

Community Ministry Status

For the Ministry of Rev. Barbara F. Meyers

December 2011

Status of ministry since last Report

Notes of Particular Importance

- **Joys**
 - Interconnections Article published about mental health ministries in UU congregations
 - Under the direction of Wayne Lowe, working on a study group looking to create a Counseling Center affiliated with our congregation.
 - I now have 2 Spiritual Directions Clients; would like to have 4 or 5.
 - Began leading effort to create a UUA congregational disability certification program
 - Helped organize first Occupy Fremont event
 - Helping care for my grandson Nathaniel King one day a week
- **Challenges**
 - Getting more of the congregation to interact with the mental health ministry.

Education

Classes and Seminars Given

- Led two mental health workshops at the Shoreline, WA UU Church on October 1, and a worship service and workshop at the Eugene UU Church on October 2. Both went very well, and both groups intend to start mental health ministries and to reach out to other near-by churches with such ministries.

Classes, Conferences and Seminars Taken and Planned

- With 10 other UUs from Mission Peak, attended a full-day workshop on "Immigration as a Moral Issue" on October 29.
- "Meeting the Addiction Treatment Needs of LGBT Persons with Co-occurring Disorders," Beacon Live webinar on November 15, 2011 with Penelope Ziegler, M.D. Very high incidence of co-occurring substance abuse and psychiatric problems for LGBT people.
- Attended weekend seminar at Esalen on *An Integrative Approach to Psychosis and Other Transformative Spiritual Experiences*, December 9-11. This seminar had some attendees prominent consumer advocates. The approach being discussed was an alternative method of treating psychosis by not using drugs, being surrounded by loving people, and recognizing the spiritual nature of the process. Some model programs from the 1970s were discussed.

Healing

Counseling Center

With a group of 4 others, helping to design a counseling center to eventually be affiliated with our congregation. So far, we've decided it will be a combination of a traditional counseling center, a healing and spiritual center, and one of the participants in wrap-around services for seriously mentally ill people.

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. A new activity is having Drumming once a month. Thanksgiving celebration at Reaching across. Successful Christmas party was held at Cole Hall this year with about 40 attendees.

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 “*HIV/AIDS*” 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

- Sponsored a workshop on handling holiday stress. The workshop was excellent, but there were only 5 attendees. Need to find a more effective way to get people to attend.

Community Ministry

- Attended a mini-retreat in Point Arena with three other community minister colleagues. This was very restful and a good bonding experience.
- Serve as mentor to two community ministers as they navigate through their preliminary fellowship. It is a 3-year commitment for each person. One person has finished her second year, and the other has finished her first year.
- Attended the PCD UUMA Fall Retreat at St. Dorothy’s Rest in Sonoma County. A restful time

Spiritual Direction

- Have two spiritual direction clients. This is very fulfilling work for me. I would like to have 4-5 clients
- Worked with Wayne Lowe to learn how to get an effective web presence for my spiritual direction practice. Considering re-design of this part of my web site.

Priestly

- Worship leader on October 16 at MPUUC on the subject of “Art and the Spirit” Enjoyed putting together the PowerPoint presentation with pictures of art.
- Volunteer chaplain for the Regional Sub Committee on Candidacy on October 15.

Social Justice

Community Awareness

- *Mental Health Matters* Public Access TV Show
 - Taped shows on “*International Consumer Groups*” in September, and “*BestNow!*” (a program for training consumers to be peer specialists) and “*A Bridge over Troubled Water*”(a program about African American Spirituality and mental health) in December. These shows were in the new, more professional studio and are much better quality than previous shows.
 - Shows broadcast in most of Alameda County on Comcast TV as well as viewable on the internet.
- Mental Health pages on MPUUC web site continue to be widely accessed.
- The UU *Interconnections* newsletter published a great article about UU mental health ministries that came out in November. You can read it at:
www.uua.org/interconnections/interconnections/190142.shtml

UUA Accessibility Group

- Accessibility Guide for UU Churches and the denomination was published and accepted by the UUA administration. They suggested that we create a congregational certification program. Have started to lead this effort.

- UU Ministerial Fellowship Committee has agreed to get mental health information on the suggested reading list for ministers, and that they will consider adding it to the required reading list the next time the list is revisited for changes.
- Continued to maintain the website for the new UU accessibility group *Equal Access* www.equualaccess.org

UUA Addictions Ministry

- As member of the UUA Addictions Ministry helped run the web site.

Occupy Fremont

- Along with 2 UCC ministers, 2 UU ministers and 1 member of Pax Christi, helped to organize the first Occupy Fremont event that took place on December 3. Over 100 people marched with us to 4 banks as we explained what the banks records on executive compensation, bailouts, and foreclosures were. We ended up at a rally with a number of speakers and some protest music. Covered by the print, radio and TV press. People want to know what is next...

Other

Books Read

- *Raising the Roof – The Pastoral-to-Program Size Transition*, by Alice Mann, Alban Institute, 2001. A very good reference book for the transition that our congregation is going through now.
- *Difficult Conversations – How to Discuss What Matters Most*, by Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton and Sheila Heen, Penguin Books, 2000. Thorough and helpful. It helped me decide to have a couple of conversations that I had been needing to have for years.
- *In Between – Memoir of an Integration Baby*, by Mark Morrison-Reed, Skinner House Books, 2009. African American UU minister Mark Morrison Reed talks about his upbringing, his marriage to an Anglo-Canadian UU minister, their co-ministry and the major role played by his racial identity and the expectations and reactions of society.
- *Not a Genuine Black Man: Or How I claimed My Piece of Ground in the Lily-White City of San Leandro* by Brian Copeland, 2011. A story told with humor, sadness and humility. People can learn a lot by the overt racism Copeland went through growing up not so long ago in our near-by community.
- *Schizophrenia: A Blueprint for Recovery* by Milt Geek, CreateSpace, 2011. The author, a man living with schizophrenia, shares his insights about how he found helpful meaning in his delusions. As the title suggests, it is a blueprint for how other people with schizophrenia can be helped to create meaningful lives. He has particular advice for those working with people with schizophrenia.
- *Agnes's Jacket: A Psychologist's Search for the Meaning of Madness*, by Gail Hornstein, Rodale Books, 2009. The book chronicles the inner lives of people diagnosed with mental illness, and suggests that we understand their experiences using their own writings, and the centrality of peer relationships.
- *Wisdom, Madness and Folly – The Philosophy of a Lunatic*, by John Custance, Pellegrini & Cudahy, New York, 1952. A first-hand account of what it feels like to have delusions, to be manic, to be severely depressed, by a very articulate and intelligent man who was a patient in a mental hospital when it was written.
- *Isaac's Storm – A Man, A Time, and the Deadliest Hurricane in History*, by Eric Larson, Vintage Books, 2000. The story of the hurricane that hit Galveston, Texas by surprise in 1900, and the man Isaac Cline who was in charge of the U.S. weather bureau in Galveston. Tragic. Hard to put down.
- *V is for Vengeance* by Sue Grafton, Penguin Group, 2011. Let's face it, I'm addicted to this series.

Personal

- Need to continually work at life balance and stress management. This has gotten easier since Nathaniel.
- Joined the gym *Curves*, and work out there 3 times a week. So far, it feels like I have more energy.
- Participated in the dedication of my grandson Nathaniel at the Livermore Congregation on Nov 13.

Other

- Met with Community Ministry Advisory Committee every quarter
- Monthly status meetings with UU Mental Health Caucus, Equal Access, MPUUC Board
- Visit my spiritual director and my psychiatrist regularly.
- Attended some MPUUC Board meetings.

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	Attended NAMI Calif convention
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	12 shows taped this year. Quality of show improved.
Continue working on preaching style	Work with preaching professor and drama coach	As speaking engagements show up	Style continues to improve.	Got positive feedback
Establish Spiritual Direction practice	Announce the beginning of my spiritual direction practice. Need to Improve web site presence	On-going	On-going	Brochures. Worship Service. Joined UUA SD network
Long term possibilities				
Explore getting a Doctor of Ministry	Evaluate program at Pacific School for Religion	December 2011	Evaluate program by Dec 2011	Decided not to do until / if I have enough time for it.