

News – June 2016

Greeting from the President



Hello UUWF Friends,

Dr. Kirstie Lewis

My three-year term as the president of the UUWF board is soon coming to an end. There have been many positive developments since my term began in July of 2013 including those described below:

- We **re-imagined our administrative structure**, when our long-time executive administrator, Ellen Spencer, retired. We hired a new part time administrator, Dana Robb, and found that there are rewards to becoming more of a working board ourselves. This shift also required many changes in our financial activities and these have been ably handled by our Treasurer, Sue Boone. She informs us that we are financially stable and have the resources we need to carry out our mission of “advancing justice for women and girls and promoting their spiritual growth.”
- Ellen helped us to move out of our offices behind 25 Beacon St. in Boston. This involved cleaning out files, and **consolidating archival materials** which we are hoping to place with Meadville-Lombard Theological School in Chicago. Since these changes, we have been busy learning to function with a more or less virtual office, rather than a bricks and mortar one.
- Rev Marti Keller



In 2014 we created a position for a **UUWF Affiliated Minister** and recruited Rev. Marti Keller to be that person. She has been

increasingly active in developing our advocacy actions and writing informative and passionate blogs, on an almost-weekly basis for our website. Through her alerts we have signed on to many Inter-faith letters and petitions which are being sent to state and national legislatures as ways of defending the rights of women, especially with regard to reproductive health. We have signed on to several Amicus briefs to federal courts. These hard-won rights are being eroded, but many voices are now being raised in protest – and ours is one of those! She also provides spiritual and programmatic support to our Board of Trustees.

- We have had some wonderful moments at the Providence and Portland GAs in our various workshops and at our booth. We invite you to always come by and say hello should you be present.
- We developed a **survey of UU women** that has given us information about the issues that are most pressing to women today. Responders told us that reproductive and economic justice are at the top of the list of their important concerns. They also told us about the ministers they knew who have been speaking out about those issues in local congregations and we have been sharing the names of these ministers

and highlighting the work that they are doing on our website.

- With the assistance of our VP for communications, Gretchen Ohmann, we have expanded and updated our website. We have begun emailing newsletters on a regular basis to keep you informed about our activities. Gretchen is also helping us to become more active with social media – which includes our [Facebook page](#). Please visit us and Like our page!



- With the help of our VP for Funding Programs, Lynn Thomas, we applied to the UUA Fund for Social Justice for matching funds to develop a program we call [The New Prophetic Sisterhood](#). Our VP for Development, Rev. Beth Dana, along with our Affiliated Minister, Rev. Marti Keller, are co-leading this group. This initiative began with the goal of attracting 100 woman-identified UU ministers and candidates for ministry. We have recently reached and exceeded that goal and have more than 130 ministers involved. The NPS



Facebook closed group is now a place of lively conversation around issues of feminism and gender justice, both outside UU and institutionally as well. We hope and expect that sermons, blogs, poems, essays, and actions will make their

way to our New Prophetic Sisterhood website as a way of capturing our living history. This is just the beginning.

- Last Fall, we welcomed the twelfth **Women's Federation Clara Barton Intern**, Shaya French, who is working out of the new UUA offices in Boston. Her activities and achievements are highlighted in this issue of our e-news. We are grateful for the contributions she has made in her time with us.



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Claudia Jimenez



Rev. Joyce Palmer

A **Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley scholarship** has recently been awarded to Ms. Claudia Jimenez, as a woman of color entering the UU ministry. Rev. Joyce Palmer chairs this scholarship committee which was established in recognition of the work of the now deceased Rev. Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley, a well-loved minister and mentor who worked tirelessly to raise awareness of the need for more inter-racial, and inter-cultural congregations in our UU movement. A number of women of color who are entering the UU ministry, education ministry or music ministry have been aided with

this scholarship over the past decade. Please help us spread the word about the availability of these funds.



Monica Simpson, Cecile Richards

Finally, this year, we have chosen two remarkable women to honor with our [Ministry to Women](#) award. This award was first created by the UUWF in 1974 when [Ms Magazine](#) was the initial recipient. Dozens of well-known and highly respected women have received this award over the years in honor of their outstanding work on behalf of women and girls. In 2016, Monica Simpson, executive director of SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective, and Cecile Richards, the president of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America, have been named as recipients of our award. Both of these women are passionate activists and leaders in the fight for reproductive choice and reproductive justice. We are thrilled to announce that they will be attending GA this year and engaging each other in a dialogue on the theme of “From Reproductive Choice to Reproductive Justice” at our UUWF workshop on Thursday, June 23 where they will receive their awards. If you are attending GA, you won’t want to miss this event!!

There are more accomplishments that our current board has achieved over the past three years, but these are the ones that rise to the top of my mind. I would like to take this opportunity to thank my board members, our affiliated minister, our administrator, and all those UU women out there who are standing with us in commitment to our mission and on behalf of women and girls everywhere.

Although I will soon be turning over my position to someone new, I know that our fight for justice and equality for women and girls is far from over. The spirit and energy of feminism has been around for a very, very long time and it is needed now more than ever.

— Dr. Kirstie Lewis

UUWF Advocacy Update: A Full Plate



Rev. Marti Keller

The UUWF issues survey, which was circulated last year, helps guide our social justice advocacy work on behalf of women and girls. We have continued to focus on reproductive justice, economic justice, ending domestic violence and sexual assault, and will be finding more ways to speak out on the impact of climate change. This is a full public policy plate.

Assaults on reproductive freedom have multiplied on the state level, including the most recent bill passed by the Oklahoma legislature that would have criminalized abortion providers. It was vetoed by the governor. But there is much to watch on the

national front in this Presidential election year as well.

There are numerous and repeated attempts in Congress to add and broaden abortion restrictions to federal programs, including hearings held by a subcommittee investigating the legality of AmeriCorps members in New York City community health center who provided compassionate emotional support to women seeking pregnancy termination. Throughout the budget development process, there have been riders (language) prohibiting public financing of abortion services.

While most of the activity on Capitol Hill is uphill and defensive, there have been proactive efforts to make positive change. President Obama has issued an order mandating overtime pay for jobs previously not covered by this requirement: a little more than half of the beneficiaries will be women workers. The U.S. Senate just passed a bill that lays out a set of rights for victims of sexual assault, including the right to be informed of forensic tests, to prevent victims from being charged for rape kit testing, and to have evidence preserved without charge for 20 years or until the statute of limitations expires. It now goes to the House Judiciary Committee.

And even in the often discouraging arena of reproductive rights, two significant positive measures have been introduced or re-introduced. UUWF has joined a number of other faith based and secular organizations to endorse the Women's Health Protection Act, a critical proactive bill which would enact protections at the federal level to ensure the right of every individual to make their own decisions about whether and when to have children. It is a bold and major attempt to over-ride some of the most odious state laws that have been proposed and in

many cases passed in recent years. It would invalidate state TRAP laws (targeted regulation of abortion providers), end requirements that doctors have hospital admitting privileges—which has so gutted abortion clinics in places like Texas—and prevent the numerous pre-viability abortion bans that so limit the decision-making agency of women.

The UUWF has joined the National Women's Law Center, Planned Parenthood Federation of America, the National Council of Jewish Women and other advocates in endorsing the reintroduction of the Access to Birth Control bill, reaffirming the right to obtain contraceptives from pharmacies and requiring the provision thereof, without threats, harassment or outright denial of services.

This year's version of the bill has added language prohibiting the use of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) as a basis for challenging the application or enforcement of this law.

We will be joining other efforts in the coming weeks and months to object to the use of RFRA to privilege one individual's religious beliefs over another in exercising her right of conscience in decisions about whether or when to have children.

— Rev. Marti Keller

Clara Barton Intern for Women's Justice



Hello UUWF,

I wanted to provide a quick update on some of the projects I've been working on!

One of the most satisfying parts of this internship has been getting to meet and work with local and national partners from SisterSong, Forward Together's *Strong Families* campaign, *Jane's Due Process* in Texas, the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, National Council of Jewish Women, the All* Above All Campaign and many others.

In the lead up to Mother's Day I worked with our partner Strong Families on the 2016 Mamas Day campaign—soliciting stories and prayers from Black mamas in our faith to create a Worship resource “[Black Mamas Matter](#).” We also pulled out the stops on UUA social media and email lists to get the word out about sending Mamas Day cards to mamas in detention. Strong Families was hoping to deliver 2,000 cards to mamas in detention and with our collective efforts 4,500 cards were delivered!

I've sent out email alerts and written blogs keeping UUs involved in reproductive justice up-to-date on what some of our partners are doing. Most notably, UUs have listened to SisterSong's fabulous monthly webinar series sharing the stories of activists, artists and lawyers at the forefront of the reproductive justice movement. I've also worked with the UUA's Youth and Young Adult Office to offer support to youth and young adults working on these

issues and provided resources for a youth conference on women's issues that took place in Ventura, California.

In Texas I've been finding UU attorneys and *guardian ad litem*s who can attend [trainings](#) to assist young people seeking abortions in TX in the aftermath of TX conservative anti-abortion laws.

I've also had time to reflect more on feminism and gender and invite you to read my piece [Raised by the 2nd Wave, Moving Forward with the 3rd Wave](#).

I look forward to meeting some of you at General Assembly! As my internship comes to a close on June 30th, I feel incredibly grateful to the UUWF and the UUA for this opportunity to learn about grassroots and legislative organizing, make connections with movement leaders and work for more justice for women and girls!

— Shaya French

Minister's Profile: Rev. Dr Daniel Kanter

As part of our periodic UUWF key issues survey, we invited participants to name UU ministers who have done exemplary work to advance justice for women and girls. We did not restrict these kudos to one gender, and indeed we received the names of male



identified ministers whose congregants appreciated and wanted their contributions to be recognized.

Rev Daniel Kanter

Reverend Dr. Daniel Kanter, Senior Minister of the [First Unitarian Church of Dallas](#), was named numerous times. And it

is not surprising given , as described in an article in the UU World (December 2015), “the long and storied history” of this congregation with regard to reproductive justice, going back to the major role its Women’s Alliance played in working with Texas attorney Sarah Weddington on the historic U.S. Supreme Court Roe V. Wade case in 1973.

Daniel uses his pulpit, and most frequently his public prophetic witness pulpit including Facebook, to speak out about reproductive injustices. He posted recently following the passage of a bill in Oklahoma that would have criminalized physicians who performed abortions in that state, which was vetoed by Governor Mary Fallin:

“What does making abortion services illegal in Oklahoma do? Pushes women to other states to get care, increases poverty levels of women especially women of color, and puts lives in danger as home remedies will be used. Sad that governments make ideological decisions over protective ones.”

Reverend Kanter serves on the Planned Parenthood’s national Clergy Advocacy Board — which is celebrating its 75th anniversary in June — and also on the local affiliate board. He is working to organize as many interfaith clergy and leaders to have respectful conversations around reproductive rights, and to be with the women seeking abortions and contraceptive services.

Following the killings last year at the Planned Parenthood clinic in Colorado Springs, in the UU World interview, Kanter advised against further division or demonization of anti-choice protesters who march outside Planned Parenthood clinics. “We would do well to hold them accountable but also to respect their

dignity,” he said. “We can’t be ‘Standing on the Side of Polarization,’” he said. “We can’t repeat the hostility of the religious right with regard to things like this shooting. We have to be wise as serpents and gentle as doves in our approach,” and “a lot of grieving has to happen.”

— Rev. Marti Keller

Join Us in Columbus



UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

UUWF will have a booth in the General Assembly Exhibit Hall – #104, right next door to UUW&R and The Red Tent, and across the aisle from the UU Humanist Association. We’re looking forward to talking with you there!

UUWF-Sponsored Workshops:

Building Bridges from Reproductive Choice to Reproductive Justice

During this centennial year marking the first birth control clinics opened in America, women are experiencing devastating losses of access to reproductive health services. The leaders of [Planned Parenthood](#) and [SisterSong](#) will dialogue about the history, opportunities and challenges facing the reproductive choice and reproductive justice movements in this country.

Thursday 6/23/2016, 3:00:00 PM – 4:15:00 PM in Convention Center — Battelle South

The Future of Women

Join a few young adult leaders for a wide-ranging conversation about the future of gender justice, on topics including economic equity, families and relationships, multiculturalism, queerness, healthcare, and more. How might the Unitarian Universalism of the future be different if it were fully committed to, and practicing, gender equity? [Ranwa Hammamy](#), [Rev. Marisol Caballero](#), [Jessica Halperin](#), and UUWF president [Dr. Kirstie Lewis](#).

Saturday 6/25/2016, 3:00:00 PM – 4:15:00 PM in Hyatt — Union E

From Our Herstory: UUWF Members March on Washington 1963

from *The Bridge* Newsletter of Unitarian and Universalist Women October 1963

Under the banner of the UUWF, Mrs. Nelson A. Burgess, Mrs. Randall L. Thompson, and Mrs. L. Charles Underwood participate in the recent March on Washington.



June 2, 2016 / [G C Ohmann](#)