

## UUA, UUWF Presidents Commemorate 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of *Roe v. Wade* Decision

January 22, 2013

The Rev. Peter Morales, President of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), and the Rev. Marti Keller, President/Chief Executive Officer of the Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation (UUWF), issued this joint statement commemorating the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision:

"Today marks the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion in the United States. We pause to celebrate this significant milestone, the successes of the reproductive rights movement, all the brave people who fought for those successes, and we recommit ourselves to the ongoing movement for true reproductive freedom and justice.

Unitarian Universalists (UUs) have been on the frontlines of women's reproductive rights and anti-racism struggles for decades. Ten years before *Roe v. Wade* made abortion legal in the United States, UUs became the first religious organization to officially affirm a woman's right to choose abortion. Then in 1973, in response to the threat by religious conservatives to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, the UUA and the UUWF joined with other religious groups and founded the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights (RCAR). RCAR became the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (RCRC) in 1993, and the UUA and the UUWF continue their active membership today.

In 2003, thanks to a substantial gift from the UUWF, the UUA created the UUWF Clara Barton Internship for Women's Issues. The Clara Barton Internship makes much of the UUA's reproductive justice advocacy possible.

And most recently, UU delegates at the 2012 General Assembly voted to make reproductive justice the Congregational Study/Action Issue (CSAI) for 2012-2016. As the first religious organization to endorse 'reproductive justice', as distinct from 'reproductive rights', the CSAI is already creating unique and pioneering contributions to the field of faith-based reproductive justice advocacy.

Reproductive justice works to understand and address systemic inequalities as they relate to marginalized communities and people, and their reproductive and sexual lives.

Within the framework of reproductive justice, the UUA and the UUWF work with partner organizations to oppose the cultural, political, economic, and structural constraints that limit women's access to health care and full reproductive choice. As a human rights issue, reproductive justice promotes the rights of people to have the children they want to have, not to have children they don't want to have, raise their children in safe and healthy environments, and express their sexuality without oppression.

The struggle for reproductive justice does not isolate or pit important social issues against each other; rather it works to promote these rights across many areas: economic justice, immigration

justice, eradication of violence against women, LGBTQ equality, comprehensive sexuality education, environmental justice, and others.

On this day, as Unitarian Universalists and many others celebrate the hard-won victories of the past, it is more important than ever to acknowledge that there is still much work to be done. The spirit of *Roe v. Wade* – the idea that every woman should have autonomy in her reproductive and sexual life – has yet to be a reality for most communities in the United States. This work will be carried out in courageous partnerships every day in all parts of the country. To be brave is to know fear, to pass through it, and to act for justice. As we continue this vital work, may we find new ways as a religious community to be afraid, to overcome, and to be truly brave.”

Resources available:

Curriculum for Congregations: <http://www.uua.org/reproductive/calling/curriculum/index.shtml>

Congregational Resource packet: <http://www.uua.org/reproductive/action/200096.shtml>

Preaching resources:

<http://www.uua.org/documents/washingtonoffice/reproductivejustice/roepreachingresource.pdf>

Roe anniversary page: <http://www.uua.org/reproductive/action/281697.shtml>