

# Community Ministry Status

For the Ministry of Rev. Barbara F. Meyers

March 2013

## Status of ministry since last Report

### Notes of Particular Importance

#### Joys

- Status of three new initiatives of my ministry
  1. MPUUC voted to give seed money to the start of the Interfaith Counseling Center and to have money in its budget each year for support. Samaritan Institute will sign formal paperwork for affiliation in May or June, at which point we will start monthly Board meetings.
  2. Leading effort to create UU Congregational Disability Certification Program. First draft of the program has been reviewed and is being updated. Field test sites being nominated. Copy Editor on board. Hope to start field test in June.
  3. Five short story-oriented videos now up on YouTube. Former co-producer continuing Mental Health Matters TV show. Production is running smoothly.
- With Equal Access board, wrote a reflection paper to send to UUA President Peter Morales about mental illness stigma in congregations. We will dialog with him about this subject.
- White House Office of Public Engagement said UU mental health ministry was doing “terrific work”!
- Helping care for my grandson Nathaniel (Natey) King one day a week

#### Challenges

- Keeping from being over committed.
- Maintaining good mental health – I had some depressive symptoms in early March. These have abated due to: medication, exercise, weaving, reading, piano playing, ...

#### Education

##### *Classes, Conferences and Seminars Taken and Planned*

- Webinar: *Understanding Addiction Interaction: Addressing Co-addictions in order to fully achieve Sobriety and Recovery for Life* - Sponsored by: Caron Treatment Centers, January 10, 2013. Interesting case study about multiple additions – sex, substance, addiction – and how they arise and are treated.
- Led a seminar session *Sharing Your Story* at ACBHCS' Healing Trauma Summit in downtown Oakland, January 17, 2013. A couple of people contacted me for continuing dialog.

#### Healing

##### *Counseling Center*

With a group of 5 others, helping to design a counseling center to eventually be affiliated with our congregation.

- Samaritan Institute agreed to work with us formally starting in May or June. A BIG deal.
- Contacted interfaith community members for outreach. Identified representatives from Jewish, Christian, Islam and Sikh faiths who are interested in working with us. Hope to identify potential Board members.

### ***Reaching Across***

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

### ***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***

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

### ***Mental Health Committee***

- Activities complete:
  - February – Mental Health Movie Night - Temple Grandin. Excellent discussion afterwards
  - March – Forum on Mental Health and Violence. Joint event with IDC committee.
- Activities planned:
  - April - Ohlone Suicide Walk
  - April – Autism Event: Worship Service
  - May - NAMI Walk
  - June - Service on Mental Health: "What is Recovery?"

### ***Community Ministry***

- Serve as mentor to two community ministers as they navigate through their preliminary fellowship. It is a 3-year commitment for each person. One person has finished her second year, and the other has finished her first year.
- Serving as informal mentor to a prospective mental health community minister doing an internship in Berkeley.

### ***Spiritual Direction***

- Have one spiritual direction client. This is very fulfilling work for me.

## **Priestly**

- Guest Preacher on Feb 24 at fledgling Merced UU Congregation. Reminded us of the early MPUUC. Offered to give them encouragement.

## **Social Justice**

### ***Community Awareness***

- Five short “focused story” Videos have now appeared on YouTube, to universally positive acclaim.
- *Mental Health Matters* Public Access TV Show continues in the capable hands of my co-producer, Shannon Eliot.
- Mental Health pages on MPUUC web site continue to be widely accessed.

### ***UUA Accessibility Group***

- Leading effort to create a congregational disability accessibility certification program. Certification document created. Incorporation of comments on earlier draft underway.
- With Equal Access Board, engaged in a dialog with UUA President Peter Morales about mental illness stigma in congregations, drafting a reflection paper on mental health.
- Continued to maintain the website for the new UU accessibility group *Equal Access* [www.equalaccess.org](http://www.equalaccess.org)

## ***UUA Addictions Ministry***

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

## **Other**

### ***Books Read***

- *Angels in America*, by Tony Kushner. This consisted of two plays and was part of the MPUUC Banned Books Club. I learned a lot about drama and its power to move people
- *Nurture Shock – New thinking about children*, by Po. Bronson and Ashley Merryman, Hachette Book Group, 2011. Interesting and counterintuitive conclusions about how children learn and behave, covering such topics as: praise, sleep, race, lying, siblings, rebellion, self-control, playing with others, and language acquisition. Very enlightening and helpful to this grandmother.
- *It's How You Play the Game: Reclaiming Sportsmanship and Honor*, by Bobby Newman, Ph.D., BCBA-D, Dove and Orca Press, 2012. No just about sports, this short book full of lessons on how a well-lived life: Respect others; Follow rules; Do one's best; Accept defeat/bad breaks gracefully; Accept consequences; Control anger; Encourage everyone's best performance; How the game is played is more important than the score.
- *Reunion – A Search for Ancestors*, by Ryan Littrell, 2012. The story of a man's search for his Scottish ancestors. I can't believe it, but I found this genealogy book dull.
- *The Patient Who Cured His Therapist – and Other Stories of Unconventional Therapy*, by Stanley Siegel, M.S.W., with Ed Lowe, Marlowe and Company, 1992. I loved this book with its stories of how Stanley Siegel gets beneath the presenting problem to the real problem underneath. Highly recommended.
- *Bastard Out of Carolina: A Novel*, by Dorothy Allison, Plume, 1992. Read this for the MPUUC Banned Book Club. Great story telling of the childhood experiences involving illegitimacy, abuse and rape, of a girl and her working-class white family in the South. This is first-rate literature.
- *The Antiracism Trainings*, by David Reich, BlazeVOX Books, 2010. Written by the former editor of *The UU World*, this is a thinly veiled satire of the UUA and its antiracism programs in the 1990s. I especially enjoyed guessing which real people the characters in the book were based on.
- *Elite – Uncovering Classism in Unitarian Universalist History*, by Mark W. Harris, Skinner House Books, 2011. The subtitle tells it all – Unitarians have a history of a membership of the higher classes. I found the description of how prominent 21<sup>st</sup> century Unitarians supported eugenics to be shocking.
- *A Disability History of the United States*, by Kim Nielsen, Beacon Press, 2012. Thorough, well-researched history starting with native societies, colonial times, mid-1800's, and ending with the disability rights movement.
- *Spiritually integrated Psychotherapy – Understanding and Addressing the Sacred*, by Kenneth I. Pargament, The Guilford Press, 2007. This is a book written for therapists to understand the importance of understanding and addressing the sacred dimension in their client's lives. It explains ways that the sacred can express itself in a person's life both positively and negatively, and it gives guidance for how to assess a client's spirituality and draw upon it in therapy. Excellent!
- *Blessings of Failure – A Transylvanian Memoir* by Judit Gellerd, 2012. Memoir of the daughter of Transylvanian martyr Imre Gellerd, and creator of the Partner Church movement between UU congregations and Transylvanian Unitarian churches. A medical doctor and ordained minister, she succeeded in the areas elusive to her mother and father. Hard to put down.
- *Inside Rehab – The Surprising Truth About Addiction Treatment – and How to Get Help That Works*, by Anne M. Fletcher, Viking, 2013. I would recommend this book to anyone who is looking into rehab for themselves or a loved one. A guide about what to ask, what to avoid, and how to find a program that works for an individual person. Discusses situations with mental illness + addiction.
- *Encountering the Sacred in Psychotherapy – How to Talk with People about Their Spiritual Lives*, by James L. Griffith and Melissa Elliott Griffith, The Guildford Press, 2002. Lots of examples of how these therapists have spoken to clients about spiritual matters. Topics include: Introducing Spirituality, Metaphor and Spirituality; Spiritual Experience; Conversations with God; Rituals;

Community involvement; when Spirituality turns Destructive. This would be a good reference book for therapists.

- *Sober for Good – New Solutions for Drinking Problems – Advice from Those Who Have Succeeded*, by Anne M. Fletcher, Houghton Mifflin Company, 2001. This would be an excellent book for someone who is struggling with a drinking problem and wants to know what works to get better. Lots of stories, and a rejection of one-solution-fits-all philosophy.
- *The Inherent Worth and Dignity of ALL Individuals: Encouraging Full Participation in our Unitarian Universalist Congregations*, by Bobby Newman, PhD., B.C.B.A, 2008. Author is a friend of mine who is a Behavior Analyst who works professionally with people who have autism. Book is about how to encourage the full participation of all people in our UU congregations.
- *Quiet – The Power of Introverts in a World that Can't Stop Talking* by Susan Cain, Crown Publishers, 2012. A passionate study of introverts and what their many advantages are. I especially liked the chapter on improving communication between introverts and extroverts. Also liked the insight that introverts can behave like extroverts at times if it is for a cause they believe in. I'm definitely an introvert by any of her measures.
- *The Art Forger* by B. A. Shapiro, Algonquin Books, 2012. Very fun read. A fictional story with many plot twists based on an artist copying a Degas painting. It is based on the real-life, unsolved art heist from the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston in 1990.

### ***Personal***

- Need to continually work at life balance, stress and depression management.
- Keeping up my exercise at the gym *Curves*, and work out there 3 times a week. Keeps up my energy level.
- Completed weaving for Knuti Van Hoven and Paul Davis: Great White Egret in Flight. Submitted it to Olive Hyde Textile Exhibit.



### ***Other***

- Met with Community Ministry Advisory Committee every quarter
- Monthly status meetings with UU Mental Health Caucus, Equal Access
- Visit my spiritual director and my psychiatrist regularly.
- Attended most MPUUC Board meetings.

## 2012 Development Plan

Area	Plans	Time line	Measurement	Status
<b>Continuing education:</b>				
Take one or two classes a year	Investigate classes to take in this year	Ongoing- Identify classes	Take classes by December 2013	
Attend GA	GA in June	June 2013	Event attended	
Attend Mental health seminars / conventions	Attend at least one local / state mental health convention in next year	Chosen by March 31	Attended by Dec. 2013	Attended WRAP Conf Will attend CASRA
Help in starting new counseling center	Attend meetings and engage in planning to start new center	Throughout 2013	New center is created.	Attending meetings every 2 weeks
<b>Areas for growth in the next 2 yrs:</b>				
Create short format mental health videos	Plan is to improve the video audience	Tape one video per month.	Ongoing	Regular video production has begun.
Disability Credentialing Program	Lead credentialing program for UUA congregations	Time line established. Field test by June 2013	Program created	Schedule established. People on board. Work proceeding
Preaching style	Work on preaching with feedback from parishioners and other professionals	As speaking engagements show up	Style continues to improve.	Comments by congregants that my style has improved.
Spiritual Direction	Continue to grow Spiritual Direction practice	On-going	Will list myself on Mercy Center SD referral list.	
<b>Long term possibilities</b>				
Create on-line course for ministers to teach about mental health.	Apply for a grant to fund creating the course	Apply for grant in 2 years.	Grant applied for and approved.	