

Community Ministry Status

For the Ministry of Rev. Barbara F. Meyers

December 2014

Status of ministry since last Report

Notes of Particular Importance

Joys

- High-lights
 1. Moved in to Connections interfaith counseling center's building at 39055 Hasting Street, Suite 106! Lots of hard work. Starting to see clients. More hard work to do...
 2. UU Congregational disability certification program will be called the Accessible and Inclusion Ministry, or AIM for short. Starting to create web pages for announcement in June.
 3. Short story-oriented videos lost funding, seeing new funder.
- Helping care for my grandson Nathaniel (Natey) King one day a week, new grandson expected in January
- Excited about the UUMA program in Entrepreneurial Ministry which starts January 29 – February 1 at Asilomar.
- Exercise schedule going well.

Challenges

- My Dad has been quite ill and I've been a primary family contact and frequent visitor. He has been doing better in recent weeks.
- Keeping from being over committed. Sometimes this is easier than others.

Education

Classes, Conferences and Seminars Taken and Planned

- Attended *The Spirituality Factor Conference* in Oakland, and served on a panel describing the importance of spirituality in helping heal from mental health problems. October 9-10.
- Attended the PCD UUMA Fall Minister's Retreat in Petaluma, October 17-19.
- Attended the PCD Leadership Day at the Unitarian Church of Berkeley in Kensington, October 25.

Healing

Counseling Center

- Held monthly Board meetings, and many more working meetings. Moved into building!
- Applied for \$18,000 grant from Kaiser, but it was not chosen to be funded
- Engaged in a contract with 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.

Mental Health Committee

November – Plan was to solicit new referrals from MPUUC and Reaching Across for therapists, psychiatrists, and other programs. Did not do it.

December – Plan was to participate in the NAMI Christmas gift wrap at John George. Cancelled due to storm

Plans are:

January – Jointly with NAMI, hold a NAMI forum for church members and the community to tell what NAMI chapters in Alameda County are doing – Unsure whether we can pull this off.

February – Movie Night – A movie about PTSD with a panel discussion afterward

March – Barbara gives a sermon on PTSD, inviting a testimonial from a consumer

April – Publicize the Ohlone College Suicide Walk

May – Publicize and participate in the NAMI Walk in San Francisco

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 finished their second year of preliminary fellowship.
- Serving as informal mentor and spiritual director to a prospective mental health community minister in the Washington DC area.

Spiritual Direction

- Will be a Spiritual Director at Connections.
- Have one spiritual direction client. This is very fulfilling work for me.

Priestly

- None

Social Justice

Community Awareness

- Continued production of YouTube videos using my own equipment. Series is entitled: “Faces of Hope and Resilience.” Funding from Reaching Across budget was turned off. Searching for new funding.
- *Mental Health Matters* Public Access TV has ceased production. Some reruns are being shown.
- 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 to be called the Accessibility and Inclusion Ministry (AIM). 8 Field Test congregations now have the handbook. UUA administrator resigned and we have advertised for a new one.
- 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

- 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

- *Restored to Sanity – Essays on the Twelve Steps by Unitarian Universalists*, edited by Ken and Cathlean, Skinner House Books, 2014. For each of the 12 steps in the Alcoholics Anonymous program, two UU's give their experiences with that step and its importance to their lives. Very moving.
- *Blessed are the Crazy – Breaking the Silence about Mental Illness, Family and Church*, by Rev. Sarah Griffith Lund, Chalice Press, 2014. Brutally honest story about the family of the author who had many mentally ill members. A clear eyed look at what faith and church can and can't do for people with mental illness. Example: "Faith cannot cure mental illness, because mental illness is not a sin that can be washed away by the blood of Jesus. But faith can carry the cross and bear the burden of mental illness. Faith can move us into knowing God's presence in the midst of pain."
- *Radical Compassion – Authors on the Faith of Boundless Love*, Shambala Publications, 2014. A collection of essays from noted spiritual leaders on the subject of Compassion. A little too esoteric for me.
- *Melissa – A Father's Lessons from a Daughter's Suicide*, by Frank Page with Lawrence Kimbrough, BH Publishing Group, 2013. Frank Page is the president and CEO of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee. The book is about his daughter Melissa's suicide. Short on story and long on conservative Christian theology. Yet it is a great comfort to fellow conservative Christians.
- *Serving those with Mental Illness*, by Ed Stetzer, Jared Pingleton, and Donald Graber, M.D, Focus on the Family publication 2014. Overview of mental illness and how Christians can be counseled using the Bible. Also advises to get professional help.
- *Brain on Fire – My Month of Madness*, by Susannah Cahalan, Free Press, 2012. Autobiographical account of a woman with anti-NMDA receptor encephalitis, a disease where her immune system attacked her brain cells. Many of her symptoms of psychosis, paranoia, and hallucinations were similar to schizophrenia, yet she completely recovered after she was correctly diagnoses. This leads her to speculate that some psych patients are misdiagnosed as she initially was. Fascinating!
- *Kitchen Table Wisdom – Stories that Heal*, by Rachel Naomi Remen, M.D., Riverhead Books, 1994. Re-read this wonderful book of collected stories from Dr. Rachel Remen's experience with counseling patients who were very ill with cancer. Lots of wisdom for us all.
- *Bringing Down the House - The Inside Story of Six M.I.T. Students Who Took Vegas for Millions*, by Ben Mezrich, Free Press, 2002 The true story of M.I.T. students who devise a system to win at playing Black Jack without cheating. It is wildly successful until the casinos catch on.
- *The Stonecutter*, by Camilla Läckberg, translated in 2013. Mystery story originally written in Swedish, great in character development and in plot twists. Loved it.
- *The Ice Princess*, by Camilla Läckberg, The Free Press, translated in 2011. Läckberg's first mystery. A real page-turner, or should I say Kindle-clicker.
- *The Preacher*, by Camilla Läckberg, The Free Press, translated in 2012. I seem to be addicted to Läckberg's mysteries. This one is about a fake faith-healer.

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.

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	Attended GA virtually. Not very effective.
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. Attended and spoke at <i>The Spirituality Factor</i> Conference in October 2014.
Help in starting new counseling center	Attend meetings as member of the board of the new center	Throughout 2014	New center is created.	Center has its own building and has started operations!
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	Behind 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 complete. RA videos started in April, ended in Nov.
Disability Credentialing Program	Lead credentialing program for UUA congregations	Field test continues	Field test continues successfully	Field test sites turning in their plans. Name chosen for program: AIM.
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	Don't know when	Create possible scenarios by Dec 2014	New baby complicates timing of sabbatical.