

WES Express

Monthly Newsletter of the Washington Ethical Society

April 2016

Upcoming Platforms Join us at 9:30am or 11:30am

Sunday, April 3. "Creating the World Together" Amanda Poppei, Senior Leader. As we begin our exploration of Creativity, Amanda will consider our particular task, as Ethical Culturists, as co-creators of our own traditions. Without a set of texts to guide us or a hierarchy to decide, how do we develop a meaningful approach to life? Are we just making it all up as we go along? What do we borrow, beg, or steal, and what is our own design? Music from the WES Chorus.

Sunday, April 10. "Chaos, Safety, and Creativity—Do I Have To?" Amanda Poppei, Senior Leader. Amanda will explore the idea that creativity sometimes feels less like beauty and more like chaos. Must we always sacrifice safety to create something new? What does that mean for our personal lives, and for our political systems? Music from the Allegheny Ramblers.

Sunday, April 17. "Inspiration" Joshua Searle-White, Professor of Psychology and Storyteller. There are times in life when we feel the need for some wisdom to guide us. It turns out that we might not have to look far. In fact, the mere physical and emotional act of letting something new in – literally, inspiration – can let help us touch a deeper wisdom that can lead our lives in new and creative directions. Join us and experience what inspiration feels like! Music from singer/songwriter Doris Justis.

Sunday, April 24. "Earth Day" Rabbi Fred Scherlinder Dobb, Adat Shalom Reconstructionist Congregation. The topic will be announced in the weekly e-Newsletter and on the WES website.

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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: Creativity

Amanda Poppei, Senior Leader

I love coloring books. I've recently found the phenomenon of adult coloring books—with lovely mandalas and flowers and other very grown-up looking things (which is to say, no unicorns). There's all kinds of research around adult coloring books. Apparently they're second best to meditation at promoting mindfulness and lowering anxiety. I even have my own set of colored pencils, which I keep in a pretty little colored pencil container so I'm always prepared.

And those coloring pencils are only for the coloring book. I would never think to pick them up and sketch with them. I consider myself on the stick-figure level in terms of my drawing abilities, and the idea of actually creating something artistic and new fills me with a sense of dread. But coloring inside the lines? That I can handle.

Of course, most of life doesn't happen inside the lines. I think that's why I like the coloring book: it offers a respite from reality. Reality doesn't have any lines at all, and it asks us not to follow a pattern but to be fully present. And more often than not, our responses look messy!

But that's what makes life creative, unlike a coloring book. It calls on not just our presence and our concentration, but on our thinking, our imagining, our dreaming. This month, as we explore the theme of creativity, I invite you to consider where your life could use a little more of your creativity. Have you been coloring inside the lines for too long? Let this be the month you sharpen your pencil and break free.



Ways to engage with
April's theme:
Creativity

April Platforms

[Explore the Theme:
Creativity](#)

Story for All Ages:

Ish
by Peter H Reynolds

Share the Plate:
*Interfaith Power and
Light*

From Your Board of Trustees:

By Rachel Alexander

What an exciting month for our community – we jump to two platforms! Since I joined the Board July of 2015, our guiding star has been supporting WES's growth. And boy have we grown! At the last report, WES's Average Sunday Attendance (ASA) is averaging 202 people, up 23% from last year. The official name for our community size is "Awkward," and indeed it can feel that way. Awkward-sized communities naturally do one of two things – they shrink back to Pastoral size (an ASA of 150) or they push through to Program size (an ASA of 225). And WES is pushing through, which is why we need to add a second platform to accommodate all of our growth.

The WES staff and your Board have been planning for two platforms for a while. We are ready! But let's be clear, this growth belongs to YOU – the WES community. People are seeking out WES and staying because YOU make them realize that it is possible to be part of a vibrant community that believes in humanity, justice and the worth of every person. And as the rhetoric and vitriol in our nation ratchet up, I hope many more will find refuge at WES.

What can you do to help WES continue to thrive and grow during this time of transition? I'm glad you asked.

- **Volunteer** – Double the services means more Sunday morning volunteers. We need more ushers, Sunday School teachers, welcome team members, and sound team members. And here's the great news, because there are two services, you can volunteer at one and enjoy the other unfettered! There is a colorful sign-up poster by the welcome tables on Sundays where you can sign up, or you can email Amanda (amandap@ethicalsociety.org) and she will get you on your way to the right team.
- **Support Your Staff** – Amanda, Melissa, Bailey, Robin and Tom are working hard to support our community during this transition. As enthusiastic and prepared as they are, you can only imagine how much work, planning and strategizing is involved in doubling your Sunday morning services. Acknowledging their effort and dedication in word or deed is a small token of gratitude for all they have accomplished in getting us to, and through, this point of growth.
- **Bring Your Friends** – You know those friends who have been saying for the longest time that they think they'd like to check out WES? Well now we actually have a place for them to sit (other than in your lap). Invite them! Give them a program, brochure or link to our website.
- **Send in Your Pledge Cards** – In order to properly plan for and support WES's growth, we need to be able to forecast our revenue with some degree of certainty. That's the point of your pledge cards, they allow us to plan and allocate resources in the most strategic and thoughtful way.
- **Relax and Have Fun** – This is an exciting time for our community. We can face it with anxiety or joy. And so many of you have chosen joy. Let's keep that going! There will be inevitable hiccups in the months ahead as we figure

this thing out. But today's hiccups will be tomorrow's community lore. "Remember when we underestimated the number of cookies to put out between platforms and the 2nd graders held an impromptu sit-in?"

WES News

2016 WES Delegation to El Rodeo Ready to Roll!

by The WES/Global Connections Team

We are happy to report that all 12 slots have been filled with WES members, eager to travel to El Salvador and reconnect with our Sister-Community friends in the small community of El Rodeo. The delegates are:

Russell Corbin, Emily Glazer, Peggy Goetz, Kye Keely, David Keely, Maia Pramuk, Susan Runner, Caroline Russell, Lola Skolnik, Karen Storms, Ross Wells and Pam Williams.



Oneida Ramos and Maya Taft Morales in El Rodeo

This can be a challenging time to travel to El Salvador. WES/Global Connections is making every effort to stay on top of best practices for safe traveling and mosquito protection. It means so much to our friends in El Rodeo that we continue to make the journey and build upon our exchange of friendship and solidarity, now in its seventh year. These delegates and the generous financial and spiritual support of WES members are keeping our Sister-Community relationship strong.

Special thanks go out to Russell Corbin, his Mom Caroline Russell and Dad Marcus Corbin who chose to celebrate Russell's 15th birthday at WES by having a party for Russell and El Rodeo. They raised over \$1,100 for our Sister Community and had a great time as well. Russell has been a pen-pal with El Rodeo teen, Oneida Ramos since 2010. They will have a chance to meet in person when the delegation visits in June!



Marcus Corbin and friends celebrate at WES

Dr. Evan Berry Presents at WES

On Sunday, April 10, 1-2pm, in the Social Hall, we are pleased to offer a class in our *Flourish! Series* about the intersection of religion and the environment and about how religious traditions work to develop responses to ecological problems. A time for comments, questions, and discussion will follow. Facilitator: Dr. Evan Berry.

Dr. Berry is an associate professor of Philosophy and Religion at American University. The University of California Press published his book, *Devoted to Nature: The Religious Roots of American Environmentalism*, last year. He also has the distinction of being the son of WES member, Mary Berry! He is quoted in a [recent Newsweek article](#) on the religious motivations for saving the earth.

Coming Up at WES

Friday, April 1

First Fridays Lunch and Discussion Group, 12:30 – 2:00pm – Social Hall.

Spring reminds us of new beginnings, blossoming, and renewal. How are you renewed in the springtime? What new beginnings will you make in the next few months? Do you have plans to become more involved at WES, or in your community, or your family? Let's share our springtime stories--pictures and poems welcome, too. All WES members and friends who have a flexible schedule are invited to participate. Please bring your own lunch, and a snack or dessert to share. Arrive early and get settled so that our usual go-round can begin right at 12:30pm. If you have questions, need transportation to the meeting, or would like to be added to our email reminder list, please contact Cindy White at crwhite712@gmail.com

Parents' Night Out, 6-10pm. The Teen Group is hosting a *Parents' Night Out* in the double classroom. There will be crafts, games, and pizza. (If your child has dietary restrictions, feel free to pack a sack lunch for them.) The cost is \$30/child (+\$10/sibling). To reserve your spot, email Robyn Kravitz (RobynK@ethicalsociety.org).

Sunday, April 3

Newcomers' Q and A, 11am and 1pm, 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!

Working for Racial Equity, 1-3pm, WES Social Hall. Have you been learning about anti-racism work and Black Lives Matter, and wonder 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.

Syrian Refugee Response Action Team meeting, 1pm, Adler Study. We will share the latest updates from the International Rescue Committee's (IRC) work in the field and discuss the situation with refugee resettlement in the U.S. in light of the election and other impeding factors. We will also nail down concrete action for

WES's support of refugees arriving in the area, including opportunities to serve as a mentor and guide for arriving families.

Monday, April 4

Mindfulness Meeting, 7:30-9pm, Social Hall. 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.

Wednesday, April 6

Small Group: Explore the Theme, 7-8:30pm. This is a drop-in small group for anyone and everyone! Newcomers and longtime members are invited, first and third Wednesdays in April, to participate in a small group discussion around the theme of the month, Creativity. Each week will feature a different focus and a different leader for the group. The format will encourage reflection and connection. No need to RSVP, just come join us. Meet the group leader in the WES Main Office. The meeting will be in the Adler Study or the Leader's Office.

Flourish! Class--Creating Your Life: Mastering the Creative Process (Theme of Creativity), 7-9pm. Social Hall. If you registered for this class, this a reminder about the third session. Facilitator: John Mulligan.

Thursday, April 7

Washington Interfaith Network Citywide Action Team Meeting, 7-8:30pm, St. Augustine Catholic Church. WES is putting together a team of 2-5 people to attend this meeting, which will include updates on the family emergency housing proposed by Mayor Bowser. Please RSVP to Terry Smith at tlsm@msn.com.

Saturday, April 9

Path to Membership, 9:30am-12pm, Social Hall. Newcomers and visitors are warmly welcomed to learn more about WES, Ethical Culture, and what membership in our community means. Please RSVP to Amanda Poppei at amandap@ethicalsociety.org.

Sunday, April 10

Teen Waffle Bar, 10:45am, Lobby. 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. Free will donation.

Aging with Intention—Discussion Series, 3pm, Julie Campbell's Home. As part of our ongoing "aging-with-intention" workshops, Beth Baker and Julie Campbell will facilitate the second quarterly discussion group this year on April 10. The gathering will be from 3pm to 5pm at the Campbells' home, 2601 Klinge Road NW. Subsequent meetings will be July 10 and October 9.

We will continue the discussion we began in January on our changing roles as we grow older. We will focus on strategies for either mitigating challenges or enhancing positive change. We will break into small theme-based groups to explore topics such as: pursuing creativity; coping with caregiving; evolving spirituality; and finding purpose (through service, political work, and so on).

All are welcome, even if you have not attended previous sessions. 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 or to suggest other topic ideas, contact Julie or Beth Baker, bethbaker@starpower.net.

Flourish! Class--The Role of Religion in Addressing Climate Change: History and Prospects, 1-2pm, Social Hall. This will be a presentation about the intersection of religion and the environment and about how religious traditions work to develop responses to ecological problems. A time for comments, questions, and discussion will follow. Facilitator: Dr. Evan Berry. See page 5 for more details.

Biology Group, 1pm, Library. The Biology Group will meet to begin discussion of *The Serengeti Rules: The Quest to Discover How Life Works and Why it Matters*, by Sean B. Carroll. All are welcome. Reading the book is not a requirement. For more information, please contact Barbara Searle, bsearle70@msn.com.

Wednesday, April 13

Flourish! Class--Creating Your Life: Mastering the Creative Process (Theme of Creativity), 7-9pm. Social Hall. If you registered for this class, this a reminder about the fourth session. Facilitator: John Mulligan.

Washington Interfaith Network Ward 1&4 Action Team Meeting, 7-8:30pm, St. Augustine Catholic Church. WES will put together a team to attend this and discuss the continuation of our planning around holding a Ward 1 & 4 action for affordable housing, homelessness and community safety.

Thursday, April 14

Board of Trustees Meeting, 7pm, Library. All are welcome to attend meetings of the Board of Trustees. Agenda and materials are available in the Members Access section of our website.

Friday, April 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 (sevens4406@yahoo.com) for more details.

Sunday, April 17

Schmoozapalooza, 1pm, WES Main 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 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!

Board Game Meetup, during Schmoozapalooza. WES will be holding a board games session for all ages after Schmoozapalooza, until 4pm. If you like to play board games, we hope to see you there. Please bring along any board games you'd like to share. If you have any questions, contact Sonja Kueppers (skueppers@gmail.com).

WES Book Group, after platform during Schmoozapalooza. Please join us for conversation and connection. The book this month is *Hunger Games (Book One)* by Suzanne Collins.

Monday, April 18

Adult Education Meeting, 7 pm, Adler Study. We meet monthly to discuss upcoming Adult Education classes and workshops. Come help us plan what we can offer in the future and when. We are also open to multi-generation classes.

Path to Membership, 7-9pm, Library. Newcomers and visitors are warmly welcomed to learn more about WES, Ethical Culture, and what membership in our community means! Please RSVP to Amanda Poppei at amandap@ethicalsociety.org.

Wednesday, April 20

Small Group: Explore the Theme, 7-8:30pm. See the description for April 6.

Flourish! Class--Creating Your Life: Mastering the Creative Process (Theme of Creativity), 7-9pm. Social Hall. If you registered for this class, this is a reminder about the fifth and final session. Facilitator: John Mulligan.

Thursday, April 21

Young@WES Happy Hour, Busboys and Poets, Takoma Park, 7pm. Join other young(ish) adults (most attendees range between early 20s and late 30s) for a chance to connect and enjoy great food and brews. Contact Thomas Allen at thomas8allen@gmail.com with questions. When you get to the bar, ask for Laura DiSciullo--she is the *day-of* contact!

Sunday, April 24

Creating the Community We Want: A Conversation about Language, Non-theism, Spirituality, and More! 1-3pm, Main Hall. Please join the Committee on Community and Leadership Support and Senior Leader Amanda Poppei as she facilitates an ongoing conversation about our community and how we want to be with each other, especially around topics of spirituality, non-theism, theism, and much more. This conversation was prompted by requests from members, but also represents part of our ongoing life together as a community of diverse people!

Humanist Seder and Spring Dinner, 5pm.

Please join us for our annual celebration of the ancient story of Passover, as we seek to understand the human experience of freedom through the lens of the Hebrews' escape from slavery in Egypt. We will share together in a humanist seder using a haggadah (the story text) created over many years at WES, and then have a potluck dinner. Families are very welcome, and children always enjoy searching for the hidden matzoh!

Sunday, May 1

Spring Festival – A Multigenerational Service

Newcomers' Q and A, 12:30pm, Library. See the description for April 3.

Monday, May 2

Mindfulness Meeting, 7:30-9pm, Social Hall. See the description for April 5.

Thursday, May 5

Flourish! Class: The Gifts of World Religion to Humanism, 7pm, Library. Join Senior Leader Amanda Poppei for a class examining the way that many religious traditions have shaped--and continue to shape--modern humanism and Ethical Culture.

Saturday, May 7

The New and Improved "Board Games," 4pm, Brigid Monaghan and Jen Watson's home. There are still spots open in a great auction event offered this year by the Board of Trustees. That's right folks, once again this year the WES Board of Trustees is throwing a picnic-style food fest with interactive "Board" games (outdoors, weather permitting). They won't be games played on a board, and we promise you won't be bored. So come prepared to eat, laugh, play games, and most of all have fun! Geared toward adults, \$30 donation to WES. To sign up, email Board president Adam Goldberg at adam_goldberg@hotmail.com.

The Book Club Schedule

The Book Club meets the third Sunday of the Month at WES after Platform during the Schmoozapalooza. These are the books we will discuss:

April - *Hunger Games* (first book), Suzanne Collins

May - *Kimjongilia: A True Story of Romance and Sacrifice in North Korea*, Victor Fox

June - *Romantic Outlaws: The Extraordinary Lives of Mary Wollstonecraft And her daughter, Mary Shelley*, Charlotte Gordon