

Minutes
Monthly Envoy Conference Call
Tuesday, April 16, 2019 3pm & 6pm Eastern

- I. In attendance:
 - a. 3pm EDT
 - i. Allison Hess (UNO, NYC)
 - ii. Colin Gamble (UU Congregation of Columbia, MD)
 - iii. Peggy Montgomery (All Souls, NYC)
 - iv. Jerry Ross (First Parish in Bedford, MA)
 - v. Rev. Chris Antal (UU Congregation at Rock Tavern, +Philly)
 - b. 6pm EDT
 - i. Allison Hess (UNO, NYC)
 - ii. Lynda Wilson (UU Church of Birmingham, AL)
 - iii. Bill McPherson (University Unitarian Church in Seattle, WA)
 - iv. Chris Blasman (Conejo Valley UU Fellowship in Newbury Park, CA)
 - v. Rev. Chris Antal (UU Congregation at Rock Tavern, +Philly)
- II. Guest Rev. Chris Antal shares about opportunity to be involved with Interfaith Network on Drone Warfare:
 - a. Rev. Chris is liaison for UU-UNO to Interfaith Network on Drone Warfare which has representatives from about 20 denominations (including Islamic, Sikh, Catholics, etc.). It's quite broad in scope and has been active since 2014 conference.
 - b. Their work includes five 30-minute films & discussion guides. Campaign has been funded through OSF – produced educational videos, seminars, regional conferences, etc. –
 - c. We now have an opportunity for UUs from any region of the country to get involved in what the INDW is doing:
 - i. Invitation: Come to the next national conference at Princeton Theological Seminary Fri Sept 27 – Sun Sept 29.
 - ii. The network is recruiting 60 people of faith to attend the conference, including the 20 reps from national denominations (such as Rev. Chris). The conference will train people of faith to educate congregations and advocate to congress re: drone warfare. Enable people in congregations to participate in public policy advocacy & work with regional legislative offices and local media.
 - iii. \$50 registration includes room & board. Some funding up to \$300 is available to help travel costs.
 - iv. Rev. Chris is hoping to bring 10 people from UU congregations to the conference who want to educate themselves and lead legislative advocacy in their region. Visit website to learn more about interfaith network. You can apply to attend this conference. Website= www.interfaithdronenetwork.org
 - v. Theological grounding in 2010 [Statement of Conscience on Creating Peace](#) – includes a paragraph (#4) about how as a religious community we repudiate aggressive & preventive war, covert wars, targeting that puts civilians at

unnecessary risk, etc. All those things apply to what U.S. is doing w/ drones & can be the basis for our action in opposition to that.

d. Questions:

- i. Allison: Can Youth attend? Rev. Chris will look into this. Probably yes, with an adult chaperone (conference doesn't have resources to supervise youth)
- ii. Colin: Where can drone videos be found? They are all available on the website above, including discussion guides.

e. Jerry: Is the quilt project mentioned at 2017 Spring Seminar still going on?

<https://dronesquiltproject.wordpress.com/> Yes! Quilts are still in circulation. (Can contribute by creating quilt squares – each has a name & honors a person who has been killed by U.S. drone strikes – or just by displaying a finished quilt in the church & having a discussion about it.) This is a good way to engage the community in the real human cost of this type of warfare. Intergenerational activity to create quilts. You can request to host the project & there's some expense involved in shipping.

f. Rev. Chris can be a point of contact for anyone interested in attending the conference. antal@uuma.org

g. Lynda: Why focus on drone warfare v. all types of warfare/disarmament generally? Using armed drones lowers the threshold for lethal force being used, allows warfare to happen in more broad area, is "too easy", etc. Many issues are involved; see these posts on the UU-UNO's Disarming Our Planet blog:

- i. [Autonomous Weapon Systems: An Ethical Basis for Human Control?](#) by International Committee of the Red Cross (September 17, 2018)
- ii. [The Case Against Lethal Drones and Autonomous Weapons Systems](#) by Joanne Dufour (September 5, 2018)

III. Seminar re-cap:

a. April 10-13, *Equity in Action: Gender in an Intersecting World*. Looked at many issues surrounding the topic of gender equity, especially how gender interacts in our lived experience with other identities we hold such as race, ability, class, religion, etc. Lots of workshops, workshops, small group discussions, etc. [The Theme Panel held at the UN](#) was in partnership with the Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations and featured Ambassador Brian Flynn, Deputy Permanent Rep. for the Mission of Ireland. Spoke about UN initiatives for gender equality; Ray Acheson from Reaching Critical Will spoke of how gender plays into disarmament conversations. Bobbi Nassar spoke of how gender plays into human rights conversations. Soon-Young Yoon spoke of how we can bring UN-level policies to a local level for implementation and real change in our communities.

- i. Peggy: Wasn't able to attend the whole Seminar but watched [Theme Panel webcast](#) – highly recommend! Allison will share this far and wide; congregations are encouraged to hold screenings & discussions or share on social media/etc!

b. Seminar recap blog post will be forthcoming on UUA Int'l blog as well as resources for further engagement with the topic of gender equity. All info will be included in the April Envoy News.

IV. Upcoming plans:

a. UUA General Assembly in June in Spokane, WA

- i. UU-UNO will host a workshop along with colleagues in Int'l Office at the UUA about how UUs can be more connected with our world community & international movements for peace & justice.
 - ii. UU-UNO will also have a reception and an Envoy gathering – more details soon.
 - iii. Jerry will go to GA, as will Bill
 - b. UN Sunday: Theme is same as 2019 Intergenerational Spring Seminar, *Equity in Action: Gender in an Intersecting World*. Recommendation to get UN Sunday on the church calendar asap! UN Sunday resource packet for planning will be published in late May/early June. Most congregations hold this service in October near UN Day (Oct. 24).
 - c. UU-UNO is currently in wrap-up mode. Seminar is over and academic interns are finishing their school year. In late May, Summer interns start!
- V. What else is going on in congregations /etc.?
- a. Lynda: Expanding the Refugee Interest Group (was part of Justice Committee) now Birmingham Interfaith Refugee Ministry. UU Church board approved a new infrastructure. Officially a committee of the church but with partners (organizational or individual) elsewhere in the community of Birmingham (might eventually become a separate 501(c)3... some things are very complicated with the church & funding!) Going to speak to a lot of other churches in the community (Latino churches, African American churches, etc.)
 - b. Jerry: May be of interest to UU-UNO interns: conference in Japan put on by council that supports [World Conference Against Atomic & Hydrogen Bombs](#). Intensive training for Young Adults around the time of the World Conference in Nagasaki & Hiroshima in August – some scholarships available.
 - c. Jerry: Discussion following the Seminar w/ Envoys who attended on taking-it-home. Plan to participate in First Parish's weekly Lyceum presentation & discussion to members of congregation. Will submit a Share the Plate proposal to dedicate offering to ECOC.
 - d. Lynda: Congregation is working on getting someone out of detention in Alabama, finding housing for them. Suggestion: maybe invite Hannah Hafner from UUSC to join an Envoy call. Talk about Love Resists, sponsoring asylum seekers, etc.
 - e. Bill: We're Still In – State of Washington is taking the lead in a lot of climate bills. Bill has been working with JUUSTICE Washington (~5,000 members) communicating with legislators to push for climate action. Jay Inslee (WA Governor) is running for President with Climate Change high on the agenda.
 - i. Chris: how do you reach the folks in remote parts of the state? Received a grant from UU Funding panel to send someone to each of congregations and encourage them to join the statewide initiative.
 - ii. Lynda: Are you connected with Citizens' Climate Lobby? Yes, they're leading the push for the EICDA (energy innovation & carbon dividend act) in WA.
 - iii. Chris: Does WA have an effort for utility companies to move to solar energy?
 - 1. Yes, by 2045 must be totally away from carbon energy sources. (Carbon neutral by 2030.) Much of WA is powered by hydroelectric energy already. Got to also get rid of hydrofluorocarbons (refrigeration) – farmers won't be happy... makes preservation harder.

- iv. Bill: Got to attend the UN Climate conference in Paris in 2015 representing UUA. UU-UNO Director Bruce Knotts came to Seattle a couple of weeks ago and he spoke about his experience at the recent UN Climate Conference in Katowice.
- f. Chris: Congregation is extremely active for how small they are. Chris felt she could help with encouraging understanding about the UU-UNO – encourage people to have a sense of connection with the rest of the world. Working on the [“Go Goals!” board game](#) to help kids engage with the United Nations SDGs. Hoping parents will work with their kids to help all generations understand all that’s happening around the world – gain a sense of ownership!

VI. Adjourn