



UUJEC News & Views: Winter 2026

| newsletter@uujec.org | Sally Jane Gellert, editor

UPDATE: UUA GA and By-Law Review (See page 3 for details.)

Spend Second Thursdays with Us! Environmental & Economic Justice Webinars

UUJEC invites you to participate in our monthly Peace, Equity, & Climate Task Force webinars on the **second Thursday** of each month and to check out our library of resources for congregational use: on YouTube, @uujec; on the Web, uujec.net/resources. Register [here](#) for upcoming events:

Coming Up

Jan. 8: UUs Demands Eco-Socialism: Faith, Climate, & the End of Capitalism

Gregory Stevens

As the planet burns and billionaires profit, one truth becomes undeniable: capitalism cannot solve the climate crisis it created. The pursuit of endless growth, profit, and private ownership has driven ecosystems to total collapse, radically deepened global inequality, and has placed every living being in peril.

Ecosocialism offers an alternative.

UUJEC Board Member Gregory Stevens (they/he) is a former Baptist preacher, long time labor organizer, interfaith community activist, and founding organizer of the UU EcoSocialist Network and an active member of the UU Society of San Francisco.

Recent Programs

Dec. 11: UUs Report Back from COP 30

Carmen Capriles & Cindy Piester

Our Peace, Equity, and Climate Task Force is calling for urgent action in the face of rapidly advancing climate disruption around the world. Board member Lucy Hitchcock, in these politically restrictive times, suggests we begin by saving the place that we love by planting trees, restoring the soil, welcoming wildlife, working to pass local, living-earth-protective city and state legislation.

In December, the UUJEC Peace, Equity, & Climate Task Force offered UUs Report Back from the U. N.'s COP 30 with International Convocation of UU Women's

Carmen Capriles and Cindy Piester. Carmen is a UU from Bolivia and a COP negotiator. The webinar took place on Thursday, December 11.

Cindy Piester, PE&C chairperson and UUJEC board member, has just returned from a month-long California "Wake Up to the Climate Crisis" tour led by Veterans For Peace Climate Crisis and Militarism Project (VFP CCMP) and cosponsored by UUJEC and other groups. The tour called for ending military air shows, and the team showed Abby Martin's film, *Earth's Greatest Enemy*.

Nov.13: Medicare (dis)Advantage

Rose Roach

The UUJEC Healthcare Task Force and Radical Elders cosponsored this informative program about Medicare (dis) Advantage, how it is overpaid yet still underdelivers, tempting the newly eligible with such shiny things as gym memberships and gift cards, not revealing until much later the Artificial Intelligence (AI) preauthorization requirements, the ever-changing networks, and the difficulty of changing programs at a later date if coverage is lacking. We appreciate speaker Rose Roach, a retired nurse who is the leader of Coordinator for the Labor Campaign for Single Payer and Chair of Healthcare for All Minnesota.



Watch the recording here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zIAUIo7h4aA>. Find the slides (PDF) here: <https://uujec.net/slides-medicare-advantage-medicare-disadvantage/>.

Table of Contents

- Web Seminars pg. 1
- Good Organizing pg. 2
- Letters pg. 2
- GA: A Promise Broken . pg. 3
- UUA By-laws pg. 3
- Affordability for All . . pg. 4
- Climate Hope pg. 4

Reparations Curriculum available for your congregation, fellowship, or society.

E-mail reparations@uujec.org for details.

Good Organizing Not Only Works, It Wins: a message from People's Action

Most of us on the UUJEC board get a lot of e-mail newsletters, and the subject line of a recent e-mail from People's Action caught my attention: *Yes, We Won*. That was not exactly my sense after Tuesday, Nov. 5th, so I opened the e-mail, and found a list of victories:

- ◆ Down Home North Carolina broke the Republican supermajority in the state's legislature, defended public education, and defeated the Republican candidate for governor, Mark Robinson, a self-avowed "Black Nazi." How? They knocked on 636,874 doors, and People's

**PEOPLE'S
ACTION**

Action's national volunteer program made 932,000 calls into the state.

- ◆ Missouri Jobs with Justice helped overturn the state's abortion ban and won Proposition A, a ballot initiative for a \$15 minimum wage and paid sick leave, which won with more than 58% of votes. How? Two years of deep canvassing on the issue.
- ◆ Progressive Maryland helped defeat an initiative (billionaire-backed) to fire half of the City Council in Baltimore, and elected a Black woman, Angela Alsobrooks, to the U.S. Senate.

Labor Notes: an e-mail round-up

Amazon/CAUSE (Carolina Amazonians United for Solidarity and Empowerment): is ramping up its organizing drive at 5 Amazon warehouses.

Starbucks: The strike and Red Cup Rebellion are underway, as Starbucks has refused to bargain in

good faith with baristas, although the union vote was back [in](#).

Trader Joe's: Union president was fired, a judge reversed a union win that would have brought them \$113,000, but don't stop shopping—just support the union with publicity or funds.

Letters!

UUJEC gets requests from numerous organizations to sign on to a variety of letters. Independently-active board members also suggest sign-ons for consideration by the UUJEC. Recently, we have signed the following letters

- Support for the **Clean Shipping Act** of 2025,
- Support for the **International Maritime Pollution Accountability Act** of 2025,
- Ask Congress to uphold its moral and legal obligations to fully restore the **U. S. Refugee Admissions Program**,
- Defend environmental justice & oppose EPA's **methane delay**,
- Oppose threats by the Administration against **nonprofits & charities** (open letter),
- **Endangerment Finding** Public Comment,
- Oppose preemption of state **AI regulation** in the Senate Reconciliation Bill,
- Endorse **Proposition 50**,
- Demand justice in "critical minerals" trade,
- Oppose **NPR-A CRA**, attacks on sensible regulations for the biggest unit of public land in the country,
- Chemical disasters affect us, as does **Chemical Safety Board funding**: frontline communities demand protection of the CSB,
- Oppose Senator Sheehy's attack on **pipeline opposition** and **free speech**
- Support changes needed to the **USMCA** to remove impediments to public health,
- Support for the **Zero-Emission Vessel Innovation Act** of 2025,
- Join as a partner for "**Vets Say No**" **Week of Action**,
- **COP 30** Global Organization Sign On: Call on World Leaders to **Resist U. S. Fossil-Fuel Pressures**,
- Protect Funding for **Lead Service Line replacement** in the FY26 Interior Spending Bill,
- Urge Congress to reject chemical-industry lobby efforts to gut **chemical safety law**,
- **Divestment from American Chemistry Council lobbyists** draft joint statement,
- Oppose fossil fuel giveaways disguised as 'permitting reform',
- Interfaith effort to protect and expand the **enhanced ACA premium tax credit**.

Write icon created by Freepik - Flaticon

GA 2026: A Promise Broken

Details for GA2026—*Meet the Moment: Together Everywhere*—were recently announced, and those who attended GA2025 are sure to be surprised—and not in a good way. At the closing session, it was announced that the upcoming GA would be all virtual, a promise that many appreciated, as it would save cost and emissions, and all would be on an equal footing—not in person as we would like, but each person with equal, if virtual, access to everything.

That promise was completely dishonored in the final announcement, especially for those on the West Coast. GA has been split in half—the first, the business sessions, including by-law review, are indeed all virtual—so no hallway conversations with distant UU friends on those topics while they are still being debated, just discuss.uua.org and—for delegates only—your preferred delegate chatrooms (visiting multiple chatrooms to read what others are saying is actively discouraged). Whova is back, but that is generally a firehose of information, mostly about social events and logistics. Those sessions are on weekday afternoons—so those working need time off, but not even the full business day. If you can take half days, great; if not, you lose mornings futilely.

After that, there is a 2-day break, so that... *the elite can travel to GA!* Yes, if you have lots of money, are an important-enough UUA staff member, or have a congregation/fellowship/society (CFS) with funds to spare—or can fund-raise on your own behalf—you, too, can join the studio experience in Louisville, Kentucky. The rest of us are invited to join 5 in-person gatherings—all in the East—or to watch from outside, at home or with folks whom you or your CFS can assemble. Those sessions—Ware lecture, Sunday service, programming—are Friday through Sunday, so mostly weekend time. Will delegates be able to take Monday, Tuesday, and Friday off? Will 2 days of

nonUU life between pieces of GA be disruptive? Will discussions of business sessions that happened 3 days ago be of interest, after real life intervenes?

There is no way to look at this other than disrespect for us, the delegates of GA and the individual UUs whom we represent. GA 2025 was the first time since I have been a delegate (every year but 1 since 2009, and I attended from off-site that year) that I had other Central Unitarian members, delegates and attendees, with me in person. Most were first-time attendees, and at least one said, "It was inspiring; why haven't I been doing this all along?" I doubt anyone will say that about a bifurcated GA. Community, even temporary community, is unlikely to gel to any great degree. Who will be left out? The same folks who Trump is attacking—the working class, the poor, those with fewer resources. The presumption that the Board—remember, the GA Planning Committee was disbanded by a delegate vote for which they lobbied, so it is the Board itself—can act with impunity, can say one thing and do another without consequences, is something that we challenge when Donald Trump declares he can fire people from independent agencies, that he can tear down the East Wing without consulting anyone (though other presidents have made changes, none did so alone), and on and on.

Will UUs accept this? Realistically, there is not much choice. Will the board face any consequences? At the very least, we need a business resolution instructing anyone planning future GAs that they (1) must be continuous, with no breaks longer than overnight; (2) must include both business sessions and programming in one location, which can be the centerpiece of a network of hubs, but must be available to all at a reasonable rate; (3) that if hubs are used for regional gatherings, there must be at least 1 in each region, and ideally with a maximum distance between hubs of 400 miles or less.

| Commentary by Sally Jane Gellert

UUA By-laws Review

From April 2024, we had a draft schedule for the by-law review process that included the following, none of which I saw in real time—either the plans changed or, more likely, one had to know where to actively seek out actions. Here is what may have happened this year so far:

Summer - Fall (August-November) 2025

- ◆ Determine and incorporate suggested changes with Board input.
- ◆ Legal preview of amendments

Winter (December- 2025-February 2026)

- ◆ Incorporate and /or revise bylaws with appropriate amendments.

Add to GA 2026 Agenda (March 2026)

Focus heavily on Communications:

- ◆ Congregational leader emails, webpage updates, Posting webinars on web page,
- ◆ social media, Infographics, congregational video. (2 minutes cheerleading, key why change?)

I find it distressing that as we close out December and begin January by the time you read this, we average UUs have no idea of what suggested changes have been "determined and incorporated". I wonder why the need for "cheerleading.". I guess all is being done by the elite, and we everyday folks have to wait for the GA agenda to come out next month. We'll do our best to find info and forward to our members and friends via e-mail and social media.

| Commentary by Sally Jane Gellert

Affordability for All: Local & State

Affordability is no hoax. In December, the Groundwork Collaborative, Local Progress, and State Innovation Exchange introduced a report called *Affordability for All: An Agenda to Bring Down Costs for Working Families*. The report details ten policies that can address the affordability crisis directly caused by unchecked corporate greed.

The authors report voter replies to twelve questions. 61% of the voters feel that affordability is not a priority for the Federal government. The same percentage feel that the economy in general is getting worse for them.

The specific steps that the authors recommend to reduce the cost of living for poor and middle-class consumers, grouped by expense type, are:

Food

1. Build Public Grocery Stores to Lower Grocery Prices
2. Require Street Pricing for Concessions at Publicly Funded Venues

Energy

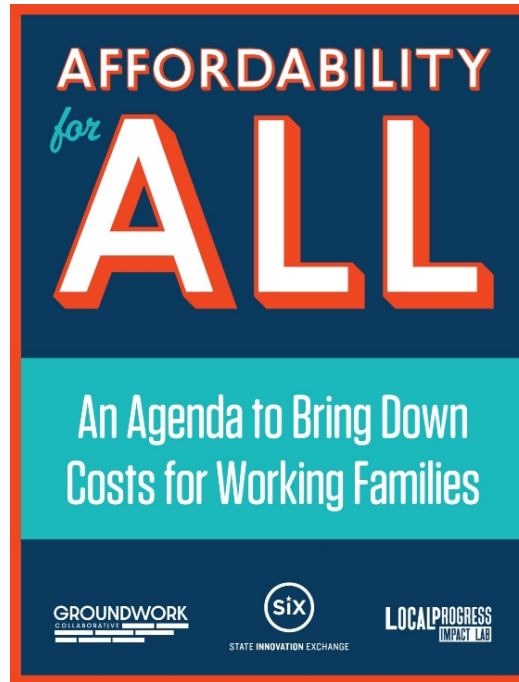
3. Cap Utility Rates and Stop Forcing Families to Subsidize Big Tech

Health Care and Childcare

4. Establish a Public Option by Allowing People to Buy into Medicaid
5. Provide Baby Baskets to New Parents

Housing

6. Freeze the Rent
7. Prevent Tech-Powered Landlord Collusion to Hike Rents
8. Provide Public Loans for Affordable Housing Development



Above, report cover. Below, cartoon by Ed Williamson.

Gouging

9. End Junk Fees
10. Ban Surveillance Pricing

Steps #1, 4, 5, and 8 require tax expenditure. Steps 3 and 6 restrict market pricing by the private sector. Steps 2, 7, 9, and 10 block pricing abuses.

As an example of abuse, consider that landlords, who are not supposed to collude on rents, use software like RealPage to share private data like rents, available square footage, and vacancy levels without directly talking to each other.

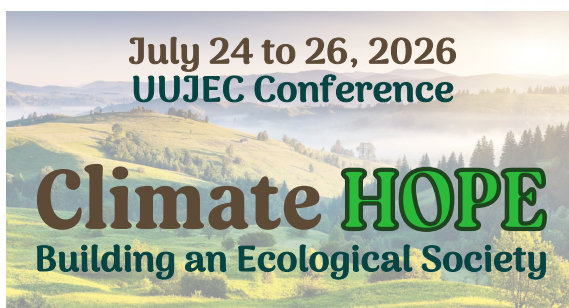
REALITY CHECK TIME FOR TRUMP'S "AFFORDABILITY HOAX!"



I'm sorry, but your card has been rejected for exceeding your limit!

Voters felt that each of the ten steps "would increase affordability." Since these steps reduce costs, that answer is no surprise. I wish that authors had asked "Do you support this recommendation?"

| By Kit Marlowe, UUJEC Secretary



Climate Hope: Building an Ecological Civilization

Join us from home—or bring the conference to your UU community!