

WES Express

Monthly Newsletter of the Washington Ethical Society

January 2016

Upcoming Platforms – Join us at 11am

Sunday, January 3. “Resisting and Resetting: A Multigenerational New Year’s Celebration” Amanda Poppei, Senior Leader. Join us for the first platform of 2016 as we welcome in the new year and our January theme of Resistance. What change do we hope to create this year? How will we resist that change—and how will that change be its own form of resistance? Music from the DC Labor Chorus.

Sunday, January 10. “Our Bodies, Ourselves: Resisting Reality” Amanda Poppei, Senior Leader. It’s that time of year—every magazine, commercial, and often our own psyches have told us we ought to make a plan to change our bodies. But in truth, our bodies are changing all the time. We age, we travel in and out of illness, we move throughout the world and life. How do we come to a place of balance, seeking wellness for our bodies while also honoring the reality of their inevitable change over time? Music from the WES Chorus.

Sunday, January 17. “We Resist! The Revolutionary Spirit of Martin Luther King.” Bernardine (Dine) Watson, a poet, and Beth Palubinsky, a singer/song stylist, have been friends for almost forty years. In this program they will lift their voices to honor King and to inspire the audience to carry on his work of activism and resistance. Please join us for this very special platform.

Sunday, January 24. “A Community of Resistance” Amanda Poppei, Senior Leader. Felix Adler, the founder of Ethical Culture, sought to create a movement that offered an alternative to both traditional religion and materialism—a movement that was a new way. Are we living up to that dream? In what ways do we resist the dominant narrative, especially the narrative of disconnection and hate? Music from the WES Chorus.

Sunday, January 31. “Resistance, Resilience, Solidarity: Learning from Our Friends in El Salvador” Peggy Goetz, Lola Skolnik, and Ross Wells, Global Connections Delegates. Members of our Global Connections team share their reflections on our sister community's past and current struggles and the importance of WES's accompaniment. Music from singer/songwriter Jean Rohe.

Table of Contents

Upcoming Platforms.....	1
Theme Exploration	2
Board Column.....	3
WES Lay Leadership	4
WES News.....	4
Coming Up at WES	6

The Washington Ethical Society is a humanistic congregation that affirms the worth of every person.

We strive through our relationships to elicit the best in the human spirit.

With faith in human goodness, we appreciate each person’s unique capacities. We joyfully celebrate together and support each other through life. We nurture a sense of reverence and responsibility for each other and the earth.

We invite you to join our community of children and adults as we work for a world where love and justice cross all borders.

ethicalsociety.org

Theme: Resistance

Amanda Poppei, Senior Leader

"Ooooh...it's irresistible!" How many times—perhaps in the last month—have we whispered or shouted or laughed that phrase? Sometimes it's about the last delicious cookie we just have to take, sometimes about the adorable baby outfit we just have to buy. And why should we resist? We are, or at least purport to be, a tradition that avoids guilt, that allows each person to experience the world as their heart leads them.

On the other hand, there are some things that we work hard to resist: racism, sexism, homophobia. We teach our children and read long-form articles and watch videos, all intended to build up our capacity to resist the societal pull toward division and inequality.

This month, as we explore *Resistance*, we will ask together when we are called to resist mightily—and when we are called to relax our resistance, to allow what is happening around us or inside us to take over. How do we know when to stand strong like a mountain and when to bend in the wind?

We hope you'll be with us to explore together the very personal and the communal aspects of resistance.



Ways to engage with
January's theme:
Resistance

January Platforms

[Explore the Theme:
Resistance](#)

Story for All Ages:
Green Eggs and Ham
by Dr. Seuss

Share the Plate:
FFOIP
*Family & Friends of
Incarcerated People*

From Your Board of Trustees:

"WES and Social Activism"

By Adam Goldberg and Ellen Post, WES Board of Trustees

Like many members of the WES community, the Board members believe deeply in taking collective action to make our community, our country, and our world a better place. Whether it's serving meals at Luther Place, fighting racism and oppression, or helping to build a well in a community where potable water is hard to come by, it's important to not just talk the talk of activism, but to walk the walk as well. Here are some examples of actions we've been involved in recently aimed at making a difference.

Adam and fellow Board member Lindsay Lucke recently participated in a protest outside the headquarters of the National Rifle Association to mark the third anniversary of the deaths of 26 people, including 20 children, at the Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut. Over 30,000 people are killed by guns each year in this country. According to NBC News, 555 children under the age of 12 have died from gunshots since Sandy Hook—that's about one every other day.

Adam's efforts on gun safety issues began more than two decades ago as a Congressional staffer with work on the Brady Bill and assault weapons ban (the latter of which has since, tragically, expired). In Australia, another country dear to Adam's heart, it took only one mass shooting to tighten gun laws, and in the 20 years since there have been no others. The calls for doing something to stop this scourge in the U.S. grow louder each year. Through collective action like the NRA protest, Adam hopes we can ensure that policymakers finally hear those calls.

Having once described herself as a "reluctant activist," Ellen has become less reluctant as the importance of many issues weigh increasingly upon her. While she cares deeply about several issues, Ellen has thrown herself into the fight against climate change and the dark forces that have spread misinformation and climate denial – forces that have slowed desperately needed action to prevent catastrophic climate change. Ellen is on the steering committee of a local (Montgomery County) climate change group, 350MoCo. The group's primary current mission is to persuade the Montgomery County government to divest from fossil fuels. It also supports worldwide efforts to "spread the word" about the urgent need for climate justice. On the final day of the Paris climate summit, as part of a 350.org-orchestrated "day of climate action," 350MoCo created – and spread on social media – [a short video](#) telling the story of Exxon and what may be "the crime of the century." Ellen wrote the script and participated in the video. (Check it out!)

As you probably know, other Board members are also deeply active doing anti-racism and environmental justice work. We hope that as a member of WES you're inspired to find an issue that you're passionate about, and that you'll take action to make the world a better place! After all, that's an important part of what Ethical Culture is about.

Strengthening WES's Lay Leadership

by Donna Taylor

The Lay Leadership Development Committee (LLDC) is a committee of the WES membership that focuses on nurturing and strengthening WES's lay leaders and volunteers. We are in the midst of holding conversations with similarly focused WES groups, to encourage improved coordination, leadership and alignment with the WES Congregational Ends Statements¹.

In the past months we have met with groups, committees and teams in the areas of

- Social Justice,
- Sunday Morning, and
- Social/Fellowship

In the coming months the LLDC will be meeting with groups in the areas of

- Children, youth and adult education,
- Finance and stewardship, and
- Community connections and support.

Some preliminary themes that have emerged from these discussions are "Leadership Succession Planning" and "Effectively Engaging Volunteers."

When we complete all our conversation in the Spring, we will share with you the common themes coming from these conversations and some resulting leadership development program initiative plans.

The members of the LLDC are Lori Betsock, Sonja Kueppers, and Donna Taylor; Danna Pope serves as the Board Liaison to the LLDC. We welcome talking with you about your ideas for strengthening leadership at WES.

WES News

Socially Responsible Impact Investing Workshop

By Carol Rawie

"As individual investors, our voices are very small indeed. But when we unite our voices with those of other investors, we can influence corporate decision makers. This is the idea behind Socially Responsible Impact Investing." (Len Cohen)

If you would like to better align your financial investments with your ethical values, join us for a free workshop on Socially Responsible Impact Investing. You might be surprised that (1) there really is an impact and (2) the evidence suggests that your investments will do at least as well as a socially indifferent portfolio.

¹ For more about *Ends Statements*, see Adam Goldberg's Board Column in the June 2015 Newsletter.

The workshop starts at 1 pm on Sunday, January 24, after Platform, in the WES Social Hall. Len Cohen, a Certified Financial Planner with a long interest in responsible investing, will make the presentation. He is a member of the Rockville Unitarian congregation, and has given similar workshops at Cedar Lane and other local UU congregations.

This one-hour workshop will include time for questions. Bring your lunch, or enjoy one of our sandwiches (\$5 suggested contribution) and other snacks. Sponsored by the WES Earth Ethics Team. RSVP not required but appreciated to help us plan numbers. For information contact Carol Rawie at kenrawie@erols.com.

Water-System Fundraiser a Huge Success

Thanks to our caring and generous WES community, we exceeded the goal for our share of the funds for the water system in our sister community, El Rodeo, El Salvador. The additional \$5,000 will create a contingency fund for the project.

As we continue to walk in community and solidarity with our friends in El Rodeo, this is a huge step indeed. If all goes well, we hope to break ground in June of 2016!

Muchimas gracias! — WES/Global Connections

Aging with Intention—New Discussion Series

As part of our ongoing “aging-with-intention” workshops, Beth Baker and Julie Campbell will facilitate a quarterly discussion group in 2016. The first gathering will be on Sunday, January 10 at 3pm at the Campbells’ home, 2601 Klinge Road NW. Subsequent meetings will be April 10, July 10 and October 9.

At the first session, we’ll be talking about how our roles may change as we grow older—from breadwinner to retiree, from adult child of parents to adult “orphan,” from being a parent to being a grandparent, from being a spouse/partner to being alone, and so on.

All are welcome. Please RSVP to Julie Campbell, juliecampbell@aol.com, so that we can have enough seating and light refreshments, and so that she can send you directions. For more information, contact Julie or Beth Baker, bethbaker@starpower.net.



Coming Up at WES

Sunday, January 3

Newcomers' Q and A, 12:30pm, Library. New to WES? Join us for this informal gathering to learn a little about who we are and what we do here, and to get your questions answered.

Monday, January 4

Mindfulness Meeting, 7:30-9pm, Double Classroom. This group meets monthly (first Mondays) for people interested in practicing meditation and living with mindfulness—or for anyone wanting to find out more about these topics. We explore both practices and ideas. Contact Trish Weil at trishweil@juno.com or Ann Baker at annlouisebaker@gmail.com.

Tuesday, January 5

Meditation Group, Adler Study, 7:30-9pm. This group, which meets on first and third Tuesdays, is open to anyone interested in meditation. We will use an approach called Recollective Awareness Meditation, based on a form of vipassanā, which involves meditating with our thoughts, emotions, and sensations rather than considering them distractions. Afterwards, we will recollect and reflect upon what happened while sitting in meditation. This experiential process introduces beginners to a meditation practice that is gentle and friendly from the outset, while it supports experienced meditators in bringing more awareness and compassion to their inner world. Sigfried Gold is a teacher in training with the Skillful Meditation Project and will be leading the group. Call or email him (301-775-3339, sigfried@sigfried.org) with questions. For more information about Recollective Awareness Meditation, see <http://skillfulmeditation.org/>.

Thursday, January 7

Valuing Differences Discussion Group, 7:30-9pm, Library. This group meets monthly for an unstructured conversation about differences of race, gender identity, age, sexual orientation, etc. in our life-space. It provides a safe place to ask questions, express concerns, and maybe find some fundamental answers. Members of the group take turns leading the discussion. We plan to start each month with a theme or a topic, but current events and the concerns of those attending may take precedence over anything preplanned. Contact June Fair, junelfair@gmail.com, or Shan Evans, sevans4406@yahoo.com, for more information.

Friday, January 8

First Fridays Lunch and Discussion Group, 12:30-2pm. Join us (unusually this month on a second Friday!) for our monthly lunch and discussion group.

Saturday, January 9

"Waking up to Race" - an introductory, *White Awake* workshop for white-identified people, 1:30-4:30pm. *White Awake* is an open source curriculum that utilizes mindfulness and contemplative, spiritual practice to support inner transformation and the development of racial awareness among white people. Eleanor Hancock, director of the program, will be offering this three-hour introductory workshop. During our time together we will: work within shared agreements that honor the tension between accountability and the avoidance of personalized shame; focus on both personal experience/story-telling, and the historical/cultural/institutional context of racism; incorporate simple exercises, small group discussion, and community ritual into our practice with one another; conclude with a call to respond, in our daily life, to the experiences of the workshop.

Sunday, January 10

Teen Waffle Bar, 12:30, Main Hall. Every second Sunday of the month the Teens will offer waffles and an assortment of toppings for WES members and friends.

Waffle ingredients and toppings are purchased through waffle bar proceeds. Remaining funds go to the Teen Group for service trips. Freewill donation.

The Biology Reading Group, after Platform, Library. This month the group will continue to explore *Life on the Edge*, by Johnjoe McFadden and Jim Al-Khalili. All are welcome. It is not necessary to read the book, though it helps. For more information, contact Barbara Searle, bsearle70@msn.com.

Board of Trustees Meeting, 12:45pm, Social Hall. All are welcome to attend meetings of the Board of Trustees. Agenda and materials are available in the Members Access section of our website.

Aging with Intention—New Discussion Series, 3pm, Julie Campbell's Home. Subsequent meetings will be April 10, July 10 and October 9. All are welcome. For a full description, please see the article on page 5.

Tuesday, January 12

Washington Interfaith Network Community Organizing Meeting, 7pm, Library. Join Amanda and WES lay leaders to talk about next steps in community organizing in our neighborhood. How can WES support the needs of Ward 4? How can we ensure homeless services in DC? What ARE the needs and what is our role in them?

Friday, January 15

Still Thirsty After All These Years, Austin Grill in Downtown Silver Spring. 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. Please contact Nancy McGuire (nkmontheroad@yahoo.com) or Shan Evans (sevans4406@yahoo.com) for more details.

Sunday, January 17

Schmoozapalooza, after platform. 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 Main 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!

WES Book Group, after platform during Schmoozapalooza. Please join us for conversation and connection! Our January selection is *Cold Mountain* by Charles Frazier.

Tuesday, January 19

Meditation Group, Adler Study, 7:30-9pm. This group, which meets on first and third Tuesdays, is open to anyone interested in meditation. For more information, see the entry above for January 5.

Sunday, January 24

Neighborhood Potlucks, 5:30pm. Neighborhood potlucks give us a chance to get to know those who live nearest to us and in a smaller group than at Platform. Bring a dish to share. Members should be contacted by their Neighborhood Coordinators-- but friends and visitors are welcome to join as well! Please contact Lindsay Lucke at

ldeflucke@gmail.com to be matched with your neighborhood or if you have any questions.

Socially Responsible Impact Investing Workshop, 1pm, Social Hall. The Earth Ethics Team is sponsoring a workshop on responsible investing by Certified Financial Planner Len Cohen, a member of the Rockville Unitarian-Universalist Congregation. This one-hour workshop will include time for questions. Bring your lunch, or enjoy one of our sandwiches (\$5 suggested contribution) and other snacks. RSVP not required but appreciated to help us plan numbers. For information see the article on page 4 or contact Carol Rawie at kenrawie@erols.com.