

Community Ministry Status

For the Ministry of Rev. Barbara F. Meyers

March 2009

Status of ministry since last Report

Education

Classes and Seminars Given

- I led a workshop on January 24 at the Los Gatos congregation to educate their pastoral care team about mental health.
- Led a 2-part class at MPUUC on *Self Care*.
- Prepared training for monthly Pastoral Associates meetings.
- Congregations and Organizations are starting to use Mental Health Matters videos for education:
 - The UU Church of Worcester, MA is using the Mental Health Matters video on Anxiety as part of a mental health education program.
 - The UU church in Hartford, Connecticut will be using Mental Health Matters video on Alzheimer's to start out teaching about mental health in their congregation, supplementing it with a local speaker.
 - Chair of Alameda County Mental Health Board will use the Mental Health Matters video on First Psychotic Break as education for Mental Health Board members to teach them what psychosis is and how it affects families.
- Hartford, Connecticut UU congregation is planning a trip for me to train several congregations
- **Status of Prior Problem:** Disappointed at how training of ministers is going.
 - My workshop on "Embracing Mental Health Issues in Our Ministries" was accepted for CONVO in Ottawa in November, a large UU ministers Association retreat. This is a very important opportunity to get the message out.
 - Wrote a short document: Mental Health Information for Ministers which has brief descriptions of the major mental disorders with specific suggestions of what a minister can do. Several ministers are reviewing it for me. I intend to give it to any minister who wants it.

Classes, Conferences and Seminars Taken and Planned

- Attended web training from SAMHSA on *Promoting Acceptance and Social Inclusion for People with Mental Health Problems in the Workplace*, on January 27.
- I plan to attend a state-wide mental health / spirituality conference in June 1-2 at the Marriott, 1001 Broadway in Oakland City Center. Submitted a paper on Ministerial Education to the conference.
- I plan to attend NAMI's National Convention in San Francisco July 6-9.

Retreats Attended

- Attended a retreat at San Damiano Retreat Center Feb 24-25 on "The Experiential Model of Learning" for Unitarian Universalist ministers in the Pacific Central District.
- Attended MPUUC Annual Retreat "Come Back to Nature" March 20-22 Monte-Toyon retreat center.

Healing

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

- Continue to prepare training materials for Pastoral Associates at the monthly meetings. Made several calls/visits to congregational members, at home and in hospital.

Mental Health Committee

- Made arrangements to sponsor an autobiographical play by Gail Marlene Schwartz called *Crazy: One Woman's Search for Sanity* to be shown on April 18. It is being presented on a pro bono basis.
- NAMI Walk will have a group from MPUUC walking. Made a faith endorsement for NAMI Walk.

Priestly

- Worship leader on March 29 on the subject of "We Are the Ones We've Been Waiting For"
- Worship associate on January 11, Feb 15.
- Attended monthly Pastoral Associates meetings, and prepared training for each meeting.
- Continued being a mentor to a UU community minister in preliminary fellowship. Monthly meetings.
- Made plans for 7 of us ministers to visit SKSM and talk about community ministry in early April. Compiled a comprehensive document about community ministry for that meeting. May make this available more widely after the meeting.

Social Justice

Community Awareness

- *Mental Health Matters* Public Access TV Show
 - Taped shows on: Byron Williams – Building a Meaningful Life in January, Grief in February and Mental Health of Older Adults in March.
 - Topics for the next shows are: Alternative Mental Health Care, and Latino Community
 - Shows continue to be broadcast throughout Alameda County on Comcast TV as well as being available from anywhere on the internet.
 - **Status of Previous Problem:** viewership of newer shows is dropping off.
 - Made list of contacts in organizations
 - Made list of contacts at educational institutions
 - Strategy: Contact people I know first. So far,
 - NAMI Alameda Co. put an article about the show in their newsletter and will put in monthly blurbs when each show is produced.
 - PCD said they didn't want to do anything more often than every 9 months.
 - Byron Williams wrote a feature editorial about my TV show for his syndicated column
- Mental Health pages on MPUUC web site continue to be widely accessed.

Resigned from Alameda County Mental Health Services Act Planning Council

I resigned from this Planning Council after reviewing how to spend my precious time. I can still attend meetings as a member of the public if there are particular issues that I am interested in. Earlier, the Workforce Education and Training piece of the MHSA for Alameda was created, approved, went to public review, and will go to the State for approval this month.

UUA Accessibility Group

- Helped to create the website for the new UU accessibility group *Equal Access*. Take a look at: www.equalaccess.org
- Mental Health Caucus under the auspices of Equal Access. Status: we have started monthly conference calls, writing mission statements and prioritizing activities.

Other

Books Read

- *Van Gogh and God – A Creative Spiritual Quest*, by Cliff Edwards, Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1989. This fascinating book follows Van Gogh's religious path from Calvinist, to liberal Christianity, and finally to the influence of Buddhism and other eastern religions on his work.
- *Replay*, by Ken Grimwood, New York: Harper, 1986. This is a story about a man who dies and wakes up as a college freshman with his life to live over. This replay happens several times, each time with him learning more about how to live a life.
- *Henri Nouwen and Soul Care - A Ministry of Integration*, by Wil Hernandez, New York: Paulist Press, 2008. I have always admired Henri Nouwen, a Dutch Priest who lived his last years as a chaplain in a house for mentally ill people. In this book, I was delighted and surprised to find that articulated a personal theology very similar to mine. He called it a "tripolar spirituality" having three dimensions: inwardly directed, upwardly compliant and outwardly committed. I have always described mine as seeing the divine within each person, between people, and transcendent.
- *Henri Nouwen – A Spirituality of Imperfection*, by Wil Hernandez, New York: Paulist Press, 2006. More on Henri Nouwen and his view that one achieves wholeness through brokenness, something that I, too, deeply believe.
- *The Lemon Tree – An Arab, a Jew and the heart of the Middle East*, by Sandy Tolan, New York: Bloomsbury, 2006. The true story of a Palestinian whose family was evicted during the Israeli war for independence and the Israeli woman whose family moved into their home. These two met after they became adults and formed a meaningful friendship that opened each others eyes to the experiences and truths in the stories of each other's peoples.
- *Three Cups of Tea – One Man's Mission to Promote Peace... One School at a Time*, by Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin, New York: Penguin, 2006. American Greg Mortenson has single-handedly managed against all odds to build many schools, mostly for girls, in remote areas of Afghanistan and Pakistan. His book tells how he came to do this work and persevered against all odds. It was recently studied by many book reading groups in Fremont who were rewarded by a visit by Mortenson, himself, which I and my daughter were able to attend.
- *The Center Cannot Hold – My Journey Through Madness*, by Elyn R. Saks, New York: Hyperion, 2007. The remarkable story of Saks who, despite having schizophrenia, has been able to become a tenured member of the USC Law School. The central lesson is that she has found a richly satisfying life, and that she wants to give hope to others.
- *The Quiet Room – A Journey Out of the Torment of Madness* by Lori Schiller and Amanda Bennett. New York: Warner Books, 1994. This is a harrowing tale of a young woman's descent into schizophrenia and her successful attempt after years of hospitalizations to finally get some control over her life. A very realistic depiction, it doesn't pull any punches.
- *The Day the Voices Stopped – A Memoir of Madness and Hope* by Ken Steele and Claire Berman, New York: Basic Books, 2001. The life story of Ken Steele who began hearing voices at age 14 and was diagnosed with schizophrenia. Abandoned by his family when he was 18, he went through a myriad of hospitals, half-way houses, and treatments until the medication Risperdol finally silenced the voices when he was 47.
- *The Blood of the Lamb* by Peter de Vries. Boston: Little, Brown, 1961. A novel about a man who loses his faith as a child when his brother dies, and tries to recover it in manhood when his daughter dies of leukemia.
- *The Alchemist*, by Paulo Coelho, translated by Alan R. Clarke, New York: HarperOne, 1993. This is a classic tale of a boy who seeks his treasure afar and after a meaningful search, finds it close to home. The theme is that each person must find and follow his or her Personal Legend and that "Wherever your heart is, there you will find your treasure."

Personal

- Need to continually work at life balance and stress management. Taught a class in self-care to help me learn this.

- My computer died in January and I got a new one HP 64-bit running Windows Vista. Thanks to an excellent backup system, I didn't lose any files or email. But, it still took several days to get everything I wanted to be installed. I realize how dependent I am on a computer for running my life.
- Weaving. New wave design finished!
- I have tentatively decided to pursue a certificate in Spiritual Direction from the Chaplaincy Institute in Berkeley. It would start next summer and have 4 weeks of classes, 1 week per quarter, for a year.

Other

- Met with Community Ministry Advisory Committee every quarter
- Chaired MPUUC Mental Health Committee which meets every 6-8 weeks
- Attended MPUUC Board meetings in August, September, and October.
- Served as secretary to the Tri Cities Interfaith Council at its monthly meetings.

2009 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	Ongoing- Identify classes	Take classes by December 09	
Attend GA and district assemblies.	DA in April and GA in June	April 2009 June 2009	Events attended	Plans made
Attend Mental health seminars / conventions	Attend at least one local / state mental health convention in next year	Choose by March 1	Attended by Dec. 2009	Registered in: NAMI Conv. in SF July 6-9 Spirituality Conv. June 1-2
Areas for growth in the next 2 yrs:				
Continue producing TV program	Work on developing education using DVDs	Identify possible users of programs	People using DVDs for education	Some churches starting to use them
Continue working on preaching style	Work with preaching professor and drama coach	As speaking engagements show up	Style continues to improve.	
Develop minister's guide to mental health and make it available	Make plan for teaching ministers	Planned to start in April 2009	Notification of ministers and evaluation of usage.	Preliminary version of Guide developed and in review.
Long term development plan possibilities:				
Possibly become a Spiritual Director	Chaplaincy Inst. Spiritual Director Program	Maybe start June 2009	Enroll in and start program	