

Special Interfaith Gathering Celebrates Diverse Families

Ask any Lexington school official or any religious leader how this community is changing, and they will tell you about the growing diversity in the town. People of all ages, races, nationalities and sexual orientation are adding to the mix of what makes a Lexingtonian.

Several faith organizations in town are dedicated to welcoming and celebrating the differences and commonalities within our community. These faith communities also seek, guided by a faith-based commitment to justice and the Golden Rule, to learn more about these human differences. With these goals in mind, a group of lay leaders and clergy from Hancock United Church of Christ, Temple Isaiah, Temple Emunah, Pilgrim Congregational Church, Lexington United Methodist Church, Follen Church and First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church have been working for several months to design a special interfaith service to be held on Sunday, December 7 at 4:00 pm at Temple Isaiah. The public is cordially invited.

This celebration, titled "We Are Family," will consist of song, prayer and personal remarks that will lift up and raise people's awareness of the strong loving bonds that create families. The service will be inclusive of adoptive families, single parent families, families of remarriage, families with special needs children or adults, interracial families, families with gay or lesbian parents or those with gay or lesbian children, and the extended families of our faith communities, to name a few. Lay participants from several Lexington families will share their thoughts on what they celebrate about their family, and an interfaith choir, led by the First Parish No Fault Singers, will also sing.

Knowing that an interfaith gathering of this sort can be a very powerful acknowledgment of love and faith, the religious leaders of these seven Lexington churches and temples have been working to create a service of joy and affirmation for all kinds of loving families. The spectrum of what it means to be a family is wide, and so is the love that binds families together. This service will honor family love in all its guises, and will express the belief that trust, respect and love are the most important family values. It is hoped that this celebration will also help develop stronger community ties and interfaith relationships.

This special gathering will be held at Temple Isaiah at 55 Lincoln Street, Lexington on Sunday, December 7 at 4:00 pm. There will be child care for the youngest children. For more information, call Hancock Church at 781-862-4220.

Rolling Ridge Conference Center invites United Methodists and friends to an Advent Luncheon - Joy to Our World on December 5

David Clyde Morse has served as Conference Organist for many years since 1980. Now, meet the voice behind the keyboard as he presents a tapestry of seasonal music with fingers on the piano and voice in singing. His message of hope will be timely and inspirational for the days of Advent that lead to the celebration of the birth of our Lord.

Schedule - Friday, December 5, 2003

- 10:00 - Arrival and Registration with Coffee/Tea in the beauty of the grounds and lake
- 10:30 - Greetings and Gathering Worship
- 11:00 - Musical Offering by David Clyde Morse
- 12:00 - Lunch
- 1:00 - Departure or Walk the Grounds (weather permitting!)

Rolling Ridge is pleased to offer this luncheon event, which has attracted seniors, UMW/UMM groups, musicians, and mission-minded United Methodists to gather for food and fellowship at our own Conferencing and Retreat Center. A tour of the woodland labyrinth will be provided (weather permitting). Welcome to your home by the lake!

Advanced Reservations are required. An \$8.00 registration fee includes lunch. Please mail or fax or email your registration to thestaff@RollingRidge.org by December 1, 2003. Directions to Rolling Ridge, 660 Great Pond Rd, North Andover MA 01845 available at www.rollingridge.org. Call 978-682-8815 for other questions.



Worship Workshop with Pastor George Walters-Sleyon

Lexington UMC will host a worship workshop on Saturday, January 17, 2004 from 1:30 - 4:00 pm (snowdate: January 18, 3:30 - 6:00 pm). Pastor George Walters-Sleyon will facilitate the workshop and will demonstrate the importance of *Cultivating Harmony in Worship through Music and Liturgy*. A variety of musical expressions will be shared including contemporary, spiritual, classical, jazz and gospel. A \$5.00 contribution per participant will be appreciated. United Methodist Churches in the area are being invited to this event.