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# Washington Ethical Society

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*a vibrant humanistic congregation that affirms the worth of every person*

Welcome!

Thank you for visiting us at the Washington Ethical Society today. If you are interested in a community that puts belief in the worth of all humans into action, you're in the right place!

Here you can:

- meet with other like heart and minded people of all ages,
- experience thought provoking platforms,
- have a place for your children to learn the values you live by in a loving setting,
- find an environment in which to explore bigger questions of life and existence, and
- eat food and just talk as friends about topics large and small at our monthly "Schmoozapalooza" after-platform lunch (3rd Sundays--please join us for the next one!).

We hope you'll visit us again. We like to say every Sunday is different--different topics, different music, different feel! Then again, a lot has stayed the same since our founding in 1944: we're still a community for people of many backgrounds and beliefs, united in our hope to change the world.

If you haven't already, check out our website: [ethicalsociety.org](http://ethicalsociety.org), to learn more about us and the special Q&As and other programming we offer for newcomers.

Most of all, please don't hesitate to reach out to me. I love welcoming visitors--in fact, it's one of the best parts of my job. Send me an email or give me a call, and I'll look forward to the conversation.

warmly,

*Amanda*

Amanda Poppei  
Senior Leader

Member of the *American Ethical Union* and the *Unitarian Universalist Association*

PS \*We know that some of our language at WES is a little unusual! We've included a language "cheat sheet" to help out. The truth is, you can use any words you like here...we just want you to know what we're talking about when we say, for instance, platform service!

## What are these "WES" people talking about?!

*A guide to language at the Washington Ethical Society*

Welcome! We are so glad that you're visiting with us, and we hope to see you again soon. We pride ourselves on being a community of people from many backgrounds, and we feel we offer an alternative religious community: a humanistic congregation that affirms the worth of every person. We would love it if you found your home with us.

And, we know that part of being an "alternative" is that we sometimes use "alternative" or new language—words that you just don't hear every day, or everyday words used in new and different ways. While we welcome you to use ANY language that feels right to you, we thought it might be helpful to have a kind of cheat sheet, a glossary of terms we frequently use. Here they are!

*WES* – the most common way people refer to the **W**ashington **E**thical **S**ociety – usually pronounced as one word, like west without the t – sometimes people refer to WES as *the Ethical Society*

*Platform* – can refer to the whole service that happens at 11am on Sunday, or just the portion of the service that is like a sermon – sometimes people differentiate by saying *platform service* or *platform address* – people also refer to the platform address as a *talk* or a *reflection*

*Congregation* – the term many people use to refer to the body of people who make up WES – other people say *community*, *religious community*, *spiritual community*, *un-church*, and any other number of terms – some people refer to WES as their church, especially to family and friends who may find that the easiest term to understand

*Leader* – the term for a clergy person in the Ethical Culture movement – Amanda's official title is *Senior Leader* but sometimes people also call her the *clergy leader* – people also refer to her as their *pastor* or *clergyperson*

*Chorus* – those people up at the front having such a good time singing together! – Ethical Culture typically uses this term instead of *choir* – our chorus sings about twice a month, and other times we have guest musicians

*Program* – the piece of paper you’re handed on Sunday which lists what’s happening that morning and in the weeks to come – people also sometimes call this a *bulletin* or, less frequently, an *order of service*

*Ethical Culture* – this is the name of the religious and philosophical tradition of which we are a part – founded in 1876 by Felix Adler, it is an ethics-based and relationship-based tradition, grounded in a typically naturalistic worldview but staying non-theistic, or essentially agnostic, about God and other metaphysical questions

*AEU* – the *American Ethical Union*, the national organization that is the connector of all 24 Ethical Societies nationally – WES is a member of the AEU (since our founding in 1944)

*UUA* – the *Unitarian Universalist Association*, the national organization that is the connector of the 1000+ Unitarian Universalist congregations nationwide – WES is also a member of the UUA (since 2008) – people also refer to this as the UU

*Flourish!* – the name for our adult education classes, which cover topics from Ethical Culture history to mindfulness

*Felix Adler* - the guy who founded Ethical Culture, way back in 1876 - originally, Adler had studied to be a rabbi, but he decided instead to found a new movement based on the idea that what we do (deed) is more important than what we believe (creed) - author of *An Ethical Philosophy of Life* and *The Religion of Duty*, among other books

*Humanism* - broadly, the movement of which we are a part - humanism can include secular humanism and religious humanism, which have similar ideas but organize themselves differently - WES is usually considered part of religious humanism because we are congregationally based - humanism is rooted in human experience and human responsibility to create the world we long for, as well as an insistence on the worth of every person

*Schmoozapalooza* - here’s the most important one! Schmoozapalooza is what we call our third Sunday lunch, directly following platform - we sometimes refer to ourselves as the Washington *Eating Society* because sharing good food, and the sense of community that comes with it, are important to us!

**We hope this helps you get to know us better--and we’d love to get to know you better, too.** Feel free to join us for a Newcomers’ Q&A after platform service in the office suite the first Sunday of every month...at Schmoozapalooza after platform service the third Sunday of every month...or at any of our small groups or classes. If you’d like to learn more about membership at the Washington Ethical Society, just send a note to our Senior Leader, Amanda Poppei, at [amandap@ethicalsociety.org](mailto:amandap@ethicalsociety.org).

