

**Minutes**  
**Monthly Envoy Conference Calls**  
November 10, 1pm and 5pm Eastern

I. Welcome and introductions

a. 1pm

- i. Allison Hess (UN Office, NYC)
- ii. Joanne Dufour (Mandeville, LA)
- iii. Malaika Walton (Oakton, VA)
- iv. Barbara La Combe (Portland, OR)
- v. Sheila O'Brien (Alton, IL)
- vi. Ron Glossop (Alton, IL)
- vii. Monica Greene (Frederick, MD)
- viii. Liza Diniakos (Thousand Oaks, CA)
- ix. Janet Nortrom (Milwaukee, WI)
- x. Suzanne Murray (UUA HQ, Boston) listening in

b. 5pm

- i. Allison Hess (UN Office, NYC)
- ii. Bill McPherson (Seattle, WA)
- iii. Mary Jean Pierson (Cincinnati, OH)
- iv. Vicky Demos (Salisbury, MD)
- v. Peggy Montgomery (All Souls, NYC)
- vi. Tom Zeller (Towson, MD)

II. US Election & the United Nations

- a. Liza shared a quote (from the [UUA Common Read: The Third Reconstruction: How a moral movement is overcoming the politics of division and fear](#) by Rev. Dr. William Barber) spurring us to action in the face of dark times.
- b. Very concerned about what the Trump administration & a Trump-appointed US ambassador to the UN will mean for the world generally, but we are entirely committed to continuing the fight for liberal progressive values and human rights.
- c. Bottom line is: we have no idea what to expect. This probably means our work at the UN will get harder as the USA's positions at the UN will be less progressive, less supportive of human rights. So we will build coalitions with others to work hard to oppose any policies we do not support that the new US representatives propose.

III. UN news

- a. SOGI Rights: There's a recent initiative at the United Nations by the African Block and the Organization of Islamic Countries to overturn a decision by the Human Rights Council to appoint an Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Human Rights. Earlier this year, that position was created (June) and September 30<sup>th</sup>, a Thai diplomat was appointed to hold the position (Vitit Muntarbhorn). There is a vote soon on whether to add this to the General Assembly agenda – UU-UNO is going to work as hard as we can, along with our partners in the progressive community at the

UN, to oppose this measure as it would mean a huge blow to human rights generally if the GA could overturn Human Rights Council decisions and appointments.

- i. Liza: What can we do in our congregations? Writing campaign to Obama & then even Trump administration describing the danger of threats to the Human Rights Council.
  - ii. What is specific role of Independent Expert? They are responsible for assessing how existing international human rights law is being implemented, raising awareness of violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, consulting with States and other stakeholders, and facilitating providing services, assistance, capacity-building, and cooperation to help address violence and discrimination. (More about the role [here!](#))
  - iii. Joanne: Does Independent Expert have power to recommend to the Security Council that peacekeepers be sent to address violations of human rights?
  - iv. UNO Director Bruce is writing a blog to be posted online early next week. Allison will ask him to address some of these questions.
- b. Marrakesh COP22 – November 7-18, 2016 in Marrakech Morocco. COP22 stands for the 22<sup>nd</sup> Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Being called the “COP of Action” – COP21 in Paris was all about setting goals, so COP22 is about getting into action so that those goals can be achieved. Lots of criticism of Paris COP that it was not transparent and the decision making was closed to civil society. Host country Morocco is committed to making COP22 transparent, with efforts to give civil society more access and more influence during negotiations. UUA observer delegates are there representing UUism – keep an eye on UU-UNO social media and Commit2Respond!
- i. Bill: <http://www.iisd.org/cop22/> can help you follow the proceedings (International Institute for Sustainable Development; based in Canada). They have daily video coverage and lots of background information about what’s going on.
  - ii. Need civil society to keep active to combat Trump’s influence
  - iii. Janet: Congregation in Milwaukee just decided to join the UU-UNO Climate Action Teams – instructions & more info on Climate Action Teams are at [www.uua.org/cat](http://www.uua.org/cat)
- c. Liza: Please share links re: Dakota pipeline & indigenous rights.
- i. Here’s a [statement on the Dakota Access Pipeline](#) from the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. (Monday, Nov. 7, 2016)
  - ii. [Statement from the UN Special Rapporteur](#) on the rights of indigenous peoples and a short [article about it](#) (Friday, Oct. 28, 2016)

#### IV. Changes to Spring Seminar

- a. Spring Seminar will be April 6-8, 2017 (youth & sponsors arrive on Wed. April 5 for orientation)
- b. This year’s theme: “Arm in Arm: Interfaith Action to Disarm Our Planet” – will cover many aspects of ending armed violence

- c. Compared to prior years, this year will be more:
  - i. Grounded in faith, spirituality – opportunities for worship, reflection, connecting activism to UU faith
  - ii. Action-focused – lots of time and programming will be dedicated to building tools and skills to be activists & go back to congregations equipped to take action.
  - iii. Interactive programs – the programming will be designed to accommodate different learning styles and will not have as much of the sitting-and-listening that were so prevalent in prior years
  - iv. Special programming for ministers seeking to incorporate international perspectives into their ministry and congregational life
  - v. Youth and sponsors will be staying at a hostel rather than on church floor – this means beds, showers, more expensive.
- d. Highlight of seminar will include visit to UN Headquarters and a panel discussion in one of the conference rooms there, as well as plenty of time afterwards to look around and visit the gift shop.
- e. More information & updated prices will be on the website ([www.uua.org/unspringseminar](http://www.uua.org/unspringseminar)) by the end of next week!
- V. Dana Greeley Sermon Competition
  - a. Yearly sermon contest pertaining to the theme for the year (2016-17 = economic inequality, just like UN Sunday & 2016 Seminar)
  - b. Sermons are accepted now through February 1<sup>st</sup> – if you or someone else at congregation wrote an awesome UN Sunday sermon, that would be a great thing to submit
  - c. Sermon should emphasize the United Nations & talk about the UU-UNO
- VI. Blue Ribbon Congregations
  - a. Deadline to achieve Blue Ribbon Status is March 31<sup>st</sup> – if you're not sure about your congregation's status, email Allison and she can give you an update. Four requirements to meet:
    - i. 5% of cong. to become UU-UNO Supporters or 15 individuals for large congregations.
      - 1. \$250 Global Equality Supporter
      - 2. \$150 Household/Family Supporter
      - 3. \$60 Individual Supporter
      - 4. \$30 Retired/Student Supporter
    - ii. Congregational donation to UU-UNO (line in budget or special collection)
    - iii. UN Sunday service or event
    - iv. Envoy or Envoy team!
- VII. Human Rights Day – coming up on December 10<sup>th</sup>!
  - a. Many people are not very educated about the Universal Declaration on Human Rights – this is a perfect time to inform them.

- b. Allison will share some videos for Human Rights Day in the UU-UNO Envoys Facebook group as well as in the November Envoy News.
- c. Joanne has a Children's version of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights – She will send a copy of this to Allison who will include it in the November Envoy News and on the [Envoy Resources page](#) of the website.

VIII. Other topics to discuss?

- a. Ron: Would like to hear about UN Sunday services that happened.
  - i. Monica had a UN Sunday service in Frederick, MD and also she gave a talk at the “Friendly Forum” about what she learned at the April 2016 Spring Seminar
  - ii. Janet hosted Bruce in Milwaukee where he spoke at two services as well as at a couple of community events including a UN Day flag-raising ceremony with the mayor.
  - iii. Joanne also hosted Bruce in the New Orleans area where he had a number of speaking engagements
  - iv. Allison: Everyone should please share about their UN Sunday services on the webpage so others can read about what you did! [Here's the link!](#)
- b. Vicky: Very involved in promoting CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women). “[Cities for CEDAW](#)” is a great initiative that many cities around the US have already adopted or are working on adopting. CEDAW is a particularly appropriate and meaningful way to deal with our times. Many people today have an understanding now of how women are violated and discriminated against on a daily basis. Having CEDAW in place gives you a backing, something to resort to if you have it as an ordinance. Ideally it would be adopted as a treaty, but the US has *not* ratified it. (We are one of 6 nations that have not ratified CEDAW, we're the only democracy and the only industrialized country of those six.) This is something people can address on the community level in the absence of these treaties.
  - i. Vicky will share some resources which Allison will then include in the November Envoy News.

IX. Adjourn. Next call will be in first half of December – info & RSVP link will be in the Nov. Envoy News.