

Quarterly Community Ministry Activities

For the Ministry of Rev. Barbara F. Meyers

March 2024

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 is now on our website, and we will be giving a GA workshop on it. Began writing a prisoner through the 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. Copy editing finished. Publication is imminent
 - Delivered manuscript to Skinner House Books, July 12, 2023. Book to be edited by a writer hired by Skinner House. New publication target is fall of this year.

Quarterly Ministerial Status Report Details

Education

- Took the online course *Wellness Matters: Self Care for Mental Health Providers*, from the Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network, January 19, 2024.

Healing

Spiritual Direction

Have three clients who I meet with monthly online. Continued group Spiritual Director Supervision with Rev. Amy Beltaine. Restart of Sidewalk Talk is 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 were active during Greg's 3-month sabbatical.

Priestly

- Worship Leader at UU Marin on February 4.
- Worship Associate at MPUUC on February 18.
- Worship Leader at UU Livermore on March 10.

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. Helped to choose a person to prepare resources for congregations to use.

Self-Care

- 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
- Took a textile & food tour of Oaxaca, Mexico March 24 – April 4.

Books Read

Mental Health Books

- Bamford, Maria. *Sure, I'll Join Your Cult: A Memoir of Mental Illness and the Quest to Belong Anywhere*, Gallery Books, 2023. In a humorous book, comedian Maria Bamford disarmingly tells the story of all the trials she has made at dealing with mental health problems, including three stays in a psych ward. The chapter about dealing with suicidal thoughts is particularly good advice.

Anti-Racism Books

- Eig, Jonathan. *King – A Life*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2023. The first biography of King in 30 years, this has quickly become the definitive biography. Using sources not available to previous biographers, Eig paints a picture of a real human being with faults and triumphs, who accomplished so much in his short life. King emerges in this book as a giant focused on religious morality as applied to society. His wife is also shown to be a major influence on him and his thinking. A lot of what he spoke about were ideas that have direct relevance to our times. **Highly recommended.**
- McBride, James. *The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store*, Riverhead Books, 2023. Fabulously told story of Blacks and Jews living on the outskirts of a small Pennsylvania town, and what happens when a well-loved deaf Black boy is institutionalized by the state, and the lengths to which the community goes to rescue him. **Highly recommended**
- McBride, James. *The Color of Water – A Black Man's Tribute to His White Mother*, Riverhead Books, 4th Edition, 2006. This book has become a classic memoir that tells the story of a Jewish woman who marries a Black man in New York in the 1940's and has 8 children. When her husband dies, she marries again and has 4 more children. They live in the projects in New York City and have very few material goods. But all 12 children graduate from college and have successful careers. Beautifully told and **Highly recommended.**
- McBride, James. *The Good Lord Bird*, Riverhead Books, 2014. Winner of the National Book Award. The story about a young black boy joins John Brown's effort dressed as a girl and becomes Brown's "good luck charm." There are lots of harrowing experiences following Brown. After the Harper's Ferry raid, he escapes capture. Gives one a flavor of the times from both a white and black point of view.
- McBride, James. *Deacon King Kong*, Riverhead Books 2020. Another brilliantly written novel from McBride. This is about characters in a blighted community in Brooklyn in the 1960's. A shooting by a drunken church deacon of a neighborhood drug dealer unfolds to show the intertwined lives of many in the neighborhood, giving a realistic look at how people in these circumstances live. The lessons learned are of the importance of compassion and love.
- Davis, Angela. *Are Prisons Obsolete?* Seven Stories Press, 2003. The famed Black scholar takes on the question of prisons with a convincing, scholarly argument that answers the title's question in the affirmative. Looking at when and why prisons were created, and how those times have changed, she looks at reforms, conflict leasing which remains today, gender structures, and finally at abolitionist alternatives. A good starting point for those who want to consider this issue.
- Powell, John A. *Racing to Justice – Transforming Our Conceptions of Self and Other to Build an Inclusive Society*, Indiana University Press, 2015. A collection of essays focused on what needs to be

done to move towards a multi-racial society. He emphasizes the necessity of coming to terms with white privilege to make this happen. The line that struck me: “In transforming whiteness and privilege, whites would get the chance to be human beings.”

- Lee, Erika and Yung, Judy. *Angel Island – Immigrant Gateway to America*, Oxford University Press, 2010. The definitive book on Angel Island. Well-researched, beautifully written with individual family stories from Chinese, Japanese, South Asian, Korean, Russians, Jews, Mexicans and Filipinos who immigrated and were detained at Angel Island.
- Fanon, Frantz, translated by Richard Philcox. *The Wretched of the Earth*, Grove Press, 1963. A treatise about the dehumanizing effects of colonization upon an individual person and upon a nation. It discusses the necessity of a violent social revolution against the colonists, with the most oppressed playing a major role. Realizing that the changing needs of each new generation, it argues that they need to discover their mission and fight for it.

General Interest Books

- Wharton, Edith. *The Age of Innocence*, Appleton, 1920. How fortuitous that I read this after Anderson Cooper’s books about the same era in New York City, the Vanderbilts and the Astors. This book, which received the Pulitzer Prize, is the story of a man living in that era whose life is heavily constrained by its mores. He meets and falls in love with a young woman who is a cousin to his wife. Beautifully told story of his thoughts and longings which are dashed by what is expected of him. Made into a play and a movie. **Recommended.**
- Haidt, Jonathan. *The Righteous Mind – Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion*, Pantheon Books, 2012. Professor of Psychology looks at why there is so much polarization in US especially on the subjects of politics and religion. Proposes a set of moral principles that help to understand the motivations of liberals and conservatives. Urges others to try and understand the motivations of others.
- Lewis, C.S. *The Screwtape Letters*, 1942. A satire in which a highly placed devil named Screwtape in a collection of letters instructs his nephew Wormwood on how to tempt a man away from “the godly enemy” and win a soul to Hell.
- Phelps, M. William. *Beautifully Cruel*, Pinnacle, 2017. True crime story of how Tracey Richter Roberts murdered 20-year-old special-needs neighbor Justin Wehde in a plot to frame her ex-husband who was about to get custody of her son, and how the case was prosecuted resulting in a guilty verdict.
- Lucey, Donna J. *Archie and Amelie – Love and Madness in the Gilded Age*, Harmony Books, 2006. John Armstrong Chanler (Archie) was an heir to the Astor riches and Amelie Rives a writer and enchanting temptress, were both passionate and intense. They married, but they tormented each other, and it didn’t last. Archie spent 4 years in an insane asylum and escaped. Fascinating true story.
- McFadden, Freida. *The Housemaid*, Bookouture, 2022. A woman ex-con gets a job as a housemaid for a wealthy couple. The wife is hostile, and the husband is charming, leading to the housemaid having an affair with him. When the wife is kicked out, the maid finds out how evil and cruel the husband really is, and the wife’s behavior starts to make sense. There is a surprising twist at the end of the novel.
- Pääbo, Svante. *Neanderthal Man: In Search of Lost Genomes*, Basic Books, 2014. The story of how the genome of the Neanderthal was sequenced by the man who directed the effort and later got a Nobel Prize for this work. Fascinating scientific gamesmanship by Pääbo and his colleagues. **Recommended**
- Albom, Mitch. *Finding Chika: A Little Girl, An Earthquake and the Making of a Family*, Harper, 2019. Albom takes responsibility for an orphanage in Haiti. One of the children has a brain tumor and he takes her to the US to get treatment, where she becomes a member of the family. She lives for about 2 years and then dies. Poignant.
- Phelps, M. William. *Kill for Me*, Pinnacle, 2010. Tracy Humphrey is accused of kidnapping and rape, a crime that his victim has decided to pursue in court. His plan for dealing with this is to convince his wife to murder the victim. They are caught and found guilty. Thoroughly researched.
- Phelps, M. William. *Never See Them Again*, Pinnacle, 2012. A teenager helps kill four of her friends. An account of the long path to finding and convicting the killer.
- Green, Graham. *The Power and the Glory*, Penguin Classics 2015. Original publication 1940. Mexico, the late 1930s: A paramilitary group has outlawed the Catholic Church and is executing its clergy.

Now the last priest is on the run, fleeing not just an unshakable police lieutenant but also his own wavering morals. He is found and executed. Known as Green's masterpiece.

- Horton, Michelle. *Dear Sister: A Memoir of Secrets, Survival, and Unbreakable Bonds*, Grand Central Publishing, 2024. Horton's sister Nikki killed her abusive husband in self-defense. She was tried and convicted of murder, before finally being freed after 6 years of incarceration. This is the story about how Michelle supported Nikki, caring for her children during this period. Powerfully written.
- Elston, Ashley. *First Lie Wins*, Pamela Doorman Books, 2024. Suspenseful mystery that keeps you guessing until the last line of the book.

2023-2024 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		Took the trip! It was great!