



Dear Beloved Community Member,

On January 22nd, 2023, we mark what would have been the 50th anniversary of the *Roe v. Wade* decision, which recognized a fundamental right to abortion care in the United States. On June 24, 2022, the United States Supreme Court issued a decision in a case titled *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, which overturned both *Roe v. Wade* and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* (another important case relating to abortion access). For over 6 months, we've lived in a country in which a person's right to abortion is not a constitutionally protected right.

We've mourned the decision. We've protested, and we've prayed. We've organized, and we've acknowledged that even though *Roe* established the legal right to an abortion, for so many, that right was in a landscape of so many other injustices and inequities in our nation, like racism, economic disparities, gender inequities, and environmental concerns. And so now we come together to worship, to keep moving forward together in this new landscape.

The team at SACReD designed a worship service to not only mark this important day, but to inspire us to move forward - to remember that we are called to "do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with (y)our God" (Micah 6:8). In this service, we gather, we remember, we confess, we ask for forgiveness, we give thanks, and we ground ourselves in the work of justice. While this service was designed for a particular Sunday, we hope these resources will be applicable whenever you address reproductive justice in worship.

This worship service is designed for Christian and Unitarian Universalist congregations. For our Jewish siblings, we are excited to uplift the upcoming [Repro Shabbat](#) organized by the National Council of Jewish Women. We've included a variety of rituals, readings, music, and sermon suggestions for you to customize the service for your specific context. The readings are all recorded - you may use the recordings in your service if you desire. The final page includes a list of ways to learn more and take action. We recommend you share some of these resources with your congregation and that you consider donating your offering to a reproductive justice organization such as [SisterSong](#) or [SisterReach](#).

SACReD's mission is to empower congregations to become loving, justice-seeking faith communities that fully support the fulfillment of reproductive moral agency and flourishing for all. We declare that abortion access is a moral and social good that enables equality and the well-being of all people. We hope you appreciate and use this resource widely!

In love and solidarity,

The SACReD Team

## **Roe Sunday Service**

*A service to mark what would have been the 50th anniversary of Roe v. Wade and to move forward together towards justice for all. Curated by Rev. Andrea Vassell (UCC) and Rev. Kate Froehlich (UMC).*

*[Roe Sunday YouTube Playlist](#) featuring all recordings*

### **ENTRANCE LITURGY AND PROCESSIONAL**

Liturgy ([recording](#))

*Spoken by liturgist*

Who will ascend the hill of the Lord?  
And who will stand in God's holy place?  
Those who have clean hands and pure hearts,  
Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying,  
'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?'  
And I said, 'Here I am; send me!'  
(psalm 24/Isaiah 6)

Processional

*[Create in Me a Clean Heart \(Instrumental\)](#), performed by Kaleb Brasee*

### **A BLESSING OF REMEMBRANCE**

*This ritual may be used as a Call to Worship or a Call to Confession before Holy Communion. It is also available as a [recording](#) if you wish to include it in that format.*

After the people are gathered 6 candles are brought forward by 4 or 6 persons.

- Each person may come in holding one or two candles, while one person stands to the side to light all the candles.
- Please have candle stands or holders so candles may be placed there after the ritual and burn throughout the service.
- Once in front of the people candle holders pause for 5-10 seconds, then they each (according to the # candle they are holding) say ...
  1. We gather
  2. We remember
  3. We confess
  4. We ask for forgiveness
  5. We give thanks

1. (The first candle is lit before the speaker speaks)

**Holy one, we gather in your name**

You are here in the midst. Between us two, three, twenty, one hundred

You are in our very breath, in the beating of our hearts, in our minds and in our spirits

We gather to worship, we gather to pray, we gather to praise  
**We gather in your name**

2. (The second candle is lit before the speaker speaks)

**Divine Light, we remember**

We remember who we have been

We remember the sins we have committed in your name

We remember how your name was used to justify

the burning of women

the Holocaust

the transatlantic slave trade

hate for LGBTQIA+ people, and

the attempts to take away women's rights to their bodily autonomy

**We remember and we see clearly that was not you**

3. (The third candle is lit before the speaker speaks)

**Eternal Spirit, we confess**

We confess that we have been the benefactor of some of these atrocities

We confess that we have not always spoken up or acted against these evils

We confess that we have not always done justice, love mercy, as you desire of us

We confess that we have not always loved as you commanded us to love you, our neighbors, and ourselves.

We confess that our action or lack of action has sometimes caused harm to others

**We confess, and ask that you forgive us.**

4. (The fourth candle is lit before the speaker speaks)

**Breath of life we ask that you forgive us**

Forgive us of benefiting without taking responsibility for the sinful gain

Forgive us for the sin of not acting or speaking out against the evils of greed, hate, power grabbing, manipulation and lying

Forgive us for where we have not chosen love, shown mercy, or worked for justice

Forgive us for denial of your expansive love for all

**Forgive us so we may turn and go another way**

5. (The fifth candle is lit before the speaker speaks)

**Abundant love we give you thanks**

We give thanks for your love lived out through us

We give thanks for your grace toward us and all who share this earth

We give thanks for your mercy so we may get up after we fall down or fail

We give thanks for hearts to love, courage to act, and grace to persevere.

**We give thanks for joy as we together do this work.**



6. (The sixth candle is held but not lit)  
Eternal Light, we pray for a world of justice and peace  
May your spirit be a light within us shining through us.  
May we pass that light to generations to come  
(Holds sixth candle up unlit before the people)

**And may your light be ignited in and lived through them for a new and even more just world. Amen!**

- Rev. Andrea Vassell, M.Div  
With permission 1/18/23

### **READINGS**

*All the readings have been recorded for you to use in your service if you desire.*

*With the exception of the Psalm, the passages below are from the NRSV (UE). Use the translation that works best in your context.*

#### **Old Testament:** Micah 6:6-8 ([recording](#))

**6** ‘With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God on high?  
Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves a year old?

**7** Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with tens of thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?’

**8** He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

#### **Psalm:** Bathsheba’s Lament - Her Response to Psalm 51:1-17 ([recording](#))

Have compassion on me, O God,  
according to your steadfast love,  
according to the abundance of your mercy.

I cry out to you,  
make visible and plain  
these transgressions inflicted upon me.

O God, will you heal me?

Wash me thoroughly from the stench of shame,  
cleansing me from the deep raw wounds on my body and spirit  
remove the staining of unwanted touches,

wash away the trauma coursing through my veins,  
cleansing the dirt of sexual violations from my body,  
remove the violence of abuse and suffering.

Speak to me O God, am I not your child?

They infringed upon my rights,  
negated my humanity with both fists,

they violated my trust,  
forcing me to hide my face in humiliation,  
while they stand before you crying for your help,  
asking you to forgive their iniquity and their transgression.  
See the bruises God, what about me?  
I know their transgressions,  
their sins are before me daily  
they ignore me as they sit before you weeping  
calling me a liar while spinning tall tales of love for me  
they ask for your forgiveness,  
they should ask of me the same.  
Will you seek judgment for me, O God?  
Against me they have committed this wrong,  
yet they run to you,  
trampling my dignity once again  
denying to me the power of my choice,  
as they return to my bed over and over again  
never asking my forgiveness, their lips dry with no apology.  
Why listen to their pleas, when they have no truths for me?  
You say you desire truth flowing from the inward being:  
I was born innocent, a whole person when my mother conceived me  
my heart was created clean  
my spirit was new and right within me  
their violations of my body, their abuse of power  
their bruising of my spirit, their killing of my husband  
I am broken in body, mind and spirit.  
Who will cry with me, O God?  
They have done evil in your sight, yet there is no justice,  
all watch as they cry claiming their hurt as primary,  
communal tears mask the silence of violence,  
do not hide your face from their sin  
account for their iniquities  
they cannot be easily absolved.  
O God, will you wash away my pain?  
Purge me from the visions that linger,  
grant me peace to sweeten this bitterness boiling in my body,  
open my lips and my mouth will lambaste this system  
uncovering the prevalence of rape, violence and bloodshed  
hold me in your presence, fill me with your Spirit  
restore to me the joy of my humanity.  
I am broken in spirit.

- Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia A. Thompson



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**New Testament:** Matthew 5:1-12 ([recording](#))

### The Beatitudes

5 When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. 2 And he began to speak and taught them, saying:

3 “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4 “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

5 “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

6 “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

7 “Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

8 “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

9 “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

10 “Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 “Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

**New Testament:** Luke 10:25-37

### The Parable of the Good Samaritan

25 An expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he said, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” 26 He said to him, “What is written in the law? What do you read there?” 27 He answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind and your neighbor as yourself.” 28 And he said to him, “You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.”

29 But wanting to vindicate himself, he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” 30 Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and took off, leaving him half dead. 31 Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the

other side. 32 So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a Samaritan while traveling came upon him, and when he saw him he was moved with compassion. 34 He went to him and bandaged his wounds, treating them with oil and wine. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, ‘Take care of him, and when I come back I will repay you whatever more you spend.’ 36 Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?” 37 He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.”

### **BLESSING OF WATER AND FIRE**

*Our suggestion is that you incorporate this blessing after the Psalm reading*

#### **A blessing of water and fire**

Praise and gratitude to You, Holy God, creator of fire and water.  
When the earth was void and without form your spirit moved upon the waters  
You created the oceans, the womb of plant life that refreshes our air with oxygen.  
You created the great rivers and lakes that bring us fresh water that sustains life.

You created humans, and from the sacred waters of the womb gave us the ability  
to bring forth life.

Bless the life-giving waters of our planet and all the creatures that find home in  
them.

Bless the sacred waters of the wombs of humans who can be pregnant and give  
birth.

May we protect them and value them as sacred parts of your creation.

Loving God, you created fire, fearsome and protective  
Fire that gives warmth and lights our paths in darkness.  
The fire of your spirit within us ignites our very lives with passion and will.  
The fires from the womb of the earth gives rise to new land and new possibilities

Ignite within us your fire as passion for love and justice,  
Love and justice to protects and shield each other from harm  
May this passion burn within us, enliven, and energize us to work for  
reproductive justice  
May this passion remind us to protect the sacred earth, our sacred bodies, and our  
sacred wombs.

Holy One, Bless now the sacred waters both within and without

The waters that connect and nurture us  
Bless now the holy fire within and without  
The fire that protects, and enlivens us  
May they remind us of your creative power and love within us

Amen

*Rev. Andrea Vassell, M.Div  
With permission 1/18/23*

### **HYMNS AND SONGS SUGGESTIONS**

- What Does The Lord Require - United Methodist Hymnal #441
- We Are A Gentle Angry People - Singing The Living Tradition #170 (UU)
- You Are Salt For The Earth, O People - The New Century Hymnal - #181 (UCC)
- O For A World - The New Century Hymnal # 575 (UCC)
- Lev Tahor - Psalm 51 Hebrew and English
- Here I am Lord (I the Lord of Sea and Sky - Found in multiple hymnals and songbooks from various denominations)
- Sacred the Body - Glory to God #27 (PCUSA)

### **PRAYERS OF PEOPLE/CONFESSION**

*Below are two options for Prayers of the People/ Prayers of Confession. The first is written by a Unitarian Universalist clergy person, the second by an Episcopal clergy person.*

#### [These Bodies](#)

We, Unitarian Universalists, who have long been known to be a bit too much in our heads, have been moving towards a more authentic recognition of our bodies, a more genuine relationship with our bodies and in our bodies. Hallelujah and blessed be.

These bodies. These bodies our homes. These bodies our being.

These bodies without which, we can neither have inherent worth, nor recognize it in others. These bodies, without which, we cannot experience the interdependent web of all existence, for it is through our bodies that we are a part of the selfsame web.

Let us pledge ourselves, the whole of ourselves, to the great collective liberation of all bodies.

Let us pledge ourselves, the whole of ourselves, to do the all that we can, to protect against gendered violence against all bodies, known and unknown, near and far, stranger or friend.





Let us pledge ourselves, the whole of ourselves, to inhabit these bodies; to honor these bodies; to celebrate these bodies; to defend these bodies.

So be it. See to it. Amen.

- Rev. Karen G. Johnston, from  
the UUA's *Reproductive Justice  
Worship Resources*

### [A Prayer for the Journey Toward Reproductive Justice](#)

Holy, gracious and loving G\_d  
You are wise beyond our knowing  
You have gifted us with  
intelligence, memory, reason, and skill.  
You fill our lives with  
experiences in which we  
may freely use these gifts.  
**We are fearfully and wonderfully made.**

Before we were born, you knew us.  
You know our deepest thoughts,  
our fiercest passions,  
our desperate longings,  
our ancient hurts,  
our wildest dreams and  
our strongest fears.  
**We are fearfully and wonderfully made.**

When we were being shaped and formed  
in the secrets of our mothers' womb  
You also knit together in us strong threads of  
liberation and justice,  
will and grace,  
and set us free to live our lives  
as human beings fully alive.  
**We are fearfully and wonderfully made.**

We are complex beings,  
living complicated lives.  
Give us the courage to  
discern what is right  
and what is good,  
knowing that the two

may not always be the same.

**We are fearfully and wonderfully made.**

Help us – and help us help others –  
to respect all of life  
especially the lives of women  
who have been denied justice  
their intelligence questioned  
their choices limited  
their freedom denied.

**We are fearfully and wonderfully made.**

Inspire our minds  
fire our spirits, and  
strengthen our wills  
that justice and compassion  
may always be our  
companions on this journey  
and we may know your peace.

**We are fearfully and wonderfully made.**

- Rev. Elizabeth Kaeton, former board member, Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice

## **SERMON IDEAS**

- Micah 6:1-8
  - This is written in covenantal language - I will then you will
  - Verse 1-5 is written as an indictment of the people from YHWH
  - Humans are asking the question of what must we do? The question is centered in the act. They offer what is deemed to be most valuable in the eyes of YHWH
  - YHWH's response is beyond the doing and centered in the reason for our doing.
  - Our doing of justice and loving kindness must go beyond earthly laws and be centered in God's laws
  - Verse 8 "justice" and "loving faithfulness" or mercy are often in tension or at odds with each other in scriptures. Justice sometimes calls us to act without consideration for the one who justice is metered out to. Loving Kindness calls us to go beyond justice and consider ways of being that calls us to a higher righteousness centered in love.
- Matthew 5:1-12 - Beatitudes

- Central to the book of Matthew in calling the people to a higher righteousness beyond law to justice. Jesus has “done” much before he speaks in this sermon. The work of justice is more than what we speak, it has to be what we do.
- Matthew names the oppression that is happening under the rule of the imperial power of the Roman empire - poverty, hunger, mourning, etc.
- These verses are a call to action - a call to participation in the coming of the reign of God. a call to be pure in heart, hunger and thirst for righteousness, peacemakers, etc.
- Envious - what do they have that is necessary for the reign of God among us.
- “Blessed” - Hebrew - “ashre” or envious - Jesus uses the envious language in these teachings although we do not think of the poor, mourning, or hungry etc., as envious, but Jesus is centering those people in ways they are not usually centered.
- This upside down presentation presents the essence of the reign of God where justice for all is the rule.

## **BLESSING**

[Body Blessing](#) *This blessing was also recorded by the author and is located at [this link](#) if you would prefer to show the video*

[Touch hands to your own forehead, if it feels natural] May you be blessed with wisdom, knowledge and understanding. May your intellect take you far on your journey. You have been blessed with reason and free will, it is your call every day to use these gifts.

[Throat] May you be blessed with voice. May you learn the complex nature of truth-telling. The ability to speak the truth in love is something that requires honesty, empathy and care. You are challenged every day to seek the joy that comes with sharing your truth compassionately, as well as listening to others.

[Heart] May your heart be full and blessed with love. May you know the agony of heartbreak, as it is intertwined with the elation of true love. Your heart is a strong and resilient organ, one that will be with you until the end of your time on earth. May you heed the wisdom of your heart and always trust the truth it tells.

[Abdomen] You are blessed with the gift of sexuality. May you always remember that you are a beloved child of god. Your body is sacred and belongs to you alone. May you live into the full expression of your identity as a human being, embracing your true sexual and gender identity. The gift of sexuality brings with it many rewards as well as great responsibility. May you always retain power over your own being, striving toward mutually fulfilling and just relationship.

[Hands] When you were a baby, your tiny hands were your first contact with the world. Before you could see more than a few feet in front of your face, you grasped the finger of your loved ones. You catch yourself with your hands when you fall, and you express love

and comfort to others with them too. May your hands be gentle and strong. May you use them to carry light into the darkness and rest to the weary. May your hands always find the place of greatest need, beginning with your own, and may the creator of all things hold you in the palm of her hand wherever you go.

[Wrap arms around whole body] May you be blessed on your journey. May you remember that growth happens on the journey and that you are never alone. May you always remember that you are a whole person, that each of these parts work together. We offer our blessings upon you, body, mind and spirit. May you be guided by compassion and truth, justice and love. May you find rest on the journey, always remembering where you came from, being mindful that your ancestors stand behind you, whether we are present on earth or have gone back to the Soul of the World. May you be blessed in all things and carry blessings with you wherever you go.

- Rev. Lisa Bovee-Kemper (UU),  
from the UUA's *Reproductive  
Justice Worship Resources*

### **BENEDICTION/SENDING**

Adapted from Isaiah 6:8-9

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying,

Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?"

And I said, "Here I am, send me!"

And God said, "Go..."

Holy One, you have called us, blessed us, and sent us. And we have said we will go.

Give us the courage to stand for you and to hold each other's lives as sacred; especially for those who are faced with difficult decisions about their pregnancies, and its impact on their lives. Help us to work to break the chains of injustice in all our lives, and proclaim your Good News to all.

Amen

- *Adapted from Austin D. Hill*

## RESOURCES AND WAYS TO TAKE ACTION

*This section is meant to be a resource for you and your congregation. Feel free to pull items that best serve your context and include them in your service, bulletin, or newsletter*

- Learn more about the work of [SACReD](#) - Spiritual Alliance of Communities for Reproductive Dignity and how your congregation can become designated as a SACReD congregation
- Learn more about reproductive justice from Black-led groups like [SisterSong](#) (based in Atlanta, GA), and [SisterReach](#) (based in Memphis, TN), then **donate to them** (or dedicate your offering to them)
- Discover more worship resources from the Unitarian Universalist [Side with Love Worship Resources](#).
- Learn from [Faith Aloud](#), a program dedicated to providing compassionate spiritual and religious support for people in all their decisions about pregnancy, parenting, abortion, and adoption.
- Take the [Spiritual Care in Different Contexts](#) course from the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice. It's just one of many courses offered in their [Religion & Repro Learning Center](#).
- Learn about the landscape of abortion access in your state using this tool from the [Center for Reproductive Rights](#).