

**Minutes**  
**Monthly Envoy Conference Calls**

Wednesday, November 15, 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. Eva Castilla (First Unitarian Church of Dallas, TX)
    - v. Eryl Court (First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto, ON)
    - vi. Monica Greene (UU Congregation of Frederick, MD)
    - vii. Joanne Dufour (North Shore UU Society in Lacombe, LA)
  - b. 6pm
    - i. Allison Hess (UN Office, NYC)
    - ii. William McPherson (University Unitarian Church in Seattle, WA)
    - iii. Phyllis Baxter (UUEstrie in North Hatley, QC)
    - iv. Shari Loe (Morristown Unitarian Fellowship, NJ)
    - v. PJ Deak (UU Society of New Haven in Hamden, CT)
- II. Envoy Communication
  - a. Envoy conference calls – Allison is considering making more of the conference calls focused, with a guest presenter, or special training for the first half of the call. Thoughts on how to make monthly time together with Envoys productive & worthwhile?
    - i. Eryl : We need to cultivate ways to interact regularly with each other both via conference calls and outside the calls, such as via email
    - ii. Vicky: Really appreciated the training session on the SDGs in September that was hosted by CVSA.
    - iii. Harry: Enjoyed the presentation from Rev. Antal last month on Drones. Would be interested in attending additional informational sessions like that.
    - iv. PJ: Thought the call with Chris Antal was very useful, and though he couldn't stay for the whole thing, the follow-up resources were really helpful. PJ was able to reference some of the things Rev. Antal spoke about in his congregation's drone film screening conversation session shortly after the Envoy call.
    - v. Bill: offers to present at a future Envoy call about the Paris Agreement, climate denial, and the Trump administration.
  - b. Envoys Google Group
    - i. This past summer, we set up a [UU-UNO Envoys Google Group](#). People can join that and have direct email interchange with other Envoys. Allison will promote this in the November Envoy News and urge people to join the group. [Here are instructions on how to join the group!](#)
- III. UN News
  - a. COP23 climate conference underway now in Bonn, Germany!

- i. The US hosted a panel on Monday about fossil fuels, particularly promoting “clean coal” – the panel was disrupted by protesters who stood up and began singing (a rendition of “Proud to be an American” rewritten to be about environmentalism, keeping coal in the ground, etc.) then walked out of the room. There were so many protesters that by the time they left, the room was almost completely empty apart from press. Apart from that, the official US delegation is more or less keeping under the radar.
  - 1. Bill: There are actually [two US delegations at the conference](#): The official Trump administration’s delegation, plus a separate unofficial delegation representing states, cities, businesses, academic institutions, & faith groups with the tagline “We Are Still In”. The “We Are Still In” delegation has a very prominent booth in the main pavilion called the “U.S. Climate Action Center” indicating that the U.S. still cares about taking action and achieving the Paris Agreement goals, and will go around the White House to do it.
  - 2. There were also protests led by indigenous activists aimed at [California Governor Jerry Brown’s expansion of fracking](#) in the state. (Link is Democracy Now follow up on Gov. Brown’s response to protesters.)
- ii. There are plans to adopt a [Gender Action Plan](#) at COP23, recognizing the role of women in climate action!
- iii. Bill: Nicaragua & Syria have signed onto the Paris Agreement, so U.S. is the only country in the world that’ll be out of it (Syria delayed b/c war, Nicaragua delayed b/c it didn’t think the Agreement was strong enough)
- iv. Shari: What does the “We Are Still In” delegation mean for the US/Paris goals?
  - 1. Basically, that the U.S. is going to try to achieve the goals despite the administration. If we can make changes, lower emissions, and get industries to be more sustainable, does it matter that it’s not being done “in the name of the United States”? The contingent that makes up the “Still In” group represents more than half of the US economy. ([more info about the coalition!](#))
- v. There are a number of UUs there representing different organizations. Salote Soqo from UUUSC is at COP23 representing Unitarian Universalists. She’s reporting regularly via the [UUUSC blog](#), and the [UU Young Adults for Climate Justice blog](#) also has some good info from COP23!
- vi. Joanne: Amy Goodman is reporting for Democracy Now in Bonn this week. Joanne watched [this fascinating show yesterday](#). Here is the full [Democracy Now COP23 coverage](#).

#### IV. Dana Greeley Sermon Competition

- a. The competition theme is the same as for UN Sunday, so people can submit sermons given at UN Sunday (2017-18 topic = disarmament)

- i. Shari: A group from Shari's congregation won the award a few years ago. The submission doesn't necessarily have to be a sermon – when Shari's team won, 5 people spoke about their experience at the seminar and tied it all together.
  - ii. Allison: Envoys should feel welcome to either submit a sermon themselves or encourage their minister to submit one. **The submission deadline is February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018!** <https://www.uua.org/justice-programs/awards/greeley>
- V. Spring Seminar is coming up soon! "When Crisis Calls: Advancing Just Migration for All"
  - a. Registration will open in early December. Keep an eye on [www.UUA.org/UNSpringSeminar](http://www.UUA.org/UNSpringSeminar) for updated information & more details in the next couple of weeks.
  - b. Registration rates are correct online.
  - c. Joanne: It would be great to invite the head of UNHCR as a keynote presenter.
- VI. UN Sunday – what did your congregation do?
  - a. Joanne: Allison came to speak at North Shore UU Society's UN Sunday service and did an amazing job (strong endorsement from Joanne for congregations to invite Allison for their future services). [Joanne's service summary](#)
  - b. Vicky: UN Sunday on Nov. 5<sup>th</sup> in which Vicky spoke, and she distributed origami cranes at the end of the talk. She talked about how the Salisbury community has been involved in disarmament action through walks, marches, alliance-building. Her address was titled "Doing Global Work on a Local Level," she emphasized how the UN's programs are not just distant ideas but they can be applied in everyday lives and talked about what the congregation does to apply them. Got to make a case for the relevancy of the UN to people's daily lives. Made a pitch for the UNO office and their involvement with the UN including the history from the UN Sunday packet. There was a table at the end of the service at which they got five memberships all together. Appreciation for the new Supporter levels, since Vicky's fellowship tends to be older & retired and the \$60 is a bit much, so \$30 was found to be quite doable. Congregational actions:
    - i. Peace Alliance for the Lower Shore for more than 10 years had a peace vigil on the main street every Sunday in front of the university. They marched and had signs, ever since the first Iraqi War. After several years, there were two elderly people left doing it alone and it got to be a bit much for them.
    - ii. Delegation went to the mayor, former & present mayors are members of Mayors for Peace
    - iii. Sponsor Peace in the Park every year.
    - iv. Have a Peace Pole.
    - v. They're located not too far from Washington DC and some of the people in the fellowship have marched in DC in the past and share their enthusiasm with the congregation.
    - vi. Talking about these actions during the UN Sunday service was an opportunity to name and honor those in the past who have been active.

- c. Monica: Spoke on 10/8 about what she learned in the seminar about disarmament around the world, and included a bit about the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to ICAN, the group that was promoting the UN nuclear prohibition. [Monica's service summary](#)
    - i. Set up a table on UN Sunday with posters and brochures
    - ii. That Sunday (10/22) the minister spoke about immigration justice (relating to next year's topic!), with really amazing music
  - d. Eryl: Assistant minister led a very nice service in Toronto
  - e. Harry: Acting Senior Minister – (senior minister is on sabbatical) So many competing interests in the congregation that are competing for time, interest, and money! UN Sunday is not something that the ministerial staff is interested in doing on an annual basis. That can change, but at this point, they're in the observe-and-learn stage.
  - f. Phyllis: Presented on nuclear ban treaty which Canada has not signed, passed out letters to send to the prime minister & other ministers.
  - g. Bill: UN Sunday service included a short speech by Bill, not a full sermon
  - h. Shari: Working on getting a date w/ Rev. Alison on a co-led service. Would also like to have a luncheon or film or something after the service for continued conversation.
    - i. Shari has been doing UN Sunday services for a long time, maybe in early summer she can do a presentation on an Envoy call and teach folks about how to do an awesome UN Sunday service
  - i. PJ: UN Service with Bruce as a guest speaker will be in January – in October, New Haven Envoys PJ, Pablo, & Arlo talked about their experience at the seminar, and are working on getting more people to attend the Spring Seminar.
    - i. [Age of Consequences](#) film screening coming up in conjunction with immigration task force.
    - ii. Sponsoring a refugee family from Iraq so this issue is definitely on people's minds
    - iii. Shari: It's the best when you can get not just youth but also adults to go to the Seminar because then it's easy to do a service the coming year because it flows naturally
  - j. PJ: Would be really great to see what everyone did for their UN Sunday service, including Order of Service, hymns, etc. so we can learn from and borrow from each other.
    - i. Allison: Yes! That's why we created the online UN Sunday sharing map. Everyone who wants to achieve Blue Ribbon status this year will need to share about their service online. Many have already done so! Take a look and please share as much as you can: [www.UUA.org/UNSunday/Services](http://www.UUA.org/UNSunday/Services)
- VII. Sharing other events Envoys have been working on
- a. Joanne: After hearing Rev. Antal's presentation at GA, someone from her congregation made the appeal to show the drone presentation at the congregation as well as at the Women's Center. Good showing at the congregation, but no success at the Women's Center the first time. Rescheduled that for this past Monday night and in addition to the director, there were 2 other people from the church plus another woman from the

Women's Center. They brainstormed outreach and are excited about reaching out to ministers in the area and inviting them to the films. The films are easily accessible for free online from the [Interfaith Network on Drone Warfare](#), and this topic is so important, congregations should really consider hosting these screenings/conversations. They even have some funding to provide!

- b. This coming Sunday, Phyllis is organizing a service with a friend who has been working with refugees in Greece. She goes as a volunteer, it is very hard for people who are not affiliated with the Greek government to do anything in the camps.
  - i. Will send Allison ideas for seminar speakers.

VIII. Torda450!

- a. 450 years ago, the Edict of Torda was adopted in Transylvania, the first proclamation of religious freedom & also created the Hungarian Unitarian Church! Huge deal for Unitarian history. The actual anniversary is January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2018 – all year long there will be events and opportunities to engage with the topic of religious freedom & with Unitarian heritage.
  - i. The [Torda450.org](http://Torda450.org) website has a page about how to combine worship services honoring both Torda450 *and* Martin Luther King, Jr. Day which are the same weekend in 2018. <https://www.uua.org/international/torda450/martin-luther-king-jr-day-and-torda450>
- b. Award! Sermons, Curricula, Powerpoints, or other presentations can be submitted (by Feb. 26, 2018)
  - i. Shari: Has been teaching a class for young people at the church for several years about the Edict of Torda, so this might be of great interest!
  - ii. If the recipient is a member of the UUMA, the recipient will be awarded a grant which will pay all expenses to attend the religious leader's pilgrimage to Transylvania in July 2018. If the recipient is not a member of the UUMA or is otherwise unable to participate in the pilgrimage, the recipient will receive a cash award of \$2000. The Entry will also be featured on U/U websites and social media.
  - iii. [More details on the award.](#) Encourage ministers to submit something!

IX. Adjourn.