

Quarterly Community Ministry Activities

For the Ministry of Rev. Barbara F. Meyers

December 2021

Executive Summary

- **Book** – Have spoken or preached to the PCD UUMA chapter and several congregations about my book. More presentations planned.
- **My Story featured in the Destructing Stigma Campaign** a series of larger-than-life photographs and interviews with people from across the United States and has traveled the world with pop-up installations in all inhabited continents except Australia.
https://deconstructingstigma.org/stories?mgi_35=2576/barbara
- **UU Mental Health Network** – Adopted new management model involving Board, Ministry, and Support teams. Started newsletter and have invite folks to start ministry activities.
- **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.
- **Participating in EqUual Access Re-imagination Process**
- **Anti-Racism:** Member of ARO team; Engaging in racial literacy reading and study, with now 81 books read.

Quarterly Ministerial Status Report Details

Education

Classes, Conferences and Seminars Given and Taken

Anti-racism trainings

- Attended two webinars of the Living Legacy Project. “The 1619 Project” a journalism project that aims to reframe the country's history by placing the consequences of slavery and the contributions of Black Americans at the very center of the United States' national narrative. October 21. And, “Medical Racism” November 18.
- Began the *Rewire* training to help white people eradicate racism within themselves. As part of this class, watched “*Slavery By Another Name*” a documentary about convict leasing, share cropping.

Attended several webinars on Peer Specialists / mental health / Spiritual Direction

- Attended 4-part webinar series on *White Privilege in Spiritual Direction and Companionship*, designed for spiritual directors who want to explore white privilege and recognize how it may be shaping their ministry. Sessions included meditation, teaching, reflection, small group storytelling and large group sharing. Facilitated by Rev. Jane E. Vennard. Oct 27, Nov 4, Nov 10, and Nov 17.
- Webinar on the report *Mental Health and Our Changing Client, 2021 Edition*, November 4, 2021. Organized by ecoAmerica with many contributors and reviewers. Excellent report on how climate change affects mental health, and actions that individuals and governments can take.
- Attended webinar *Art-making as an Alternative Philosophy of Care During Emotional Crisis* presented by Karin Jervert. Sponsored by the National Empowerment Center, December 9, 2021. All people are artists. Art is powerful and empowering and can lead to healing. What we express becomes what we value. Go forward in the spirit of play. A wonderful presentation.
- Attended webinar *Peer Support Specialist Ethics and Accountability* presented by Judi Holder, December 16, 2021. Excellent information about code of ethics for peer supporters.

Spiritual Direction

Have two clients who I meet with monthly online. Started Spiritual Director Supervision with Rev. Amy Beltaine. Joined covenanted monthly meetings with UU Spiritual Directors for mutual support.

Putting restart of Sidewalk Talk on hiatus due to the pandemic.

Emotional CPR

eCPR book has been edited by a professional developmental editor. Doing outreach for potential reviewers and recommendations as part of preparing a book proposal.

Reaching Across

New manager of Reaching Across is in place and is a joy to work with. Continued compensated job for quarter-time work. During the pandemic, we are doing peer counseling by phone and having Zoom meetings. A number of new groups started. Plan to start in person meetings in February.

Encouragement Committee

Rev. Greg and I co-lead a team of seven.

Priestly

- Participated as the UU representative in the Interfaith Thanksgiving service of the Tri City Interfaith Council November 22, 2021.
- Participated as the UU representative in an interfaith Prayer Vigil to honor the homeless who have died in Alameda County in the last year. November 29, 2021.

Social Justice

Community Awareness

- Part of the ARO Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression social justice group at MPUUC. Made decision to focus on the 8th Principle this year, with a congregational vote in 2022. Several congregational services and workshops planned.
- Taking Rewire training led by Rev. Greg Ward.
- Continue racial literacy reading

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.
- Monthly status meetings with EqUUal Access and with AIM.
- Participated in meetings with UUA staff to help make disability justice a priority issue for the UUA. This has been a dream of EqUUal Access for years and I'm happy to see it coming.

UUA Addictions Ministry

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

Self-Care

- Visit my spiritual director and my psychiatrist regularly.
- Keeping up my exercise by walking 4-5 miles a day. Longer runs once a week.

Other

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

Mental Health Books

- O'Toole, Jennifer Cook. *Autism in Heels – The Untold Story of a Female Life on the Spectrum*, Skyhorse Publishing, 2018. Brilliant bestselling memoir about her troubled early life and how she discovered that she lives with autism. Enlightening about how autism in females differs significantly from that in males. **Highly recommended for those interested in the autism spectrum**

- Murthy, Vivek. Together – *The Healing Power of Human Connection in a Sometimes Lonely World*, Harper Wave, 2020. I loved this book! The Surgeon General of the US focuses on the importance of human connection with many stories from his life and the lives of others. Glad that the US Surgeon General has this focus. **Very highly recommended.**

Anti-Racism Books

- Foner, Eric. *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877*, Harper Perennial, 1989. This prize-winning classic is recognized as the standard work on the period, and its author as the preeminent historian of Reconstruction. The blatant racist ways that Southerners worked, by means of vigilante terrorism, murder, electoral and political corruption, to deny blacks land, opportunity and suffrage is heartbreaking.
- Tochluk, Shelly. *Witnessing Whiteness: The Need To Talk About Race and How To Do It, Second Edition*, Rowman & Littlefield Education, 2010. Re-read this book to prepare for Rewire Class. Good motivation and education about race and racism. Especially liked the chapter about how the white race was created. Good strategies for how to interrupt racism when you hear it
- Mills, Kay. *This Little Light of Mine – The Life of Fannie Lou Hamer with a foreword by Marian Wright Edelman*. The University Press of Kentucky, 2007. Originally published by Plume in 1994. Award-winning biography of civil rights activist brings her courageous spirit to life with many of the campaigns she was involved in especially those that focused on voting rights and the place of poor and uneducated blacks in Mississippi and beyond.
- Leeming, David. *James Baldwin, A Biography*, Knopf, 1994. Meticulously researched and beautifully written account of Baldwin's life, the life of a tortured genius. Many of Baldwin's views seem prescient because they so closely follow today's views on racism, how it hurts whites and US society morally. **Recommended.** *
- Brown, Vincent. *The Reaper's Garden – Death and Power in the World of Atlantic Slavery*, Harvard University Press, 2008. An examination of death and slavery in the island of Jamaica before emancipation. Whites died at a greater rate than blacks in Jamaica, and the dead were a social and political force. Funeral rites, inheritance, martyrs, British abolition, burials, and salvation as seen by the enslaved and the enslavers.
- Rothstein, Richard. *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*, Liveright, 2017. Clear-eyed look at how local, state and federal government policies that have rigged the system against African Americans, and created segregation. A clarion call to remedy the situation. Devastating to read these facts. **Highly Recommended ***
- Morrison, Toni. *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*, Vintage, 1993. Brilliant analysis of the portrayal of blacks in American literature. She convincingly shows the themes of freedom and individualism, manhood and innocence in American literature, depended on the existence of an enslaved black population. **Highly Recommended ***
- Grau, Shirley Ann. *The Keepers of the House – A Novel*, 1964. Winning the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 1965, this book is the story of several generations of the Howland family in rural Alabama. William Howland secretly marries his black housekeeper Margaret and has three children who can pass for white. Abigail, his granddaughter from a previous marriage marries a man with political ambitions which are ruined when, after the death of William and Margaret, the fact of their interracial marriage comes to light. A mob of local people burn the Howland's barn and attempt to burn the house. **Recommended ***
- Morris, Aldon. *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement – Black Communities Organizing for Change*, Free Press, 1984. PhD Thesis from the University of New York at Stony Brook. Interviews from many of the prominent players in the Civil Rights Movement combined with first-class scholarship result with lots of details behind-the-scenes that made things happen.
- Morrison, Toni. *Beloved*, Alfred Knopf, 1987. Masterpiece Pulitzer Prize winning novel by Nobel Prize winner. This is great literature – there are 2 or 3 meanings at different levels to every sentence. By telling the story of an escaped slave about to be recaptured who murders her own daughter to save her from slavery, the theme is that slavery was evil and harmed everyone involved. My favorite quote: “Whitepeople believed that whatever the manners, under every dark skin was a jungle. Swift unnavigable waters, swinging screaming baboons, sleeping snakes, red gums ready for their sweet white blood. ... But it wasn't the jungle blacks brought with them to this place from the other (livable)

place. It was the jungle whitefolks planted in them. And it grew. It spread. In, through and after life, it spread, until it invaded the whites who had made it. Touched them every one. Changed and altered them. Made them bloody, silly, worse than even they wanted to be, so scared were they of the jungle they had made. The screaming baboon lived under their own white skin; the red gums were their own.” I will read it more than once. **Recommended**

- Baraka, Amiri. (LeRoi Jones) *SOS Poems 1961-2013*. Grove Press 2014. Listening to him recite his poetry on video made these poems come to life.
- Hampton, Henry, and Steve Fayer, with Sarah Flynn. *Voices of Freedom – An Oral History of the Civil Rights Movement from the 1950’s through the 1980’s*, Bantam Books, 1990. Interviews with famous and lesser known people written as a companion to the PBS Series, “Eyes on the Prize”.
- Baraka, Amiri (as LeRoi Jones). *The System of Dante’s Hell*, Grove Press, 1966. Traces the circles of Dante’s hell in “jagged staccato sentence fragments”, as a way of describing living as a black man in America, until the end of the book when he finds his own voice. Reminded me a little of word-salad sometimes experienced by people experiencing psychosis. Hard for me to get into.
- Berlin, Ira. *Many Thousands Gone – The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America*, Harvard University Press, 1998. Detailed scholarly study of slavery from 1619 to 1819. The main thesis is that the institution of slavery and the concept of race was constantly changing. The book depicts the diverse forms slavery took before cotton was king.
- Franklin, John Hope. *Reconstruction After the Civil War*, University of Chicago Press, 1961, 1994, 2014. From a prominent African American historian, he uses scholarship to show that Reconstruction ended because of the brevity of the North’s occupation, the limited power wielded by former slaves, the influence of moderate southerners, the flawed constitutions of the radical state governments, and the downfall of Reconstruction remain compelling today.
- Glymph, Thavolia. *Out of the House of Bondage – The Transformation of the Plantation Household*, Cambridge University Press, 2008. Focuses on the relationship between female mistresses of plantation households and their female slaves, and how this changed after emancipation. Exposes the violence and cruelty towards the slaves, and the indignity felt by the former mistresses when they could no longer behave the same after the Civil War, when former black slaves sought to set up their own households.
- Hannah-Jones, Nikole, Caitlin Roper, Ilena Silverman, and Jake Silverstein. *The 1619 Project: A New Origin Story*, Random House Audio, 2021. Reframes American history by placing slavery and its continuing legacy at the center of our national narrative. Contains essays by prominent authors on nearly every part of our society – politics, music, diet, traffic, capitalism, religion, democracy, justice, punishment and more – and shows how the legacy of slavery is central to its formation. Remarkable, convincing, stunning. **Very highly recommended**
- Wallace, Michelle. *Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman*, Verso, 1978, 1999. A critique of masculine bias in the civil rights movement, and the way that black women have been and remain marginalized. Caused a lot of controversy when first published. New introduction written 21 years later tells what she still believes and what she has changed her mind about.

General Interest Books

- Straight, Susan. *In the Country of Women – A Memoir*, Catapult, 2019. Addressed to her three smart, strong, beautiful, biracial daughters, this memoir lovingly tells the tale of the strong women in her and her husband’s mixed race family.
- Clinton, Hillary and Penny, Louise. *State of Terror*, Simon & Schuster, 2021. Thriller where a new female Secretary of State races against time to save the US from nuclear explosions at the hands of terrorists. Lots of DC insider details and thinly veiled portraits of actual politicians make it a fun read.
- Potter, Shawna. *Making Spaces Safer: A Guide to Giving Harassment the Boot Wherever You Work, Play, and Gather*, AK Press, 2019. A guide for public spaces of all sorts that want to learn how to handle harassment. She outlines steps that are realistic and practical. Includes a chapter on how to flirt without being a creep.
- Glaser, Gabrielle. *American Baby – A Mother, a Child, and the Shadow History of Adoption*, Viking, 2021. The story of a teen-age mother forced to give her child up for adoption even though she married

the father. And the story how she found her son over 50 years later with DNA testing. A big case for open adoptions.

- Elliott, Andrea. *Invisible Child – Poverty, Survival & Hope in an American City*, Random House, 2021. This book is the product of a New York Times reporter following a spunky homeless black girl Dasani and her family in New York City for 8 years. This is a real rollercoaster of circumstances from homeless shelters, to apartment, to an opportunity for Dasani in an exclusive school in Pennsylvania, and back to homelessness. It tells it like it is for many impoverished families. **Recommended**
- Cabane, Olivia Fox. *The Charisma Myth – How Anyone Can Master the Art and Science of Personal Magnetism*, Portfolio/Penguin, 2012. Fascinating exercises on how to make a person become charismatic.

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	Anti-racism classes underway
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 Peerocalypse 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; Racial literacy, Rewire
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		Have 2 ongoing clients, monthly supervision and a monthly UU SD group meeting.
Long term possibilities				
Mini Sabbatical	Plan to do a weaving tour in Laos and Viet Nam	Original plan: October 2020. New plan: Future		