

Community Ministry Advisory Committee
For the Ministry of Rev. Barbara Meyers

March 2007 AGENDA

Status of ministry since last meeting

Education

Caring Congregation

- A group of mostly UU Chicago-area congregations is arranging me to train about 20 trainers how to lead Caring Congregation classes in their churches November. The UUA Grant will cover some of the expenses. The Central Midwest UU District office is organizing the training.
- The Palo Alto Presbyterian church has engaged me to teach the Caring Congregation at their congregation starting in April. I will use this opportunity to make the curriculum ecumenical.
- A Maryland Presbyterian church is going to use the curriculum as a basis for classes they will be teaching in March. I will help them customize the lessons for their purposes.

Classes and Seminars Given

- Led 6-week class on Understanding the New Testament at Mission Peak UU.

Classes and Seminars Taken

- “Spirituality and Mental Illness” online 2-week seminar Feb 12-13, 2007 offered by the Wayne E. Oates Institute. Made some good contacts among religious professionals working in mental health situations.
- Participated in on-line conference calls organized by US Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
 - Jan 17, 2007. “National Anti-Stigma Campaign Media Outreach” Excellent presentations on running a media campaign.
 - Feb 7, 2007 “Building Partnerships That Work” Presentations on stigma programs that have been effective “Small-Scale Intervention”, the “Stamp out Stigma” presentations in San Francisco, and the “In Our Own Voice” program from NAMI.

Education Effort Begun

- With the Consumer Affairs Director of Alameda County Behavioral Healthcare, began an effort to educate county administration of the importance of religious faith to recovery from mental illness. This effort includes representatives of other faith traditions and is just beginning.

Healing

Reaching Across

- Continue working about quarter time at Reaching Across organization. A recent increase in their funding has allowed me to be compensated at a higher rate than was done before.

Support Groups

- Continued co-leading new interfaith support group for people with depression and sadness. The group has gotten several new members in recent weeks and now “has traction.” Arranged for more publicity for this group via an article and ad in the monthly “Families Advocate” published by the Alameda Country Mental Health Association.
- Continued to recommend support group for families of those with mental illness. Have gotten feedback that this has been helpful

Pastoral Associates

- Will continue being chair of Pastoral Associates until new replacement(s) identified.
- Continue to prepare training materials for Pastoral Associates
- Made several visits to congregational members with mental health problems, at home and in the hospital.

Priestly

- Led service on January 7 service on “Humility. Had many people ask for copies of the sermon. It is posted on line on the MPUUC web site.

Social Justice

Joined Alameda County Mental Health Services Act Planning Council

This is a group of community stakeholders that meets quarterly and gives advisory oversight on the evaluation and implementation of the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA Proposition 63) in Alameda County. The group reviews the MHSA program portfolio, recommends budgetary actions, and prioritizes new programs. The first meeting was on January 25, 2007.

MPUUC Social Justice Area

Community Awareness

- Mental Health pages on MPUUC web site continue to be widely accessed.
- Taped an anti-stigma program for on community access television.
 - A joint effort by people from the Alameda County Mental Health Public Awareness Committee, the MPUUC mental health committee, the Fremont Alliance for a Hate-Free Community and Alameda County’s NAMI chapter.
 - The show will be marketed to community access TV stations for May Mental Health Month.
 - Plan to tape one show using the experienced crew from another show and then decide whether to make more programs.

Anti Stigma Effort

- Attended monthly meetings of the Public Awareness Committee of the Mental Health Board.
- The community access TV program (above) has been planned with them.

UUA Accessibility Committee

- Attended UUA’s Accessibility Committee meeting in January in Detroit. Presented a draft of a denominational policy on mental health. It was passed unanimously and has been sent to the UUA Board of Trustees for action. The committee went beyond voting to establish this policy; we stated that mental health should be a competency area for future ministers to demonstrate when appearing before the Ministerial Fellowship Committee, the credentialing body for UU ministers. We will prepare some study questions for candidates to prepare for this competency. I am thrilled about this. We still have to see what the Board of Trustees will do, but I'm still thrilled.

UU Mental Health Chat forum

- UU email chat list for people interested in a UU mental health ministry has been set up.

Books Read

- *Spirituality and Religion in Recovery from Mental Illness*, Roger D. Fallot, Ed., New Directions for Mental Health Services, Jossey-Bass Publishers, Number 80, Winter 1998. Excellent collection of articles about the importance of religion in recovery from mental illness.

- *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, by Mark Haddon. New York: Vintage Contemporaries, 2003. A mystery written as a first person account by a boy with Asperger's Disorder. A fascinating look at the thinking of someone with Asperger's.
- *Dancing with Bipolar Bears*, by James McReynolds, iUniverse.com, 2003. A first-person account of a Baptist minister who becomes bi-polar and devotes his lifetime to serving people with mental disorders.
- *The Devil in the White City*, by Erik Larson, New York: Vintage, 2003. About the Chicago World's Fair in 1893, heavy in psychological profiles of the builders, an early psychopath and a deranged man. A true story which is a study in greed, ambition, pride and madness.
- *The New Social Face of Buddhism – A Call to Action*, by Ken Jones, Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2003. How Buddhism is relevant to current social issues.
- *The Parable of the Sower*, by Octavia E. Butler, New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 1993. The journey of a woman who feels the pain of others living in 2025 in a dehumanized civilization. A gruesome, depressing story, and example of process theology by a UU author.
- Several books about Guatemala and weaving: *Maya of Guatemala*, *The Maya Textile Tradition*, *A Century of Change in Guatemalan Textiles*, *Guatemalan Backstrap Weaving*

Collegial / Personal

- Took 11 day vacation to Guatemala with 60 other weavers!

Other

- Met with Community Ministry Advisory Committee every quarter
- Chaired MPUUC Mental Health Committee which meets every 6-8 weeks
- Met with Committee on Ministry from MPUUC monthly
- Met with mentor Rev. Dave Sammons every 4-6 weeks
- Met with other UU community ministers every 2 months
- Met with Tri-Cities Interfaith Association every month

Upcoming activities

Education

- Plan for Community Ministry workshop at Starr King School for the Ministry in spring
- Will teach 6-week version of the Caring Congregation curriculum at Palo Alto Presbyterian Church in the spring. Will use this as an opportunity to make it more ecumenical, a long-term goal.

Healing

- Continue being chair of Pastoral Associates until replacement(s) on board.
- Continue work at Reaching Across

Priestly

- Participate in worship planning

Social Justice

- Continue to speak as part of a Alameda County Anti-Stigma Speakers Bureau.
- Work on community access television show

Collegial / Personal

- Keep learning to manage stress level, weight and exercise

Development Plan

- Continuing education:
 - Reading books and journal articles and take one or two classes a year.
 - Mental health seminars / conventions: Concentrate on state and local events
- Long term:
 - Possible training as a Spiritual Director: Shalem Institute or Mercy Center
 - Possible D. Min. at Pacific School of Religion

2007 Development Plan

| Area | Plans | Time line | Measurement | Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Continuing education: | | | | |
| Take one or two classes a year | Investigate classes to take in the next year | Identify class by March 1 | Take class by December 07 | Seminar: Spirit. & mental illness |
| Attend GA and district assemblies. | DA in April and GA in June | April 2007 June 2007 | Events attended | Plan to attend Plan to attend |
| Attend Mental health seminars / conventions | Attend at least one local / state mental health convention in next year | Choose by March 1 | Attended by Dec. 2007 | TBD |
| Areas for growth in the next 2 yrs: | | | | |
| Strengthen the new mental health support groups | Work on advertising, reaching possible local and interfaith audiences | Plan evaluated/ developed by March 2007 | More people come and stay in groups | Some improvement seen in 4Q06 |
| Continue working on preaching style | Work with preaching professor and drama coach | As speaking engagements show up | Style continues to improve. | Continue to get excellent help from Knuti van Hoven |
| Increase support and growth of Caring Congregation curriculum | Set into action self-sustaining structure. Conduct more teach-the-teachers. Develop intersession / intensive version of the course. | Carry out self-sustaining structure | Structure set up and used and evaluated. | In process |
| Long term development plan possibilities: | | | | |
| Possibly become a Spiritual Director | Check out programs at Shalem Institute and Mercy Center | At least 2 years away | Investigate program and decide when to use | Programs investigated. |
| Possible D.Min. at Pacific School of Religion | Understand requirements for the program at PSR | At least 2 years away | Make a decision by Dec 2007 whether to pursue DMin. | Requirements understood. |