

Much of the time of the Accountability Group members have been spent on the various assignments that they have including service on the planning for chaplaincy, Opening Celebration, Service of the Living Tradition, Synergy, Thursday morning worship, closing worship and now right relations as well as liaison activities with the UU Ministers' Association, Allies for Racial Equity and other key groups. Members of the Group have served as an extra pool of volunteers for this General Assembly. In addition, we continue to hold discussions with various groups about aspects of their business

Messaging and Excitement Building Around General Assembly: Our biggest concern continues to be the need for additional messaging and excitement building around the importance of this General Assembly. Initial response numbers suggest that our concern about a lack of understanding and possible lower response are not unwarranted. Because so many people are first-time attendees, we wonder if the early registration deadline should be extended? Of particular concern is a more effective way to mobilize the communications networks of the UU Ministers Association to help generate a sense of importance and about encouraging registration. We are hearing very basic questions from people who should have more information, including reports from District staff that they need more information. Of most concern is that some people do not have the basic ethic that this is an occasion for witness and service and not about workshop content.

Concern About the Use of Spanish Language: We would ask that there be some conscious conversation about how and when we are using Spanish at this General Assembly and that we recognize that the value may be mostly for us as Unitarian Universalists to have the experience of being in a multilingual environment. We also need a recognition that many in our midst area already multilingual as many of those of Latina/o heritage who will be with us will be multilingual and we want to not unintentionally create uncomfortable paternalism. We have had discussions that nuances need to be recognized when we are using simultaneous translation, whether we should identify people who have Spanish fluency, etc. We understand that there will be some people who only speak Spanish speaking and it is not clear how we will be fully involving them in this General Assembly. Decentralizing English-speaking is perhaps the primary reason to do this even more so than hospitality. Continued conversation with our partner organizations should be the basis of any decisions about use of Spanish. More clarity about when translators will be used and that they be provided with UU-speak.

Cultural Contexting: At this Justice General Assembly, being sure we are attuned to the ways we use or borrow elements from cultures other than our dominant one is important. We hope the Council on Crosscultural Engagement will be used as a resource for all worship leaders and that extra care will be taken to contexting in worship, plenary and other. Not only the context of the item but also who is presenting or performing it is important. Energy breaks and other pieces also need to be thought of in this context.

Accessibility of Off-Site Witness: Appreciate the care that the Arizona Immigration Ministry to pull that off. The witness at the jail complex has many complexities for those historically marginalized in our own UU family and care needs to be taken that those trained to help with those activities be aware of these. We ask that care continued to be taken in all aspects of this. The training for witness volunteers should include information on how to support those most likely to experience challenges. This may be a place where the Accountability Group can be of assistance in the training and on the day of the event.

Multigenerational Representation: Throughout General Assembly Youth and Young Adults will be participating in various events with the larger population, of which we are all apart. We would ask that workshops, worship, and social justice related event generally welcome all ages. Youth and Young Adults have been represented throughout the Accountability Group's planning and processing in preparation for General Assembly. We ask that their voices continue to be heard and recognized throughout GA.

Role of the Accountability Group at General Assembly: We would ask for clarification from the Board and/or the Planning Committee as to what our role will be at General Assembly other than the myriad individual roles we are having. We would suggest that we offer an interim report on concerns to the Board and/or Planning Committee at some point. It may also be important to have some of us involved in other key activities. We would also ask for the use of meeting space during the General Assembly as well. Following the General Assembly, we do anticipate a final report on our observations on our role and its implications for the future.

Statement on Acts of Civil Disobedience: We spent some time at the request of Craig Roshaven and Susan Frederick-Grey on the issue of civil disobedience actions instigated by individuals (i.e. out of the GA Planning/Arizona Immigration Ministry structure.) After writing this, it was decided not to use it but we offer it here in case it is useful in the future.

“As we approach our time of witness, service and education at the Justice General Assembly in Phoenix, we are aware of some conflict around the role of civil disobedience at this event. As the Accountability Group for Justice General Assembly we wish to remind those planning to attend that we have made a commitment to respect the leadership of our local partner organizations. We ask that acts of civil disobedience be conducted only at their request. It is important to remember that we are in Arizona because these partners invited Unitarian Universalists to join them in witnessing against the human and civil rights violations in Arizona. At this point, the local partner organizations have not requested civil disobedience. If this should change, a plan for effective civil disobedience at a gathering this size will be used to mobilize our involvement. We ask that those attending the General Assembly respect the intentional and involved planning process that has led to this Justice General Assembly and not endanger the careful balance of decision-making, dialogue, and planning by engaging in acts of civil disobedience that have not been requested by our partners. We believe this to be a matter of accountability and we are asking individuals and groups to come to Arizona ready to serve the expressed needs of our partners, rather than with an agenda of our own.

Training on civil disobedience will be offered at this General Assembly and individual congregations or groups of individuals may decide to engage in this vital form of witness in their home communities as part of the continued action around immigration issues. The Accountability Group urges that any actions adapt a spirit of right relationship by developing local partnerships so that those most affected by the policies and practices are able to lead and their voices can be heard. We encourage any individuals or groups considering civil disobedience in any context to consider their motivations and whether these acts serve the needs of those most affected by the civil and human rights violations undertaken in the guise of immigration enforcement. Our role in justice-making may well be to listen and develop accountable, responsive relationships with those most marginalized by these and other policies of oppression and discrimination.”

Jeanne Pupke’s also offered an example of a covenant they are asking the attendees from the congregation she serves to agree to:

Aware of the many connections that draw us to General Assembly in Phoenix, the resolution for Justice G.A. approved by General Assembly 2010, of our many concerns for human rights in the state of Arizona as well as the requests of our local partners to focus our time together on generative work to heal the divisions those laws have amplified in accord with the guidance of our Association Leadership, and in accountable relationship to all, we the members of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Richmond do covenant to refrain from activities of civil disobedience during the time of our gathering in June of 2012. We recognize the value of such activities at times and places where they may be appropriate but will refrain from using them during our Justice G.A. 2012.