

Quarterly Community Ministry Activities

For the Ministry of Rev. Barbara F. Meyers

June 2023

Executive Summary

- **Continue to work quarter time as Assistant Director of Life Reaching Across to Life.** We are now having in-person meetings at Reaching Across 3 days a week, with some of the meetings being hybrid.
- **UU Mental Health Network** – We have made some progress in our resources. Seeking to have a relationship with the prisoner writing program run by the Church of the Larger Fellowship.
- **Anti-Racism:** Continued my education and involvement in the ARO team at MPUUC.
- **Books**
 - eCPR book to be published through the National Empowerment Center. They have completed most of the final edits.
 - Delivered manuscript to Skinner House Books, July 12, 2023

Quarterly Ministerial Status Report Details

Education

- Took the online course “*UU Ups and Downs: Lessons from the Past*” from the Starr King School for the Ministry. Taught by Rev. John Buehrens in six sessions, this class told the fascinating history of UUs in the Bay Area from 1850 to present.
- Took Continuing Education class *Law and Ethics Training class for Peer Support Specialists*. Led by Best NOW. Covered California Code of Ethics for Peer Support Specialists, Boundaries, Dual Relationships, Confidentiality, HIPAA, and Mandated Reporting. Aug 18, 2023
- Took online course “*Ayahuasca Use: Risks and Benefits*” offered by the Integrative Mental Health University and taught by Susan Bustos, PhD who is a practitioner. Ayahuasca is an indigenous psychedelic illegal in the US, but legal in Peru where many treatments are given. Some people have gotten help for addictions and PTSD with it, but there are also contraindications.
- Took the online course “*Inner Ethics: When Working with non-Ordinary States*” from the Integrative Mental Health University, Sept 29, 2023. Discussed the particular ethical care that is needed when a client is having a non-ordinary state, such as a spiritual emergency or psychedelic therapy.

Attended webinars on Peer Specialists / Mental Health

- Took online seminar *Black 365 - Reclaiming your Power: The Necessity of Self-Care for Self-Preservation*, Sponsored by the National Training and Technical Assistance Center, led by Dr. Carmen Reese Foster and Kertesha B. Riley. Explored the origins of self-care and its necessity for sustainability for those who do impactful work in the Black community. New concept for me: part of self-care is care of the community. July 13, 2023.
- Took webinar: *A Taste of Wonderland – Birthing a New Story of ‘Best Life* for all, presented by Hilary Van Welter and Bret Warshawsky, July 18, 2023. Fantastic vision of what a new paradigm treatment for mental health could be: Breakdown -> Breakthrough, Diagnosis -> Human systems change, Clinical treatment -> Diverse healing modalities, Lifelong suffering -> Healing, Resilience and Joy.
- Took webinar *Supporting Neurodivergent Students in Higher Ed & Challenging Discrimination: Human Rights & Social Justice* by given by Shira Collings and Nev Jones, sponsored by the National Empowerment Center. The results of research on involuntary commitment and its impact on college students show that involuntary commitment is overwhelmingly negative. Recommendations made.

Healing

Spiritual Direction

Have three clients 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 for now.

Reaching Across

Continued compensated job for quarter-time work. We have started an in-person and hybrid program.

Encouragement Committee

I participate as a member of this committee.

Committee on Ministry

I was elected to be a member of this committee. We will be active during Greg's 3-month sabbatical.

Priestly

- Worship leader on July 16, 2023, on General Assembly 2023

Social Justice

Community Awareness

The emcee of the interfaith Annual day of Peace on Sept 21, 2023

UU Mental Health Network

President of the Board of the UU Mental Health Network. Resources on the website greatly improved.

UUA Accessibility Group

Continue as board secretary of the EqUUal Access organization.

UUA Addictions Ministry

As member of the UUA Addictions Ministry, kept the website up and responded to our referred questions. Participated in a group discussion led by the UUA to enliven this effort.

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.
- Signed up for an Alzheimer's support group for caregivers since Tom was diagnosed with Alzheimer's
- Signed up for a weaving & food tour of Oaxaca, Mexico next March.

Books Read

Mental Health Books

- Cavanagh, Sarah Rose. *Mind Over Monsters – Supporting Youth Mental Health with Compassionate Challenge*, Beacon Press, 2023. To support youth mental health, we must create what Cavanagh calls compassionate challenge—first, we need to cultivate learning and living environments characterized by compassion, and then, we need to guide our youth into practices that encourage challenge, helping them face their fears in an encouraging, safe, and even playful way. **Recommended.**
- Miller, Lisa. *The Awakened Brain: The New Science of Spirituality and Our Quest for an Inspired Life*, Random House, 2021. I can't believe I didn't know about this fabulous scientific study of spirituality and how it helps the brain! Weaving her own deeply personal journey of awakening with her

- groundbreaking research, Dr. Miller shows that humans are universally equipped with a capacity for spirituality, and that our brains become more resilient and robust because of it. **Highly Recommended**
- Gottstein, Jim. *The Zyprexa Papers*, Jim Gottstein, 2020. The Zyprexa papers were documents created by pharmaceutical giant Eli Lilly that showed that they were aware of and concealed harmful effects of their new and bestselling schizophrenia drug Zyprexa. This harm was not disclosed to the FDA or to doctors, who were encouraged by Eli Lilly's marketing to prescribe it off label to children and the elderly. Jim Gottstein obtained a copy of the papers and was instrumental in making them well-known. The book is the story of what ensued.
 - Snyder, Charles M. *The Lady and the President – The Letters of Dorothea Dix and Millard Fillmore*, University of Kentucky Press, 2014. Based on 150 newly discovered letters of both figures, the complete known correspondence between the mental health crusader and the US President, two people who highly esteemed each other. Having read Dix's highly religious *Meditations for Private Hours*, I was surprised that little of these sentiments are found in her correspondence with Fillmore.
 - Dirmann, Tina. *Such Good Boys – The True Story of a Mother and Two Sons and a Horrifying Murder*, St. Martin's Press, 2005. Jane Bautista is a mother with unacknowledged and undiagnosed paranoid schizophrenia, who mistreats her two sons. One of her sons murders her and the other helps him dispose of the body. The younger son can avoid prison by testifying against his brother who is convicted. It asks the question: who is responsible for children mistreated by a mentally ill mother.
 - Rosen, Jonathan. *The Best Minds: A Story of Friendship, Madness, and the Tragedy of Good Intentions*, Penguin Press, 2023. True story of the author and his boyhood best friend, the brilliant Michael Laudor. They both go to Yale and afterwards, Michael is hospitalized with schizophrenia. When he is released, he goes to Yale Law School, where he is given much support by his professors and classmates. After he graduates, his success story is published in the New York Times, and he soon as a book deal and a movie deal. Unfortunately, he stops taking his psych meds and kills his fiancé thinking she is an impostor who is out to destroy him. He is ruled to be too mentally ill to stand trial and is held in a psychiatric hospital. The story made me rethink the peer movement's insistence that all care should be voluntary. **Recommended.**

Anti-Racism Books

- Perry, Imani. *Looking for Lorraine – The Radiant and Radical Life of Lorraine Hansberry*, Beacon Press, 2018. Perry immersed herself in the life of Hansberry, playwright of *A Raisin in the Sun*, who died of cancer too young at age 34, and tells of her radical life and those much more prominent (James Baldwin, Nina Simone) whose lives she touched and influenced.
- Broome, Brian. *Punch Me Up to the Gods – A Memoir*, Mariner Books, 2021. I saw the interview that Brian Broome gave at GA and knew I had to read the book. Simply brilliant, poignant, beautiful writing of his life as a dark-skinned, gay African American boy and man. The theme is that what society has taught Black men to be is damaging to them and those around them. I am envisioning that many boys will read it and realize he has saved their lives. **Highly Recommended.**
- Ford, Dionine. *Go Back and Get It: A Memoir of Race, Inheritance, and Intergenerational Healing*, Bold Type Books, 2023. Story of a woman who traced her family history back to a remarkable great great grandmother who was a slave who bore children sired by her owner. She discusses her own trauma and how this search has helped to heal it. **Recommended.**
- Zack, Ian. *Odetta: A Life in Music and Protest*, Beacon Press, 2020. Biography of the remarkable folk and blues singer Odetta. It made me look up her music and listen.
- Taylor, Sonya Renee. *The Body is Not an Apology: The Power of Radical Self-Love*, Berrett-Koehler Publishers; 2nd edition, 2021. Humans are a varied and divergent bunch with all manner of beliefs, morals, and bodies. Systems of oppression thrive off our inability to make peace with difference and injure the relationship we have with our own bodies. The book offers radical self-love as the balm to heal the wounds inflicted by these violent systems.
- Seletzky, Leta McCollough. *The Kneeling Man: My Father's Life as a Black Spy who Witnessed the Assassination of Martin Luther King Jr.*, Counterpoint LLC, 2023. In the famous photograph of the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. on the balcony of Memphis's Lorraine Motel, one man knelt down beside King, trying to staunch the blood from his fatal head wound with a borrowed towel. This man was Marrell McCollough, the father of the author. In the book, she tells the story of his life.

- Ibrahim, Laila. *The Scarlet Carnation*, Lake Union Publishing, 2022. Continuing saga of black and white families, this time in the San Francisco Bay Area in the early 1900s. Themes are racism, class divides and WW I.

General Interest Books

- Stewart, Nancy Rubin. *Poor Richard's Women – Deborah Read Franklin and the Other Women Behind the Founding Father*, Beacon Press, 2022. This book is about the relationships that Benjamin Franklin had with the women in his life: his wife, his daughter, and the women in France and England who had very close relationships with. Interesting.
- Buehrens, John A. *Universalists and Unitarians in America: A People's History*, Skinner House Books, 2011. Former UUA President Buehrens has an encyclopedic memory for the stories behind all the major incidents in Unitarian, Universalist and Unitarian Universalist history.
- Buscaglia, Leo. *The Fall of Freddie the Leaf – A Story of Life for All Ages*, SLACK Incorporated, 1982. A book written to help children understand death. A well-respected classic. **Recommended.**
- Popkin, Jim. *Code Name Blue Wren – The True Story of America's Most Dangerous Female Spy—and the Sister She Betrayed*, Hanover Square Press, 2023. Ana Montes worked for the US Defense Intelligence Agency for 17 years and received many awards for her work as a Cuba specialist, but in actuality she was a spy who passed secrets to the Cubans. This is her story and that of her family, many of whom worked for the FBI, what motivated her actions and how she was caught.
- Talbot, David. *Season of the Witch – Enchantment, Terror, and Deliverance in the City of Love*, Free Press, 2012. The history of San Francisco from 1967 to 1982, showing the different transitions that happened in the city from the summer of love and the violence that followed it, to the People's Temple, to the Moscone and Milk murders, to the national football championship to the AIDS crisis. Beautifully written. **Recommended.**
- Simmons, Philip. *Learning to Fall: The Blessings of an Imperfect Life*, Bantam, 2003. Essays by Simmons who was living with ALS. With humor, hard-earned wisdom and a keen eye for life's lessons — whether drawn from great poetry or visits to the town dump — Simmons shares his discovery that even at times of great sorrow we may find profound freedom. And by sharing the wonder of his daily life, he offers us the gift of connecting more deeply and joyously with our own. Simmons died in 2002 and the book was posthumously published.
- Rhodes, Richard. *A Hole In the World – An American Boyhood*, Simon & Schuster, 1990. Story of Rhodes' troubled boyhood. He and his brother petitioned to be taken from their abusive parents' home to live with orphans. Heartbreaking, but they emerged to have successful lives.
- Rhodes, Richard. *The Making of the Atomic Bomb*, Simon & Schuster, 1986. Winner of the Pulitzer Prize, the National Book Award, and the National Book Critics Circle Award, this epic work details the science, the people, and the sociopolitical realities that led to the development of the atomic bomb. It begins with the turn-of-the-century discovery of nuclear energy, precedes with the nuclear experiments and discoveries, the creation of the laboratories, and ends with the surrender of the Japanese, with many character studies of the scientists and others who played a role. **Recommended.**
- Campbell, Judith. *You Can't Tell a Book – A Viridienne Green Mystery*, Fine.Line.Press, 2023. Another mystery by my UU minister colleague Judith Campbell. This one involves catching an infamous art thief. I inhale these books.
- Rowling, J.K. *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, Scholastic, 1998. I always wondered about the Harry Potter books so I tried one. Engaging tale of magic and harrowing chases and escapes.
- Martel, Yan. *Life of Pi: A Novel*, Mariner Books Classics, 2002. A story that can be understood on many levels. A boy is stranded on a lifeboat with just a Bengal tiger for a companion. They have many adventures trying to stay alive for 7 months until they reach land. The audible book version is so beautifully told that it was hard to stop listening. **Highly Recommended.**
- Zusak, Markus. *The Book Thief*, Knopf Books for Young Readers, 2016. Story of a young girl in Nazi Germany in the early years of WW II. A young girl loses her family and is taken in by a poor foster family. The girl learns to read and steals books to read. The girl's foster family hides a Jewish man in their basement and the girl becomes very attached to him. A movie was made based on the book.

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	Spiritual direction classes. Webinars
Attend GA in person or virtually	GA in June online	June 2023	GA Attended physically	Attended GA in Pittsburgh
Attend Mental health seminars / conventions	Attend at least one local / state mental health convention in next year	Chosen by March 31	Seminar / convention attended	Attended class in May to help people who are in spiritual crisis.
Mental Health Ministry	Discern next actions in support of mental health	Chosen by March 31	Determine direction of UU Mental Health Ministry	Ongoing. Working on support groups and speaker's bureau
Racial Justice	Discern actions in support of racial justice	Chosen by March 1	Meaningful actions taking place	As part of ARO committee.
Spiritual Direction	Create opportunities for Spiritual Direction practice and supervision	On-going		Taking supervision and giving spiritual direction.
Vacation				
Mini Sabbatical	International weaving and food tour in Oaxaca, Mexico	March 2024		Have signed up!