

**Minutes**  
**Monthly Envoy Conference Calls**  
December 13, 1pm and 6pm Eastern

- I. Welcome and introductions
  - a. 1pm
    - i. Allison Hess (UN Office, NYC)
    - ii. Vicky Demos (UU Fellowship at Salisbury, MD)
    - iii. Peggy Montgomery (All Souls Unitarian Church in New York, NY)
    - iv. Ron Glossop (First Unitarian Church in Alton, IL)
  - b. 6pm
    - i. Allison Hess (UN Office, NYC)
    - ii. Joanne Dufour (North Shore UU Society in Lacombe, LA)
    - iii. PJ Deak (Unitarian Society of New Haven in Hamden, CT)
    - iv. MJ Pierson (The Gathering at Northern Hills in Cincinnati, OH)
    - v. Bill McPherson (University Unitarian Church in Seattle, WA)
- II. UN news and updates
  - a. Monday December 12th there was a special ceremony at the UN General Assembly. It included a tribute to Ban Ki-moon and Oath of Office ceremony for the new Secretary-General Antonio Guterres
    - i. Allison will share the [link to watch the ceremony](#) (was also shared in UU-UNO Envoys Facebook group on Monday)
    - ii. Ceremony includes moving tributes to outgoing S-G Ban Ki-moon from representatives of each regional group (e.g. Asia-Pacific Group, Africa Group, etc.), remarks from Mr. Ban, and also remarks from Mr. Guterres (listen to hear about some of his intended UN reforms).
    - iii. Mr. Guterres will take office officially on January 1<sup>st</sup>, will appoint heads of some UN offices, including the Office of Disarmament Affairs
  - b. Disarmament is a big topic at the UN recently – since in October the General Assembly voted overwhelmingly to start negotiations for a treaty to ban nuclear weapons
    - i. Prominent in this conversation is Kazakhstan which hosted an event a few days ago which UNO Director Bruce attended. Kazakhstan, as a former Soviet country, kept their nuclear arsenal after getting independence, but has recently gotten rid of their nuclear weapons. [Kazakhstan hopes to set an example](#) for other countries to eliminate their own weapons, but the big challenge will be getting the Permanent 5 members of the Security Council (UK, US, France, China, Russia) to get rid of *their* nuclear weapons...
    - ii. In 2017 there will be a conference to negotiate a legally-binding treaty on banning nuclear weapons. (Good timing since disarmament is also the topic for the 2017 UU-UNO Spring Seminar!)

- c. The UN is monitoring the situation in Syria very closely, and the siege in Aleppo. Heads of different groups at the UN, including S-G Ban Ki-moon have [expressed their outrage and grave concern](#), urging the international community to be active and do something.
- III. Currency situation in India
  - a. On November 8<sup>th</sup>, Prime Minister Modi announced that all 500 and 1,000 Rupee notes would no longer be valid. People needed to exchange or deposit their notes within a certain time frame. This meant in 3 hours, 86% of the currency was declared illegal. The goal was to target black money, but of course there were many unintended consequences.
  - b. The currency change has meant a huge blow to many partners of the UU Holdeen India Program who largely work with India's poor and those who don't necessarily have a bank account and who get paid in cash. It has led to hours long lines at banks in order to withdraw only small amounts of cash, since the banks are quickly running out of legal tender.
  - c. Ron: Saw a story about politician who threw a [wedding for his daughter](#) that cost millions of dollars, displaying extravagant wealth and causing outrage in the midst of this crisis that primarily affected everyday people as the uber-wealthy largely avoided the effects.
- IV. Office event coming up soon:
  - a. UU-UNO is hosting an event this Thursday which will be live streamed. "Responding in the Wake of the Storm: Environmental Racism and Hurricane Matthew" panel event will address how health professionals, community leaders, and organizations working in Haiti have and continue to respond to Hurricane Matthew which struck Haiti in early October. The event will take place from 10am-12pm on Thursday, December 15<sup>th</sup> and [will be live streamed on the UUA Int'l Office's YouTube page](#). Two representatives from UUSC will speak at this event about what they have been doing on the ground in Haiti.
- V. Congregational activities for Human Rights Day – what did your congregation do?
  - a. Ron: No event at the congregation, but all 3 Envoys from Alton, IL attended a Human Rights Day celebration at Missouri History Museum
    - i. Speaker talking about Human right to education, especially sex education
    - ii. 20<sup>th</sup> annual event that the St Louis coalition of Human Rights put on (which Ron is a part of)
    - iii. Presentation recognizing unsung "heroes and sheroes" of human rights
  - b. PJ: 3 times per year each Social Justice group at the congregation has 2-3 minutes to talk about a something relevant to their group. This weekend was PJ's group, so he got to talk about the Universal Declaration of Human Rights & how it's relevant today and to UU values
    - i. After the service, he handed out the UUSC's mini booklet of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and gave people a chance to [sign the pledge](#) from the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.
    - ii. This was a quick and relatively easy way for people to get engaged and do a little something for human rights. Brings people to the table and they can talk

one-on-one and learn more, have a more personal connection than just listening during the service.

- c. Joanne: Worship committee lets Joanne do 5 minute UN Minute each month. The first month she talked about sustainable development, then human rights, then environmental, then this month's topic was indigenous rights – perfect timing since it followed human rights and environment week, and also very pertinent to current news in Standing Rock.
    - i. Now Joanne will have time to do an after-service program once per month closer to 30 minutes rather than just 5.
    - ii. Joanne will send Allison her talk about Indigenous rights so it can be shared with Envoys.
  - d. MJ: Similar to PJ's congregation, MJ's congregation has a "Spark" once per month giving people a couple of minutes to talk about social justice issues – this Sunday, MJ will talk about UUSC & UU-UNO as the global face of UUism. Her congregation is still at a level where people are hardly aware of the global aspects to our faith.
    - i. MJ wants to incorporate human rights day info into this "Spark"
    - ii. Donation during the service will probably go to Haiti relief
    - iii. Would love to try to get someone to come to New York for the seminar – this would be a big step for the congregation in terms of engagement.
    - iv. MJ will send her Spark text to Allison for sharing with other Envoys.
  - e. PJ's congregation had Rev. Chris Antal speak recently and it was so inspiring. (He will be the keynote speaker at the UU-UNO's Spring Seminar) Highly recommended as a guest speaker for other congregations!
- VI. Reminder about [Dana Greeley sermon competition](#) (submission deadline is February 1<sup>st</sup>) and [Blue Ribbon Award](#) (Deadline to achieve all requirements is March 31<sup>st</sup>)
- a. Contact Allison if you wish to know how your congregation's doing so far re: Blue Ribbon Status.
- VII. Spring Seminar registration is open! Full title: *Arm in Arm: Interfaith Action to Disarm Our Planet*.
- a. Allison will share a blurb that can be included in congregations' newsletters.
- VIII. Other items to discuss?
- a. Bill: The UN Secretary-General rotates based on the region they come from, so after Kofi Annan from African Group, and Ban Ki-moon from Asia-Pacific Group, Guterres will represent the Western European & Others Group. It will be good to have a person who's an expert in refugees & human rights (Guterres was UN High Commissioner for Refugees from 2005-2015)
    - i. Though not in the UN Charter, general custom dictates that the appointee may not be a citizen of any of the permanent five members of the Security Council
    - ii. Nikki Haley appointment as UN Ambassador – She is relatively progressive on some issues. She has some trade experience, but no international diplomacy experience. Here's an [article](#) that focuses particularly on Nikki Haley and LGBT rights at the UN...

- b. Peggy: How are other congregations handling fallout from our November election? This is a high priority at All Souls – There are at least 100 more people at every service since then. Minster (Galen) is receiving tons of calls every day from people wanting to talk.
  - i. The UUA created a map application online where congregations can share what they've been doing after the election. It's called [Show the Love](#) – you can check it out to see what others are doing and if you want, share your own congregation's action.
  - ii. Ron: Has a strong philosophy that you can't change the past, got to focus on what to do now. One positive action that many people are taking is trying to get rid of the electoral college. The more discussion there is about the legitimacy of the electoral college, the more the question is raised of whether it is appropriate for the president elect to talk about the mandate he has.
  - iii. Vicky attended the CEDAW (convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women) conference, and many people from congregation are participating in the Women's March on Washington on the 21<sup>st</sup> of January (they're pretty nearby DC). In terms of CEDAW, the strategy is to go local, make sure to have local institutions going in the right direction. Use as much influence as possible in local organizations to maintain what you have and go forward. Looks very difficult on the federal level.
    - 1. Peggy: There's a march also happening in Manhattan. All Souls will be combining w/ another church in NYC to send a bus to DC for the march. Peggy paid to sponsor a couple of young women to go to the march in DC.
    - 2. Ron: Good idea to get young people involved.
  - iv. Vicky's congregation is trying to look into becoming a sanctuary. They also want to write to their county executive and mayor to urge them to follow rule of law, including civil rights law.
- c. PJ: Interested in joining the [UU-UNO Envoys Facebook Group](#)! Also it would be great to have a [list of all the International Holidays](#).
  - i. Idea: Announce international holidays during joys and concerns so people are aware! If done out loud by individuals, plant people in the audience to share "We are celebrating such-and-such holiday today" during joys and concerns, otherwise write it down each week to be shared.
  - ii. Bill: Yesterday (12/12/16) was the first anniversary of the Paris Agreement!

IX. Adjourn