

Interfaith Families Project



2023-2024

Annual Report



Message from the Staff & Board

Dear Members, Colleagues, Friends, and the Wider IFFP Community,

We are thrilled to share our FY 2023–24 Annual Report as we prepare to enter IFFP's 30th year. This past year has been marked by a renewed focus on our stories as interfaith families, culminating in a vibrant storytelling event.

We've also embarked on new initiatives, such as our inclusive communion, striving for equal representation, and achieving a balanced integration of both Jewish and Christian spiritual elements.

Our community has been featured in prominent platforms like the Duke Divinity School, the New York Times, Moment Magazine, and Baltimore NPR. We were also featured in both the Newbies and the Interfaithing podcasts.

The following pages showcase in words, numbers, and pictures just a few of the many highlights from the year. We are excited to share these facets of IFFP with you and look forward to continuing to grow and expand our community in 2024–25.

Thank you for your commitment to IFFP's mission and your support of our ongoing projects. We are thrilled to have you by our side as we embrace the exciting changes and opportunities ahead.

With gratitude,
IFFP Staff and FY 2023–24 Board of Directors



About Us

What Is IFFP?

Started in 1995, The Interfaith Families Project of Greater Washington, (IFFP), is an independent community of interfaith families and others committed to sharing, learning about, and celebrating our Jewish and Christian traditions. IFFP is a place where both Jewish and Christian partners can feel like equal members of the community, celebrate, and learn about both faiths. At IFFP, we “teach not preach.”



What Do We Do?

The core value of IFFP is respect—for each other, for Judaism, and for Christianity. As a community led by both a Rabbi and a Reverend, we celebrate, explore, question, and enjoy both religious traditions. IFFP members neither reject our religious backgrounds nor seek a new religion that is a mixture of beliefs. Instead, we believe it is possible — and desirable — to honor our distinct religious traditions and to share those traditions with spouses, partners, and children.

How Do We Do It?

IFFP seeks to develop our children, ourselves, and our community through opportunities for education about Christianity and Judaism, holiday celebrations, fellowship, spiritual gatherings, community service, and exploration of interfaith identity in an environment that encourages questions and respects different answers.



How Can I Become Involved?

IFFP is a community of more than 100 families living in the D.C. area, as well as across the country and abroad. People are welcome to join as virtual or local members. If you are interested in membership, contact our Administrative Director, Miranda Hovemeyer at Miranda@iffp.org. You can also visit our website at iffp.org to learn more.



Join

During the fiscal year, IFFP brought together 109 households from across the greater Washington, DC, area, the country, and internationally for Gatherings, Sunday School, holidays, community events, and social outings. This year, we welcomed 12 new or returning interfaith families, including households spanning multiple IFFP generations.

New or Returning Households



The Kanter/Jones Family - Takoma Park, MD

The Pappafotis Family - Kensington, MD

The Stapleton Family - Fairfax, VA

The Haverstick Family - Somers Point, NJ

The D'Angelo/Solomon Family - Laurel, MD

The Irizarry/Grabowsky Family - Philadelphia, PA



The Bartley Family - Bethesda, MD

The Bewley/Goldsmith Family - Washington, DC

The Field Family - Muscatine, IA

The Finn/Roy Family - Bethesda, MD

The Last Family - Aldie, VA

The Lyons Family - Aspen Hill, MD



Gather

IFFP built community, honored traditions, and deepened our interfaith identities both on-site and off-site through weekly Gatherings, celebrations of Christian and Jewish holidays, fun and adventurous Teen Group activities, a weekend Women's Retreat, and an interactive and informative multi-session Couples Workshop.

Some of the many highlights from these events include:

- Holding 24 Gatherings, 18 Adult Groups.
- Coming of Age ceremony for 16 graduates, one of our largest classes yet.
- Welcoming our largest-ever 'class' of Couples Workshop participants
- Bringing together 30 women across multiple generations at the Bon Secours Retreat Center for a rejuvenating and fun Women's Retreat.
- Engaging IFFP's teens in game nights, pool parties, ice skating, community service, and in Gatherings and Adult Groups.
- Creation of a "prayground" space to help families with small children to better engage in the Gathering.
- Held a special Gathering to support one another as an interfaith community of people with differing opinions on the war in Israel/Gaza.
- Shared communion during Easter for the first time. This was done inclusively, so members could feel welcome to participate in several ways.
- Engaged and connected members throughout the year in storytelling and story-listening, through our theme "Our Living Stories." This culminated in a storytelling event at Busboys and Poets Takoma Park, where eight members, worked with member-curators, to tell personal real-life 5-7 minute stories about being in interfaith families.
- Nearly a dozen members played or sang in the band for the first time during Gathering. In addition, we had nearly 20 members sing in the Nativity Choir.



Learn

Sunday School

One of the hallmarks of IFFP is our Sunday School. Serving children ages three to 13, the curriculum's capstone experience is a two-year Coming of Age Program, where students study six foundational questions that help them form their religious identity. In addition to learning concepts from both Jewish and Christian perspectives, students also study Hebrew and engage in music instruction.

This year, 90 students attended IFFP's Sunday School, including 27 young members of our community who joined via our Distance program. Twenty-Eight IFFP parents served as teachers of the religious education curriculum, and 15 teens gained valuable experience as class interns.

Adult Education

Each Sunday, IFFP offers programming for the adults in our community while children take part in Sunday School. Adult group discussions covered a wide range of topics and engaged both outside speakers and dialogue among the IFFP community.

Highlights include:

- Rabbi Ari Saks Reflects on "Interfaithing" Podcast
- Rev. Matt Hoffman & Generous Listening
- David Bigge Explores the History of the Temple
- Dr. Tara Coles on Lessons Learned from Working in Palliative Care
- Stan Drake on Jewish Name Changing
- Exploring Liberation Theology with Rev. Sam and Doug Lynott
- Portraits of Jerusalem with Rabbi Donna Cephus and Shifa Mahmoud
- Story Telling 101 with Jodi Kanter



Care

Care Team

Through the years, clergy and community members alike have found ways to be present for one another during challenging times, life transitions, and happy milestones. The Care Team meets regularly and supports members and their families in a variety of ways, always staying true to our core values of inclusion and connection. In addition, they led a grief group and introduced blue care cards during Gatherings (where members could share a particular prayer concern). We set up meal trains, sent cards, visited, called, and remained present to our community and its needs. Immediately following the tragic events of Oct 7th, Care Team members were present at our community dialogue that took place during the Adult Group hour, and to members as needed.

Weddings & Baby Namings

Our Rabbi and Reverend led 23 interfaith marriage services, 8 interfaith B'nei Mitzvahs, and 4 interfaith Baby Naming ceremonies this year. These services are one of the hallmarks of IFFP's unique value to the wider interfaith community.

Tikkun Olam & Community Service

IFFP's Racial Justice, Environmental and Immigration, and Refugee Assistance Tikkun Olam (TO) Groups help develop Gathering reflections, lead Adult Group discussions, and coordinate outside service activities for IFFP members. In 2023-24, IFFP's Teen Group volunteered at Shepherd's Table. At our Purim carnival, we collected food for a local food bank, Manna, as well as home-goods for A Wider Circle. Our Racial Justice and Environmental groups each were featured in Gathering and Adult Group programming. IFFP also continued its longstanding relationship with Springvale Terrace; members donated over 100 bags of toiletries to residents.



IFFP By The Numbers

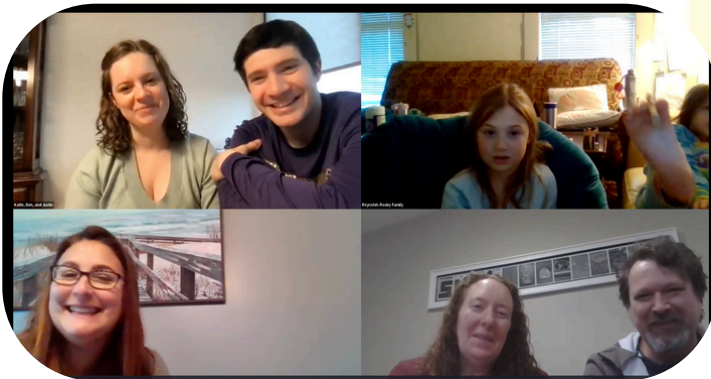
- 5** Pieces in the media about IFFP
- 12** States where our member families live
- 19** Virtual member households
- 22** Couples Workshop participants - our largest ever!
- 109** Local member households
- 143** Households/corporations that donated to IFFP
- 927** Followers on Facebook
- 1028** Followers on Instagram



Looking Ahead

2024-2025 Theme: Diving for Pearls

In our 30th year, we are celebrating the treasure that the IFFP community embodies. We will delve into the pearls of wisdom found in our traditions, experiences, and life together. Our history, religious diversity, and growth have given us an abundance from which to share and the desire to keep diving deep for these precious pearls that enhance our lives.



Thank You



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