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 are, 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 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: “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
  - 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.


### Healing

**Spiritual Direction**
The work on Sidewalk Talk is on hold until the pandemic is under control. I have been attending 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.
- 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

**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.

**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.
- 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, *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 Peerpocalypse                                              |
| 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                                      |