

Community Ministry Status

For the Ministry of Rev. Barbara F. Meyers

June 2011

Status of ministry since last Report

Notes of Particular Importance

- **Joys**
 - Helping care for my grandson Nathaniel King one day a week
 - Participating in Jeremy Nickel's ordination
 - Following my visits last year, Port Townsend, WA and Golden, CO congregations now have active mental health ministries
 - Working with a media consultant to make TV show more professional
 - Workshops given at Mount Diablo UU, and to Iroquois UUMA/LREDA chapters
- **Challenges**
 - Learning the wisdom of how and when to say no - Getting better at it!

Education

Classes and Seminars Given

- Led a mental health workshop at the Mount Diablo UU Church on February 5 with 20 people attending. Very well received.
- Led a 3-day workshop on Mental Health and Congregations at the Iroquois chapter of the UUMA and LREDA at White Eagle retreat center near Ithaca, New York. Very well received. I especially liked having the DREs as members of the class.
- Gave a talk on "*Healing*" as part of Washington Hospital's *Celebration of Life for Cancer Survivors* event on May 12. I talked about how curing, a medical concept, is different from healing, which is more spiritual.
- Gave a presentation *A Conversation about Congregational Policy on Alcohol Use* at the PCD District Assembly on May 14. Gave the same presentation as part of a panel at the UU General Assembly on June 23. It was well received both times.
- Was part of a presentation to 25 faith leaders teaching about mental health and what the role of a faith leader is. This was organized by the Alameda County Behavioral Healthcare System as part of their community education program.

Classes, Conferences and Seminars Taken and Planned

- Completed Starr King School for the Ministry class *Mental Health and Oppression in the US* taught on-line by a friend of mine from seminary. An excellent class with a perspective and readings that I hadn't been fully exposed to. What I learned was developed into a sermon.
- Participated in a SAMHSA ADS Center Training Teleconference - *Obesity in America: Putting Strategies into Practice in the Worksite* on April 21, 2011. Stressed how managing weight involves many aspects of life.
- Participated in NARSAD Webinar *How Do Genes Cause Mental Illness?* by researcher Dr. Daniel Weinberger, *Director of Genes, Cognition and Psychosis Program National Institute of Mental Health*, May 23, 2011. Explained how complex the relationship between genes and schizophrenia.
- Participated in Webinar organized by CLUE (Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice) and Faith Rooted.org, *Labor and Christianity: What Would Jesus Do in Madison Wisconsin? How can faith and labor work together...* June 3, 2011. Stories and tactics for getting justice for workers from a faith perspective.

- Participated in webinar *How to Have a Conversation with God*, by Neale Donald Walsch on June 8, 2011. Interesting discussion about connecting to God within. Also a pitch for an on-line class.
- Submitted a proposal for a 1-day intensive class at Starr King School for the Ministry 2013-2014 year entitled Mental Health & Pastoral Care.
- Participated in NARSAD Webinar by Joseph Coyle, MD, *Development and Pharmacological Treatment of Schizophrenia*

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

- Prepared training materials on “*End of Life Issues*” for Pastoral Associates at their monthly meeting.
- Helped out visiting people in nursing homes and hospitals as part of the PA program.

Mental Health Committee

- Had a successful mental health movie night on June 4 to show *It’s Kind of a Funny Story*. We showed the movie and had a discussion afterwards.
- Participated in the NAMI Walk in May.

Spiritual Direction

- Joined the UU Spiritual Directors Network www.uusdn.org. No customers yet.

Priestly

- Worship leader on May 8 in Humboldt County on the subject of “Mother’s Day for Mother Earth.”
- Worship leader on May 29 at MPUUC on “Mental Illness and Oppression”.
- Participated in annual Holocaust Remembrance Service on May 1st Temple Beth Torah.
- Participated in planning and in ceremony Jeremy Nickel’s ordination – a joyous day!

Social Justice

Community Awareness

- *Mental Health Matters* Public Access TV Show
 - Taped shows on “*LGBT*” in April, “*Emotional CPR*” with world-famous psychiatrist/former schizophrenia patient Dr. Daniel Fisher in May and “*Suicide*” in June. .
 - P.E.E.R.S. continue to tape a second show each month for Mental Health Matters. Shannon Eliot, their co-producer taped two shows on housing for people with mental health problems in June
 - Shows continue to be broadcast throughout Alameda County on Comcast TV as well as being available from anywhere on the internet.
 - With P.E.E.R.S. began an effort with a media consultant to make the show more professional with the aim of making the show gain a wider audience.
- Mental Health pages on MPUUC web site continue to be widely accessed.

UUA Accessibility Group

- Leader of the Mental Health Caucus under the auspices of Equal Access. Led a 3-day meeting in New York for 5 UUs who are mental health leaders to plot our strategy over the next 5 years and

beyond. Very successful – lots of bonding, fun and work of substance. We are now having monthly phone conferences with the leadership team.

- Continued to maintain the website for the new UU accessibility group *Equal Access*. Take a look at www.equualaccess.org
- Chair of the Policies committee for Equal Access, collected policies for each of the disabilities and identified who would be the recipients of these policies within the UUA administration. Document out for review among members of Equal Access and interested others.

UUA Addictions Ministry

- As member of the UUA Addictions Ministry, got their website set up with initial content: www.uuaddictionsministry.org.
- Developed a draft *Alcohol Use Policy* for MPUUC and participated with the MPUUC Board in revising it and getting it passed. What I learned doing it was the basis of a presentation at the Pacific Central District Assembly and at a UU General Assembly workshop.

Other

Books Read

- *Trials of the Visionary Mind- Spiritual Emergence and the Renewal Process* by John Wier Perry, SUNY Press, 1999. This book talks about the philosophy behind Diabasis an organization that used alternate approach to psychosis by regarding it as a spiritual passage from 1977-1979. Some of the descriptions of the psychotic experiences were eerily similar to mine – i.e. visions of death and rebirth. I always hoped I'd find a book some day to describe what I went through, and this is it.
- *Soteria- Through Madness to Deliverance*, by Loren Mosher and Voyce Hendrix with Deborah C. Fort, 2004. The story of an organization that existed between 1971-1983, that took people in their first psychotic break and listened to them in their altered states of consciousness with little or no medication.
- *Eat, Pray, Love- One Woman's Search for Everything Across Italy, India and Indonesia*, by Elizabeth Gilbert, Penguin Books, 2006. Funny and poignant book about Liz Gilbert's search for what really matters in life. Also read Gilbert's follow on book *Committed: A Love Story* which was about the institution of marriage but it wasn't nearly as good.
- *Gifts of Imperfection – Let go of Who You Think You're Supposed to Be and Embrace Who You Are* by Brené Brown, PhD, Hazelden Press, 2010. How to cultivate authenticity, compassion, resilience, gratitude, intuition, faith, creativity, calmness, meaning, laughter, song and dance. And what gets in their way: perfectionism, scarcity, certainty, exhaustion, anxiety, and caring what others think.
- *Prisoner of Liberté – Story of a Transylvanian Martyr*, by Judit Gellérd, Uniquist, 2003. Judit Gellérd, a physician and an ordained Unitarian minister, is the founder of the partner church program which creates partnerships between Transylvanian Unitarians and UU Congregations in the US. This is the story of her father Imre Gellérd a Transylvanian Unitarian minister who was imprisoned unjustly and brutally treated by the Communists and who later killed himself because he thought he would be imprisoned again. A very sad story.
- *Is Nothing Sacred –When Sex Invades the Pastoral Relationship*, by Marie M. Fortune, HarperCollins, 1992. Sobering true story of a minister who sexually abused, and how the congregation dealt with the problem.
- *Never in My Wildest Dreams – A Black Woman's Life in Journalism* by Belva Davis with Vicki Haddock, PoliPointPress 2011. The story of Belva Davis, an African American San Francisco news woman and the challenges she faced as one of the first black people in the news business. That she was able to overcome so many obstacles – abusive upbringing, lack of education, prejudice – and prevail is very inspiring and hope-giving.
- *In the Garden of Beasts – Love, Terror, and an American Family in Hitler's Berlin* by Erik Larson.
- *Poems for Being* by Jonathan M. Bernard, 2011. Jonathan is diagnosed with schizophrenia and has written this book of poems on behalf of all people who struggle. A remarkable, profound look at the

thinking of a person who experiences altered states of thinking, and expresses it with great beauty. A request from his mother that I look at his book, has led me to decide to add a page to my website pointing to works of art by people with mental illness.

Personal

- Need to continually work at life balance and stress management.
- Began a continuing role in my grandson's care one day a week. Will cut back on other activities if necessary for this important priority in my life.

Other

- Met with Community Ministry Advisory Committee every quarter
- Attended some MPUUC Board meetings.
- Attended community ministry meetings with local community ministers.

2011 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 2011	Took SKSM class on mental health and oppression
Attend GA	GA in June	June 2011	Event attended	Done
Attend Mental health seminars / conventions	Attend at least one local / state mental health convention in next year	Chosen by March 1:	Attended by Dec. 2011	
Areas for growth in the next 2 yrs:				
Continue producing TV program	Work on developing education using DVDs	Work with PEERS to identify possible users of programs	Ongoing	6 of 12 shows taped this year so far
Continue working on preaching style	Work with preaching professor and drama coach	As speaking engagements show up	Style continues to improve.	Got positive feedback on last sermon – They said I had passion!
Establish Spiritual Direction practice	Announce the beginning of my spiritual direction practice.	On-going	On-going	Brochures. Worship Service. Joined UUA SD network
Long term possibilities				
Explore and enhance my creativity	Center for Creative Exploration The Painting Studio 300 Chenery Street, SF 415.333.9515			
Explore getting a Doctor of Ministry	Evaluate program at Pacific School for Religion	December 2011	Evaluate program by Dec 2011	