

Minutes
Monthly Envoy Conference Calls
Tuesday, December 17, 2019 3pm & 6pm Eastern

- I. Welcome and introductions
 - a. 3pm
 - i. Allison Hess (UU United Nations Office, NYC)
 - ii. Peggy Montgomery (All Souls, NYC)
 - iii. Melissa Weale (UU Congregation of Mississauga, ON)
 - iv. Anita McLean (First Unitarian Congregation in Ottawa, ON)
 - b. 6pm
 - i. Allison (UU United Nations Office, NYC)
 - ii. Bill McPherson (University Unitarian Church in Seattle, WA)
 - iii. Bernard Condon (Unitarian Church of All Souls, NYC)
 - iv. Phyllis Baxter (North Hatley UU Church, QC)
 - v. Jeannie Lewis (San Marcos UU Fellowship, TX)
 - vi. Joanne Dufour (Olympia UU Congregation, WA)
- II. Bill & Joanne: Shared about recent sessions in a three-week series on Climate Change at Olympia UU Congregation. Had good attendance throughout all three weeks. The first week focused on International and national level picture – Bill spoke about the Paris Agreement. The second week focused on state-level action on climate change. The third week focused on local-level action.
- III. COP25 updates from Madrid (25th Conference of Parties (COP25) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)) (A country or entity can be “party to a convention” so this is the 25th such conference for those parties to the UNFCCC)
 - a. Very disappointing outcome. Major economies & polluters (esp. Brazil, China, Australia, Saudi Arabia, & the U.S.) blocked the negotiations from moving faster and prevented the conference from achieving their main goals. Ended up pushing rules about global carbon trading to next year, as well as questions of how to fund climate adaptations for developing countries which was an important part of the Paris Agreement.
 - b. Meanwhile, there were mass demonstrations by activists surrounding (as well as inside) the conference
 - c. UU-UNO has UNFCCC Status so can send a UU contingent to represent us at the UNFCCC COP. This year’s UU representatives were led by UUSC. They brought some of their indigenous partners to speak from their experience at the talks. Indigenous leaders are often underrepresented at UN conferences generally and COPs specifically as they must have UN FCCC status. See more: <https://www.uusc.org/uusc-supports-indigenous-leadership-at-cop25-international-climate-change-talks/>
 - d. The next UNFCCC Climate Conference is in November 2020 in Glasgow, UK. Many people are looking towards that with anxiety but even more so looking towards an EU-China summit in Leipzig, Germany in September. The Leipzig summit hopes to secure commitments from China and the EU that go beyond their nationally determined contributions (NDCs) from the Paris Agreement. Getting those agreements secured in Leipzig will hopefully bring much-needed momentum to Glasgow, when all countries

need to submit updated NDCs. (Apologies to folk on the earlier call - I had gotten these details a little mixed up.)

- e. Bill: Warsaw mechanism is still pending: A provision of the Paris Agreement where countries who experienced loss & damage from draught/flood/extreme weather can ask for compensation from the countries that caused climate change. This has upset a number of American corporations who think they will be liable so they're trying to insulate themselves. COP is trying to set up an international fund so no one country or corporation is assigned all of the liability – this didn't get finalized at COP25 so will need to be addressed at future COPs.

IV. Human Rights Day

- a. Blog post from UU-UNO - www.uua.org/international/blog/universal-indivisible-and-interdependent-human-rights
- b. Discussion guide for congregational discussion & reflection – www.uua.org/humanrightsday
- c. What have congregations done to honor the holiday?
 - i. Anita: With Amnesty International organizing a talk by Dr. Tarek Loubani who was shot at the Gaza border, one of several Palestinian medics who were shot. He's also a professor at the University of Western Ontario. Will be at congregation on January 14th. Anita visited West Bank and saw settlements and actions that threaten the lives and education of Palestinian school children (including arresting them and putting them in jail). Israel is not following UN recommendations.
 - ii. Phyllis: Congregation does an annual Write for Rights through Amnesty International. Write letters & send to various governments pertaining to specific cases to do with human rights. They do make an impact when a government agency receives hundreds of thousands of letters. This year, the group concentrated on young people. It's always shocking to learn why people are arrested (e.g. in Greece, 2 young people were helping refugees and were arrested; can face up to 10 years in prison if convicted.)

V. Looking towards 2020 with a global perspective

- a. Anniversaries to be aware of:
 - i. Earth Day turns 50 (April 22) – there will be a lot of demonstrations happening that entire week (and it's the week after the Intergenerational Spring Seminar!) <https://www.earthday.org/earth-day-50th-anniversary/>
 - ii. 75th commemoration of the first use of nuclear weapons in Hiroshima & Nagasaki (August 6 & August 9)
 - 1. Joanne: National Defense Authorization Act passed the House – brought Dems & Reps together to *enlarge* our military budget. Wouldn't think Dems would agree to that. Please call senators in the state and ask to vote *no* on the bill. (They're trying to push a lot of bills through quickly so call soon!) It includes a lot of horrendous stuff (like continuing to fund Saudi war in Yemen). Learn more and call now: <https://www.dailykos.com/stories/2019/12/9/1904525/-Tell-Congress-No-Pentagon-Funding-Bill-Without-Ending-Yemen-War>

2. Also: Following the successful adult education program on climate issues, now focusing on disarmament, esp. nuclear weapons. Will be a 4-week program alongside coalition including Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility. Joanne is researching to prepare for this and has been learning a lot about the suffering of people in Marshall Islands and impact of nuclear testing by U.S. there. This is a great opportunity to talk about something that brings together climate & nuclear issues – Joanne will be posting an article in the Disarming Our Planet blog soon on this topic. Would encourage other congregations to host such an event as well. Possibly invite any Marshallese folk in your community. Tie into the 75th anniversary of Hiroshima & Nagasaki. Joanne & planning partner are working on a script that's very detailed and can probably be replicated in your town/congregation. Will take place at the end of Feb and into March so stay tuned for more.
- iii. 100th Anniversary of Ratification of 19th Amendment giving American women the right to vote (August 26)
- iv. United Nations turns 75! (October 24) –
 1. Host UN75 conversations locally to inform the direction of the UN towards its 100th anniversary. More at <https://www.un.org/en/un75/join-conversation>
- v. 400th anniversary of Mayflower Pilgrims arriving at Plymouth Rock
 1. This will be a big focus of UUA General Assembly in Providence, RI June 24-28 – reckoning with UU legacies of colonialism www.uua.org/ga
- vi. Bernard: Recently spent some time researching UU-UNO programs and will be raising money through youth group for the Every Child is Our Child program. www.uua.org/ecoc Want to raise awareness about the UN at All Souls. Want to organize a tour of the UN to help folk understand how the UN & UU-UNO work together so that people understand the connection.
- b. UNO Intergenerational Spring Seminar “All In For Climate Justice” April 16-18, 2020 www.UUA.org/UNSpringSeminar
 - i. Registration is open now. Apply for reduced registration by January 13. Early Bird Registration ends January 20. Regular Registration ends March 2.
 - ii. Peggy: Concerned about the registration rates which seem much higher for youth this year. (Same cost to all attendees.) Must be clear why & how & that we don't want to make it so that some people can't come.
 1. Allison: Hoping people will apply for reduced registration if needed. Trying this new model to make the Seminar more sustainably funded. (FYI the Early Bird rate this year \$375 is the same as it was last year for adults, and same as regular [not early bird] rate last year for youth)
- c. U.S. Elections: UU the Vote www.uua.org/vote
 - i. Organize congregation to get out the vote, prevent voter intimidation & disenfranchisement efforts, and spread awareness about issues UUs care about.
 1. Especially: supporting the United Nations! SDGs! Peace, disarmament, climate justice!

- VI. Question about the Envoy News: How does the last-weekday-of-the-month schedule work for you & your congregation's newsletter?
 - a. Thanks to Sarah in LA for the request to share news & announcements further ahead of time. Envoys are encouraged to let Allison know of any other feedback re: Envoy News you may have.
 - b. Peggy: Idea: Envoys (or others) can submit thoughts about being part of the UU-UNO. Might be interesting to have a column or something every so often with people's reflections about the connections between our denomination & the UU-UNO.
- VII. Adjourn.