



Washington Ethical Society

A vibrant humanistic congregation

NEWS & NOTES

A weekly newsletter to keep you informed.

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December's Theme: Presence

December's theme is *Presence*. You can find the monthly theme packet on the [website](#). And below is Carol Clayton's Artist Statement and her photograph for the month of December.

I had a completely different image in mind when I saw the theme for December. Presence. It spoke of a majestic mountain, a stately tree, natural beauty that was timeless and imposing, something that gently dominated the landscape, quietly. Then came the election. In the days following, I watched as Amanda remained composed and centered. As though she was the eye of the hurricane, she created a safe calm place away from the powerful forces of grief and disappointment and fear that engulfed so many of us. Amanda demonstrated the composure and wisdom, balance and humor that saw many of us through what was for me personally a very difficult two weeks. As I began the process of producing the image, more and more it was Amanda I thought of when I turned the word Presence over in my mind. It wasn't until Robyn Kravitz asked if I had finished December and I said no, that she shared the thought that she felt the portrait I took of Amanda a few months ago would make a great subject. Clearly there was only one image for this theme, and it wasn't nature, not this time. I created this image especially for December's theme. Amanda was gracious about it, as always.



-Carol Clayton, WES Member and Themes 2016-2017 Artist



Upcoming Racial Justice Events in the DC Area



Wednesday, December 7, 7-9pm, All Souls Church, Unitarian

A Dialogue on Race & Ethnicity (ADORE)

Members of ADORE and the REEB Voting Rights Project are sponsoring a dialogue to debrief the November elections. Peter Montgomery, an All Souls member and our guest speaker, will discuss the intersection of religion, race, politics and money. Peter is a writer who has studied religious conservatives for close to two decades. He attended the GOP Convention and a number of Trump rallies. For Peter this is spiritual work. He says, "We have to

remember that many Trump supporters are motivated by their love of this country." Come join us for this post-election analysis and dialogue. Contact Paula Cole Jones for more information: pcolejones@gmail.com

Saturday, December 17, 1-3pm, All Souls Church, Unitarian

DMV Solidarity: A New Age of Resistance

The results of November's election leave our nation with a president - elect who lost the popular vote - after waging a campaign fueled by bigotry, xenophobia, homophobia, and sexism. Unitarian congregations have a deeply rooted tradition of social justice work- dating from the abolitionist movement, and continuing through the Civil Rights era. In the years to come, we must deepen this tradition in solidarity with other faith traditions, as well as those who have found no spiritual home. Join with social justice organizations and members of communities on the front lines of the struggles to come. This will be an opportunity to deepen our commitment to social justice in this new era of resistance to white supremacy and all forms of oppression and exploitation. Contact Paula Cole Jones for more information: pcolejones@gmail.com



Refugee Resettlement Team Update

Refugee Resettlement Team Seeks Leader for Housing & Furnishing Team



You may have noticed at the Refugee Resettlement Team table in the Lobby after platform that the Good Neighbor Home Supply List -- those basic items any apartment would need -- is rapidly filling in. Generous donors have pledged whole bedroom suites, linens, kitchen wares, and even a computer. Several people have offered general support and would probably join in the leg work to create a welcoming home. What is most needed now is someone to coordinate these willing volunteers and the donated furnishings. The first step is to help find an apartment and make arrangements with the landlord for our family to sign a lease after their arrival, a process LSS can facilitate. Leading this team requires logistical thinking, assembling team members to collect and deliver furniture, consideration of interim storage space if necessary, and then final set-up of the apartment, like making beds, stocking the kitchen, and having phone and other utilities activated. It is an opportunity to bring small groups together to put their compassion to work to build a home for people who likely have gone without one for years. Coordinating this effort promises to be rewarding both in the opportunity it gives other WES members and the tremendous difference you get to make in the lives of the incoming refugee family. If this is of interest to you or you want to know more, please contact Sue Smith (240-281- 0102 or suzhome2@verizon.net).



SEEK Weekly Spotlight

The WES Teen Group held its monthly waffle bar this past Sunday. Waffle bar days can get pretty hectic, so it takes all the help we can get. The teens started prepping gluten-free/dairy free waffles at 9am, and they were still cranking out waffles while simultaneously serving them upstairs between platforms. It's a ton of fun, but it makes a mess in the kitchen every time. Afterwards, during the second platform, the teens got busy cleaning up. This week, the teens made and served over 120 waffles. Thanks to everyone who came to support! If you would like to volunteer to help out with waffle bars or other teen group events in the future, contact Mike Kravitz (mikek@ethicalsociety.org).



This Sunday's Platform. 9:30am & 11:30am.

"Embracing Sankofa: Being Here and There--A Humanist's Pilgrimage to Ghana," Christian Hayden, member of the **Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia and Future of Ethical Societies.** Join Christian as he explores his year of service in Northern Ghana with the Humanist Service

This Sunday at WES

WESTalks, 10:50am, Social Hall. Being Present -- Explore this month's theme of *presence* with a skilled practitioner. What does it mean to be present? Learn to see the seemingly subtle yet very powerful effect of having your attention in the present moment

Corps, using reflections and poetry. Join him as he wrestles with spirituality, identity, and his struggle to find presence and peace with an expanded worldview, a broader definition of home. Music from Ghanaian drummer Kweku Owusu.

WESstalks

Twenty minutes between platforms

and present surroundings as you navigate the activities of your life. Increasing our ability to be present is especially powerful in relationships-being present when in conversation with another is a gift to them, to ourselves, and to the relationship. Led by Antoinette Kranenburg. Antoinette Kranenburg is a certified Alexander Technique teacher since 1988, interested in dance, yoga, Tai Chi, performing arts, physical challenges, injury prevention and recovery, parenting education, and aging well.

Biology Reading Group, 1pm, Library. For December, January, and February the Biology group will be reading the book [I Contain Multitudes: The Microbes Within Us and a Grander View of Life](#), by Ed Yong. For further information get in touch with Barbara Searle (bsearle70@msn.com).

Working for Racial Equity, 1-3pm, Adler Study. Have you been learning about anti-racism work and Black Lives Matter, and wondering what the next step is for you and for WES? Join us to vision together! We will continue our discussion of plans for shorter term and longer term projects, including Restorative Justice, Muslim solidarity, and deepening our existing work. If you aren't on the WRE listserv or have any questions, please email Danna Pope (dannapope@gmail.com).

The Upcoming Weeks at WES

Saturday, December 10

- **Winter Festival, 4:30 & 7pm Performances.** Cookies and punch reception is scheduled for in between the two showings at 6pm. If you're interested in baking cookies, please contact Amanda (amandap@ethicalsociety.org)

Tuesday, December 13

- **Adult Education Council Meeting, 7:30-9 p.m. Library.** This group meets monthly on the second Tuesdays of the month for people interested in creating classes, trips, events for our adult community at WES. If you would like attend, please do. You can also contact [Melissa Sinclair](#) for more information.

Friday, December 16

- **Still Thirsty After All These Years, Scion Restaurant, 1200 East-West Highway.** This group is for WES adults beyond the demographics of the "Young and Thirsty" group, but still thirsty for connections, entertainment, and new experiences. We will meet for Happy Hour on the third Friday of every month. Contact Nancy McGuire (nkmontheroad@yahoo.com) or Shan Evans (sevans4406@yahoo.com) for more details.

Sunday, December 18

- **Platform Service, 9:30am & 11:30am, Main Hall. "Don't Unwrap, Unplug," Amanda**

Poppei, Senior Leader. Six shopping days until Christmas. Five until Hanukkah. Don't forget the kids' teachers and the neighbors. Make sure the decorations are perfect. Pick up the yule log. Wait a second...are we doing this right? Join Amanda as she considers what an unplugged holiday season might look like, and what it means to be truly present to the people and the beauty around us. Music from Josh Blinder.

- **Tai Chi, 11am, Social Hall.** We invite you to join us out on the front lawn (or in the Main Hall if weather doesn't cooperate) for a 30-minute session of Tai Chi. No experience necessary and perfect for all ages and abilities.
- **Schmoozapalooza Lunch, 12:45pm, Social Hall.** WES continues our lunch on every third Sunday for all who want to hang out after platform and gab with friends. Gather around tables in the Social Hall and keep on talking. Nosh on a great lunch, with vegetarian options always available. Requested donation \$5. Schmoozing with your friends and licking your fingers--what better way to keep on talking, parse the platform, and catch up! (If you plan to attend the 9:30 platform, why not help out the Schmooze team and then join in the good food? Contact Julie Grimes (jwellergrimes@gmail.com) to get involved).
- **Information Meeting on the WES 2017 Follies, after Schmooze.** The Follies are coming to WES Saturday, March 11, 2017, bringing you an exciting, entertaining, and high energy variety show developed and performed by our beloved WES community. Want to learn more and join in on the fun? We invite you to join us at around 1:30, at the end of Schmoozapalooza, when we'll explain the Follies concept and how you can be involved. If you have any immediate questions please email Sera Morgan (SMorgan@hrsa.gov) or Shelby French (shelbyfrench2@yahoo.com).
- **Sunday Book Club, after lunch, downstairs classroom.** The Sunday Book Club will hold its second meeting in the downstairs classroom at 1:45, after Schmoozapalooza. Rachel Hartig will be leading a discussion of "The Lottery" by Shirley Jackson. All are welcome to come and share perspectives on this troubling but compelling story. For further information, please contact Rachel (rachel.hartig@gallaudet.edu).
- **SOLD OUT -- Bystander Intervention Training, 2pm, Main Hall.** In a political and social environment that can feel hostile, we want to be ready to act as agents for good, keeping ourselves and others safe. Collective Action for Safe Spaces (CASS) is a local grassroots non-profit working to empower our community to speak out against harassment. In this workshop, participants will learn to recognize and safely respond to aggressive behavior using bystander intervention strategies. Limited to 25 participants; donation of \$15 requested, but not required, to help defray costs. However, you must RSVP via the Facebook event or to amandap@ethicalsociety.org.
- **Community-wide Holiday Party for BES, NoVES, and WES, 4pm, Sinclair's House.**
The Evite for this event is here- RSVPs on the evite no later than Thursday evening, December 15 so we know how many gingerbread houses and crafts to assemble. We will begin with an early potluck dinner. Then we will decorate gingerbread houses and make homemade ornaments. Besides gingerbread houses and ornament making, there is table tennis, a pool table, and a Wii with several fun/interactive non-violent games. There is also a kid's train set, play kitchen, large rocking horse, and a playhouse in the basement. There is space all over the house for crafts and conversation. [Details are here.](#)
- **Solstice Soundscape, 6pm, Main Hall.** Join international award winning percussionist Tom Teasley for an experience unlike any other--an immersion in sound and spoken word, drawing us into the quiet of the coming winter solstice. This promises to be a relaxing and connecting experience. Friends and family are welcome to join for this exceptional opportunity!

Tuesday, December 20

- **Holiday wrapping event, 7 pm, Social Hall.** Do you have presents that need wrapping for Winter Solstice, Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanzaa, or the New Year, but you are tired of doing it in the wee hours the night before the holiday? Come join in a simple wrapping party with friends at WES. Bring your paper and ribbons and gifts to wrap. Melissa will provide tape and light snacks. You can contact [Melissa Sinclair](#) for more information.

Sunday, December 25

- **Platform Service, 10:30 am, Main Hall. "A Gift to Each Other: Our Presence," Bailey Whiteman, Music Director.** December 25: for some, it's a challenging day, with over-excited children, pets trying to eat the wrapping paper, an inner sense of sadness. For others, it's joyful, full of traditions and merriment. And for millions in the United States and

around the world, it is just another day. Let's be present for each other, listen to stories, sing, and find connection. Join Bailey and member Tony Nam for this multi-generational platform, as we share stories about our traditions, from the silly to the sublime.

- **Potluck Brunch, 11:30 am, Main Hall.** After platform, let's enjoy a meal together. We'll set up some tables, and share food and conversation.

To see a long-term calendar of events, we invite you to visit our website calendar. It can be found [here.](http://www.ethicalsociety.org/calendar.php) (<http://www.ethicalsociety.org/calendar.php>)

Announcements

Mitten Collection for a Wider Circle -- If you are interested in donating pairs of new mittens to the folks at a Wider Circle, we invite you to bring them this Saturday to Winter Festival. The Giving Tree will be set up in the lobby and you can hang the new pairs of mittens Saturday night right onto the tree.

Upcoming Seasonal Events at the Washington Ethical Society



Saturday December 10

4:30pm — Winter Festival Performance

6pm — Punch and Cookies Reception

7pm — Winter Festival Performance

Sunday December 18

6pm — Solstice Soundscape with Tom Teasley

Sunday December 25

10:30 Platform

11:30 Potluck Brunch

Sunday January 1

10:30 Platform

BES, NOVES AND WES COMMUNITY HOLIDAY PARTY

Melissa and Sven Sinclair 410-227-4003

Sunday, December 18 at 4:00 PM

Sinclair Home
10552 Rivulet Row Columbia, MD 21044



Quick Links

[WES Website](#)

[December's Photos](#)

[Shop Amazon Smile and It Benefits WES](#)

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