

03-GS-36 The Twenty-fourth General Synod adopts the amended resolution, “Organ, Tissue, and Blood Donation,”

ORGAN, TISSUE AND BLOOD DONATION

WHEREAS, God taught us to love one another through Jesus Christ, whose life was sacrificed that we might live abundantly; and

WHEREAS, much of the ministry of Jesus was a ministry of healing, restoring persons to wholeness in body and spirit and relationships; and

WHEREAS, the miracle of organ and tissue transplantation brings with it the opportunity for renewed health and well being and represents the highest form of compassion and love for others; and

WHEREAS, thousands of people suffer and die from an unnecessary shortage of organ and tissue donations; and

WHEREAS, resurrection and eternal life are not dependent on the condition of one’s physical body at or after death, but upon the grace of God alone as promised in the gospel; and

WHEREAS, donors of organs, tissues may be living related donors (LRD), living unrelated donors (LURD), and donors upon death.

WHEREAS, some states maintain an organ and tissue donor registry approved by an Organ Procurement Organization (OPO), while other states do not; and

WHEREAS, in states which require consent of surviving family members for organ and tissue donation upon death, the family faces a time of tragic loss without an official statement from the United Church of Christ; and

WHEREAS, the recovery of organs and tissues, though subject to temptation and abuse, is normally carried out responsibly and caringly.

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED that the Twenty-fourth General Synod of the United Church of Christ

- 1) encourages and supports members of the United Church of Christ to become organ, tissue, blood and bone marrow donors as an expression of Christian ministry, generosity, stewardship and love;
- 2) calls upon those providing pastoral care to provide information to help individuals make informed decisions regarding organ, tissue, blood and bone marrow donation;

- 3) encourages and supports individuals to join Organ Procurement Organization-approved organ and tissue donor registries where applicable, to sign organ and tissue donor cards, and to include within their advanced medical directives instructions for organ and tissue donation;
- 4) encourage and support those individuals who decide to become organ and tissue donors to discuss and share their life-giving decision with their clergy and their families.
- 5) encourages members and ministries of the United Church of Christ to investigate realities of organ and tissue donation and access to organ and tissue donation and share that information with all the settings of the church.
- 6) calls on all settings of the church to engage the American Red Cross, the United States Food and Drug Administration, and other regulatory agencies to change blood donation policies so that gay and bisexual men (who are, at present, prevented from donating blood because of sexual histories) may be included in the pool of potential donors as well as increase the opportunities and gifts of blood donation.

Funding for this action will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available. These same agencies would be the ones responsible for developing the strategy and program to implement this resolution.