

Quarterly Community Ministry Activities

For the Ministry of Rev. Barbara F. Meyers

December 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. All people who work for the Peer Wellness Collective are being trained as Peer Support Specialists. Training ...
- **UU Mental Health Network** – Elected to another 2-year term as board president.
- **EqUual Access Re-imagination Process.** MOU with the UUA has been signed. The UUA to add employees to do some disability work. A long time (10 years +) in coming!
- **Anti-Racism:** Continued my education and involvement in the ARO team at MPUUC.
- **Books**
 - eCPR book to be published through the National Empowerment Center. Signed a contract and received an advance.
 - Submitted a proposal to Skinner House Books for a book on disability to be co-authored with Shelly Rohe, the former AIM Administrator.

Quarterly Ministerial Status Report Details

Education

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

- The parent organization for Reaching Across, which renamed itself as *Peer Wellness Collective*, decided that all employees become official Peer Support Specialists so that we can bill our time spent with clients to MediCal, as allowed for in a newly passed California law. Taking classes Monday – Friday 10:00 – 12:30 for the month of November and first weeks of December. Exam to be taken in December.
- Attended a 3-Part Webinar: *Spiritual Journaling and Deep Listening: Practical Wisdom for Spiritual Directors and Companions*, sponsored by Spiritual Directors International. The leaders were Colette Lafia and Debie Thomas. October 11, 18, and 25. Very good wisdom about using journaling exercises to help self and clients. I know I will use some of this in my own life, and with the people I am companioning as a spiritual director.
- Attended webinar “*Art and Healing – The Beauty Path*” by Meghan Caughey, sponsored by the National Empowerment Center, October 20, 2022. Excellent webinar! The author wrote the book *Mudflower – Surviving Schizophrenia Through Art*. I will be able to use some of the exercises that I learned in my work with Reaching Across. One of the best webinars that I’ve attended.
- Attended webinars “*Supporting Neurodivergent Children and Youth*” and “*Bonus Material*”, November 16, 2022 and November 28, 2022. Created by the UUMA. Good tips to work with neurodivergent children and youth.
- Attended some of the online *Alternatives Conference* sessions. Nov 2, 3, 4, 2022. Sponsored by the National Coalition for Recovery. Groups formed to create on-going work in advocacy in education, legislation and creating peer services.
- Attended webinar *DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) Initiatives can be Leveraged in Peer Support Work*, by Vanessa Williams, October 25, 2022, sponsored by the Center for Wellbeing.
- Appeared as an invited panelist representing the UU Mental Health Network in a webinar by UUs for a Just Economic Community, October 27, 2022.

Spiritual Direction

Have one client who I meet with monthly online. Continued 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

Signed a contract and received an advance from the National Empowerment Center who will be the publisher.

Reaching Across

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. Zoom meetings while management re-thinks a comprehensive plans for the group.

Encouragement Committee

After my mental health crisis, I decided to no longer lead this group, but just be a member of the group. Two people have stepped up to co-lead the group. They did an excellent job while I was unavailable and work well together. Incredibly happy with this outcome.

Priestly

- Led worship at MPUUC on December 4, 2022 on Disability Justice.
- Represented UUism by reading a prayer at an interfaith vigil for homeless people who died in 2022. November 27, 2022.

Social Justice

Community Awareness

- Part of the ARO Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression social justice group at MPUUC. Will continue to educate the congregation on anti-racism and oppression, and lead in a congregational response to the Article 2 Study Commission. Grateful for Rev. Greg's participation and support in this effort.

UU Mental Health Network

Reelected President of the Board of the UU Mental Health Network. Chief accomplishments include:

- Mental Health quotes from my book are now in UUA's Worship Web. More will be coming.

UUA Accessibility Group

- EqUUal Access has successfully executed an MOU with the UUA in which UUA will have UUA employees assume the congregation-based Accessibility work, and some Disability Justice work. This was something that took over a decade to make happen. 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

- Monthly meetings with my spiritual director.
- Yoga, Beauty Diary, and daily meditation are helpful spiritual practices
- Keeping up my exercise by walking 4-5 miles a day. Longer runs once a week. This was interrupted when I was recovering from covid and depression.

Other

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

Mental Health Books

- Maté, Gabor, with Daniel Maté. *The Myth of Normal: Trauma, Illness, and Healing in a Toxic Culture*, Random House, 2022. Famed physician and author believes that for all our expertise and technological sophistication, Western medicine often fails to treat the whole person, ignoring how today's culture stresses the body, burdens the immune system, and undermines emotional balance. Now Maté brings his perspective to the great untangling of common myths about what makes us sick, connects the dots between the maladies of individuals and the declining soundness of society—and offers a compassionate guide for health and healing.
- Caughey, Meghan J.M. *Mud Flower: Surviving Schizophrenia and Suicide Through Art*, Luminare Press, 2021. Moving story of the life of artist Meghan Caughey who lives with a schizophrenia diagnosis. How her out-of-control mental problems led to dozens of hospitalizations and several suicide attempts, and how her artwork led her to a job helping other peers heal through art.

Recommended.

- Vine, Phyllis. *Fighting for Reform – An Activist's History of Mental Health Reform*, Beacon Press, 2022. The history of the former psychiatric patients, families, and courageous activists who formed a patients' liberation movement that challenged medical authority and proved to the world that recovery from mental illness is possible. I know many of the people profiled. **Recommended.**
- Pruchno, Rachel A. *Beyond Madness – The Pain and Possibilities of Serious Mental Illness*, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2022. Part memoir, part guide to families of people with mental illness. Lots of good strategies for finding care and navigating the broken mental health system.

Anti-Racism Books

- Banaji, Mahzarin and Greenwald, Anthony. *Blindspot: Hidden Biases of Good People*, Delacorte Press, 2013. Fascinating study by two psychologists of the hidden biases that we carry by having cultural attitudes about age, gender, race, social class, and other factors, and which without our conscious control shape our likes, dislikes, and judgments. Presents conclusions about the effects of these unconscious preferences on racial inequalities. **Recommended**
- Coates, Laura. *Just Pursuit: A Black Prosecutor's Fight for Fairness*, Simon & Schuster 2022. Entertaining best seller with stories of a US Prosecuting Attorney in DC. Shows how even with the best intentions, “the pursuit of justice creates injustice.”
- Jacob, Mira. *Good Talk – A Memoir in Conversations*, One World, 2019. The audio version of this award-winning book is fabulous. Mira Jacob is the daughter of Indian immigrants who married a Jewish man. She tells the story of her life with other people reading the dialog with her. The vignettes are sometimes hilarious, and sometimes sad, as she exposes the racism that she experienced.
- Mills, Charles W. *The Racial Contract*, Cornell University Press, 2022 25th anniversary edition. Award winning, classic academic study that introduced critical race theory. Argues that the society we live in is a continuing white supremacist state.
- Eddo-Lodge, Reni. *Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race*, Bloomsbury Circus, 2017. Discussion of Racism in Great Britain by a woman with Jamaican parents who was born in England. The problems in England are eerily like the problems of race in the US.
- Gaines, Ernest J. *A Lesson Before Dying*, Vintage, 1994. A prize-winning novel about an innocent black youth who is convicted of a crime in 1940's Louisiana and given the death sentence. His attorney says he is no better than a hog. His god-mother convinces an educated black teacher to meet with him and teach him how to die with dignity “like a man.” This he does.
- Rankine, Claudia. *Citizen: An American Lyric*, Greywolf Press, 2014. Award winning poetry about micro-aggressions by a poet, essayist, playwright, and professor at Yale. Beautiful expression of this be-numbing experience.
- King, Ruth. *Mindful of Race: Transforming Racism from the Inside Out*, Sounds True, 2018. King is a meditation teacher and diversity consultant. In this book she helps readers see the complexity of racial identity and the dynamics of oppression. She offers guided meditation instructions on how to work with our own role in the story of race and shows how to come to a place of compassion

Recommended.

- Danticat, Edwidge. *Breath, Eyes, Memory*, Vintage, 1994. This brilliant first novel written at age 25 made Danticat prominent on the literary scene. In 1998 it was an Oprah's Book Club selection. It tells the story of Sophie Caco who was born in Haiti, the child of a rape. Her mother moves to New York and leaves Sophie in the care of her sister. At age 12, Sophie comes to New York to be with her mother. She eventually marries a man next door and has a daughter. They return to Haiti to visit amidst the backdrop of the wonder, traditions, memories, and violence of Haiti. Themes include rape, family, suffering, madness, and the strength of Haitian women.
- Bayoumi, Moustafa. *How Does it Feel to be a Problem? – Being Young and Arab in America*, Penguin Press, 2008. The stories of seven young people of Arab ethnicity living in New York in the years after 9/11. All of them struggle to fit into a society, from being subjected to government surveillance to the indignities of workplace discrimination to having parents and family suddenly disappear.
- DiAngelo, Robin. *What Does It Mean to Be White? Developing White Racial Literacy, Revised Edition*, Peter lang, 2016. Esteemed anti-racist trainer DiAngelo puts together a comprehensive set of lessons about white racial literacy. Definitions, white fragility, how whites deny or can't see racism, and white silence are some of the lessons. A good overview for white people to learn about racism.
- Ball, Edward. *Slaves in the Family*, Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 1998. Edward Ball, a descendant of the Ball family which owned many plantations in South Carolina does research on his family and discovers that his slave holding patriarch fathered another family with one of his slaves. He traces that other family, finds and contacts present day members. Lots of research went into finding details about slaves being sold and their family members. He issues an apology to his present day African American relatives.
- Baldwin, James. *Go Tell It On The Mountain*, Doubleday, 1952. Baldwin's semi-autobiographical first novel and masterpiece tells the story of the spiritual rebirth of 14-year-old John Grimes in a Pentecostal church in Harlem. The stories of family members are told in flashbacks, revealing the love and the hypocrisy in their lives. Sexuality and racism are major themes.
- Baldwin, James. *Going to Meet the Man*, Dial Press, 1965. A rich collection of eight beautifully written short stories that cover many topics related to anti-Black racism in American society. Includes topics of African-American–Jewish relations, childhood, jazz, family relationships, jazz, lynching, sexuality, and white supremacy.
- Baldwin, James. *Giovanni's Room*, Knopf, 1956. Widely considered to be a masterpiece, it is the story of an American ex-pat in Paris in the 1950's who has just proposed to his girlfriend. While she is away for a time to think about the proposal, he begins a homosexual affair with Giovanni, a bar tender in a gay bar. His internal struggle with his bisexuality against a society that wouldn't accept it is a major theme. When his girlfriend returns, he breaks up with Giovanni and there is a tragic ending.
- Baldwin, James. *Another Country*, Dial Press, 1962. The novel is primarily set in Greenwich Village and Harlem, New York City, in the late 1950s. It portrayed many themes that were taboo at the time of its release, including bisexuality, interracial couples and extramarital affairs.
- Hughes, Langston. *Not Without Laughter*, Knopf, 1930. Semi-autobiographical novel of a young African American boy growing up in a small Kansas town. A depiction of the joys and challenges of ordinary small-town Black. Celebrates the beauty of Black English, music and customs. Hughes grew up in Lawrence, Kansas.
- Schuyler, George. *Black No More: Being an Account of the Strange and Wonderful Workings of Science in the Land of the Free, A.D. 1933–1940*, 1931. A Harlem Renaissance satire about an invention that can turn Blacks into White – what happens to society, to Black groups, to white supremacists, to the economy, to politics. Wickedly funny, it is a treat to read. **Recommended.**
- Fisher, Rudolph. *The Conjure-Man Dies – A Mystery Tale of Dark Harlem*, Harper Collins, 1932. This book is the first mystery novel written by an African-American, Rudolph Fisher, who was a medical doctor in Harlem. In the story, a 'conjure-man', a fortune teller, a mysterious figure who sits in darkness while his clients sit directly across from him, bathed in light. One of his clients realizes that the person he is talking to is dead. The plot cleverly puts a Harlem doctor as one of the key detectives who helps solve the case. Lots of local color.
- Thandeka. *Learning To Be White – Money, Race, and God in America*, Continuum, 1999. Focuses on how white people are harmed by racism, including child abuse, class exploitation, the inability to relate to others, and shame all justified in the name of race money and God.

- Bigelow, Bill, and Peterson, Bob, editors. *Rethinking Columbus – The Next 500 Years*, Rethinking Schools, 1998. Intended for elementary and secondary teachers, this book has resources by many authors for teaching about the impact of the arrival of Columbus in the Americas. From the point of view of indigenous cultures, it challenges the historical narrative taught in many schools. **Recommended for teachers.**
- Johnson, Allan G. *Privilege, Power, and Difference, Second Edition*, McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2006. Textbook written for people to examine systems of privilege and difference in our society. Accessible tool for reaching about privilege and oppression.

General Interest Books

- Penny, Louise. *A World of Curiosities*, Minotaur Books, 2022. Another beautifully written mystery with Canadian Chief Inspector Armond Gamache, involving secret rooms, old crimes he has solved and an escaped convict with revenge on his mind. **Recommended**
- Prouty, Olive Higgins. *Now, Voyager*, Houghton, Mifflin 1941. Portrayal of the inner life of a privileged woman, dominated by her mother who has a nervous breakdown and is greatly helped by psychotherapy. She takes a trip to Italy where she falls in love with a fellow voyager and emerges much stronger, her own woman. I really liked this book which was made into a movie starring Bette Davis in an academy award nominated performance. **Recommended.**
- Prouty, Olive Higgins. *Stella Dallas*, Houghton, Mifflin 1923. Stella Dallas is a working-class woman who marries a rich businessman but struggles to adapt to her new life. After the marriage fails, she sacrifices her own happiness for the sake of her daughter. It has been made into three movies and a long-running radio serial. **Recommended**

2023 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	
Attend GA in person or virtually	GA in June online	June 2023	GA Attended physically	
Attend Mental health seminars / conventions	Attend at least one local / state mental health convention in next year	Chosen by March 31	Seminar / convention attended	
Mental Health Ministry	Discern next actions in support of mental health	Chosen by March 31	Determine direction of UU Mental Health Ministry	
Racial Justice	Discern actions in support of racial justice	Chosen by March 1	Meaningful actions taking place	
Spiritual Direction	Create opportunities for Spiritual Direction practice and supervision	On-going		
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		