

Community Ministry Status

For the Ministry of Rev. Barbara F. Meyers

March 2014

Status of ministry since last Report

Notes of Particular Importance

Joys

- High-lights
 1. Interfaith Counseling Center. Held monthly Board meetings. Two grant applications turned in. One awarded: Chalice Lighter grant. Developed talking points.
 2. UU Congregational Disability Certification Program. Handbook now at the field test congregations and initial congregational evaluations are being received.
 3. Short story-oriented videos – Will began production of videos at Reaching Across with my own equipment, and funding from the county through Reaching Across.
- Another UU mental health minister is moving to the Bay Area in June! I'm excited.
- Helping care for my grandson Nathaniel (Natey) King one day a week
- Training to run a half-marathon on May 3

Challenges

- Keeping from being over committed. Sometimes this is easier than others.
- Poor attendance at some Mental Health Committee events.
- Training to run a half-marathon on May 3

Education

Classes, Conferences and Seminars Taken and Planned

- *Mindfulness Meditation* – A 6-session class taught by Patt Saso. Very good at stimulating me to get started on regular meditative practice. I liked the fellowship with other class goers.
- *The Power to Bless*, an on-line class from the Oates Institute, Jan 13-31. I like the Oates Institute's way of nurturing and edifying those of us in the vocations of spiritual guidance and pastoral care. We discussed how to recognize the presence and/or absence of blessing within ourselves and others, and how to help those to whom we minister find blessing.
- *Meeting Alzheimer's: A Communication, Connection & Care Experiential Workshop*, led by Rev. Jade Angelica, a UU minister colleague, Feb 20, 2014. This was a fabulous workshop with experiential exercises in how best to communicate with people with Alzheimer's. Based on her book "*Where Two Worlds Touch – A Spiritual Journey Through Alzheimer's Disease*," Skinner House 2014.
- *Tools for Change* – Conference in San Francisco March 7 and 8, 2014. Sponsored by the Mental Health Association of San Francisco. Many good workshops, especially on arts and crafts. Good chance to make connections with other attendees.
- *ADHD: Neurodevelopmental Disorder Through the Ages*, March 11, by Dr. Rachel Klein, Brain and Behavior Foundation webinar. Conclusion: Medication is the best therapy.
- *Story Telling Webinar* – Taught by PCD District Executive Josh Searle-White. Good experiential workshop on the importance of authenticity, silence and connection when telling stories.
- *DSM-5 In Plain English* – Dr. Kenneth Carter as a Cross Country Education on-demand webinar. Excellent discussion of the DSM-5 and how it differs from the DSM-IV.
- Working with to other UUs on creating an on-line curriculum of my Caring Congregation curriculum. Updated the curriculum from the DSM – IV to the DSM-5.

Healing

Counseling Center

- Held monthly Board meetings. Increased religious diversity of the board with Muslim participants.
- Chalice Lighter Grant proposal to the PCD was awarded beginning April 15.
- Grant to UUA Funding Program re-submitted showing progress since last year.
- Helped develop talking points about the Center to different audiences.

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 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

This year's activities are:

- January: Yoga for depression and anxiety led by Janelle Hargrove. Great session, but it was just Janelle and me. I need to find a better way to promote classes like this if we are going to have them.
- February: Sermon on "Suitcases in the Hospital Attic" and trip to the Exploratorium which has a special exhibit on the suitcases.
- March 1 Mental Health Movie Night. Watch "Phoebe in Wonderland" with a discussion about Tourette's. Four people attended.
- April 6: Rev. Meyers to give a sermon on ADHD. Mary Ann Davis to do homily.
- April: Ohlone College Suicide Prevention Walk - publicize and participate
- May – FERC to hold 5150 workshop in Fremont for public to attend. We will publicize.
- May: NAMI Walk - publicize and participate

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. They have both other has finished their second year of preliminary fellowship.
- Serving as informal mentor and spiritual director to a prospective mental health community minister doing an internship in St. Louis.

Spiritual Direction

- Have two spiritual direction clients. This is very fulfilling work for me.

Priestly

- Retained a preaching coach from the UUMA coaching program. She is very helpful.

- February 23 “Suitcases in the Attic” preached at MPUUC
- March 20 – Led a short service at Alma Via Senior Residence for 2 people at the request of Sister Annette Burkhart, their Director of Spiritual Care. Delightful experience.

Social Justice

Community Awareness

- Last year, nine short “focused story” videos appeared on YouTube, to universally positive acclaim. This year, funder will produce 2 more videos.
- I have obtained equipment to start production of my own YouTube videos. Will start in the New Year at Reaching Across with County funding through Reaching Across in April.
- *Mental Health Matters* Public Access TV continues under new management, with fewer shows.
- 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. 8 Field Test congregations now have the handbook and a UUA administrator, who I am supervising, is on board and doing a great job.
- Continued to maintain the website for the new UU accessibility group *EqUUal Access* www.equualaccess.org.

UUA Addictions Ministry

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

Board Membership

- Resigned from the Board of the Universalist Recovery Church, a UU church specializing in recovery from mental health and substance abuse located near Portland, Oregon, but will continue to help them in an advisory capacity.

Other

Books Read

- *Hey, America, Your Roots are Showing – Adventures in Discovering News-Making Connections, Unexpected Ancestors, Long-Hidden Secrets, and Solving Historical Puzzles*, by Megan Smolenyak, Citadel Press, 2012. As an amateur genealogist, I loved this book’s stories and family history research techniques.
- *The Seven Daughters of Eve – The Science that Reveals our Genetic Ancestry*, by Bryan Sykes, W.W. Norton, 2001. Fascinating story of the analysis of mitochondrial DNA that found 7 “clans” for most people of European heritage.
- *How, Then, Shall We Live? – Four Simple Questions that Revel the Beauty and Meaning of Our Lives*, by Wayne Muller, Bantam, 1996. Very thoughtful and moving treatment of the important questions of life: Who am I; Who do I Love; How Shall I Live, Knowing I Will Die; What is My Gift to the Family of the Earth?
- *Personality PLUS - How to Understand Others by Understanding Yourself*, by Florence Littauer, Revell, 1983. The book breaks down personalities into 4 types and tells the strong and weak points of each type. A little simplistic, but interesting. I always come out weird in these kinds of tests; I was about equal parts of 3 of the 4 types.
- *Fat Chance – Beating the Odds Against Sugar, Processed Food, Obesity, and Disease* by Robert H. Lustig, M.D., Hudson Street Press, 2013. A powerful indictment of processed food and sugar in the American diet. Claims people have gotten fatter because “non-fat” dishes have added sugar to improve the taste. Makes me never want to drink soda or fruit juice, or any processed food, for that matter.
- *Behind the Kitchen Door*, by Saru Jayaraman, ILR Press, 2013. UUA’s recommended group-read book. Passionate description of the problems in how the workers are treated in the restaurant

industry, in terms of wages, tips, racism and sexism. A call-to-arms to help make things better. Both depressing and hopeful.

- *Mind Over Medicine- Scientific Proof That You Can Heal Yourself*, by Lissa Rankin, M.D., Hay House, Inc, 2013. Totally fascinating book about how the “placebo effect” gets activated. Walks you through how to diagnose problems in your life and write the RX. I so much want to believe what she says!
- *To Soften the Blow*, by Lynn Vessels, CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2012. Tour-de-force memoir about how Vessels recovered from PTSD after she witnessed her Dad shoot her Mom when she was a young girl. Fascinating and engrossing.
- *“Where Two Worlds Touch – A Spiritual Journey Through Alzheimer’s Disease,”* by Rev. Jade Angelica. Skinner House 2014. UU minister Jade Angelica speaks about her compassionate care of her mother through the process of dying of Alzheimer’s disease. Highly recommended to families and pastoral care givers of Alzheimer’s patients.
- *The ADHD Explosion – Myths, Medication, Money, and Today’s Push for Performance:* by Stephen P. Hinshaw and Richard M. Scheffler, Oxford University Press, 2014. Very well researched and organized information about ADHD, its history and why it has such a rapid rise in the last decade. Recommended for anyone interested in this issue.
- *An Altar in the World – A Geography of Faith*, by Barbara Brown Taylor, HarperOne, 2009. Explains how the Holy can be found in many places every day.
- *Monks and White Dwarfs – Science and the Mystical*, by Paul Leppert, Patton Pacific Press, 2000. Discusses many parallels between science and religious thinking.
- *Buried in the Sky – The Extraordinary Story of the Sherpa Climbers on K2’s Deadliest Day*, by Peter Zuckerman and Amanda Padoan, W.W. Norton, 2012. Engaging mountain climbing story.
- *Quantum Theology – Spiritual Implications of the New Physics Revised and Updated Edition, with Reflective Questions*, by Dairmuid O’Murchu, Crossroad Publishing Company, 2004. Quantum physics gives us a different way at looking at reality, and this book explores how that different view affects theology and spiritual exploration. Ex: Creative energy comes from within the Cosmos; the whole is greater than the sum of the parts; extinction and transform are primary for the theologian.

Personal

- Need to continually work at life balance, stress and depression management. This is going successfully and is sometimes easier than others.
- Keeping up my exercise at the gym *Curves*, and work out there 3 times a week.
- Ran in a 5K race at San Leandro Marina on February 15, 2014. Came in 4th place in my age group
- Training to run a half-marathon on May 3, running longer distances each weekend.

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.

2014 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 2014	Took <i>DSM5 In Plain English</i>
Attend GA in person or virtually	GA in June	June 2014	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. 2014	Attended <i>Tools for Change</i> in March 2014
Help in starting new counseling center	Attend meetings as member of the board of the new center	Throughout 2014	New center is created.	Initial actions are continuing. One grant was obtained.
Create on-line course for ministers to teach about mental health.	Work with another person who will create the class	Throughout 2014	Course created or near completion in Dec 2014	Three people working on this.
Areas for growth in the next 2 yrs:				
Create short format mental health videos	Plan is to improve the video audience	Tape one video per month.	Ongoing	PEERS videos in Feb / Mar RA videos to start in April
Disability Credentialing Program	Lead credentialing program for UUA congregations	Field test continues	Field test continues successfully	Field test sites turning in their initial evals
Preaching style	Retained the help of a preaching coach. Great results so far.	Coaching through June.	Style continues to improve.	Lots of positive comments after coaching.
Spiritual Direction	Continue to grow Spiritual Direction practice. Presentation on Spiritual Direction at District Assembly	On-going		
Long term possibilities				
Plan for sabbatical	Plan for ministerial sabbatical of 6 months	Probably in 2016 after Nate is in kindergarten	Create possible scenarios by Dec 2014	