

Minutes
Monthly Envoy Conference Calls

Tuesday, May 15, 2018 1pm and 6pm Eastern; 8pm Youth call

I. Welcome and introductions

a. 1pm

- i. Allison Hess (UN Office, NYC) heading to Boston this week for UU Holdeen India Program board meeting.
- ii. Bruce Knotts (UN Office, NYC) getting ready for travel this weekend to Hamilton, ON for Canadian Unitarian Council's conference.
- iii. David Kimball (UU Fellowship of Vero Beach, FL) newish Envoy has an info table during coffee hour
- iv. Jerry Ross (First Parish Bedford, MA) had a great experience attending the Seminar last month; congregation very involved with migration issues, currently hosting a person in Sanctuary for four months now; Jerry was around NYC for conference on disarmament and hopes to do a blog soon
- v. Dan Kohnstamm (Glacier UU Fellowship in Kalispell, MT) Looking forward to visiting NY in June and seeing Allison & the office
- vi. Peggy Montgomery (All Souls NYC) Lots of changes in programs at All Souls, focusing on capital campaign

b. 6pm

- i. Allison Hess (UN Office, NYC)
- ii. Bill McPherson (University Unitarian Church in Seattle, WA) Working on Carbon Tax Initiative. Participated yesterday in Poor People's Campaign – focusing on affordable housing and addressing homelessness in Seattle, also working on minimum wage (have program to raise to \$15 by 2021) Also working on gun control initiative (requiring locks) just passed deadly force (requiring police to be careful w/ deadly force – or be liable if not careful)
- iii. Nancy Nowak (First Parish Church UU in Duxbury, MA) has been to that church – very inspired by what Bill's describing. Just last September started racial justice task force (were doing service work, this is first *justice* work) – currently working on Black Lives Matter and are struggling against mentalities of white comfort in a majority white town where people don't personally know any people of color. Will be moving soon and do a bit of church hopping before settling down in a new one.
- iv. PJ Deak (UU Society of New Haven, CT)

c. 8pm Youth Call

- i. Allison Hess (UN Office, NYC)
- ii. Nathan Linden (First Parish UU in Bedford, MA)

II. Office & UN updates from Bruce Knotts

- a. Disarmament – we're in discussions with the Office of Disarmament Affairs to put together an interfaith event on Sept 26 (int'l day for abolition of nuclear weapons). ODA says they've had interfaith statements in the past, but never found any Hindus that would support it – we've now connected with Gopal Patel who heads the Bhumi Project

and will help and find others. Hoping to get a really big interfaith presence to condemn nuclear weapons.

- i. Will weave in the drawings from All Souls Church DC. Right after WWII, ASC sent aid to Japan, and children in Japan sent back drawings of life in the aftermath of WWII. UN may actually incorporate these drawings into the Sept 26 day for the abolition of nuclear weapons. Mel Hardy at ASC DC is helping to facilitate.
- b. Bruce was asked (by UUA) to write a statement about what happened in Palestine yesterday. Just met w/ Polish ambassador to the UN (on Security Council) made it clear Poland is keeping embassy in Tel Aviv where most of the embassies are. Truly horrifying situation, at least 60 killed, ~1800 wounded – We’ve drafted a statement ([now on our blog](#)). (The UUA has never done a statement on Palestine before, also doesn’t usually ask the UU-UNO for comment/statement before. These steps w/ UUA & statement are rather revolutionary and bode well for the future.)
 - i. Bill: University Church has a group working on Palestine
 - ii. Nancy: Very meaningful in terms of motivating human rights activists.
- c. Gearing up for UUA General Assembly in Kansas City
 - i. Will have an Envoy Brunch and looking forward to the International reception
 - ii. [Find events online](#) & for those attending, find us in exhibit hall (@ UUA Expressway)
- d. Coming up this July 9-18 – High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. This theme is "Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies" and in addition to Goal 17, it will focus on goals 6, 7, 11, 12, and 15. (Last year’s HLPF focused on goals 1, 2,3,5,9, and 14, and next year’s will focus on goals 4,8,13, and 16.)
- e. NGO DPI conference Aug 22-23rd will be open to the public. It’s on the topic of multilateralism. Secretary-General is concerned about disturbing trend around the world of nationalism and populism, leaders not interested in working collaboratively. Conference will be about promoting multilateralism.
- f. In June Bruce is flying off to Taiwan to address the World League of Freedom and Democracy (democracy under threat) Freedom House says 70 countries are less free/democratic than used to be. US was downgraded from “Fully Free” to “partially free”.
- g. Peggy: How are we doing on financial support for the office?
 - i. Bruce: had a fundraiser a couple weeks ago, with not a great turnout. Raised \$3,000 (down quite a bit from last year’s spring fundraiser when we raised \$12,000)
- h. Jerry: Regarding interfaith effort to reject nuclear arms - At disarmament conferences recently Jerry learned about the Secretary-General’s appeal to nuclear powers to resume negotiations, included an interfaith statement. Are we part of that?
 - i. Bruce: Yes, we’re part of that! The UUA & the Committee on Disarmament, Peace, & Security contributed to that.
 - ii. Need negotiations before we can achieve disarmament – nuclear powers haven’t had a big negotiation conference in 20 years? Need to talk about reductions, controls... we’re in more danger now than we were during the cold war. People are concerned about North Korea, but most dangerous parts of the

world (as far as nuclear weapons) really = Pakistan and India, also Russia and Ukraine

- i. UU-UNO Summer interns are starting soon! Looking forward to getting to work on summer projects.
 - j. Nancy: Eric Cherry (current Director of UUA Int'l Office) is leaving soon to be minister at UU church in Franklin, MA – what happens with the International Office/UU-UNO?
 - i. No serious reorganization projected, will be hiring a new International staff group director to fill in Eric's position. Eric's last day at the UUA will be Aug. 3rd.
- III. Energizing Envoy Program – Ideas for a project Envoys could work on together? Ideas for resources it would be helpful for you to have from the UU-UNO?
- a. Jerry: It's great you're starting conference calls just for youth – very valuable for them to have space together with other youth. Maybe have a project that's led by the Youth Envoys, with some Adult mentors who can help in whatever way is valuable?
 - i. Been thinking of how to make the Youth Envoys' role in congregation relevant.
 - ii. Maybe have a UU-UNO summer intern put some thought into this?
 - iii. Would be great to have a former Youth Envoy intern in the UU-UNO
 - 1. Allison: Yes! Some interest from current Youth Envoys but new UN rules mean you have to be 18 to get a grounds-pass so wouldn't be a valuable internship until Youth Envoys turn 18.
 - b. David: Maybe not a project for Envoys, but happy to take on himself if UU-UNO doesn't have the capacity: Info sheets on what the United Nations is doing on certain topics
 - i. It's interesting to have info about what the UU-UNO is working on, but would be more effective in terms of reaching the congregation to have info on what the UN itself is doing
 - ii. E.g. South Korea and North Korea summit
 - iii. Palestine (upcoming Forum at the UN)
 - iv. David can help come up with these info sheets to share with other Envoys
 - v. Allison: UU-UNO interns can help with graphic design this summer
 - c. Dan: UN Sunday resources are helpful. UN Sunday tends not to get a huge turnout – people are looking for more spirituality – make the connection in materials between the issues and the message spiritually
 - i. Allison: will definitely be incorporating that spiritual message more in upcoming UN Sunday packet. 2018 topic is advancing just migration for all. Many cong's are already working on this topic so UN Sunday should fit more comfortably into the normal church conversation than perhaps it sometimes does.
 - ii. Dan: Recently had a visitor present from a refugee support group in Missoula that was effective, showed people how to get involved.
 - iii. David: It will be helpful to have the learnings from the Seminar in a handout
 - 1. Allison: For some of that, take a look at [the 2018 seminar page](#), also a lot of that info (& more!) will be in the UN Sunday packet.
 - d. Peggy: It was inspiring in the Seminar to hear from the group from Connecticut in which the mom, dad, and son were all active in bringing a refugee family to the area, and involved the whole community and congregation – especially that intergenerational aspect was great to see.

- i. Jerry: Maybe invite Pablo to talk to the other Youth Envoys on one of the youth calls about his/youth participation in that initiative.
 - ii. Peggy: Have been getting All Souls members (including children!) active in supporting Fourth Universalist (across the park) who are providing sanctuary for a woman and her daughter.
 - e. Bill: Create Climate Justice – round table at noon eastern time. Aly Tharp of UUMFE (ministry for earth) is running that platform with Karen Brammer of Green Sanctuary & UU-UNO. Would be great to start bringing along a UN perspective on that.
 - i. Allison: UU-UNO climate justice intern will be work on this and priority will be highlighting UN initiatives etc.
 - f. Bill: Just concluded a UNFCCC (Framework Convention on Climate Change) conference in Bonn, getting ready for COP in Poland in Dec. It behooves us to find ways to stay in since the USA is trying to retreat from the Paris Agreement.
 - g. PJ: is taking seminar subject and running with it even more than before – Pablo will be working this summer with IRIS, work with refugee kids. Documentary film about refugee camp. Interested in contact with Connecticut area Envoys as PJ, Pablo, & Arlo (USNH Envoy team) could easily take UN Sunday service or shorter presentation on the road to talk locally about the UU-UNO / United Nations
 - h. PJ: Pablo will age out in a couple years so will need to start recruiting new Youth Envoys
 - i. Allison's idea for Envoy project – craft an online worship service together, can bring bits of worship that Envoys planned for their own services and form one worship done sort of like a webinar online. The online UN worship would be open to the public.
 - j. Nancy: List of resources (movies etc.) that are short enough to show, that are UNO related? Share links to [2015 seminar video](#) & [50th anniversary film](#) (& put on Envoy Resources page). Would be good to have one on ECOC!
 - k. Nancy: Can we have a 200-250 word description of what's going on at the UN/how the office is engaged? This is in the Envoy News each month "For Your Newsletter" section.
 - l. Nancy: Great idea for video – day in the life of Bruce Knotts. What he does and what his impact is, something directly related to the office. Show at church, etc.
 - m. Nancy: Anything we can do with/for/by ministers is important, e.g. sermon award. Reluctance by minister to mention the UN/UU-UNO... need to get the ministers on board/enthusiastic
 - i. PJ: conversation at the Advisory Board meeting about getting a minister involved in the UU-UNO Advisory Board.
 - n. Nathan: How about Envoys collaborate on a video to show to congregations – maybe talk about why the UN's important, important to individuals and to UUs.
- IV. On the horizon:
- a. UN Sunday conference call to talk about putting together an intergenerational service with Shari Loe from Morristown Fellowship – 6pm Eastern on Thursday May 31st [RSVP](#)
 - i. Allison: Will be guest preaching in Bedford, MA on 10/21. Would love to come to preach also in Kalispell, MT! (grandmother lives in Missoula)
 - b. Look for the UN Sunday Packet to be sent around in early June.
- V. Adjourn