

Minutes
Monthly Envoy Conference Call
September 21, 2021 at 3pm & 6pm Eastern

International Day of Peace!

- I. Welcome and Introductions
 - a. 3pm
 - i. Allison Hess (UU@UN)
 - ii. Jeannie Lewis (San Marcos UU Fellowship, TX)
 - iii. Dana Burch (Community Church of New York, NY)
 - iv. Ron Glossop (First Unitarian Church of Alton, IL)
 - v. Barry Lee (North Shore UU Society, LA)
 - vi. Mandy Mynhier (All Souls Community Church of West Michigan)
 - vii. Elaine Nelson (UU Community Church of Washington County, OR)
 - viii. Marilyn Mehr (All Souls NYC)
 - ix. Peggy Montgomery (All Souls NYC)
 - b. 6pm
 - i. Allison Hess (UU@UN)
 - ii. Joanne Spivey (UU congregation of Frederick, MD)
 - iii. Nasreen Gagner (UU Congregation of Long Beach, CA)
 - iv. Phyllis Baxter (UU Church of North Hatley, QC)
 - v. Janis Daly (Don Heights Unitarian Congregation in Toronto, ON)
 - vi. Janet Bendowitz (UU Congregation of Shelter Rock, NY)
 - vii. Anna Mone (All Souls NYC)
 - viii. Bill McPherson (University Unitarian Church in Seattle, WA)
- II. News from the United Nations and our UU Office
 - a. UNGA is happening right now! See the list of presenters (<https://gadebate.un.org/generaldebate76/en/>) and watch live and recorded addresses on UN Web TV (<https://media.un.org/en/webtv/>)
 - i. The “General Debate” is when heads of state give their address. Supposed to be 15 mins, but many go over. This year many leaders are in NYC to deliver their speech in person, but several have submitted pre-recorded videos which are shown during their slot in the GA hall.
 - ii. Ron: We should move the UN from a confederation to a federation (as happened when we created the United States of America)
 1. Dana: The European Union is trying to move in that direction.
 - b. UN Food Systems Summit is September 23 (Thursday!)
 - i. Lots of controversy surrounds the Summit. Allison just wrote a blog post with many details about this – read more here: <https://www.uua.org/international/blog/call-inclusion-sovereignty-unfss>
 - ii. A big concern is the move by the UN towards multistakeholder format. This is an undemocratic design for such a summit because it allows more powerful people and entities to dominate the conversation. (read more about this here:

<https://www.resilience.org/stories/2021-07-26/power-to-the-elites-multistakeholderism-and-the-un-food-systems-summit/>)

1. Dana: Multistakeholder initiative at Harvard that looks at power dynamics in multistakeholder initiatives, very powerful lens to understand it all. <https://www.msi-integrity.org/>
- iii. This week there are counter-mobilizations happening led by activist groups and frontline farmers, food workers, and indigenous peoples.
 1. [People's Autonomous Response to the UNFSS](#)
 2. [Global People's Summit for Just, Equitable, Healthy and Sustainable Food Systems](#)
- c. UUMFE and UU@UN will be hosting two panels in October focusing on the recent UN climate report and COP26.
 - i. Wed. October 6 at 8pm EDT
 1. Focus: Strengthening Local Climate Commitments, informed by IPCC report
 - ii. Thurs. October 28 at 7pm EDT
 1. Focus: Understanding what to expect from COP26
 - iii. Also considering holding informal conversations each day of COP26 to discuss what's happened that day in Glasgow.
 1. Bill: Anyone can follow along with the COP by reading daily reports from ENB. The reports will start on October 31, but people can become familiar with the site any time.
 - a. (ENB stands for Earth Negotiations Bulletin, and it is sponsored by IISD, the International Institute for Sustainable Development, in Winnipeg, Canada. Bill used to work for ENB and wrote and edited reports on environmental conferences around the world.)
 - iv. Clarifications: COP26 is the 26th Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (aka UN climate conference). It will take place October 31 – November 12, 2021 in Glasgow, Scotland (and I believe hybrid format). In 2015, countries submitted their national commitments in Paris which need to be renewed every 5 years. The 2020 COP was postponed due to Covid, so COP26 in 2021 is when countries need to submit updated commitments (these are called NDCs, nationally determined contributions). The IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) report provides the science to inform the Parties as to what they need to consider as they create their individual climate commitments.
 1. Recent indications show that the commitments that have already been submitted are insufficient for meeting the Paris Agreement's goal to limit global warming to less than 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. This means the COP will be super critical in pressuring countries toward accelerating and strengthening those commitments and (importantly) action.

2. Bill: October 31 is when COP starts, one week after UN Sunday! Good to at least mention that during UN Sunday and the following week.

III. United Nations Sunday resources and activities

- a. Jeannie: Gotten in touch with Aly Tharp to deliver the UN Sunday message, not sure yet if it'll be in person or on Zoom. Congregation is meeting on Zoom through September, maybe in person come October.
- b. Elaine: Would the 2021 Greeley Sermon Competition's winning sermon video be allowed to be used during UN Sunday?
 - i. Allison: Not sure but I will follow up!
 - ii. Mandy: What's the Greeley Sermon competition?
 1. An annual Sermon Competition hosted by the UU@UN on the theme of UN Sunday/Spring Seminar. The 2021 winner addressed both the 2020 and 2021 UN Sunday themes in their sermon, so the topic would be very relevant for this fall's UN Sunday. www.uua.org/greeleysermonaward
 2. Note: we're shifting the timing/theme for the award to correspond with the *upcoming* Seminar, not the *prior* one. This means the 2021-22 award winner hopefully will present their sermon at the 2022 Spring Seminar. More details to come very soon.
- c. Elaine: I'm putting together UN Sunday worship, also a local group is trying to put together a food co-op. Hope to have a speaker from that co-op address the congregation at another non-worship event around that time in October.
- d. Jeannie: For several years, congregants took care of two community garden plots to provide food for the local food bank. The congregation's involvement with the food bank has taken many forms over the years, including financially supporting teens with disabilities who have tended the garden, and collecting fresh fruits and vegetables at the church to donate to the food bank.
- e. Elaine: For many years, our church has had the 2nd Sunday per month as "food Sunday": Collect food for the local homeless shelter that serves youth, adults, and families. They give a list of what people are looking for and we bring that to church (has required more coordination during pandemic).
 - i. Dana: Building food justice into your month is really cool
- f. Nasreen: Rev. Lyssa agreed to have UN Sunday on Oct 24, she didn't even take any convincing. Very supportive.
- g. Janet: This will be the 3rd UN Sunday I've been part of. Hoping Allison will contribute virtually. Usually we look at resources from the UU@UN, and then personalize it.
- h. Phyllis: I said I'd be in charge of UN Sunday. The election has been totally dominating my thoughts recently. Local member of federal parliament has been agricultural minister – she was just re-elected. She has a food sustainability plan, hoping to talk to her and maybe get her to share something with the congregation. I think she's fairly good at what she does, supports farmers markets.
- i. Janis: A lot of Canadian congregations are only virtual still, but are now trying to figure out hybrid services. I'll be the guinea pig for that on UN Sunday!

- j. Joanne: We're doing a hybrid format for worship and it's been good so far. Likely I'll do something relatively small for UN Sunday. Will reach out to Allison re: collaborating on a program maybe before the service.
- k. Anna: There's a lot in these resources. Where to begin?
 - i. Allison: Consider what type of event might be best for your congregation (Worship service? Workshop? Ceremony? Activity? Etc.) and decide on the overall goal for your event. What's the message you want people to take away from it or action you want them to take? The "[Planning a UN Sunday Service](#)" chapter of the UN Sunday resources gives a suggested timeline for planning a service – could be adapted for other events.
- IV. Other thoughts and ideas for discussion:
 - a. Mandy: It would be helpful to have a calendar reminder about Envoy meetings with the Zoom link
 - i. Allison: will send a calendar invite to people who RSVP for each month's meeting.
- V. Janet: When I was in England over the summer I loved that every day at 6:30pm the BBC has a climate program. I want to see about doing a similar thing here!
 - a. Allison: Recommend the UN's new climate podcast "No Denying It": <https://news.un.org/en/podcast/no-denying-it> (the 3rd episode features Aditi Mayer, a sustainable fashion advocate who was a panelist in an event the UU@UN hosted in March!)