

Quarterly Community Ministry Activities

For the Ministry of Rev. Barbara F. Meyers

March 2021

Executive Summary

- **Book** – Have spoken or preached to several UU congregations about my book.
- **UU Mental Health Network** – Two GA workshops were approved. Revising the mission/vision/values statements with membership participation. 105 members.
- **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. Director of Reaching Across resigned and I've been helping to keep the organization running, and interviewing replacements for him.
- **Participating in EqUual Access Re-imagination Process**
- In *Beloved Conversations* began spring semester class from Meadville-Lombard Theological Seminary focusing on anti-racism and confronting white supremacy.
- Discovered that I could do exercise and listen to audio books checked out from the library at the same time!

Quarterly Ministerial Status Report Details

Education

Classes, Conferences and Seminars Taken and Planned

- Attended classes / conventions / conferences
 - Attended Western Region Assembly: February 12, 2021. Online gathering, celebration, awards, workshop (Beloved Conversations) and Worship.
 - *Harm Reduction*, presented by National Healthcare for the Homeless Council, Feb 23, 2021.
 - *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Basic Building Blocks Course*, Project of the ADA National Network. February 15, 2021.
 - *De-Escalation Techniques*, from Relias Academy, Feb 16, 2021
- Attended several racism trainings
 - R.E.A.C.H. (Recognize, Express, & Acknowledge through Community Healing) Racial Trauma Event sponsored by the Alameda County Mental Health Association and the Family Education and Resource Center. January 14, 2021, 9:00 am – 2:30 pm. This was an excellent anti-racism training with speakers, quizzes, music, and fun. I especially liked the educator speaker Tovi C. Scruggs-Hussein who gave a wonderful anti-racism workshop. Got her free anti-racism book at www.ticiess.com.
 - Attended webinar: *Trauma of Racism – Healing our National Legacy*, presented by Patricia Rush, Audrey Stillerman and Loren Williams, sponsored by Mad in America, March 11, 2021. Exploration of Emotional Trauma from Systemic Oppression. Included research on the impact of discrimination on mental and physical wellness and understanding how structural racism and exclusion of sexual and gender minorities are a root of health disparity.
- Attended several webinars on Peer Specialists / mental health
 - Attended webinar: *Introducing the Withdrawal Series and Setting the Scene*, Sponsored by Mad in America, the Council for Evidence-based Psychiatry and the International Institute for Psychiatric Drug Withdrawal, January 15, 2021. Discussing the latest developments and research in studying serious problems people have withdrawing from psychiatric drugs.
 - Attended webinar: *Enhancing Quality of Care with Psychiatric Advanced Directive (PAD) and Peer Support*, Presented by: Rayshell Chambers, Laurie Hallmark, Elyn R. Saks, and Tristan Scremin, January 26, 2021. The importance of creating an advanced directive for psychiatric care.

- Attended webinar: *Brain-Body Regulation: The Foundation of Mental Wellness*, presented by Mad in America, February 11, 2021. An introduction to the scientific model of Brain-Body Regulation. Topics included the impact of childhood experience, how traumatic experience disrupts Regulation, and how restoring Regulation is the key to healing.
- Attended webinar: *COVID-19 Accessible Materials for People with Disabilities* by the ADA National Network, 2/11/2021. Speakers were from the Georgia Tech Center for Inclusive Design and Innovation. Lots of good information about reaching people with disabilities with Covid materials. On website www.cidi.gatech.edu/covid

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.

Have one client who I meet with monthly online.

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 over 100 pages and most contributors have completed content. Next, I will start looking for an agent.

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. Helping to select new director after previous director resigned.

Pastoral Associates

Worked with Rev. Greg to start an effort with him and me as a co-leader. Several people are interested in helping out. Not in operation right now. Pastoral issues are being handled by Rev. Greg and volunteers when a need arises.

Priestly

- Worship leader at MPUUC January 3, 2021. Subject: Beauty.
- Guest Worship leader at Berrian UU Fellowship in Michigan, January 10. Subject: Held
- Guest Worship leader at Buffalo NY UU Congregation, January 24. Subject: Held
- Mental Health Workshop, Rockville, MD, February 27
- Speak to Fremont Area Writers about Held, February 27
- Guest Worship Leader at Napa UU, February 28
- Maria Luisa Macias Memorial Service, February 28.
- Worship Associate with ARO Team, March 7.

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 is on a pause while we redesign the program to get more congregational involvement.
- New AIM Administrator Shelly Rohe started in December. I supervise her.

UUA Addictions Ministry

As member of the UUA Addictions Ministry, kept the website up and responded to or referred questions.

Other

Books Read (* = audio book I listened to while walking)

Mental Health Books

- Braestrup, Kate. *Here If You Need Me – A True Story*, Little Brown, 2007. Woman who becomes a chaplain for game wardens in Maine after her game warden husband dies in an automobile accident. Stories from her chaplaincy.
- Goldberg, Philip. *Spiritual Practice for Crazy Times – Powerful Tools to Cultivate Calm, Clarity, and Courage*, Hay House, 2020. A guidebook to spiritual practice, with an emphasis on meditation. Specific techniques for finding time for practice, framing, relationships, when things get bad, and giving back.
- Grinker, Roy Richard. *Nobody's Normal – How Culture Created the Stigma of Mental Illness*, W.W. Norton & Co., 2021. Well-researched historical study of mental health stigma, showing how culture has shaped what is 'normal' and what isn't, and the lengths some cultures have gone to exclude the 'not normal,' and how we can change it. Draws on three generations of psychiatrists in his family.
- Hall, Will, editor. *Outside Mental Health – Voices and Visions of Madness*, Madness Radio, 2016. A large collection of writings and interviews of many people who have lived with madness and who have been helped not the mental health system, but by various alternatives. Lots of interesting views.

Anti-Racism Books

- Dyson, Michael Eric. *Tears We Cannot Stop – A Sermon to White America*, St. Martin's Press, 2017. Impassioned plea to white people explaining the experiences of black people in America from a preacher and academic written in the format of a church service, including invocation, sermon and benediction. **He has a great reading list for racial literacy, as well as reparations ideas anyone can do. Recommended ***
- Angelou, Maya. *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, Random House, 1969. Autobiography of the early years of Maya Angelou's life. A classic in anti-racist literacy. Themes: identity, family, racism, rape, literacy. Banned by many US school boards because of the description of child rape and teen age pregnancy. **Recommended**
- Baldwin, James. *The Fire Next Time*, Dial Press. 1969. Essays about the position of black people in the United States. He believes the solution to racism is love. Racism hurts whites as well as blacks. *
- Beckert, Sven. *Empire of Cotton – A Global Industry*, Vintage, 2014. Fascinating history showing how the worldwide industrial revolution and development of capitalism grew out of the growing, harvesting, spinning, weaving and sewing of cotton, and in particular, how slavery and thus low labor cost in the United States played an important role in making all of this happen.*
- Coates, Te-Nehisi. *Between the World and Me*, One World, 2015. Reread this powerful statement about race in America written as a letter to his son. Even more powerful in a second reading.
- Ellison, Ralph. *Invisible Man*, Random House, 1952. This novel is regarded as a classic masterpiece explaining the U.S. black experience in the 20th century. The story of a black young man in the south who then moves to New York. **Recommended.***
- Johnson, Charles. *Middle Passage*, Scribner, 1990. Fictional tale of a freed black slave who stows away on a ship which is going to Africa to pick up slaves. He partakes in a mutiny on board, and undergoes an experience of horror and self-discovery. 1990 National Book Award for Fiction.
- King, Martin Luther, Jr. *Stride Toward Freedom – The Montgomery Story*, Beacon Press, 1958. This is an excellent story of the Montgomery bus boycott from the inside, giving the parts that all people played and the struggles of King with his own conscience. **Highly Recommended.**
- King, Martin Luther, Jr. *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?* Beacon Press, 1968. One of King's last writings. A passionate advocate for non-violence as the only way to end segregation, and points of view of white supremacy that are still very true. Have we made any progress at all? Great quote: "What is needed is a realization that power without love is reckless and

abusive, and that love without power is sentimental and anemic. Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice.” **Recommended.**

- Lewis, John, with D’Orso, Michael. *Walking with the Wind – A Memoir of the Movement*, Simon and Schuster, 1998. Beautifully-told inside story of the civil rights movement by one of the major players who later went on to serve for decades in Congress. John Lewis is my hero. **Recommended**
- Obama, Barack. *A Promised Land*, Crown, November 2020. Memoir of Barack Obama’s rise to the presidency and his first term as president. I’m so impressed with him. We were blessed to have this outstanding public servant in charge of our country. **Recommended.** *
- Perry, Imani. *Breathe: A Letter to my Sons*, Beacon Press, 2019. Perry writes of racism and her wishes for her sons. UUA’s common book read book for 2020-2021.
- Stowe, Harriett Beecher. *Uncle Tom’s Cabin – Or Life Among the Lowly*, John P. Jewett & Co, 1852. Classic tale of slavery. Extremely influential before the abolition of slavery.
- Tubbs, Anna Malaika. *The Three Mothers: How the Mothers of Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, and James Baldwin Shaped a Nation*, Flatiron books, 2021. Derived from Tubbs PhD thesis, this book focuses on the lives of Alberta King, Berdis Baldwin and Louise Little, mothers of three leaders of Black resistance in the 20th century. She has done a lot of research on their lives, talking to living relatives and unearthing the very strong influence they had on their sons.*

General Interest Books

- Bechdel, Alison. *Fun Home – A Family Tragicomic*, Houghton-Mifflin, 2006. Graphic novel memoir telling of a young woman’s realization that she is a lesbian, and learning that her father, an English teacher and mortician, was gay. Beautifully told and prize-winning.
- Biden, Jill. *Where the Light Enters: Building a Family, Discovering Myself*, Flatiron Books 2019. Memoir of the wife of Joe Biden telling of her early life, how she met and married Joe and became the mother of his two sons and the many triumphs and heart-aches along the way.
- **I highly recommend** all of these meticulously researched historical fiction books by Geraldine Brooks:
 - Brooks, Geraldine. *The Secret Chord*, Little Brown Book Group, 2015. The story of King David told from the viewpoint of his prophet Nathan. Historical fiction, beautifully told. *
 - Brooks, Geraldine. *Caleb’s Crossing*, Penguin Books, 2011. Historical fiction giving the story of the first Indian graduate of Harvard, from the point of view of an English friend from his childhood.*
 - Brooks, Geraldine, *The People of the Book*, Viking, 2009. I loved this book which is historical fiction giving the tale of the Sarajevo Haggadah, an ancient illustrated Jewish manuscript which survived many close calls with destruction. I loved this book. *
 - Brooks, Geraldine. *Year of Wonders*, Penguin Books, 2002. Historical fiction account of 1665-66 a year when the black plague came to the village of Eyam, England. It is told from the viewpoint of a woman who was the servant of the town’s rector who convinced the town to quarantine itself to prevent spread of the plague.*
- Chernow, Ron. *Grant*, Penguin Books, Sept 2018. Tour de force biography of Ulysses S. Grant, with details of his family, and the other characters he engaged with during his life, showing how he emerged from being a failure as a small business man to the leader of Union armies and President of the United States. What stuck with me was his humble nature, his brilliant military mind, his too trusting nature, and his love of his wife, family and country. **Recommended for history buffs.** *
- Gruen, Sara. *Water for Elephants*, Algonquin Books, 2007. Loved this story of a veterinary student, shy of his degree, who joins a circus show and is put in charge of the animal menagerie. He finds true love in the woman equestrian star who is married to a brutal animal trainer, and learns how to manage Rosie the elephant. Great adventure and romance. Made into a movie in 2011. *
- Larson, Erik. *Dead Wake – The Last Crossing of the Lusitania*, Crown Publishers, 2015. A very thoroughly researched historical account of the sinking of the Lusitania in 1915 by a German submarine. Larson is such a good writer; I have liked all of his books. *
- Moore, Kate. *The Radium Girls – The Dark Story of America’s Shining Women*, Simon & Schuster, UK, 2016. Tragic tale of girls who painted radium dials on watches, and became ill with radium poisoning, and the company who lied to them and tried to cover it up.

- Walls, Jeannette. *The Glass Castle: A Memoir*, Scribner, 2009. The best-selling true story of growing up in a very poor, dysfunctional family in which the children had to learn how to take care of themselves and protect each other. She is able to go to college on scholarships and become a writer. In this book she reclaims and makes peace with her past. Made into a movie. *
- Winchester, Simon. *Krakatoa - The Day the Earth Exploded*, Harper Collins, 2003. Extremely well-researched and well-told account of the volcanic explosion of the island of Krakatoa in 1883. He considers many aspects of this eruption: the science plate tectonics, social development of the Dutch East Indies, political and religious implications, the first disaster covered globally by telegraph. **Recommended for history and science buffs.** *

Personal

- Monthly status meetings with EqUUal Access
- Visit my spiritual director and my psychiatrist regularly.
- Keeping up my exercise by walking 4-5 miles a day.

2021 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	
Attend GA in person or virtually	GA in June on line	June 2021	GA 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	Plan to attend Alternatives in July
Mental Health Ministry	Discern next actions in support of mental health	Chosen by March 31	Determine direction of UU Mental Health Ministry	UU Mental Health Network activities
Racial Justice	Discern actions in support of racial justice	Chosen by March 1	Meaningful actions taking place	Beloved conversations; Racial literacy
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	Revising to get greater use by congregations.
Spiritual Direction	Create opportunities for Spiritual Direction practice	On-going		
Long term possibilities				
Mini Sabbatical	Plan to do a weaving tour in Laos and Viet Nam	Original plan: October 2020. New plan: April 2022		