

Minutes
Monthly Envoy Conference Calls
Tuesday, August 18, 2020, 3pm and 6pm Eastern

- I. Welcome and introductions
 - a. 3pm EDT
 - i. Allison Hess UU@UN, NYC
 - ii. Jeannie Lewis (San Marcos UU Fellowship, TX)
 - iii. Ron Glossop (First Unitarian Church of Alton, IL)
 - iv. Nasreen/Sarah Gagner (UU Congregation of Long Beach, CA)
 - v. Irvin Waller (First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa, ON)
 - vi. Peggy Montgomery (Unitarian Church of All Souls, NYC)
 - vii. Tudy McLaine (First Unitarian Ottawa, ON)
 - viii. Bruce Knotts UU@UN, NYC
 - b. 6pm EDT
 - i. Allison Hess UU@UN, NYC
 - ii. Bill McPherson (University Unitarian Church in Seattle, WA)
 - iii. Janet Bendowitz (UU Congregation at Shelter Rock in Manhasset, NY)
 - iv. Barbara LaCombe (First Unitarian Church in Portland, OR)
 - v. Terry van Brundt (North Shore UU Society in Lacombe, LA)
 - vi. Barry Lee (North Shore UU Society in Lacombe, LA)
 - vii. BJ Allen (San Marcos UU Fellowship, TX)
- II. What have congregations been up to this Summer?
 - a. San Marcos UU Fellowship, TX: This summer has been busy: had Zoom services every week and smaller meetings for groups during the week. Criminal justice has been a big issue locally; a neighboring Black church found a noose hanging in it, so the community marched and SMUUF joined other neighboring churches to do a ritual prayer at the victimized church. Been marching with Black Lives Matter movement. Due to Covid-19, Jeannie hasn't participated in person – followed everything as much as possible online
 - b. First Unitarian Church of Alton, IL: Active in Citizens for Global Solutions. Worship services via YouTube are happening every Sunday. Ron usually leads several services per year but hasn't done so since the move to virtual services.
 - c. UU Congregation of Long Beach, CA: Excited about the new minister Rev. Lissa Gundlach who started August 1 and will give her first sermon on August 23. Now Nasreen is the UU@UN Envoy and active in Social Justice & Racial Justice and also part of the Social Council. Also helps with the Finance department. Nasreen and a friend who served together on Ministerial Search Committee are working on a program to do with adopting the 8th Principle (just had their first meeting). Nasreen is also involved with a People of Color affinity group in the church that's becoming re-established. Summer usually should be quiet but not this year!
 - d. First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa, ON: Irvin is on the Board of the congregation and they're in discussion about how to manage COVID-19 restrictions in the next 4-5

months. Launched a series of Sunday forums – mini-webinars ~30 minutes with folx with this congregation and others in Canada.

- i. International Webinar on SDG16 - Violence Prevention: How Faith Leaders can Save Lives, Faith Based Coalition on Crime Prevention Criminal Justice at 12 midday on August 27
- ii. Planning Holtom Peace Lecture Sept 24 at 7pm Eastern. The speaker is Kate White, head of UN Association of Canada and Vice President of the World Federation of UN Associations. Will speak about Climate Change, reduction of poverty, violence prevention/SDG16, and SDGs generally. Will also include a few quick statements from Canadian ambassador to the UN and the Swedish ambassador.
- iii. Irvin has been involved for several decades in UN issues re: crime and justice. Very active now in Black and Indigenous Lives Matter, defunding policing, and more.
- iv. Part of a new group called Faith Based Coalition on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, held a recent webinar on incarceration, and getting ready for a webinar on Violence Prevention:
How can faith leaders save lives? The Coalition of Faith-Based Organizations is organizing a panel discussion between international experts on the science of making cities safer with a leading Buddhist and Iman. Action on Black Lives Matter and Defunding Police calls for transformation to what works. The panelists will share the science, momentum among cities for change, and what leaders in the major world religions can do. 27 August, 12 noon Eastern. For more details, see www.coalitionfbco.org
 1. That group is hoping for a Unitarian on their steering committee, Rev. Darcy Roake at Community Church UU, NOLA
 2. Bruce: Darcy Roake used to work at the UU Office at the UN in 2008
- e. All Souls NYC, NY: Peggy's co-Envoys Marilyn Mehr and Youth Envoy Bernard aren't on the call but the team is getting together later this week to discuss getting youth involved at All Souls. The last 3 years All Souls has been working on renovating the building. It was almost ready to open up but then along came pandemic so uncertain what's next. Since virtual operations began there has been some kind of Zoom program almost every day. Now giving the two ministers and other staff time to breathe; they'll take a break and return at the beginning of September for more fine programs. All the Zoom programming really helps and makes everyone feel connected.
- f. University Unitarian Church, WA: Services filmed at the church (just a few presenters are there physically) & streamed online. Bill has been working with UU Ministry for Earth this summer. Was in the General Assembly workshop on "Learning from Providence," been doing a lot of Zooming. The General Assembly workshops will be released in September. A list can be found at <https://www.uua.org/ga/off-site/2020/workshops>

- g. UU Congregation at Shelter Rock, NY: More active than ever in many ways, hired a professional A/V firm so the activities are just growing and are reaching a wider population than they used to. Working on deciding whether to adopt the 8th Principle, beginning 6 sessions on inclusion of transgender people in the congregation. Have a transition minister right now working on making the congregation's efforts vision- & mission-centered.
- h. First Unitarian Portland, OR: Very active congregation. Virtual worship with about 8 leaders who present live. Barbara's been participating in a great outreach program to call everyone on a list to check in regularly and make sure people are doing okay. Minister Bill Sinkford was set to retire in a year, but he's agreed to stay on for a little while longer, so postponed the search process.
- i. North Shore UU Society, LA: Zoom church services average attendance ~32 of 75 members. Facing loss of contract minister (was the first called minister then worked as a chaplain in a NOLA hospital then hired part time to continue the ministry). Now looking at how to apply for professional ministry through the national organization. The congregation is in an extremely conservative parish (David Duke lives there), so people have always felt they need to watch out for themselves. Recently with Black Lives Matter and other issues, been cooperating with a group called "Matters of the Heart" offering them a place to meet at the church. Terry's encouraged by that. Terry's beginning to realize how much of our history is tied up in the UN – perhaps we're not taking advantage of that to the degree we could. Appreciated Bruce's July note about Pompeo's human rights commission. The more we can promote the UN as a way to deal with worldwide issues, the better we'll all be.
 - i. Barry adds: Congregation is located 40 min north of NOLA. To clarify: parish = LA version of County. Affirms it's a very conservative area: represented in Congress by Steve Scalise. Very important to have a little progressive bubble.

III. UN News

- a. U.S. wants to extend arms embargo on Iran, but because the U.S. dropped out of JCPOA (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, aka "the Iran Deal"), the other members of the Security Council voted that the U.S. has no say in that anymore. Josh Black (a UU) was one of the primary U.S. negotiators of the JCPOA. He said we didn't get everything we wanted, gave up stuff we didn't really want to – but so did Iran, that's what negotiations are all about. No side is going to be perfectly happy with the result. The agreements are almost miraculous to get consensus on something like that, and leaving such a thing is deeply irresponsible.
- b. UN is focus on addressing the pandemic and all its health, economic, and social consequences. Especially concerned about sliding back progress made in the last decade on SDGs and combatting diseases like tuberculosis and malaria because resources are directed towards COVID-19
 - i. Also focus on conflicts during pandemic, how to get humanitarian aid especially to Syria.

- c. UN General Assembly will be in September as always. Permanent Representatives based in NYC are invited to attend in person socially distanced without any of their aides. The Heads of State will *not* travel to NYC but instead will submit their speeches via video.
 - i. That first 2 weeks of GA is a big show, the real work of the GA will continue through December.
 - ii. The same procedure will apply for a series of special high-level sessions scheduled to take place, including a commemoration of the landmark 75th anniversary of the United Nations; a summit on biodiversity; and a meeting to commemorate, and promote, the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons.
 - 1. No specifics yet re: 75th anniversary commemoration
- d. The UN has been working fairly well virtually, especially the Security Council. They have sorted out their own secure way to meet and vote and take advantage of the technology.

IV. UU@UN News

- a. UU@UN's been working on a strategic planning process, looking at increasing attention at the UN towards the demilitarization of police. Very sensitive to the behavior of U.S. police forces killing Black people and people of color, as well as other countries where this happens such as in Belarus against people who are peacefully protesting.
 - i. Bruce: Very interested in what Irvin was speaking about re: defunding the police. This will be a big focus for our office at the United Nations moving forward. Bruce & Irvin will follow up to collaborate together on this issue.
 - ii. UU@UN will work with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and possibly Office of Disarmament Affairs (it's not *exactly* a disarmament issue)
 - iii. Irvin: Canadian Chiefs of Police will remove possession of illicit drugs from the criminal code. Also recommending police not be involved as first resource in responding to mental health crises.
 - iv. Irvin: Also working re: assault weapons ban for the Americas (Canada has just introduced an assault weapons ban) involved with folx from Sandy Hook and a group in Latin America relating to what we can do on an assault weapons ban. U.S. Democrats seem in favor but look at exports: 70% of handguns in Toronto used to kill people come from the U.S.
 - v. Bruce: Also worked on Arms Trade treaty focus on small arms – hard to get the Security Council to work on such a thing. The 5 permanent members are the world's primary weapons exporters. Also re: Assault weapons and demilitarizing: We have more guns in the U.S. than we have people. Very hard to demilitarize police when the citizens are so heavily armed.
- b. Worked with the Parliament of the World's Religions on memorializing the 75th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima August 6. It was a beautiful virtual event, featuring former Soviet Union President Mikhail Gorbachev and former US Secretary of State George Shultz, both gave a condemnation of nuclear weapons. Watch the video here: <https://www.voices-uri.org/commemorative>

- c. New “Sixth Principle Award”. Find a full description here:
<https://www.uua.org/international-justice/un/6thprincipleaward>
 - i. Reimagining of the former “Blue Ribbon Award” with different ways to be involved and recognized. The timeline is the same: meet at least 3 of the requirements and submit a report by March 31 to qualify as a “Sixth Principle Congregation”
 - ii. Janet: Found the process of planning a UN Sunday service extremely fulfilling – though it was a lot of work. Hopes to continue making UN Sunday part of the congregational worship year.
 - d. *All Virtual* Intergenerational Spring Seminar in 2021 will focus on climate & food justice
 - i. UU@UN is seeking Youth & Adult Chaplains and Planning Committee members! Please apply by this Thurs, Aug 20 and encourage others to as well! Applications & details at www.uua.org/unspringseminar
 - ii. Registration will open in Dec. or Jan. And later we’ll be accepting applications for Collaboration Group Facilitators.
 - 1. Bill was a Collab. Group facilitator last year and would like to do it again.
 - e. United Nations Sunday worship services: recommended date October 25th, 2020 on the theme of *All In for Climate Justice: People, Power, Planet*
 - i. The collection contains worship materials and other resources. Instead of just talking about climate justice, congregations should use UN Sunday as an opportunity to take action and orient their congregation toward climate justice by becoming a Green Sanctuary and getting involved with Create Climate Justice. www.uua.org/unsunday
- V. Discussion: Envoy role. How can we reshape or focus the Envoy role so that it feels meaningful for the Envoy, the congregation, and the UU Office at the UN. What feels most meaningful to you about your role as an Envoy? The fact is, many congregations don’t have Envoys, so we’re exploring ways to get information and resources out directly to congregational leaders. What feels like the specific responsibility of an Envoy, that couldn’t be done by another person or group in the congregation? (Either that you currently do or that you could be doing)
- a. Nasreen: Would like to be a very active Envoy but needs help knowing how to start. Have talked to important people in the congregation and would like guidelines from me that can present to them and share an action plan! Suggested doing a congregation-wide brainstorm.
 - i. Allison will find and share the survey LA Envoy Sarah made for her congregation
 - b. Jeannie: Would appreciate seeing a list of general Envoy tasks (here: <https://www.uua.org/international-justice/un/envoys/envoy-responsibilities>)
 - c. BJ: Like to share what’s going on in my place and hear what’s going on in other places, and hear from Allison and Bruce. Sometimes put that in notes to the church. Would be nice to have a picture, meme, or etc. to share. A picture of the activities to share more broadly. Encourages us and gives ideas for others to share the information, not just the

notes. Occasionally can make a big deal of certain topics. Program from Joanne on disarmament, make a graphic to share about the programs.

- i. Allison: Would be great to have Envoys share on the office's Blog about the projects they're working on, connecting it to the UN and the SDGs. Find blog at www.uua.org/international/blog - the recent blog posts can also be found in each month's Envoy News.
- d. Terry: Congregation has a weekly newsletter, could share information to put in a column. That feels like a good place to highlight the importance of supporting the UN & UU@UN
- e. Janet: shares information in the newsletter. How to communicate the information with the rest of the congregation. Where we're thinking to go for the future.
- f. Barbara: Hard to disseminate information so that it actually reaches people. So much information goes in the newsletter so UU@UN announcements get buried. UU@UN Envoys are embedded in the Peace Action Group so can reach those people easily, still hard to get much information out to the full congregation
 - i. Allison: have heard this a lot so UU@UN is working on reaching congregational leaders (ministers, religious educators, admins, board members etc.) through other channels so they get some of the news/announcements/resources directly
- g. Janet: Jazz up our virtual presence – how do we reach the growing virtual audience.
- h. Terry: Wanted to share Bruce's note with the rest of the congregation.
 - i. Allison: UU@UN perhaps should share more announcements in blog format not just emails like the monthly note from the Director.
- i. BJ: Found the website doesn't contain current information about what's going on
 - i. Allison: yes. We're going to be working on that!
- j. BJ: Would like to have more information/resources to do with: If we're working on something in our congregation, how can we go beyond the church and this monthly Envoy meeting and go into the pipeline of the action for any of these initiatives that we're doing.
 - i. Allison: For climate action: Join the UU CreateClimateJustice.net which is great for networking with other groups and also finding and sharing resources. <https://www.uumfe.org/get-involved/create-climate-justice-net/>
 - ii. BJ: Climate Healers Group, leader Sailesh Rao was at Parliament of the World's Religions. This Friday going to be showing a film for a local Presbyterian church and SMUUF, screening a documentary called a Prayer for Compassion. Asking if we can open our hearts to compassion for others including animals.
 - 1. Screening of *A Prayer for Compassion* with a discussion w/ director and a cast member afterward.
https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_9G5rPq9Tm6lYvwckJ_kuQ

2. Wed August 26 *Cowspiracy*

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_CfLIHZNhQfGFyu3B86wOyg

- k. Bill: Envoy Team is the Climate Action Team and the UU@UN has had a role in forming CATs, now working within UUMFE on plans for the next year and want to revive the climate action network which brings together people in different teams.
- l. Barbara: Had been very excited to send youth envoy to NYC, but he attended online instead and had a good experience. Want to get their youth Envoy involved in more activities.
 - i. Really appreciated the July 14 Q&A with the UU@UN staff, but didn't take notes. [Here's a link to the video recording!](#)

VI. Adjourn