Reproductive Justice Ministry

What is Reproductive Justice?

Join the **Reproductive Justice Ministry (RJM) Team** for our monthly meeting! (Usually the 4th Tuesday of the month, 6:00-7:30 pm, but stay tuned for possible date changes)

Next Meeting? Tuesday, Oct 27 (contact Melissa if planning to attend)
Where? Sandburg Hall, UU AVL
Questions? Contact Melissa Himelein (himelein@gmail.com)

Upcoming Events

Ongoing Opportunities

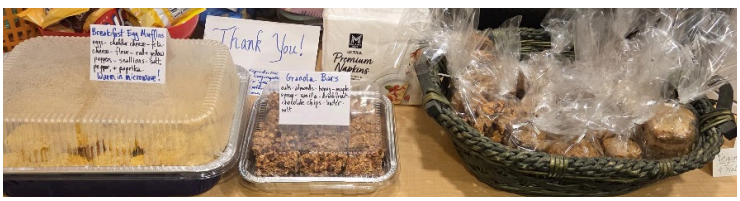
- **Planned Parenthood (PP) Patient Greeting:** Greeters serve as the first point of contact for patients to the Asheville health center. Working in groups, they facilitate patients reaching the front doors without harassment from protestors. Volunteers are asked to sign up for one two-hour shift per month (Friday or Saturday mornings). If interested, you can access the application here.
- **AVL Period Pantry:** A grass-roots organization in Asheville has set up 11 indoor and 10 outdoor locations that offer 24/7 access to free period products (e.g., tampons, liners, pads, menstrual cups). If you are interested in contributing to a pantry, find a location close to you at ashevilleperiodpantry.com/locations.

Staff Appreciation for Planned Parenthood Employees

We have initiated quarterly staff appreciation events for the hard-working staff of Asheville's Planned Parenthood facility. Our summer event (August 2025) involved the contribution of gratitude bags containing rocks painted by our UU AVL youth, along with hand-sewn decorative hearts, muffins, and other assorted items. In the spring (May 2025) we delivered breakfast items, flowers, and cookies for each staff member on duty. Working in pairs or groups of three, you are welcome to sign up for a future appreciation date! Contact Melissa (himelein@gmail.com) with your interest.







What Have We Been Doing?

Letter to Editor, Mountain Xpress

We penned a [letter to the editor of the Mountain Xpress] regarding public funding of Crisis Pregnancy Centers, published in March (2026).

Movie Night! *Preconceived*

In collaboration with our partners at Congregation Beth HaTephila (43 N. Liberty St.), we showed this award-winning documentary to over 50 attendees in June (2025). The film tells the story of "Crisis Pregnancy Centers" (CPCs) in the United States, anti-abortion organizations that counsel pregnant individuals against abortion and provide misleading information about reproductive health care. To learn more about CPCs and other topics touched on in the film, see [this document] based on medical research. In North Carolina, over $15 million in public funds were allocated to CPCs in 2021.

Carolina Abortion Fund: Community Plate Recipient, February and March 2025

For two months this year, our generous congregation supported the [Carolina Abortion Fund] (CAF) through the UUCA community plate program, raising a higher-than-usual amount. The CAF, nominated as a community plate recipient by our reproductive justice team, provides financial, practical, and emotional support to callers in NC and SC trying to access abortion care. We collected **$5976.98.** Thank you to all who contributed!

Trust Women Potluck



Rev. Claudia & Rev. Rebecca Todd Peters

The Rev. and Dr. Rebecca Todd Peters, author of *Trust Women: A Progressive Christian Argument for Reproductive Justice* (2018), joined the RJM team and several guests (30 people!) for a potluck on January 28. After offering brief remarks, Rev. Peters opened the meeting up for questions and lively conversation about reproductive justice in this post-election era.

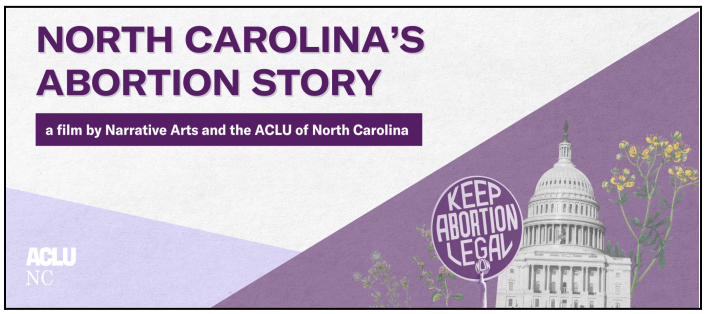


Defusing Antisemitism



Antisemitism is being used as a campaign wedge issue in current NC elections. This training, offered on Sept 11 by Dove Kent and Aaron Bryant, helped participants learn how to identify veiled antisemitism and provided concrete strategies for addressing it. Contact himelein@gmail.com if you're interested in accessing notes from this very thoughtful and informative workshop. (Aaron Bryant & Dove Kent, at left.)

North Carolina's Abortion Story



Film

In September 2024, we worked with members of Congregation Beth HaTephila to show this documentary at the Temple. Just 10 minutes, we found the film moving and informative, highlighting both historical and current aspects of reproductive freedom in North Carolina. If you're interested in viewing the film (released in April, 2024), you can find information on the ACLU film website.

Fundraisers for Planned Parenthood: Clothing Swaps



Lexi (bottom right) and volunteers before the Fall 2024 clothing swap.

In response to the Supreme Court's overturning of Roe v. Wade in 2022, RJM team member Lexi Crosswell began raising funds for Planned Parenthood by organizing clothing swaps. RJM team members were among the many volunteers at both the Spring and Fall 2024 swaps, held at Regeneration Station. Each raised approximately $5000! Learn more about the swaps and stay tuned for information about the Spring 2025 swap on the AVL Clothing Swap website.

Lexi was honored for her work at the annual Planned Parenthood South Atlantic fundraiser in April 2024, receiving an award for exceptional volunteerism.

Abortion Patient Care Kit Assembly

We have assembled patient care packages three times to date (June 2024, December 2024, and October 2025). Thanks to many generous congregants, some of whom also assisted with care bag assembly, we donated 50+ bags each time filled with helpful and hopefully soothing items (e.g., cozy socks, ginger chews, heating pads, tea, menstrual pads, chocolates, eye masks). Many hands make light work; we appreciate everyone who helped out! Stay tuned for more calls for supplies in the future!



Lexi and Kelly show the completed care kits.

Plan C: Documentary and Conversation



On May 8, we hosted approximately 60 people in Sandburg Hall for screening of the recent documentary, Plan C. The moving film motivated eager small-group conversation afterward, followed by a brief presentation by a reproductive

health physician with Planned Parenthood. The event was co-sponsored with our partner, Congregation Beth HaTephila.

Advocacy!

Following the U.S. Supreme Court's overturning of Roe v. Wade in 2022, RJM team member Susan Foster wrote a resolution on reproductive justice for the national CUUPS organization: "We...support the right of any pregnant person to make decisions regarding their own reproductive health...The stripping of such rights violates the principles of the UUA, especially the inherent worth and dignity of every person; justice, equity, and compassion in human relations; and the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process..." It was adopted in August, 2023. You can find the full text here.