

Minutes
Monthly Envoy Conference Calls
Thursday, August 24, 2017 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. Harry Davis (First Unitarian Church of Dallas, TX)
 - iv. Karen Mackey (First Unitarian Church of Sioux City, IA)
 - v. Eryl Court (First Unitarian Church of Toronto, ON)
 - b. 6pm
 - i. Allison Hess (UN Office, NYC)
 - ii. Eva Castilla (First Unitarian Church in Dallas, TX)
 - iii. Roger Meyer (First Unitarian Church in Portland, OR)
 - iv. Joanne Dufour (North Shore UU Society in Lacombe, LA)
 - v. Riley Taylor (First Unitarian Church in Cincinnati, OH)
- II. UN & Office Updates
 - a. At the UN, people are really excited about the Disarmament Treaty that was adopted in July. Nuclear disarmament is feeling more and more urgent these days with North Korea and USA threatening each other – North Korea's a big preoccupation at the UN. Nikki Hayley is getting big praise for having successfully brought the whole Security Council together to adopt those sanctions against N Korea a few weeks ago, even getting China and Russia on board.
 - i. Roger: Physicians for Social Responsibility has a lot of anti-nuclear efforts! Look around for them if you're seeking local partners on disarmament issues.
 - ii. Riley: Did any nuclear powers participate? No, they all boycotted. ([Blog post from one of our interns](#) about the treaty/negotiations!)
 - iii. Joanne: Didn't North Korea participate in some way? Not really. They voted in the GA First Committee (which is concerned with disarmament issues) [in favor of taking forward](#) multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations (1st Cmtee vote was Oct 27, 2016) but was not present for the actual GA vote last December.
 - b. Another big focus at the UN is the ongoing Syrian refugee situation. Next year (2018) is going to be a big year for refugee issues – in September the UN is holding a Summit on refugees, and of course the [UU-UNO Spring Seminar](#) in April.
- III. Upcoming UU-UNO Events:
 - a. SDG training webinar for Envoys on September 11th with partners from CVSA (Commission on Voluntary Service & Action)
 - i. The training will happen over Zoom – Allison will share the info shortly, including detailed instructions on how to join online. No Zoom account is needed.
 - b. UN Sunday

- i. Eryl: First Unitarian Church in Toronto will be celebrating UN Sunday – featuring Ernie Regehr, founder 35-40 years ago of Project Ploughshares, a Canadian peace organization, he also wrote a book called “Making a Killing”
 - 1. First Unitarian Church of Toronto will also be holding a commemoration at the church’s peace pole on the Sunday after International Day of Peace (Sept 21)
- ii. Roger: Portland Church is having a share the plate for UNO on UN Sunday, present the peace pole, and winner of the Youth Essay contest will be presented as well – [Rotary International page on Peace Poles](#). They’re very nice-looking, many churches & etc. have them. <http://peacepoleproject.org/>
- iii. Vicky: UN Sunday on November 5th – Peace Alliance of the Lower Shore (started with the congregation) stands on the street each Sunday in silent vigil against the wars. Vicky plans to talk at UN Sunday about the many wars that the US has been in. Will be making Peace cranes to send to a Children’s Museum.
- iv. Janet: Church has an interim minister who will (hopefully) do a UN Sunday service
 - 1. Unanimous urging Bruce to reach out to ministers about holding UN Sunday services, speaking about the great work/accomplishments of the UN/UU-UNO and offering him as a guest speaker.
- c. Spring Seminar 2017: UU-UNO is seeking Youth & Adult Chaplains and Planning Committee members! Please apply and encourage others to as well! Applications at www.uua.org/unspringseminar
 - i. Riley: Youth & Sponsor rules? All high schoolers (or home school equivalent) are considered Youth, even if they have turned 18 already, so they need a sponsor in order to attend the seminar. 18-year-olds who have graduated high school may attend the seminar but must register as Young Adults and may not lodge with the rest of the youth in the block rooms in the hostel.
 - ii. Janet: Has a youth who’s interested in the UN and may want to attend the seminar!
- d. [UU-UNO Fall Reception October 21, 2017](#) at Cedar Lane UU Church in Bethesda. If you can’t attend in person, please urge your DC-area friends and family to attend! Ensure continuing support of the UU-UNO!
 - i. Roger: doesn’t know when his membership is due. Does UU-UNO send out reminders? (Allison thinks so, but will verify) In the reminder letters, people want to know an update of current events, bring people up to speed.

IV. Envoy Tasks/Information

- a. Meet with your minister – make sure people in the church know you’re the UN Envoy and connect with your congregation’s leadership to work together and support one another’s goals!
- b. “New” Blue Ribbon Requirements!
 - i. Blue Ribbon requirements are as follows
 - 1. Envoy/Envoy Team

2. Annual UN Sunday service
 3. 15 members or 5% of your congregation become individual UU-UNO Supporters.
 4. Congregational donation to the UU-UNO, either as an annual budget line or collection plate.
- ii. In order for the 3rd requirement to count, you need each individual supporter to become an actual “Supporter” that meets the minimum listed in our Supporter requirements. Please keep track of who became a Supporter and please urge people to use the Supporter Envelopes (Tell Allison how many you want and she can send you some!) This is not a *new* requirement, we’re just going to start being more strict about enforcing the minimum donation required to count as a “Supporter”
 - iii. Individuals can become UU-UNO Supporters at the following annual levels:
 - \$250.00 - Global Equality Supporter
 - \$150.00 - Family/Household Supporter
 - \$60.00 - Individual Supporter
 - \$30.00 - Retired/Student Supporter

To qualify for Blue Ribbon status, a congregation must have at least 5% of their members become Supporters (or 15 individuals for large congregations). Global Equality and Family/Household Supporters can qualify as two (2) individuals for Blue Ribbon purposes.

V. Discussion: Resistance to the United Nations?

- a. The UU-UNO’s advisory board is putting together an action toolkit for individuals, congregations, and communities to take action in support of the UN, and specifically in support of continued US funding for the United Nations. One of the things they’re including is going to be an FAQ with suggested responses to common questions/criticisms pertaining to the UN. What criticisms have you heard of the UN? What questions do we need to equip people to respond to?
 - i. Vicky: Peacekeeping crimes should be put into context (sexual violence) gotten a lot of publicity – that kind of thing needs to be put into some kind of context. It isn’t ALL the peacekeepers that are involved, it’s been a small number of people relative to all the peacekeepers that are out there. The UN has acknowledged that there have been problems and is doing things to ensure that this doesn’t happen in the future (further training in sexual harassment, violence, how to treat refugees etc.)
 - ii. Harry: Anti-globalist nonsense from right-wingers in Dallas. Generalized justification for the work that the UN does would serve as a counterargument to the very superficial opinions that America has primacy over the world and shouldn’t be taking direction from an outside quasi-governmental entity that consists of other governments. Not productive for us to engage the Tea Party

and other far right-wing. Harry is new to UU-UNO involvement, so not sure what people are feeling in the congregation, UN-wise.

1. Vicky: Perhaps tell people yeah it would be nice if we could just take care of ourselves but we're linked globally. Think of something very concrete that someone is involved in that links them with someone in another part of the world (maybe where their shirt was made or something). Question the isolationism that is totally unrealistic. "Yes it would be great if we could just rely on ourselves, but unfortunately (?) we are really connected to other parts of the world."
- iii. Harry: Liberals & UUs in Texas are fighting a real uphill battle with people who don't respect science & etc.; cannot make the assumptions perhaps NYers can regarding what people understand/believe about the world. On a local level they've been very effective. Working on an international level however is a real challenge.
 1. Vicky: Maryland was a blue state but the lower shore where Vicky lives is very red, and the issues they're encountering are not so different from what Harry's experiencing in Texas.
- iv. Eryl: Please share the content of this discussion more broadly with other Envoys!
 1. Allison: When the Action Toolkit mentioned above is published it will be an online thing, of which perhaps the FAQ section will be more interactive to give people a chance to contribute their experiences and feedback re: resistance to the United Nations.
- v. Roger: UN is not so good at sharing information about accomplishments. Need information sheets about what issues the UN has been useful for. UN is complex, and having interpretation from UU-UNO about what the UN is all about would be helpful.
 1. UU-UNO handouts about each program area are really great.

VI. Additional discussion items?

- a. Roger: Congregation has an annual UN essay contest for the youth!
- b. Joanne: [UN Wire](#) is great! They have every other day news briefs about what's going on at the UN.
- c. Joanne: visited the University Unitarian Church in Seattle and they have an excellent Climate Action Team that focuses on local, national, and international levels. Would love to hear from the team's minutes.
 - i. Chris Antal's inspiring presentation at GA about drones has inspired a member of Joanne's congregation to do a screening of the film at the church!