
Interfaith Families Project

Sept.- Oct. 2005 www.iffp.net P.O. Box 5413, Takoma Park, MD 20913 iffp@verizon.net 301-270-6337

FROM THE BOARD

Dear Friends,

Happy fall to all! We are off to a busy and thoughtful start. There are a few special things to note below. But I also need to remind those of you who have not yet done so to please fill out your registration forms and get them in right away. In addition:

- **Reflection on Shabbat/Sabbath:** I want to extend my sincere appreciation to **Ellen Jennings** and **Rebecca Weiss** for the extremely thoughtful Gathering they led on Sunday regarding the Sabbath, and to **Sam Lawson** for following up in the well-attended adult group with a spirited discussion on the same topic. Some people mentioned the **'raisin'** that Rebecca had us savor during the Gathering and how they wished to find more moments in their busy lives to pay closer attention to what they have, and what they would like to have, in their lives. I hope that each of us can find a moment this week, whether alone, or with our families, to mark the Sabbath in a way that is comfortable and meaningful.
- **Sligo Middle School:** I am sorry for the inconvenience our first two Sundays of not being able to get into school on time, but thank you all for your wonderful cooperation regardless. Montgomery County staff was responsible for the problem but has assured Susan Ryder that a better system is now in place and that they will also **refund IFFP** the cost of the facility for both days!
- **Rabbi Harold:** Please note on your calendars that the High Holy Days, or Days of Awe, are approaching and Rabbi Harold will join us to help us think about this important time of year. He will lead a contemplative service from 9:30 to 10:00 on **October 2nd and 9th**. He also will participate in the Gatherings and lead the adult group on each of those days, focusing on the importance of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, and how both Jews and Christians can relate to the holidays.
- **Community Service, October 16th:** Thanks to our wonderful Community Service Workgroup, IFFP will meet on October 16th on the **gleaning fields!** Instead of meeting at Sligo, IFFP will meet at a nearby farm to glean crops for donation to a local homeless shelter or food bank. Details to follow. Adults and children of all ages are strongly encouraged to treat this like a regular Gathering and Sunday School, just at a different location.
- **New List Serve Address:** Thank to **Jeff Kenton**, IFFP is moving its list serve to Yahoo Groups because of serious and un-resolvable problems with our old list serve. If you have not already received the e-mail invitation to join the new list serve, please join now by sending a blank e-mail to: iffplistserve-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.
- **Party:** The 10th Anniversary party was fabulous. Thanks to **Adria Zeldin** and **Mary Joel Holin** for convening it and to all of those who attended.

I hope that any member or prospective member of IFFP will feel free to contact me by phone or e-mail with comments, questions or concerns about our operations. I am always interested in hearing from you.

And, finally, I want to thank all the IFFP members who work so hard each week to make our “project” such a success. I am referring to the teachers, worship committee, adult group committee, community service workgroup, welcoming and new member committees, community comfort/support group, celebrations committee, young couples committee, website managers, coffee servers, sound system haulers, musicians, the IFFP Board members, our paid staff, and Rabbi Harold. As we prepare for the harvest celebration, we should give thanks for the fruits of the labor of all these members.

- Daniel Weiss, Board Chair

OCTOBER 2005

Oct. 2	Sligo Middle School <i>Rosh Hashanah</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contemplative Service with Rabbi Harold, 9:30 am • Gathering led by Rabbi Harold, 10 am • Refreshments, 10:30 am • Sunday School/Adult Group, 10:45 am • Farewell Lunch for Rev. Heather, noon - 2pm • COA Evening Meeting 	Oct. 9	Sligo Middle School <i>Yom Kippur</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contemplative Service with Rabbi Harold, 9:30 am • Gathering led by Rabbi Harold, 10 am • Refreshments, 10:30 am • Sunday School/Adult Group, 10:45 am • Class Picnic for Grades 3 & 4, noon • COA Evening Meeting
Oct. 13 (Thurs.) 5 pm	Yom Kippur Reflection <i>Paint Branch Unitarian Universalist Church</i> Followed by Break-the-Fast Potlucks at members' homes	Oct. 14 (Fri) 7:30 pm	Young Couples Potluck <i>Lynn and Barry Fantle's home</i>
Oct. 16	Sukkot Gleaning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gleaning (for members of all ages) instead of our usual Sunday morning activities, 10 till noon • COA Evening Meeting 	Oct. 22	IFFP Fall Women's Gathering <i>Jessica Vistnes' home</i> This event is tentative. Please see page 7.
Oct. 30	Sligo Middle School <i>Gathering</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contemplative Service with Rabbi Harold, 9:30 am • Gathering with Rabbi Harold, 10 am • Refreshments, 10:30 am • Sunday School/Adult Group, 10:45 am • Class Picnic for Grade 5, noon • COA Evening Meeting 		Here are the actual dates of some Jewish holidays that will occur this month: Rosh Hashanah Oct. 4 th Yom Kippur Oct. 13 th Sukkot Oct. 18 th These holidays start the night before the day listed.

We urge you to keep this newsletter handy throughout the month so you can refer back to it. When you have questions, please check the newsletter and bulletins before calling **Susan** in the office. If you find it difficult to keep track of the newsletter during the month, remember that you can check the newsletter on line at www.iffp.net.

Three important calendar notes: (1) **Revisions:** the calendar for the year has been revised to reflect some recent changes. Please replace previous calendars with this. (2) **Starting time:**

Gatherings **start at 10 am** this year, to allow time for socializing and refreshments in between the Gathering and the prompt start of Sunday School and Adult Group at 10:45.

(3) **IFFP weather cancellation policy:** IFFP follows Montgomery County Public Schools for closure due to weather. In case of icy conditions, snow, or storms, call 240-777-2706 or check the website, <http://www.mcps.k12.md.us>. Also, if the weather is questionable, check the list serve before you leave home.

OCTOBER EVENTS

Rev. Heather Kirk-Davidoff's Farewell Lunch – Oct. 2nd

Next week, Sunday, October 2nd, will be a very busy IFFP day! **Rabbi Harold** will lead the Contemplative Service, Rosh Hashanah Gathering, and Adult Group, and then **Rev. Heather** will join us for a farewell potluck lunch.

This is our opportunity to visit with Rev. Heather and her family, to hear about her new job and their new life in Columbia, Maryland, to send her good wishes, and to thank her for all she has contributed to IFFP.

Once again, this will be a potluck lunch with IFFP supplying drinks and paper goods. As usual, the food assignments are based on your family's last name (use the female head of your household if the adults have different last names). Please make your special dishes for this special event. If your last name begins with:

A-N: Main dishes

O-Z: Side dishes or salads

Board Members: Desserts

We need apples and honey for Rosh Hashanah – Oct. 2nd

We want to bring in the sweetness of the New Year with the traditional treat of apples and honey (in addition to our usual morning fare.). We need about 6 members to each bring a small or medium jar of honey and a dozen apples, cored and sliced. If you can, please contact Susan, Sury3@aol.com.

- Susan Ryder, Program Coordinator

October adult groups – Oct. 2nd, 9th, and 30th

Rabbi Harold will lead two adult groups about the importance of the High Holy Days: on October 2nd, the Adult Group will discuss Rosh Hashanah, and on October 9th, we will discuss Yom Kippur. After two Sundays without Adult Group, on October 30th, we will have a discussion of Jewish and Christian teachings about community service/charity/tzedukah. Community Service Workgroup Co-Chairs **Barb Gottlieb Antoinette Eates**, together with Adult Group Chair **Sam Lawson**, will lead the discussion. Read the article on pages 9-10 for more info about the thought behind the October 30th Adult Group.

Yom Kippur Reflection – Oct. 13th

Our Yom Kippur service will be held this year on Thursday, October 13th, at 5:00 pm at the Paint Branch Unitarian Universalist Church near Silver Spring, 3215 Powder Mill Road, Adelphi, Maryland. The service is about an hour long, and is designed to be accessible to school aged children through adults. Younger children are welcome, but we do not provide child care. The Paint Branch Church has an open, airy sanctuary filled with windows and surrounded by trees, and the setting helps to make this service a memorable one for all of us who usually gather in a school cafeteria. It will be followed by our Break-the-Fast Potluck Dinners at members' homes.

- Susan Ryder, Program Coordinator

Yom Kippur Break-the-fast Potlucks – Oct. 13th

On Thursday, October 13th, join other IFFP families and break the Yom Kippur fast with easy-to-prepare breakfast-type meals at our fourth annual Yom Kippur Break-the-fast Potluck Dinners. The dinners will take place right after the Yom Kippur Reflection, which starts at 5 pm. Let **Jessica Vistnes** know by October 6th if you are interested in hosting a potluck or attending one. Please provide your address and the names and ages of your children and Jessica will match up families.

- **Jessica Vistnes**, Celebrations Coordinator

Young Couples Potluck

The first young couples potluck dinner will be on Friday, October 14th, at 7:30pm. **Lynn** and **Barry Fantle** will be hosting. More details will be e-mailed soon!

- Kerri Mullins-Levine, Young Couples Coordinator

Celebrate Sukkot on the Gleaning Fields! – Oct. 16

IMPORTANT NOTE: Change in Location for October 16 Gathering and Sunday School

IFFP's Sukkot Gathering on October 16th will take place at a nearby farm where we will celebrate the Jewish harvest holiday by gleaning crops to give to a local shelter or food bank. Please note the change in location from Sligo Middle School.

Several considerations led to the idea of gleaning on October 16th. Surveys over the past few years have indicated that IFFP members have enjoyed the gleaning activities conducted in the past as great outdoor activities for all ages that truly fill a need in our community. Gleaning on Sukkot makes special sense given that Sukkot celebrates both the harvest and the welcoming of others to share in our bounty. Weather permitting, we will glean from 10 to noon. During that time, to the extent possible, Sunday School teachers in attendance at the gleaning will gather their students to reinforce for them community service themes.

The farm's location is still to be determined and will depend on crop availability as we get closer to the date. Please watch your weekly bulletin for more information on location. If you have questions in the meantime, please contact **Antoinette Eates**, **Barbara Gottlieb**, or **Chuck Pierret**. Teachers with questions should contact **Ellen Jennings**.

- Antoinette Eates and Barb Gottlieb, Community Service Workgroup Chairs

New IFFP Members' Lunch Rescheduled

IFFP invites its new members to a lunch in their honor every fall. We originally had planned the lunch for October 16th, but since we are having our Sukkot Gathering at a gleaning field, the lunch will be rescheduled. Please look for an invitation and more information in your e-mail closer to the date. If you have questions, please call or e-mail **Cheryl Leanza**, or Lisa Wilcox.

- Cheryl Leanza and Lisa Wilcox, New Member Co-Coordinators

Do you like good food and good company, but you're not a new member? You can come to the lunch if you are a mentor. See page 7.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Notes from the DRE

At our recent teacher training, one of the teachers shared a difficult experience she'd had when teaching Sunday School at IFFP a number of years ago. She'd been talking about the love of G-d with children in one of the younger grades, and a parent had taken her to task for doing so. She hadn't had a chance to teach again since then and wondered if I thought that mentioning the word "G-d" would still be a problem. Hmmmm. Good question!

Here's how I answered it. We are an interfaith Sunday School that focuses on two of the world's major monotheistic religions. Humankind's relationship with G-d (however one defines that term) is central to the teachings of both religions, and, in my view, it would be difficult to teach about Judaism and Christianity without referring to this relationship. So we will be talking about G-d (and Jesus, and prayer, and the Bible) in Sunday School. For me, the question is "how?"

I believe the answer lies in a question-based approach to teaching. Godly Play, our First Grade curriculum, offers an excellent example of this. In Godly Play, the teacher presents a Bible story to the children and then asks Wondering Questions. "I wonder what would happen if such-and-such a part were left out of the story?" "I wonder what the story would be like if it had a different ending?" "I wonder why such-and-such a character did that?" These questions engage the children and bring them into the world of the story. They don't preach to the children and tell them what to believe. The questions also encourage the children to think about the relevance of each story to their own lives. In the early elementary grades, this is referred to as "text to self" connection, and the goal is for children to learn to make connections between what they read and what they live, between story and real life. One informs the other.

I tend to take the Godly Play approach a step further, especially with the older grades, and especially when talking about the very real fact that different people have different beliefs. So, for example, when talking about the somewhat challenging (for an interfaith group) Easter story, I might first ask, "What did the people in the story think happened?" Then, "Did they all think the same thing?" Then, "What do you think happened?" Then, "Do you know anybody who thinks something else happened?" Then, "Yes, different people have different ideas about what happened after Jesus died. Some people believe that after he died he came back to life and his whole body rose up to be in heaven with God. Some people believe he died just like anybody else but his teachings are still important. Some people believe that after he died both his spirit and his teachings remained with us to help and guide us. Can you think of any other things that some people believe about the Easter story?"

The point of all this is that the IFFP Sunday School is trying to teach our children both the traditional stories (and prayers and rituals) of Judaism and Christianity and that different people hold different valid beliefs about these stories. By using a question-based approach to teaching, we are able to emphasize that there are a variety of ways to understand and interpret the Jewish and Christian traditions. This approach also helps our children develop the tools they'll need to make decisions about what they believe and to determine what they find most meaningful in the two religious traditions present in their families. I'm excited to be a part of this process, and I look forward to talking more about it with you.

- Ellen Jennings, Director of Religious Education

News From Teachers

The Coming of Age (8th grade) and Coming of Age Prep (7th grade) classes met recently for the first time this year. These classes gather on Sunday evenings, and 7th and 8th grade students consider this a great break from the regular Sunday School format! They're taught by a seasoned group of teachers whose profiles follow.

COA (Coming of Age) Teachers:

Rev. Heather Kirk-Davidoff -- Rev. Heather taught the Coming of Age class last year and created an excellent new "decision-making" curriculum in the process. She is an ordained UCC minister and was, until recently, the Spiritual Director of IFFP. She is also part of an interfaith marriage and has three children who have participated in IFFP's Sunday School Program. Rev. Heather is now the minister of a community church in Columbia, Maryland, and is happy to maintain her connection to IFFP by continuing to teach COA.

Samuel Seligman -- Sam is a student at the University of Maryland with a major in Anthropology. Sam grew up in a Reform Jewish family and now practices what he calls "traditionalist" Judaism (*i.e.*, he's observant). Sam came to IFFP through his co-teacher, **Rose Sadler**, and co-taught the COA Prep class last year. He thinks that by being closer in age to the students, he can have a very positive affect on their development. He'd like to make religious school a worthwhile experience for the kids.

Rose Sadler -- Rose is a student at the University of Maryland, majoring in Judaic Studies and Anthropology. Rose grew up in a Conservative Jewish family and attended a Jewish Day School. Rose came to IFFP because she was interested in working with an interfaith community. She loves working with kids and having in-depth conversations about religion with them.

COA Prep Teachers:

Sheldon Novak -- Sheldon has a B.A. in Religion from Syracuse University and an M.A. in Religious Studies from Penn State. He also has 25 years of teaching experience in religious schools and Bar/Bat Mitzvah preparation. Sheldon attends a Conservative Synagogue with his wife, Liat, and their two sons. A good friend introduced him to IFFP in 1997, and he's been teaching and/or mentoring our COA students ever since. Sheldon loves teaching and learning from the students. He is impressed by the openness and creativity of the kids and always hopes to make a difference in their lives.

Sarah Dammeyer -- Sarah has a B.A. in English and English Education and is working on her Master's. She is an 11th grade English teacher at Churchill High School. Sarah grew up in a Roman Catholic family and is very interested in religion. **Carol Muskin** introduced her to IFFP, and Sarah co-taught the COA Prep class this past year. Sarah loves learning from 7th graders and thinks they have a great perspective and ask excellent questions!

- Ellen Jennings, Director of Religious Education

COA class – plans and requests for community involvement

This year, I am once again teaching the Coming of Age class using a revised version of the curriculum I created for the class last year. I'm really excited about the class! After teaching the class once through, I have a much better sense of how each class can lead to the next one, and how all the classes together can feed into the Coming of Age Projects which each student completes with the help of a mentor outside of class. There is also a lot of energy among the kids—every single one of our 21 students has returned this year. **Sam Seligman** and **Rose Sadler**, students at the University of Maryland who assisted with the COA Prep class year, have agreed to continue as assistants in the COA class this year. They already have a great rapport with the kids and are very good at engaging them in discussion, so I feel very lucky to have their help.

We will be calling on the wider IFFP community for assistance in several ways this year. First of all, many of our students are currently searching for a mentor for their project. Mentors meet with the student about once a month from November through April to assist with their independent project. Sometimes the mentor has a special interest or expertise in the project area (politics or art or history, etc.) and sometimes the mentor is simply a person who enjoys talking with young teens. The main job of the mentor is not to provide information but rather to brainstorm with the COA student and to help them to organize their ideas and to strategize about how to put their project together. If you might be interested in being a COA mentor, please

drop me an e-mail at . And, if a COA student approaches you and asks you to mentor them, please consider saying yes.

Secondly, on Sunday, October 30th, we focus our class on how having a goal affects the way you make decisions. I would like on that evening to have 5 or 6 guests who would be willing to talk about their careers. When did you decide to pursue your career? What kinds of steps were involved with achieving that goal? Was it ever difficult to pursue that goal? Did you change your career goals somewhere along the line? If you'd be willing to share a bit about yourself in this way, please let me know:

I expect great things from this class—and I will keep you updated about our progress!

- Heather Kirk-Davidoff, COA Teacher

GET INVOLVED

Possible Fall Women's Retreat on October 22 – Coordinators needed

Last year we had our first, wonderful, one-day fall women's retreat at Jessica Vistnes' lovely house in Rockville. Jessica has generously offered her home again, as well as to organize the food for the day. However, no one has come forward to coordinate the activities. All that's really needed is to determine a focus for the day, and find a facilitator (either in or out of IFFP). Last year we baked bread, took a long walk, danced in the yard, and just had a great time talking and being together. (Betty Thompson, our past facilitator is not available due to the recent death of her sister).

If you would like to attend the retreat or help plan it, please contact Susan this week, at the office, 301-270-6337.

- Susan Ryder, Program Coordinator

IFFP needs mentors for new families

We are very pleased that we have several new members joining IFFP this fall. That means that we are in need of Mentor Families to help welcome our new members into the IFFP community. This involves joining your assigned new family at the New Members' Lunch, and being available to answer their questions throughout the year. Making an effort to greet them at our Gatherings is another helpful way to make new members feel welcomed. If you would be willing to provide this little bit of hospitality to one of our new families, please contact **Susan** in the IFFP office or **Cheryl Leanza**.

Join the *new list* serve today

IFFP is moving our list serve to Yahoo Groups. Topica has proved to be unreliable and unresponsive to our needs and problems. **If you are not presently signed up with Topica** (which means you're not receiving list serve announcements or our Thursday bulletins by list serve), **or if you have recently changed your e-mail address, please be sure to sign up for Yahoo Groups by sending a blank e-mail to: iffplistserve-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.**

Yahoo's service, like Topica, is free and offers several additional benefits. These include a searchable archive of all posts, file downloads for things like the newsletter, photo galleries, links, databases (think online membership directory), Polls and Calendars. While we may not need these services right away, they may prove useful in the future.

Yahoo Groups has issued invitations to everyone on the current list-serve. The Topica list serve will remain active for at least a week while we make the transition and all important e-mail should go to both lists during the transition period. If you do not receive the invitation you can join by sending a blank e-mail to iffplistserve-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. If you have any questions or problems please contact Jeff Kenton, IFFP List-serve Coordinator, who is handling the transition.

- Susan Ryder, Program Coordinator

How Interfaith Families Can Thrive and Contribute in a Polarized World

That's the title of Dovetail's National Interfaith Families Conference, to be held over Martin Luther King weekend (January 14-16), right here in Bethesda! It's the first time this biannual conference will be held in the DC area. The conference will be a great opportunity to come out and meet interfaith families from around the country and to let everyone know about IFFP.

Ellen Jennings, Rabbi Harold, Rev. Heather, and Sue Katz Miller each will be speaking or leading workshops, and we'll be recruiting some of you to help present the "IFFP point of view." Dovetail supports interfaith families, no matter which religious pathway they choose. The conference attendees are usually a mix of young couples trying to choose a pathway, clergy and religious educators from many religions and denominations, and members from the independent interfaith groups like ours from New York, Chicago and elsewhere.

The conference will be held at the Bethesda Jewish Congregation/Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church, a beautiful space in the woods shared by a synagogue and a Protestant church. At the conference, the leaders of these two congregations will tell the story of how they came to share this space intentionally. There will be a panel of clergy (including Rabbi Harold) talking about their experiences with interfaith marriage, and a panel of interfaith teens talking about the choices they've made (some of them from IFFP). On Monday (Martin Luther King Day), IFFP will be hosting a networking session with the other independent interfaith groups that have dual-faith religious schools like ours.

For updates on the conference, or to find out more about past Dovetail conferences, go to <http://dovetailinstitute.org/conferences.html>. To get involved with the conference, contact Ellen Jennings, Susan Ryder or Sue Katz Miller.

- Sue Katz Miller, IFFP Member

If you're still looking for ways to get involved, please consider mentoring a COA student or visiting the October 30th COA evening session to talk to them about your career goals and path. For more information, read the article on the COA class above.

IFFP's 10TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Celebration was a great success

On Saturday night, September 17, 2005, current and former IFFP members gathered at Positano Ristorante Italiano in Bethesda to celebrate the 10th anniversary of our interfaith organization. The evening started with a very humorous welcome from current Board Chair, **Danny Weiss**, in Italian, followed by an English translation. Long time IFFP member **Ian Spatz** MC'ed the evening's festivities and a DJ entertained the children as well as adults. Two of the four IFFP founding moms, **Mary Joel Holin** and **Irene Landsman**, spoke of IFFP's early days and how the organization has grown and evolved over its 10 year history. Long time member **Adria Zeldin** read greetings from three graduated teen members who are now in college, **Izaak Orlansky**, **Rebecca Feiden** and **Diego Vasquez**. They sent messages about how IFFP influenced

their lives and what IFFP means to them. Former Director **Rev. Julia Jarvis** brought words of hope and inspiration to the crowd and **Rabbi Harold White** offered a lovely benediction.

Food and conversation were plentiful and the evening ended with a delicious rum cake celebrating IFFP's 10 years and a questionable rendition of the "YMCA" dance lead by **Ian, Mary Joel** and **Adria!**

- Adria S. Zeldin, IFFP Member and Co-organizer of the celebration

10th anniversary thoughts from an IFFP Sunday School alum

IFFP started for me in a one-room classroom in the Takoma Park Presbyterian Church. We didn't really know what we were doing exactly, and the more I learn about the origins of IFFP I think the parents weren't exactly sure either. For me, it was a chance to figure out why I got to miss school to go eat apples and honey with my dad, or why the heck we put a Star of David on the top of our Christmas tree. Looking back, you've got to hand it to the parents: They took a group of somewhat confused boys and girls and gave them a place to feel comfortable and maybe, just maybe, even enjoy learning about their religious heritages.

It took me a while to realize this genius – maybe in only the last few years. Part of the realization came from reflecting on those first few years and coming in with mostly positive memories: having fun acting out Bible stories with Peggy, struggling to learn Hebrew with the extremely compassionate and hilarious Sheldon, and the truly exciting and satisfying journey of laying down the foundation of the Coming of Age ceremony with Julia Jarvis and the rest of the first COAers. Another part of the realization came the years after the Coming of Age ceremony, as parents would approach the teen group, wondering whether we had become confused, depressed individuals still seeking some religious identity in the world. Being able to confidently say we were comfortable, and even proud of our identity, was a great feeling, one that I believe IFFP was directly responsible for.

The thought of all the IFFP kids crammed into one classroom and being able to all fit around a piano singing holiday carols seems quite ridiculous now. I walk in on Sundays and I recognize few. It doesn't bother me too much – it's a nice feeling to see it go on with so much enthusiasm and popularity. To think that now hundreds of children are going through a similar experience as me is so satisfying, to be a part of that is just great. I've made some great friends in this organization, met some amazing people and formed bonds that I hope will last my life. After ten great years, may IFFP continue to be the kind of nurturing place that it was for me and let us not forget the hard work of those who have contributed to that extraordinary success. I am truly thankful.

- **Izaak Orlansky**, IFFP alum now in college

UPDATES

Dovetail conference discussed during September 18th adult group

At an abbreviated Adult Group session on our Back to School morning, **Sue Katz Miller** led a discussion on the upcoming conference, and asked for input in planning the workshops. IFFP members requested more academic and theological speakers, on topics such as the historical Jesus, the origins of Christianity in Judaism, and how interfaith families can benefit the world. See page 8 for more info on the upcoming conference and how you can get involved.

Community Service Workgroup Update

The Community Service Workgroup had a very productive meeting in September. The workgroup is addressing the topic of community service at two levels. Concretely, the group is trying to see what activities can best be worked into our existing schedule. (Be sure to read the announcement in this newsletter on gleaning on October 16th, IFFP's first big community service event of the year). More abstractly, the workgroup is exploring ways of incorporating community service into various aspects of IFFP life: classroom

curriculum, classroom activities, Gathering, adult group, teen group, and outside-the-walls family participation. To assist in this broad goal, the workgroup has proposed having one or more adult group sessions in order to address the following topics:

- Jewish and Christian teachings about community service/charity/tzedukah. We would like IFFP's practice of community service to be rooted in an understanding of the teachings of our heritage faiths. This is potentially a vast subject, and may be an exploration that takes place over more than one year. We will begin the discussion at the Adult Group on October 30th.
- Our kids' need to experience community service firsthand. For some of us, a commitment to service is an essential part of our faith - the faith we grew up with, and the faith we want to pass on to our children. To the extent that IFFP has not embraced service as a basic element of its identity, our kids are not getting the experience of serving the poor or working for justice. Not only that; they may not be identifying the responsibility to serve as part of a Jewish or Christian identity. We would like to explore the issue of how parents feel community service should be presented in the context of an interfaith Sunday School.
- What kind of community service? This is in part a logistical question. There are projects that can be carried out by the kids in their Sunday School classrooms (such as making holiday cards for residents in nursing homes); projects that can be carried out in the school building after Sunday School class (such as assembling sandwiches to be delivered to a meals program); and projects that have to be done off-site (like gleanings). These logistical issues need to be discussed with members. There are also other questions that would fall under this heading - Whom should we seek to serve? What kinds of service contribute to self-help as opposed to dependency? etc. - that also bear discussion.
- Extent of commitment. We need a sense from IFFP as a whole of how much time we can commit to a project, and if it is a one-time commitment that is desired or an on-going one. There are also projects that could be carried by a smaller number of families working on an on-going, rotating basis (such as volunteering to fix a meal at a shelter on a set day each month, with families signing up in advance). We need to get a quantified sense of member's willingness to commit so we can gauge the kind of institutional commitment to make.
- Logistics. The most urgent question here is that outside-the-walls activities are going to call for some flexibility in scheduling. We would like to hear from the parents how they feel about scheduling additional activities into an already-full 20- to 22-week calendar, versus sacrificing some classroom instruction time for hands-on, family-participation service projects.

The workgroup is looking forward to hearing from IFFP members on each of these topics.

- Barbara Gottlieb and Antoinette Eates, Co-coordinators of the Community Service Workgroup

Welcome our new IFFP members!

We want to welcome the families who have recently joined our IFFP family. Please be sure to welcome them and chat with them at Gatherings: **Lisa Beaudet** and her son **Arlo** who is in the first grade (Lisa is a friend of Rev. Heather's); and **Maureen Scanlon** and **Michael Ellner**, who are a new young couple from Arlington - remember that Virginia contingent! We hope that you will soon feel at home in our community.

Directory updates

We have directory updates for the following members:

Wendy Brown

Kathy Flitter

Melinda Frederick

Sue Ellen Kelly

Karen Kenton

Jessica Landman

Carol Muskin

Marika Partridge

Larry Ravitz

Martha Brettschneider

Mark Shellenberger

Felise Shellenberger

Heather & Dan Kirk-Davidoff: new home info

We also have directory info for the following new members:

Maureen Scanlon & Michael Ellner

Lisa Beaudet

Robin Allen

Jennifer, Joe & Ryan Cavey

Ilisa Halpern & Scott Paul

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Rev. Heather Kirk-Davidoff's Installation – Oct. 23rd

Rev. Heather will be installed at the Kittamaqundi Community Church on Sunday, October 23rd, 3:00 pm. This is a Sunday when we do not have IFFP. Everyone is invited -- including kids -- and the church will have child care for young children. Reception to follow with toasts and roasts.

Directions: Oliver's Carriage House is located at 5410 Leaf Treader Way in Columbia's Town Center. From Interstate 95, take Exit 41 west (MD Route 175) toward Columbia (past US Route 29). From US 29, take Exit 20 west toward Columbia. Look for Vantage Point Rd., the second traffic light after US 29. Turn left onto Vantage Point Rd. At the top of the hill, turn left onto Leaf Treader Way. Take an immediate right into our parking lot.

High Holy Days Services at Georgetown University

Rabbi Harold leads services on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur at Georgetown. They are free and open to the public. These popular services do fill up, however, so **Rabbi Harold** advises IFFP families to arrive at least 20 minutes before the start of each service. Child care is available for pre-school aged children. Times and locations for all services are available on the Campus Ministry Information Hotline, 202-687-1882.

JOYS AND CONCERNS

Jeremy Marcus and Cheryl Leanza are delighted to announce they are expecting a baby in February.

Special thanks

IFFP has a beautiful, professional, impressive new flyer thanks to **Jay Groff**, who, with his wife **Lauren**, owns Groff Creative Inc. (<http://www.groffcreative.com/index.html>). Last spring Jay began working with the text, logo, and digital photos we gave him. He took those and designed our wonderful flyer - donating a great deal of his time to layouts and many changes resulting from our revisions! We thank him for his professional work, his time, and his great patience.

IFFP Board: *Chair:* Danny Weiss, *Vice chair:* Betsy Keeler • *Secretary:* Mark Cohen • *Treasurer:* Richard Harris • *Board Members:* Erica Burman • Phil Jakobsberg • Sam Lawson • Ian Spatz • Rebecca Weiss
IFFP Coordinators: *Adult Group:* Sam Lawson • *Celebrations:* Jessica Vistnes and Geneva Collins • *Coffee Mavens:* Marika Partridge & Larry Ravitz • *Community Comfort/Support Group:* Anne Stewart, Carol Muskin, and Maggi Cowlan • *Community Service Workgroup:* Antoinette Eates and Barb Gottlieb • *Greeting Table:* Lisa Henderson and Erica Burman • *New Members:* Cheryl Leanza, and Lisa Wilcox • *Newsletter:* Holly Cooper, • *Sound System Maven:* • *Website:* Felise and Mark Shellenberger • *Worship:* Larry Bostian • *Young Couples:* Kerri Mullins-Levine
IFFP Staff: *Director of Religious Education:* Ellen Jennings • *Spiritual Advisor:* Rabbi Harold White, 202-687-3480 (office) • *Program Coordinator:* Susan Ryder