

# Quarterly Community Ministry Activities

For the Ministry of Rev. Barbara F. Meyers

**December 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** – Children and Youth Resource Toolkit now on our website. Seeking to have a relationship with the prisoner writing program run by the Church of the Larger Fellowship, I began writing to a prisoner.
- **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 the final edits and are close to publishing.
  - Delivered manuscript to Skinner House Books, July 12, 2023. Review of manuscript with Skinner House in early January.

## Quarterly Ministerial Status Report Details

### Education

- Took the online course “*Ketamine Assisted Psychotherapy*” from the Integrative Mental Health University. A doctor and two psychotherapists, with experience working with people taking ketamine (which is a legal psychedelic drug) talk about their protocols, the results, the contraindications, and some impressive success stories. This was excellent. December 15, 2023.

### *Attended webinars on Peer Specialists / Mental Health*

- Attended webinar The Role of Peer Support as an Indigenous Practice by Vesper Moore, November 29, 2023. Excellent presentation about how mental health problems are dealt with in indigenous communities.
- Attended webinar “Community is Medicine” from the Transformational Resilience company, which addresses the society-level mental health impacts that will occur in the climate catastrophe. December 12, 2023. Excellent analysis of the societal impacts that need to be addressed in the whole community, not just in individual.

## Healing

### *Spiritual Direction*

Have four clients who I meet with monthly online. Continued group Spiritual Director Supervision with Rev. Amy Beltaine. Joined covenanted bi-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 have been active during Greg's 3-month sabbatical.

### **Priestly**

- Worship Leader at Douglas Flat on October 8.
- Worship Associate at MPUUC on October 29 and December 24.

### **Social Justice**

#### ***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. An effort is underway to hire people to prepare worship and RE resources for congregations to use.

### **Self-Care**

- Attended PCD UUMA fall retreat in Santa Cruz, October 13-15.
- Monthly meetings with my spiritual director.
- 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.
- Continue as a member of an Alzheimer's support group for caregivers
- Signed up for a weaving & food tour of Oaxaca, Mexico next March.

### ***Books Read***

#### ***Mental Health Books***

- Palmer, Christopher. *Brain Energy - A Revolutionary Breakthrough in Understanding Mental Health—and Improving Treatment for Anxiety, Depression, OCD, PTSD, and More*. Palmer, a psychiatrist on the faculty of Harvard Medical School, explains a unified theory of what causes mental illness and many other diseases. It is what brings energy to the brain - metabolism and the role of mitochondria in each cell that make it happen. The goal is to make the mitochondria happy. Fascinating and hopeful, even if only some of it is true. **Highly Recommended**
- Dowell Sue, pen name for Kathy Hurt. *The Dark Has Its Own Light*, Westbow Press, 2016. The story of the childhood and early adulthood of Kathy Hurt whose parents expected perfection in everything from her. The story of her eventual hospitalization for depression and her eventual recovery. She became a UU minister. I found many similarities in her story and mine. A sister spirit!
- Lee, Erika. *The Making of Asian America: A History*, Simon & Schuster, 2016. Lee, a professor at Harvard, is the descendant of Chinese immigrants to the US in the mid-1800s. She writes a comprehensive history starting with the first Asians up to today. The book traces the experiences of myriad Asian-American communities, from Chinese laborers in 1850s California to Hmong refugees in 1980s Minnesota, and much more. I learned a lot. **Recommended.**
- Williams-Paisley, Kimberly. *Where the Light Gets In – Losing My Mother Only to Find Her Again*, Crown, 2017. Kimberly Williams-Paisley's mother had a rare form of dementia, and the book tells the story of their relationship before and during the illness. It has been helpful to many people.
- Griffin, Misty. *Tears of the Silenced – An Amish True Crime Memoir of Childhood Sexual Abuse, Brutal Betrayal, and Ultimate Survival*, Mango, 2018. Shocking story of parental child abuse among the Amish. Misty Griffin was able to leave, survive and thrive, determined to help other children who are abused. Opened my eyes to child abuse in closed religious communities. **Recommended.**

- Urban, Melissa. *The Book of Boundaries: Set the Limits That Will Set You Free*, Dial Press, 2023. Excellent book with words to use to set boundaries in many parts of your life. **Highly Recommended.**

### **Anti-Racism Books**

- Ruffin, Amber and Lamar, Lacey. *You'll Never Believe What Happened to Lacey – Crazy Stories About Racism*, Hachette Book Group, 2021. Vignettes, many of them funny, about incidents of racism in the life of Lacey Lamar. Her sister, comedian Amber Ruffin, is the narrator. Funny and sad at the same time.
- Dennis, David Jr, and Dennis, David Sr. *The Movement Made Us – A Father, A Son and the Legacy of a Freedom Ride*, Harper, 2022. The moving memoir of David Dennis Sr, an important organizer in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's, told with his son David Dennis Jr, a journalist. A chronicle of the triumphs and sorrows that the legacy of racism has left. **Recommended.**
- Kaur, Valerie. *See No Stranger – A Memoir and Manifesto of Revolutionary Love*, Penguin Random House, 2020. Sikh American Valerie Kaur tells of her journey from a farm in California to Stanford, Harvard Divinity School, and Yale Law School to become an activist and film maker focusing on “revolutionary love.” The stages that she identifies as necessary for the struggle are Wonder, Grieve, Fight, Rage, Listen, Reimagine, Breathe, Push and Transition, each beautifully told in the events of her life and in the life of the world. A remarkable book. **Recommended.**
- Ten Boom, Corrie, with John and Elizabeth Sherrill. *The Hiding Place*, Chosen Books, 1961. The true story of a Dutch woman and her family who hid Jews in World War II and were caught and sent to a concentration camp. Their Christian faith was enormously important in their commitment to the resistance. Remarkable. **Recommended.**
- Blackmon, Douglas A. *Slavery By Another Name – The Re-Enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II*, Doubleday, 2008. Devastating story of how it was common for southern blacks to be arrested on trumped-up charges, then sold to work off their fines as laborers in businesses, mines, and farms. Conditions were many times worse than slavery because there wasn't an incentive to keep slaves alive. I hadn't been aware of this immoral practice. I feel sick that this happened in my country. **Highly Recommended.**
- Sered, Danielle. *Until We Reckon: Violence, Mass Incarceration, and a Road to Repair*, The New Press, 2019. Passionate and well-reasoned treatise on failures of our criminal justice system and the effectiveness of restorative justice. Beyond that, it gives an argument for why reckoning with our past history is required if we are to make our country a safer place. **Recommended.**
- Ruttenberg, Danya. *On Repentance and Repair – Making Amends in an Unapologetic World*, Beacon Press, 2022. UUA's common book-read for 2022-2023. Using a Jewish model for repentance, the book explains the series of steps necessary for repentance when a person or a society has harmed someone or some group.
- Egan, Timothy. *A Fever in the Heartland: The Ku Klux Klan's Plot to Take Over America, and the Woman Who Stopped Them*, Viking, 2023. The story of how popular the KKK was in the mid-west in the mid-1920's, and Grand Dragon DC Stephenson's plan to become president of the United States. Thinking he was impervious to any prosecution, he raped and killed a woman and surprisingly was found guilty. The KKK lost much public favor after this. **Recommended.**
- Birnbaum, Nechama. *The Redhead of Auschwitz – A True Story*, Amsterdam Publishers, 2021. Rosie Greenstein's holocaust survival story has been written by her granddaughter. In 1944 Rosie and her family were sent from their home in Romania to Auschwitz and other concentration camps. Her determination to survive and return home kept her alive during that horrific experience.

### **General Interest Books**

- Zusak, Marcus. *The Book Thief*, Knopf Books for Young Readers, 2013. Story of a young girl in Germany at the time of the Nazi's who was being cared for by foster parents. She stole books to learn how to read. Her family hid a Jew, who survived along with the girl. Very readable. Made into a movie.
- Foster, Gary. *The Shift*, St. Martin's Press, 2021. Chief Scientific Officer at WW (formerly Weight Watchers) talking about the fundamental shifts that a person needs to make to get beyond the obstacles that keep them from true wellness. Among the shifts are treating yourself with compassion, leaning into your strengths, appreciating the power of small steps (and more frequent rewards), finding your

people, and truly relaxing into happiness and gratitude. This is a research based, excellent approach for goals beyond the scale.

- West, James L.W. *William Styron, A Life*, Random House, 1998. I read this book to understand the life of the author of *Darkness Visible*, a book that changed my life. The book follows him very closely throughout his life and I think I have gained an understanding of who he was. I really liked this one.
- Shick, Rev. Stephen M. *Speaking by Heart – The Spiritual Practice of Unscripted Public Speaking*, 2023. Techniques to learn how to speak and give sermons without notes. Involves immersing yourself in the subject matter, the art of telling a story, practicing, using body language, and releasing positive energy. Lots of good advice.
- Phelps, M. William. *We Thought We Knew You – A Terrifying True Story of Secrets, Betrayal, Deception, and Murder*, Kensington, 2020. The tale of the murder of a woman by her son’s spiteful ex-girlfriend. Well researched and hard to put down.
- Pearson, Thomas W. *An Ordinary Future – Margaret Mead, the Problem of Disability and a Child Born Different*, University of California Press, 2023. The author, an anthropologist, tells the story of being the father of a child with Down’s syndrome.
- Grann, David. *The Wager: A Tale of Shipwreck, Mutiny and Murder*, Doubleday, 2023. Remarkable true story of a British ship The Wager, that set out in a fleet to capture a Spanish galleon. It was shipwrecked on a rocky uninhabited island off the southern tip of South America, with the crew suffering starvation. Eventually there was a mutiny and two different ships with two different stories of what had happened eventually returned to England. No one was found guilty of anything.
- Ohler, Norman. *Blitzed – Drugs in the Third Reich*, Translated edition, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017. The story of systematic drug abuse in the Third Reich, including how Hitler was addicted to narcotics administered by his personal doctor Theodor Morell. Well researched and told.
- Saramago, Jose. *All the Names*, Harcourt, 1997. Translated from the Portuguese. Kafkaesque story about a civil servant who obsessively goes in search of an unknown woman, who he finds has died. About the closeness of the living to the dead. Saramago received the 1998 Nobel Prize in Literature.
- Cooper, Anderson and Howe, Katherine. *Vanderbilt: The Rise and Fall of an American Dynasty*, Harper, 2021. Anderson Cooper, the son of Gloria Vanderbilt, tells the story of the rise of the Vanderbilts in New York, and the fall of the dynasty chiefly due to their excessive spending to stay at the top of society.
- Cooper, Anderson and Howe, Katherine. *Astor: The Rise and Fall of an American Fortune*, Harper, 2023. Story of the Astor family in New York starting with the fir trader, later real-estate entrepreneur in New York City. Lots of profiles of particularly colorful Astors and their spouses, and how they became the top of society in the Gilded Age.
- Phelps, M. William. *Obsessed*, Pinnacle, 2014. True crime story of a woman who murdered the current girlfriend of her ex-boyfriend to win him back. She also attempted to murder her husband because he also stood in the way of getting her ex-boyfriend back.

## 2023 Development Plan

Area	Plans	Timeline	Measurement	Status
<b>Continuing education:</b>				
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.
<b>Vacation</b>				
Mini Sabbatical	International weaving and food tour in Oaxaca, Mexico	March 2024		Have signed up!