

Community Ministry Status

For the Ministry of Rev. Barbara Meyers

December, 2008

Status of ministry since last Report

Education

Classes and Seminars Given

- Attended NAMI California conference on August 23 in Burlingame, where I presented a workshop on "Using Public Access TV to Advocate for Mental Health" at the NAMI California Conference on August 23 in Burlingame.
- I led two workshops on October 17-18 at the San Diego UU Congregation. They were to the general congregation and to the pastoral care team. Will speak at Los Gatos in January.
- **Problem:** Disappointed at how training of ministers is going. Want to brainstorm solutions with the committee.

Classes and Seminars Taken

- Attended web training from SAMHSA on *Children's Mental Health Problems and the Need for Social Inclusion*, November 18.

Conferences Attended

- Attended a retreat at St. Dorothy's Rest on Sept 30-Oct 2 for Unitarian Universalist ministers in the Pacific Central District. It was restful and inspiring as usual.
- Attended the local chapter of the National Survivors of Suicide Loss Day sponsored by the Association for Suicide Prevention on November 22.

County Education Effort Continues

Plans have been made to have a state-wide Mental Health and Spirituality Conference in spring 2009. I have been going to some of the meetings and will participate in this as much as I can with my other activities.

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 visits to congregational members with mental health problems, at home and in the hospital.

Mental Health Committee

- With 4 others, will sing to patients at the psych ward at Eden Hospital on December 16.
- Put on a mental health movie night on Nov 8 showing *A Beautiful Mind*, with a discussion afterwards.

Priestly

- Officiated at the memorial service for Laura White who died by suicide. Counseled the family on an ongoing basis.
- Worship associate on August 17 and November 23.
- Worship leader on November 30 on the subject of “Friendship as a Calling”
- Attended monthly Pastoral Associates meetings, and prepared training for each meeting.
- Participated in Interfaith Thanksgiving service on November 24.
- Began being a mentor to a UU community minister in preliminary fellowship. Monthly meetings.

Social Justice

Community Awareness

- *Mental Health Matters* Public Access TV Show
 - Taped shows on: Asian community mental health in August, Mental health in Jail in September, PTSD in October, and Anxiety in November.
 - Topics for the next shows are: First Psychotic Break, Rev. Byron Williams and Grief.
 - Shows continue to be broadcast throughout Alameda County on Comcast TV as well as being available from anywhere on the internet. There have been 7727 accesses of the shows from the internet as of December 2.
 - **Problem:** viewership of newer shows is dropping off. Would like to get some ideas from you.
- Mental Health pages on MPUUC web site continue to be widely accessed.
- Helped a group at Herrick Hospital prepare grant proposal to do videos for mental health.
- Visited Contra Costa County Clubhouse in preparation for a possible TV show on their effort.

Participated in Alameda County Mental Health Services Act Planning Council

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.

Social Action

- Participated in planning meetings and a vigil in support of labor negotiations for nursing home workers.
- Testified at the Fremont City Council in favor of their joining a law suit to repeal Proposition 8, which they voted 4-1 to do.
- As part of the campaign, made phone calls in opposition to Proposition 8, and made phone calls in favor of Obama’s election.

UUA Accessibility Group

- The new UU accessibility group *Equal Access* had an in-person meeting in Boston is planned on September 5-7. This meeting was very important in setting near term and long range goals for the organization. I have taken responsibility to make sure the web site gets up and running.
- Started a Mental Health Caucus under the auspices of Equal Access. There are currently 18 people in this caucus and we have started conference calls, writing mission statements and prioritizing activities.

Other

Books Read

- *Self-Made Man – One Woman’s Journey into Manhood and Back Again*, by Norah Vincent, New York: Viking, 2006. For 18 months, Norah Vincent dresses up as a man to see what it is like being a man in our society, infiltrating situations that most women never see. She reports back her observations that, much to her surprise, reveal that men live by rigid codes and rituals of masculinity which serve to stifle any sensitivity, leaving them with scars that keep them from being who they are as people. Fascinating.

- *Sudden Glory: Laughter as Subversive History* by Barry Sanders, Boston: Beacon Press, 1995. A scholarly look at the history of laughter from ancient to present times – what is funny, what isn't funny, the role of laughter in society at various points in history up to the present. Surprisingly, this book is rather dry and I found very little that was funny in it.
- *Anatomy of an Illness as Perceived by the Patient – Reflections on Healing and Regeneration*, by Norman Cousins, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1979. Norman Cousins, the prominent political journalist, author, professor, and world peace advocate was struck in middle age with a very painful, crippling arthritis. Told that he had little chance of surviving, Cousins and his doctor developed a recovery program incorporating megadoses of Vitamin C, along with a positive attitude, love, faith, hope, and laughter induced by Marx Brothers films. His recovery gives a striking example of what the mind and body working together can do to overcome illness.
- *And a Time to Die*, by Mark Pelgrin, ed. Dr. Sheila Moon and Dr. Elizabeth Howes, Sausalito, CA: Contact Editions, 1962. From the journals of a teacher who died at age 17 of pancreatic cancer leaving a wife and 4 children as he struggled to find meaning in the last days of his life.
- *LSD Spirituality and the Creative Process*, by Marlene Dobkin de Rios and Oscar Janiger, Rochester, Vermont: Park Street Press, 2003. The results of the 1950's-1960's experiments with LSD by Dr. Oscar Janiger are finally published in this volume. In addition to reporting the findings and long-term follow-up studies, the book examines the nature of the creative process and the spiritual experiences of the experimental subjects.
- *After a Suicide – Recommendations for Religious Services & Other Public Memorial Observances*, Suicide Prevention Resource Center, edited by David Litts. An excellent reference available free on line at: www.sprc.org/library/aftersuicide.pdf.
- *My Son ... My Son ... - A Guide to Healing After Death, Loss, or Suicide*, by Iris Bolton with Curtis Mitchel, Roswell, GA: Bolton Press Atlanta, 1983. A mother's poignant story of healing after the suicide of her son. Iris Bolton went on to help found support groups for suicide survivors and to become a leader in the Compassionate Friends organization for bereaved parents.
- *No Time to Say Goodbye – Surviving the Suicide of a Loved One*, by Carla Fine, New York: Broadway Books, 1997. Having lost a child to suicide herself, Carla Fine speaks frankly and compassionately about the overwhelming feelings of confusion, guilt, shame, anger and loneliness often shared by suicide survivors. She offers invaluable guidance through the various stages of the grief process.
- *Sanity & Grace – A Journey of Suicide, Survival and Strength*, by Judy Collins, New York: Penguin, 2003. This is the story of the suicide of singer Judy Collins' son, how she has come to terms with it and has become an inspiration to other suicide survivors.
- *Silent Grief – Living in the Wake of Suicide – A survivor and a psychologist tell what it's like to be left behind – and offer help for moving on*, by Christopher Lukas and Henry M. Seiden, Ph.D., New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1987. The authors assure the survivors of suicide that they are not alone in their pain, and suggest steps to help them come to terms with their grief, to talk about it, to listen, to learn, and to change one's life.

Personal

- Need to continually work at life balance and stress management.
- Weaving. New wave design under production
- 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.
- Participated in HERS Breast Cancer 5K run and came in 2nd in the women's over 60 age category.

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.

2008 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 08	Taken 2 classes
Attend GA and district assemblies.	DA in April and GA in June	April 2008 June 2008	Events attended	Presented at DA Attended GA
Attend Mental health seminars / conventions	Attend at least one local / state mental health convention in next year	Choose by March 1	Attended by Dec. 2008	Attended Client convention. NAMI California convention.
Areas for growth in the next 2 yrs:				
Continue to support 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	Weekly night group now has an established group.
Continue working on preaching style	Work with preaching professor and drama coach	As speaking engagements show up	Style continues to improve.	In progress
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.	NYC Training held in March. Center Presenter. San Diego training in October.
Long term development plan possibilities:				
Possibly become a Spiritual Director	Chaplaincy Institute, Mercy Center, Shalem Institute	Maybe start June 2009	Programs investigated.	Chaplaincy Inst. Spiritual Director Program
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.	Decided to put this decision off for a year or 2