

Quarterly Community Ministry Activities

For the Ministry of Rev. Barbara F. Meyers

December 2024

Executive Summary

- **Continue to work quarter time as Assistant Director of Life Reaching Across to Life.** We have in-person meetings at Reaching Across 3 days a week, with some of the meetings being hybrid. Funding for our organization is guaranteed for at least 3 more years.
- **UU Mental Health Network** – Reelected to another 2-year term as president of the organization. Proposing a GA workshop on companionship and NAMI FaithNet.
- **Anti-Racism:** Continued my education and involvement in the ARO team at MPUUC.
- **Self-Care:** My one day a month to do craft work has worked wonderfully. My psychiatrist and spiritual director both think I should work up to one day a week. Considering it!
- **Books**
 - Emotional CPR Book had a formal book launch – a lot of fun to participate.
 - Disability book reorganized by Skinner House. I feel good about this reorganization. It will be published in 2025.

Quarterly Ministerial Status Report Details

Education

- Took the online class *Nutrition, Micro-nutrients and Mental Health* offered by Integrated Mental Health University. Taught by Dr. Pam Shervanick. Advice was given on getting a test to see what levels of important vitamins you have in your body. Negative on pharmaceuticals. She believes people diagnosed with schizophrenia have special gifts.
- Took the 5-part class *Contemplative Creativity: Explorations of Art in Spiritual Companionship* from the Spiritual Director's Institute, October 2024. Four different artists engaged class members in a creative activity and a discussion about how it related to spirituality and might be used in spiritual direction. Excellent!
- Took the webinar: *Supervision Within Peer Values*, presented by Kimberly Marquez-Cortes and Bre Williams from PEERS, presented by the SAMHSA Doors to Wellbeing webinar series, October 29, 2024. The experience of being a supervisor of peers. Lots of good ideas from the presenters and attendees.
- Took the webinar: *Nervous System Informed Yoga for Holistic Healing*, taught by Joanne Lutz, sponsored by the National Empowerment Center and SAMHSA, Nov 19, 2024. Excellent workshop showing us specific yoga poses and breathwork for mental health and explaining how each of them works on your nervous system. Loved This! Lutz has a business training psychotherapists about how to use yoga with their clients.
- Took the class: *Medi-Cal Billing for Peer Support Specialists* taught by the Best Now organization. Nov 25, 2024.

Healing

Spiritual Direction

Have four clients who I meet with monthly online. Continued group Spiritual Director Supervision with Rev. Amy Beltaine. I offered to train Faithful Fools to do Sidewalk Talk in San Francisco..

Reaching Across

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

Collegial Support

- On the MFT team for two colleagues working towards full fellowship
- Supervisor for one Community Minister colleague in preliminary fellowship
- Intern committee chair for one colleague's internship

Encouragement Committee

I participate as a member of this committee.

Committee on Ministry

I was elected to be a member of this committee.

Priestly

- Worship leader at San Mateo, 20 October.
- Worship Associate at MPUUC , 24 October Noble Savage, 24 December Christmas Eve service.
- Officiant at Memorial Service for Greg Brahaney, Pantheist, 7 December

Social Justice

UU Mental Health Network

Reelected President of the Board of the UU Mental Health Network. Resources on the website greatly improved. Workshop planned for General Assembly

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 effort to improve worship resources for addictions-related worship services.

Self-Care

- Monthly meetings with my spiritual director.
- Taking one day per month to do crafts. Psychiatrist challenged me to do one day a week.
- 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 a Dementia support group for caregivers

Books Read

Mental Health Books

- Springsteen, Bruce. *Born to Run*, Simon and Schuster, 2017. Autobiography by the legendary rock star. Authentic, honest details of his relentless drive to write and perform music. Also authentic details of his father's mental illness and his own struggles with depression and other mental health difficulties, and how he overcame them.
- Aviv, Rachel. *Strangers to Ourselves – Unsettled Minds and the Stories that Make Us*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2022. A book that treads between different meanings of mental crises in 5 different case studies, including that of Aviv, herself. Spiritual / Mental illness; Medicine / Alternative care; Psychosis / Racial trauma; Psycho analysis / Damaged client. Written with great sensitivity and clarity so that we understand all sides to the situations. One of the best books of 2022. **Recommended.**
- Hornstein, Gail. *Agnes' Jacket – A Psychologist's Search for the Meaning of Madness*, Rodale Books, 2009. Reread this book about the importance of mental health peer support in preparation for a book-read. I realized that I know some of the people mentioned, so it meant more this time.
- Deraniyagala, Sonali. *Wave – A Memoir*, Vintage, 2013. In 2004, at a beach resort on the coast of Sri Lanka, Sonali Deraniyagala and her family—parents, husband, sons—were swept away by a

tsunami. Only Sonali survived to tell their tale. This is her account of the nearly incomprehensible event and its aftermath. A riveting description of grief. **Recommended.**

- Vonnegut, Mark. *Just Like Someone Without Mental Illness Only More So: A Memoir*, Delacorte Press, 2010. Son of Kurt, Mark Vonnegut was diagnosed and treated for schizophrenia in his early 20s. He was able to recover, complete college, go to medical school and become a pediatrician. He finds value in living humbly and helping others. He writes in an honest self-deprecating style,

Anti-Racism Books

- Burke, Tarana. *Unbound – My Story of Liberation and the Birth of the Me Too Movement*, Flatiron Books 2021. Activist founder and leader of the Me Too movement tells her story of sexual assault as a young black girl and how she tried to hide from the shame that she felt. The story tells how she was able to overcome that shame and become the powerful leader she has become, with a special passion to help young black and brown girls. **Recommended.**
- Curtis, Christopher Paul, *Bud, Not Buddy*, Delacorte Press, 1999. Children's literature story about a young African American boy whose mother died when he was 6. He runs away from a foster family and goes out to try to find his father using the few clues he has from his mother. He eventually finds his grandfather. Won the Newberry medal award.
- Young, Damon. *What Doesn't Kill You Makes You Blacker*, Echo, 2019. This is a memoir about being black in America told in a series of essays where he tells his life in a set of circumstances where his blackness has been a part of the story. Honest, funny, poignant, and at times self-deprecating.
- Murray, Pauli. *Song in a Weary Throat – Memoir of an American Pilgrimage*, Liveright, 1987. The autobiography of the remarkable early civil rights pioneer who today would be considered transgender, and who went from being orphaned at age 4 in the south to graduating from Hunter College, getting a Howard University law degree, helping to found NOW, getting a doctorate and finally becoming an ordained Episcopalian priest. **Recommended.**

General Interest Books

- Conklin, Tara. *The Last Romantics – A Novel*, Mariner Books, 2020. The story of a family of three girls and one boy, and the story that one of the girls, a poet, tells when she is 102 years old. The brother died in the company of his girlfriend Luna, and the sisters try in vain to find Luna. The poet has written a love poem about Luna that made her famous.
- King, Gary C. *Love, Lies and Murder*, Pinnacle, 2007. True story of the Nashville murder of Janet Levine March by her lawyer husband Perry March, and his efforts to escape justice. He fled the country with their children, setting off an intense legal battle to extradite him back to Tennessee to face a trial where he was convicted.
- Pinsky, Mark I. *Met Her on the Mountain – A Forty-year Quest to Solve the Appalachian Cold Case Murder of Nancy Morgan*, Blair, 2013. Pinsky, a reporter, writes of his efforts to solve the cold case murder of VISTA worker Nancy Morgan in Madison, North Carolina. A fellow VISTA worker was charged and acquitted in a murder trial. Pinsky identified another person, the son of the sheriff, who he believes is guilty but has no luck in getting cooperation from the legal system. Well told.
- Cassou, Michell and Cubley, Stewart. *Life, Paint and Passion – Reclaiming the magic of Spontaneous Expression*, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1995. Introduces the concept of spontaneous painting as a way to express and evoke one's creativity. Based on painting classes, with lots of examples. **Recommended**
- Wright, Laura Rose. *The Suspect*, 1985. Edgar award winner for best novel. The book starts with the murder scene, so there is no doubt who the guilty party is. The book is a cat-and-mouse play between the murderer and the police sergeant who knows who did it, but can't prove it.
- Parker, Matt. *Humble Pi – When Math Goes Wrong in the Real World*, Riverhead Books, 2019. Entertaining book about mathematical mishaps in the real world. Loved it. **Recommended for Fun**
- Rule, Anne. *Bitter Harvest*, Simon and Schuster, 1997. True story of Dr. Debra Green who poisoned her husband, nearly killing him, and burned down her house, killing two of her children.
- Siple, Joe. *The Five Wishes of Mr. Murray McBride*, Black Rose Writing, 2018. Award winning best seller. A 100-year-old man thinks he has nothing to live for until he meets and befriends 10-year-old

Jason who is waiting for a heart transplant. When he learns that Jason has 5 wishes before he dies, he sets about to make them happen. Made me cry. **Recommended if you need a good cry**

- Rice, Ann. *The Witching Hour (Lives of Mayfair Witches)*, Ballentine Books, 1993. Very long story about a family of witches going back several hundred years. A devil haunted them the whole time with diabolical plans of becoming human. Not my cup of tea.
- Kitagawa, Kate and Revell, Timothy. *The Secret Lives of Numbers – A Hidden History of Math’s Unsung Trailblazers*, William Morrow, 2024. Stories of little-known mathematicians from ancient times to the present. Entertaining.
- Hilderbrand, Elin. *The Perfect Couple*, Little, Brown and Company, 2018. A planned wedding on Nantucket goes awry when the maid of honor is found dead on the beach the morning of the planned ceremony. The investigation reveals that many couples in attendance have secrets. There is no perfect couple. To be made into a mini-series on TV.
- Benjamin, Melanie. *The Swans of Fifth Avenue: A Novel*, Delacorte Press, 2016. The story of Truman Capote and the collection of socialites gathered around him in 1940-1950’s New York. How they adored him, and how they felt betrayed by him in a tell-all book he wrote. Engaging.
- Everett, Pamela. *Little Shoes – The Sensational Depression-Era Murders That Became My Family’s Secret*, Skyhorse Publishing, 2018. The author learns that two of her father’s sisters were brutally murdered in 1937, a story the family never talked about. The author, an attorney who volunteers at the California Innocence Project, believes the man who was executed for the murders was not guilty.
- Bouser, Steve. *Death of a Pinehurst Princess – The 1935 Elva Statler Davidson Mystery*, The History Press, 2010. Twenty-two-year-old heiress Elva Statler was found dead just weeks after her marriage to a much older man. A sensational case in 1935, where her husband was suspected of murder. The book concludes it was probably suicide.
- Liebman, Susan Weiss, PhD. *The Dressmaker’s Mirror – Sudden Death, Genetics, and a Jewish Family’s Secret*, Rowman & Littlefield, 2024. A geneticist discovers that there is a genetic mutation that has caused early deaths in her family. She helped identify the gene and has become an advocate for genetic testing.

2024-2025 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	Mentor class. Spiritist Therapy class. Webinars.
Attend GA in person or virtually	GA in June online	June 2024	GA Attended virtually	Attended GA virtually
Attend Mental health seminars / conventions	Attend at least one local / state mental health event in next year			Attended Alameda County Suicide Conference
Mental Health Ministry	Discern next actions in support of mental health	Ongoing	Determine direction of UU Mental Health Ministry	Ongoing. Working on support groups and education
Racial Justice	Discern actions in support of racial justice	Ongoing	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				
Vacation	Attend Convergence weaving convention	July 2024		Conference attended. Hats!