

Interfaith Council Meeting

Date: September 1st, 2026

Time: 11:00 AM- 12:00 PM

Location: The Gathering Space

Facilitator: Dr. Kathryn Hidelberger

Note Taker: Zoe Seaver

ATTENDEES

Dr. Heidelberg, Izzac Rumble, Zoe Seaver, Dr. Vespa, Dr. Shin, Malak, Dr. Beidler, Dr. Lewinson, Aman, and Dr. Lidke

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed and approved.

REPORTS

- Welcome and introductions
 - What is one moment in the last six months in your faith, spiritual, or personal life that was life giving?
 - Dr. Heidelberg: I was in Amsterdam for a fellowship of Christian and Muslim inter-religious work. Getting to connect with fellow Christians and conversations about navigating faith was encouraging and impactful.
 - Dr. Lidke: Being a father for my 12-year old daughter. Doing an annual event where my daughters' friends come to town to go to the Hippie Hole. Being there and seeing the joy was special
 - Dr. Beidler: Got to see a friend get married at a monastery and connected with nuns about science.
 - Dr. Vespa: Went to Illinois to revisit people and places related to where I got my masters.
 - Malak: My brother recently got married and I got to be with a lot of my family members. I got to connect with some family members I do not see often about struggles and faith of Islam.
 - Dr. Shin: I traveled quite a bit this summer. I enjoyed traveling with my mother. The beauty of nature put us in awe.

- Aman: Over the summer, I was in Costa Rica for two months working with Winshape camps. Working with the kids was a blessing
 - Dr. Lewinson: Last Saturday, in Jewish worship we read from the Torah scroll, which has not happened in a while. Despite the stumbles, the entire community worked together with the prayers.
 - Izzac: I went on a cross-country road trip with my family. I never went West before, so the beauty was amazing and different.
 - Zoe: I went vegetarian after my study abroad which is growing my spirituality and how I interact with the world.
- Old business – none
- New business
 - Revise and update IFC bylaws to better reflect Berry’s new strategic plan and the needs of the campus community (not an immediate priority but one to keep on our radar)
 - Look at the current bylaws and strategic plan for next meeting
 - Interfaith bylaws are on the IFC website
 - IFC Meeting time and date: revise? keep?
 - Change meeting date to first Tuesday of the month at 11:00am
- Programming for 26-27:
 - Confirmed events:
 - Speedfaithing – Solidarity Week event – Thursday, Sept. 24, 11 am – 12 pm, Krannert Ballroom
 - An idea from Interfaith America
 - Form circles and series of questions to answer. 4-5 minutes to answer each question
 - Possible rap-up: student reflection of the event
 - The event is CE approved
 - Brainstorm potential questions
 - Share protentional questions to Dr. Heidelberger by the 22nd through email
 - Questions should reflect the theme of “unity” and diversity
 - Need promotional materials
 - Flyers are needed
 - Need by September 14th
 - Student can work together
 - Interfaith Candlelight Reflection- Thursday, Sept. 23, 8:30pm
 - Please keep in touch Devon Smyth if interest in participating

- *Can Religion Save Democracy? How More Faith, Not Less, Can Heal our Public Life* – book tour event with Matthew Kaemingk and Shadi Hamid, Spring 2027
 - Applying for funding, confirming availability now
 - Part of the funding from the fellowship
 - Anticipated funding: \$2,000-\$3,000 from out end
 - May need to provide honoraria (Chaplain's Office will likely co-sponsor)
 - \$500-\$1000 for each of the speakers
 - Details will be shared as they come
 - Partnering with both community and Berry student organizations: One Community United, Berry Brotherhood
 - Maybe a possible lunch to connect with the speakers. Maybe connect with student organizations
- Possible events for discussion:
 - Turkish Sufi music/poetry event – Latif Bolat
 - Latif Bolat wanted to come to do an event
 - Quoted \$1000
 - See about co-sponsors
 - Islamic calligraphy event – co-sponsor with the Art Department (Brad Adams)
 - Bring in a local person from North Georgia
 - Maybe bring in something interactive for students
 - Other ideas?
 - Bringing in the President to do an event about his personal experience
 - Coffee House series: interview members of the Berry community to better know your neighbors
 - During Viking Venture, Marthas table connecting over food. Maybe bring a picnic to bring food of meaning.
 - Maybe an opportunity to bring conversations about faith and biology. Possibly a nature walk.
 - Increase awareness of interfaith council.