

Unitarian Universalist Theology of Reproductive Justice

Five themes, fundamental to the Unitarian Universalist tradition, are central to a theological understanding of reproductive justice: sacred sexuality, inherent worth and dignity, reverence for life, right of conscience, and justice.

Sacred Sexuality

Believing in human goodness and concerned with the flourishing of life in its inherent interdependence, Unitarian Universalism holds that sexuality is a sacred and powerful gift. Sexuality provides people with opportunities to grow in intimacy with each other and the sacred, as well as opportunities for harm and exploitation. As a powerful force that contributes to love and justice, as well as to intense discord and pain, people are responsible for being stewards of this tremendous capacity. Human sexuality must be understood and celebrated in its complexity, diversity, and possibility. Unitarian Universalists take great joy and pride in teaching comprehensive sexuality education to all age groups within their congregations and in advocating for the same in the public sphere.

Inherent Worth and Dignity

As a faith tradition attentive to sacred discernment, free will, and the lived reality of human beings, rather than dogma or creed, Unitarian Universalism calls its members to recognize the sacredness of every person. In congregations and the public sphere, Unitarian Universalists work for justice, equity, and compassion in ways that create respect from tolerance and transform simple diversity into the beloved community, through ideas of power, privilege, oppression, and love. Drawing upon the teachings of Jesus and the words and deeds of other prophetic people, Unitarian Universalists know that in the interdependent web of life, no life is independent of another.

Reverence for Life

Unitarian Universalists draw spiritual sustenance from the experience of being human, from “that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves [one] to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces that create and uphold life,” (Unitarian Universalist Principles and Sources). In the interdependent web which creates, sustains, and remembers all life, each person has a right to health and protection. Because Unitarian Universalists believe they are a part of life, not owners of it, they are called to be responsible and wise participants in the web of life and stewards of its power and resources. With a deep reverence for life in its complexity and diversity, Unitarian Universalists do not agree on the precise moment in which life begins, or continues. They are, however, united in their affirmation for the well-being of women and others, and their interest in requiring public policy to be concerned with the same.

Right of Conscience

Women, and people of all genders, are moral agents who possess dignity, freedom of conscience, and the capacity to make decisions according to the sacred within them. We carry the wisdom from our religious ancestors that coercion, particularly over the most precious and intimate circumstances of our lives, is not only wrong, but also breeds hatred and bitterness. Whether people are made in the image of God, having the power to create and sustain life, or are in a sacred partnership with God to co-create life, every person has access to spiritual truths within and beyond them which guide their decision-making. Both Unitarians and Universalists, historically, have rejected ideas of predestination or original sin, perpetuating instead a theology of sacred human choices between right and wrong. Unitarian Universalists and other people of faith come together in religious community for the pursuit of truth and meaning, and the discernment to live their lives accordingly. People have a sacred obligation to support each other and their children in this pursuit.

Justice

Universalist theologians of the past believed that rather than being fixated on salvation after death, humans should concern themselves with salvation in this world. They refused to believe that suffering and violence were simply part of “God’s plan,” over which humans had no control. Instead, humans are responsible for taking care of one another, particularly the most vulnerable and marginalized. People are responsible for “saving” each other.

Today, because each life is inextricably connected to every other life, because of the human capacity to alleviate much of the suffering we witness and experience, Unitarians Universalists are dedicated to creating a world of justice, equity, and compassion for all.