

Minutes
Monthly Envoy Conference Call
Thursday February 22, 6pm Eastern

- I. In attendance: (Name, congregation/location, share recent movie &/or other check-in)
 - a. Allison Hess (UN Office, NYC)
 - i. Black Panther!
 - b. Joanne Dufour (North Shore UU Society in Lacombe, LA)
 - i. The Post & The Darkest Hour
 - c. Bill McPherson (University Unitarian Church in Seattle, WA)
 - i. There are a series of bills in Washington State relating to the question of climate change. Bill testified yesterday. Someone said Washington state contributes only 0.3% of the world's carbon emissions – but Bill pointed out that WA is only 0.1% of the world's population so really, should be only emitting one third of what we are! Mentioned the Paris Agreement and how we have committed to get that percentage to 0% by 2050.
 - d. Nancy Nowak (First Parish in Duxbury, MA)
 - i. The Post, 13th, & Traces of the Trade (which is about the slave trade in Providence, RI – very nearby for Duxbury)
 - e. MJ Pierson (The Gathering at Northern Hills in Cincinnati, OH) – MJ also works with youth at other congregations in the area through teaching OWL
 - i. Congregation just hosted a film series for Black History Month including 13th, Mudbound, and Get Out
 - f. Ron Glossop (First Unitarian Church in Alton, IL)
 - i. The World is My Country, about a man (Garry Davis) who declared himself a world citizen during WWII
 - ii. In April, congregation will host a talk by David Gallop from the World Service Authority (provide official documents, services for stateless persons such as refugees)
 - g. Lisa Bredbenner (Middletown, NJ)
 - i. Serves on the UU-UNO Advisory Board and is responsible for getting to know/support the Envoy program, so listening in!
 - h. Jerry Ross (First Parish Bedford, MA)
 - i. First Parish is a sanctuary congregation, they currently have a guest in sanctuary and over 200 people from the church and local community are taking shifts to be on duty at all times.
 - ii. Really looking forward to the Seminar – 3 adults and 4 youth from First Parish will attend!
 - iii. The Post brought back many memories of those times protesting & being a conscientious objector
 - iv. Daniel Ellsberg has a new book called ["The Doomsday Machine"](#)
 - i. Peggy Montgomery (All Souls Church, NYC)

- i. The Post reminded Peggy of "[Crisis & Change: My Years as President of the Unitarian Universalist Association 1969-1977](#)" by Bob West – talked about Beacon Press's involvement w/ the Pentagon Papers (also, turns out Peggy & Bob West are distant relations!)
- II. Report from ICUU Conference in Kathmandu, Nepal
 - a. Conference was initially supposed to be held in Shillong, Meghalaya in North East India, but the Indian government refused to grant conference visas to ICUU.
 - b. Amazing to meet so many UUs from around the world, including lots from the US, but also large groups from NE India and Transylvania, as well as others from a total of 20 countries! Also, thanks to grants from the UU Partner Church Council, 20 young adults were able to attend.
 - c. Theme of the conference was "The Heart of Unitarian/Universalism"
 - i. Deep theological conversations
 - 1. How are U/Us different, theologically in different parts of the world?
 - 2. How are we similar?
 - 3. What is the "heart" of UUism? What unites us?
 - d. Allison asked people What is different about the Unitarian Church in [wherever you're from] as compared to other churches in that area?
 - i. Most people said something about freedom, not being required to believe a certain thing but being free to determine that for yourself.
 - ii. Very pertinent conversation given this year's year-long celebration of the 450th anniversary of the Edict of Torda ([Torda450!](#))
 - iii. The conference included the first Torda450 Theological Dialogue with the 5 global U/U theologians ([read about them here!](#) –scroll down for bios) The theologians come from Transylvania, Romania; United States; Indonesia; Burundi; and NE India
 - iv. There will be discussion modules to go along with each of these theological dialogues that take place throughout the year. The first one will be available March 1st – keep an eye out! The idea is, you watch the video of the dialogue between the theologians, and then in a small group in your congregation, you discuss the questions in the module thing.
 - v. The next of these dialogues will be in April during the UU-UNO's Intergenerational Spring Seminar!
 - e. Also got a small amount of time to visit the city of Kathmandu! It was really amazing – so many beautiful temples & palaces & etc. – but also sad because so much was destroyed by the huge earthquake in 2015. A lot of the structures are covered in scaffolding. Also it was very smoggy!
 - f. Allison's writing a blog post about the conference – keep an eye out for that soon!
- III. Office Updates
 - a. LGBTQ human rights – UU-UNO hosted an event on LGBTQ Asylum Seekers & refugees at All Souls NYC on Feb 13. Blog post forthcoming!
 - i. Peggy heard good things but wasn't able to attend

- b. Women's Rights – Preparing for the NGO CSW (Commission on the Status of Women) Forum in March! Here are some more [details about the two events](#) we're hosting 3/15 & 3/16.
 - i. Jerry: Where can I point people who want to learn more about what the UU-UNO is actually working on re: women's rights program?
 - 1. Allison will update the [webpage](#) so that it's got more detailed & recent information! That's the place where this information can be found.
 - c. Climate Justice – We're working on a panel discussion relating to climate change and the SDGs for some time in April.
 - d. Refugee Program – also putting together a panel for May on refugees as a follow-up to the Seminar!
- IV. Spring Seminar is coming up April 5-7!
- a. We will have an Envoy Lunch meeting on Saturday so that Envoys can get to know each other and prospective Envoys can hear about the program. Must buy a ticket ahead of time!
 - b. We're praying that one panel will be taking place at the UN headquarters, in the morning of Friday April 6th and will be live streamed (and viewable online afterward) for people unable to attend the Seminar.
 - c. Jerry & Joanne will attend! Peggy will attend at least on Saturday.
 - d. Joanne recently heard from David Milliband (Director of IRC) on the radio – he will not be at the Seminar ☹️
 - e. Keynote speaker: [Raed Jarrar](#)!
- V. [Greeley Award](#) (sermon competition!) deadline extended to March 7 – spread the word!
- VI. Blue Ribbon deadline is coming up on March 31st!
- a. As a reminder, to qualify as a Blue Ribbon Congregation, you must meet the following four requirements: 1) Have an Envoy or Envoy team, 2) Hold a UN Sunday service, 3) Have at least 5% of your congregation's membership be UU-UNO Supporters (or 15 individuals for large congregations), 4) Congregational donation: congregation assigns a special collection or line in the budget to the UU-UNO.
- VII. Other items to share?
- a. Joanne: Spent a month in January in NYC volunteering at the UNO! It was a very affirming wonderful experience – got connected to many amazing people and learned so much from them. Focused on putting together a blog about disarmament, which will continue to be added to every 2 weeks. Check out the blog here!
<https://www.uua.org/international/blog/disarmament>
 - i. Jerry's very interested in working together on this with Joanne – Allison will put them in touch.
- VIII. Adjourn