

Minutes
Monthly Envoy Conference Call
September 17, 2019 at 3pm & 6pm Eastern

- I. Welcome and Introductions & a fun thing you did recently!
 - a. 3pm
 - i. Allison Hess she/her (UN Office, NYC) Baked almond-and-sunflower-butter cookies and learned that sunflowers turn your bakes greenish black inside... fun!
 - ii. Jeannie Lewis she/her (San Marcos UU Fellowship, TX) Been in lots of meetings which is not so fun but looking forward to Allison's visit for UN Sunday in Oct!
 - iii. Barry Lee he/him (North Shore UU Church in Lacombe, LA) Went to his kids' open house lunch activity at the elementary school.
 - iv. Astrid Trefzger she/her (Kingston Unitarian Fellowship, ON) This weekend hosted an event at church – summer socializing event with fellow congregants.
 - v. Amber Scott she/her (First UU Church of Columbus, OH) new religious educator at the church – no Envoy program yet so listening in!
 - vi. Peggy Montgomery she/her (All Souls, NYC) Church's 200th anniversary coming up. Recently proofread a 400 page book about the history of the church. Very fascinating and made Peggy proud.
 - vii. Becky Allen her/she (San Marcos UU Fellowship, TX) also been attending Wallflower Church's religious education group: they have a monthly climate action group. For about 5 years been involved in a monthly meeting re: environmental topics – just proposed changing it to "climate" instead
 - viii. Marilyn Mehr she/her (All Souls, NYC) recently attended DPI/NGO conference in Salt Lake City with at least 3,000 people. UNO Director Bruce was there and chaired a meeting about cooperation between religious groups. Very good conference where they talked about building sustainable societies.
 - ix. Ron Glossop he/him (UU Church of Alton, IL) gave sermon about Esperanto this past Sunday 9/15. Contact Allison if interested in reading the text of the sermon or being in touch with Ron re: Esperanto.
 - b. 6pm
 - i. Allison Hess she/her (UN Office, NYC)
 - ii. Phyllis Baxter she/her (North Hatley UU Church) Trees are starting to turn which Phyllis does not find fun. Enjoyed spending time in a garden recently.
 - iii. Bill McPherson he/him (University Unitarian Church in Seattle) Getting excited for the Climate Strike this week
 - iv. Jerry Ross he/him (First Parish Bedford, MA) Celebrated combined birthday party for grandchild and dog. Also been exciting and enriching to organize activities with youth around the climate strike. Jerry injured foot so unfortunately can't participate in Strike.
 - v. Chris Blasman she/her ("Chalice" UU Fellowship of the Conejo Valley, CA) this weekend the church celebrated new nickname for the fellowship. Also getting ready for climate strike this weekend, all local cities are organizing their own climate strike activities. Will be very big even though not in Los Angeles.

- vi. Lisa LoPiano she/her (Unitarian Fellowship of Huntington, NY) 90th birthday party for Lisa's aunt. Recent service focused on climate change – many older folx in the congregation will go into the city for climate strike and there are also evening and Saturday climate strike activities that Lisa and others can participate in.
- vii. Sarah Pinho she/her (First UU Church of Los Angeles, CA) Very excited about upcoming UN Sunday on 10/20. There's an exceptionally laden theme this year! Excited to have a prof. from UCLA to speak – expertise on chicanx feminist activism across borders (US and various Latin American countries), and she has even worked with organizations who work with the UN before. Also Sarah's sister's saxophone quartet is performing at UN Sunday.

II. Role of UU-UNO Envoys

- a. How do you describe your role in the congregation (not what the website says, but what you say it is/what you do)?
 - i. Jeannie: Been an Envoy for many years, not participated in Envoy calls until recently. Read emails; haven't been that active. Recruited Becky Allen because knew she was an activist and would be involved. Trying to provide information from Envoy call discussions to help the congregation learn more. Pretty much the Envoy program has been invisible – now Becky & Jeannie can make it more visible and active and hoping Allison's visit on 10/27 will help as well.
 - ii. Becky: Listen to the calls & love the minutes. Don't have a good structure for reporting the minutes. Sometimes post to Fbook page and send them out – not sure how many people in the church know about the program. Shared about Bruce Knotts's report on his visit (12/2017) to the Every Child is Our Child program in Ghana.
 - iii. Marilyn: Reorganizing social action programs at All Souls. New Assistant Minister will be in charge of social action groups and coordinating them which will be valuable in supporting one another. Now the area we're working together on is climate change – several of us will march on Friday for the Climate Strike. Role = collaborating and promoting UN office whenever we can.
 - 1. UNO Director Bruce is coming to All Souls to speak for Adult Education program on Oct. 13th and 20th.
 - iv. Astrid is lucky beneficiary of very active UU-UNO program in the fellowship. In the past have had a Youth Envoy and Adult Envoy who were very active. Not able to strongarm the youth envoys to come to the envoy calls but they are very interested in the youth group and they come to the spring seminar (aim to come every other year) and it just so happens that both Astrid's kids have been able to go (including Astrid's child is Senior Youth Dean this year! Woo!) Have a UN flag inside the door and Blue Ribbon Award plaques on display – Astrid has something on her name-badge that says "I'm your UU-UNO envoy, ask me about it!". Astrid adds another view of the larger picture with other social justice groups by picking things out of the Envoy News to help globalize the conversation/perspective.

- v. Ron Glossop: 2020 is an important anniversary for the UN and a lot of activity is taking place around how to make the UN more effective in dealing with global problems. Role = help keep people informed about what's going on at the global level. Concerned about English taking over as global language and hoping to get more people interested in Esperanto as a way to deal with this global problem. Ron lives on the Missouri side of the river but goes to church in Alton, Illinois so is not super connected to the local community in Alton, IL but has some folks in the church who help in spreading the word, including UUSC's actions
- vi. Barry: New Envoy not super active recently because small church, very active in local issues not so much globally but they'd like to be!
- vii. Sarah: Newer members are interested and surprised to learn that there's a UN office. Not sure if older members were already aware. Thinks the UN Sunday will be a coming out party for getting folks tuned in to the UU-UNO!
- viii. Jerry: Lots going on at the congregation all the time and it's a challenge to get people's attention. Been successful in getting people to know that the UU-UNO exists. It's quite a task to make sure they know about the UN and that it actually accomplishes things around the world. UN Sunday and the Intergenerational Conference are the main mechanisms for this outreach in the congregation. The Envoy News contains interesting info that Jerry discusses sometimes with the youth Envoys. Not sure if much of that gets heard by the congregation at large but it's good at least to talk with the youth once a month.
- ix. Chris: Similar boat to Jerry's description of his congregation. Chris has been active since this last March. Has been talking to individuals who are very active and reminds them about how similar the actions in the fellowship are to the actions being taken at the UN and globally. Chris has hopes of other folks in the church also supporting the UU-UNO. Hopes to talk with fellow congregants about fellowship actions that can be shared with the UU-UNO. What issues being faced locally might inform or be informed by knowledge from the UN.
- x. Lisa: Similar challenges in a lot of ways: UN Sunday & Spring Seminar & Blue Ribbon Congregation status is important too. Make sure to meet the requirements and have people sign up to be supporters. Youth Envoys get excited about the Spring Seminar and then after summer the academic crush makes things difficult to coordinate with their schedules. Lisa's goal for this year is to keep in communication with the youth, have more adults involved (fundraising for youth attendees at Seminar the adults were interested to learn more), and have some space in weekly newsletter to share information from the UN (would love youth Envoys to write that sometimes e.g. about climate march). Fellowship life is very busy so having UU-UNO in the forefront is challenging.
- xi. Phyllis: Very tiny congregation of 30 members. Every so often Phyllis makes an announcement about something going on at the UN and how it relates to the congregation's concerns. Have a UN flag in the sanctuary which has been there for as long as Phyllis has! People generally are favorable towards the UN but it's

not a huge part of awareness/everyday life. Also works on planning UN Sunday each year.

- xii. Bill has enlisted the climate action team as the Envoy team and the group has been active in promoting the green new deal locally and also are excited about the Seminar!
 - 1. Joanne: Bill will be coming to Joanne's church soon to talk about international climate issues as part one of 3-week adult education class. Bill will share his PowerPoint which Allison can share with anyone who's interested.
- b. What would you like to be doing that you aren't and what's getting in your way?
 - i. Jeannie: I'm social justice chair at the church. Try my best to focus on local issues because I don't want to overload the congregation and so many emails and phone calls, etc. on national issues but tend to try to send action alerts by email trying to focus on local issues. Sometimes things come up like hurricanes on S. Texas coast that we can help with. Want folx to know about issues that UU-UNO is interested in. Want people to be educated about it, not sure how much to go into it without getting people exhausted.
 - 1. Allison: Talk about how the issues being addressed locally are part of larger global movements e.g. Sustainable Development Goals. Look at Time to Act section in the Envoy News for ways to connect local action to the SDGs.
 - 2. Ron: Issues at a global level are exactly the ones we need to focus on – need congregations to broaden their horizons
 - ii. Marilyn: if we do something like participate in climate march should we write about it to share in Envoy news?
 - 1. Allison: yes! UU-UNO loves including Envoy articles in our blog. Write something and send to Allison!
 - 2. Becky: Good to know about blog! Posted articles about the climate strike in social media. Congregation is very devoted to local issues; sometimes it's hard to pick and choose what UU-UNO actions to share with congregation.
 - iii. Astrid: Having federal election now in Canada so have restrictions on charitable status that say the church cannot be involved too much in politics. One of the issues that's lifted up by 3/5 of the candidates for leadership = guaranteed minimum income. Need to be very careful in how to talk about this via church without making a statement that sounds too political; then can say all about whatever you want after the election is over. Sometimes this feels like an obstacle.
 - 1. Allison: In USA religious orgs. just can't campaign for a specific candidate/party, but can take stance on issues/legislation/etc.
 - 2. Ron: need to focus on the 6th and 7th UU principles. This is an important part of what UUs are about that we're citizens of the U.S. or Canada but also are citizens of the world. Got to say We have a loyalty to the country but higher loyalty to what's happening to humanity as a whole

- iv. Becky: Anyone planning to talk about recent IPCC land use report which recommends eat less meat? Becky's been writing to local papers. UU Statement of Conscience on Ethical Eating (2011) recommends eating less meat; IPCC is careful not to restrict guidelines too firmly because of different governments' interests/what's possible in different countries. Interested in discussing: At our events, can we promote: Eating less meat is good and eating no meat is better when we can. Going vegan solves so many environmental issues. Is hopeful the UU-UNO can take the lead on that. At least at the events we're sponsoring we can be plant based lead the way.
 - 1. Allison: UU-UNO Seminar will all be plant-based this year for food and trying to see how else to make the event carbon-neutral-ish. Would be great for congregations to do this as well. We talk about Ethical Eating at the UN a lot, esp. with interfaith partners.
 - 2. Becky: Congregation took part in several activities around this including Demonstrating Our Values through Eating program. Will Tuttle came to speak (author of World Peace Diet). Also had book study of the first of two books by Dr. Salish Rao about the need for a plant-based diet.
 - 3. Astrid: CUC has a new focus for two years: Looking at issues of water accessibility in the north and for indigenous peoples. Water is another way to approach ethical eating because they're so entwined.
- v. Joanne: At prior congregation: made up a questionnaire of many UN-related topics to see what people may be interested in and she got 5 minutes each week to present about those topics. Later she did this *after* the service for whoever wanted to stick around because it tended to go over 5 mins. Did after-service programs (e.g. screening armed drone documentary series) maybe 20 times over the 2 years at that congregation; even if just a couple of people came it felt successful. Current congregation: very busy and Joanne's not getting a whole lot of support from the congregation to get Envoy program started. Might try the same approach as at prior church with the questionnaire.
- vi. Chris: Trying to move forward on making sure that the youth can use the SDGs game. Congregation has a game afternoon once per month, want to get the kids to play this game! One positive idea is introducing the idea of the UN to the young kids and if they're interested their parents may be interested too. Can create it with the kids and make the dice and color the pieces, etc. Allison will share this: "Go Goals!" Board Game <https://go-goals.org>
- vii. Sarah: Will give survey to congregation about what topics they'd like to learn about. ALSO struggling for something concrete. (1) Would like to have firm concrete actions to take. Also (2) where to start with all the news that's out there and (3) what is our impact as a UU organization at the UN?
- viii. Joanne: Can we encourage people to write to their elected representatives?
 - 1. Bill: Yes: you're restricted in campaigning for officials but not restricted on supporting legislation!

III. UN & Office Updates

- a. UN General Assembly is technically underway starting today, though it'll really kick into gear on the 23rd when the heads of state arrive. Watch the proceedings on UN Web TV (webtv.un.org)
 - i. The general debate, is not actually a debate. Member States take turns delivering speeches and are given a right of reply when required. Since the early years of the GA, the first country to speak has been Brazil because, according to the UN Protocol and Liaison Services, no one seemed to want to be the first to speak, and Brazil went first on several occasions, which then became a tradition.
 - 1. The second spot goes to the host country (the US), and then the order of speakers follows a complex algorithm reflecting level of representation, geographical balance, the order in which the request to speak was recorded, and other considerations.
 - ii. Big summits next week:
 - 1. Climate Action Summit 9/23
 - a. The Secretary-General has challenged leaders to come to the summit with concrete plans, rather than grand speeches, and expects the event to demonstrate massive movements in the economy away from fossil fuels, and towards clean, renewable energy sources
 - 2. Making Universal Health Coverage a reality 9/23
 - a. On the same day as the Climate Action Summit, the UN will host the first-ever High-Level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage which, the UN says, will be the most significant political meeting held on universal health coverage ever.
 - 3. Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals 9/24-9/25
 - a. The UN has seen progress over the last four years, but warns that conflict, climate change, lack of access to essential health services, growing inequalities and significant financing gaps have limited the impact of global efforts.
 - 4. Financing for Development 9/26
 - a. The High-Level Dialogue on Financing for Development, on September 26, will bring together leaders from government, business and the financial sector, in a bid to unlock the resources and partnerships needed, and accelerate progress.
 - 5. Supporting Small Island Developing States 9/27
 - a. A one-day high level review of the progress made in addressing the priorities of small island developing States (SIDS) through the implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway.
 - iii. Becky: UUSC updates re: climate-forced displacement? Here's their webpage on that <https://www.uusc.org/initiatives/climate-forced-displacement/>
- IV. What's going on for UN Sunday? What've you got planned, what questions do you have? Contact Allison if you need donation envelopes

- a. Blue Ribbon reminder (see requirements: <http://www.uua.org/international-justice/un/blue-ribbon>)
 - i. Mobile donations: For UN Sunday, let people know they can text to donate! Just text UNO to 51555 to donate via mobile phone.
- b. Sarah: This is her first year doing this in LA! Any stories or tips are appreciated!
 - i. Please share stories about UNO's impact at the UN. Pg. 12-13 of UN Sunday Packet
- c. Becky: What's the date for UN Sunday?
 - i. Allison: Recommended date for this year is Oct. 27 because it's the closest Sunday to United Nations Day Oct. 24. Any day that works for your congregation is fine too though. (One good idea for this year is to hold UN Sunday on March 8th, International Women's Day which falls on a Sunday in 2020 and ties in well with the UN Sunday topic of intersectional gender equity; just be sure to lift up how gender equity means *so much more* than just women's equality. See UN Sunday Packet for more on the topic!)
 - ii. Astrid: Also a good opportunity to tie in the topic with pride and renewing Welcoming Congregation status (also see info about this in the UN Sunday Packet)
- d. Lisa: Fellowship usually holds UN Sunday on the recommended date but the program committee put something else on that week so the service will be December 8th instead. (Human Rights Day is Dec. 10 so that's a good tie-in)
 - i. Congregation's very passionate about Every Child is Our Child and hopes for an update soon
 - 1. Allison: Will make sure we have an update on that in October!
 - 2. Often there's a message that goes out re: ECOC around World AIDS Day on Dec. 1st.

V. Adjourn