

Community Ministry Status

For the Ministry of Rev. Barbara F. Meyers

March 2017

Status of ministry since last Report

Notes of Particular Importance

Joys

High-lights

- Understanding my place in the resistance
 - Working to ensure that mental health issues are adequately represented
 - Focus on issues of racism in the mental health system.
 - Contributing regularly to wider causes (ACLU, SPLC, Planned Parenthood, ...)
- Getting involved in new efforts
 - Emotional CPR
 - Will train to be a eCPR practitioner and apprentice facilitator
 - Will help with some business aspects of eCPR organization
 - Webinars for UU ministers and leaders, sponsored by UU regions
 - Co-leader of Ableism Task Force for the UUMA
 - Volunteering once a month as a peer at John George Psychiatric Hospital
 - Leading Elder Group at Mission Peak UU
- Wrote a program to automate demographics and activity reporting at Reaching Across
- Continue helping care for both grandsons.

Challenges

- Keeping from being over committed.

Education

Classes, Conferences and Seminars Taken and Planned

- Presented a webinar “Mental Health Information for Ministers and Lay Leaders” on Feb 15. 150 people attended! I felt good about how it went. It was organized by a New England region. Plan to offer it in the Western Region next year.
- Attended on-line class organized by the Church of the Larger Fellowship: *Strategic Non Violent Resistance for Ministers*, taught by Dr. Sharon Welch, faculty member of Meadville-Lombard Theological School. February 3 - March 17, 2017. Lots of good readings, discussion and motivation for resistance. Good historical background on kinds of non-violent resistance from many cultures. Some lessons:
 - Don’t try to defeat evil; expose and contain it and inoculate yourself against it. Recognize your temptations.
 - Research on Non-violence shows that it is the most effective way to change a society; one person can’t do everything; need roles for all kinds of people, including law enforcement to play; getting large numbers of people to engage is very important; ideological tests don’t work
 - Diffusion in activism (many different people working on different aspects of the problem in creative resonance) is necessary for success, not a cause of failure.
- Remotely attended the *Race, Policing, and Public Health Symposium*, co-hosted by Stanford Medicine and Stanford Law School, March 6, 2017. This had some of the top researchers in the country working

on racial justice and how it affects public health. It is available on-line to watch at <http://med.stanford.edu/rpph/videos.html>. **Highly recommended!**

- Attended webinar: *Faith. Hope. Life: The Role of Faith Communities in Suicide Prevention*, presented by the Suicide Prevention Resource Center, on February 23, 2017. Good discussion on how faith communities can help in suicide prevention led by religious leaders from Christian, Jewish and Islamic communities. **Excellent!** I have recommended this to other ministers who have found it valuable.
- Attended webinar: *How to be a Creative Peer Specialist*, sponsored by Doors to Wellbeing at the Copeland Center for Wellness and Recovery, February 28, 2017. Great ideas about using art to reach people who are living with mental health difficulties.
- Attended 2 Webinars on *Supporting Client Culture* by CAMHPRO, California Association of Mental Health Peer Run Organizations, a new state-wide group. Rising from the Ashes: March 22. From Victims to Heroes: March 29. Defining client culture, challenges, etc. Good beginning to the new group.
- Attended Webinar “*Art as a Peer Specialist Skill – Learn how peer specialists can use creativity and the arts to inspire others throughout their recovery journeys.*” presented by “Bluebird” and Meghan Caughey, February 28, 2017. Great examples of using the arts in recovery.
- Attended the webinar: *Mental Health and Our Changing Climate: Impacts, Implications, and Guidance*, by ecoAmerica, and the American Psychological Association, March 29, 2017. This webinar made public a report on mental health and climate change, which included suggestions of addressing problems.
- Interviewed by Rev. John Swinton in England who is writing a book about psychosis and religion.

Healing

Counseling Center

Completed closing down counseling center.

Fremont Unified School District

Part of a task force in the Fremont Unified School District to help students who are under excessive stress.

Reaching Across

Continued compensated job at Reaching Across organization, for quarter-time work. Attend Monday support group meetings, two Interfaith Support Groups per month, a spirituality group once a month, Friday craft days and some Wednesday events.

Wrote an Excel program to automate demographics and activity reporting at Reaching Across. It will be adapted to other programs in the Alameda County Network.

Support Groups

- Started an Elder’s Group as part of small group ministry at MPUUC
- Continued co-leading interfaith support group for people with depression and sadness.
- Continued to recommend support group for families of those with mental illness.

Pastoral Associates

- Led the Pastoral Associates meetings and worked with several congregation members as an associate.

Spiritual Direction

- Attended meeting of East Bay Spiritual Directors February 1, 2017. It focused on white privilege. Excellent set of exercises led by Rev. Joellynn Monahan.

Priestly

- Presented homily on Ring Theory in Pastoral Care on Feb 26. Had a sparsely attended PA workshop after the service

Social Justice

Community Awareness

Mental Health pages on MPUUC web site continue to be widely accessed.

Racial Justice

- I've joined the national and local NAACP, the ACLU, and contribute to the Southern Poverty Law Center and Planned Parenthood
- I've attended meetings of Showing Up For Racial Justice, a group for whites interested in being allies.
- Participated in week-long fast organized by the We Say Enough campaign

UUA Accessibility Group

- The congregational disability accessibility certification program called the Accessibility and Inclusion Ministry (AIM) program continues its general availability. Five congregations have officially entered the program. I am in charge of implementing this program. I have set up four review teams to follow the congregations through the process.

UUA Addictions Ministry

- As member of the UUA Addictions Ministry, helped run their web site www.uuaddictionsministry.org.

Other

Books Read

- *The age of Actualization – A Handbook for Growing Elder Community*, by David “Lucky” Goff and Alexandra Hart, 2014. Excellent book on how to start and run an elder group. Recommended to me by Rev. Kurt A. Kuhwald.
- *Loud Hands: Autistic People, Speaking*, edited by Julia Bascom, Autistic Self-Advocacy Network, 2012. A collection of essays written by and for Autistic people that catalogues the experiences and ethos of the Autistic community and has become one of that community's foundational documents.
- *Negroland – A Memoir*, by Margo Jefferson, Pantheon Books, 2015. Memoir of an upper-class African-American woman telling how she constantly straddled the worlds of Blacks and Whites. Well written winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award.
- *Like One of the Family: Conversations from a Domestic's Life*, by Alice Childress, Beacon Press, 1956. Vignettes about life as an African American maid in New York in the 1950's. Entertaining and wise.
- *I Am Not Your Negro: A Companion Edition to the Documentary Film Directed by Raoul Peck, from texts by James Baldwin, compiled and edited by Raoul Peck*, Vintage Books, 2017. Even though Baldwin died 30 years ago, his words feel as though they were written today. Beautiful writing articulating the continuing tragedy of racism in the United States.
- *Elizabeth and Hazel: Two Women of Little Rock*, by David Margolick, Yale University Press, 2011. A study of the principal figures, Elizabeth Eckford a black girl, and Hazel Bryan Massery, a white girl heckling her, in the iconic photograph from the Little Rock school segregation crisis. Riveting.
- *The Children of Raquette Lake: One Summer That Helped Change the Course of Treatment for Autism*, by Mira Rothenberg. The fascinating story of pioneering child psychologist Mira Rothenberg and two colleagues who take 11 children diagnosed with schizophrenia and autism to an upstate New York lake for 10 weeks to try total immersion in a supportive environment. **Highly Recommended.**
- *Brilliant Imperfection – Grappling with Cure*, by Eli Clare, Duke University Press, 2017. Brilliantly written memoir about the intersectionality of disability and transphobia, focusing an activist's passion on the concept of “cure” as applied to them. **Highly Recommended** for anyone interested in either or both of these issues.
- *Living for Two – A Daughter's Journey from Grief and Madness to Forgiveness and Peace*, by Lauren Spiro, Trafford Publishing, 2014. After her father was murdered, Lauren – age 16 - had a psychotic break and was diagnosed with schizophrenia. She emerged from the hospital, went back to school and became a therapist. Throughout her career, she hid her mental health diagnosis. The book is a story reclaiming her past, and seeing it as a spiritual transformation. Very moving.

- *Blessed are the Crazy – Breaking the Silence about Mental Illness, Family and Church*, by Sarah Griffith Lund, Chalice Press, 2014. A woman who becomes a minister talks about mental illness in her family and how to start a mental health ministry.
- *Men Explain Things to Me*, comic essay by Rebecca Solnit, 2008. Origin of the term “mansplaining”. Very entertaining. And true.

Personal

- Need to continually work at life balance, stress and depression management. This is going successfully and is sometimes easier than others. Trying to learn how to make stress an ally.
- Work out at 24-Hour Fitness 2 times a week.
- Had a lot of pleasure finishing two sewing projects.

Other

- Met with Community Ministry Advisory Committee regularly
- Monthly status meetings with EqUual Access
- Visit my spiritual director and my psychiatrist regularly.
- Attended MPUUC Board meetings and NAACP meetings.

2017 Development Plan

Area	Plans	Time line	Measurement	Status
Continuing education:				
Take one or two classes a year	Investigate classes to take in this year	Ongoing- Identify classes	Take classes by December 2017	Took <i>Strategic Non Violent Resistance for Ministers</i> Feb-March 2017
Attend GA in person or virtually	GA in June	June 2017	Event attended	Registered for 2017 GA in New Orleans
Attend Mental health seminars / conventions	Attend at least one local / state mental health convention in next year	Chosen by March 31	Attended by Dec. 2017	Possibly attend Alternatives in August.
Mental Health Ministry	Discern next actions in support of mental health	Chosen by March 31	Activity underway by Dec 2017	Will work with the eCPR program as a facilitator
Racial Justice	Discern actions in support of racial justice	Chosen by March 31	Activity underway by Dec 2017	Focus on racism in the mental health system
Areas for growth in the next 2 yrs:				
Disability Credentialing Program	Lead the group which will administer the AIM certification program for UUA congregations.	On-going	New congregations sign up for the program	We have 8 congregations signed up. 3 pilots have completed the program
Spiritual Direction	Continue to grow Spiritual Direction practice	On-going		No progress
Long term possibilities				
Plan for sabbatical	Plan for ministerial sabbatical of 6 months	Don't know when	Rethink this after Zach is older.	