

FREE FLOWING

WellSprings
CONGREGATION

A Community Charged Full With the Charge of the Soul

Volume 6, Issue 4

A Quarterly Newsletter--Winter-2011



30-Day Spiritual
Practice Challenge
Starting January 16th
(See The Weekly for Details)

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Ken's Column
Happy
(almost)
Birthday!



On January 21st, 2012 WellSprings turns five years old. I offer congratulations to all of us and have tremendous gratitude for all of us who have been a part of this journey. In five short years, we have accomplished much and grown in ways unprecedented for a new UU congregation. We've served together, grown together, struggled together, mourned together, celebrated together. There has been so much Life here at WellSprings, an abundance of what we call Soul in our mission. And we're still quite young and have only just begun.

In the New Year, we'll be observing our birthday in a couple different ways. Look for announcements to come soon about specific dates, but the celebrations will include an event with our initial benefactor congregation, Main Line Unitarian Church, and also our own birthday party.

As with any birthday, our thoughts turn to gifts. What's an appropriate gift to give to a five-year-old congregation? This is the way that I can →

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Ken's Column

Happy (almost) Birthday!

(Cont'd)



most meaningfully frame the question for all of us to answer: *What gifts can you give to WellSprings so that WellSprings can continue to share its gifts with the world?*

That's the question I'd most like all of us to answer in this coming fifth birthday month, together and individually. What are the gifts that each of us brings so that all of us will thrive together?

Five years ago most of you who are reading this column had no idea what WellSprings was. That's an awesome thing. It means that we've grown. It means that we've not kept the gift of WellSprings to ourselves. Let's keep giving WellSprings away. Giving it to people who are hurting. Giving it to people who are seeking. Giving it to people who are healing. Giving it to people who are growing. That's the way we'll keep growing.

Because when we give WellSprings away, the offering comes back to us in the form of a blessing.

May you live in your blessings,

Rev. Ken Beldon, Lead Minister



Greg's Notes

From Our Ministerial Intern

This January, for nearly the entire month, I will be in Chicago at Meadville Lombard Theological School for a series of academic courses. We refer to this month as the J-Term. I will be taking a course in Multifaith Theology, one in Religious Education, and finally a course in Preaching. Along with these courses, there is a convocation that Rev. Ken and I will attend together that will engage in the theme of, "Creating Places of Hope and Resilience in Uncertain Times: An Exploration of Ethic, Economy, and Theology."

As I prepare for this intense month of education, I have been pondering one of the assignments for the course in preaching. I am to write a brief (5 pages) paper on my source(s) of hope. The assignment asks me to explain from where I draw my hope, psychologically, philosophically, and/or theologically. It is not a paper about what I am hopeful for, nor a paper on how to give hope to others (if that is even possible). The paper is, however, intended to address the question, "In the face of pain and suffering that feels overwhelming, why ought we choose to live another day?"

I must confess that I have known about the assignment for nearly a year and a half, as the professor of this course has not substantially altered his syllabus in the last several offerings of the class. When I first read the assignment, I admit my heart fell. I was clueless about how to approach this. But, I figured that I had some time, as I also knew that I wouldn't be taking the course for nearly eighteen months. Secretly, I suppose I hoped that the professor would eventually eliminate the assignment before I was to take the class, thus saving me the struggle to articulate where I ground my hope. Alas, the assignment has not changed.

So, here I am. After months of thinking, deliberating, fretting, and procrastinating, I have come up with this: Nada. Bupkis. Empty pages. Not a single word.

Sigh.



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A Note From Greg... (Continued)

Now, I am, generally speaking, a hopeful person. (I am also generally optimistic, but that's something different from hope, I think.) So if I am so hope-filled, why, I wonder, has this paper been so difficult to write?



I have taken to asking people where they ground their hope. (Which makes me a blast at a cocktail party.)

This past summer, I had a wonderful discussion of the matter with two friends who attend Christian seminaries. One, a Lutheran, placed her hope in a "theology of the cross," based on the Christian scriptural tradition of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. I had to admit to her that I didn't really understand that theology, but also saw that it did, in fact, offer her hope. A Disciples of Christ friend stated that she placed her hope at the Lord's Table, meaning through the ritual of communion. This I understood a bit better, as I can resonate with the sense of spiritual community that I believe the ritual of communion represents. Yet, I fear there is not enough there for me to locate my source of hope in that tradition.

So after many months of consideration and challenge, I am left only with one conclusive thought: I find the question of the source of my hope to be... *a really awesome one*. I mean that in a good way. While I have yet to find words to articulate my source of hope, I am loving the challenge of it. I have found that we frequently engage in the language of hope, and I intuitively know that our individual and collective senses of hope must have a discernible source. This assignment has asked me to listen differently, both to myself and others. It has asked me to live into hope, even when what is in front of me seems hopeless. It has pushed me to answer the question, then to question my answer, and to return again to where I started. →

I imagine that I will be wrestling with this question for the rest of my life. I'd like to invite you to do the same. This question of hope, of our source of hope, is not the sole purview of the seminarian, the theologian, or the minister. It is a question for all of us, for we all, I think, struggle with the answer. I invite you to listen for the word "hope," give some attention to how we use it, what we mean by it, and from where we ground our sense of it. The five page paper is optional (for you, at least)!

To help us along, I leave you with this quote from Unitarian Universalist minister, Reverend Victoria Safford:

"Our mission is to plant ourselves at the gates of hope—not the prudent gates of Optimism, which are somewhat narrower; nor the stalwart, boring gates of Common Sense; nor the strident gates of Self-Righteousness, which creak on shrill and angry hinges (people cannot hear us there; they cannot pass through); nor the cheerful, flimsy garden gate of 'Everything Is Gonna Be All Right.' But a different, sometimes lonely place, of truth-telling about your own soul, first of all, and its condition, the place of resistance and defiance, from which you see the world both as it is and as it could be, as it will be; the place from which you glimpse not only struggle but joy in the struggle. And we stand there, beckoning and calling, telling people what we're seeing, asking them what they see."

Victoria Safford, "The Gates of Hope,"
The Nation, September 2, 2004,

<http://www.thenation.com/article/gates-hope>.

Blessings and gratitude to you all. I will see you when I return in February!

--Greg Pelley

*A Community
Charged Full
With the
Charge of the Soul*

The YouthSpirit Yodel Winter 2011-12

Sunday mornings are busy and bustling in YouthSpirit at WellSprings! Kids from the youngest baby in the nursery to our growing and curious teenagers find fun and friendship at the heart of deepening spiritual awareness at both the 9:30 and 11:00 am services. Striving to meet our kids where they are, YouthSpirit is excited to offer four spiritual development programs for our growing families this program year.

YouthSpirit Nursery and Pre-K, open from 9:30 am until Noon every Sunday, is the fun place where babies, toddlers and pre-schoolers come together for fun and creative play with Ms. Magda and Ms. Harriet. There's music, games and creative activities all morning long to keep the kids happy and safe while parents enjoy Sunday service.

Looking forward to our second semester opening February 5, 2012, YouthSpirit Kindergarten and First Grade, Second and Third Grade, and Fourth and Fifth Grade groups join in fellowship this winter and spring and journey together in "Ripples of Connection." YouthSpirit Mentors, Workshop Leaders and kids join hand-in-hand to explore our connections with each other, the Sacred and the greater community, and deepening our faith identity by actively generating deeds that support our beliefs. "Ripples of Connection" offers both traditional classroom and spiritual workshop experiences in the course of sixteen weeks, where our faith comes to life within our children's sacred community.

Deepening our connection to WellSprings community partner, The Clinic, weekly class activities open young minds and hearts to community service. We'll explore stories and activities to help us imagine being a living part of something greater than ourselves. Spiritual Workshops →



Community Service at Good Samaritan Shelter

then turn our beliefs into actions when kids develop and launch "Coins for the Clinic – Collection for Connection," collecting coins to fulfill The Clinic's Wish List for everyday items like tissues, paper towels, band-aids, baby diapers and wipes, children's books in both English and Spanish.

The YouthSpirit Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Grade group continues adventurously on their own virtual island designed just for middle school kids. "Spiritual Survivor II" Mentors and kids explore together how faith inspires us to keep our connections with our friends and our community spiritually healthy and whole. In Spiritual Workshop, 6th-8th Graders peer mentor younger kids in "Coins for the Clinic – Collection for Connection" campaign to discover how our connections with others help us live with integrity and make good choices, opening doors to greater spiritual growth and new friendships.

YouthGroup, open to WellSprings kids in 8th-12th Grade, enjoys "SpiritFlix for Teens" once a month, and gathers for special fun and fellowship events designed just for teens. See more about "SpiritFlix for Teens" in this issue of Free Flowing.

Within the four discerned areas designed for kids' spiritual growth, YouthSpirit is committed this 2011-2012 program year to develop true and achievable faith practices with our kids. Each week our Sunday YouthSpirit sessions open with a regular ritual designed to give our kids simple language to define our faith, and we nurture regular spiritual practice through engaging in age-appropriate periods of stillness. →

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The YouthSpirit Yodel Winter 2011-12 (Continued)

There are lots of good things in store in YouthSpirit every Sunday and we're excited to offer a program where our children creatively explore spiritual growth with family, fun, and good friends. Join the fun and reach out to Becky McAndrews, YouthSpirit Director, at becky@wellspringsuu.org or 610-280-3797 to learn more about WellSprings' YouthSpirit and YouthGroup.

SPRITFLIX for TEENS

Helping our kids' transition from childhood to adolescence is central to healthy and whole spiritual growth. Recognizing the spirit and vitality of our kids as they grow up, WellSprings is offering more ways for our teens to be a significant part of our community and shared spiritual lives.

Opening last September, WellSprings YouthSpirit offers "SpiritFlix for Teens" for YouthSpirit kids in 8th-12th Grade. Teens gather on the second Sunday of every month at YouthSpirit time of fellowship during regular 11:00 am worship service and engage in fun and meaningful activities and discussions about popular Hollywood films produced for the teen and young adult. Kids have an opportunity to view the film beforehand, gathering in fellowship the Friday evening before for "Popcorn and Movie Night," and good old-fashioned fun.

In nine monthly gatherings, "SpiritFlix for Teens" has explored fun films like "Forrest Gump," and we'll dive into the deeper, resonant meanings of movies like "Trevor" and "Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring."



On remaining Sunday mornings, YouthGroup teens have choices to remain with the congregation and hear the weekly message, or serve as a Peer Mentor in a YouthSpirit group with the younger kids.

YouthSpirit is growing up and excited about YouthGroup, a very special place for our teens to grow wholly and spiritually in fellowship and faith.

Our Whole Lives

Starting February 5, 2012, WellSprings offers Our Whole Lives (OWL) to WellSprings pre-teens and teens currently in 7th-9th Grade. Our Whole Lives (OWL), developed jointly by Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) and United Church of Christ, is a comprehensive sexuality education program designed to help participants make responsible and informed choices about sexual health and behavior. We are excited to integrate some new material, currently being developed by UUA, to include social media and Internet into the weekly class sessions.

Karen Cicchinelli and Michael Evans co-facilitate the program, having earned their OWL facilitator qualifications in September 2010, in a weekend-long training program sponsored by Joseph Priestly District of the UUA.

Our Whole Lives orientation gatherings are open to 7th-9th grade kids and parents at 12:15 pm →

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Our Whole Lives (Continued)

on Sunday, January 15th and Sunday, January 22nd in the Music Room at the Montgomery School. Set within the supportive and affirming framework of WellSprings, classes open on February 5th for a fourteen-week period and meet at the Montgomery School on Sundays from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm. WellSprings is proud to offer OWL to our 7th-9th graders and their families. Reach out to Becky McAndrews, YouthSpirit Director, becky@wellspringsuu.org for more information about Our Whole Lives.

WellSprings Day of Community Service

On November 19th, several WellSprings members and families came out to lend a helping hand to Phoenixville agencies serving people whose lives are in unfortunate or vulnerable circumstances. Gathering at Steel City Coffee House to start the day, two groups then set out to The Clinic, WellSprings' dedicated community partner, and Good Samaritan Shelters to disinfect, clean, and paint facilities.

Since 2001, The Clinic in Phoenixville has served the uninsured and underinsured with low-cost or free medical care. In addition to primary medical care, The Clinic offers a variety of medical specialties and addiction and nutrition counseling. The Clinic staff was very thankful for the several WellSprings members who disinfected the entire waiting area and several patient rooms – wiping down anything that people touch – in this busy flu season.

The Good Samaritan Shelter is a Christian ministry providing transitional housing and supportive services to homeless men, women and women with children in Phoenixville and Ephrata. Working in an emergency shelter for homeless men, WellSpringers scrubbed, painted, and cleaned to spruce up the home that holds as many as 65 residents in the course of one year.

Nate Hoffer, Executive Director of Good Samaritan Shelter said, "Thank you so much for the great work you did on Saturday! We are so grateful for your support. The work you've done really does look wonderful." →

Day of Community Service (Continued)

WellSpringers shared the charge of the soul in a day of fun, fellowship, and camaraderie to reach out to folks who greatly appreciate our radical hospitality.

Fun and Fellowship Team

Meet the Fun and Fellowship team! We're the team that helps organize the social events that help you connect with other WellSprings folks.

You may have attended one of our events this year, they included:

- Potluck dinners—my personal fave for really getting to know folks (plus there's the free food and folks take their dirty dishes home!) Did I mention the free food?
- 5K walk/run/bike/crawl/slither—the weather this year was beautiful! Thanks Teresa.
- Reading Phillies baseball game—okay, even with the annual rain delay, we always have a great time! Thanks Andrew.
- "WellCome Back" pool party. Thanks to the Sabadish family.
- Hayride and pumpkin picking at Milky Way Farm—my kids love their kids (baby goats... get it?).
- Family game night/potluck—board games, card games, and interactive games. Thanks Connie.
- Poker night—winners get their money back, but the rest goes to Wellsprings Thanks Jim.
- Dog walk on the Struble Trail.

You get the idea – gathering a smaller group of folks gives you the chance to make new friends and to go beyond the Sunday ritual of "Good morning, how are you..."

Have a great idea for a new activity? We'd love to hear it!

We're also looking for additional team members to help with planning activities. Fun and Fellowship team meets quarterly, yup, just four times per year. We can meet at the office in Exton or at Linda's house in Eagleview—did I mention I make cookies....

If you'd like to host, suggest an activity, or join our team, please contact Linda Hughes: elijaybea@gmail.com.

--Linda Hughes



*“Want what you have,
Do what you can,
And be who you are.”*

–Forrest Church

Caring Connection



We are in the midst of the holiday season. This is a season of great joy, but can also be stressful or lonely for people. If you are looking for a connection within our WellSprings community, please let one of our members know. We will do what we can to help you or help you to access resources.

Please contact Phyllis Ballester, Team Leader, at 610-213-9433 or phylballester@hotmail.com or one of our members—Carol Klekotka, Sylvia Doyle, Carol Ruark, Carol Mantsch, Nan Robb, Page Buck, Bryan Meyer, and Renee Cain.

--Phyllis Ballester

Retreat Team

The retreat team has been hard at work developing their program for 2012. The first retreat of the new year, Creating Your Value Legacy, will be offered on January 28, 2012 at the Temenos Farm House. Attendees will have the opportunity to explore their personal values and learn how to tell and share their wisdom stories. The retreat team will be facilitating this highly interactive event and ample time will be provided for sharing, as well as for individual reflection and writing.

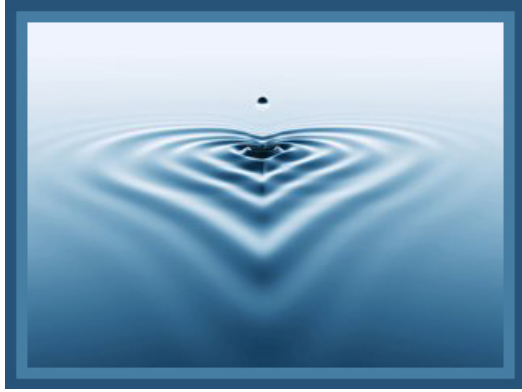
The team will soon start working with Rev. Ken on a mindfulness retreat for late spring. Also, the team has already reserved the weekend of October 19 for the 4th Annual Silent Retreat. It will be held at Temenos Retreat Center.

This small but devoted team would welcome the addition of new members so that it can maintain the energy and creativity needed to offer multiple retreats each year. Please contact Marian Caroselli (610-620-3210 or carosellim@yahoo.com), if you are interested in joining.

--Marian Caroselli



WellSprings Went A-Caroling



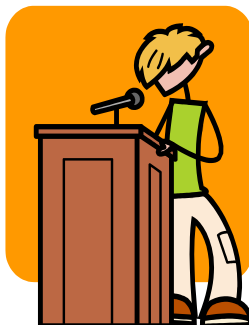
Ripples of Connection

We believe that each of us yearns for connection with each other and with the Sacred. We are mindful of the choices we make and know that our freedom reaches its fulfillment in connection with others. Like a pebble dropped into a pool of water, we do not know how far the ripples of our actions may reach.

--from WellSprings Core Beliefs

Rev. Ken's Upcoming Message Series This Winter/Spring

- Making Choices Mindfully
- Half-Way Through This Life



Our Teams Team Leaders and Ministry Statements

MANAGEMENT and STEWARDSHIP

Frank Zinni, Chris Chepel (Stewardship), Jim Riley, John Mason, Carol Mantsch

The Management and Stewardship Team provides strategic, forward-looking guidance and promotes wise stewardship of our congregational gifts. We are committed to listening to and hearing from the Lead Minister, the Leadership Springboard, and the members of our congregation in regularly evaluating the financial and management conditions of our congregation. Our ministry is to honestly evaluate where we are in the hope of courageously going where we are called to be.

LEADERSHIP and SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Sharon Bader, Team Leader

The WellSprings Leadership and Spiritual Development Team believes that each of us has the potential for new life. We work to empower people to find and to live their true sense of calling. We identify opportunities and create pathways for individual and community spiritual growth. With humility and generosity of spirit, this team honestly evaluates where we are in the hope of going where we are called to be.

YouthSpirit

Becky McAndrews, YouthSpirit Director

Deeply rooted in WellSprings' Core Values and Beliefs, YouthSpirit desires to nurture childhood and family spiritual awareness, growth, and maturity. A child's regular participation in a YouthSpirit group develops early practices of faith and spiritual consciousness that encourage the growing mind and heart to live with integrity every day and always.

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Our Teams (Continued)

Team Leaders and Ministry Statements

Hospitality

Kim Sabadish, Team Leader

The Hospitality Team embraces the belief that each of us yearns for connection with each other and with the Sacred. We are a community of deep listening, possessing the humility and the vulnerability necessary to make positive change. We welcome people to WellSprings with generosity of spirit, making way for others to find a place where they may live out what they do best and the world needs most. Through sharing our joy and deeper selves, we aspire to create an atmosphere where all who come might celebrate, cultivate, and be nurtured in their spiritual life by others in the WellSprings Congregation.

CARING CONNECTION

Phyllis Ballester, Team Leader

WellSprings Caring Connection affirms our connection and our interdependence. We encourage each other to live fully and love generously by both giving and receiving acts of kindness and service. Sharing our vulnerabilities and helping each other when we are in need nurtures our spiritual growth.

FUN and FELLOWSHIP

Linda Hughes, Team Leader

The WellSprings Fun and Fellowship Team believes in helping create relationships between us by gathering for the purpose of having fun. By planning varied activities that express the many diverse interests of our congregation, we hope to not only nurture personal connections among us, but lead to a deeper spiritual connection as well. These connections in turn help us define not only ourselves but also work to strengthen the entire WellSprings Congregation.

RETREATS

Marian Caroselli, Team Leader

The Retreat Team creates opportunities to explore our spiritual depths. Within this environment we discover and celebrate our gifts, cultivate our spiritual practice and foster our growth. Retreats are set in environments conducive to individual and group experience which may include: education, prayer, meditation reflection, discussion, yoga, the arts and holistic practices.



I've Got a Great New Idea, Who Do I Talk To?

WellSprings is designed to help us give birth to our spiritual gifts, talents, and aspirations. Our DNA (values, beliefs, vision, and mission) is a seedbed from which our ministries together spring forth.

If you conceive an idea, a new Springboard—our small groups for spiritual growth—or sense a real need in our community where WellSprings could make a difference, here's what we invite you to do.

First, contact Ken ...or Becky if you have an idea related to YouthSpirit...or Maria if you have an idea for Springboards. Their initial question will be one of discernment—"Does this fit with our DNA, our core identity as a spiritual community?" If it does, their second question will be, "How can we help you bring this to life?" Maybe your idea will work with one of our existing Teams or Springboards. Maybe it will be something entirely new.

At WellSprings, we like to follow the call of new ideas into being and put them into practice. All we're waiting for is you!



How WellSprings Works

WellSprings is a congregation of small groups. We currently have two types of small groups, Springboards and Teams. Springboards are our small groups for spiritual growth that are offered for eight-week sessions on a seasonal basis. Springboards are led by WellSprings members, staff, and participants based on their interest in the topic and their ability to commit to leading for the entire eight-week period. Springboards are open to all who attend WellSprings' services, and are organized by the Springboard Coordinator.

Teams are our small groups that are organized around providing specific services to the WellSprings community, including YouthSpirit, Hospitality, Ministry, Stewardship, Leadership and Spiritual Development, Fun and Fellowship, and Caring Connection. Teams are a longer-term commitment and team leaders must be members of the congregation and are discerned and appointed by the Lead Minister and the Leadership and Spiritual Development Team. Team leaders, in conjunction with the Lead Minister, are responsible for recruiting their team's membership.

The Lead Minister serves as the Chief Executive Officer of WellSprings and works collaboratively with the Team Leaders, YouthSpirit Director/Outreach, Springboard Coordinator, and Administrator to build programming based upon the congregation's beliefs, values, vision and mission. The Lead Minister is overseen by the Management Team, which provides the corporate structure for WellSprings, ensures that WellSprings retains its tax exempt status, and works collaboratively with the Lead Minister to set long-term strategy.

WellSprings at the Montgomery School

Since January 2007, WellSprings has been meeting at the Montgomery School in Chester Springs. Their Bell Hall is a beautiful place for WellSprings to grow and fits our needs well.

There are two parking lots you can use on Sunday morning: the lower parking lot, which is on your right as you enter the property, and the upper parking lot, which is around the circular drive to the left as you enter. If you need easy accessibility and/or handicapped parking spaces, we recommend you use the upper parking lot, because that entrance has a flat entryway into Bell Hall and a ramp down into our worship space.

Staff Schedules

As you may know, WellSprings has four employees on staff. Ken Beldon, our Lead Minister, and Carol Klekotka, our Office Administrator, are full time; Becky McAndrews, our YouthSpirit Director and Outreach Coordinator, is half time; and Maria Jacobs, our Springboards Coordinator, is quarter time.

Here are their schedules. All can be reached through our office phone 610-280-3797 and the ways listed below.

Ken is in our Exton office on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesdays. On Thursday, he is in his home office, writing his Sunday message. Friday is his day off. On Saturday he is often leading meetings, classes, or is representing WellSprings in the larger community. On Sundays you will find him in the pulpit. His cell is 215-913-9989 and email is ken@wellspringsuu.org. For pastoral emergencies, please call his cell.

Becky is in the office Monday and Tuesday. Her email is becky@wellspringsuu.org and her cell is 610-659-8170.

Maria is in the office Tuesday afternoon. Her email is maria@wellspringsuu.org and her cell is 610-308-2377.

Carol is in the office Monday – Friday (11:00 am–7:00 pm). Her email is carol@wellspringsuu.org and her cell is 610-304-7342.

WellSprings Contacts

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Maria Jacobs, Springboard Coordinator:
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Carol Klekotka, Administrator: carol@wellspringsuu.org

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