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# Interfaith Families Project

April 2006

[www.iffp.net](http://www.iffp.net)

P.O. Box 5413, Takoma Park, MD 20913

[iffp@verizon.net](mailto:iffp@verizon.net)

301-270-6337

## FROM THE BOARD

IFFP held its annual membership meeting on April 2. While the children were finding out what “peace” meant to them at the Peace Camp held in the Cafeteria, 40 to 50 grownups held forth in the gym about the budget, the new Board, big ideas about IFFP’s future, and other topics. **Rev. Julia** led us off with a beautiful opening gathering including a series of short readings about the importance of “community.” If you were not able to be there, here is a recap of the annual meeting.

Treasurer **Richard Harris** presented a proposed budget for the 2006-2007 school year, a copy of which was mailed to all members prior to the meeting. The members approved the budget, which assumes income and expenses of approximately \$124,000 and calls for a 10 percent increase in the tax-deductible membership fees but no increase in tuition, which is not tax-deductible. This amounts to roughly a 5 percent overall increase in IFFP fees for a family of four, or between \$60/yr and \$90/yr depending on your income category. The current budget will end within a few thousand dollars of balance, plus or minus. The annual fundraising drive has yielded about \$8,000 of our \$10,000 goal so far. If you have not yet made a tax-deductible contribution, any amount is greatly appreciated at this time.

I presented the slate of candidates for the Board for this coming year. Their names and biographies were mailed to all members ahead of time. The membership voted to approve the new board members. We thanked **Betsy Keeler**, Board vice chair, and **Sam Lawson**, for their Board service over the past three years. They will step down in the normal rotation at the beginning of this summer. **Jen Liebreich** and **Colette Matzzie** will join the Board. I will continue on the Board for a fourth year and a second year as Board chair. **Rebecca Weiss** will be vice chair in the coming year, with the expectation that she will be chair in her third year on the Board. We will need a new treasurer beginning in 2007-2008, when Richard will have completed his three-year service. If you are interested in learning more about the Board or would like to be considered for service in future years, please contact me at any time.

**Ian Spatz** presented a revised version of the IFFP by-laws, which also were mailed to the membership ahead of time. The by-laws had not been changed since IFFP’s founding. The membership approved Ian’s proposed changes, with one change and one condition. The membership suggested and approved a lower percentage needed for a quorum - 20 percent. And the membership asked and agreed that these new by-laws stay in effect pending further review and revision of the by-laws between now and September, when the membership would again be presented with the revised by-laws for approval. If you have questions about, or suggested changes to, the by-laws, please contact Ian.

**Ellen Jennings** reviewed the progress she and the curriculum committee have made on IFFP’s curriculum, read the new IFFP Sunday school mission statement as approved by the Board, and made a plea for people interested in teaching at IFFP to contact her. **Rev. Julia** discussed the revived teen group for 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> graders. Board member **Erica Burman** presented a brief summary of IFFP’s membership survey, which also was mailed to all members ahead of time and is available to review online.

Finally, in the time we had remaining, members raised a few other ideas about IFFP’s future. One was whether to consider a name change for IFFP to something that sounds, perhaps, more established or

congregational and less temporary. If you have ever thought about IFFP having a new or different name, or if you would like to be part of an ad hoc committee to consider a name change, please contact **Susan Ryder**. Members also raised again the question of whether IFFP should have its own building apart from Sligo Middle School. This is a long-standing and multi-faceted issue that stirred strong reactions. Some felt grateful that we have as little responsibility as we do to the maintenance of our meeting location and can concentrate our energies and resources on the programs and services we offer. Some felt that a different setting could provide a richer spiritual context to IFFP that could enhance our community. There are many financial, logistical, and management issues involved with this topic. If you feel strongly about it in one way or another, please feel free to e-mail your comments to **Susan Ryder**. If you would like to be part of an ad hoc building committee, please submit your name to Susan as well.

The annual meeting was spirited and accomplished its primary goals. While we ran out of time, we did not exhaust our pool of ideas or zest for conversation with each other. I look forward to continuing the dialogue about IFFP and its vibrant and evolving future.

- Danny Weiss, Board Chair

## MARCH – APRIL 2006

Apr. 22, 5 p.m.	<b>Passover Seder</b> <i>Schweinhaut Center</i> 1000 Forest Glen Road Silver Spring	Apr. 23	<b>Sligo Middle School</b> <i>Easter</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contemplative Service, 9:30 am, with <b>Rev. Julia</b> and <b>Rabbi Harold</b></li> <li>Gathering, 10 am, with <b>Rev. Julia Jarvis</b></li> <li>Refreshments for all; Easter Egg hunt for toddlers through 2<sup>nd</sup> graders, 10:30</li> <li>Sunday School/Adult Group, 10:45 am</li> <li>Easter Egg hunt for 3<sup>rd</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> graders, noon</li> <li>COA independent projects due</li> </ul>
Apr. 28-30 Fri-Sun	<b>IFFP Women's Retreat</b> <i>Bethany Beach</i>	Apr. 30	<b>COA Ceremony "dress rehearsal"</b> <i>Christ Congregational Church</i>
May 6 (Sat.), 9 am - noon	<b>COA Presentations and Ceremony</b> National 4-H Youth Conference Center's Aiton Auditorium 7100 Connecticut Avenue, Chevy Chase <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presentations 9-11 a.m.</li> <li>Ceremony 11-noon</li> </ul>	May 7	<b>Sligo Middle School</b> <i>Letting Go and Bringing In</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blessing Graduating Teens and Welcoming New Members at Gathering, 10 am, with <b>Rev. Julia</b></li> <li>Refreshments, 10:30 am</li> <li>Sunday School/Adult Group and Open House, 10:45 am</li> </ul>
May 14	<b>Community Service Day</b> Stay tuned to your bulletins for details!	May 21	<b>Sligo Middle School</b> <i>COA Celebration and Teacher Appreciation</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gathering, 10 am, with <b>Rev. Julia</b></li> <li>Reception in honor of new COA graduates and teachers immediately following</li> </ul>

## CALENDAR DETAILS

### Gatherings (Please take note: We have made some changes in the Gathering schedule for May and June.)

*April 23rd* is the Holy Week/Easter Gathering, which will feature "Lessons and Signs," singing, palms, lights, flowers and reflections.

*May 7th* will be an "interfaith" Gathering featuring "Letting Go and Bringing In" as we hear from and bless the graduating teens and welcome the new members.

\*\*\*\*\**(CHANGE)* *May 14th* – Please check future bulletins for details.

\*\*\*\*\**(CHANGES)* *May 21<sup>st</sup>* we will have the COA celebration and teacher appreciation. Following the Gathering we will have a reception for both the COA'ers and teachers. We will have our closing picnic on *June 4th* at Wheaton Regional Park.

- Julia Jarvis, Spiritual Director

### Contemplative Services

Once a month, **Rabbi Harold** and **Rev. Julia** will be offering some more reflective time at 9:30 a.m. in the Media Center. We will read some scriptures and do some midrashing and reflecting on what they are saying to us. Occasionally, **Rev. Julia** will serve communion. We will also offer some quiet time and closing prayers. Please join us on *April 23rd*, before IFFP's Easter morning Gathering, for this time of **communion** and **reflection** on the Easter Story. All are welcome and we will have nursery provided.

- Julia Jarvis, Spiritual Director

### Adult Groups

*April 23<sup>rd</sup>* – *Two tracks:*

Track 1: **Rabbi Harold** will lead a discussion of Jewish and Christian Messianic concepts.

Track 2: **Rev. Julia** will host "Getting to Know You"

*May 7<sup>th</sup>* – *Two tracks:*

Track 1: **Kent Dirckx** and **Sam Lawson** will lead a discussion of how each of our faiths looks at the important issues of salvation and forgiveness.

Track 2: Orientation for prospective members (see Open House article on page 4).

### Annual Easter Egg Hunt, April 23<sup>rd</sup>

Pray for sunshine or we'll have quite a challenge hiding 800 eggs in Sligo! We still need COA'ers, teens, and other willing folks to help fill and hide the eggs. Please contact **Susan**, [Sury3@aol.com](mailto:Sury3@aol.com), if you'd like to help. Our egg hunt will follow a different format this year.

*Toddlers through grade two*, with parents, will have their hunt from 10:30 – 11:00 in the courtyard (as soon as you've finished snack or while nibbling on a bagel). Each child will receive a bag and be able to find 5 or 6 eggs containing a trinket and candy. Parents will then escort the children to class and return to one of two Adult Groups. Either the parents can keep the bag until after Sunday School, or the teacher will label the bags and put them on the side during class.

*Grades 3-6* will collect their 5 or 6 eggs in the courtyard after Sunday School.

### Spring Open House, May 7<sup>th</sup>

Once again, it's almost time for our Spring Open House. The Fall and Spring Open Houses are our best opportunities to introduce IFFP to potential members. Please help to publicize this Open House as much as possible. There are hundreds of interfaith families in the Metro area who would be interested in hearing about IFFP. Post flyers at libraries, JCC's, coffee houses, nursery schools, play groups, gymborees, book stores, health food stores; forward our e-mail invitation to other list serves, interfaith friends, and groups you belong to; put the invitation in school newsletters. If you have new and unusual ideas for spreading the word, please let me know, [Sury3@aol.com](mailto:Sury3@aol.com). We're always open to creative suggestions.

Prospective members will join us for the Gathering and social time. From 10:45-12:00, we will have an orientation where they can speak with **Rev. Julia, Ellen**, and Board members. They'll have the opportunity to learn more and ask questions about IFFP programs, activities, and special events and visit classrooms.

- Susan Ryder, Program Coordinator

### Newsletter editor wanted

Are you looking for a way to get more involved with IFFP next year? Do you enjoy writing, editing, and/or organizing? Please consider editing the IFFP newsletter! The newsletter will go out every month or two (the frequency is still being determined). Working on it gives you insight into what is going on with IFFP and lets you make a real contribution on a timetable that works for you (day time, evening hours, weekends, during kids' naps, lunch hours at work, whatever fits).

As the editor, you will work closely with **Susan**. You will solicit articles from Board members, activity coordinators, staff, and others (I'll give you a broadcast e-mail list that you can update as new folks become involved). You will read the articles, get any necessary clarification, and put them together into the newsletter. If you are a good proofreader, that is a plus. Susan will continue sending the newsletters out, so you won't need to worry about doing that.

Call Susan or me if you have questions or want to talk about becoming the next editor. Next month is my last newsletter, so don't delay! Thanks.

- Holly Cooper, Newsletter editor

### PASSOVER INFORMATION

#### IFFP's Passover Seder, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 5:00

Celebrate Passover with IFFP on Saturday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, at 5:00 p.m. at the Schweinhaut Center, site of our Holiday Party, 1000 Forest Glen Road. **Rabbi Harold** will once again lead our wonderful, child-friendly, family Seder. We'll be using our own IFFP Haggadah that **Brent Mitchell** and **Fredie Adelman** spent six months creating. The fifth graders will perform a play. We'll have Seder plates to be decorated by the kids at the Seder, haroset made by our intrepid chefs (*try out the recipes on the next page*), and other traditional Passover foods and songs.

This is a potluck event, and there will be good kitchen facilities, so bring your favorite Passover dish. IFFP provides paper goods, wine, and other beverages. There will be a matzo ball soup/ritual foods coordination effort. **If any of these is your specialty, contact Jessica Vistnes. If you can make haroset, contact Susan Ryder.**

FOOD ASSIGNMENTS FOR THE SEDER

- \* A-G - Main dish. If last name of female head of household begins with A-G, bring a main dish to feed 15 people.
- \* H-P - Dessert. If last name of female head of household begins with H-P, bring a dessert dish to feed 15 people.
- \* Q-Z - Side Dish. If last name of female head of your household begins with Q-Z, bring a side dish to feed 15 people.

**Please RSVP to Jessica by April 16th.** We must know the headcount for this event, as this celebration involves even more specific organization than the Holiday Party.

- Jessica Vistnes, Celebrations Coordinator

**Haroset Recipes**

*European Recipe for Haroset*

1 cup grated apples  
 2 tbsps. sweet red wine sugar or honey to taste  
 1/2 tsp. cinnamon  
 1/2 cup chopped walnuts

Mix all ingredients together

*Sephardic Recipe for Haroset*

1 lb. dried raisins  
 8 oz. pitted dates  
 2 cup water (or enough to cover)  
 1/4 cup sugar  
 1/4 cup chopped walnuts or pecans

Place the raisins and dates in a bowl with enough water to cover. Let stand one hour. Drain.

Add the sugar and whirl the mixture in a blender, a few spoonfuls at a time.

Transfer to a heavy saucepan and simmer over low heat until fruits are cooked and liquid absorbed (about 20 minutes).

Remove from heat. When cool, add nuts.

**Variety of Haggadahs Wanted**

We have had a number of requests from members looking for a Haggadah that would be a good fit for their family. **Freddie Adelman** and **Brent Mitchell** created the child-friendly Haggadah we use at the IFFP Seder and **Ian Spatz** compiled one that he edits yearly (and is available electronically from Ian or the office, Susan, [Sury3@aol.com](mailto:Sury3@aol.com)). **Rabbi Harold** uses an interfaith version at the Georgetown Seder that we hope to get as well. The Santa Cruz Haggadah, for instance, is more spiritual/insightful than strictly religious and works well for a mixed group at a Seder

If you have a version that you think other IFFP'ers would enjoy, please e-mail it to the office, if possible, or send the name to Susan. We are planning to display as many versions as possible at the Seder.

- Susan Ryder, Program Coordinator

## Holiday Resource

InterfaithFamily.com is a very useful resource for interfaith families. Their Passover and Easter issue of InterfaithFamily.com's Web Magazine (<http://www.interfaithfamily.com/magazine>) has some articles of interest such as: "Danielle Stillman offers tips on sharing Passover with guests of any religion," <http://www.interfaithfamily.com/site/apps/nl/content2.asp?c=ekLSK5MLIrG&b=297378&ct=2086195>, and "Michael Felsen and his wife share the values underlying their secular celebration of Passover," <http://www.interfaithfamily.com/site/apps/nl/content2.asp?c=ekLSK5MLIrG&b=297378&ct=2086189>

- Susan Ryder, Program Coordinator

## NEW (AND RENEWED) IFFP ACTIVITIES

### IFFP Teen Group Revived

Already things are beginning to happen with the IFFP Teen Group.

7 teens and 4 adults will be traveling up to Cape May to 1/4 work and 3/4 play at Hotel Chalfonte. Two Quaker women own this hotel; in exchange for helping them get the hotel ready for summer, we will receive low cost lodging and food.

**Rev. Julia**, along with others, will be working this spring and summer to create and design next year's teen group. We hope to have 1/3 fun, 1/3 community service activities, and 1/3 seminars around issues the teens are interested in.

If any of you would like to participate and help lead/guide this wonderful group of teens, please contact me. We don't want to lose these teens to sleep or soccer!

- Julia Jarvis, Spiritual Director

### Interfaith Couples Workshop Series, May 3, 10, 17 & 24, 7-9 P.M.

Next month we will present IFFP's first (of hopefully many) interfaith couples workshop series. We have had many requests over the years for workshops that would help dating couples decide if and how their marriage could work, give guidance and support to couples deciding how to raise their children, and then help with the process.

This series, "A UNION OF DIVINITIES: A WORKSHOP IN GROWING AS AN INTERFAITH COUPLE" will be led by our own **Dr. Dan Griffin**, **Rev. Julia**, and **Rabbi Harold**. The workshops are designed to help couples explore and implement practical strategies for coping with the myriad issues that face an interfaith couple. These include dealing constructively with extended family, decision-making about issues of culture and faith, and harnessing interfaith difference as a path toward growth as an individual and a couple.

For those of you who don't know, Dan is a family therapist and psychologist with over 25 years of experience with children and families. He is on the faculty of George Washington University Hospital Department of Psychiatry and Children's National Medical Center and, of course, has been in an interfaith marriage for 16 years.

Rev. Julia and Rabbi Harold have counseled many interfaith couples and have officiated at many interfaith wedding and baby naming ceremonies, separately and together.

The workshops will be held at Christ Congregational Church, 9525 Colesville Rd, Silver Spring. The series is \$80 for members, \$100 for non-members. If you're interested, please contact Susan, [Sury3@aol.com](mailto:Sury3@aol.com).

- Susan Ryder, Program Coordinator

### **Special Summer Gatherings/Activities with No Sunday School**

*June 4th* ~ "A Time to Mourn" Gathering to remember all those who we have lost, featuring the Kaddish and a special time for children around loss. **Closing Picnic** at Wheaton Regional Park after the Gathering.

*June 11th* ~ "Shavout and Pentacost" Gathering with **Rabbi Harold** leading us.

*July 9th* ~ "A Time to Restore" with swimming at Daleview Pool after Gathering. Full body baptisms will be offered at the pool for those interested. See **Ian Spatz**.

- Julia Jarvis, Spiritual Director

## **FROM THE DRE**

### **Notes From the DRE—Teachers, Teachers, Teachers WANTED**

This month it's all about teachers—how great they are, how much I appreciate them, and how best I can encourage each of you to consider joining our teaching team this coming Sunday School year! While many (if not most) of our teachers are returning next fall, we do have a number of openings in a variety of grades. You can choose to be one of two lead teachers (we usually have one Christian and one Jewish teacher per class) or an assistant teacher (though not all classes require this position). Teachers are provided with curriculum materials, an excellent day-long teacher training, and support/resources throughout the year. Lead teachers are also eligible for one Sunday School tuition waiver. It's a tremendously rewarding experience, which is why so many of our teachers keep coming back!

If you're interested in teaching (or just want to ask some questions and find out more about what it entails), please contact me as soon as possible. I'd love to have some of our new teachers "shadow" our current teachers for the last couple of classes. This is a great way to get an idea of how it works before jumping in next fall.

I'd also like to encourage everyone to read our new/revised Sunday School Mission Statement and Goals (reprinted on the following page). The IFFP Curriculum Committee and I have been working since last October to create them, and we look forward to getting your feedback. We researched multiple Christian denominations and branches of Judaism to learn about the goals of other congregations, and we think that the goals we created do a good job of reflecting both where our Sunday School Program is and where we hope to take it in the future. Our next step is to begin reviewing and then revising (as needed) the entire Preschool through 8<sup>th</sup> Grade curriculum in light of the new mission statement and goals.

I look forward to seeing everyone at our IFFP Seder Dinner on Saturday, April 22. In the meanwhile, I wish you all a Happy and Blessed Passover and Easter.

In Peace,  
Ellen Jennings  
[ejennings@post.harvard.edu](mailto:ejennings@post.harvard.edu)

P.S. I WILL write Passover and Easter overviews this month. You can pick up the Passover handout at the Seder Dinner, and I'll have the Easter handout available at our IFFP Easter Gathering on April 23.

### **Sunday School Mission Statement**

The Interfaith Families Project of Greater Washington (IFFP) offers a comprehensive religious education program for grades Preschool through 8. We aim to teach children about Judaism and Christianity in a way that both respects the uniqueness of each religion and acknowledges the history, scripture and values they share in common. We are dedicated to honest intellectual inquiry combined with faithfulness to tradition.

IFFP acknowledges that parents are their children's primary religious educators. We view our school as a community of learners and strive to provide a loving and accepting atmosphere, where children can question and explore with adults committed to supporting them. Our goal is to give children a sense of the meaning religion can bring to their lives and to provide them with a foundation for their life long spiritual journeys.

### **Sunday School Goals**

The IFFP Sunday School program will:

Help students develop an understanding and appreciation of their Jewish/Christian identity in the context of a supportive interfaith community.

Support and encourage parents as their children's primary religious educators and mentors.

Strive to create a spirit of class cooperation, togetherness and understanding of individual differences.

Provide students with a setting in which they can comfortably explore their own ideas about faith, God, prayer and other religious concepts or practices.

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Teach students the major characters, stories and lessons of both the Jewish Bible (TANAKH) and New Testament.

Celebrate the major holidays while teaching students about the history, stories, prayers and rituals that go along with them.

Provide students with the opportunity to learn about the different denominations and branches of Judaism and Christianity.

Help students understand the importance of Israel/Palestine in both religions and teach them about the land, its history, its peoples and its conflicts.

Provide students with an appreciation of the Hebrew language and teach them to read and pronounce the Hebrew alphabet and begin reading Hebrew prayers.

Encourage students to identify their values and develop the tools for ethical decision-making.

Highlight the importance of social justice in each tradition and give students the opportunity to engage in acts of community service/tzedakah.



### Yahoo List Serve

It's not too late to join the list serve!

To get your weekly bulletin and other IFFP news, join IFFP's free list serve by sending a blank e-mail to [iffplistserve-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:iffplistserve-subscribe@yahoogroups.com). Please send a copy of your e-mail to **Jeff Kenton**, our list serve coordinator, at [Jkenton@verizon.net](mailto:Jkenton@verizon.net).

You can send non-commercial e-mails to our membership from the Yahoo Groups website. If the message is not directly related to IFFP, please put "off topic" in the subject line.

## RECENT IFFP ACTIVITIES

### Men's Night Out

Men's Night Out was a stunning success. Some 20 IFFP men of different religious backgrounds, political persuasions and drinking habits joined forces for an evening filled with musical delights. As might be expected, the night began with typical male disorganization - wasn't someone suppose to bring a turntable - but quickly smoothed out after we decided nobody would bring vinyl (someone did). Our MC for the evening was **Larry Ravitz**. It was originally slated to be **Dan Griffin**, but Larry challenged Dan for the job, defeated him in a duel, and led us brilliantly through the evening. Almost all the men came with music in hand. A couple did not, but it was of no matter, as **Andy Katz** was prepared with over 4 billion songs programmed into his IPOD. As might be expected, the music selections were of exquisite taste and sophistication – classical greats Bach and Mozart, jazz greats Miles Davis and Thelonious Monk...

Well, maybe not quite. Overall, the men from IFFP demonstrated that classic rock is not dead. There were several notable exceptions, but generally speaking, good old-time rock and roll dominated the evening. Everybody was enjoying themselves as the evening came to a long slow close with the final selection by **Ian Spatz**: Whipping Post by the Allman Brothers Band. **Sam Lawson** described it best, "It's a four minute song with a 19 minute ending". If you did not get a copy of the commemorative CD – expertly produced by **Andy Katz** - and/or you would like your music returned, please see **Phil Jakobsberg**.

- Phil Jakobsberg, Board Member and Men's Night Out Co-Coordinator

### Comfort Committee

The Comfort Committee appreciates the excellent response from our memberships to our recent request for meals. We were able to provide meals twice per week for five weeks for new parents **Jeremy Marcus** and **Cheryl Leanza**. Thank you!

### Religion in our Everyday Lives- the March 26<sup>th</sup> 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Gathering

How hard could it be to coordinate the fourteen students in the IFFP 6<sup>th</sup> Grade class as they planned and facilitated a Gathering for the IFFP Community? **Cynthia**, **Bobby**, and I had seen **Brent** and last year's 6<sup>th</sup> graders as they presented a Gathering on the theme of prayer. They did a fabulous job—and it didn't look that hard. Well, we knew that we had a talented group of 6<sup>th</sup> graders—no doubt that they had the brains and the talent to pull it off. On the other hand, getting fourteen talented teens to agree on anything—let alone their ideas on religion—proved to be quite a challenge.

Everyone who was there on March 26<sup>th</sup> knows that the current 6<sup>th</sup> graders facilitated a thought provoking, relevant, and fun Gathering about religion in our everyday lives. One group of students (**Michael Gelfeld, Becca Kelly, Andrew Flynn, and Hannah Loeb**) worked for several weeks selecting music. Since the teens do not always feel very connected to the Gatherings, they felt it was important to include some of the music that they listen to. Though many songs were considered, the group finally settled on “Where is the Love” by Black Eyed Peas. The other musical highlight was **Pete and Andrew Flynn** leading us in a moving rendition of “Imagine” by John Lennon.

Another group of teens volunteered to select readings, write the reflections, and read at the Gathering (**Adrienne & Zoe Jackson, Daniel & Leah Muskin-Pierret, and Abigail Burman**). **Abigail** and **Adrienne** reminded us that the “under G-d” phrase in the Pledge of Allegiance was added during the McCarthy era and makes many of us uncomfortable when we are expected to recite the Pledge. **Daniel, Zoe,** and **Leah** wanted to include readings that were relevant to the young people in IFFP. The choice of readings from C.S. Lewis’ Chronicles of Narnia series seemed particularly appropriate given the press generated by the recent movie version. We all learned a lot about how literature can utilize themes and lessons from the Bible, and **Ellen Jennings** informed us that we were engaged in analysis of “Contemporary Scriptures.” **Rabbi Harold** followed with his commentary which highlighted the connections between the Old and New Testaments, politics, and popular literature.

A third group of 6<sup>th</sup> graders helped to facilitate the various components of the Gathering (**Lena Meyerson, Aimee Miller, Maddy Kenton, Ally Wichansky, and Sally Ravitz**). In true kid fashion, the students decided that having something to eat would make the Gathering more interesting; thus, we served a sweet treat of Hershey kisses and Turkish Delight. The sweets helped us to savor our joys as we greeted each other with handshakes of peace. We also decided to bring back the IFFP tradition of pebbles placed in a bowl of water as we invited the community to reflect on our concerns. The 6<sup>th</sup> Graders, and their teachers, were pleased with the outcome of all of their hard work, and we were especially pleased that our Gathering clocked in exactly at the half-hour mark! Truly we all have a renewed respect for the Worship Committee. Now we know how much work is involved in that half-hour Gathering each IFFP Sunday.

- Carol Muskin, 6<sup>th</sup> grade co-teacher

## NEW MEMBERS

### Welcome to Our New Members!

We are pleased to welcome our newest members **Anne Dee** (like Andy) & **Tim Conway**, and son **Joshua**, 2½, and **Kristina Seppala & Jon Senton**, all of whom live in Virginia! We wish you no traffic and wonderful experiences at IFFP!

### Directory Updates

Please contact Susan Ryder in the office if you want contact information for our new members.

## REV. JULIA'S LETTER

### Spring Songs to Consider

Spring is a wonderful time to sing! Our hearts fill lighter and freer with the warmth of the air and color bursting gorgeously! Thus, I wanted to share some songs reflecting some Jewish and Christian theologies. I found a song about Passover (from the Unitarian hymnbook) and, from the Congregational hymnbook, I found an Easter song.

First, from the Unitarians:

Pack nothing. Bring only your determination to serve and your willingness to be free. Don't wait for the bread to rise. Take nourishment for the journey, but eat standing, be ready to move at a moment's notice.

Do not hesitate to leave your old ways behind--fear, silence, submission. Only surrender to the need of the time--to love justice and walk humbly with your God.

Begin quickly, before you have time to sink back into old slavery. Set out in the dark. I will send fire to warm and encourage you. I will be with you in the fire and I will be with you in the cloud.

I will give you dreams in the desert to guide you safely home to that place you have not yet seen. ... I am sending you into the wilderness to make a new way and to learn my ways more deeply....

Some of you will be so changed by weathers and wandering that even your closest friends will have to learn your features as though for the first time. Some of you, will not change at all.

Some will be abandoned by your dearest loves and misunderstood by those who have known you since birth and feel abandoned by you. Some will find new friendship in unlikely faces, and old friends as faithful and true as the pillar of God's flame....

Sing songs as you go, and hold close together. You may at times grow confused and lose your way.... Touch each other and keep telling the stories..... Make maps as you go, remembering the way back from before you were born....

So you will be only the first of many waves of deliverance on these desert seas.

It is the first of many beginnings--your Paschaltide.

Words by Alla Renee Bazarth from *Singing the Living Tradition* pg. 632

Now the Congregationalists:

Now the green blade rises from the buried grain,  
Wheat that in dark earth many days has lain;  
love lives again, that with the dead has been;

Refrain: Love is come again like what arising green.

In the grave they laid the love by hatred slain,  
thinking that Jesus would not wake again,  
laid in the earth like grain that sleeps unseen.  
Christ came forth at Easter, like the risen grain,  
who that for three days in the grave had lain;  
raised from the dead, the risen Christ is seen;

When our hearts are wintry, grieving, or in pain,  
your touch can call us back to life again,  
fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been.

Refrain: Love is come again like wheat arising green.

Words from "Now The Green Blade Rises" by John Crum in the *New Century Hymnal*

As the growth of green blades rise up in our community and as we continue to create the IFFP map, making our way through this new land, may we do it in love, respect, without fear and with full JOY!

I look forward to continue meeting all the IFFP members I haven't met yet and to renewing relationships with those I have known. Our Seder meal (April 22) and Easter's second track adult group on "Getting to Know You" will provide some more opportunities for us to make those connections. I will also be available Tuesdays and Fridays to meet with people in the IFFP office. To make an appointment with me, please call me at home or at the office (301) 270-6337.

Finally, several folks have shown some interest in starting an early morning prayer/meditation time. If you would be interested in doing this, please email me at [juliajar@erols.com](mailto:juliajar@erols.com). I would like to start doing this at the IFFP office on Wednesday mornings (some time in May) from 7:30-8:00 a.m., which gives people plenty of time to get to work. This time would provide a space for people to have some quiet, share some concerns/joys and readings. All are welcome.

Gratefully yours,  
Julia

**IFFP Board:** *Chair:* Danny Weiss, [DWeiss2205@aol.com](mailto:DWeiss2205@aol.com) • *Vice chair:* Betsy Keeler, [betsy.keeler@dc.gov](mailto:betsy.keeler@dc.gov), [Betsyharvey@starpower.net](mailto:Betsyharvey@starpower.net) • *Secretary:* Mark Cohen, [cohenmarkp@aol.com](mailto:cohenmarkp@aol.com) • *Treasurer:* Richard Harris, [rharris@nasw.org](mailto:rharris@nasw.org) • *Board Members:* Erica Burman, [ericaburman@us.net](mailto:ericaburman@us.net) • Phil Jakobsberg, [pjakobsberg@wabtec.com](mailto:pjakobsberg@wabtec.com) • Sam Lawson, [sam.lawson@sdlawson.com](mailto:sam.lawson@sdlawson.com) • Ian Spatz, [kois@erols.com](mailto:kois@erols.com) • Rebecca Weiss, [becndan@aol.com](mailto:becndan@aol.com)

**IFFP Coordinators:** *Adult Group:* Sam Lawson, [sam.lawson@sdlawson.com](mailto:sam.lawson@sdlawson.com) • *Celebrations:* Jessica Vistnes, [jvistnes@ahrq.gov](mailto:jvistnes@ahrq.gov); and Geneva Collins, [genevacollins@erols.com](mailto:genevacollins@erols.com) • *Coffee Mavens:* Marika Partridge & Larry Ravitz, [tomarika@aol.com](mailto:tomarika@aol.com) • *Community Comfort/ Support Group Contacts:* Anne Stewart, [annecstewart@aol.com](mailto:annecstewart@aol.com); and Carol Muskin, [cmuskin@umd.edu](mailto:cmuskin@umd.edu) • *Community Service Workgroup:* Antoinette Eates, [aeates@msn.com](mailto:aeates@msn.com); and Barb Gottlieb, [bgottlieb@womensedge.org](mailto:bgottlieb@womensedge.org) • *Greeting Table:* Lisa Henderson, [LKH1@starpower.net](mailto:LKH1@starpower.net); and Erica Burman, [ericaburman@us.net](mailto:ericaburman@us.net) • *New Members:* Cheryl Leanza, [cherylleanza@earthlink.net](mailto:cherylleanza@earthlink.net); Lisa Wilcox, [Lisa.Wilcox@nasd.com](mailto:Lisa.Wilcox@nasd.com); and Tova Sanders, [Tova@gwu.edu](mailto:Tova@gwu.edu) • *Newsletter:* Holly Cooper, [ward-holly.cooper@comcast.net](mailto:ward-holly.cooper@comcast.net) • *Sound System Maven:* Robin Thieme, [robin@thiemehome.com](mailto:robin@thiemehome.com) • *Website:* Felise and Mark Shellenberger, [felise.shellenberger@comcast.net](mailto:felise.shellenberger@comcast.net), [mshellenberger1@comcast.net](mailto:mshellenberger1@comcast.net) • *Worship:* Larry Bostian, [Llbostian@aol.com](mailto:Llbostian@aol.com) • *Young Couples:* Kerri Mullins-Levine, [kmullinslevine@yahoo.com](mailto:kmullinslevine@yahoo.com)

**IFFP Staff:** *Spiritual Director:* Rev. Julia Jarvis, [juliajar@erols.com](mailto:juliajar@erols.com) • *Director of Religious Education:* Ellen Jennings, [ejennings@post.harvard.edu](mailto:ejennings@post.harvard.edu) • *Spiritual Advisor:* Rabbi Harold White, [Whitehs@georgetown.edu](mailto:Whitehs@georgetown.edu) • *Program Coordinator:* Susan Ryder, [Sury3@aol.com](mailto:Sury3@aol.com)