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22

ANNUAL  
REPORT



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# MESSAGE FROM LEADERSHIP

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Dear friend,

This year, the moment we've all been dreading came to pass: the Supreme Court overturned the landmark 1973 Roe v Wade decision, allowing Mississippi's 15-week ban to continue and opening the door for states across the country to completely ban abortion for the first time in almost 50 years, which began happening almost immediately.

This happened on the tail end of a long stretch of increasingly invasive, punitive, and cruel anti-abortion legislation at the state level. These laws place massive emotional, financial, and sometimes legal burden on people seeking abortions or experiencing a miscarriage, as well as those who provide them care, and encourage a de facto police state. Many states already had trigger bans in place and moved to enforce them the moment Roe was dismantled.

As a result, we are in a national crisis. Millions of people across the United States have been suffering untold hardships as a result of this legislation, especially those who belong to already marginalized communities.

Like many, I was devastated watching this all unfold. The Dobbs ruling and these state-level laws don't stand alone—they are entrenched in a white Christian nationalist, patriarchal political agenda that has targeted voting rights, trans rights, immigration, education, and more. It's about more than just abortion; it's about the control of our bodies. Everyone's bodily autonomy and freedom are at risk.

But something else happened this year—less news-worthy, but still meaningful to me: for the first time in decades, many of our religious communities honored major holidays this spring, including Easter, Passover, Ramadan, Theravada New Year, and others. This synchronicity offered us a unique opportunity to connect across our traditions in a sacred time to honor our shared values: justice, equity, compassion, community care, and love.

It reminded me that although faith and religion are often distorted and politically weaponized, as they are in the anti-abortion platform, they can also be so much more. That if we work in harmony, progressive people of faith have the collective potential and power to create positive change, to deepen our faith and commitments to the work of dignity and freedom for all. There are many more of us than there are of anti-choice extremists who use religion as a cudgel against fellow humans.

Over the course of this year, RCRC sought to minister to the movement and provide spiritual accompaniment to those affected by the shifting landscape. We worked to honor and support abortion providers, promote abortion storytelling as a way to see the nuance and humanity in these decisions, connect with faith communities, educate the public, and invest in future generations of activists.

The Dobbs decision reinforced RCRC's core mission and vision of reproductive freedom and dignity for all. Part of our call in these times is to be bold in holding onto the vision of a world we have not yet seen—but we believe is possible.

These are our roots. And in the following pages, you'll see how we tapped into them again and responded throughout the year with our programmatic work.



**Faithfully yours,**

**Rev. Katey Zeh**  
**Chief Executive Officer**



# SPIRITUAL FORTIFICATION

## *for providers and clinics*

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### Dignity to Decide Award

RCRC established Dignity to Decide Award in 2019 to honor prophetic action and leadership that challenges the status quo in service of reproductive freedom and dignity.

This year, we felt it was important than ever to honor and affirm the heroic and courageous efforts of the folks on the ground who show up every day for their communities.



*Dr. DeShawn Taylor and the Desert Star Family Planning team*

RCRC is proud to announce that we honored three recipients: Jackson Women's Health Organization, Whole Woman's Health, and Desert Star Family Planning. All three health centers serve their local communities by providing comprehensive abortion care.

We honor the physicians, nurses, social workers, and administrative and advocacy staff who put their lives on the line to provide abortion care services in an increasingly hostile and compassionless society. While abortion care services have always been vital, in this era of escalating legislative and religious oppression that has become the norm, they have become an even greater sacrifice of love and compassion.

## Abortions Welcome

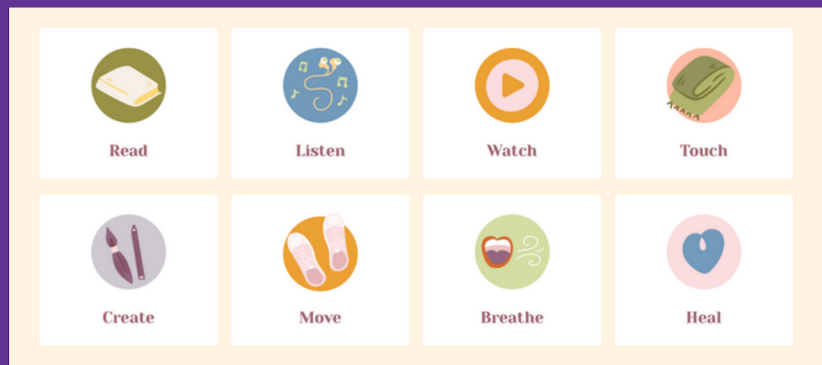
We launched Abortions Welcome (co-created with Faith in Women) earlier this year—a pro-choice, virtual spiritual companion for use before, during, and after abortion.

Oftentimes, people seeking compassionate spiritual resources online about abortion are instead met with a sea of misleading anti-abortion extremism. Abortions Welcome is our response to this. It is our hope that this site acts as a resting place—a sacred space of comfort and care for people on their abortion journeys.



We have lovingly curated a diverse array of resources and activities to aid in spiritual and physical comfort.

You can browse by "mode" and find something based on the needs of your mind, body, or senses, or you can browse by "topic", based on your personal interests and belief, and more.



With the Dobbs ruling, we anticipate that self-managed abortions will be on the rise, and we hope that resources like this one will provide much-needed comfort to people having these experiences at home.

## Clinic Blessings & Dedications

Clinic blessings and dedications are some of the most powerful work we do.

When we join other spiritual leaders and clergy to host interfaith rituals of blessing for abortion clinics, we affirm that the care given to all women and pregnant people respects their decisions about their own body and honors their full personhood, and we honor the courage and compassion of all the staff who do this sacred work and this sacred space.

This year, we held a dedication for the opening of Partners in Abortion Care in Maryland, founded by mothers, longtime friends, and healthcare providers Morgan Nuzzo and Dr. Diane Horvath.



*Clockwise from top left: poetry reading, storytelling, candle lighting, and prayer circle from Partners*

After the fall of Roe, these amazing women sourced medical equipment from a closed Georgia clinic. They jumped through healthcare system hoops. And they raised almost \$500,000 through GoFundMe...all while coping with harassment and threats.

The resulting clinic is a haven for safe, legal abortion. Because of its location, Partners in Abortion Care is an access point for patients forced to travel from across the country. They provide health care with dignity for all, including pregnant children and teenagers, people who have survived rape or incest, those carrying nonviable pregnancies, and those for whom pregnancy is a death sentence. That this clinic exists is a blessing.



# COMPASSIONATE

## *abortion storytelling*

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This year, RCRC's leadership was engaged in bringing much-needed nuance and compassion to the abortion stories of real people. With so much misinformation, shame, and stigma attached to the abortion narrative, intimate stories like these are ever more important to remind us that we are not dealing with concepts, but rather real humans and their complicated lives.

**Asha Dahya**, RCRC board member, began work on her documentary "**Someone You Know**", which follows the journeys of three later abortion seekers.



Through their stories we explore the challenges to accessing abortion care amidst numerous unnecessary barriers, patients navigating an increasingly divisive political landscape where misinformation about abortion is becoming the basis of legislation across the country, the impacts of shaming, and the reality of the "morality gap"—especially applied to individuals who seek abortions later in their pregnancies.

**Rev. Katey Zeh**, RCRC CEO, released her book **A Complicated Choice: Making Space for Grief and Healing in the Pro-Choice Movement**. Rev. Zeh wanted to honor the sacred complexity of reproductive decision-making, and spoke to people across the country who shared their powerful stories of abortion.

These stories open up space for the complexities of our reproductive lives, giving voice to the experiences of grief, loss, and healing surrounding abortion experiences, and center the real people making the decision to end a pregnancy in the context of their full lives and circumstances.

# CONNECTING

## *with faith communities*

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### SACREDLY SPEAKING

Sacredly Speaking is an RCRC program that helps justice advocates, guided by their faith and moral principles, to change the frameworks needed to realize reproductive freedom and dignity.

We do this by holding workshops for congregations and faith communities to equip folks with what they need to speak and write about reproductive freedom issue, breaking out beyond the anti-abortion theology and frameworks that we've all become accustomed to, and developing new moral and religious language to communicate intersectional and holistic approaches to reproductive freedom and human thriving.

### SACReD GATHERING

RCRC was proud to sponsor the inaugural SACReD Gathering earlier this year, hosted by Spiritual Alliance of Communities for Reproductive Dignity (SACReD). This was a national gathering of voices from faith communities and the reproductive freedom movement, meant to bring folks together to deepen connections, craft healing together, and hone organizing skills.



# EDUCATION

## *in the fight for reproductive freedom*

### RELIGION & REPRO LEARNING CENTER

This year we added two new courses to our virtual learning offerings:

#### Compassionate Care 101

An overview (and practice opportunities) of the care skills needed to facilitate a process whereby people who are experiencing reproductive decision-making or loss access their own inner strengths, values, and wisdom to make decisions and/or heal.

#### Reproductive Decisions and Loss

An intersectional look at the reproductive decisions and options that people face every day, as well as the different kinds of reproductive losses experienced by many, often in silence, and the supports they need to heal.

We also, by popular demand, held the webinar “An UnHoly War: No Democracy Without Choice,” featuring an expert panel of journalists, academics, and faith leaders discussing the deep ties between the anti-abortion movement and the Jan 6 rioters, and how theocratic movements are endangering the democracy in our country.

FREE LEARNING CENTER WEBINAR

Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice

## AN UNHOLY WAR: NO DEMOCRACY WITHOUT CHOICE

Rachel Tabachnick

Frederick Clarkson

Rev. Traci Blackmon

Katherine Stewart

Rev. Dr. John Selders

# INVESTMENTS

## *in future generations*

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### SPIRITUAL YOUTH FOR REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOM (SYRF)

This year, RCRC was thrilled to launch our rebooted, one-of-a kind Spiritual Youth for Reproductive Freedom (SYRF) program. SYRF organizes on college campuses across the country, and has helped cultivate some of the brightest leaders in the faith and repro movement. It provides multi-faith fellowship for students and opportunities to integrate their spirituality with their pursuit of reproductive freedom across academic campuses nationwide, and we've updated it for a new generation.

We kicked things off with Learning Center webinar Gen Z: The Massacre Generation, tackling the topic of institutional violence and its impact on young people.

**FREE LEARNING CENTER WEBINAR**



## GEN Z: THE MASSACRE GENERATION



**Essence  
Ellis**



**Bex  
Heimbrock**



**Victor  
Asal**



**Faria  
Tavecchi**

With moderators Margaret Velto, Rose Miller, and A-Nya Badger!



# CHANGING THE NARRATIVE

## *on faith and abortion*

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A core piece of RCRC's work is transforming the public conversation about faith and abortion, and taking power back from the religious conservatives who have unjustly dominated this space for far too long.



This year we spoke to the media about how our pro-choice, pro-reproductive freedom values stem directly from our faith values, not in spite of them. For many people, supporting a person's reproductive decision-making and bodily autonomy is an act of deep compassion, which is central to their faith practice. We stressed that the dissolution of Roe and rising abortion bans are a violation of religious freedom. And we talked about how religious people and communities around the country can step into their power and really start fighting back.

A few places we showed up:



INSIDER

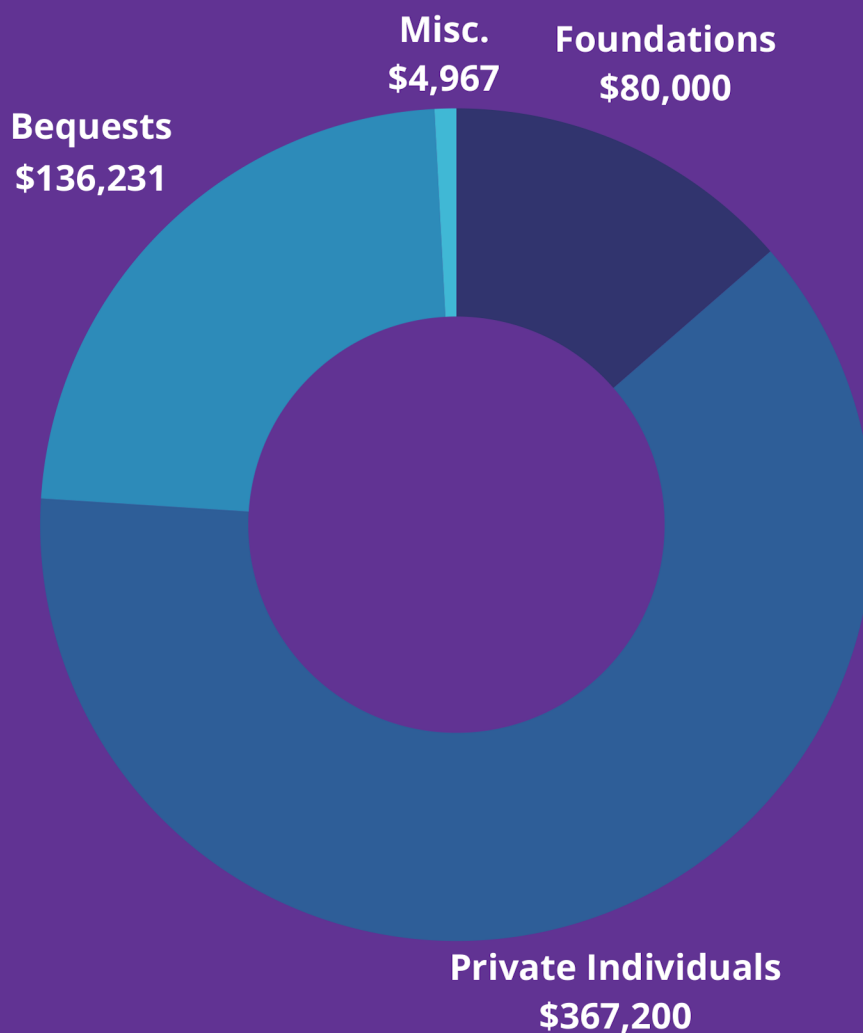




# 2022 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

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## 2022 Support and Revenues \$588,398

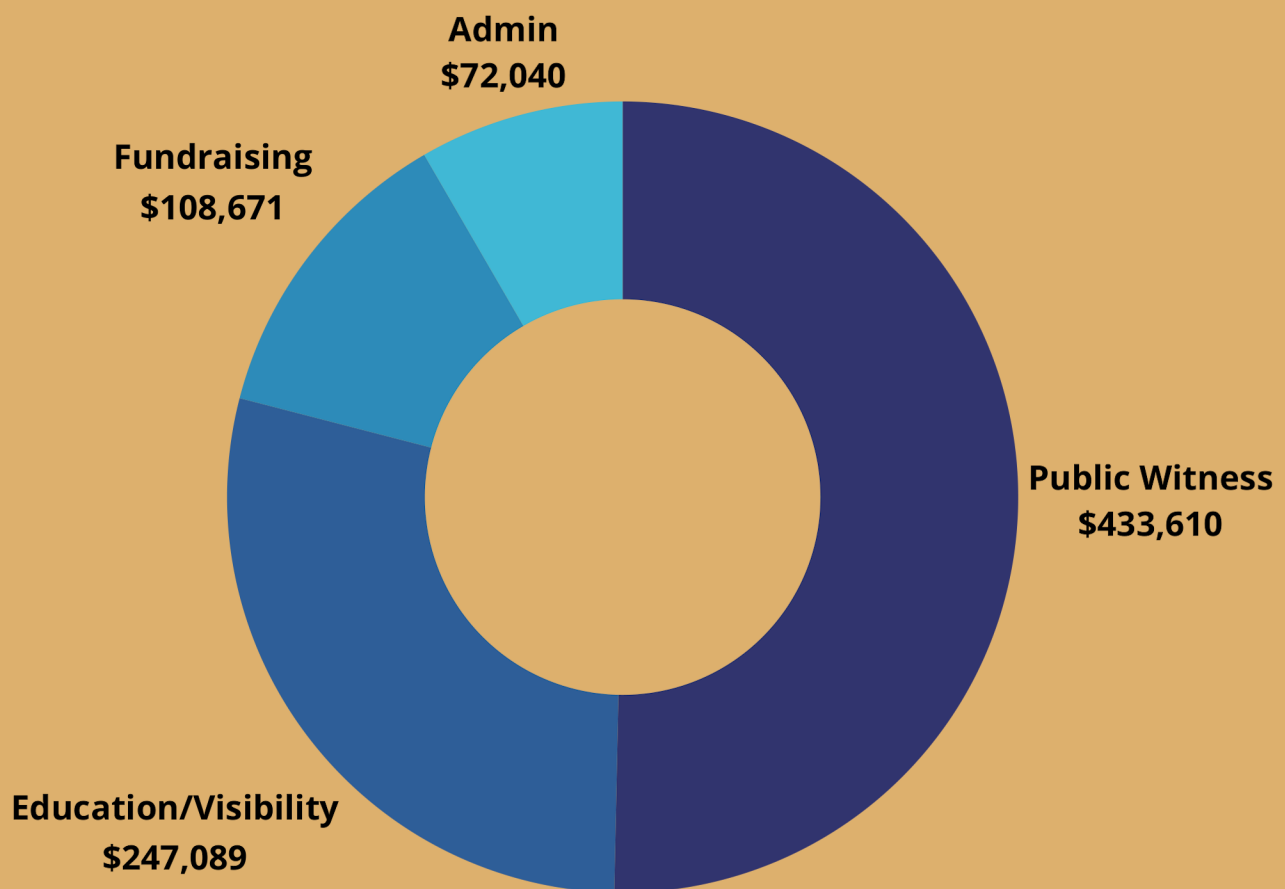


# 2020 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS, cont.

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## 2022 Expenses

\$861,410



# 2022 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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**Bishop John Selders**, *Board Chair*

**Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Kaeton**, *Vice Chair*

**Rabbi Josh Fixler**, *Treasurer*

**Asha Dahya**

**Rt. Rev. Edward Donalson**

**Courtney Fowler**

**Malynda Hale**

**Rep. Padma Kuppa**

**Trey Lusk**

**Rev. Brandee Jasmine Mimitzraiem**

**Jeana Nam**

**Raquel Saraswati**

# 2022 STAFF

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**Dr. Elizabeth Freese**

*Associate Director of Learning Center*

**Rev. Dr. Cari Jackson**

*Director of Spiritual Care and Activism*

**Melanie Bui Larsen**

*Director of Communications and Outreach*

**Carolyn Miller**

*Chief Operating Officer*

**Rev. Katey Zeh**

*Chief Executive Officer*