



Newsletter of the Indiana Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice

Weekend of Prayerful Affirmation and Action for the Safety of Clinic Workers

October 16-18, 2009

Join with congregations and communities of faith throughout the nation in spiritually or prayerfully affirming the work of doctors, nurses, administrators, counselors, and other abortion clinic workers. They willingly put themselves in danger of harassment or violence so that women have access to abortion and other reproductive services. Without these courageous clinic workers, safe, legal abortion would be an unfulfilled promise.

The recent murder of Dr. George Tiller reminds us of the harassment and violence that is directed at abortion clinic workers everyday. We want to let them know **they are in our thoughts and prayers, and to let America know that people of faith stand together in spiritual, prayerful support of clinic workers.** Together, we can raise a powerful voice throughout the country.

Your congregation or community of faith can get involved in a number of ways. For ideas and for a collection of worship resources including prayers and liturgies, sign up at

www.rcrc.org/getinvolved/weekendofprayer.html

Sponsored by Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice

IRCRC provides “quiet ministry” to clinic patients through letter of support

In a unique collaboration with Planned Parenthood of Indiana, IRCRC has developed a letter that carries a supportive and loving message from the faith community to patients at abortion providing clinics.

The letter is signed by several Indiana clergy and religious leaders representing a variety of faith traditions. The letter offers words of comfort and support to women facing unintended and problem pregnancies who may also be struggling with various religious perspectives on their decision. The letter is made available to patients during the counseling process at Planned Parenthood clinics.

IRCRC President Kaye McSpadden calls the letter **“a quiet ministry, one that will help to counter the loud, hurtful and judgmental rhetoric that often comes from anti-choice groups and so-called crisis pregnancy centers.”**

While IRCRC does not seek to influence a woman’s decision, McSpadden says “we want her to know that many in the faith community support her right to make the decision that is best for her, and that regardless of her decision, she is loved and accepted.”

The IRCRC is grateful to Planned Parenthood staff for their cooperation on this project, and to the clergy who helped develop the text of the letter and also to those who signed the letter.

Text of the letter—

Dear Friend,

The decision to have an abortion is very personal. Though the reason may be complicated and private, you are not alone. As religious leaders, we hope this letter reassures you of the support that you enjoy from clergy and other ministers from a number of religious traditions.

While the beliefs of each person are deserving of respect, no one should be allowed to force their faith teachings on anyone else. We believe this decision is yours, made with your doctor or other medical provider, or nurse, and anyone else you choose to bring into the conversation, such as a spouse, partner, parent, or minister or clergy.

We support your right and your ability to choose what is best for you and your loved ones.

Our religious traditions have somewhat different opinions about abortion, but we share some basic understandings.

No one knows the circumstances of your life as well as you know them; no one knows what is in your heart better than you. Allow yourself to be at peace with your decision.

Know that God loves you and is with you no matter what you decide. You can find strength, understanding, and comfort in that love.

If you would like to speak to a minister or clergy person, Planned Parenthood can refer you to someone who will be supportive of you and your decision. Your privacy will be protected and all conversations will be completely confidential.

Our hope for you is for peace in your heart.



Religious leaders meet with White House staff

by Carolyn Meagher

In late July, a group of nine progressive faith leaders from organizations and mainline denominations met with White House staff in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building. Their purpose was to demonstrate strong multifaith support for comprehensive sexuality education for youth.

These leaders included:

- Rev. Ignacio Castuera, National Chaplain for Planned Parenthood Federation of America,
- Rev. Debra Haffner for the Religious Institute,
- Ann Hanson, Minister for Sexuality Education and Justice for the United Church of Christ,
- Rev. Carlton Veazey, President of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice,
- Rev. Ann Tiemeyer from the National Council of Churches of Christ,
- Rev. Amy Stapleton from the United Methodist Church,
- Lisa Cox from Catholics for Choice, and
- Nina Schwartz from National Council for Jewish Women.

These nine religious leaders represented over 60 million people of faith— 60 million people who support sexuality education that is comprehensive and scientifically sound. Sixty million people who oppose abstinence only sexuality education.

The White House staff was reported to be receptive, and they expressed interest in the UCC/UUA *Our Whole Lives* curriculum for teens at risk. Did the meeting between the faith leaders and White House staff accomplish anything? It did dispel the myth that religious denominations and organizations only support abstinence-only sexuality educational approaches.

Furthermore, the meeting promoted the themes of holiness and sexuality, the need for the moral agency of youth, and the need for integrity and scientific based principles in sexuality educational programs for youth. ♦

Meagher is a sexuality educator, member of First Congregational United Church of Christ in Indianapolis, and IRCRC Vice President.

Hoosier Clergy for Choice**

- Rev. Dr. Jay E. Abernathy, Jr.
- Rabbi Jon Adland
- Rev. Deanna Brown
- Rev. Andy Burnette
- Rev. Richard Clough
- Rev. Hilary E. Cooke
- Rev. Linda Dolby
- Rev. Philip Hoy
- Rev. Karen Lipinczyk
- Rev. Dr. Carl Malmgren
- Rev. Christen Pettitt Miller
- Rabbi Bruce J. Pfeffer
- Rev. William F. Ping
- Rabbi Dennis C. Sasso
- Rev. Doddie L. Stone
- Rev. Teri Thomas
- Rabbi Mira Wasserman

**Indiana clergy show their support for reproductive rights and religious freedom by signing the *Clergy for Choice Pledge*. Clergy of all faiths are welcome to join. Also, clergy in all positions are welcome, including clergy in congregational work, hospital chaplaincy, campus ministry, counseling, and retired clergy. Contact IRCRC or go to www.ircrc.org/joinclergyforchoice.html

Organizational Supporters*

- Congregation Beth-El Zedeck, Indianapolis
- First Congregational Church UCC, Indianapolis
- Social Justice Committee, Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Hendricks Co.
- Temple Israel, Gary
- Unitarian Universalist Church, Lafayette
- Planned Parenthood of Indiana

*Organizations in Indiana show their commitment to reproductive rights and religious freedom by signing up to be IRCRC Supporters. Supporters can include congregations, committees, chapters, and other local groups, as well as regional and state-level groups such as conferences, districts, and presbyteries. Both religious and secular groups are welcome. Contact IRCRC or go to <http://www.ircrc.org/signup.html>

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Help keep the faith for choice in Indiana!

Send a donation to the address below.

Or, donate online at www.ircrc.org.



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IRCRC brings the moral power of religious communities to ensure reproductive choice and health through education and advocacy. IRCRC is a state affiliate of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice.

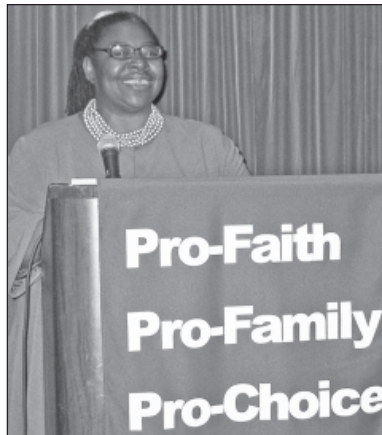
2009 Faith & Freedom Dinner is big success

About 80 people gathered in Indianapolis on April 25 for an evening of celebration, fellowship, and re-commitment to working for reproductive choice and religious freedom.

Inspiring and rousing music was provided by **Sapponia**, ensemble of the **Indianapolis Women's Chorus**, and keynote speaker **Loretta Ross** challenged the audience to consider concepts of reproductive justice. The 2009 Faith and Freedom Award for Advocacy was presented to former Indiana State Representative **David Orentlicher**. Several statewide groups were represented, including the **Indiana Chapter of Americans United for Separation of Church and State**, and **Planned Parenthood of Indiana**. Quite a few clergy were also present and several of them participated in the program.

Participants enjoyed the pre-dinner reception—chatting, bidding on the many items in the silent auction, and listening to the mellow sounds of jazz musician **Jamie Newman**.

Many thanks to everyone who helped make this event possible, including donors of silent auction items, individual dinner sponsors and organizational sponsors **Planned Parenthood of Indiana** and **Christian Community**. ♦



Top: **Sapponia** shares an inspirational *Alleluia*. Above, left: keynote speaker **Loretta Ross**. Right: Faith & Freedom Award Winner Rep. **David Orentlicher**

Workshop explores reproductive justice and need for better communication on sexuality

On Saturday afternoon, April 25, a free workshop, "Let's Talk about Sex," was held at Ebenezer Missionary Baptist Church



in Indianapolis. Using a Powerpoint presentation as backdrop, **Loretta Ross** engaged about 25 adults, teens, and young adults in conversation on topics that included human rights, reproductive justice, and the need to improve communication and education about sexuality in order to promote health and safety.

Many thanks to everyone who helped make the workshop possible, including the co-sponsors **Ebenezer Missionary Baptist Church**, **Planned Parenthood of Indiana**, and **IRCRC**. ♦



Work for prevention...

Sign the *Prevention First* petition online at

[www.ircrc.org/
preventionfirst.html](http://www.ircrc.org/preventionfirst.html)

Indiana
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Change Service Requested

Important: this is the last print newsletter—don't miss out!



We're going all-digital!

Do we have your e-mail address?

This will be the last print edition of the *Faith & Freedom* newsletter. In the future, *Faith & Freedom* will be in the form of an e-newsletter.

In order to keep you informed of news and developments, we must have your e-mail address. If you have received e-mail notices from us in the past, then you are covered.

If we do not have your e-mail address, or even if you're unsure, just **send your name and e-mail address to:**

info@ircrc.org

P.S. Don't have e-mail? No problem! Just let us know and we'll continue to send you the *Faith & Freedom* newsletter by regular mail.