

Quarterly Community Ministry Activities

For the Ministry of Rev. Barbara F. Meyers

September 2020

Executive Summary

- **Book – *Held: Showing Up for Each Other's Mental Health*.** The book was published in mid-August by Skinner House Books. Got rave reviews from endorsers. Book-read at MPUUC is planned for October. Will also be talking about it in other venues.
- **UU Mental Health Network** – The Board has been meeting monthly, with hard-working board members. Election for new Board planned for October 4.
- **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, putting on Zoom meetings on various subjects, and distributing arts and crafts supplies
- **Started working with a new intern for EqUual Access.** Elizabeth Foster from Boston University School of Theology.
- **Hired new Administrator for Accessibility and Inclusion Ministry** – Interviewed 8 applicants and chose a very capable person for this job. Will overlap with previous administrator in month of December.
- **Took a virtual 5-day silent retreat starting September 28. It was fabulous!**

Quarterly Ministerial Status Report Details

Education

Classes, Conferences and Seminars Taken and Planned

- Attended classes / conventions / conferences
 - NAMI National Convention, July 13-14, 2020. It was all virtual and free of charge. I attended sessions for Faith Leaders, Esketamine, Youth, and CIT. CIT is now moving beyond just training police, to setting up a whole community response to psychiatric crisis, not necessarily involving police.
 - *Peerpocalypse* conference July 20 – 23, 2020, a conference on alternatives to the medical model mental health care. I attended sessions on: Community CPR, Peer Support for Grief and Loss, Several sessions on alternative suicide care, and Spiritual Concerns in Peer Support Settings. Lots of participation from all over the world.
 - *Marginalized Ministry* – Attended one session of this conference on July 22. First time on Zoom. It was good to see many dear friends most of whom are working as chaplains in prisons and jails.
 - *HEAR Training Pilot* – Attended 5-week pilot training for the HEAR project from Sidewalk Talk. Designed to help people learn how to listen, and why it is important. August – September, 2020.
- Attended several racism trainings
 - Attended a 4-part series on *Racism – the struggle for the soul of a nation pausing at the intersection of greed, power, and virus*. Taught by Father Tom Bonacci, August 3: What is Racism, August 10: Re-inventing History, August 17: Anti-Racism, August 24: The “Whitening” of Jesus, 2020. Excellent summary of the issues with a mostly Catholic class of attendees.
 - Attended webinar: *“White Faith Leader Formation Series: A Conversation with Rev. Michael-Ray Mathews on Whiteness”* from Faith in Action, July 7, 2020. A conversation about the spiritual implications of whiteness for white people. Representatives from many faith communities around the country attended.
 - Attended webinar: *Feminism Beyond White Supremacy: Where We Have Been and Where We Need to Go*. July 30 2020. Sponsored by many groups including NARAL, Planned Parenthood,

- Feminist Futures, Act Blue and others. Veteran feminists Barbara Smith and Amy Sonnie talked about the history of feminism, black women, and identity politics.
- Attended webinar conversation with Ruby Sales, a long-time social justice activist on “*The Spiritual Crisis of Whiteness*.” Ruby shared some profound reflections on the “spiritual murder” of whiteness and what true spiritual leadership looks like in this moment to combat a growing sense of futurelessness. Organized by *Faith in Action*, an interfaith social action group. August 11, 2020.
 - Attended webinar: “*NAMI's Ask the Expert Webinar: Failing Another Test in Addressing Mental Health Disparities*” July 30, 2020 presented by psychiatrist Dr. Altha Stewart. The link between mental health problems and racial discrimination.
 - Attended webinar: *Moving through Spiritual Impasse to Counter White Supremacy*, with Rev. Dr. Rebecca Parker and Richael Faithful, presented by the Braxton Institute, Sept 22, 2020. Rebecca Parker likened the slaughter of black men to a reenactment of the horrors of the crucifixion, and asked: when will white people have seen enough slaughter for this to end?
 - Attended several webinars on Peer Specialists / mental health
 - *Physical Wellness for Work: A Guide for Peer Specialists* by: Judith Cook and Peggy Swarbrick, July 1, 2020. Great free resources for getting and staying healthy. Exercise videos and nutritional advice. Sponsored by the Doors to Wellbeing.
 - "Monthly Rotation Peer Specialist Model Practice Spotlight, State Standardization & PS4PS-Peer Support 4 Peer Supporters” from the California Association of Mental Health Peer Run Organizations, July 9, 2020. Good model for on-line peer support group.
 - *United We Meet the Needs of Diverse Communities: Peers Transforming Systems: Peers & Peer Support Leading the Way*, August 6, 2020. Sponsored by CAMHPRO and San Francisco Mental Health. Lots of presentations on peer mental health in minority communities.
 - *State Peer Standardization Update SB 803 (Beall-D) PASSED CA Legislature* from the California Association of Mental Health Peer Run Organizations, September 10, 2020.
 - *The Importance of Policies and Procedures for Peer Run Organizations*, September 15, 2020. Part of the Peer Run Organization Learning Collaborative Webinar Series. Good basic information about policies and procedures, and which policies might be unique to peer-run organizations.
 - Attended a forum on "The Struggle & Dignity of a Minister with Traumatic Brain Injury: Post Traumatic Spiritual Gifts" by Rev. Phillip Schulman, on August 30, 2020.

Healing

Spiritual Direction

The work on Sidewalk Talk is on hold until the pandemic is under control. I have been attended weekly check-ins for Sidewalk Talk city leaders.

Emotional CPR

- Started creating a book about eCPR with stories from people who have been leading it. Designed for a wide audience – the general public.
- Attended sessions to create a “youth” version of eCPR.

Reaching Across

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

Pastoral Associates

Handled pastoral care for the congregation for 6 weeks in the summer before new minister started. 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

- Worship Associate at MPUUC on July 5, for a service focusing on GA experiences. Gave homily.
- Worship Leader on at MPUUC on August 2, 2020, on the subject of Held, my book.
- Worship Associate at MPUUC for September 13 service. Rev. Greg Ward's first service after starting as the called minister at MPUUC.
- Officiated at the Wedding of a couple Sept 12, 2020. Quite a challenge with Covid procedures at County Recorder's office and smoke in the air because of fires. But it worked out beautifully.

Social Justice

Community Awareness

- Part of the ARO Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression social justice group at MPUUC
- 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. I am in charge of implementing this program. Since so few congregations have taken this on, we are in the process of revising it so that it is more granular and seems more doable.
- Hired a new AIM Administrator who will start in December.

UUA Addictions Ministry

As member of the UUA Addictions Ministry, conferred with other members about next steps during pandemic. Believe we will be encouraging congregations to do online support groups.

Other

Books Read

Mental Health Books

- Linn, Virginia. *The Other Side of Crazy: My Odyssey to Insanity and Back*, John Linn, May 2020. Story of a woman who was abused as a child and who develops late-onset schizophrenia. Her courageous journey returning to sanity.
- Herman, Judith. *Trauma and Recovery – The Aftermath of Violence - from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*, 1992, 1997 by Basic Books, Epilogue 2015 by Basic Books. Major resource on trauma and its treatment, based on long-term research and treatment of victims of trauma. Stages of recovery identified: Healing Relationship, Safety, Remembrance/Mourning, and Reconnection. **Highly Recommended**
- David, Anthony. *Into the Abyss – A Neuropsychiatrist's Notes on Troubled Minds*, One World, 2020. A number of case studies of patients of a British neuropsychiatrist. Interesting.
- MGilchrist, Iain. *The Master and His Emissary – The Divided Brain and the Making of the Western World, New Expanded Edition*, Yale University Press, 2018. Tour-de-force study about the differences between the right and left hemispheres of the brain, with the right hemisphere as master, carrying wisdom, creativity, metaphors, seeing the whole picture, while the left hemisphere is its emissary, offering simple answers with mechanistic models to explain everything that exists. He expands his study to look at western civilization at points where there is more or less right hemisphere influences, finding we are now in a left hemisphere stage, which he fears will lead to disaster. **Recommended**
- Hornbacher, Marya. *Wasted: A Memoir of Anorexia and Bulimia*, Harper Collins, 2009. Harrowing story of a young girl who grows into a young woman living with and nearly dying from anorexia and bulimia. Very forthcoming about her thought processes. Now considered to be a classic.

- Hornbacher, Marya, *Madness: A Bipolar Life*, Mariner books, 2009. Story of a woman with co-occurring disorders: Bipolar Disorder and Anorexia.

Racism Books

- Saad, Layla F. *Me and White Supremacy – Combat Racism, Change the World, and Become a Good Ancestor*, Sourcebooks 2020. Read this and discussed it with a group from MPUUC. Daily journaling on examination of white supremacy and where it shows up in my life. Very Good. **Recommended.**
- Manakem, Resmaa. *My Grandmother's Hands – Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies*, Central Recovery Press, 2017. Racism seen as trauma - how to heal it for blacks, whites and police departments. What is unique here is seeing the police as traumatized.
- Hyde, Catherine Ryan. *Have You Seen Luis Velez? - A Novel*, Lake Union Publishing, 2019. Alienated high school senior helps a ninety-year-old blind widow in his building after her helper, Luis Velez, stops coming by. In the process he discovers that life holds both great sadness and great joy.

General Interest Books

- Matthews, Glenna, *The Golden State in the Civil War – Thomas Starr King, the Republican Party and the Birth of the Modern California*, Cambridge University Press, 2012. Fascinating, well-researched history story with Unitarian minister Thomas Starr King as a major player in California history. I especially liked the story about the people on different sides of the Civil War in California. I hadn't learned this in public school in California. **Recommended for history buffs.**
- Kolsky, Linda. *Heavenly Hindsight*. Reviewed a draft of a book by my sister-in-law Linda Kolsky, which probed the meaning she found after the unexplained death of her son when he was 18.
- Waxman, Abbi. *The Garden of Small Beginnings*, Berkley Penguin Random House, 2017. A young widow with two children takes a gardening class to help her illustrate a gardening book, and comes to terms with her grief. Delightful, funny, sad. I loved this book. **Recommended.**
- Smith, Carlton. *Cold-Blooded – A True Story of Love, Lies, Greed, and Murder*, Open Road Integrated Media, 2004. Lawyer Larry McNabney is killed by his wife Elisa. Lots of intrigue.
- Campbell, Rev. Judith. *Paper Trail – The Third Viridienne Greene Mystery*, Fine Line Press, 2020. Another romp by my UU minister colleague. This one about forgeries.
- Campbell, Rev. Judith. *Sin of the Father*, 2020. Priest learns that he is a father from a long-ago liaison before he was ordained.
- Ibrahim, Laila. *Paper Wife – A Novel*. Lake Union Publishing, 2018. Chinese woman takes on the identity of a man's dead wife for an arranged marriage and comes to San Francisco in 1923. Author is DRE at the Oakland UU Church.
- Ibrahim, Laila, *Golden Poppies – A Novel*, 2020. Explores the relationship between a black family and a white family in the 1890s. An actual meeting of suffragists at the First Unitarian Church in Oakland is recounted.

Personal

- **Took a virtual 5-day silent retreat starting September 28. It was fabulous!**
- 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.
- Ran/walked a half-marathon on Sept 5.

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	Classes completed	A number of classes and webinars taken.
Attend GA in person or virtually	GA in June in Providence	June 2020	GA Attended in person or virtually	Attended virtually
Attend Mental health seminars / conventions	Attend at least one local / state mental health convention in next year	Chosen by March 31	Seminar / convention attended	NAMI National Peerpcalypse
Mental Health Ministry	Discern next actions in support of mental health	Chosen by March 31	Determine direction of UU Mental Health Ministry	Book is published. Pandemic info on uumentalhealth.org
Racial Justice	Discern actions in support of racial justice	Chosen by June 30	Meaningful actions taking place	Personal self-promise to interrupt racist comments
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		Sidewalk Talk on hold due to pandemic
Long term possibilities				
Mini Sabbatical	Plan to do a weaving tour in Laos and Viet Nam	Original plan: October 2020 for 3 weeks		On indefinite hold due to pandemic