

Congregational Study/Action Issue
Approved by the Board of Trustees of the Unitarian Society of Ridgewood
Submitted by Reproductive Justice Committee of the Unitarian Society of Ridgewood
Co-Chairs: Carol A. Loscalzo and Mandolin Restivo
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1. Issue

The Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations has historically supported safe and legal abortion, yet has not authored a resolution about reproductive rights since 1993. Since this time, there have been numerous changes in reproductive health. Reproductive rights and health services are seriously under attack. There has also been an important calling from women of color for the use of the Reproductive Justice framework. Reproductive Justice represents a broader analysis of racial, economic, cultural, and structural constraints on women's power, according to SisterSong (www.sistersong.net) The right to have children, not have children, and to parent children in safe and healthy environments is a human right. It is in keeping with UUA principles and is worthy of our study and action.

2. In no more than 50 words, this section should answer why Unitarian Universalism might have a particular responsibility or position calling Unitarian Universalists (UUs) to engage the issue.

Unitarian Universalists have been on the frontline of anti-racist work for decades. The commitment to reproductive justice as a study issue would reenergize that commitment, and pay attention to the important intersections of race, class and gender. It is important to be informed by the work of feminist theologians, reproductive justice advocates, and Unitarian Universalists who are part of the reproductive justice movement.

3. *Topics for Congregational Study:* This section should contain a series of five to ten questions that illustrate the issue's field of study and that are suitable for use in congregational group discussion.

1. What is reproductive justice?
2. Why is focusing on individual choice inadequate?
3. How do power structures limit individuals' access to reproductive justice?
4. What are the choices in birth?
5. What moral questions does reproductive technology create?
6. How does sexual assault and childhood sexual abuse contribute to unintended pregnancies later in life?
7. How can eliminating racism, classism and sexism reduce the need for abortion and enable families to care for the children they do have?
8. How are pregnant women who use drugs stigmatized and what are the real dangers and solutions?
9. How can transgendered individuals maintain their reproductive rights?
10. How do economic justice and reproductive justice intersect?

4. Possible Congregational/District Actions: This section should contain a list of five to ten possible actions at appropriate levels for a congregation or district to use. The list should demonstrate a variety of possible commitment levels or available resources.

1. Form a Reproductive Justice Committee
2. Join Sister Song as an ally member.
3. Invite SisterSong to conduct reproductive justice training.
4. Educate congregation on reproductive justice, choices in birth and other relevant issues, including presenting a lay service on reproductive justice.
5. Show films about reproductive justice.
6. Present a reproductive justice workshop at district meetings.
7. Advocate for legislative positions that foster reproductive justice.
8. Give money to organizations that help women fund abortions.
9. Create interfaith networks and committees.

5. Related Prior Social Witness Statements

1. Reform of Abortion Statutes – 1963
2. Abortion – 1968
3. Abortion – 1973
4. Unitarian Universalist Statement On Survival And Population Control -1970
5. For The Right To Abortion -1975
6. Abortion: Right To Choose – 1978
7. A Religious Statement On Abortion: A Call To Commitment – 1980
8. Resolution On Abortion Clinic Bombings – 1985
9. Right To Choose – 1987
10. Federal Legislation For Choice - 1993