

NAME

Wild.mp3

DATE

November 21, 2021

DURATION

35m 9s

7 SPEAKERS

Speaker1

Speaker2

Speaker3

Speaker4

Speaker5

Speaker6

Speaker7

START OF TRANSCRIPT

[00:00:00] Speaker1

The following is a message from Wellsprings Congregation.

[00:00:11] Speaker2

My name is Mo, and I am nine years old. I live with my mom, dad, sister and dog. And to get my dog is named Buster. He is 12 years old. He's a sweet, adorable dog who looks like he has to find my smiles because he had 16 teeth removed. A boy cat is named Luna. He is a big black cat with white armpits who is one and a half years old. He's so cute he tries to eat cereal and dog food. His sister is. His name, Lucy, she's a small, straight tabby with pink with a pink nose. On the first night we got her. She hid in a fireplace behind the hole. She's a sweet eat night cat. But when someone new comes to the house, she hides. I am in third grade. I spent an elementary school. I like to play soccer at recess with my friends and I also play soccer on the weekends too. I love going to day camp in summer. My favorite thing to do at camp is woodworking. I was happy to be able to go to the swimming pool in summer. I am happy that I've been able to see my friends in person.

[00:01:33] Speaker2

I was nervous about getting my COVID 19 shot on Friday, but it was not painful. I wasn't really brave, I wouldn't get. I just went with it. I enjoy Gatorade, my mom bought me after I get my second shot. So I'm hoping my mom would take me to the arcade, I'm looking forward to seeing my cousins that Thanksgiving. I love building things I want and doing experiments when I grow up, I want to build things on when things I would like to invent a machine that turns exhaust into fresh air to help prevent climate change. I would like to have a jetpack and a dirt bike when I grow up. I have a lot of questions. I'm interested in how things work and why things happen, or why or what causes them to happen in the future. I hope to be happy. I would. I would like to go to Hawaii someday. I would like Earth to be clean was out there. I hope corona virus free will be over. Next year, I am excited about Christmas.

[00:02:59] Speaker3

Ok. Good morning. It's frustrating that I can't be here in Bell Hall with all of you today because I love to see people when I see people. And it's been a long two years since I have gotten a chance to do that. But it is a pleasure to be present with you all here at the service today, and I am enjoying being even more present with the whole congregation very soon. And when I talked to Ken about the wild and precious life, the service that he said the inspiration was the poem by Mary Oliver and that people talked about what they be doing and what they should be doing instead. And when I read the poem, what I thought most about was a scene from the movie Little Miss Sunshine, and the adults in the room may remember it as the one where Alan Arkin gives his grandkids some advice from the backseat of the Volkswagen Microbus. And he basically tells his grandkids that they should be loving lots of people. And Alan Arkin is pretty vulgar about this suggestion, as I remember, but I basically think he's arguing that loving people in a pretty casual and even haphazard. Dare I say, while certainly self centered way is what we should be doing more of. And so there's a tension between what's going on with me as a father of two and a partner to an extraordinarily hardworking woman and as a new lawyer with the district attorney's office and what I think Mary Oliver and Alan Arkin might be suggesting. So to explore that a little bit, I have invited some helpers. Sound pretty savvy, loves to get books from the library and to read them with her mom and dad and then to listen to them on the Gumdrop Readers podcast. And she loves baking chocolate chip cookies with dad, and she can break the eggs into the bowl all by herself. Usually, she takes her pink teddy to school with her, and she won't go to sleep without her mom every night. Oh my!

[00:05:04] Speaker4

And this is wrong. He's 15 months old. He loves taking baths and blueberry pancakes. And he has a big truck that he likes to play with, and he wants to do everything that his sister is doing. And I'm Priya

[00:05:18] Speaker3

And I am Priya's husband.

[00:05:21] Speaker4

I have a new job at a bank and I put the kids to bed every night and take Sobhi to school in the morning. And I love to cook and I would really just love 20 minutes alone in the bathroom every day.

[00:05:47] Speaker3

And most of the time that we put it together is unmistakably precious. But it's not mostly wild or casual or haphazard. Most of the time that we spend on ourselves is deliberate and intentional with bedtime routines or making grocery lists or organizing calendars. Most of what we're doing is loving, but most of what it is is pretty circumscribed with a pretty specific focus on the four of us. So what we've been doing since the last time we saw we have been raising a family, we've been building a home. We've been learning a trade and preparing for the future. We have been patient and narrowly focused on loving this family. And what could we do differently with this one precious life? How can we heed some of the Alan Arkin's advice to love a little more promiscuously? I think we can remember the larger family that we have here now, and we can pay attention to the friends that need us now and we can fight for justice now, and we can seek to stop injustice now. We can prepare for long and dangerous battles ahead, but not by avoiding our obligations to those fights that deserve and need our attention now. We can honor our precious lives, both by being intentional and by being spontaneous. Happy Thanksgiving, everybody. Happy Thanksgiving.

[00:07:08]

Ok. Oh. When Reverend Lee

[00:07:16] Speaker1

Asked me to give the talk today as a person who had just celebrated her 50th birthday last April and who has been on the front lines of a pandemic for almost two years in health care, I thought no problem so easy. I have so much to talk about. So much has happened that has led me to this time. And then I sat down to write it. And nothing came to mind that felt true. Oh, sure, I could talk about the path that led me to being an activist. The seeds that started in my childhood and that grew in my young adult years to being a doctor, which started in my 20s and honestly didn't call me until my 30s to being a mother, which has, with the blessing of science, was made possible in my 40s. But who I thought, other than a few close friends and my therapist is interested in such a talk. And then I thought I could talk about the pandemic and how that has shaped me as a healer and a leader. But we're all tired of pandemic talks these days, aren't we? And given Covid's uncontrolled state, I frankly just get really angry every time I think about it. And no one needs to hear that. And then I thought I could talk about what I want for the future. But it all seemed really superficial and pretentious. I mean, I get that the 50s are the new 30s and really who doesn't want to rock a body and a bikini like hair? And Helen Mirren, who is in her 70s.

[00:08:47] Speaker1

And don't we all want to end racism to end poverty and discrimination and injustice? Don't we all want clean water and air? Well, given our current political and national values? And some of the recent courts, vile judgments or lack thereof, I think we can all agree that that's actually not what everybody wants. And so as I was just getting ready to email Lee and tell her to find somebody else since I couldn't feel like I could express anything that meant anything to me. I reread the poem. And something shifted for me. I don't know how or why, but a voice came. So, you know, those filters we talk about laughingly and with derisive judgment about people who don't seem to have them, people who seem to say anything and everything without fear or acknowledgement of pain or hurt that is caused. Somehow, it became very clear to me that I have a filter and it's in place. And it has been locked tight and covered with decades of silence and fear. Oh, friends, I'm 50 years old, and when I look back over the years and take stock of all I have been and all I have done, it's not easy for me to take pride in my accomplishments and even less easy to look at the shadow and doubt that accompanies so much of my journey.

[00:10:08] Speaker1

I realized that I took loneliness and used activism and false bravado to make me seem more certain that I was. Because to voice that loneliness in my 20s was unthinkable. I've sold myself short and would keep silent when friends and co-workers would talk about their accomplishments because really, I didn't feel that I had anything to boast about. And both was wrong. To protest all the evil and unjust in the world, I have spoken aloud, I have chanted and marched, screamed and raged, which has been so very and is so very easy to do. When the devil is visible and tangible, it's so easy. But what has not been easy was to talk about the pain that has been held inside. It has been so much easier to stay silent. Silent when my family of birth struggled with the loss of my beloved father when I was 11. My brother's subsequent drug addiction and a mother who worked two menial jobs, which really just put us on the edge of poverty. I didn't say anything all those years because that would rock the boat. Silence was the norm because I was the good girl, the good student, the good daughter and I did what was expected. And it was easier to do than insist that I was hurting to silence became the norm in my teen years.

[00:11:32] Speaker1

Silence, because I never thought I was good enough to have lifelong friends and only read about in books, although despite myself, I've somehow managed to accomplish this numerous times for which I'm eminently grateful. Silence, because I never thought I was worthy of love and of being cherished without cost. Silence when I should have just said no and arranged for a sperm donor to have a child rather than waiting and wanting a partner to father a child with me. Silence when my home reverberated with pain and loss and I kept it in and the windows down because what would the neighbors think? So when I reread that poem by Mary Oliver, what struck me most was the imagery of the peace and the quiet. But not of silence. Of some days in warm grass of insects making noises in that grass of skies, there are perfect blue and a sun that warms you to the core. Ok, that partisan in there, but in the image that comes to my mind, it is. But my friends being peaceful and quiet is not in my nature these days. Oh, I would love to be one of those persons who could be a poster child for Aveda. I would love to be able to rise in the morning after a full night's sleep, which I normally never get. I would love to be able to have time to meditate, which I don't, and then have a breakfast full of wholesome goodness, which I can usually manage with the power bar.

[00:13:07] Speaker1

And then I would love to be this kind of person that advocates brushing their tongue and able to do a downward dog without a bone creaking and spend a day full of science and beauty and their house is clean. And that is not me or my life. What is me as a woman, like so many of us are overwhelmed with day to day responsibilities and a woman who must use her voice. To care for those patients, co-parent her daughter and care, take an ill spouse. And so what I am slowly coming to grips with my friends and my heart is that this voice, my voice is true. It's real and it's worth hearing. It took me decades to come to this realization that people want to hear what I have to say and when I speak, I am heard. But this is so hard to accept, even now, even now, as I speak to you, there is a little tiny piece inside of me telling you just to sit down, shut up and no one cares. But the difference. Now, this compared to the me of my 20s, 30s and 40s. And that I'm starting to really embrace is that I don't believe that little voice anymore and with practice. I'm learning to let her go.

[00:14:28] Speaker1

So much so that I decided to nurture a love of mine during this hell of a pandemic and take singing lessons. Singing for me is the closest thing that I have to a conversation with God when I sing for a magical moment, my voice and my soul lift together in perfect accord, and there is no doubt no judgment that comes later. But I'm learning to laugh at the miscues, the off harmonies and the wrong notes. And rather than dwelling on them, friends, I am just taking a breath and starting again. And so as I look to the next decade with all the triumphs and disappointments that I can expect. I look forward to a decade where I can make the choice to be silent. Or I can make the choice to speak rather than those choices being made and determined for me. I can relish in quiet reading filled afternoons or walks with friends. I can embrace the power of when I have something to say that affects the lives of my family of spirit, my family of choice, my family of blood or my family of faith. I can teach my daughter to trust her voice. And I can let my spirit soar with music and song. The doubts will still be there. Decades of forced, silent take time to change. But it is a start, a precious start. On this next stage of my wild

[00:16:04]

And precious life.

[00:16:44] Speaker5

Good morning. My name is Carol Clark, and it's a privilege for me to share my one wild and precious life with you this morning. It's all been about love. That's been the theme of my life. If I was a child, I recall, and again, I'm going, I might use some terms that are relevant to the experience of what I grew up with, and they're not terms that I would use today, but please accept that that's just where my information came from as I was growing up. Well, we sang songs like Jesus Loves Me, and one of the other things was they will know we are Christians by our love. What I noticed, though, at a very early age, was that those concepts did not match what was actually practiced in real life, not even in the church. So this definition of what became a standard for me early on as to what love looks like, and it's also used in many of the marriage ceremonies today. It comes from First Corinthians Chapter 13 verses four to eight. And I'm going to read it to you. Love is patient. Love is kind. It does not envy. It does not boast. It's not proud. It's not really. It is not self seeking. It is not easily angered. It keeps no record of wrongs. And love does not delight in evil, but rejoices in the truth. It always protects. Always trusts, always hopes. Always perseveres. Love never fails. And that is what has accompanied me and much of my life as to the standard of what I look for as symptoms or standards of love, which in many communities is called agape.

[00:18:30] Speaker5

It means unconditional, unearned love that is there because it's love. Now, for most of my life, I have searched for spiritual community that takes this seriously and wanting meaningful fellowship and growth with others in community. My search became a learning experience a beautiful one as I went without community into the wilderness and read everything that crossed my path and beckoned me to explore. The wilderness was very fruitful during that period in my life. And because of this, I experienced a new sense of what I typically call authentic spirituality and that encompassed what was, for me, the best of all spiritual persuasions. I'm a hybrid and I like that. I studied everything that I could, and I delight in gaining from the wisdom and the experience of other great teachers. Spiritual leaders who have influenced me greatly, but I have also left behind what does not resonate for me. I hesitate to mention names because there were so many teachers that influenced me. But there are few key concepts that have made my life practice what it is today. First of all, I learned a lot about what love is from Jesus's teachings and his life the way he left. I learned about compassion from Buddhism. The Buddha was a great teacher, and the practice of compassion in Buddhism has taught me so much, and it is a real essential companion to love. I became grounded in the practice of mindfulness meditation through Jon Kabat-Zinn, teacher and later at Wellsprings. I have grown this practice by an influence in more teachings from Father Thomas Keating and Richard Rau, who has just really beautiful daily reflections.

[00:20:30] Speaker5

Then something exciting happened that brought me out of that wilderness. Wellsprings was born. This has filled my life with opportunities to grow and brought me into something into community where love thrives and the values are important to me, are contained in our DNA, which is what we aspire to be. If you haven't done so, look it up. It's on the website. It's in the app. It contains so many values that are grounded in what is so important to me, and it's what drew me to wellsprings. Then in October of 2006, I was hired as a second staff person as the community was about to launch. They needed an office administrator and I have had the privilege of serving at Wellsprings as office administrator for about 14 years. This opened the door to some of the very, very best years of my life, and I experienced both the giving and receiving of abundant love. Then in 2013, I suffered some severe injuries that kept me in the hospital and nursing facilities for close to six months, and I could not return to the office for almost a year. The power and healing energy of love from this community surrounded me during many months of recovery. Here are the picture of part of what was decorated in my room. My granddaughter wanted the cards and flowers to surround me because they represented so much love that was pouring in from people that I knew and loved so much from this community. And this picture is is not the best one, but it's the only one I could come up with.

[00:22:21] Speaker5

I wasn't really into photography during that period of time, but it is an example of of the energy that came to me from the community and I. I want to share that with you because the power of that love is here for all of us. Always. It's here now. It was there then and it will be here in the future. And I share that with some of you who were not here during those formative years because they were important years to wellsprings. They gave us our foundation and it was such a meaningful thing for me to be part of that and to and to spend my energy with it. There was an especially wonderful moment when I was able to walk again and I walk down to the front of the hall and with the chalice on the sun, then I came back. It was overwhelming because all of you in this room stood and applauded and gave me such delight in seeing me come back. And that has always been an imprinted in my mind and my heart, and it will always be there. So I encourage you to keep it flowing both ways in this community, giving it and receiving it. It's for charging the soul of this community, and we want to keep that charge very much alive. Although lingering health issues will limit my physical presence, my loving spiritual connection will always be here with you, and I share her request that I've made for my memorial service when that time comes for me.

[00:23:55] Speaker5

At our fifth birthday party, which we celebrated right here in Bell Hall, we had music and dancing and dinner and we were really enjoying one another. And then the band started to play one of my favorite songs, Love Train and a spontaneous human love train. Formed and led by Ken. We traveled around this room in joy and celebration. So it is my wish for love, train to again form at my memorial service that spreading the love. It's a joy and a great event, that's all background. Love has always been the theme in my explorations, and I have felt it is the most important thing to know and practice. It took a look at what I have been doing with my one wild and precious life to realize that love has always been that mission for me. Mahatma Gandhi has a saying that helped me bring it all together, be the change you wish to see in the world. It's not about preaching or teaching. We're making pronouncements about something. It's doing it. It's being it. It's becoming it. So to be in a world of love. I need to be calm and grow in my capacity to love and practice compassion. It's not just being in community of love. It's building it under all circumstances and with every single contact I make on my path. It's been such a privilege to be here and to share my life with you, to get to know you and I love you all so much and I wish you many blessings in your life.

[00:25:57] Speaker6

Good morning. Let me tell you about my introduction to wellsprings. It was on my 19th birthday, and when Kathleen announced it, the congregation spontaneously broke into Happy Birthday. It was a warm, sincere welcome that I remember every birthday. Now a happy feeling to be accepted by a community of good people who like one another. I was born in nineteen twenty five, so that makes me 96. Dr. Kretschmer, who delivered me at home, lived across the street. He and my mother went to kindergarten together. Twenty years later, he delivered Kathleen. Ours was a neighborhood of mixed Dutch and German background. My grandmother learned to speak English in the first grade. However, I spent summers with my Irish grandmother at her farm. She would come to town to fetch me and we would hitchhike back to the farm. I'm married at 18 to my mother Paper Boy, 19. And everyone predicted it would never last. And it didn't. After 67 years, he died and left me. In the meanwhile, we had three children, a girl, a boy and a small girl. We lived in the outskirts of Detroit. In Grand Rapids, Michigan, in Atlanta, Georgia, in Jacksonville, Florida, following his promotions. I liked them all, but my favorite was Chestertown, Maryland. I did a stint as PTA president in Atlanta, but that's another story. In early adulthood, my life didn't really appear to be wild. Just ordinary. But infinitely precious. It was, as was everyday life. I believe everyone on the Earth deserved enough to eat in a safe place to sleep, and it was up to me to help that help make that happen.

[00:29:00] Speaker6

I still believe that. Since I already had a family to care for whenever a friend or acquaintance needed a temporary home for a child during a crisis, I would gladly step forward to provide one for as long as it was needed. Our whole family was part of this for many a child over the years. One little boy lived with us for three years. He and Kathleen are still in touch today. After a while, the children were grown and on their own. A eased job steady enough to provide four week vacations. My life began to take on a wild quality to go with the ever-present protesters. Many years ago, I'd seen a rock in the road in Upper Michigan, and I fell in love. Elton dug it out for me and it sat beside the back door ever after. We decided to spend our four racing for vacation weeks traveling across our beautiful country, looking for more good rocks. We drove from coast to coast four times on a shoestring in second hand campers and a fifth to Yellowstone and back with four teenaged grandchildren. Wild and precious indeed. What am I going to do now that I'm too old for such hands on help or any such travel? I plan to enjoy the sun, the Moon, rain, flowers, books, my rocks. And France, as much as I can, as long as I can, and to continue to help other precious lives as long as I can and be glad I still can. There they are. One of them.

[00:31:49] Speaker7

Amen and amen and amen. And I love rocks, too, Lois. I plan to keep looking for those the rest of my wild and precious life. Thank you so much, Milo. Thank you, Jed. Thank you, Amelia here with us in Belle Hall. Thank you, Carol. And thank you so much, Lois. You know, when you hear stories from people ages nine to ninety six in the space of about 40 minutes, it gives you some perspective. And so I'd like to invite you all before our last song to join me now in the spirit of prayer. From wherever you are, perhaps you want to stop and rest and take in the enormity of the lives and the years and the stories you've heard. Maybe let your eyes fall closed and your shoulders drop for a moment, let your hands be still. God of our hearts. Creator of each of our lives and giver of all of our days. May we remember on the mornings that life can feel like a series of endless tasks? Or on the mornings when life feels like a to do list full of obligations. May we remember that those are all real feelings that the stress of this world? Is sometimes trying to pull us in different directions, trying to pull us away from the true meaning of it all. Don't let it. Remember that your time is yours. That the life given to you is your own. Say no. Press pause when you need to. Ask for help and don't let someone tell you you shouldn't have asked. Do whatever you can. To enjoy this life you've been given. And no, it won't be in every day, every moment thing, just like Bev said. But find those moments when it can be. And let yourself take them. Because this life only happens to us once, as far as I know. For these precious and wild moments that we've all been given. On This Morning and this day. And in all the days that we have to come to share them with each other. I say a grateful amen.

[00:34:57] Speaker1

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[00:35:06] Speaker6

Letters UU dot ORG

END OF TRANSCRIPT



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