

Quarterly Community Ministry Activities

For the Ministry of Rev. Barbara F. Meyers

March 2020

Executive Summary

- **"Listening Post"** – In mid-March, decided to cancel Sidewalk Talk events in San Francisco and Fremont until the pandemic is under control. Up to that point, we continued a Listening Post on Thursday afternoons in the Tenderloin neighborhood of San Francisco, sponsored by the Faithful Fools Street Ministry. Planning on starting a 3rd location in Fremont: at the mobile shower/laundry facility at Niles Discovery Church when we start up again.
- **Book** – The manuscript has been approved, the copy-editor sent me their suggested changes, and I have approved it. The next step is to have pre-reviewers read it to create blurbs for the book jacket and advertisement. A new title has been chosen: *Showing Up for Each Other's Mental Health: A Guide for Every Member of the Congregation*. They tell me the book will come out in mid-July.
- **UU Mental Health Network** – The Board has been meeting monthly, with hard-working board members. We now have a bank account and the IRS has granted us 501 c 3 tax exempt status. Our proposals for a workshop and a poster session at General Assembly have been accepted. We created a set of resources for mental health during Covid-19 and put it on our web site. Have been having weekly support calls.
- Continue work quarter time as **Assistant Director of Life Reaching Across to Life**. During the pandemic, we have been doing peer counseling by phone to our regular attendees.
- **I have an intern** who started in August 2019 doing work for EqUUal Access / AIM.

Quarterly Ministerial Status Report Details

Education

Classes, Conferences and Seminars Taken and Planned

- Attended webinar *Crisis Engagement Strategies*, presented by Elliot Palmer sponsored by the Doors to Wellbeing, January 28, 2020. Part of Peer Specialist Webinar Series. Good summary of what to keep in mind when dealing with a person in mental health crisis.
- Invited to lead the discussion after a screening of the movie "Bedlam" at the Niles Discovery Church. February 8, 2020. Very well done exposé which I hope stirs some action. Discussion went very well.
- Attended webinar *Peer Support Specialists Working Together with Allies* presented by Vivian Nuñez, February 25, 2020. Part of Peer Specialist Webinar Series. Discussed how to connect with and empower allies in mental health recovery.
- Attended webinar *State Standardization & Peer Support for Peer Supporters* presented by the California Association of Mental Health Peer Run Organizations. March 12, 2020. This gave the history of the standards for peer support in California.
- Attended webinar: *Staying in Your Lane: Managing Roles and Responsibilities as your Peer-Run Organization Grows*. March 24, 2020. From the Peer-Run Organization Learning Collaborative Webinar Series. This advice would have been helpful for Connections.
- Attended webinar: *Spiritual Care by Phone*, offered by the San Francisco Night Ministry, March 30, 2020. Good tips from people who give care by phone in San Francisco.

Healing

Spiritual Direction

This work is on hold until the pandemic is under control.

Emotional CPR

Nothing this quarter

UU Mental Health Blog morphed into UU Mental Health Network

UUA approved our becoming an official “related organization.” Incorporated, chosen the first Board and started meeting regularly. I am Board President. Proposals for presentations at General Assembly were approved. The IRS approved our application for tax exempt status.

Reaching Across

Continued compensated job at Reaching Across organization, for quarter-time work. Attend Monday support group meetings, two Interfaith Support Groups per month, a spirituality group once a month, Friday craft days and some Wednesday events. During the pandemic, we are doing peer counseling by phone.

Pastoral Associates

Restarted the Pastoral Associate program at MPUUC as a co-leader. Organized an effort to call all congregation members to check in during the pandemic.

Priestly

- Led workshop on mental health effects of climate change at Sunnyvale UU Fellowship January 5, 2020.
- Led worship on January 26, 2020 at MPUUC on “Listening.”
- Worship Associate on at MPUUC on February 9, 2020.

Social Justice

Community Awareness

- Mental Health pages on MPUUC web site continue to be widely accessed.
- Some items moved to the UU Mental Health Network site.

UUA Accessibility Group

- The congregational disability accessibility certification program called the Accessibility and Inclusion Ministry (AIM) program continues its general availability. Six congregations have officially completed the program and about 10 more are in process. I am in charge of implementing this program.
- Have an intern who I supervise.

UUA Addictions Ministry

As member of the UUA Addictions Ministry, helped run their web site www.uuaddictionsministry.org.

Other

Books Read

- Rosenberg, Kenneth Paul, and DeLong, Jessica. *Bedlam – An Intimate Journey into America’s Mental Health Crisis*, Random House, 2019. Significant and authentic portrayal of the sorry condition of mental health for people with the most serious problems, using real people, including his own family situation. Has good suggestions for what to do now, and what to advocate for in the future. Also a documentary by the same person. **Highly recommended.**
- Lieberman, Matthew D. *Social – Why Our Brains Are Wired to Connect*, Crown Publishers, 2013. Humans are wired in their brains to be social – threats to social connections are experienced in much the same way as physical pain. Lots of research using brain imaging shows the same regions of the brain light up for both social and physical pain. And more. **Recommended**
- Grcevich, Stephen. *Mental Health and the Church – A Ministry Handbook for Including Children and Adults with ADHD, Anxiety, Mood Disorders, and Other Common Mental Health Conditions*,

Zondervan, 2018. Child psychiatrist who is a conservative Christian tells how to include people with mental illnesses in church life. Some good points about including children and teens, and about what is problematic in church life for many people with mental illnesses.

- Linehan, Marsha M. *Building a Life Worth Living - A Memoir*, Random House, 2020. Outstanding memoir of the developer of Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT), who herself went through a serious mental health crisis early in her life. One of my all-time heroes. **Highly Recommended.**
- Heumann, Judith with Kristen Joiner. *Being Heumann – An Unrepentant Memoir of a Disability Rights Activist*, Beacon Press, 2020. Fabulous life story of Judy Heumann who was a key figure in changing laws to protect people with disabilities. **Recommended.**
- Murphy Kate. *You're Not Listening – What You're Missing and Why it Matters*, Celadon books, 2019. A good treatment about the importance of listening, and why it has become a lost art.
- Landis, Kate. *Pushing an Elephant Up the Stairs*, Skinner House Books, 2020. Memoir of UU minister who has had mental health problems. How being in a spiritual community helped her to recover.
- Sins Invalid. *Skin, Tooth, and Bone – A Disability Justice Primer, Second Edition*, sinsinvalid.org, 2019. A booklet with an explanation of Disability Justice, its principles, suggestions for public events and mobilizations. A very forthright, progressive guide for the movement. **Recommended for people working on disability issues.**
- Kendi, Ibram X. *Stamped from the Beginning – The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America*, Bold Type Books, 2016. Traces the history of racism and antiracism in the United States through the lives and times of 5 historical figures: Cotton Mather, Thomas Jefferson, William Lloyd Garrison, W.E.B. Du Bois and Angela Davis. Well researched and explained. Won the National Book Award for Non Fiction in 2016. **Recommended.**
- Kendi, Ibram X. *How To Be An Antiracist*, One World, 2019. Explains anti-racism as opposed to “not racist”, with “not racist” meaning a denial that race means anything, and anti-racist being against racism. This is an autobiographical tour through the belief cycle that led him to this position. He says that black people, including himself can be racist. Against black assimilation into the white culture as this is racist against black culture. Challenging. **Recommended**
- Buehrens, John. *Conflagration – How the Transcendentalists Sparked the American Struggle for Racial, Gender, and Social Justice*, Beacon Press, 2020. Engaging and well-researched story of the Transcendentalists and of the start of the Unitarian religion. **Recommended for UUs.**
- Strayed, Cheryl. *Tiny Beautiful Things: Advice on Love and Life from Dear Sugar*, Vintage, 2012. I loved this book by a web-based advice columnist that has some of her favorite columns. It is a combination of memoir and wisdom that doesn't avoid the hard things. Made into a play.
- St. Clair, Kassia. *The Golden Thread: How Fabric Changed History*, Liveright Publishing Corporation 2019. I really loved this book that looks at kinds of fabric that have been produced by human beings throughout history – from fibers found in caves, to the silk road, to Viking sails, to lace, to cotton and wool, to sports and astronaut wear. **Recommended**

Personal

- Need to continually work at life balance, stress and depression management. This is going successfully and is sometimes easier than others.
- Work out at 24-Hour Fitness 2 times a week. Exercising at home due to pandemic.
- Working on a couple of weavings

Other

- Met with Community Ministry Advisory Committee regularly
- Monthly status meetings with EqUual Access
- Visit my spiritual director and my psychiatrist regularly.

2020 Development Plan

| Area | Plans | Time line | Measurement | Status |
|---|---|---------------------------|--|--|
| Continuing education: | | | | |
| Take one or two classes a year | Investigate classes to take in this year | Ongoing- Identify classes | | On hold due to pandemic |
| Attend GA in person or virtually | GA in June in Providence | June 2020 | GA Attended in person or virtually | Plan to go, in whatever form it takes |
| Attend Mental health seminars / conventions | Attend at least one local / state mental health convention in next year | Chosen by March 31 | Seminar / convention attended | On hold due to pandemic |
| Mental Health Ministry | Discern next actions in support of mental health | Chosen by March 31 | Determine direction of UU Mental Health Ministry | Book being produced. Pandemic info on umentalhealth.org |
| Racial Justice | Discern actions in support of racial justice | Chosen by June 30 | Meaningful actions taking place | Support group of colleagues focused on ending white supremacy. Readings. |
| Areas for growth in the next 2 yrs: | | | | |
| Disability Credentialing Program | Lead the group which will administer the AIM certification program for UUA congregations. | On-going | Program continues to be used by congregations | Identified need to simplify program. |
| Spiritual Direction | Create opportunities for Spiritual Direction practice | On-going | | On hold due to pandemic |
| Long term possibilities | | | | |
| Mini Sabbatical | Plan to do a weaving tour in Laos and Viet Nam | October 2020 for 3 weeks | | On hold due to pandemic |