

Social Justice at the UUA General Assembly

*Submitted by Joan M. Gregory,
Off-Site Delegate, UUA GA 2015*

The 2015 UUA General Assembly was a whirlwind of social justice learning, discussion, and action. In particular, delegates accomplished the following:

- Adopted a Statement of Conscience in support of reproductive justice—a broad framework “which espouses the human right to have children, not to have children, to parent the children one has in healthy environments, and to safeguard bodily autonomy and to express one’s sexuality freely.” The statement explicitly acknowledges “reproductive justice” as a concept developed by women of color. <http://www.uua.org/statements/reproductive-justice>
- Passed an Action of Immediate Witness urging UU support for local, national, and international climate justice campaigns, including the Lummi Nation’s opposition to the Gateway Pacific Coal Terminal in Washington State, the Moral March for Climate Justice during Pope Francis’s September 2015 visit to the United States, and the United Nations Climate Agreement Talks in December 2015. <http://www.uua.org/statements/support-strong-compassionate-global-climate-agreement-2015-act-livable-climate>
- Passed an Action of Immediate Witness calling for the closure of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) family detention centers. [http://www.uua.org/statements/end-](http://www.uua.org/statements/end-immigrant-child-and-family-detention-now)

immigrant-child-
and-family-
detention-now

- Approved an Action of Immediate Witness calling UU congregations to action in supporting the Black Lives Matter Movement. <http://www.uua.org/statements/support-black-lives-matter-movement>
- Received: A Preliminary Report on Class in the Unitarian Universalist Association (<http://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/class-coa-report2015.pdf>) from the Commission on Appraisal.
- Attendees celebrated marriage equality, committed to respond on climate justice, rallied and held a die-in supporting the Black Lives Matter movement, and much more. For a more complete report on social justice at UUA GA 2015, read: Black Lives Matter resolution, rally, die-in cap General Assembly: <http://www.uuworld.org/articles/blm-rally-general-assembly>. A database of previous social justice statements (including actions of immediate witness and statements of conscience) from 1961 to the present may be found at: <http://www.uua.org/statements/years>.



If you would like to experience UUA General Assembly 2015 virtually, you may want to check out videos of the general sessions, worship services, and selected workshops at: <http://www.uua.org/ga/virtual/2015>. More highlights from this year’s General Assembly may be found at: <http://www.uuworld.org/ga>

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The Torch is published approximately 23 times per year, every other week during the regular church year & once per month during the summer.

Next Publication Date

August 17, 2015

Submission Deadline

August 10 2015 (Monday)
by 10:00 a.m.

Events to be listed should occur after August 18th to ensure timeliness.

Editor

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Congregational Briefs

Summer UU Lunch Bunch

The UU Lunch Bunch family-friendly group for anyone and everyone who would like to get together for lunch and chat with like-minded people. Meet at the Restaurant on Sundays approx. 1 hour after the end of Summer Forum. For more information contact Sonia Carnell at lunchbunch@slcuu.org.
July 19: The Annex by Epic Brewing (1048 East 2100 South)
July 26: Faustina (454 East 300 South)
August 2: Katmandu II (212 South 700 East)
August 9: Indochine Vietnamese Bistro (230 South 1300 East)
August 16: Hog Wallow Pub (3200 East Big Cottonwood Canyon Rd)

Environmental Ministry News

Laudato Si', On Care for our Common Home

Source: *Interfaith Power & Light's Faith Climate Action Kit on Pope Francis' Encyclical:*

<http://www.interfaithpowerandlight.org/resources/pope-francis-encyclical-preview-and-resources/>

Encyclicals are formal letters issued by a pope to the Catholic Church—its bishops and people of goodwill everywhere—concerning moral, doctrinal and disciplinary matters. Pope Francis' leadership on climate change has the potential to create an atmosphere where world leaders will act on climate change in Paris in December of 2015 at the UN climate negotiations. His latest encyclical, *Laudato Si', On Care for our Common Home*:

http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html highlights climate change as a moral issue, pointing out that the poor suffer the most from consequences of improper care of the environment even though they have contributed the least to climate change. Below are selected quotes with paragraph references to provide a glimpse into the 184 page encyclical:

- "Climate change is a global problem with grave implications: environmental, social, economic, political and for the distribution of goods. It represents one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our day." (25)
- "Humanity is called to recognize the need for changes of lifestyle, production and consumption, in order to combat this warming or at least the human causes which produce or aggravate it." (23)
- "There is an urgent need to develop policies so that, in the

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next few years, the emission of carbon dioxide and other highly polluting gases can be drastically reduced, for example, substituting for fossil fuels and developing sources of renewable energy." (26)

- "[The earth] now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her." (2)
- "We have forgotten that we ourselves are dust of the earth (cf. Gen 2:7); our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters." (2)
- "Nature cannot be regarded as something separate from ourselves or as a mere setting in which we live. We are part of nature, included in it and thus in constant interaction with it." (139)
- "Today, the analysis of environmental problems cannot be separated from the analysis of human, family, work-related and urban contexts, nor from how individuals relate to themselves, which leads in turn to how they relate to others and to the environment." (141)
- "Many of the poor live in areas particularly affected by phenomena related to warming, and their means of subsistence are largely dependent on natural reserves and ecosystemic services such as agriculture, fishing and forestry." (25)
- "A sense of deep communion with the rest of nature cannot be real if our hearts lack tenderness, compassion and concern for our fellow human beings." (91)
- "We are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental. Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature." (139)
- "These problems are closely linked to a throwaway culture which affects the excluded just as it quickly reduces things to

rubbish." (22)

- "It is hard for us to accept that the way natural ecosystems work is exemplary: plants synthesize nutrients which feed herbivores; these in turn become food for carnivores, which produce significant quantities of organic waste which give rise to new generations of plants.
- But our industrial system, at the end of its cycle of production and consumption, has not developed the capacity to absorb and reuse waste and by-products. We have not yet managed to adopt a circular model of production capable of preserving resources for present and future generations, while limiting as much as possible the use of non-renewable resources, moderating their consumption, maximizing their efficient use, reusing and recycling them." (22)
- "Is it realistic to hope that those who are obsessed with maximizing profits will stop to reflect on the environmental damage which they will leave behind for future generations? Where profits alone count, there can be no thinking about the rhythms of nature, its phases of decay and regeneration, or the complexity of ecosystems which may be gravely upset by human intervention." (190)

The Vatican Information Service has published an overview of the encyclical with its key messages.

<http://visnewsen.blogspot.com/2015/06/overview-of-encyclical-laudato-si.html>

Among Ourselves

First Unitarian Church sends its love and sympathy to Barbara Kreek and family on the death of Justin. They had recently celebrated their 64th wedding anniversary. A memorial service for Justin will take place early in the fall. Details will follow.

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Summer Forum continues through August 23

A diverse and exciting new lineup of speakers awaits you through August 23. Programs begin at 10 a.m., and feature music and Q&A sessions. Conversations and refreshments continue in Eliot Hall. Child care is provided.

July 19

"Lessons in Sustainable Living from Uganda"
-Kim Koeven, recently returned Peace Corps Volunteer

July 26

"My Life with James Dudley Barker - Before and After He Was Killed By Police"
-Heidi Keilbaugh

August 2

"Experiencing Excommunication, LDS Style"
-John Dehlin, founder of the Mormon Stories podcast and creator of several Mormon-themed blogs and websites

August 9

"Gender Roles in Cuba: Two Participants Report on the International Women's Conference in Havana"
-Summer Smith and Joanna Straughn

August 16

"Emotional Intelligence and Transformational Leadership"
-Rev. Harold Straughn

August 23

"The Fight for Our Children's Right to Breathe"
-Ingrid Griffee, executive director, Utah Moms for Clean Air