

Quarterly Community Ministry Activities

For the Ministry of Rev. Barbara F. Meyers

September 2025

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 2 more years.
- **UU Mental Health Network** – Starting an LGBTQ Support Group.
- **Anti-Racism:** Continued my education and involvement in the ARO team at MPUUC.
- **Self-Care:** Psychiatrist says I'm thriving and don't need regular appointments anymore. I'm taking 3-4 days a month to do craft work. Strength training two days a week at CrossFit.
- **Book:** Skinner House has sent us a draft of the book on Disability. Will be updating it with my co-author.

Quarterly Ministerial Status Report Details

Education

- Attended webinar from Mad in America. *Recovery Oriented Cognitive Therapy for Psychosis : Living Well with Psychosis* by Aaron P. Brinen. This was an overview of an approach used by Brinen with his patients. He has written a book *Living Well with Psychosis Practical Strategies for Improving Your Daily Life* that discusses this use of cognitive therapy with patients with psychosis, work that has shown statistically significant results in clinical trials. The approach focuses on working on the problems behind negative symptoms.
- Took the webinar *Guiding Companions as They Navigate the Journeys of Ego, Soul, and Spirit* by Scott McCrae from Spiritual Directors International, July 10, 2025. This was an excellent class talking about the kinds of difficulties that people have when they are stuck at the level of ego, soul or spirit and what kinds of questions spiritual directors can do to help their clients through them. I particularly liked the concept of creating a spiritual council to help one with one's problems.
- Took the webinar *Therapeutic Lying in Dementia Care*, by Rev. Katie Norris. Excellent description of how to minimize or eliminate lying to people with dementia.
- Took the *Spiritual First Aid Certificate Course* developed by Dr. Jamie D. Aten and Kent Annan, and offered by SpiritualFirstAid.com. Launched by Wheaton College's Humanitarian Disaster Institute. Christian based, but not Christian specific. Excellent collection of 8 lessons that work for spiritual support of people who have undergone a disaster. **Recommended.**
- Took webinar: *Understanding and Treating Panic Disorder*, presented by Dr. Maya Massing-Schaffer of InStride Health. Content: understanding and treating panic disorder in children, youth and young adults and where to find help. July 22, 2025.
- Took webinar: *Back to School: Supporting Educational Opportunities*, presented by Mark Salzer, August 26, 2025. Presented by Doors to Wellbeing.
- Started taking Fall Semester class at SKSM: Towards (A Theatre Of) Empowerment. It will end with a performance on December 11 focusing on social justice issues.
- Took Webinar: *Soteria Houses: Safe, Humane, Life-Enhancing Treatment for Psychosis*, Presented by the National Empowerment Center, Sept 30, 2025. A panel of operators of Soteria Houses in New Mexico, Vermont, Alaska and Israel talked about their treatment of people with psychosis.

Healing

Spiritual Direction

I have four clients who I meet with online every month. Continued group Spiritual Director Supervision with Rev. Amy Beltaine.

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 a colleague 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

- Led Worship at MPUUC on July 13 on General Assembly
- Led Worship at MPUUC on August 31 on Divine Feminine
- Led Worship at UU Livermore on September 7 on Divine Feminine

Social Justice

UU Mental Health Network

President of the Board of the UU Mental Health Network. Resources on the website greatly improved. Workshop at General Assembly. Starting a support group.

UUA Accessibility Group

Continue as board secretary of the EqUUal Access organization.

UUA Addictions Ministry

As member of the UUA Addictions Ministry, we 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.
- I am taking 3-4 days per month to do crafts.
- Psychiatrist says I'm thriving and don't need regular appointments any more.
- Beauty Diary, and daily meditation are helpful spiritual practices
- Keeping up my exercise by walking 4-5 miles 3 days a week. Longer runs once a week. And strength training two times a week.
- Continue as a member of a Dementia support group for caregivers

Books Read

Mental Health and Disability Books

- King, Laurie R. *Folly*, Random House, 2002. Rae Newborn is recently released from a psych hospital where she had been after the tragic death of her husband and daughter. She decides to go to a private island in the San Juan Islands to rebuild a home that her great uncle had built, and that had burned down. She finds the solitude and hard work to be rejuvenating mentally and physically. There is psychological suspense and danger along with her resilience.

- Paperny, Anna Mehler. *Hello, I Want to Die Please Fix Me*, Random House Canada, 2019. The author has treatment-resistant depression and has made several suicide attempts even though she wants to live. The book is a detailed explanation of her suicide attempts and the many unsuccessful treatments that she explored to get rid of her depression. I wouldn't recommend it to someone who is suicidal because it gives too many details about her attempts. But the book does have a good survey of all of the existing treatments for depression.
- See below: Metzl, Jonathan M. *The Protest Psychosis – How Schizophrenia Became a Black Disease*, Beacon Press, 2009.
- Chesler, Phyllis. *Women and Madness: Revised and Updated*, St. Martin's Griffin, 2005. The first edition of this seminal and definitive book in 1975 was the first to address critical questions about women and mental health. Combining patient interviews with an analysis of women's roles in history, society, and myth, Chesler concludes that there is a terrible double standard when it comes to women's psychology. **Recommended.**
- Ripley, Amanda. *The Unthinkable – Who Survives When Disaster Strikes, and Why – Revised and Updates*, Harmony Books, 2024. The book looks at several disaster scenarios and discusses the human responses of the people involved. She looks at several situations: 9/11 accounts, hurricane Katrina, hostage experiences, Jerusalem, Beverly Hills Supper Club Fire, crowd crush deaths in Mecca, school shootings, plane landing in the Potomac River, and the kinds of human responses they engender: denial, fear, risk, distrust, resilience, panic, paralysis, and heroism. Thoroughly researched. She argues that more training in how to develop new instincts is needed.

Anti-Racism Books

- Metzl, Jonathan M. *The Protest Psychosis – How Schizophrenia Became a Black Disease*, Beacon Press, 2009. A well-researched and powerful account of how cultural anxieties about race during the Civil Rights movement shaped American notions of what schizophrenia was. Before the 1960's there was no difference in schizophrenia diagnosis between blacks and whites. Then, during the Civil Rights movement patients started exhibiting rage against the system. Instead of working to fix the system, psychiatry invented new criteria for schizophrenia that included rage and violence, and black men became much more likely to be diagnosed as schizophrenic. The echoes of this disparity continue today. **Recommended**
- Cleveland, Christena. *God Is a Black Woman*, Harper One, 2022. Story of a theologian and activist who realizes that the white Christian God doesn't work for her, and embraces the Black Madonna.
- Metzl, Jonathan M. *Dying of Whiteness – How the Politics of Racial Resentment Is Killing America's Heartland*, Basic Books 2024. A physician's account of how right-wing backlash policies have deadly consequences — even for the white voters they promise to help. Detailed examples of gun control in Missouri, healthcare in Tennessee, and in public schools in Kansas make the point of lost white lives as well as those of other races due to these policies. **Recommended.**
- Madison, Mary. *Plantation Slave Weavers Remember: An Oral History*, CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2015. Narratives from slaves and children of slaves who were involved in weaving during slavery.
- Ross, Loretta J. *Callin In: How to Start Making Change with Those You'd Rather Cancel*, Simon and Schuster, 2025. Brilliantly written book challenging the concept of "Calling Out" someone who has said something you find offensive and instead arguing that "Calling In" someone can be much more effective in many cases. I loved the examples she gives. **Highly Recommended.**
- Lester, Terence. *From Dropout to Doctorate: Breaking the Chains of Educational Injustice*, InterVarsity Press, 2025. Dr. Terence Lester tells us about his journey from a troubled and traumatic childhood and youth, becoming a gang member and dropping out of school, experiencing homelessness, to eventually finding stability with the help of a church congregation, friends who believed in him, and becoming a family man, a minister, and a non-profit entrepreneur. He eventually goes back to graduate school and earns a PhD with a dissertation that focuses on the problems and solutions of people who have been denied the advantages that education can bring. In addition to telling his own story, the book goes into detail about the many challenges that face African Americans today, including the generational trauma they have gotten from racism and its aftermath. It is a good

education about the challenges of racism as well as an inspirational story. He chooses to live his life giving opportunities to people like the young man he once was.

- Winters, Mary-Frances. *Black Fatigue: How Racism Erodes the Mind, Body, and Spirit*, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2020. Winters describes how in every aspect of life—from economics to education, work, criminal justice, and, very importantly, health outcomes—for the most part, the trajectory for Black people is not improving.
- DiAngelo, Robin. *Nice Racism: How Progressive White People Perpetuate Racial Harm*, Beacon Press, 2021. DiAngelo identifies many common white racial patterns and breaks down how well-intentioned white people unknowingly perpetuate racial harm. She challenges the ideology of individualism and explains why it is OK to generalize about white people, and she demonstrates how white people who experience other oppressions still benefit from systemic racism. **Recommended**
- Morrison, Toni. *The Bluest Eye*, Vintage, 2007. Unloved and raped by her father, a Black girl prays for her eyes to turn blue because she thinks she would then become beautiful.
- Van Der Wouden, Yael. *The Safekeep*, Avid Reader Press, 2025. Dutch family acquires a home that had been taken from a Jewish family during World War II and is now housing a daughter of the Dutch family. She meets a daughter from the Jewish family without knowing her connection to the house and they have a passionate affair. Then she finds out and tries to make amends. Beautifully written. Finalist for the Booker Prize. **Recommended**

General Interest Books

- McFadden, Frieda. *Death Row (Alibis Collection)*, Amazon Original Stories, 2025. Engaging story about a woman who believes she is on death row for murdering her husband. But what is reality and what isn't is difficult to tell.
- Ripley, Amanda. *Unthinkable – Who Survives When Disaster Strikes and Why*, Revised and Updated. Harmony, 2024. A thorough study of disasters like 911, gun violence, hurricanes, hostage situations, plane crashes, to understand the responses of people who survive and those who don't. **Recommended.**
- Cameron, Julia. *The Artist's Way – A Spiritual Path to Higher Creativity, 25th Anniversary Edition*, Tarcher Perigee, 2016. Fabulous book giving steps on how to tap into your creative spirit. A methodology and 12 weekly lessons to follow. I loved this book and intend to do the 12-week course. **Highly Recommended.**
- Schwartz, Barry. *The Paradox of Choice – Why More is Less*, Harper Perennial, 2005. A social critique of our obsession with choice, and how it contributes to anxiety, dissatisfaction and regret. Lots of data from many studies showing that less is more, especially when trying to find the maximal best choice.
- Engle, Ken. *Everybody's Best Friend – The True Story of a Marriage That Ended In Murder*, St. Martin's Press, 1999. Con man Craig Rabinowitz created a sham company and fooled everyone, including his wife, family and investors, while spending time at a strip club and squandering the investors' money. In a deep financial hole, he heavily insured his wife's life and murdered her.
- Cordes, Henry J. and Todd Cooper. *Pathological: The Murderous Rage of Dr. Anthony Garcia*, WildBlue Press 2018. A Dr. is fired from a number of jobs for incompetence and takes out his rage on the people who he blames for his situation. Well written, lots of good detective work.
- Gladwell, Malcolm. *Taking to Strangers – What We Should Know About the People We Don't Know*, Little Brown and Company 2019. Entertaining and interesting look at how communication can go wrong between people of different backgrounds. What we should think about in these situations. **Recommended**
- Hergert, Lucas. *Impassioned – A Guide to Progressive Preaching*, Skinner House Books, 2025. Practical, detailed advice on how to create and deliver passionate sermons from a UU minister, seminary professor, and friend. I love this book. I learned a lot from it and will refer to it often. **Recommended.**
- Bowden, Mark. *The Last Stone – A Masterpiece of Criminal Interrogation*, Atlantic Monthly Press, 2020. Fifty years after two sisters disappeared, police investigate the crime, leading to the guilty plea by Lloyd Welch. The book is a detailed story of the police investigation. I found it tedious.

- Collins, Marion. *While She Slept: A Husband, a Wife, a Brutal Murder*, St. Martin's Griffin, 2005.
Man attacks his wife bashing her brain in. When she doesn't die, he poisons her with cyanide.

2024-2025 Development Plan

Area	Plans	Timeline	Measurement	Status
Take one or two classes a year	Investigate classes to take in this year	Ongoing- Identify classes	Classes completed	Taking SKSM class
Attend GA in person or virtually	GA in June	June 2026	GA Attended online	
Attend Mental health seminars / conventions	Attend at least one local / state mental health event in next year			
Mental Health Ministry	Discern next actions in support of mental health	Ongoing	Determine direction of UU Mental Health Ministry	
Racial Justice	Discern actions in support of racial justice	Ongoing	Meaningful actions taking place	Banned Book display in Library December 2025
Spiritual Direction	Create opportunities for Spiritual Direction practice and supervision	On-going		
Vacation	Attend Convergence weaving convention	July 2026		