

Quarterly Community Ministry Activities

For the Ministry of Rev. Barbara F. Meyers

June 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. Tried in-person in April and went back to Zoom.
- **UU Mental Health Network** – Presented a workshop at GA and had an in-person booth.
- **EqUUal Access Re-imagination Process.** UUA to pick up accessibility and justice work. AIM certification has ended. EqUUal Access bylaws and structure have changed.
- **Anti-Racism:** Member of ARO team; Engaging in racial literacy reading and study. MPUUC vote to adopt the 8th Principle was successful on June 5, 2022. Successful Juneteenth celebration with about 60 attendees.
- **Social Justice** – As part of ICJJ, participated in planning and putting on a vigil to protest the many deaths at Santa Rita Jail, many of which were suicides by mentally ill prisoners.
- **Books**
 - Have spoken or preached to several congregations about my book *Held*. More presentations planned. Had a book signing at GA.
 - eCPR book to be published through the National Empowerment Center.
- **Personal** – My own mental health has improved.

Quarterly Ministerial Status Report Details

Education

Classes, Conferences and Seminars Given and Taken

- Attended How to Become a Medical-Peer Support Specialist, given by the California Department of Health Care Services, May 10, 2022. Thinking of grandparenting into the California peer support specialist process. Good outline of what is required in this class.
- Gave a training to Bnai Keshet synagogue on May 13, 2022. The training was based on my book HELD. Well-received. My first training to a Jewish group.
- Attended the UUA General Assembly and the UUMA Ministry Days
- Attended class on Boundaries before UUMA Ministry Days

Anti-racism trainings

- Completed the *Rewire* training to help white people eradicate racism within themselves.
- Completed intensive 14-week Racial Healing training led by Tovi Skruggs-Hussein. This training got me to work on my tendency to avoid conflict, with very helpful results in my life.

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

- Attended webinar *Ethics in Peer Support* from the Doors to Wellbeing, presented by Crystal Gery-Agee. May 31, 2022. Great discussion of ethics for peer supporters.
- Attended webinar: Faith and Spirituality in Trauma Recovery, presented by Mental Health America, June 29, 2022. Speakers: Dr. LaNail Plummer, CEO of Onyx Therapy Group, and Shani Banks, founder of Holistic Muslim Healing. Excellent description of how faith and spirituality can be important in recovering from different kinds of trauma, with a concentration on Black Muslim trauma.

Spiritual Direction

Have two clients who I meet with monthly online. Started group 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. Will publish it through the National Empowerment Center.

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. Had one month of in-person meetings, and now back to Zoom meetings while management re-thinks a comprehensive plans for the group.

Encouragement Committee

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

Priestly

- Led worship at the Foothills UU in Marysville, Tennessee. On May 8, 2022, on HELD.
- Led mental health workshop at the Bnai Keshet Synagogue, Montclair, New Jersey, May 13, 2022.
- Led workshop at All Souls UU Congregation in New York City. On June 12, 2022, on HELD

Social Justice

Community Awareness

- As part of Interfaith Coalition for Justice in the Jail, participated in planning and putting on a vigil to protest the many deaths at Santa Rita Jail, many of which were suicides by mentally ill prisoners.
- 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, which was successfully taken on June 5, 2022.

UUA Accessibility Group

- The congregational disability accessibility certification program called the Accessibility and Inclusion Ministry (AIM) program has ended. There is a commitment from the UUA to have UUA employees assume the Accessibility work. EqUUal Access has reorganized and 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

- My personal mental health has improved largely by moving toward conflict with curiosity rather than avoiding conflict, and also by taking omega-3 fatty acids supplements.
- Got mild case of Covid after returning from General Assembly in Portland.
- Visit my spiritual director and my psychiatrist regularly.
- Beauty Diary and daily meditation 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

- Thomas, Sheri. *Imbalanced – A Memoir*, Luminare Press, 2021. Memoir by UU disability and mental health advocate telling of her life with cerebral palsy and a late-occurring diagnosis of bipolar illness.

Anti-Racism Books

- Broom, Sarah M. *The Yellow House – A Memoir*, Corsair, 2019. This book, which received the National Book Award for Non-Fiction, is at once a memoir about growing up as the youngest of 12 children in a black family in a poor neighborhood in New Orleans, a story of the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, and of her search to understand the pull of home after her family's home is demolished after the storm.
- Whitehead, Colson. *The Nickel Boys: A Novel*, Fleet, 2019. As a result of a mistake, a high school-age black boy is sent to a reform academy for boys to get “physical and moral training”. It turns out to be a chamber of horrors, with beatings, and even killings. This novel is based on a real reform school where bodies were later uncovered in mass graves.
- Barber, Rev. Dr. William J. II, with Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove. *The Third Reconstruction: How a Moral Movement is Overcoming the Politics of Division and Fear*, Beacon Press, 2016. Leader of protests involving over a hundred thousand people in North Carolina, who protested restrictions to voting access and an extreme make-over of state government.
- McGhee, Heather, *The Sum of Us, One World*, 2021. Analysis of the cost of racism to all Americans, not just blacks. The benefits to everyone when we come together across the racial divide to solve common problems. **Recommended.**
- Singh, Anneliese A., PhD, LPC. *The Racial Healing Handbook – Practical Activities to Help You Challenge Privilege, Confront Systemic Racism & Engage in Collective Healing*, New Harbinger Publications, Inc., 2019. This textbook for the Mindful Allyship Class I took is excellent. Lots of exercises leading you to becoming an anti-racist. **Recommended.**
- Trethewey, Natasha. *Memorial Drive*, Harper Collins, 2020. Poet Natasha Trethewey writes a tribute to her mother who was murdered when Natasha was nineteen. The book is a way of honoring her mother and the life they shared together. Her father was white, her mother black, and the book has a background of racism in the south.
- Zinn, Howard. *A People's History of the United States – 1492-Present*, Harper, 2017. US History from the bottom up, disrupting the narrative taught in schools. Quite comprehensive and disturbing.
- Harper, Frances Ellen Watkins. *Iola Leroy –or Shadows Uplifted*, James H. Erle, 1892. One of the first novels published by an African American woman. Set in the mid-1800's, it follows the life of a young woman whose family kept her black ancestry a secret. At her father's death, it is discovered, and she is forced into slavery until rescued during the Civil War. She devotes her subsequent life to helping other African Americans.
- Kendi, Ibram and Blain, Keisha N. *Four Hundred Souls – A Community History of African-America 1619-2019*, One World, 2021. Essays from 80 prominent African American scholars and 10 poets for each 5-year span between 1619 and 2019. The focus of each essay is on something of importance in the history of African Americans that happened in that time span. Remarkable. **Recommended.**
- Raines, Ben. *The Last Slave Ship – The True Story of How Clotilda Was Found, Her Descendants, and an Extraordinary Reckoning*, Simon and Schuster, 2022. Fifty years after importing slaves was banned, a ship brought the last group of slaves from Africa to the United States. The ship, the Clotilda, was burned and sunk. This is the remarkable story of how the ship was found, and the story of what happened to the enslaved people and their descendants in the United States. It gives a story of the horrible impact slavery had on the villages of African continent, some of whom became rich off of capturing others. **Highly Recommended.**
- Morrison, Toni. *God Help the Child*, Vintage, 2015. The story of a young woman, whose very dark black skin is part of her beauty, her boldness and confidence, her success in life, but which caused her light-skinned mother to deny her even the simplest forms of love. A story of child abuse.
- Morrison, Toni. *Sula*, Knopf, 2002. The story of Nel Wright and Sula Peace, who become friends as children in the small town of Medallion, Ohio. Nel and Sula's friendship endures even after Nel has grown up to be a pillar of the black community and Sula has become a pariah. But their friendship ends in an unforgivable betrayal.

- Allen, Theodore W, two appendices by Jeffrey B. Perry. *The Invention of the White Race – Volume I: Racial Oppression and Social Control, Second Edition*, Verso, 2012. A good deal of this scholarly book was about how the English oppressed the Irish, and how many of the patterns of racial expression carried over to the oppression of blacks in North America. Interestingly enough, when the Irish immigrated to the United States, they also participated in racial oppression of the blacks; they were no longer on the bottom of the social hierarchy – at least they weren't black. This distinction was especially encouraged by wealthy whites in the United States and led to widespread racial discrimination. **Recommended for scholars.**

General Interest Books

- Campbell, Judith. *False Pretenses – An Olympia Brown Mystery*, Fine Line Press, 2022. Another mystery written by my ministerial colleague Rev. Judith Campbell. Rev. Olympia Brown helps a waning congregation, and helps rescue an undocumented, abused woman.
- Grann, David. *The Devil and Sherlock Holmes – Tales of Murder, Madness and Obsession*, Doubleday, 2010. Collection of 12 previously published articles about people in the grip of obsession who the author had studied and interviewed.
- Labatut, Benjamin. Translated from the Spanish by Adrian Nathan West. *When We Cease to Understand the World*, New York Review of Books, 2021. Fictional tales of the lives of real-life scientists and thinkers whose discoveries resulted in moral consequences. Although this is highly rated, I found it a tough slog to get through.
- Rohr, Richard. *Falling Upward – Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life*, Jossey-Bass 2011. This book sounded like it was telling my life's story; you find spiritual depth and meaning in overcoming obstacles. The second half of life is for living in spiritual depth – the “spirituality of imperfection” or “the way of the wound.” Loved it. **Recommended.**
- Green, John. *The Anthropocene Reviewed – Essays on a Human-Centered Planet*, Penguin Random House, 2021. Thoughtful essays on various aspects of contemporary life.
- Peskin, Sara Manning, *A Molecule Away from Madness – Tales of the Hijacked Brain*, W.W. Norton, 2022. Stories of how minute changes of molecules in the brain can dramatically affect a person's behavior and ability to live.
- Rule, Ann. *Dead by Sunset – Perfect Husband? Perfect Killer?*, Simon & Schuster, 1995. Tale of the life of Bradley Cunningham who abused many women and murdered his wife Cheryl Keeton, the circumstances of their lives and how he was caught and tried for the murder. Masterfully told.
- Huneven, Michelle. *Search*, Penguin Press, 2022. Novel about a search for a new minister in a UU congregation. Some of the ministers were thinly disguised portraits of people I know.
- Leschziner, Guy. *The Man Who Tasted Words – A Neurologist Explores the Strange and Startling World of Our Senses*, St. Martin's Press, 2022. A number of case studies of patients with difficulties related to their perceptions of what their senses are telling them. Shows that what we perceive to be absolute truths of the world around us is actually a complex internal reconstruction by our minds and nervous systems.

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	Rewire and Racial Healing classes
Attend GA in person or virtually	GA in June online	June 2022	GA Attended physically	Workshop presented
Attend Mental health seminars / conventions	Attend at least one local / state mental health convention in next year	Chosen by March 31	Seminar / convention attended	How to Become a Medical-Peer Support Specialist

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		