is a charitable act so long as it does not impede the life or hasten the death of the donor or does not come from an unborn child.

BUDDHISM:

Buddhists believe that organ and tissue donation is a matter of individual conscience and place high value on acts of compassion. Reverend Gyomay Masao, president and founder of the Buddhist Temple of Chicago says, "We honor those people who donate their bodies and organs to the advancement of medical science and to saving lives." The importance of letting loved ones know your wishes is stressed.

CATHOLICISM:

Catholics view organ and tissue donation as an act of charity and love. Transplants are morally and ethically acceptable to the Vatican. According to Father Leroy Wickowski, Director of the Office of Health Affairs of the Archdiocese of Chicago, "We encourage donation as an act of charity. It is something good that can result from tragedy and a way for families to find comfort by helping others." Pope John Paul II stated, "The Catholic Church would promote the fact that there is a need for organ donors and that Christians should accept this as a 'challenge to their

generosity and fraternal love' so long as ethical principles are followed." Pope Benedict XVI proclaimed "To give one's organs spontaneously for transplants, in full awareness and full knowledge, means to give expression to a true, deep act of love for one's neighbor...As for myself, I have agreed to give my organs to whomever might be in need."

CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST):

The Christian Church encourages organ and tissue donation, stating that we were created for God's glory and for sharing God's love. A 1985 resolution, adopted by the General Assembly, encourages "...members of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to enroll as organ donors and prayerfully support those who have received an organ transplant."

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE:

The Church of Christ Scientist does not have a specific position regarding organ donation. According to the First Church of Christ Scientist in Boston, Christian Scientists normally rely on spiritual instead of medical means of healing. They are free, however, to choose whatever form of medical treatment they desire including a transplant. The question of organ and tissue donation is an individual decision.

EPISCOPAL:

The Episcopal Church passed a resolution in 1982 that recognizes the life-giving benefits of organ, blood and tissue donation. All Christians are encouraged to become organ, blood and tissue donors "...as part of their ministry to others in the name of Christ, who gave His life that we may have life in its fullness."

GREEK ORTHODOX:

On January 7, 2005 in Athens, the head of the Greek Orthodox Church, Archbishop of Athens and All Greece Christodoulos said that he and the members of the Holy Synod had signed organ donor forms. The church also asked clerics and parishioners to display solidarity in the cause. The Greek Orthodox Church has supported organ donation since 1999. The decision was then prompted by the death of a 12-year-old boy from Rhodes, who had waited 14 months for a heart transplant.

GYPSIES:

Gypsies are a people of different ethnic groups without a formalized religion. They share common folk beliefs and tend to be opposed to organ donation. Their opposition is connected with their beliefs about the afterlife. Traditional belief contends that for one year after death the soul retraces its steps. Thus, the body must remain intact because the soul maintains its physical shape.

HINDUISM:

According to the Hindu Temple Society of North America, Hindus are not prohibited by religious law from donating their organs. This act is an individual's decision. H. L. Trivedi, in *Transplantation Proceedings*, stated that, "Hindu mythology has stories in which the parts of the human body are used for the benefit of other humans and society. There is nothing in the Hindu religion indicating that parts of humans, dead or alive, cannot be used to alleviate the suffering of other humans."

INDEPENDENT CONSERVATIVE EVANGELICAL:

Generally, Evangelicals have no opposition to organ and tissue donation. Each church is autonomous and leaves the decision to donate up to the individual.

ISLAM:

The religion of Islam believes in the principle of saving human lives. According to A. Sachedina in his *Transplantation Proceedings* (1990) article, *Islamic Views on Organ Transplantation*, "...the majority of the Muslim scholars belonging to various schools of Islamic law have invoked the principle of priority of saving human life and have permitted the organ transplant as a necessity to procure that noble end."

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES:

According to the Watch Tower Society, Jehovah's Witnesses believe donation is a matter of individual decision. Jehovah's Witnesses are often assumed to be opposed to donation because of their belief against blood transfusion. However, this merely means that all blood must be removed from the organs and tissues before being transplanted.

JUDAISM:

All four branches of Judaism (Orthodox, Conservative, Reform and Reconstructionist) support and encourage donation. According to Orthodox Rabbi Moses Tendler, Chairman of the Biology Department of Yeshiva University in New York City and Chairman of the Bioethics Commission of the Rabbinical Council of America, "If one is in the position to donate an organ to save another's life, it's obligatory to do so, even if the donor never knows who the beneficiary will be. The basic principle of Jewish ethics-'the infinite worth of the human being'-also includes donation of corneas, since eyesight restoration is considered a life-saving operation." In 1991, the Rabbinical Council of America (Orthodox) approved organ donations as permissible, and even required, from brain-dead patients. The Reform movement looks upon the transplant program favorably and Rabbi Richard Address, Director of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations Bio-Ethics Committee and Committee on Older Adults, states that "Judaic Responsa materials provide a positive approach and by and large the North American Reform Jewish community approves of transplantation."

LUTHERAN:

In 1984, the Lutheran Church in America passed a resolution stating that donation contributes to the well-being of humanity and can be "...an expression of sacrificial love for a neighbor in need." They call on members to consider donating organs and to make any necessary family and legal arrangements, including the use of a signed donor card.

MENNONITE:

Mennonites have no formal position on donation, but are not opposed to it. They believe the decision to donate is up to the individual and/or his or her family.

MORAVIAN:

The Moravian Church has made no statement addressing organ and tissue donation or transplantation. Robert E. Sawyer, President, Provincial Elders Conference, Moravian Church of America, Southern Province, states, "There is nothing in our doctrine or policy that would prevent a Moravian pastor from assisting a family in making a decision to donate or not to donate an organ." It is, therefore, a matter of individual choice.

MORMON (CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS):

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints believes that the decision to donate is an individual one made in conjunction with family, medical personnel and prayer. They do not oppose donation.

PENTECOSTAL:

Pentecostals believe that the decision to donate should be left up to the individual.

PRESBYTERIAN:

Presbyterians encourage and support donation. They respect a person's right to make decisions regarding his or her own body.

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST:

Donation and transplantation are strongly encouraged by Seventh-Day Adventists. They have many transplant hospitals, including Loma Linda in California. Loma Linda specializes in pediatric heart transplantation.

SHINTO:

In Shinto, the dead body is considered to be impure and dangerous, and thus quite powerful. "In folk belief context, injuring a dead body is a serious crime. . .," according to E. Namihira in his article, Shinto Concept Concerning the Dead Human Body. "To this day it is difficult to obtain consent from bereaved families for organ donation or dissection for medical education or pathological anatomy. . . the Japanese regard them all in the sense of injuring a dead body." Families are often concerned that they not injure the itai, the relationship between the dead person and the bereaved people.

SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS):

Organ and tissue donation is believed to be an individual decision. The Society of Friends does not have an official position on donation.

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST:

Organ and tissue donation is widely supported by Unitarian Universalists. They view it as an act of love and selfless giving.

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST:

Reverend Jay Lintner, Director, Washington Office of the United Church of Christ Office for Church in Society, states, "United Church of Christ people, churches and agencies are extremely and overwhelmingly supportive of organ sharing. The General Synod has never spoken to this issue because, in general, the Synod speaks on more controversial issues, and there is no controversy about organ sharing, just as there is no controversy about blood donation in the denomination. While the General Synod has never spoken about blood donation, blood donation rooms have been set up at several General Synods. Similarly, any organized effort to get the General Synod delegates or individual churches to sign organ donation cards would meet with generally positive responses."

UNITED METHODIST:

The United Methodist Church issued a policy statement regarding organ and tissue donation. In it, they state that, "The United Methodist Church recognizes the life-giving benefits of organ and tissue donation, and thereby encourages all Christians to become organ and tissue donors by signing and carrying cards or driver's licenses, attesting to their commitment of such organs upon their death, to those in need, as a part of their ministry to others in the name of Christ, who gave his life that we might have life in its fullness." A 1992 resolution states, "Donation is to be encouraged, assuming appropriate safeguards against hastening death and determination of death by reliable criteria." The resolution further states, "Pastoral-care persons should be willing to explore these options as a normal part of conversation with patients and their families."



® *If you have specific questions regarding your faith's position on organ and tissue donation, please talk with your spiritual advisor. To be an organ and tissue donor, simply sign up when you apply for or renew your driver's license or go online to register:*

www.donatelifetn.org in Tennessee
www.save7lives.org in Virginia

