



# National Donor Sabbath

Nov. 14 – 16, 2003

**New Mexico Donor Services**  
2715 Broadbent Prkwy. NE, Ste. J  
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87107  
Albuquerque: (505) 843-7672  
**Toll Free: 1-800-843-7672**  
**Fax: (505) 343-1828**

Dear Religious Leader:

We ask that you join faith communities throughout New Mexico and the U.S. in observing the **National Donor Sabbath, the weekend of November 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>**, to increase awareness of the critical need for organ and tissue donations and the miracle of transplantation. The eighth annual interfaith celebration of life is a special time in which faith communities unite to stress the importance of donating life. The National Donor Sabbath is held two weeks before Thanksgiving, a time we pay special attention for our blessings and would like to help others in need.

As a religious leader, you can join this life-saving effort by talking to your congregants about organ donation, an opportunity to share the greatest blessing of all - the gift of life. **Most religions in the United States support organ and tissue donation** as an honored and compassionate expression of generosity and love. In this packet, there is a list of religious views on donation.

**The need for life-saving donations is great.** Right now, over 80,000 men, women and children are on the waiting list for a life-saving transplant. Each day 17 people die waiting an organ transplant. One donor can save the lives of 7 people in need of organ transplants, and improve the lives of 40 others through tissue transplants. Close to 25,000 people receive an organ transplant each year, and 900,000 people in the U.S. receive tissue transplants each year (ie. cornea, skin, bone transplants). But the number of organs and tissue available for transplant is dim compared to the numbers needed to save lives.

**New Mexico donation laws were changed in 2002** to better comply with an individual's decision to be an organ and tissue donor. Driver's licenses issued after Jan. 1, 2003 are in full compliance of donation laws. Licenses issued before 2003, even those with the red ♥, need a donation sticker added to the back of the license to update the status to that individual's decision.

### **Celebrate the Gift of Life by spreading the word...**

- Give a sermon about making a decision to save lives through donation. Many people mistakenly believe that their religion does not support donation because it has not been addressed.
- Read **"To Remember Me"** poem to your congregation, or include in newsletter or bulletin.
- Hold a candle-lighting ceremony and ask families to talk about saving lives.
- Pass out donor driver's license stickers after the service and have them available for all members.
- Feature an article in your newsletter about donation and transplantation. Highlight a member of the congregation that has benefited from donation, or who left a legacy through donation.
- Include donation information in your bulletin, web site, or e-mail.
- Discuss religious misconceptions about organ and tissue donation in classes or workshops.
- Invite congregation members who want to share their own story about donation or transplantation.

To get started, fill out the enclosed **Information Request form** and return it to New Mexico Donor Services by fax or mail. We would like to know about any activities within your congregation that help promote life-saving donations during the National Donor Sabbath or at any other time. We thank you for your commitment to teach your congregation about donating life.

Sincerely,

Maria Sanders,  
Community Services Director



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## *To Remember Me*

*T*he 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*



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## Sample Bulletin and Newsletter Inserts For Organ & Tissue Donation

**Organ Donation. It's all about Life!** When you donate your organs you give someone the most precious gift ~ a chance to live. You can sign up as an Organ Donor ♥ on your New Mexico driver's license. If your license was issued before Jan. 1<sup>st</sup> 2003, please add a **Donation Sticker** available at \_\_\_\_\_ (**where sticker will be available**).

**Give the Gift of Life.** (Name of Religion) supports 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. New Mexico laws have changed making the Organ Donor ♥ on the driver's license a person's consent to donate at their time of death. Until now, the ♥ only indicated a person's intent. Licenses issued before Jan. 1<sup>st</sup> 2003 need a **Donation Sticker** which are now available \_\_\_\_\_ (**where sticker will be available**).

**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 donation with your family. Sign up to be a donor on your New Mexico driver's license. Please consider making this gift of life in the name of Christ, who gave his life so that we might live.

## 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 lighted candle (lighted candle represents people awaiting transplants)

They walk to the front where everyone can see them.

They line up side by side, facing the audience

They stand still.

Each person blows out their own candle.

A voice announces:

**"Today, 17 people will die because there are not enough organs available for transplant. Sign up to be a donor and talk to your family about saving lives through organ and tissue donation."**

Candle holders exit



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### Sacred text to be used in addressing Organ and Tissue Donation

Transplants are not specifically mentioned in most sacred texts because they are a very recent development. However, there is nothing that would prevent them. The timeless content of the texts speak to donation in principle.

#### Old Testament

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	Psalms 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

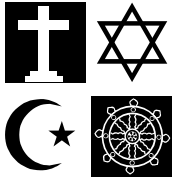
Matthew 5:7	"Blessed are the merciful."
Matthew 7:7	"Ask...seek...knock."
Matthew 7:12	"In everything do to others as you would have them do to you..."
Matthew 25: 31-46	Caring for the stranger
Luke 4:16-21	"...and recovery of sight for the blind."
Luke 6:37-38	"Give and it will be given to you."
Luke 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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## Religious Views of Organ Donation

Most religious or spiritual groups accept organ and tissue donation as a gift of life to a fellow human being. Here are some views of donation and transplantation from various religions, denominations and societies, and although it is not exhaustive, it does demonstrate the mood of the religious community. If you are uncertain about the moral, ethical or spiritual value of donation, please discuss it with your spiritual advisor.

**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** – Approved if there is a definite indication that the health of the recipient would improve, but reluctant if the outcome is questionable.

**BAHA'I** – Transplantation is acceptable if it is prescribed by medical authorities. Bahaists are permitted to donate their organs and bodies for restorative purposes and medical research.

**BAPTIST** – Donation is supported as an act of charity and the church leaves the decision to donate up to the individual.

**BRETHREN** – The 1993 Church of Brethren's Annual Conference resolution in support of donation states: "We have the opportunity to help others out of love for Christ, through the donation of organs and tissues."

**BUDDHISM** – Organ and tissue donation is a matter of individual conscience and place a high value on acts of compassion. Reverend Gyomay Masao, founder of the Buddhist Temple in Chicago states, "We honor those people who donate their bodies and organs to the advancement of medical science and to saving lives."

**CATHOLIC** – Donation is viewed as an act of charity and fraternal love. Something good that can result from a tragedy and a way for families to find comfort by helping others. His holiness Pope John Paul II made an official statement in 1990 that he "invites all Catholic institutions to promote awareness of the need for organ and tissue donors. Those who believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave his life for the salvation of all, should recognize the urgent need for organs for transplant as a challenge to their generosity and fraternal love."

**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 to enroll as organ donors and prayerfully support those who have received an organ transplant."

**CHRISTIAN SCIENTISTS** – Donation and Transplantation is an individual decision. The Church of Christ Scientist takes no specific position on transplants or organ donation as distinct from other medical or surgical procedures. According to the First Church of Christ Scientist in Boston, Christian Scientist normally rely on spiritual rather than medical means for healing. They are free however, to choose whatever form of medical treatment they desire, including organ/tissue transplant.

**EPISCOPAL** – The Episcopal Church passed a resolution in 1982 recognizing the life-giving benefits of organ and tissue donation and encourages all Christians 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."

**EVANGELICAL** – A resolution passed in 1982 encouraged the members "to sign and carry Organ Donor Cards." The resolution also recommended "that it become the policy of our pastors, teachers and counselors to encourage awareness of organ donation in all our congregations."

**GREEK ORTHODOX** – Not opposed to organ donation as long as the organs and tissue in question are used to better human life. Donation of the entire body for experimentation or research is not consistent with tradition.

**GYPSIES (Romany)** – 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 to their belief about the afterlife. Traditional belief contends that for one year after a person dies, 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 and tissue. This act is an individual decision. 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.



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**ISLAM** – The religion of Islam strongly believes in the principle of saving human lives. 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. Organs should not be stored but transplanted immediately.

**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 tissue before being transplanted.

**JUDAISM** – All four branches of Judaism (Orthodox, Conservative, Reform and Reconstructionist) support and encourage donation. If it is possible 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. Organ donation is actually a "moral obligation." It is the only "mitzvot" or good deed, an individual can perform after death.

**LUTHERAN CHURCH - MISSOURI SYNOD** – This was the first national church to publicly call for Americans to donate their organs after death by signing an Organ Donor Card. The resolution, passed in 1981, included recommendations that pastors and teachers inform members about organ donation and that family members express their intent to donate.

**LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICAN** – 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." It called on members to consider donating organs and to make 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 or their 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 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 THE 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. Donation is not opposed.

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

**PRESBYTERIAN** – Presbyterian churches encourage and support donation. They respect a person's right to make decisions regarding their own body.

**PROTESTANTISM**— Encourage and endorse organ donation.

**SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST** – Donation and transplantation are strongly encouraged by Seventh-Day Adventists. The Church has 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, so injuring the dead body is a serious crime. Donation is considered to be such an injury. Family is concerned that the itai—the relationship between the dead person and the bereaved people—not be harmed.

**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**— United Church of Christ people, churches and agencies are extremely and overwhelmingly supportive of organ sharing. The General Synod states that there is no controversy about organ sharing, just as there is no controversy about blood donation in the denomination. 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 passes a policy statement regarding donation stating 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 donor 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."



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**Information Request Form**

You are the key to the success of National Donor Sabbath. Please help spread the word of life-saving and life-improving donations.

We encourage you to distribute the **Driver's License Donation Sticker** to everyone who has a Driver's License issued before January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2003. Changes in the New Mexico laws last year make the Organ Donor ♥ on the driver's license that individuals decision to be a donor, to be carried out at their time of death.

How many bulletin inserts would you like? \_\_\_\_\_

How many driver's license stickers? \_\_\_\_\_

**Please check the following ways you plan to address the message of lifesaving donations:**

- |                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| _____ Sermon           | _____ Classes or workshop                     |
| _____ Bulletin Inserts | _____ Candle lighting ceremony during worship |
| _____ Newsletter       | _____ Web-site or e-mail                      |

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**This information will help us determine your congregation's impact on donation education.**

How many people are in your congregation? \_\_\_\_\_

How many people attend services each week? \_\_\_\_\_

How many families receive newsletter? \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Church: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_ Web site: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please fax to: (505) 343-1828**

**Return by mail to:**  
**New Mexico Donor Services**  
**2715 Broadbent Parkway NE, Suite J**  
**Albuquerque, NM 87107**

**If you have any questions or comments, please call us at 1-800-843-7672 or (505) 843-7672.**