

## IFFP's Forgiveness and Reconciliation Service

March 2, 2003

**"Forgiveness is the name of love practiced among people who love poorly. The hard truth is that all of us love poorly. We need to forgive and be forgiven every day, every hour, unceasingly. That is the great work of love among the fellowship of the weak that is the human race."**

-- Henri Nouwen

### Opening Song—"Hineh Ma Tov"

Hineh, mah-tov u-mah na'im  
Shevet achim gam-yachad.

*Translation:*

*Behold!*

*How good and pleasant it is!*

*When people dwell together in unity!*

### Welcome

### Interfaith Responsive Reading

**Reader:** We gather here as an Interfaith Community  
To share and celebrate the gift of life together

**All:** *Some of us gather as the Children of Israel  
Some of us gather in the name of Jesus of Nazareth  
Some of us gather influenced by each*

**Reader:** Howsoever we come, and whomsoever we are  
May we be moved, In our time together  
To experience that sense of Divine presence in each of us  
Evoked by our worship together

**All:** *And to know in the wisdom of our hearts  
That deeper unity in which all is one.*

### Reading -- from "Why Bad Things Happen to Good People"

--Rabbi Harold Kushner

**Reader 1:** Are you capable of forgiving and accepting love in a world which has disappointed you by not being perfect, a world in which there is so much unfairness and cruelty, disease and crime, earthquake and accident? Can you forgive its imperfections and love it because it is capable of containing great beauty and goodness, and because it is the only world we have?

**Reader 2:** Are you capable of forgiving and loving the people around you, even if they have hurt you and let you down by not being perfect? Can you forgive them and love them, because there aren't any perfect people around, and because the penalty for not being able to love imperfect people is condemning oneself to loneliness?

**Reader 3:** Are you capable of forgiving and loving God even when you have found out that God is not perfect, even when God has let you down and disappointed you by permitting bad luck and sickness and cruelty in the world and permitting some of those things to happen to you? Can you learn to love and forgive God despite God's limitations, and as you once learned to forgive and love your parents even though they were not as wise, strong, or as perfect as you needed them to be?

**Reader 4:** And if you can do these things, will you be able to recognize that the ability to forgive and the ability to love are the weapons God has given us to enable us to live fully, bravely and meaningfully in this less-than-perfect world?

### Reflection -- Forgiveness

### Moment of Silence

Va'l kulom, eloha' s'lihot sala'ach la-nu, m'chal la-nu, ka-per la-nu.

(For all the things we have done wrong, O God, forgive us, pardon us, grant us atonement)

## Joys and Concerns

"The Prodigal Son" -- Pete Flynn -- adapted from Luke 15:11-32

## Announcements

### Closing Song—"Amazing Grace"

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound,  
That saved a soul like me!  
I once was lost, but now am found,  
Was blind but now I see.

Through many dangers, toils and snares,  
I have already come;  
'Tis Grace has brought me safe thus far,  
And grace will lead me home.

When we've been there ten thousand years  
Bright shining as the sun,  
We've no less days to sing God's praise  
Than when we'd first begun.

## Benediction and Charge

*All: May we go out into the World  
Carrying with each of us the love and blessing of this Interfaith  
Community*

**Reader:** May we continue to hold on to what is good  
and to stand as beacons of light and understanding for all  
people.

*All: May God's Spirit And Peace Be With Us Each Now and  
Forever*

**Reader:** May the Lord bless you and keep you. Amen