

# Voice for Choice

Newsletter of the Kentucky Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice  
Summer 2020

## Vote! Your Reproductive Freedom Depends on It!

by Amber G. Duke

Amber G. Duke serves the American Civil Liberties Union of Kentucky as Communications Director.

At the time of this writing, we're exactly one hundred days away from the November general election. By the time you read this piece, we will be even closer to casting our ballots. There are many questions about how the election will play out during this health pandemic that remain unanswered. The ACLU of Kentucky has a lawsuit pending that asks Kentucky election officials to extend the emergency measures that were put in place for the June primary (early in-person voting, mail-in absentee voting, etc.), as well as blocking the new mandatory photo ID law.

While those protocols are being established, you can start, or continue, the work of evaluating candidates up and down the ballot for their stances on reproductive freedom. It's not enough to assume a D at the end of a candidate's name means they support reproductive rights or than an R means they oppose them. It also isn't enough to ask candidates

at the state and federal levels only about their stances on reproductive rights. If there's a school board race on your ballot, for example, asking candidates their position on comprehensive sexuality education is important.

As you do candidate research, find out if the candidate is one of the seven in ten Americans who believe abortion should remain legal. You can also ask if the candidate believes that we should be free to determine what our families look like without government interference. In the weeks ahead, be sure to follow the work of such organizations as Planned Parenthood of Indiana and Kentucky that engage in political education. You can also stay up to date on the ACLU-KY voting rights lawsuit and voting procedures at [ACLU-Ky.Org](http://ACLU-Ky.Org).

Cont. on page 4



Amber G. Duke

## Wayne's Words

by the Rev. Wayne A. Gnatuk

Wayne A. Gnatuk is Chair of the KRCRC Board of Directors.

**Jonathan Eig. *The Birth of the Pill: How Four Crusaders Reinvented Sex and Launched a Revolution.***

New York: W.W. Norton, 2014.

Reviewed by Wayne A. Gnatuk

One bumps into the topic of reproductive freedom at some of the most unexpected moments. In August 2019, Carole and I were at Chautauqua Institution for a few days. While there, Jonathan Eig gave a lecture in the Hall of Philosophy. He's the author of *Ali*, the *New York Times* bestselling biography of Muhammad Ali. Along with at least a thousand others, I went to hear him speak. His lecture on Ali was fascinating, but I'll admit to having been totally surprised that afternoon when I learned that back in 2014,

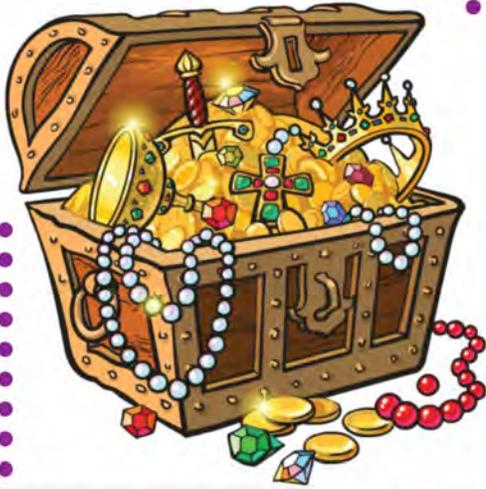
Eig authored a book about the invention of the pill!

It's entitled *The Birth of the Pill: How Four Crusaders Reinvented Sex and Launched a Revolution*. I ordered it that same day and began reading it the day it arrived in my mailbox. *The Birth of the Pill* is a fascinating book! Once I started reading, I couldn't put it down! Eig keys in on four individuals whose interactions resulted in the birth control

Cont. on page 2



Rev. Wayne A. Gnatuk



KRCRC is on a  
treasure hunt... for  
YOUR "Choice  
Treasures"!

From November 8 through 22, we're planning KRCRC's third Online Silent Auction.

As a supporter of reproductive justice in Kentucky, would you come up with one or more "Choice Treasures" you'd be willing to part with? Your treasure could be...

- ◆ a quality art piece, craft, piece of jewelry, or collectors' item
- ◆ a restaurant or retail gift card
- ◆ a gourmet meal or dessert that you prepare and deliver
- ◆ a night, weekend or week at your vacation retreat or timeshare

Please let us know what "Choice Treasure" you can donate to further KRCRC's work! Contact [info@krcrc.org](mailto:info@krcrc.org), and we'll arrange for pick-up. Thank you!



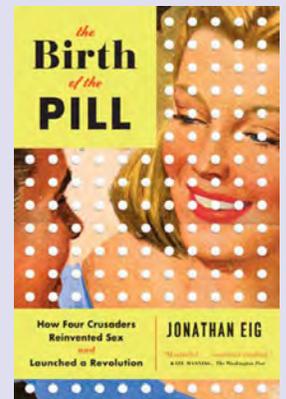
## Wayne's Words *Cont. from page 1.*

pill. Margaret Sanger needs no introduction in these pages; she spearheaded the four-person cooperative effort to develop the pill. In late 1950, Sanger received a letter from Katharine Dexter McCormick, the wife of a schizophrenic International Harvester magnate named Stanley McCormick. Mrs. McCormick, who was one of the wealthiest women in the world at the time, wanted to know how she could financially assist research in contraceptive methods.

Sanger encouraged her to support the work of Gregory Pincus, an American biologist who was studying the effects of progesterone in rabbits. Sanger thought that Pincus' work could have major significance for human birth control, and McCormick pumped massive amounts of money into his research.

In 1952, John Rock, a devout Catholic and an OB/GYN, also became involved. He did the clinical testing of what became known as Enovid, the first birth control pill. Enovid was approved by the FDA in 1957, first as a menstrual regulator and then in 1960 as a contraceptive.

That's a thumbnail image of the story told in *The Birth of the Pill*. I found the details fascinating. Eig is a wonderful writer, and *Birth of the Pill* is quite a page turner! Many of us don't know much about how the pill came into being, and Eig's book tells the story, and tells it well. I recommend it to you!



# Planned Parenthood Fights Back!

By Chris Charbonneau

*Chris Charbonneau is the CEO of Planned Parenthood of Indiana and Kentucky. She is the longest-serving CEO in the Planned Parenthood Federation, having been involved in reproductive health care access and abortion rights for more than three decades.*



*Chris Charbonneau*

The heart of Planned Parenthood is in the communities we serve, where we live and work side by side with our patients, advocates, supporters, and champions. We work to build a world in which every person — regardless of race, income, insurance, gender identity, sexual orientation, abilities, or immigration status — can access expert, compassionate sexual and reproductive health care, information, and education without shame or judgement, no matter what.

When these rights are under attack, we are compelled to fight back. This has been the story since 1932, when Planned Parenthood first provided care in Kentucky. This time is different. Right now, we are in the middle of two public health crises: COVID-19 and systemic racism. On top of that, this administration and allies across the country will stop at nothing to chip away at our access to care through a politically orchestrated court system. We need strong leadership to navigate through the COVID-19 pandemic, to ensure that all people in Kentucky can gain access to health

care, and to make sure that reproductive rights aren't further eroded.

This won't be easy. The pandemic is exposing the prevalence of inequities that have stood in the way of access to care for communities of color. We see the results in health outcomes: economic inequality, structural racism, and public health failures have all combined and resulted in higher infection and death rates for the Black community.

Planned Parenthood must work to earn and maintain the trust of our Black communities in partnership and alliance. The fundamental right to bodily autonomy—the belief that every person should be safe and free in their body—is not a right everyone shares. Planned Parenthood will continue to fight for reproductive health care, paid leave, economic security, and investing in safe and healthy communities.

## Kentucky A Fund Makes financial barriers fall. Justice demands it.

by Kate Cunningham

*Kate Cunningham is the President of A Fund, Inc.*

This haiku sums up the work of A Fund. For 27 years, A Fund, an all-volunteer nonprofit organization, has been helping Kentucky women pay for the abortions that they seek in order to regain control of their fertility and their lives.

During the fiscal year ending June 20, 2020, A Fund helped 1182 women from 263 zip codes, primarily in Kentucky and Southern Indiana, but also from other nearby states. Of these 1182 women, 1120 sought abortion care and 62 wanted contraception: long acting reversible contraception (56) or emergency contraception (6).

A record number of donors gave A Fund a record amount: \$162,800. A Fund disbursed \$146,055 to eleven clinics in nine states. Because of difficulty traveling to Louisville, where the state's only two abortion clinics are located, many women visit clinics in other states.

Clinics are seeing more and more women with fewer



resources, especially since COVID 19 has eliminated so many service jobs. In these uncertain times, observes Anne Ahola, the director of the EMW Women's Surgical Center, people facing unemployment, the closing of child care centers, evictions, and food insecurity are reluctant to add to their families.

Now that the US Supreme Court has ruled that employers can deny women contraceptive coverage based on the employer's religious or moral beliefs, contraception will remain difficult and expensive to obtain for many workers. Lack of access to contraception, of course, leads to more unplanned, unintended pregnancies.

The need for abortion funding is not going away- and neither is A Fund. A Fund prepares an annual Report to Donors, which is posted on our website, [www.kyafund.org](http://www.kyafund.org). A Fund is proud of its financial transparency and, thanks to its all-volunteer staff, "overhead" expenses during this past fiscal year were just 1.1% of income!

*Cont. on page 4*

**A Fund** *Cont. from page 3.*

**Support A Fund on September 17, 2020**

September 17, 2020 is Give for Good Louisville Day, the annual day of online giving sponsored by the Community Foundation of Louisville. Please mark your calendars and put A Fund at the top of your giving list. Your personal online gift will be augmented by incentives and grants from other generous foundations on this day only, for 24 hours, midnight to midnight! Donate at [www.giveforgoodlouisville.org](http://www.giveforgoodlouisville.org)

**A Fund Board of Directors**



*Clockwise from top left: Jillian Kordus (member at large), Ann T. Allen, Wayne A. Gnatuk, Robin Harland, Jill Reynolds, Paula Schneider, Maggie Steptoe, Kate Cunningham (President), Doug Deatz. Absent: Sharon Yunker Deatz, Alex Whitman, Deb Finkel*

**KRCRC thanks Louisville Friends Meeting for a generous donation of \$1500 and looks forward to working with members of this congregation.**

**VOTE!** *Cont. from page 1.*

**National Updates**

There was mixed news from the courts in the realm of reproductive rights this summer.

A shameful ruling from the U.S. Supreme Court in Trump v. Pennsylvania authorizes the federal government to institute broad exemptions to the birth control benefit of the Affordable Care Act.

This ruling allows employers, including universities, who claim some religious or moral opposition to birth control to refuse to include contraceptive coverage in the health insurance offered to students and employees. This could rob hundreds of thousands of people of their no-cost coverage and force them to pay out of pocket for contraceptives.

Before that ruling, the justices upheld reproductive choice by reaffirming the right to gain access to abortion. By blocking a TRAP (Targeted Regulation of Abortion Providers) law, June Medical Services v. Russo allows three clinics in Louisiana to continue to provide abortion care. The ruling does not have an immediate impact on Kentucky's two abortion providers. EMW Women's Surgical Center and Planned Parenthood of Indiana and Kentucky have a case pending before the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals challenging Kentucky's regulations requiring abortion providers to have transfer agreements with hospitals and transport agreements with ambulance companies. We simply have to wait and see what, if any, bearing the ruling will have in that case. We are optimistic that the Sixth Circuit will follow the Supreme Court's

precedent in this decision and strike down the unnecessary requirements that we are challenging in our ongoing case.

Finally, the national ACLU Reproductive Freedom Project won a nationwide preliminary injunction in a lawsuit challenging an FDA restriction on mifepristone, a medication used for early abortion. Under the injunction, clinicians can instead deliver this medication to eligible abortion patients by mail or courier without an unnecessary in-person visit, where permitted by state law. This is an important win during this health pandemic. Unfortunately, because Kentucky state law prohibits telemedicine for abortion care and has a mandatory ultrasound requirement, it is unlikely this win will benefit Kentuckians.

**State-Level Updates**

In case you missed it, in early June the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld a lower court ruling that struck down a Kentucky law banning physicians from performing D&E abortions. Two courts have made it resoundingly clear that D&E abortion care is safe, and Kentuckians have a right to obtain this care.

ACLU-KY Reproductive Freedom Policy Strategist Jackie McGranahan has been working with Rep. Attica Scott and Legislative Research Commission bill drafters on legislation to address racial disparities in maternal mortality rates. Last session this was one omnibus bill; for the 2021 legislative session, the measure will be broken up into separate bills for lawmakers' consideration. We expect the legislation to be pre-filed this fall.

# Faithful Perspectives: Clinic Protests during COVID-19

*Excerpts from a statement issued jointly by Catholics for Choice, the National Council of Jewish Women, and the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice.*

- The views of anti-abortion protesters do not reflect those of most Americans, but instead represent one extreme interpretation of religious views with no room for other beliefs.
- The harassment of abortion providers, clinic staff, and patients in the name of religion is antithetical to core tenets of faith teachings and sacred texts: the call to act with love, justice, and compassion for one another.
- There is no single religious stance on abortion. We know that people of faith are inside the clinic seeking care and that many providers are just as committed to their faith as the protesters outside. Religious opponents to abortion try to obscure this theological and ethical spectrum by asserting their position as solely valid and true.
- Our faith traditions call on us to respect religious liberty, which honors individuals' rights to both freedom of and

freedom from religion. Real religious liberty is a protective shield, not a weapon used to harm others. Those who invoke "religious liberty" to block access to essential care jeopardize the health and safety of patients and providers, grossly violating this principle and our nation's Constitution.

- Protesters who claim to "protect life" when actively endangering the lives of patients and clinic staff by ignoring social distancing guidelines make it clear that they are not genuinely interested in protecting all lives.



*Cont. on page 6*

## An Enthusiastic YES!

by Dawn Cooley

*Rev. Dawn Cooley is a Unitarian Universalist minister in Louisville, Kentucky. She currently serves as Executive Director for Kentucky Interfaith Power & Light and as Justice Center Coordinator for Thomas Jefferson Unitarian Church. Here she tells us why she recently joined KRCRC's Board of Directors.*

There is hardly an area of human life where clergy don't interact with people. We are on the front line when it comes to questions of how to have children, how not to be pregnant, and how to raise children in a safe and healthy environment. These are some of the meaning-of-life questions that people struggle with. And these are also the questions fundamental to reproductive justice.

In 2016, I spoke at a rally at the state capital organized by Planned Parenthood of Indiana and Kentucky. Though a Unity Prayer was included at the end, I was the only speaker to take a faith-based approach to the current issues facing the state.

None of the coverage of the event at that time even mentions that there was a faith-based speaker present. I was not quoted. I was not listed among the speakers. And there are no pictures to show I was there, either. Nothing in the Courier Journal. Nothing in the State-Journal. Nothing in the coverage at either WDRB or WHAS. While others have been left out here and there, the teen Planned Parenthood Peer Educators and I were the only ones left out of the coverage entirely.

One might argue that this is coincidence, but I don't think so. I think that, as people are uncomfortable hearing that teenagers actually have sex (\*gasp!\*), people are also uncomfortable hearing a religious leader speak frankly about reproductive justice.

Being religious does not mean being against reproductive justice. Far from it. My faith encourages me to advocate not only for the freedom of those choices in each person's life journey, but also for the ability of all families and communities to realize a sense of wholeness with regard to their sexual and reproductive lives.

So it was with a lot of excitement that when I was asked to join the KRCRC Board, I offered an enthusiastic "YES!!!"



*Rev. Dawn Cooley*

# How the Unitarian Universalist Church Understands Reproductive Freedom

By Dawn Cooley

*Adapted from the UUA 2015 Statement of Conscience on Reproductive Justice*

Decisions about children, families and sexuality are some of life’s most profound. Unitarian Universalists advocate not only for the freedom of those choices in each person’s life journey, but also for the ability of all families and communities to realize a sense of wholeness with regard to their sexual and reproductive lives. We strive to create safe and healthy environments for children in our faith communities and campaign publicly for just and compassionate laws for family planning, reproductive health, and gender equality.

Our faith community has a long history of progressive witness for freedom and justice. Soon after the merger of Universalism and Unitarianism, the new Association (1961) adopted statements in support of civil rights and the rights of women. In time, the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations added advocacy for those facing oppression based on their sexual orientation or gender identity and expression. We have offered and continue to offer comprehensive sexuality education across the lifespan within our congregations, and have advocated for these teachings in the public sphere.

As Unitarian Universalists we covenant to uphold **our seven principles**. The first, second and sixth principles are the most applicable to reproductive justice. We are all relational beings with varying abilities, preferences, and identities.



Unitarian Universalism calls us to advocate for the positive expression of sexuality, including choices about reproduction and nurturing, and for a culture of respect and empowerment. Our commitment to our principles calls us to support and partner with oppressed communities as we work together to build the world we dream about. In order to embody our principles, we as Unitarian Universalists must listen to and follow the lead of those from the affected communities, especially women of color, and reach outside our cultural assumptions.

Unitarian Universalists support gender equity, positive sexuality, diverse sexual expression and the individual’s right to make reproductive choices. Such choices are influenced by social and political systems as well as by factors such as racial/cultural identity, economic status, immigration/citizenship status, relationship with the justice system, health status, and ability.

Therefore, we embrace the reproductive justice framework, which defends the human rights to have children, not to have children, to parent children in healthy environments, to safeguard bodily autonomy, and to express one’s sexuality freely.

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## Faithful Perspectives *Cont. from page 5.*

- The actions of anti-abortion protesters during this pandemic have made plain a single-minded obsession with the fetus that has risen to the level of idolatry. In this time of crisis and uncertainty, it is about time we call the movement out for what it is: a fetish cult.



National Council of Jewish Women

CATHOLICS  
FOR  
CHOICE

# An Open Letter to our White Christian Siblings

by Liz Tate

*Liz Tate is KRCRC's Field Organizer. She is helping to start new chapters and make connections with congregations throughout the state.*

Our understanding of race and racism as an intersectional social justice issue is due to the efforts of Black activists and educators. We humbly acknowledge our debt to them. We hope that this open letter serves to honor their work, because it is our responsibility to correct the injustices that we have collectively upheld for so many centuries.

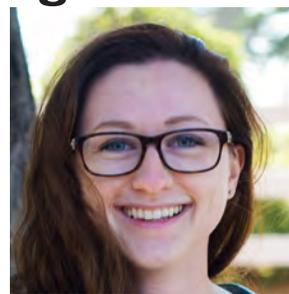
In the book of Mark, chapter 5 verses 1 - 20, Jesus meets a man who is "possessed by an unclean spirit." People have tried to bind him with chains and shackles, but the unclean spirit within him is so powerful that no one can restrain him. Jesus tells the unclean spirit to leave the man. When Jesus then demands to know the man's name, the man replies, "my name is Legion; for we are many inside this man."

Religious or not, if you're white, this passage applies to you. If you're a Christian, you'll see this as a call to Jesus (who is love and justice in human form). If you belong to another religious group or stay as far away from religion as possible, this applies to you, too. Love and justice always have and always will exist well beyond the boundaries of any religion. When we apply this passage to our current circumstances, we can see the violent, frightening man with the unclean spirit as a metaphor for oppressors. We white Americans are infected with an unclean spirit of racism. A key difference between

ourselves and the man possessed by demons is that we have not only chosen to keep this unclean spirit within us, we have created it. And we are ultimately responsible for getting rid of it.

Today, all over the country and especially here in Louisville, we are coming to a turning point. Our Black fellow citizens have been crying out for justice for hundreds of years. Time and time again, we have silenced and punished them for even speaking up about it. A lot of people are talking about ways we can create lasting change. We must listen to our Black siblings and we must abolish white supremacy in all its forms. We must renounce our white privilege, individually and collectively.

The Kentucky Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice includes people of faith and conscience, both religious and secular. We are committed to fulfilling our role within the larger framework of Reproductive Justice, a concept created by and for Black womxn and womxn of color. We follow the example of groups such as SisterSong, the organization that began the Reproductive Justice movement.



*Liz Tate*

## Churches in the Struggle for Reproductive Justice

by the Rev. Elwood Sturtevant

*The Rev. Elwood Sturtevant, who served as pastor of Thomas Jefferson Unitarian Church, recently joined the KRCRC Board of Directors.*

I am a Unitarian Universalist minister who served a congregation in Louisville for 31 years before I retired in 2018. A native Californian, I went to college and law school there. After practicing law for about six years in Los Angeles, I decided to attend seminary. In 1987, I began my ministry in Louisville. While here, I helped start the Metropolitan Housing Coalition, served Eastern Area Community Ministries in a variety of roles, and was active with Religious Leaders for Fairness. I was also a board member of Planned Parenthood of Kentucky and then Planned Parenthood of Indiana and Kentucky, which I helped create. I am married to Roxanne, a retired teacher, and have two grown sons.

After completing classes at the Starr King School for the Ministry, I served a year in 1986-87 as intern and then summer minister at the First Unitarian Church of Dallas, Texas. There I came to understand the important part

churches can play in the struggle for reproductive justice. More specifically, I got to know some of the women who had been part of the Women's Alliance at First Unitarian who in the late 1960's had studied the issue of abortion. Inspired by a leader from Planned Parenthood, they originally decided to lobby to change Texas law, but inspired by Linda Coffee, they chose instead to challenge Texas' abortion ban in the courts. Forming a broad coalition, these women helped support a case through the Texas court system and urged Sarah Weddington to go all the way to the U. S. Supreme Court with it. This case, called *Roe v. Wade*, declared for the first time that the right to an abortion is implicit in the 14th Amendment's right to privacy, and changed the legal landscape of this nation.



*Rev. Elwood Sturtevant*



**Kentucky Religious Coalition  
for Reproductive Choice  
PO Box 4065  
Louisville, KY 40204**

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

*The Religious Community in Support of an Individual's Right to Choose!*



**Newsletter Editor:  
Ann T. Allen  
Design & Layout:  
Jennifer Shank**

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**Tel: 1.866.606.0988  
Email: [info@krcrc.org](mailto:info@krcrc.org)  
Web: [www.krcrc.org](http://www.krcrc.org)  
Twitter: [@Ky\\_RCRC](https://twitter.com/Ky_RCRC)**

**KRCRC  
PO Box 4065  
Louisville, KY 40204**

### **Metro Council Will Debate Buffer Zone**



Louisville Metro Council will soon debate legislation allowing health-care facilities to create “buffer zones” outside their entrances. Such spaces will allow patients to access medical care and protect them from COVID 19. The Louisville Safety Zone campaign has recently drawn attention to the risk to patients who must walk through crowds of protesters, some of whom fail to wear masks or socially distance, at the entrance to EMW Clinic.

The proposed legislation would protect patients' access to ALL medical facilities. Many cities in other states have passed such laws. Please let your Metro Council member know that you support the buffer zones and the rights of all patients to seek medical care.