

## Samantha Gonzalez-Block Hired as Interim Minister of the Interfaith Families Project

### *Gonzalez-Block Joins Rabbi Deborah Reichmann on IFFP's Spiritual Leadership Team*

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The Board of Directors of the Interfaith Families Project of Greater Washington DC (IFFP) announces today the hiring of Samantha Gonzalez-Block as its Interim Minister, effective July 1. Reverend Gonzalez-Block will serve alongside Rabbi Deborah Reichmann, who joined IFFP in January 2020.

Gonzalez-Block comes to IFFP from Asheville, NC, where she has served as Associate Pastor of Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church since 2015. Raised in an interfaith family in Montclair, New Jersey, she is a graduate of Barnard College and Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York and is ordained as a minister in the Presbyterian Church (USA). Her interfaith experience includes formal roles as a Religious Educator with Interfaith Community, Inc. in New York, NY, teaching about interfaith identity in a collegiate context, as well as working with families of various religious and cultural backgrounds in congregations. Bilingual in Spanish, she has experience in secondary education, domestic and international social justice advocacy, and the integration of religion, arts and culture. She succeeds Reverend Julia Jarvis, who will retire from IFFP in June.

"As someone who grew up in a Jewish-Christian home, I longed for a place like IFFP. What joy it is to know that IFFP is here and that I have the privilege to serve this community. I look forward to working alongside Rabbi Debbie, the Staff and all of IFFP to explore and flourish together," remarked Gonzalez-Block.

Gonzalez-Block will join Rabbi Deborah Reichmann in providing spiritual leadership to IFFP's 80+ households in the greater Washington, DC area and nationwide. Trained as a Jewish Universalist rabbi, Reichmann's rabbinic formation included learning from Jewish Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist and Humanitarian movements. She presents a modern Jewish worldview rooted in tradition, but adapted to 21st Century sensibilities. A native Spanish speaker, Reichmann earned her Bachelor's degree, Master's in Liberal Studies, and Juris Doctorate at Georgetown University, and a Master's in Public Health from Johns Hopkins University.

"IFFP is in for a wonderful year with the dynamic duo of Debbie and Sam," noted Heidi Anderson, IFFP Board Chair. "Our hire of Sam sets us up for a successful future, and it is truly a blessing to have Debbie among us! Sadly, the pandemic hit shortly after she started so many of our members only know her through the screen."

Said Reichmann, "I am eager to work with Sam as we take IFFP into its second quarter century. The foundations established by the wonderful leaders before us will allow us to continue to grow IFFP as a spiritual interfaith community and to serve as a resource around the nation. The work of IFFP is exciting, and the prospect of being in person again is terrific."

Currently celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, IFFP has continued regular weekly gatherings, Sunday School, adult groups and support to its membership throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

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The Interfaith Families Project of Greater Washington, DC (IFFP) was founded in 1995 by four interfaith couples from Takoma Park, Maryland, who wanted a Sunday School for their Jewish and Christian children. IFFP is an independent community of interfaith families who are committed to sharing, learning about, and celebrating their Jewish and Christian traditions. For more information about IFFP, please go to <https://iffp.net>.