



It was a moment we call “Shalom”. When the peace of God that passes all understanding descends and, together, we breathe in the realization that God has already been here. Such was our experience at the Joint Ecumenical Service of Prayer and Reflection between Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, an ELCA Congregation, and Pardes Levavot, a Jewish Renewal Congregation, in Boulder, Colorado on October 22<sup>nd</sup>. With the opening of the Fox Institute for Creation Spirituality came an unexpected invitation to host Rev. Matthew Fox at our Sunday

morning worship. This was an opportunity to deepen the unique relationship which has existed between Shepherd and Pardes since early 2004.

As congregations from two distinct, yet deeply-connected faith traditions, we had studied together, participated in missional events, and broken bread together. As faith leaders and clergy couples, we had shared Shabbat dinner and worshiped together on Christmas Eve and Rosh HaShanah. However, we had never embarked on creating a worship experience which could be inviting and meaningful to both faith traditions and the community at large. We agreed that it was critical to honor the sacred elements of both traditions. Our shared sanctuary, with its warm design of natural light and the mixed metals of the Shekinah Glory and Dove of Peace reflected in the credence table, invited such a venture. The sound of running water descending from cupped leaf to cupped leaf of the baptismal font calls forth peace and new life. Ironically, the rich designs of these sacred elements had come through the vision of a Boulder artist and Jewish designer nearly a decade before. One can only wonder if they had also envisioned that their shared artistic expression would ultimately weave together the rich traditions of an established Lutheran congregation and a budding Jewish Renewal community.

With excitement, planning, and space for the Spirit to move, the moment arrived and we came together, “renewing” Jews and “reformed” Lutherans, to sing and pray. In silent adoration of the Torah, we listened as the promise to Abraham poured forth, then later echoed in the Words of Institution. Together we stood, hearts woven together in the Lord’s Prayer, prayed first in Hebrew, then English, culminating in an intricate, unchoreographed dance of healing prayer, lighting candles, blessing and dining...a moment of peace we call “Shalom”.

