

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

Wednesday, May 17, 2017 12pm and 6pm Eastern; 8pm Youth call

- I. Welcome and introductions
  - a. 12pm
    - i. Allison Hess (UN Office, NYC)
    - ii. Bill McPherson (University Unitarian in Seattle, WA)
    - iii. Eryl Court (Toronto First in Toronto, ON)
    - iv. Monica Greene (UU Congregation of Frederick, MD)
    - v. Martha Foster (UU Congregation in Bloomington, IN)
    - vi. Nancy Nowak (First Parish Church in Duxbury, MA)
  - b. 6pm
    - i. Allison Hess (UN Office, NYC)
    - ii. Jerry Ross (First Parish in Bedford, MA)
    - iii. Joanne Dufour (NSUUS in Lacombe, LA)
  - c. 8pm
    - i. Allison Hess (UN Office, NYC)
    - ii. Andrew Mickle (UU Fellowship of Centre County in State College, PA)
- II. Office updates
  - a. Just had our international staff group retreat last week in Boston – strategizing included following up on the staff teach-in on White Supremacy
    - i. All of us identifying *our* role in combatting and dismantling white supremacy in our denomination and our world.
      1. Decade for People of African Descent – Here’s a [link to the report](#) presented to the Human Right Council 18 August 2016 by the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent on its mission to the United States.
    - ii. Are your congregations doing a teach-in? Have you already done it?
      1. Yes from Bill, Martha, Monica – Nancy’s congregation is slowly moving in the right direction.
      2. [Resources are available online](#) from Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism (scroll down on the page to find resources)
      3. Nancy: [Doctrine of Discovery](#) is critical in understanding the religious tone of white supremacy as a global system. “White Christian Men know it all” lots of related policies & doctrines since then that build off of the Doctrine of Discovery, such as chasing Cherokee Indians off their land on the Trail of Tears.
      4. Jerry: There are discussions in the congregation about doing it, but nothing has happened yet
      5. Joanne: White Supremacy teach in will be on Memorial Day
        - a. Louisiana still fighting the civil war with removals of confederate statues.
        - b. Only acknowledging black-white issues – how about Asian, Indigenous, Muslim, etc.?

- c. Joanne used to be in a group that was focused on teaching about diversity (Native American experience, Asian experience, etc. in USA) Gary Howard (who led this group) wrote a book “We can’t teach what we don’t know” – talking to white people who don’t have experience with people from other backgrounds ([most recent edition of the book](#))
      - 6. Andrew: Congregation’s got a big social action group, but not necessarily ready for real engagement on racial justice (still a lot of “All Lives Matter” people in the congregation). Talking to the minister is a good idea. They just voted for a new Minister – Rev. Carol Thomas Cissel!
    - b. Apologies for the technical difficulties during last week’s panel on mass incarceration and racism. We’ll have a blog post on that later this week.
    - c. Another event we cohosted earlier this month was on climate-induced migration. It was in one of the smaller conference rooms at UN Headquarters and was live streamed on the Facebook page of one of our partners who joined us in organizing that event. The link to the live stream is included [in the blog post](#) for any who are interested! Very interesting discussion with indigenous activists & UN representatives.
- III. UN News
  - a. UN Security Council just unanimously condemned the North Korea missile tests (including Russia and China = important since they often would abstain or veto) There’s also been discussion of tightening sanctions.
  - b. The UN and Microsoft just announced a [new partnership to support human rights](#) work – Microsoft will develop technology that will help the UN to predict, analyze, and respond to human rights situations around the world.
    - i. Joanne – Microsoft was one of the first corporations that signed on and promoted the Millennium Development Goals
  - c. Coming up this July 10-19 – High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. This theme is “Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in the changing world” and in addition to Goal 17, it will focus on goals 1,2,3,5,9, and 14. (Next year’s HLPF will focus on goals 6,7,11,12, and 15, and the following year will focus on goals 4,8,13, and 16.)
  - d. Jerry: Are there particular actions people can do for the upcoming [nuclear treaty negotiations](#)? (15 June to 7 July) Jerry’s coming down to NYC for the Women’s March to Ban the Bomb.
    - i. Maybe Jerry could do a guest post [on our blog](#).
- IV. Upcoming plans – including UUA General Assembly
  - a. Sights are set for GA
    - i. UU-UNO/UUSC workshop on human rights & climate justice (Thurs 6/22 1:30-2:45)
    - ii. UUA IRO & ICUU workshop on UU Refugees (Thurs 6/22 3:15-4:30)
    - iii. UUPCC & ICUU & IRO international worship! (Thurs 6/22 5:00-6:15)
    - iv. International Reception & Blue Ribbon Ceremony! (Thurs 6/22 6:15-7:45)
    - v. Envoy Meeting! Friday 6/23 11:30-12:45
    - vi. Jerry will be an offsite delegate. Joanne will be there for Thursday

- vii. Andrew will be at GA for the first time!
  - b. Joanne – Would Jerry like the Drone Quilt? Probably not right now,
  - c. We need to get that video as soon as possible! Both Ray and Chris especially – on a flash drive would be best
  - d. Summer interns are starting! Very exciting [SHARE LINK TO INTERNSHIP APPLICATION](#)
  - e. Look for the UN Sunday packet in June! Start planning a date for your UN Sunday service. If you'd like Bruce or I to speak, please get in touch ASAP – we both already have things on our calendars so don't delay!
    - i. Disarmament.
    - ii. Joanne: Hopefully Allison can come down in October to Louisiana
    - iii. Jerry's congregation's trying to get either the weekend before or after October 24<sup>th</sup>.
- V. Envoy Programs – what's up with you/your congregation?
- a. Eryl – question: How widespread is UU-UNO participation around the United States?
    - i. Probably about 40 congregations have regular UN Sundays *that I know about* and have active Envoys; about 120 congregations have Envoys but not super active.
    - ii. Here's a [link to the Envoy group](#) on Facebook and [instructions on how to join](#).
    - iii. Eryl: Idea - have the UU-UNO interns send to Envoys a brief summary of what's going on at the UN which would be of special interest to Envoys (in a very brief form) – Envoys might like to watch the weekly [The Week in Review](#) video on UN Web TV ([webTV.UN.org](#))
    - iv. Allison will look into setting up a forum on UUA.org for Envoys to have some interchange/discussion on issues.
  - b. Bill - Indigenous activism to stop the Bears Ears monument from being destroyed in Utah – partnering w/ social justice group in Washington DC
  - c. Eryl – planning the UN Sunday service which will be close to UN Day
    - i. Outside the church is a peace pole – originated by survivor of a Hiroshima bombing – thousands of them exist throughout the world with “May Peace Prevail on Earth” inscribed in many languages. Next month there's an annual ceremony at the peace pole – brings people together around this universal aspiration for humanity. It is our responsibility to ensure that billions of children around the world have the chance to survive and thrive.
      - 1. Nancy is interested in a peace pole for her congregation! [Here's the link.](#) ([fancy wooden ones](#) are more expensive)
  - d. Monica – attended the seminar on Disarmament and shared what she learned w/ her congregation's Social Action Committee & also the Frederick Peace and Justice Network. Monica also nominated the UN Office to be a beneficiary of the church's split plate collection and it was approved!
  - e. Nancy – Any information from the office regarding Black Lives Matter & mass incarceration will help understand & develop local programs – Nancy's congregation and the UU state action network (UU Mass Action) are working hard on abolishing state-wide mass incarceration which is very connected to BLM
    - i. In the southern part of the country white supremacy is a very loaded word

1. Silence & apathy are part of the white supremacist culture
  2. "White supremacists are not required to uphold white supremacist culture"
  3. Eryl: It's important to be very thoughtful & sensitive of the way you present these things. Be sure not to inadvertently making blunders in what we do and say.
  4. Nancy: All of us will make mistakes. It's hugely important to discuss this topic and receive feedback if things were inadvertently hurtful. [Mark Morrison Reed's Minns Lecture](#) – don't be afraid; go forth in a humble and vulnerable way; you can ask for feedback – we're all imperfect.
  5. Nancy: New Orleans taking monuments down of confederate leaders so the climate at GA is going to be interesting – probably as racially charged now as it was right after Katrina. It will require real sensitivity on all parts.
- f. Joanne – DRE at the congregation had established contacts w/ people in the Muslim community, so they have had a few programs recently including airing a video on YouTube showing what it feels like to be a Muslim in this current time in the US. A large group of Muslims came, and one speaker explained the similarities between Judaism, Christianity, and Islam – then everyone split into small groups with one Muslim person in each group so they could have real personal conversations and get to know one another. It was a very interesting and valuable experience, especially for those who weren't familiar with any Muslim people beforehand.
- g. Jerry – Congregation just became a 1<sup>st</sup> level sanctuary congregation a couple weeks ago! They've had a lot of training recently around that, including through UU Mass Action, with a strong interfaith component. Very positive process and vote was unanimous except for one person.
- i. Jerry shared in the newsletter & informal discussions about the Spring Seminar and is rejuvenating the Envoy program within the congregation – connecting to many-years-ago history of engagement with the UU-UNO in the congregation. Envoy position is within the Peace & Justice Committee.
  - ii. Jerry is discussing with the minister to see about getting a congregational donation for the UU-UNO to hopefully become a Blue Ribbon Congregation.
  - iii. Talking a lot in the congregation about nuclear weapons & engagement locally, specifically with a congressman about a bill he's sponsoring to require congressional authorization before any first use of nuclear weapons.
  - iv. Climate Change: Congregation provides financial support for a statewide community organizing position that works with other groups around the state that are involved with climate action
  - v. Racial Justice roundtable that Jerry participates on – doing a lot of educational programs and bringing in speakers. There's a Working Group within UU Mass Action that's focused on Black Lives Matter – partnering with Cambridge BLM group to sponsor a conference in June.

VI. Adjourn