

Minutes
Monthly Envoy Conference Calls
Wednesday, May 22, 2019 3pm and 6pm Eastern

- I. Welcome and Introductions
 - a. 3pm
 - i. Allison Hess (UN Office, NYC) Recently returned from Boston for UU Holdeen India Program board meeting and UUA Int'l Office staff group retreat.
 - ii. Jerry Ross (First Parish Bedford, MA) Congregation is hosting on June 2nd a share the Plate with ECOC program. Opportunity for Olivia to share about the group's experience at the Spring conference. Shared feedback about Seminar in Parish newsletter as well.
 - iii. Liv Evans (First Parish Bedford, MA) Excited to be a new Envoy! Getting Envoys engaged with UU-UNO via Instagram
 - iv. Nora Farahat (UU Congregation of Columbia, MD) Nora's co-Envoy has plans for her that Nora's not clear on what they are!
 - v. Janet Nortrom (Milwaukee) Will be an offsite delegate at GA this year! Got International Educator award!
 - vi. Janet Bendowitz (UU Congregation at Shelter Rock) ECOC presentation at UUCSR and now Janet and Clara are Envoys hurrah. Look
 - vii. Joanne Dufour (Olympia UU Congregation, WA) Spent a few weeks in Jordan & Lebanon at refugee camps before the Spring Seminar and Disarmament conference in April
 - viii. Peggy Montgomery (All Souls NYC) redoing church roof etc. ALSO coming up to 200th anniversary.
 - ix. Nancy Nowak (formerly First Parish Duxbury, now in Hingham, MA) recently moved to a new area, longtime supporter of the UN and our UU-UNO
 - b. 6pm
 - i. Allison Hess (UN Office, NYC)
 - ii. Bill McPherson (University Unitarian Church in Seattle, WA) Preparing for GA, UUs coming soon to speak about Climate Change = Aly Tharp (from UUMFE), [Levi Draheim](#) (11-y-o), Leonard Higgins (valve turner from OR) they'll be on a bit of a tour this summer including visiting Portland, Seattle, and GA
 - iii. Joanne Dufour (Olympia UU Church in Washington) Back recently from a trip to Jordan and Lebanon refugee camp. Very excited for upcoming climate class at Olympia congregation led by Bill who is visiting!
 - iv. Barbara LaCombe (First Unitarian in Portland, OR)
 - v. Karen Andersen Miller (UU Church of Olinda in Ruthven, ON)
 - vi. Christine Blasman (Conejo Valley UU Fellowship, Newbury Park, CA)
- II. Envoys engagement via Instagram: Send photos & captions to Allison (ahess@uua.org) and she will post about Envoy activities via UU-UNO's Instagram account https://www.instagram.com/uu_uno/ (@uu_uno)
- III. Disarmament Reports from Joanne and Jerry
 - a. Joanne: April 14 Conference in New Jersey. About the conference: www.njit.edu/nuclearfree (and for speaker abstracts:

<http://www.njit.edu/nuclearfree/speaker-abstracts>) Organizer was UU (Jay Kappraff), and it was held at New Jersey Institute of Technology.

- i. Listening and learning event, not discussion. Speakers were highly informative – learned so much!
- ii. When environmental movement began following the initiation of the UN Environment Conferences and the creation of UNEP, there was a big emphasis on integrating disarmament with environmental efforts. Nowadays, disarmament is not often spoken about.
- iii. There are 9 nuclear nations. What keeps them in their position is domination, fear, status, control, secrecy, profit, and power! *And* because people believe in the *myth* of deterrence. Got new info about the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (was adopted 2017 but has not come into force yet – about halfway there!). Of the 88,000 that existed in the 80s when there were big disarmament efforts, 14,450 nuclear weapons exist currently. 94% of the world’s nuclear arsenal is owned by the U.S. and Russia.
- iv. Trump has talked about miniature nuclear weapons and they have already been built in Texas. They are now in the process of being mounted on submarines in our naval bases, with our Washington base a possible location. The “mini nukes” are the size of those dropped on Hiroshima & Nagasaki, but the U.S.’s stockpile has thousands of larger ones that are *~800 times more powerful* than Hiroshima.
 1. Joanne went to her congressman and spoke to him recently about this issue.
- v. One speaker at the conference spoke about how fast things can happen: if President Trump gives order to fire a nuclear war, he has to enter a code to verify he is who he is, then within five minutes those bombs can be discharged. Within a half hour, they can reach their destination. “Immediate Response on High Alert Status.” Weapons have been on high alert since the cold war... they still are!
 1. One goal is to extend the warning and decision time (Daniel Ellsberg spoke of many near misses)
 2. Check out [Union of Concerned Scientists](#), [Physicians for Social Responsibility](#), [Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists](#), etc.
 3. Even if we (U.S.) don’t have disarmament on our agenda, other places do and are campaigning very aggressively on getting governments to sign onto the ban ([Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons](#)).
- vi. What can we do now?
 1. Raise the issue of disarmament (no one’s talking about this!) Learn about and talk about the issue of disarmament, trying to bring it back. [Joanne’s blog helps with background information: Disarming Our Planet.](#)
 2. A few bills have been presented in Congress relating to No First Use of nuclear weapons
 - a. One by Sen. Elizabeth Warren & Rep. Adam Smith [HR 4415](#) & [Senate Bill S.272](#)

- b. One by Sen. Ed Markey and Rep. Ted Lieu [HR 669](#) & [Senate Bill S.200](#).
 - c. Talk about that with your congressional representatives and track to see if these get passed. Only Congress can declare war, hence no first-use of nuclear weapons efforts to assume that authority from the constitution.
 - 3. There have been false warnings of nuclear activity: Need longer timings so don't automatically react to a false alarm! Need to keep speaking up!
 - b. Jerry: Part of the problem when talking about nuclear weapons is people's eyes glaze over because it seems so abstract and like it could never happen.
 - i. Jerry attended two conferences in NYC in May with two big messages:
 - 1. Danger of nuclear event is very real and immediate, with truly catastrophic consequences
 - 2. As dangerous as the world is now, there are 2,000 organizations around the world working for nuclear disarmament. There are things we can do right now in our neighborhoods, classrooms, and homes
 - ii. Everyone's worried about climate change. A second equally existential threat = nuclear weapons. All the work we're doing can be wiped out immediately with a single nuclear event. Doesn't have to be a nuclear war, could be an accident. We've had a lot of very close calls. People want to think our nuclear weapons are under lockdown – they're actually locked and loaded!
 - iii. First conference:
 - 1. [Daniel Ellsberg](#): We know him from Pentagon Papers in Vietnam. He was also involved with planning for a nuclear war. At the conference, he talked about [putting in place the doomsday machine](#). A lot of these weapons systems can go off without being able to be recalled.
 - 2. Some int'l speakers from Russia, India, Germany: shared perspectives about how people are working to address this but we face many serious threats w/ INF treaty withdrawal by U.S., and U.S. efforts to increase spending on nukes. Our country has so many great needs (education, poverty, infrastructure, healthcare, etc.), but all the money is going into the military and an unimaginable amount is going into nuclear weapons!
 - iv. Second conference:
 - 1. Many organizations are working on disarmament in different ways.
 - 2. One very important campaign is [Back from the Brink](#): They propose 5 steps the U.S. can take to dramatically reduce the risk of a nuclear war, accident, terrorism, etc. You don't have to get into long discussion about nuclear deterrence – just lift up these 5 things. This is the bill [introduced by Massachusetts Rep. Jim McGovern](#):
 - a. Renounce any first use of nuclear weapons.
 - b. End the authority of U.S. president to launch nukes w/o congress
 - c. Take nukes off high alert
 - d. Cancel the plan to build up our nuclear arsenal

- e. Work together towards verifiable agreement for all nations to eliminate nuclear weapons. Back in 70s signed NPT. Nuclear armed countries agreed in the NPT to work towards disarmament while others promise never to develop them...
 - v. Jerry will be heading up an effort at GA to adopt an Action of Immediate Witness calling on the UUA to endorse the Back from the Brink Campaign and encourage all UUs to work on this, write to our congressperson, etc. There are actually 6 bills in Congress (all but one are in both house and senate) that do some of these various things. Anyone who wants to work with Jerry on this AIW please reach out! If you're going to Spokane, go to UUA website and go to Social Witness process and you'll see the proposal. Need to work on it online ahead of time. <http://www.uua.org/action/process/planning-aiw-ga>
 - c. Peggy: is part of All Souls nuclear disarmament task force. Leader is Guy Quinlan. Working on disarmament conference at GA in the fall. Jerry's been in communication with him. Jerry set up a Google Group for folks to work on this AIW. Contact Jerry if interested jeraldpross@gmail.com
 - d. Nora: What can we do for those who can't go to GA? Allison will share resources and links to take action in Envoy News at end of May (also in these minutes 😊).
 - e. Liv: recently watched something on TV about Nagasaki and it blew her mind; keeps you on the edge of your seat.
 - i. Allison: Keep an eye out for events/campaigns in 2020 when it's the 75th anniversary of Hiroshima, Nagasaki bombings, as well as the creation of the United Nations/end of WWII...
 - f. Jerry: Has resources re: Young People in Japan communicating with young people in the U.S. to share the experiences. Graphic Novels drawn by Japanese artists. Very powerful video of exchange between All Souls DC & Japanese children.
 - g. Joanne: if you have a local [Soka Gakkai](#) organization or [Physicians for Social Responsibility](#), they'd be good guest speakers & collaborators.
 - h. Karen: Any comments about Korean issue? Joanne: Part of what North Korean leader wants is removal of nuclear weapons from Korean peninsula. Need the U.S. to follow suit before DPRK will.
 - i. Barbara: First Unitarian Portland's Peace Action Group hasn't given much attention to this issue. Barbara is energized by hearing about this! They also have a large presence of Physicians for Social Responsibility so will consider collaborating on this.
 - j. Joanne: Suggested also:
 - i. Daniel Ellsberg's book Doomsday Machine ([blog by Guy Quinlan about the book](#))
 - ii. Share posts from [Disarming Our Planet blog](#) on congregation newsletter etc.
 - k. Thank you, Joanne & Jerry!
- IV. Envoy actions & plans for the summer?
 - a. Bill: will be doing a presentation at GA!
 - b. Karen: will be writing yearly message at church for the fall! Will spend the summer working on that (so gender equity for this year). Also posts often on social media, sharing about some of the issues, or UN Days of Observance. Sometimes shares also on UU-UNO Envoys Facebook Group. Wants to strategize how to post things that are non-

threatening/ easy to engage with and then link to UU-UNO, UUA, CUC, blog for people to learn more. Create a graphic with link to a blog to share about the issue.

- i. Facebook has re-done their algorithms again so dialogue in the comments & groups like ours are more prominent. Can be good for getting the word out! Contact Karen, she can help create a graphic for you.
 - ii. Karen wants to get in touch with local artists, poets, etc. to share values-filled messages
 - iii. Check out [UU Ministry for Earth's Call to Arts!](#)
- c. Christine: Looking to get regular space in the newsletter each month to share the main points of each conversation with Envoys.
- d. To get in touch with one another, find an Envoy on the online [Map of UU-UNO Envoys](#). Click their username (if you're logged in) and send them a message! (If you're not on there, make sure to add yourself to the Envoys map!)

V. UN & UU-UNO News

- a. UN News to report:
 - i. International Day for Biological Diversity is today 5/22 – UN report earlier this month highlighted 1 million species in danger of extinction.
 1. For an inspiring story about biodiversity in action, check out [The Biggest Little Farm](#) – now in theatres
 - ii. Joyous news last week about Taiwan legalizing same-sex marriage. [UU-UNO Director visited Taiwan](#) several times in the last few years and spoke about the human rights side of the same-sex-marriage conversation. Honored and humbled to have played a small part in this victory.
 1. On the UN side of things, the UN's Free & Equal campaign continues to work to end discrimination and violence against LGBTI people in countries around the world, including those >70 that criminalize same-sex relations.
 2. Joanne: saw a program on Frontline about global LGBTQ issues on May 21 (possibly 60 minutes)
- b. UU-UNO is getting ready for GA!
 - i. UUA Int'l Office is holding a workshop centered around connecting on a personal level with making our 6th principle a reality (the goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all)
 1. Workshop is Thurs, 6/20 at 4:30pm
 - ii. UUA Int'l Office as well as ICUU and UUPCC are hosting an International Reception
 1. Reception is Saturday, 6/22 at 5:15pm
 - iii. We will have an Envoy meeting, let Allison know if you're attending
- c. Summer interns start on June 5th, we'll be working on resources for congregations and Envoys! Lots of exciting summer projects in store...
- d. UN Sunday packet will be available in June – stay tuned! Get a date on the calendar now before minister leaves for the summer! Recommended date is October 27th.
 - i. Jerry: Pablo and PJ will come to Bedford, MA! (Pablo was Senior Youth Dean at this year's Spring Seminar)

- ii. Nora: Maybe can invite a speaker to UUCS from UU-UNO
 - iii. Janet N: Might invite a local UN leader to be guest speaker
 - e. Joseph Ochill was in NYC for much of April from the Every Child is Our Child program in Ghana. He had some great visits to congregations around the area. Please note: fundraising status of ECOC is still critical. Please consider holding some kind of fundraiser at your congregation, maybe share the plate or (as All Souls NYC has done) a bake-sale! Call Allison to discuss ideas.
 - f. Nora: Urgent actions for ending child detention - events throughout June to close Homestead temporary shelter. Lots of things you can do: (see all details below!)
 - i. Petition, letter-writing, etc. Actions on the National Mall on June 9th. June 12th going to Hill offices to advocate for bills to prohibit federal funds to be used for these facilities. June 16th interfaith march and vigil in Florida.
- VI. Adjourn

From your home or congregation:

- **Sign the petition to HHS Secretary Azar, Assistant HHS Secretary Johnson and Acting Director of Office of Refugee Resettlement Hayes before June 10.** The petition asks to reunite children with their sponsors as quickly as possible and end collaborations with the Department of Homeland Security that interfere with reunifications. As well as close the Homestead Temporary Shelter for Unaccompanied Alien Children and stop using emergency influx facilities. The coalition wants to gather 100,000 signatures to deliver to Dept. of HHS & Key Members of Congress. *Message: All children deserve to live in safety and peace. It's time to reunite children with their loved ones.*
 - The link for the petition can be [found here](#) and is on both UUSC and AFSC pages.
 - Side with Love has also put it up on [Facebook](#) so you can share on social media and write your own intro etc.
 - A [Flyer and Fact Sheet](#) by AFSC is available.
- **Prepare letters written by children directed to the children in detention at Homestead FL.** Organize religious education classes to write letters, or have your children and grandchildren participate. The coalition will deliver letters to your members of Congress between June 10 and 14.
 - An [AFSC portal and toolkit](#) is available, with sign-ups plus materials for children and youth.

At events: June 9 to June 16:

- **Sunday, June 9:**

- “Where are the Children” Pajama Clothesline Project (representing children separated from their families) as part of International Children’s Day on National Mall, Washington, DC between 12th and 14th Street, 10 a.m. to 5:30 pm.
 - **UU Church of Columbia, MD** is leading this witness action. See the [UUSJ commentary](#) and the [Facebook page](#) for more details.
- Interfaith vigil at Homestead Florida, look for details to be posted on the [AFSC portal](#).
- **Wednesday, June 12** – Coalition will visit Hill offices to advocate for bills in House and Senate aimed at prohibiting federal funds from being used for emergency influx facilities (like Homestead Detention Center) and prohibiting HHS from sharing information on potential sponsors of detained children with DHS, which could use the information to deport sponsors.
 - Details TBA on the [AFSC portal](#). We will update you when they become available. If you want to help in either planning or visit roles, please let us know at info@uusj.org.
- **Sunday, June 16** – Father’s Day – Inter-faith March and Vigil at Homestead Detention Center in Florida. Encourage friends and families to join (or travel yourself to **Florida**). Coalition partners include AFSC, Florida Immigrant Coalition, United We Dream, Miami Friends Meeting, WeCount!, Farmworker Association of Florida and Miramar Circle of Protection.
 - Sign up at the [AFSC portal](#) for news on gathering site and time (at Homestead Hospital) and to sign up to join vigil.