

# Quarterly Community Ministry Activities

For the Ministry of Rev. Barbara F. Meyers

December 2020

## Executive Summary

- **Book** – Have been invited by several UU organizations to speak or preach about my book.
- **UU Mental Health Network** – Elected president of the Board of the UU Mental Health Network. Did a survey of UUs and had a strategic planning session about how best to carry out our mission.
- **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
- **Participating in EqUual Access Re-imagination Process**
- In *Beloved Conversations* fall semester class from Meadville-Lombard Theological Seminary focusing on anti-racism and confronting white supremacy.

## Quarterly Ministerial Status Report Details Education

### *Classes, Conferences and Seminars Taken and Planned*

- Attended classes / conventions / conferences
  - Attended Virtual Town Hall: *Creating Our Mental Health*, discussing the use of Social Therapy in groups, with Hugh Polk, MD, Rachel Mickenberg, LCSW and their clients. Co-Sponsored by Mad in America & the East Side Institute. October 4, 2020. Looks like intentional peer support.
  - Attended UUMA class: *Realism and Resilience: Preparing as Clergy for Post-Election Responses*. Good start to a conversation about what churches need to do to get ready for possible post-election scenarios. 150 ministers attended. Lots of good resources.
  - Attended PEERS Webinar, *Transition from In-person to Remote Services During COVID-19*, November 24, 2020. Presented by: Bre Williams, Kimberly Marquez-Cortes and Sarah Marxer. The experiences of PEERS when going online during the pandemic. A lot sounded familiar to our experience.
  - Attended webinar: *Sutter Health Psychiatry Rounds - Trauma in Older Adults*, presented by Melinda Ginne, PhD, December 7, 2020. Good description of the issues of working with older adults who have experienced trauma in their lives.
- Attended several racism trainings
  - Taking the semester-long *Beloved Conversations* class from Meadville-Lombard Theological Seminary which focuses on race relations, in the white minister's group. Have a cohort pod for the class with four community ministers. Meet with each group every two weeks.
- Attended several webinars on Peer Specialists / mental health
  - Attended webinar *Peer Specialization in California – What's Next?* Sponsored by CAMhPRO, Excellent discussion of what will happen now that SB 803 Peer Support Specialist Certification has become law in California.
  - Attended webinar *Incorporating Youth Leadership into Treatment*, presented by Evelyn Clark and Tyus Reed. Part of the Peer Specialist webinar series from Doors to Wellbeing, October 27, 2020. Importance of engaging authentically with youth. Listening is very important.
  - Attended webinar: *Assessing the Effectiveness of Peer-Led Programs for People with Co-Occurring Disorders*, hosted by Mad in America Continuing Education. Focused on programs of Dual Diagnosis Anonymous. DDA uses traditional 12 steps of AA plus 5

additional steps focusing on mental illness. Many meetings are on-line in the pandemic. Presenters from Oregon and the UK. December 10, 2020. Excellent!

## **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. Have about 60 pages and several contributors have made commitments.

### ***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. Planning a re-boot of the program at the end of January.

## **Priestly**

- Worship Associate at MPUUC on November 8, for a service focusing on Reconciliation led by Mark Rahman.

## **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.

### ***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.
- New AIM Administrator Shelly Rohe started 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***

- Brown, Brené. *I Thought It Was Just Me – Women Reclaiming Power and Courage in a Culture of Shame*, Gotham Books, 2007. Summary of research and findings in Brown's research on shame, what

causes it, and how to be shame-resilient. What helps is recognizing shame, understanding our triggers, practicing critical awareness, reaching out to others and speaking out about shame.

- Wagner, Pamela Spiro, and Spiro, Carolyn. *Divided Minds: Twin Sisters and Their Journey Through Schizophrenia*, St. Martin's Press, 2006. One twin developed schizophrenia, the other became a psychiatrist. Lots of details of what they went through starting with early childhood through many hospitalizations and trials at living independently.
- Maisel, Eric. *The Future of Mental Health – Deconstructing the Mental Disorder Paradigm*, Routledge, 2017. Criticism of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual and the practice of pill-prescribing psychiatry. Has some good views of what the future might be: wants the focus to change to “problems of living” rather than “mental disorder”, and the therapists to know many kinds of therapies and to try and find the right one for each person.
- Maisel, Eric. *Humane Helping – Focusing Less on Disorders and More on Life's Challenges*, Routledge, 2018. A book for therapists, psychiatrists and other helpers telling them how to help clients without diagnosing disorders. A lot of good ideas, but anti-psych medicine and anti DSM.
- Shenk, Joshua Wolf. *Lincoln's Melancholy – How Depression Challenged a President and Fueled His Greatness*, Houghton Mifflin, 2005. Well-researched and fascinating study of Lincoln. I especially liked the conclusion that today Lincoln would be classified as having a mental disorder but also that he would be seen as very mentally healthy because he had “successful performance of mental function resulting in productive activities, fulfilling relationships with other people, and the ability to adapt to change and cope with adversity.” **Recommended.**
- Lane, Christopher. *Shyness – How Normal Behavior Became a Sickness*, Yale University Press, 2007. Tells the story of the DSM-3 which codified Avoidant Behavior as a Personality Disorder, a process which was arbitrary and showed the subjective nature of coming up with the descriptions of many disorders. Well researched, showing the anti-psychoanalytical bias of the committee creating the DSM. Makes you think about other disorders listed.
- Pollan, Michael. *How to Change Your Mind: What the New Science of Psychedelics Teaches Us About Consciousness, Dying, Addiction, Depression, and Transcendence*. Penguin Books, 2018. Well-researched study about how psychedelics are coming back into consideration for use in addiction and depression and helping those who are dying. Talks about all of the problems of the 1970's and some important ways to keep their use safe – using guides who act like shaman. **Recommended.**
- Harper, Michele. *The Beauty in Breaking – A Memoir*, Riverhead Books, 2020. A black woman emergency room physician tells stories of her patients and her navigation of a troubled time in her life.

#### ***Anti-Racism Books***

- Baldwin, James. *If Beale Street Could Talk*, Dial Press, 1974. Love story about a black couple; the man is unjustly imprisoned for a crime he didn't do, and the woman is having a baby. Looks at the families and the racial dynamics in Harlem in the 1970's. Made into a movie 2018 Very Good. **Recommended.**
- Cooper, Brittney. *Eloquent Rage – A Black Feminist Discovers Her Superpower*, Picador, 2019. Cooper, a professor of Women's and Gender Studies and Africana Studies at Rutgers University, delivers a powerful examination of Black women's anger, and how it is rooted in racist and sexist oppression. Written for Black women, but important for all to read.

#### ***General Interest Books***

- Aronson, Brad. *Human Kind*, LifeTree Media, 2020. Many examples of how people can be kind to others, motivated by what the author experienced when his wife had cancer and others helped them.
- Philip, Maryann. *Henry VIII and Katherine of Aragon: The Cannon Conspiracy, A Nicola Machiavelli Mystery: Book Four*, RealHystoryMysteryPress.com, 2020. Another mystery romp through the Renaissance, with lots of historical figures and real situations. Love these books! **Recommended for history buffs.**
- Sebald, W. G. *Austerlitz*, Random House, 2001. A novel giving the story of a man who learns that at age 4 he was part of the kindertransport of Jewish children from Eastern Europe during the Holocaust. Memories flood back as he visits the place he used to live. Beautifully written in a unique style. Has been called one of the supreme works of art of our time. **Highly Recommended.**

- Obama, Michelle, *Becoming*, Penguin, 2018. Memoir by the first lady. I loved this book that I borrowed from the audio book collection at the library. I listened to it while taking my daily walks. Her passion to make things better for those of our country who have been left behind is palpable and laudable. **Recommended.**

**Personal**

- Monthly status meetings with EqUUal Access
- Visit my spiritual director and my psychiatrist regularly.

## 2020 Development Plan

Area	Plans	Time line	Measurement	Status
<b>Continuing education:</b>				
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 <a href="http://umentalhealth.org">umentalhealth.org</a>
Racial Justice	Discern actions in support of racial justice	Chosen by June 30	Meaningful actions taking place	Personal self-promise to interrupt racist comments
<b>Areas for growth in the next 2 yrs:</b>				
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
<b>Long term possibilities</b>				
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