

Quarterly Community Ministry Activities

For the Ministry of Rev. Barbara F. Meyers

March 2022

Executive Summary

- **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. To start in-person meetings on April 12!
- **UU Mental Health Network** – Have an official UUA staff liaison. Will present a workshop at GA and have a booth. Still working on commitment model.
- **Participating in EqUual Access Re-imagination Process.** UUA to pick up accessibility and justice work. AIM certification to be ended.
- **Anti-Racism:** Member of ARO team; Engaging in racial literacy reading and study. This is a priority for my life.
- **Disabled Minister's chapter of the UUMA.** This is an organization that I helped lobby for and get started last year. Thrilled with the success of the first two meetings!
- **Books**
 - Have spoken or preached to the PCD UUMA chapter and several congregations about my book *Held*. More presentations planned. Will have a book signing at GA.
 - Jointly with Shelly Rohe, submitted another book proposal, on Disability, to Skinner House.
 - eCPR book proposal sent to several publishers
 - List of potential books on mental health sent to Skinner House.

Quarterly Ministerial Status Report Details

Education

Classes, Conferences and Seminars Given and Taken

- Attended Starr King School for the Ministry Symposium 2022 held on Zoom: “Co-Creating a Just Digital Future”, January 8, 2022. Dr. Sylvester Johnson of Virginia Tech gave the keynote on the Digital Future of Humanity: Artificial Intelligence, Race, and the Cyborg” there was also a panel on Visions of a Just Future in Science Fiction, and several online breakout groups. Interesting.
- Attended the class *Psychedelics, Entheogens and Spiritual Care*, February 25-28 from the Chaplaincy Institute, taught Ayize Jama-Everett, an African American therapist, and science fiction writer. Discussed the important role that psychedelics and religion/spirituality. The textbook *The Immortality Key* by Brian Muraresku discussed the possibility that early Christian eucharist rituals might have involved psychedelics. The class had lots of people who want to assist people using psychedelics. I found it very interesting, but I also expressed my concern about people who have had damaging experiences with psychedelics and have had their lives severely affected.
- Completed course “Overcome Depression: Effective Integrative Methods” From the Integrative Mental Health University, March 23, 2022. Excellent presentation of alternative methods for treating depression, including some very recent treatments using psychedelics. I would recommend this class to anyone struggling with depression.

Anti-racism trainings

- Continued 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.
- Began the Embodied Allyship training organized by Tovi Scruggs-Hussein. Nine sessions From January – April. The class will explore their individual racial identities and the sensibilities required to

become productive allies. Live Zoom sessions will include affinity group work, practice with anti-racist tools, and exercises to heal and deepen embodiment, increasing the capacity for forgiveness, compassion, and empathy. Lots of homework. A big commitment. Very happy I'm doing it.

- Attended *Jubilee Three*, a weekend antiracism workshop that has been provided to UU congregations since September 2020. Over five hundred UUs have gone through the training. March 25-27, 2022. Very moving and motivating from some very committed trainers.

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

- Attended webinar *Rural America's Social Injustice and Mental Health Crisis*, sponsored by the National Coalition for Mental Health Recovery, Jan 12, 2022. A group of presenters who are filming a documentary on the lack of availability of mental health resources in rural communities. Lots of talk about Emotional CPR and other peer support activities.
- Attended webinar *Peer Support for Older Adults*, Sponsored by The Doors to Wellbeing, January 25, 2022. Presenter: Vivian Nuñez. Special challenges and needs of giving peer support to older adults: fear, time, the feeling of not being listened to or respected, cultural differences, disabilities, medication challenges, isolation. Advice: listen, ask about their story, use humor, respect perspectives, be authentic, and sincere.

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. Have twenty-six committed reviewers. Prepared book proposal and submitted it to several publishers.

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 April.

Encouragement Committee

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

Priestly

- Led worship at the Rutland Unitarian Church, in VT. On February 13, 2022, on HELD.
- Led worship at the UU Fellowship of Bennington, VT. On March 13, 2022, on HELD

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.
- Member of Interfaith Coalition for Justice in Jails. Have been on several calls with local officials. Trying to get more community services for people with mental illness to keep them out of jail. Put together a group of consumers with justice experience to help the effort.

UUA Accessibility Group

- Attended the first meeting of the Disabled Minister's chapter of the UUMA. This is an organization that I helped lobby for and get started last year. Thrilled with the success of the first meeting Jan 11, 2022!

- The congregational disability accessibility certification program called the Accessibility and Inclusion Ministry (AIM) program will be ended. Commitment from the UUA to have UUA employees assume the Accessibility work. EqUual Access will focus on Ableism.

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.
- Journaling and Beauty Diary are very helpful spiritual practices
- 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

- Coleman, Monica A. *Bipolar Faith: A Black Woman's Journey with Depression and Faith*, Fortress Press, 2016. Both a spiritual autobiography and a memoir of mental illness. In this powerful book, Monica Coleman shares her life-long dance with trauma, depression, and the threat of death. She examines the ways that the legacies of slavery, war, sharecropping, poverty, and alcoholism mask a family history of mental illness.
- Insel, Thomas, MD. *Healing – Our Path from Mental Illness to Mental Health*, Penguin Press, 2022. A clear-eyed look at the crisis of mental health care in America today, and a path forward to fix it, from the former director of the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), and Alameda County resident. His thesis is that our system is set up for failure, and we need to embrace a recovery mindset to succeed. **Highly Recommended**

Anti-Racism Books

- Smith, Barbara. *The Truth that Never Hurts – Writings on Race, Gender, and Freedom*. Rutgers University Press, 2000. A series of essays from the point of view of a black lesbian. Speaks about the differences that this point of view has with the white feminist movement, and the mostly homophobic black civil rights movement.
- Baradaran, Mehrsa. *The Color of Money – Black Banks and the Racial Wealth Gap*, Belknap Press, 2017. Examines the result of past government policies and the operation of Black banking in a segregated economy, and makes clear that only bolder, more realistic views of banking's relation to black communities will end the cycle of poverty and promote black wealth.
- Carson, Clayborne. *In Struggle – SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s*, Harvard University Press, 1995. Study of SNCC that began as a doctoral dissertation. After interviewing and researching many people who were part of SNCC, Carson has put together a detailed analysis of how it started, operated, and finally fell apart due to “destructive competition among black leaders who were all convinced of their rectitude.”
- Sinha, Manisha. *The Counterrevolution of Slavery – Politics and Ideology in Antebellum South Carolina*, University of North Carolina Press, 2000. Book derived from Sinha's PhD thesis. Shows how South Carolina paved the way for secession, motivated by the interests of plantation-owners and their desire to keep slavery, and that secession was an overturning of the Revolution of 1776 and the principles that underlay it – that “all men were created equal.”
- Crenshaw, Kimberlé, Neil Gotanda, Gary Peller and Kendall Thomas, editors. *Critical Race Theory – The Key Writings That Formed the Movement*, The New Press, 1986. Collection of legal essays from black lawyers on the interpretation of laws that affect African Americans. For example, white liberals have misinterpreted *Brown v. Board of Education* to say that integration is good, whereas CRT says that integration isn't necessarily good for black students; the goal should be what is best for black children, not what white liberals think is good for them.

- Grann, David. *Killers of the Flower Moon – The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI*, Doubleday, 2017. Riveting story about killings of Osage Indians in Oklahoma who had land, to take over their oil-rich leases. The story of cracking this mystery was the first successful case of the FBI. *
- Johnson, Walter. *The Broken Heart of America – St. Louis and the Violent History of the United States*, Basic Books, 2021. From its founding, through the Indian wars, the Civil War, the 1904 World's Fair, the great migration, the exclusion of Blacks from jobs and housing to The city of St. Louis is described as an exemplar of how typifies how imperialism, racism, and capitalism have persistently entwined to corrupt the nation's past. St. Louis was a staging post for Indian removal and imperial expansion, and its wealth grew on the backs of its poor Black residents, from slavery through redlining and urban renewal. **Recommended.**
- Ward, Jesmyn, Editor. *The Fire This Time – A New Generation Speaks about Race*, Scribner, 2017. A collection of essays on race in the United States by contemporary original thinkers. Envisioned as a response to *The Fire Next Time*, James Baldwin's groundbreaking 1963 essay collection, these contemporary writers reflect on the past, present, and future of race in America.
- Spiegelman, Art, *Maus: A Survivor's Tale*, Pantheon, 1996. Brilliant graphic novel telling the story of Art Spiegelman's father Vladek's time as a Polish Jew in the Holocaust - what it took to survive and finally have a happy reunion with his wife after the war. A banned book everyone should read. **Recommended.**
- Lewis, Sinclair. *It Can't Happen Here*, Doubleday, 1935. Story about a dictator becoming president of the United States and destroys the mechanisms of the democratic government. A rebellious reporter is sent to a concentration camp, and later escapes. Thought to be written about Huey Long, and lots of comments have been made about similarities to Trump. Very witty and entertaining. *
- Watts, Deborah A. *101 ways to know you're "Black" in Corporate America*, Watts-Five 1998. Collected situations of Blacks in corporate settings.
- Murdoch, Sierra Crane. *Yellow Bird: Oil, Murder, and a Woman's Search for Justice in Indian Country*, Random House, 2020. The story of an Indian Woman, Lyssa Yellowbird, who was driven to solve the disappearance of a white oil worker during an oil boom on an Indian Reservation in North Dakota. It tells impact of the oil boom and bust on the Indian people.
- Whitehead, Colson. *The Underground Railroad*, Doubleday, 2016. A novel giving the story of a slave woman who flees from her plantation in Georgia and embarks on a trip of several stages on the underground railroad, with stops in South Carolina, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Indiana. Winner of the 2016 Pulitzer prize in fiction. Good story telling.
- X, Malcolm, and Alex Haley. *The Autobiography of Malcolm X – As Told To Alex Haley*, Random House, 1964. The well-written story of this extraordinary man's life makes for essential reading for people who want to understand race in America. I was left with the impression that he was 60 years ahead of his time, with his timeless and fascinating perspective on the lies and limitations of the American Dream, and the inherent racism in a society that denies its nonwhite citizens the opportunity to dream. **Highly Recommended**
- Cullors, Patrisse and Asha Bandele. *When They Call You A Terrorist: A Black Lives Matter Memoir*, St. Martins, 2020. Patrisse is one of the women who began the Black Lives Matter movement. This book tells of her childhood in a very poor home of a single mother. She is given a scholarship to UCLA and along with her education, she learns how to be an activist. Moving and contemporary. **Recommended.**

General Interest Books

- Muraresku, Brian C. *The Immortality Key – The Secret History of the Religion with No Name*, St. Martin's Press, 2020. Posits the theory that the original Eucharist shared by early Christians was a psychedelic potion prepared by women, and that this was a continuation of pagan rites.
- Novogratz, Jacqueline. *Manifesto for a Moral Revolution: Practices to Build a Better World*, Henry Holt & Co, 2020. Drawing on inspiring stories from the culmination of thirty years of work developing morally based and economically sustainable solutions for the problems of the poor throughout the world, Novogratz, the CEO of Acumen, divulges the most common leadership mistakes and the mind-sets needed to rise above them. **Highly recommended possibility for a book-read.**

- Lehane, Dennis. *The Given Day*, William Morrow, 2008. Set in Boston at the end of the WW I, the book captures the political and social unrest of a nation caught at the crossroads between past and future. It is the story of two families—one black, one white—swept up in a maelstrom of revolutionaries and anarchists, immigrants and ward bosses, Brahmins, and ordinary citizens, all engaged in a battle for survival and power.
- Inskeep, Steve. *Imperfect Union – How Jessie and John Fremont Mapped the West, invented Celebrity and Helped Cause the Civil War*, Penguin Books, 2021. Well-researched and well-told story of Jessie Benton Fremont and John Fremont. John’s sometimes ill-advised and reckless adventures in exploring the West, his role in the founding of the state of California, his running for President, and his fated business ventures are well detailed. One feels like he would have been a disaster as President. Jessie comes out the “better man of the two” in her political expertise, being the daughter of a US Senator, and her protecting and promoting of her husband. Makes good reading for a resident of Fremont, California. **Recommended for history buffs.**
- Hart, Carl L. *Drug Use for Grown-Ups: Chasing Liberty in the Land of Fear*, Penguin Books, 2022. Unabashed promotion of decriminalization of drug possession and use. Makes the case that most people don’t become addicts, and that drugs can be helpful to people. Ignores the drastic consequences of drug addiction that disrupt and ruin lives.

2021 Development Plan

Area	Plans	Timeline	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 online	June 2022	GA Attended virtually	Workshop planned
Attend Mental health seminars / conventions	Attend at least one local / state mental health convention in next year	Chosen by March 31	Seminar / convention attended	TBD
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	Racial literacy, Rewire, Jubilee 3
Spiritual Direction	Create opportunities for Spiritual Direction practice and supervision	On-going		Have two ongoing clients, monthly supervision, and a monthly UU SD group meeting.
Areas for growth in the next 2 yrs:				
Long term possibilities				
Mini Sabbatical	Plan to do a weaving tour in Laos and Viet Nam	Original plan: October 2020. New plan: Future		