

Community Ministry Status

For the Ministry of Rev. Barbara F. Meyers

December 2013

Status of ministry since last Report

Notes of Particular Importance

Joys

- High-lights
 1. Interfaith Counseling Center. Held six Board meetings. Grant requests in process.
 2. UU Congregational Disability Certification Program. Handbook now at the field test congregations and field tests are underway. UUA paid for an administrator.
 3. Short story-oriented videos – Funder will fund 3 more videos this year. Decided to produce additional videos with my own equipment
- Working with another UU on creating an on-line version of my Caring Congregation curriculum.
- 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

Challenges

- Keeping from being over committed. Sometimes this is easier than others.

Education

Classes, Conferences and Seminars Taken and Planned

- Webinar on *Non-Suicidal Self Injury in Youth* by Ministries and Faith Development, UUA. Nov 4, 2013. Good discussion of what motivates self-injury, the signs to watch for, what to ask, how to educate youth.
- Working with another UU on creating an on-line curriculum of my Caring Congregation curriculum.

Healing

Counseling Center

- Held first six Board meetings. Increased religious diversity of the board with Muslim participants.
- Developed and submitted 501 c 3 non-profit application to the IRS. IRS notification expected in fall 2014.
- Chalice Lighter Grant proposal to the PCD was not awarded. At their request, have resubmitted the grant proposal.

Reaching Across

Continued compensated job at Reaching Across organization, for quarter-time work. Attend Monday support group meetings, two Interfaith Support Groups per 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 planned activities are:

- October: Activity was cancelled due to my brother's death and will be rescheduled in February.
- November: Update Referral List - Done
- December: Christmas Gift Wrap for John George Mental Hospital - Done
- January: Yoga for depression and anxiety led by Janelle
- February: Trip to the Exploratorium which has a special exhibit on Mental Health. Also Mental Health Movie Night. Watch "Phoebe in Wonderland" with a discussion about Tourette's.
- March: Possible joint forum with IDC committee on CIT – Crisis Intervention Training for Police in the Tri Cities *Violence* after church.
- April: Ohlone College Suicide Prevention Walk - publicize and participate
- April: Rev. Meyers to give a sermon on ADHD. Mary Ann Davis to do homily.
- 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.
- November 10, 2013–Worship Service: "Jesus the Revolutionary." Have been told that this was my best sermon ever. Many thanks to my preaching coach.

Social Justice

Community Awareness

- Last year, nine short "focused story" videos appeared on YouTube, to universally positive acclaim. This year, funder will produce 3 more videos.
- I have obtained equipment to start production of my own YouTube videos. Will start in the New Year.
- *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.
- Invited to visit the Sausal Creek Stabilization Facility in Oakland on December 14, to talk about mental health, spirituality and religion with the staff. Was very impressed with the staff there.

UUA Accessibility Group

- Leading effort to create a congregational disability accessibility certification program. 9 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.equalaccess.org.

UUA Addictions Ministry

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

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

- *Double Double – A Dual Memoir of Alcoholism*, by Martha Grimes and her son Ken Grimes, Scribner, 2013. Frank and painful story of alcoholism of well-known mystery writer Martha Grimes and drug abuse and alcoholism of her son Ken. They have been now sober for many years. I ended up not liking either one of them, even though they are brutally honest.
- *American Prometheus – The Triumph and Tragedy of J. Robert Oppenheimer* by Kai Bird and Martin J. Sherwin, Vintage 2007. A tour-de-force study of Oppenheimer, his personality and genius. Highly recommended for history, biography, and science buffs.
- *A Good Telling – Bringing Worship to Life with Story* by Kristin Maier, Skinner House Books, 2013. Excellent resource for how to tell a story to a congregation.
- *The Lives They Left Behind – Suitcases from a State Hospital Attic* by Darby Penny and Peter Stastny, Bellevue Literary Press, 2008. Willard Psychiatric Center in New York was for 126 years a long-term-care mental hospital. When it, and closed in 1995 hundreds of suitcases of former residents were found in its attic. This book tells the stories of 9 of these patients. The Exploratorium contains an exhibit from these suitcases. One chapter explains that some things have not changed so much since then. Heartbreaking.
- *Devil in the Grove – Thurgood Marshall, the Groveland Boys, and the Dawn of New America*, by Gilbert King, Harper Perennial, 2013. Riveting story of four young black men falsely convicted of rape in rural Florida in the early 1950's. They were beaten, two of them killed, and the others sentenced to die in highly flawed trials. Thurgood Marshall in his role as NAACP legal counsel defended them. When the sentences were commuted by the newly elected Florida governor, it was widely recognized as a signal that things had changed in the south and in the country.
- *Gracefully Insane – Life and Death Inside America's Premier Mental Hospital*, by Alex Beam, Public Affairs, 2003. The story of McLean's Hospital, first opened in 1817, the psychiatric hospital that specialized in caring for the most affluent of clients. The book has stories of many prominent patients in a venue of landscaped gardens, tennis courts, golf course, room service and a riding stable.
- *The Bell Jar*, by Sylvia Plath, Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2005. Original publication in 1963. I don't know why I haven't read this sooner; it is a wonderfully written book about a young woman who is seriously depressed, makes a suicide attempt, and then gets better. Hopeful and realistic, it is semi-autobiographical. Tragically Plath herself died by suicide shortly after the book was published.
- *Ignorance is Blitz – Mangled Moments of History from Actual College Students* by Anders Henriksson, Workman Publishing Company, 2008. This book is so funny that I had to put it down to stop laughing.
- *The Everything Store – Jeff Bezos and the Age of Amazon*, by Brad Stone, Little Brown 2013. Well reported story of Amazon.com. Was put off by ruthless behavior by Jeff Bezos.
- *A Different Outlook on Bipolar Disorder – Ups and downs to Buddha State*, by Benjamin Nemopode, 2012. Authentic, somewhat incoherent ramblings of a man who is bipolar.

Personal

- Death of my brother Douglas in late September affected me personally with much sadness. I lost about a month
- 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 Quarry Lakes on Dec 14, 2013 and got first place in my age group.

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.

2013 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 2013	SKSM workshop taken
Attend GA	GA in June	June 2013	Event attended	Attended GA as a chaplain
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 and CASRA conferences
Help in starting new counseling center	Attend meetings as member of the board of the new center	Throughout 2013	New center is created.	Attending meetings. See progress.
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	Have taped 9 videos. Will tape 3 more this year
Disability Credentialing Program	Lead credentialing program for UUA congregations	Time line established. Field test by June 2013	Program created	Handbook complete. Field test sites in operation
Preaching style	Retained the help of a preaching coach. Great results so far.	Coaching through next June.	Style continues to improve.	“Best sermon ever”: unsolicited feedback.
Spiritual Direction	Continue to grow Spiritual Direction practice	On-going		
Long term possibilities				
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.	