

**Minutes**  
**Monthly Envoy Conference Calls**  
Thursday, January 18, 1pm and 5pm Eastern

- I. Welcome and introductions
  - a. 1pm
    - i. Allison (UN Office, NYC)
    - ii. Bill McPherson (University Unitarian Church in Seattle, WA)
    - iii. Holly Chase (First Congregational Society in Salem, MA)
    - iv. Monica Greene (UU Congregation of Frederick, MD)
    - v. Rebecca Allen (San Marcos UU Fellowship in Lockhart, TX)
    - vi. Nancy Nowak (First Parish Church UU in Duxbury, MA)
  - b. 6pm
    - i. Allison (UN Office, NYC)
    - ii. Bill McPherson (University Unitarian Church in Seattle, WA)
    - iii. Joanne Dufour (North Shore UU Society in Lacombe, LA)
    - iv. Peggy Montgomery (All Souls Church in New York, NY)
    - v. Barbara LaCombe (First Unitarian Church of Portland, OR)
    - vi. Daniel Sullivan (King's Chapel in Boston, MA)
    - vii. Peg Dobrinska (UU Fellowship of Centre County in State College, PA)
- II. Climate Action Presentation by Dr. William McPherson: retired environmental diplomat who has worked all over the world, currently very active in climate activism in the Seattle area.
  - a. The Paris Agreement – Bill was one of the UU-UNO's credentialed delegates to the 2015 COP21 and got to witness the Paris Agreement being adopted. 197 countries have signed on (including the US, we're not out of it yet!) (also includes Syria & Nicaragua who joined later on)
    - i. All of these countries agreed to keep temperatures "well below 2 degrees centigrade" (we're already past 1 degree) – with the ambition of holding the temperature change to 1.5 (scientists are telling us that's not really possible)
    - ii. We will *all* strive to reach *zero* net emissions by the year 2050 – that really drives a lot of the policy. Want to reach the point where sequestration by trees/forests matches the amount of carbon we put in the air.
    - iii. Nationally Determined Contributions – Each nation has the right to determine its own contributions, and that's where the Trump decision to withdraw from the Paris Agreement comes in. Every 5 years, these commitments are reviewed via the UNFCCC's (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) Conference of Parties (COP) – assessments are made on whether each country's commitments are doing enough or not and need to be adjusted.
  - b. Graph of global greenhouse gas emissions:
    - 1. No Action, continuing business as usual, would raise the global temperature by 4.5 degrees by 2050
    - 2. Current NDCs would take us to 3.5 degrees over pre-industrial temps

3. If we really want to meet the terms of the agreement, to reach 2 degrees, we need to start reducing emissions right away and get on a very strict regimen downward.
- c. Clean Power Plan (US commitments):
    - i. First step towards meeting our Paris Agreement commitments is the Clean Power Plan relating to getting rid of carbon fuel was put into suspension by the supreme court under Obama and now Scott Pruitt, head of EPA, is saying it won't be enforced.
    - ii. Next step is establishing a 55 mpg standard for vehicles – also suspended by Trump administration. Auto companies are happy to go back on the Obama-era promise to move towards that 55mpg goal.
    - iii. Next step is reducing methane (including fracking, natural gas, and agriculture) and nitrous oxides (from agriculture) – fracking cutbacks are starting to be suspended under the Trump administration....
    - iv. Next step is improving energy efficiency and eliminating HFCs (Montreal protocol established HFC substitutes).
    - v. Next step is California Standards – up to 12 other states joined California on these (incl. Washington, Oregon, & NY!). They will go into effect regardless of Trump administration - courts probably won't allow federal government to stop California from taking these steps.
    - vi. Even with these 5 steps, we still don't meet our Paris Agreement, but we're not even going to be doing those! There is a market pressure to improve power plant emissions (because gas is cheaper than coal)
    - vii. The current federal government is not going to help out at all with these, but not all hope is lost!
  - d. Rebecca – Indian scientist Dr. Sailesh Rao has plotted all animal agriculture and its environmental impact. Beyond the huge ecological cost of beef, the dairy industry contributes in a major way to methane and even eating fish is not sustainable as some oceanographers are expecting a dead ocean in less than fifty years. [Here's Dr. Rao's talk from COP21.](#)
  - e. Monica – What's the most effective thing an individual can do?
    - i. Climate Action Team at University Church in Seattle has been leading a competition called "Taming Bigfoot" – the name is a reference to carbon footprint, and a local mascot in the pacific northwest! Form ~25 teams throughout the city of ~7 people each. Recruited the teams at city-wide events where people could sign up there or online, also got a column in the Seattle Times. Teams are multigenerational, with a mix of those who have a green lifestyle and those who are "aspiring" to have a green lifestyle.
      1. The teams will keep records of what they're doing, gas usage, paper usage, food purchases, water meters, etc. First month = no changes in normal routine, just start tracking. Then in following months, teams talk about what they're doing and each month, measure the footprint and

make adjustments. In May, award prizes to those who reduce their footprint the most. Businesses have sponsored prizes to give people.

- ii. Just working on individual footprints is not enough. (Washington State has 1/1000<sup>th</sup> population of the world – we can do what we can in Seattle has very little effect on the rest of the world, but serve as a good example for everyone else!)
  - iii. Carbon Tax – WA Governor has proposed \$20/ton tax (pay per ton of carbon emitted). Money from the tax would go into clean energy and into low-income communities. It's regressive though, so percentage-wise, the tax would have a greater impact on lower-income communities. UU Voices of Washington State (Bill is president) went to Olympia and testified about the carbon tax.
- f. Monica – had a social action meeting at church and are thinking of joining UUs for Social Justice in DC so hoping congregation can join the energy around lobbying for progressive causes. Maybe we can get Congress to do something. Not a lot of hope with the Trump administration doing something, but it's possible Congress could? (Difficult w/ competing priorities on the legislative agenda!)
- g. Rebecca – a couple things they're doing in San Marcos: presented to RE classes about Citizen's Climate Lobby (will have speaker next month) (Bill says they're one of the most effective lobbyists on state & federal level) At all the events, they're not serving any animal products like beef, trying not to use Styrofoam, bringing cloth napkins – whilst promoting CCL, also touching on other aspects!
- i. Bipartisan climate coalition in the House of Representatives – they won't let a democrat join unless they can get a republican also to join. Would be nice to have such a thing in the Senate too where much of the problems are!
  - ii. Also: Donate the Plate. Congregation is thinking of including those environmental aspects that aren't talked about very much so there's more awareness of the methane contribution
- h. Holly – is hoping to have a UN Sunday at the congregation, and want the topic to be on climate change and climate action.
- i. Bill – Should mention at UN Sunday: Even though the US has indicated it will withdraw as a federal government from the Paris Agreement, a number of states and cities have adopted this statement that "We're Still In" – several state, local, and business leaders went to COP23 in Bonn in November. During that meeting the "We're Still In" contingency all spoke of their pledges. Some cities for example have goals of zero emissions by such-and-such date – we're complying with the Paris Agreement even if the Federal Government isn't. Cities and states are still working with the UN, representing us (plus the UU-UNO obviously)
- i. The U.S. ended up coming across as being pretty proactive and aggressive in addressing climate change (even though the actual federal delegation was pushing for fossil fuels)
- j. Nancy – There are about 22 UU state action networks. The communication through the UU-UNO can bring this information down to the State advocacy networks.

UUMassAction is going strong and has a climate group which is very state oriented (b/c pipeline issues) but bringing this into the broader national & international level would be really great. UUSC also has an initiative on climate change – related to helping people relocate in Alaska and in Pacific Island whose lands are threatened by climate change.

- i. Bill: Washington does participate with CUUSAN! (coalition of UU state action networks)
  - ii. UU-UNO's 2018 spring seminar theme panel will focus on Climate refugees – working with UUSC on that!
- k. Rebecca – involved with UU Ministry For Earth, will be speaking about impacts on indigenous people. Also, a number of ministers have been collaborating on getting UUSC to look at a group called a Well-Fed World which tries to find alternatives to address hunger relief *and* animal protection (rather than Heifer International)
  - i. Book by Dr. Sailesh Rao – [Carbon Dharma: the Occupation of Butterflies](#) – explains what happens to our bodies with temperature rises, and what happens to the Earth. Not just scientific but also personal and even spiritual.
- l. Nancy – Love the idea of talking with UU Ministry for Earth... How can we link with national environmental organization, who is doing the best advocacy in Washington DC? Would prefer to focus funding rather than spreading it around and being less effective. Do you know if/how they're collaborating to get political power?
  - i. Citizen's Climate Lobby is the most directly involved in lobbying Congress. Sierra Club (have DC office), 350.org in coalition from each other. In Washington, the Alliance for Jobs and Clean Energy is a collaboration of groups from labor movement, indigenous groups, people of color groups, etc.
- m. NE states have Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, California has Cap & Trade, British Columbia has a Carbon Tax which has reduced their emissions and their economic growth is actually above the rest of Canada!
- n. Joanne – Louisiana democrats have an anti-fracking campaign (church is not involved) 1/3 of Louisiana will be gone by 2050 (losing a football field/day!)
  - i. After Katrina, 1 of the 3 UU churches in NOLA was destroyed and they built it with as progressive of materials they could find!
- o. Bill – Seattle congregation is doing a big building project – looking at how to build in solar panels, try to have zero fossil fuels. City puts solar panels on public buildings, and people can get a dividend on their power bill. Will hopefully get citizens pay for solar panels for private buildings – it's an investment!
- p. Barbara – Portland church has a climate group, but Barbara's not part of it so doesn't know details, but the group is doing some good work!
- q. Barbara – is there anything in the Paris Agreement about population control?
  - i. Bill: no. That's a red line that, if brought up at the conference, people would leave the room. The Nicaraguan delegate wanted to include something about a Carbon Budget, but that was another of these red lines that couldn't be crossed and wasn't brought up at the COP.
- r. Many thanks to Bill for his great informative presentation! Keep up the good work!

- III. Blue Ribbon Congregation Deadline is coming up March 31<sup>st</sup>! Allison will be contacting Envoys whose congregations are close to meeting the requirements. Email her if interested in status.
- IV. Office Updates
  - a. Preparing for Commission on the Status of Women forum – both of our proposals were approved, so we'll be hosting two panel discussions at the forum in March!
    - i. "Advancing Gender Equality through Community Based Organizing and Global Advocacy" – community-based practices and how they increase opportunities for women living in poverty.
    - ii. "Female Genital Mutilation: Advancing Awareness and Advocating for Global Action" – cultivate awareness of the effects of FGM on those who have gone through it and what current and future best practices can address the issue.
  - b. Tentative LGBTQ rights event at the UN – Not ready to actually announce anything publicly because this is just in the very beginning stages of planning! Focus on bringing together Member States who are on the fence as far as LGBTQ human rights go, places like China, Vietnam, Ghana, India etc. that are discussing sexual orientation & gender identity human rights on a national level. The goal would be to get each participating country to submit a commitment to improving the lives of LGBTQ people, with each commitment representing the best *that individual country* can commit to – similar to the way the Paris Agreement worked. Some countries may be able to outlaw SOGI hate speech; others might be ready to go further, providing specific protections, etc. Very excited about this endeavor and are working with a number of partners on this, including the UN office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights who has connected us with the block of countries at the UN who are in support of SOGI rights. (again, they can help us in making this possible, but the main countries we'll be focusing our energy on those countries who are not 100% committed (yet) to SOGI rights.)
    - i. Rebecca: Churches are looking at White Supremacy (one of recent Statements of Conscience). What about UU-UNO – how is the UU-UNO doing on diversity? Just 2 staff (Allison & Director, Bruce), both of whom are white. Our staff group has been focusing on diversifying the events and panel discussions etc. that we put on. In terms of combatting white supremacy programmatically, a couple of years ago we added an additional key program area on Racial Justice which primarily has been focusing on people of African descent and working closely with the United Nations Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent.
  - c. [Intergenerational Spring Seminar](#) is coming up soon! April 5-7 in NYC.
    - i. Registration is open until February 26<sup>th</sup>. Envoys get a \$50 registration discount. (Early registration ends next Monday though, 1/22, so if you want to get the best rate, don't forget!)
    - ii. Envoy Lunch will be Saturday afternoon, including time for information sharing, networking, and training!

- iii. Monica: Question about housing costs for youth? The youth will lodge at the hostel with their sponsors, and this lodging cost is included in the price of their registration, as a way to encourage youth to attend the event!
  - d. Dana Greeley Sermon Competition – submit sermons by Feb. 1<sup>st</sup>! The topic for the sermon competition is the same as for this past year's UN Sunday (disarmament). Find more info about the competition at <https://www.uua.org/justice-programs/awards/greeley>
    - i. Don't need to be a minister to submit a sermon!
  - e. This year is the 450<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Edict of Torda – first statement of religious tolerance and first official recognition of Unitarianism! Big deal for religious freedom generally and for Unitarians specifically! Learn more at [www.Torda450.org](http://www.Torda450.org) about opportunities to engage with this anniversary throughout the whole year of 2018!
- V. Adjourn