

Community Ministry Status

For the Ministry of Rev. Barbara F. Meyers

September 2015

Status of ministry since last Report

Notes of Particular Importance

Joys

- High-lights
 1. Connections: A Counseling Center Affirming Spirituality and Diversity seeing clients with a staff of 4 therapists, 2 interns and 2 spiritual directors. Hired a Business Manager who is taking on many of the responsibilities very capably.
 2. UU Congregational disability certification program is now formally underway with one congregation applying and others in process. I am leading the implementation.
 3. Mental Health is the yearly social justice priority for MPUUC. Led the effort to design this program for the coming year.
- Continue helping care for both grandsons: Nate, age 4 every other Saturday and Zach age 5 months every other Tuesday.
- For the UUMA program in Entrepreneurial Ministry I Attended an outstanding week-long education retreat for Entrepreneurial Ministry in Chicago
- Exercise schedule going well.

Challenges

- My Dad has been quite ill and I've been a primary family contact and frequent visitor. He met his newest great grandson in May.
- Keeping from being over committed. Sometimes this is easier than others.

Education

Classes, Conferences and Seminars Taken and Planned

- Attended an outstanding week-long education retreat for Entrepreneurial Ministry in Chicago August 24-28. Very impressive professors from the Kellogg School of Management gave us the principles of becoming an entrepreneur.
- Took on-line education class *Creating a Healthcare Practice Welcoming to LGBT Seniors* by Lavender Seniors of the East Bay and Life Eldercare. May 21, 2015. Excellent class for healthcare professionals about how to treat the special problems of LGBT seniors.
- Member of a panel "*Bridging the Gap: Mental Illness, Faith and Recovery*" at NAMI National Convention on July 8, 2015.
- Attended *Marginalized Ministry Conference* in Berkeley, July 22, 2015. Most of the attendees had prison ministries and told of the horrid conditions for everyone in the system, wardens and prisoners alike. I like to be around this group every year for a day.

Healing

Counseling Center

- Held monthly Board meetings, and many more working meetings. Recruited new Business Manager

- Seeing clients. Not a full load, yet.
- Applied for new grants using a grant writer and fund raiser specialist.

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.

Support Groups

- 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. Substituted in congregational pastoral care for Jeremy Nickel when he was on vacation.

Mental Health Committee Work

- Mental Health is the yearly social justice priority for MPUUC. Led the effort to design this program for the coming year.

Community Ministry

- Continued mentoring a community minister. She should be in her final year of the 3-year process.
- Serving as informal mentor and spiritual director to a prospective mental health community minister in the Washington DC area.

Spiritual Direction

- I am a Spiritual Director at Connections.

Priestly

- July 26. MPUUC service on *AIM for Inclusion*, the new UU program on accessibility and inclusion for people with disabilities. Well received.
- August 16. Guest preacher at the UU Napa congregation.
- August 30. Guest preacher at the Grass Valley congregation, my second visit to them.

Social Justice

Community Awareness

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

UUA Accessibility Group

- The congregational disability accessibility certification program called the Accessibility and Inclusion Ministry (AIM) program is formally underway.

UUA Addictions Ministry

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

Board Membership

- On the Board of the Universalist Recovery Church, a UU church specializing in recovery from mental health and substance abuse located near Portland, Oregon.

Other

Books Read

- *American Psychosis – How the Federal Government Destroyed the Mental Illness Treatment System*, by E. Fuller Torrey, M. D., Oxford University Press, 2014. Fascinating and horrifying account of the emptying of state mental hospitals during the last 50 years. Some solutions are proffered. Torrey is a controversial figure, particularly with consumer groups because he advocates forced treatment. He has many good points – especially about financial incentives to not treat the most seriously mentally ill as a priority.
- *The Goddess Pose – The Audacious Life of Indra Devi the Woman Who Helped Bring Yoga to the West*, by Michelle Goldberg, Alfred Knopf, 2015. Fascinating story about the woman who is sometimes called the first lady of yoga. Born in Latvia, she kept reinventing herself all over the world - in Russia, Germany, India, Shanghai, Hollywood, Vietnam, Mexico, Argentina, and Panama - as she lived 103 very active and daring years. Was most fascinated to learn that while Indians had done yoga for thousands of years, their "practices didn't necessarily have anything in common with yoga as currently understood by the West, as a series of poses and breathing exercises designed to strengthen the body and calm the mind." Devi was largely responsible for exporting it to the West from India at the time of the Indian independence movement, as a gift showing India's rich culture to the world.
- *Enabling Acts – The Hidden Story of How the Americans with Disabilities Act Gave the Largest US Minority its Rights*, by Lennard J. Davis, Beacon Press 2015. This is an excellent book about how the ADA came to be, with all the intrigue of both houses of Congress and the Administration. Really opens one's eyes to how the political process works.
- *Wrestling with Our Inner Angels – Faith, Mental Illness, and the Journey to Wholeness*, by Nancy Kehoe, Jossey-Bass books, 2009. Written by a nun in the community of the Sacred Heart, this book is a beautiful chronicle of her work with people who have mental illness. Like me, she finds contact with these special people to be something sacred.
- *Just Mercy – A Story of Justice and Redemption*, by Bryan Stevenson, Spiegel & Grau, 2014. The UUA book-read for this year. Very inspiring story of attorney Bryan Stevenson who has fought for equal justice for incarcerated marginalized people and has been to the Supreme Court 5 times winning major victories relating to the death penalty and children convicted of adult crimes.
- *Waking Up White – And Finding Myself in the Story of Race*, by Debby Irving, Elephant Room Press, 2014. The author tells the tale of a white woman who wakes up to the role that white privilege plays in her life. Excellent questions and exercises for the reader.
- *fail, fail again, fail better – Wise advice for leaning into the unknown*, by Pema Chödrön, Sounds True, 2015. The commencement address Pema Chödrön gave to the 2014 class of Naropa University in Boulder, Colorado. Why learning how to handle failure will bring about your best human abilities.
- *Accidental Saints – Finding God in All the Wrong People*, by Nadia Bolz-Weber, Convergent Books, 2015. Lutheran minister who formerly was a stand-up comic, drug addict and alcoholic started a church for outsiders in the Denver area. Funny and poignant vignettes from her ministry and her own spiritual path.
- *Influence – Science and Practice, 5th Edition*, by Robert B. Cialdini, Pearson Books, 2009. Excellent resource on some of the key ways that people are influenced: Fixed Pattern Reactions; Reciprocation; Consistency and Commitment; Social Pressures; Likeability; Deference to Authority; and Scarcity.
- *How the Mighty Fall – And Why Some Companies Never Give In*, by Jim Collins, Harper Collins Publishers, 2009. Study of the 5 stages that companies go through when they fail – Hubris born of success: Undisciplined pursuit of more, Denial of risk, Grasping for salvation, and Capitulation to irrelevance or death. Also, what can help companies pull out of it. Lots of examples, including IBM.
- *Spiritual Envy: An Agnostic's Quest*, By Michael Krasny, New World Library, 2010. Spiritual quest by the SF State English professor and host of KQED's Forum program. While unflinchingly honest and thorough, I found it to be a tedious read.
- *Not for Ourselves Alone – Theological Essays on Relationship*, Burton D. Carley and Laurel Hallman, editors, Skinner House Books, 2014. Essays by many prominent UUs about the values of religious community.
- *Who's Real, What Matters – Living Life from a Spiritual Perspective*, by Pat Cavaliere, Tate Publishing Enterprises, 2009. The book gives a formula for and examples of how to live one's life by spiritual principles rather than ego-driven principles.

- *Go Set a Watchman*, by Harper Lee, Harper-Collins, 2015. Well publicized second novel by Harper Lee where the protagonist finds out that her father Atticus Finch is a racist. OK. Not great in my opinion.
- *Blood Will Out – The True Story of a Murder, a Mystery and a Masquerade*, by Water Kirn, W. W. Norton, 2014. The author does not spare himself in telling the tale about how he was fooled by a man claiming to be “Clark Rockefeller” who turned out to be a chronic liar, impersonator and murderer.
- *Name Dropper – Investigating the Clark Rockefeller Mystery* – by Frank C. Girardot, Jr. More of the Clark Rockefeller story from a very thorough investigator.

Personal

- Need to continually work at life balance, stress and depression management. This is going successfully and is sometimes easier than others.
- Work out at City Sports 3 times a week.

Other

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

2015 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 2015	Entrepreneurial Ministry classes taken
Attend GA in person or virtually	GA in June	June 2015	Event attended	Complete
Attend Mental health seminars / conventions	Attend at least one local / state mental health convention in next year	Chosen by March 31 NAMI California conference where I was on a panel.	Attended by Dec. 2015	Appeared on NAMI California panel for faith and mental health.
Help in starting new counseling center	Attend meetings as member of the board of the new center	Throughout 2015	Center is on a sound financial footing and self-sustaining.	Working on this very hard. Not yet financially self-sustaining.
Areas for growth in the next 2 yrs:				
Disability Credentialing Program	Lead the group which will administer the AIM certification program for UUA congregations.	Program made public in June 2015	New congregations sign up for the program	Congregations have started signing up for the program.
Spiritual Direction	Continue to grow Spiritual Direction practice at Connections.	On-going		
Long term possibilities				
Plan for sabbatical	Plan for ministerial sabbatical of 6 months	Don't know when	Rethink this after Zach is older and Connections is well established.	