

# Quarterly Community Ministry Activities

For the Ministry of Rev. Barbara F. Meyers

June 2021

## Executive Summary

- **Book** – Have spoken or preached to several UU congregations and Pathways to Promise about my book.
- **UU Mental Health Network** – Adopted new mission and vision statements. Began LGBTQ identity group. Two workshops at General Assembly. 121 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. New manager in place at Reaching Across
- **Participating in EqUual Access Re-imagination Process**
- **Anti-Racism:** Member of ARO team; Took *Beloved Conversations* spring semester class; Engaging in racial literacy reading and study
- **Completed supervision** of student ministry in EqUual Access of Elizabeth Foster a student from Boston University School of Theology.

## Quarterly Ministerial Status Report Details

### Education

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

- Attended classes / conventions / conferences
  - Attended spring semester of *Beloved Conversations* from Meadville Lombard seminary. Regularly processed this with a “pod” of 5 community ministers, and with Kathi Bayne.
  - Attended the training *A Clinical Look at Grief and Trauma Related Grief*, from Kara, an organization that provides comprehensive grief support, crisis intervention and education to individuals and communities facing the difficult realities of death and loss. April 29, 2021. Excellent resource to understand how people process grief.
  - Attend the online conference *Peerpocalypse*, which is designed for mental health peers. Some good sessions on altered states, BIPoC mental health, the movie *Cured*.
- Attended several racism trainings
  - Attended *Beloved Conversations*, an anti-racism class from Meadville-Lombard. Six lessons including pod discussions talking about our response to racism. Spring 2021.
  - R.E.A.C.H. (Recognize, Express, & Acknowledge through Community Healing) *Healing Through PTSD and Xenophobia*, by Dr. Han Ren, including a Chinese Tea Ceremony from the West China Tea Company, an Event sponsored by the Alameda County Mental Health Association and the Family Education and Resource Center. April 29, 2021.
  - *Knee on My Neck: Slavery’s Ghost*, a 5-session Zoom study jointly sponsored by the Provincial Chapter, and the Franciscan Committee on Fostering Racial Harmony of the Third Order, and the Society of St. Francis, Province of the Americas. 5 weeks starting May 25 – June 22.
- Attended several webinars on Peer Specialists / mental health
  - Attended NAMI East Bay meeting with a guest speaker on the bay area “Hearing Voices” group. April 28, 2021.
  - Attended webinar: WRAP for Addictions, from the Copeland Center for Wellness and Recovery, presented by Waynette Brock and Rachele Weiss. May 11, 2021. Discussed the use of WRAP for Addictions. Quite similar to other uses of WRAP. Pointed out it could be done in conjunction with other addiction programs like AA, NA, etc.

- Attended webinar: *Spiritual Practice and Suicide Prevention: The Roles of Faith Communities in Prevention, Intervention and Crisis Response*, presented by Interfaith Network on Mental Illness. May 15, 2021. Lots of resources and practices focusing on the role of faith in suicide prevention.
- Attended webinar: *Communication: Healthy Boundaries for Peer Specialists*, presented by Jane Winterling and Amey Dettmer. Part of the Doors to Wellbeing Peer Specialist Webinar Series from SAMHSA and the Copeland Center for Wellness and Recovery, May 25, 2021. Good examples and role-plays of good and not so good ways of setting boundaries and the support system that peer specialists needs.
- Attended webinar: *Disabilities & Disasters: A Path to More Inclusive Climate Solutions*, with Adriane Griffen and Krystal Vasquez, sponsored by Climate for Health. June 17, 2021. How people with disabilities have been ignored in planning for climate change, and what people can do.

## **Healing**

### ***Spiritual Direction***

Plan to restart Sidewalk Talk in San Francisco 1 time a month in August.  
Have two clients who I meet with monthly online.

### ***Emotional CPR***

Have first draft of a book about eCPR with stories from people who have been leading it. Found an editor who will start developmental editing in August.

### ***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. Plan to start in person meetings in August.

### ***Pastoral Associates***

Worked with Rev. Greg to start an effort with him and me as a co-leader. Have a team in place. I am handling Pastoral Support while Greg is on summer leave.

## **Priestly**

- Worship leader at Treasure Coast UU in Florida, May 2, 2021. Subject: HELD
- Worship leader at UU Young Adult Revival Network, May 16, 2021. Subject: HELD
- Worship leader at UU Church of Birmingham, Alabama, May 23, 2021. Subject: HELD
- Started being a Mentor to a minister in preliminary fellowship, Kristen Stone. She is starting a mental health ministry.
- Completed supervising Elizabeth Foster's stint as a student minister in EqUUal Access. She attends Boston University's School of Theology.

## **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.
- Attended a demonstration in Oakland to support shifting \$122 million from the sheriff's budget to fund mental health and housing. June 22, 2021. Organizations involved: The Ella Baker Center, Showing Up for Racial Justice, American Friends Service Committee, and NAMI.

### ***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.

## ***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***

- Ragins, Mark, MD. *Journeys beyond the Frontier – A Rebellious Guide to Psychosis and Other Extraordinary Experiences*, Independently published, 2021. **I love, love, love this book!** Ragins, who I have met in person, is a psychiatrist who has spent his career working with the patients with the most serious mental illnesses, and has gotten many awards for the outstanding success he has treating people with illnesses that often include psychosis, drug abuse and homelessness. His philosophy is to let the goals of treatment to be the goals of the client. He is openly disdainful of meds-only approaches adopted by much of the existent psychiatric profession, and works to help his clients find meaning and purpose in their lives, by their own standards. I think we would all be better off if more psychiatrists followed his approach. **Very Highly Recommended!**
- Kross, Ethan. *Chatter - The Voice in our Head, Why it matters, and How to Harness It*, Crown Books, 2021. Excellent advice on how to keep from mental rumination. Examples: Use distanced self-talk referring to yourself by your name; Imagine advising a friend; Reframe as a challenge; Use a lucky charm; Perform a ritual; Build a list of advisors; Seek physical contact; Minimize social media; Create order in your environment; Expose yourself to green spaces; Seek awe-inspiring experiences  
**Recommended**

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

- Washington, Booker T. *Up from Slavery*, 1901. Autobiography of Booker T. Washington from his birth as a slave, his determination to work hard and get an education, his creation of the Tuskegee Institute, and adulation of him by audiences in the south and north. He is irrepressibly positive, resilient and has a “pull yourself up by your bootstraps” point of view. Very interesting.\*
- McPherson, James M. *Battle Cry of Freedom – The Civil War Era*, Oxford University Press, 1988. This has been described as the best 1-volume history of the Civil War. **Recommended for history buffs.** \*
- Baptist, Edward. *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism*, Basic Books, 2014. Drawing from stories of former slaves as well as many records of slave trading and the textile industry, this is a well-researched history of how brutal treatment of slaves fueled the establishment of capitalism in the United States. Quote: “*The idea that the commodification and suffering and forced labor of African Americans is what made the United States powerful and rich is not an idea that people necessarily are happy to hear. Yet it is the truth.*” \*
- Gates Jr., Henry Louis. *Stony the Road- Reconstruction, White Supremacy and the Rise of Jim Crow*, Penguin Press, 2019. Harvard African American Studies professor examines the period of reconstruction showing how white supremacy was reestablished wiping out gains of emancipation. Heartbreakingly accurate. \*
- Joseph, Peniel E. *Waiting ‘Til the Midnight Hour: A Narrative History of Black Power in America*, Henry Holt & Co., 2007. History of the many personalities and groups that were part of the black power movement in the US and their sometimes contentious interactions. \*
- Jones, Edward P. *The Known World – A Novel*, Amistad, 2003. Story of a black slave owner in fictional Manchester County, Virginia in the 1830s-1860s. It has been described as “a masterpiece of overlapping plot lines, time shifts, and heartbreaking details of life under slavery.”\*
- Johnson, Walter. *Soul by Soul – Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market*, Harvard University Press, 1999. A detailed description of the running of the slave market in New Orleans, with commentaries from slave holders, slave traders and slaves, and the culture around this institution. Shocking and compelling. \*
- Lorde, Audre. *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*, The Crossing Press, 1984. Known primarily for her poetry, Lorde, a black, lesbian, feminist, and mother of two, has collected 15 essays and speeches

in this volume. She attacks sexism and racism in US society, and sexism and homophobia in in the black American community. The best known quote is: “The master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house.” \*

- Du Bois, W.E.B. *The Souls of Black Folk*, A.C. McClurg & Co, 1903. A classic in African American literature, this book is a collection of essays, each one beginning with a pair of epigraphs: text from a poem and the musical score of a spiritual. The chapters focus on such topics as the importance of political life, the history of Reconstruction, a critique of Booker T. Washington, importance of training black men, faith, the death of his young son, and the role of spiritual music.
- Faust, Drew Gilpin. *This Republic of Suffering – Death and the American Civil War*, Knopf, 2008. An examination, largely using the words of common citizens, showing how the experience of death and suffering changed the way that Americans conceived of these ultimate topics. \*
- Walker, Alice. *The Color Purple*, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1982. Classic Pulitzer Prize winning book about a resilient and courageous woman was later a Broadway show and a movie. Celie has grown up poor in rural Georgia, despised by the society around her and abused by her own family. In an attempt to transcend a life that often seems too much to bear, Celie begins writing letters directly to God. The letters, spanning twenty years, record a journey of self-discovery and empowerment. **Highly recommended.**
- Truth, Sojourner. *Ain't I a Woman?* 1850. Brief, passionate statement about her ability to do anything a man can do.
- Elliott, Zetta. *Say Her Name*, Little Brown, 2020. A collection of passionate poetry written by and celebrating black women, their creativity and their resilience through their struggles.
- Ransby, Barbara. *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement – A Radical Democratic Vision*, University of North Carolina Press, 2003. Biography of one of the most influential people in the movement for civil rights in the United States. Baker was a gifted grassroots organizer whose remarkable career spanned fifty years and touched thousands of lives. She was a key figure in the NAACP, a founder of the SCLC, and a prime mover in the creation of SNCC, defying the traditional status of women of the time. \*
- Branch, Taylor. *Parting the Waters – America in the King Years 1954-63*, Simon & Schuster 2007. Incredibly thorough and detailed examination of the early years of the Civil Rights movement. Lots of facts illuminated by records and tapes of the key players. **Highly Recommended.\***
- Wilkerson, Isabel. *Caste – The Origins of Our Discontents*, Random House, 2020. An instant classic study of racism in the United States, comparing it to the idea of caste in India and the position of Jews in Nazi Germany. Many examples from the earliest colonial times to today. **Highly Recommended.** \*
- Dunbar, Erica Armstrong. *Never Caught: The Washingtons' Relentless Pursuit of Their Runaway Slave, Ona Judge*, 37 Ink, 2017. Story of a slave of George and Martha Washington who ran away, and how they tried to get her back into slavery for years. Very well researched by a black author.

### **General Interest Books**

- Clark, Julie. *The Last Flight*, Sourcebooks Landmark 2020. Very suspenseful story of two women who change identities by a chance meeting at an airport. Both have things they want to run away from.
- Goodwin, Doris Kearns. *Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream*, Harper and Row, 1976, New Forward 2015. The story of Johnson’s life with insights into his personality and how the skills he used so successfully in the Senate did not serve him well as a president.
- Slaton, Pamela. *Reunited – An Investigative Genealogist Unlocks Some of Life’s Greatest Family Mysteries*, St. Martin’s Griffin, 2012. Fascinating tales from a woman specializing in locating birth families of adoptees.
- Ter Kuile, Casper. *The Power of Ritual – Turning Everyday Activities into Soulful Practices*, Harper Collins, 2020. Making connections with yourself, with others, with nature and with transcendence. Examples using sacred text, taking refuge, and others.
- Farley, Audrey Clare. *The Unfit Heiress – The Tragic Life and Scandalous Sterilization of Ann Cooper Hewitt*, Grand Central Publishing, Hachette Book Group, 2021. Story of a young heiress

whose mother had her declared as feeble-minded (she wasn't) and sterilized under California's eugenics laws, so that she could control her daughter's multi-million dollar inheritance trust fund.

**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  |
|---|---|--|--|---|
| <b>Continuing education:</b>                |   |  |  |   |
| 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                            | Attended and part of 2 workshops              |
| Attend Mental health seminars / conventions | Attend at least one local / state mental health convention in next year                   | Chosen by March 31                                   | Seminar / convention attended                    | May Peerpocalypse<br>July: Alternatives       |
| 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;<br>Racial literacy     |
| <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    | Revising to get greater use by congregations. |
| Spiritual Direction                         | Create opportunities for Spiritual Direction practice                                     | On-going   |  |   |
| <b>Long term possibilities</b>              |   |  |  |   |
| Mini Sabbatical                             | Plan to do a weaving tour in Laos and Viet Nam  | Original plan: October 2020.<br>New plan: April 2022 |  |   |