

# Reproductive Justice Team Annual Report 2023-2024

**Committee Chair and Members:** Sara Dalton (Leader), Cynthia Luke, Lisa Evanylo, Jill Kiecolt, Helen Renqvist, Susan Baker, Nancy Bodenhorn

**Purpose of the Committee:** The purpose of the Reproductive Justice Team, formed in January 2023, was to promote reproductive justice, defined by SisterSong as “the human right to maintain personal bodily autonomy, have children, not have children, and parent the children we have in safe and sustainable communities.”

**Achievements During the Last Year:** During Fiscal year 2023/2024 we educated ourselves on both federal and state legislation related to reproductive freedom. We followed legislation in the VA General Assembly session in January and February and contacted legislators regarding favorable legislation which we supported and spoke against unfavorable legislation. In her role as a member of the VA LWV Reproductive Health Issues Group, the team leader, Sara, tracked legislation throughout the session. We also continued our efforts to find partner groups in the New River Valley and had several contacts with New River Abortion Access Fund, the local NAACP, and also the regional Lutheran synod leader, Bill King. With the NAACP we attempted to create a partnership to work on maternal health issues. However, none of the three groups were in a position to collaborate at that time. In February of 2024, Sara was contacted by Pat Hyer, spokesperson for Our Bodies Our Choice (OBOC) a newly forming reproductive justice group in the area. Sara was invited to become a core member of OBOC and has been meeting on an ongoing basis with OBOC since February. As we had been looking for partners, our UUC group decided to dissolve and join the OBOC group. Several of our UUC RJ group attended the first OBOC public event on March 16, all our active members have joined that group, and most will be attending the next public OBOC event on June 2.

**Lessons Learned in the Last Year:** We learned that it was hard to find local partners interested in reproductive justice in our area and when we were contacted by a newly forming group, we readily agreed to join them. We feel there is strength in numbers and that we can have more influence when we work in collaboration with others.

**Committee Expenses for the Year:** None

**How the Committee Supports the Mission and Vision of UUC:** According to the UUA, our first UU Principle, the inherent worth and dignity of every person, “includes a belief in the sacredness of all bodies, and the importance of self-determination and human agency. As part of a liberatory Reproductive Justice movement, we affirm our commitment to building a world in which all people are able to make choices about their bodies, their health, and their families within safe, thriving communities.”

**Goals of the Committee for Next Year:** As noted above the UUC RJ group has dissolved and is now part of OBOC. While we are no longer functioning as a UUC Reproductive Justice group, as UUs we are continuing to work toward that mission, listed above, while part of another local reproductive justice group.