

Dan Gutenson:

My name is Dan Gutenson. I pastor church in Watts Chapel Baptist Church, I've been a lifelong resident of Lincoln County, received a kidney transplant 11 years ago. Kidneys are the most in demand, the most transplanted organ is the kidney, of course, then the most needed organ is a kidney.

Well, my family has a history of polycystic kidney disease, and I knew very early in life that I was probably going to have the disease and going to have to have a transplant. My daughter has the same disease and will probably need a transplant at some point. And I have a twin sister that also has the disease and she's getting close to getting on the list.

Of course, I knew that I had the disease some years ago when I did some kind of probably physical in high school. And so they monitored every once in a while to keep an eye on the kidney, kidney function they always did an ultrasound occasionally to see how many cysts were growing on the kidney. Polycystic kidney disease, many cysts on the kidney and the cyst grow so large that they destroy the kidney. And so when my creatinine level got high enough, they put me on the donor list or on the recipient list.

I made it known to the church where I was at and some of the folks wanted to be tested. And one lady Donna Harris, her husband had been in an accident, deep bruise down deep in his brain, went to Florida for a surgery and she came back and I just went by to see him, and she said, oh, we're going next Tuesday, so I'm going to give you a kidney. And I said, no, you've been through it enough. And she said I believe it's God's will for me to give you a kidney. And so it worked out if we went in or she was a match and those, there are some markers indicators on the kidney, a blood type, all that that's got to come together to match it. She was a match and like I say, 11 years later, oh, we're doing well.

You'll say, oh, there's like two million people that are on the organ donor registry and that's true. But of those there's shockingly less than 1% of those will die in such a way that they could be an organ donor. Matter of fact, I think it's three out of 1,000 only. So you figured that gets to be a real small number and there are a lot of folks on the donor waiting list or on the recipient waiting list. 19 people I think it goes a day die waiting for a life-saving organ. People have to die in such a way that they can be an organ donor. You have to be on life support when the kidney or the liver the lungs are harvested. I had a friend of mine just passed away and he didn't die in the hospital where he could be an organ donor, but he's donated skin, cornea, ligaments, bone, different things if they can do it. And even some heart valves and stuff they can harvest.

Well, he gives a gift of life and not only life, but a quality of life. And I would encourage people to sign up on the organ donor registry. I would have to be on dialysis three days a week if I went into clinic or I would have to do that at home self dialyze. And so it's definitely a quality and probably quantity of life for sure.