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Donate Life Texas Collaborates with Faith Communities to Offer Hope **--National Donor Sabbath Observed Nov. 14-Nov. 16**

HOUSTON, TEXAS (Nov. 6, 2014) – Join [Donate Life Texas](#) in celebrating [National Donor Sabbath](#) this Nov. 14-16, a time for people of all religions to honor those who have given the lifesaving gift of organ, eye and tissue donation. Every year during this special time, donation and transplant organizations work closely with faith communities to bring the message of donation to congregations nationwide.

Faith plays a significant role in the decision to register as a donor. All major religions support organ, eye and tissue donation, and believe it to be a final act of kindness and generosity. Many faith leaders focus on the [gifts of hope](#) passed to others by supporting donation and transplantation. Professionals in the health care community bring awareness to all worship groups across the nation

“While religions differ in many ways, the commonality among all of them is the sharing of positive, inspiring messages that instill hope,” said Kevin Myer of Donate Life Texas. “Since people often turn to their faith leaders for help when dealing with life and death issues, National Donor Sabbath provides an opportunity for faith communities to share their views and join in the conversation.”

Every day, more than 75 people receive the gift of life through donation and transplantation across the country. Thousands receive lifesaving [tissue donations](#) and countless others receive the precious gift of sight. Even so, more than 13,000 people in Texas are on the waiting list for a lifesaving organ transplant.

“By registering to be an organ, eye and tissue donor, you can offer hope to the more than 120,000 men, women and children across the United States currently awaiting organ transplants and hundreds of thousands more in need of cornea and tissue transplants,” said Myer.

To register as a donor and for more information, visit www.donatelifetexas.org or www.donevidatexas.org.

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About Donate Life Texas

The Donate Life Texas organ donor registry started in 2006 and celebrated its 5 millionth registration in early 2014, making it among the fastest growing registries in the country. The registry is supported by all three Texas organ procurement organizations, [LifeGift](#), [Southwest Transplant Alliance](#) and [Texas Organ Sharing Alliance](#).

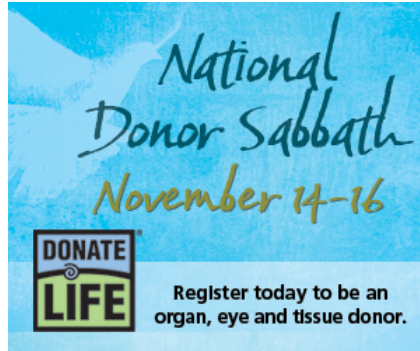
Signing up is fast and easy at [DonateLifeTexas.org](#) and provides a way for individuals to make their wish to be an organ, eye and tissue donor known. It also provides legal, first-person authorization for organs to be donated upon death, which removes the burden of decision-making from the family during an already difficult time.

Donate Life Texas is part of the [Donate Life America](#) not-for-profit alliance of national organizations and local partners across the United States, serving as a national voice and inspiring all people to save and enhance lives through organ, eye and tissue donation.

About LifeGift

LifeGift is a nonprofit, 501(c) 3 organization that offers hope to individuals needing transplants in 109 Texas counties in the Houston area, North Texas and West Texas. It is a founding member of [Donate Life Texas](#), the organization that runs the organ, eye and tissue donor registry.

Editor's note: See next page for helpful chart outlining specific denominations and beliefs.



Religious Viewpoints on Organ, Eye and Tissue Donation

RELIGION/DENOMINATION	SPECIFIC BELIEF
AME and Zion AME	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 donation if they know it is for the health and welfare of the transplant recipient. They would be reluctant to donate their organs if the transplant outcome was known to be questionable. John Hostetler, an authority on Amish religion, says in his book <i>Amish Society</i> that "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, anesthesia, hospitalization, dental work, blood transfusions and immunization."
Assembly of God	The Church views the decision to donate as an individual choice. Organ and tissue donation is highly supported by the denomination but the decision to donate is up to the individual.
Baptist	The church leaves the decision up to the individual and donation is supported as an act of charity.
Buddhism	Buddhists believe that organ and tissue donation is a matter of individual conscience and places high value on acts of compassion. The importance of letting loved ones know your wishes is stressed.
Catholicism	Organ and tissue donation considered an act of charity and love, and transplants are morally and ethically acceptable to the Vatican.
Christian Science	Christian Scientists normally rely on spiritual means of healing instead of medical. They are free, however, to choose whatever form of medical treatment they desire, including transplants.

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."
Church of Christ/Independent	Organ transplants should not be a religious problem.
Episcopal	The 70 th General Convention of the Episcopal Church recommends and urges "all members of this Church to consider seriously the opportunity to donate organs after death that others may live, and that such decisions be clearly stated to family, friends, church and attorney."
Evangelical Covenant Church	The Evangelical Covenant Church passed a resolution at the Annual Meeting in 1992 encouraging members to sign and carry organ donor cards. The resolution also recommended "that it becomes a policy with our pastors, teachers, and counselors to encourage awareness of organ donation in all our congregations."
Greek Orthodox	The Church supports donation as a way to better human life in the form of transplantation that would lead to improvements in the treatment and prevention of disease.
Hinduis	As stated by the Hindu Temple of Society of North America, organ and tissue donation is an individual decision and Hindus are not prohibited by religious law from donating their organs or tissues.
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 strongly believes in the principle of saving human lives. According to A. Sachedina in <i>Transplanting Proceedings</i> , "The majority of 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 Witness	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 against donation because of the opposition to blood transfusions. However, this merely means that all blood must be removed from organs and tissue before being transplanted.

Judaism	In principal Judaism sanctions and encourage organ, eye, and tissue donation in order to save lives. Rabbi Elliott N. Dorff wrote that saving a life through organ donation supersedes the rules concerning treatment of a dead body. Transplantation does not desecrate a body or show lack of respect for the dead, and any delay in burial to facilitate organ donation is respectful of the decedent. Organ donation saves lives and honors the deceased.
Lutheran Church	The Lutheran Church passed a resolution in 1984 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 and to make any necessary family legal arrangements, including the use of a signed donor card."
Mennonite	There is no prohibition against donation and transplantation in the Mennonite faith. Church officials state such decisions are individual ones.
Mormons	The Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints recognizes that "the donation of organs and tissues is a selfless act that often results in great benefit ...The decision to will or donate one's own body organs or tissue for medical purposes, or the decision to authorize the transplant of organs or tissue from a deceased family member, is made by the individual or the deceased member's family." (Handbook 2: 21.3.7)
Presbyterian	Presbyterians encourage and endorse donation. It is an individual's right to make decisions regarding his or her own body. The resolution states, "the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) recognizes the life-giving benefits of organ and tissue donation, and thereby encourages all Christians to become organ and tissue donors as a part of their ministry to others ..."
Quakers	Officials for the Quaker faith do not oppose organ donation and transplantation. The decision, they say, is an individual one.
Seventh-Day Adventist	Donation and transplantation are strongly encouraged. In fact, Seventh Day Adventists have many transplant hospitals, including Loma Linda in California, which specializes in pediatric heart transplants.

<p>Southern Baptist Convention</p>	<p>In 1988, the Southern Baptist Convention resolved that because “resurrection does not depend on body wholeness” and that “organ transplant technology has transformed many lives from certain death to vibrant productivity,” the SBC encourages “voluntarism regarding organ donations in the spirit of stewardship, compassion for the needs of others, and alleviating suffering.” (Resolution on Human Organ Donations, June, 1988.)</p>
<p>Unitarian Universalist</p>	<p>Organ and tissue donation is widely supported by Unitarian Universalists who view it as an act of love and selfless giving.</p>
<p>United Methodist</p>	<p>"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," reports a church policy statement. In a 2000 resolution the church also "encourages its congregations to join in the interfaith celebration of National Donor Sabbath ... another way that United Methodists can help save lives."</p>
<p>United Church of Christ</p>	<p>When advocated by medical practitioners to improve or preserve human life, this procedure is encouraged, providing all appropriate consents are obtained.</p>