

Gary Langenwalter (cornea recipient)

During National Donor Sabbath, faith communities come together to honor donors, support recipients, and reflect on the power of helping others. Gary Langenwalter's story is a moving reminder of how donation can restore not only sight, but also independence, connection, and hope.

At what he expected to be a routine eye appointment, Gary learned that his weakening vision was anything but routine. What he first assumed was simply part of aging, or perhaps cataracts like other family members had experienced, turned out to be far more serious.

Over the course of his life and career, Gary Langenwalter has served in many roles, including as a pastor at United Methodist Church church. He has always lived an active and engaged life. Over time, however, he began noticing a decline in his eyesight, especially while driving at night. It was not until a series of tests, along with the frightening experience of an almost car accident on a rainy Oregon night, that Gary fully understood how much his vision loss was affecting his life.

Using corneal tissue generously provided through donation, Gary was able to have two successful corneal transplants.

As Gary reflects on the donors who made his transplant possible, his gratitude is overwhelming. "It means so much to me and to my wife and to our two sons and to their kids," he said. **"It's a gift that cannot be repaid. My donors gave me the gift of sight and of not being in pain. They gave me the gift of life, because without sight, it's really hard to function in this world."**

Gary also sees his experience through the lens of faith and service. He shared, "I believe healing can happen through the generosity of donors, the work of eye banks, and the skill of dedicated surgeons." His words reflect the spirit of National Donor Sabbath: compassion in action, communities coming together, and lives being touched through the selfless gift of donation.

For those considering whether to register as a donor, Gary offers this simple message: **"Through this gift, you will live on. And we're all in this together; this is how we can help each other."**