A Reflection from your Hindu Chaplain

Dear Jumbos,

This past Friday, Tufts Hindu Chaplaincy and Tufts Hindu Students Association held Diwali Puja in the Interfaith Center. Diwali, or Deepawali, translates to “row of lights” and is commonly known as the Festival of Lights. The lunar calendar date for Diwali this year is Sunday November 12, but because it falls on the long weekend, it was held a week earlier so that students can go home to celebrate Diwali with their families.

One of the many reasons we celebrate Diwali is honoring the return of Lord Ram, an avatar of Vishnu (one of the three forces of creation, maintenance and destruction), to his home in Ayodhya after being exiled for 14 years. This past Friday, we sang bhajans (sacred songs) to Ram and Krishna (another avatar of Vishnu) to add to the resounding welcome.

This is one of the reflections upon which I expand on today – what does it mean to come home? To return from something that changed us? When I think about the story of Lord Ram, I wonder how it might have felt to see all the lights lit brightly in a celebration of homecoming. It makes me think of those in my life, on campus, and at home whose smiles light up my day and whose greetings of welcome are like celebrations of homecoming, no matter what else has changed.

This past Friday, I saw students connecting over these themes and I would love to hear from you what homecoming means to you. In closing, I leave you with this opening of the Mahalakshmi Ashtakam from the Padma Purana to inspire your sense of welcome and your sense of abundance.
Salutations to You O Mahamaya (the Primordial Cause of Creation); Who Abides in Sri Pitha (Her Transcendental Abode) and is Worshipped by the Suras, Who is adorned with Shankha (Conch), Chakra (Discus) and Gada (Mace) in Her Hands; Salutations to You, O Devi Mahalakshmi.

With warmth,
Preeta Banerjee
Hindu Chaplain
Come pick up a care package at Goddard Chapel

In this time of suffering and conflict in the world and among our community at Tufts, genuine acts of kindness and care matter. Last week, students assembled over 150 care packages to be shared with and by the community. Come by anytime between 9am and 5pm Monday though Friday.

Upcoming Signature Programs
tuesCall For Art, Pax et Lux: A Multifaith Winter Celebration
Submissions due Monday, November 27

Pax et Lux is the University Chaplaincy’s multifaith winter celebration centered around themes of peace and light. The celebration includes singing, dancing, storytelling, and poetry and aims to highlight individuality and celebrate people’s traditions, cultures, and practices. Please save the date for the event this year on Thursday, December 7 at 6:00 p.m.

Interested undergraduate and graduate students are invited to submit creative responses for this year’s Pax et Lux celebration. We invite submissions of written or visual art to be displayed in Goddard Chapel event and reception. We ask that submissions respond to one of the following questions: “Peace and light have many different manifestations in many different lives, how do these grounding principles of our community reveal themselves in yours?” “What brings you joy and warmth in the winter?” “What traditions do you associate with wintertime?” Submissions are accepted here.

Submit Art to Pax et Lux

Religious and Philosophical Programs

Our gatherings are open to all members of the Tufts community! Please find more information and more regular weekly programming and events here on our
Mindfulness - Decolonizing The Mind With Michael Yellowbird
Wednesday, November 8, 7:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m., Goddard Chapel

Join the Tufts Buddhist Mindfulness Sangha, the Buddhist Chaplaincy and Professor Michael Yellowbird of the University of Manitoba for a discussion on mindfulness and decolonizing the mind. Michael Yellowbird, a practitioner of mindfulness and meditation, is active in re-introducing the practice of mindfulness to Native American and indigenous communities around the world. Please contact Buddhist Chaplain Ji Hyang Padma with any questions.
Pizza and Bible Study
Wednesday, November 15, 6:00 p.m., Campus Center, Room 218

Join the Protestant Chaplaincy as we study the Gospel of Mark together. All are welcome, regardless of your identity, spiritual/religious background, or knowledge of the Bible. Please contact Protestant Chaplain Dan Bell with any questions.
More than a Major: Life is (Much) More Than Work and School

What does your best life really mean, you think? Join the University Chaplaincy to really get to know what you want from your days, including relationships, rest, play, nature, and more.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 15 12-1PM, LUNCH PROVIDED
ALUMNAE LOUNGE

More than a Major: Life is (Much) More Than Work and School
Wednesday, November 15, 12:00 p.m., Alumnae Lounge

What does your best life really mean? Join the University Chaplaincy for More than a Major: Life is (Much) More Than Work and School to really get to know what you want from your days, including relationships, rest, play, nature, and more. As part of Majors Month this year, we are inviting you to join in-person for lunch and crafty conversation about what makes your life full, and how your major can be a part of that fullness. Follow this link to learn more details about the event and register. Reach out to program manager Nora Bond with any questions.
Mark Your Calendars for True Colors: An Interfaith Queer Crafts and Conversations Group
Tuesday, November 14, 7:00 p.m., LGBT Center

True Colors is an interfaith group for queer-identified students to talk about spirituality, religion, and whatever is on your minds and hearts. We meet for snacks, a crafting activity, and laid-back conversations hosted by Dan Bell, Tufts’ Protestant Chaplain. Join us for our fall meetings on the dates above. Email Protestant Chaplain Dan Bell to sign up for our e-list or ask any questions.
Tufts Sunday Concert Series: Tufts Choruses - Forest Through The Trees

Sunday, November 12, 3:00 p.m., Distler Performance Hall

“Humans are bad for the environment” is a tired cliché. Such misanthropic eco-nihilism too often begets the notion that mass violence could be a viable solution to global environmental crises. Marvel’s blockbuster Avengers films and their arch-villain, Thanos, demonstrate that this specter of ecofascism looms in pop-cultural imaginations as a malevolent threat for some and a tantalizing fantasy for others. In part as a response to the Avengers films, the Anti-Creep Climate Initiative published the webzine and teaching tool, “Against the Ecofascist Creep” (2022), a research-driven primer for de-bunking six everyday ecofascist myths that appear in pop culture, political discourse, and everyday life.

During this event, the webzine authors will share their multidisciplinary research on the relationship between climate justice, anti-ecofascist theory and action, and the need to re-encounter and re-imagine the project of humanism.
Episcopal Service Corps: Fall 2024 Applications Open Soon

Episcopal Service Corps will begin accepting applications for the 2024 Fall program beginning December 1. Episcopal Service Corps empowers adults ages 21-32 to transform unjust structures through community building, local collaboration, prayer, and action. Programs serve thousands of people across fifteen communities across the country. You can find out more about Episcopal Service Corps here and apply below.

Apply to ESC

Photo of the Month

The Buddhist Chaplaincy and the Tufts Buddhist Mindfulness Sangha visited Chùa Việt Nam, a Vietnamese Buddhist temple in Boston, on Sunday, November 5, 2023 with Brandeis and Northeastern students.
Upcoming Religious Celebrations and Observances

These events are drawn from the multifaith calendar maintained by the Office of Religious and Spiritual Life at Harvard Divinity School. To see more upcoming religious holidays and festivals, please follow the link to the Harvard Divinity School calendar.

Diwali (Dipavali)
Sun., Nov. 12, 2023
Tradition: Hinduism
Perhaps the most popular of all Hindu festivals, also known as the Festival of Lights, it is dedicated to the goddess Kali in Bengal and to Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, in the rest of India. As with several other festivals, Diwali is associated with one of the stories about the destruction of evil by Vishnu in one of his many manifestations.

Diwali/Mahavir Nirvana
Sun., Nov. 12, 2023
Tradition: Jainism
This "Festival of Lamps" celebrates the attainment of Moksa by Lord Mahavira. A burning lamp symbolizes the "light of knowledge," which dispels the darkness of delusion and ignorance.

Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji
Fri., Nov. 24, 2023
Tradition: Sikhism
This day commemorates the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji (1621-1675), the ninth of the Ten Sikh Gurus. He is remembered not only for his defense of the Sikh faith, but also of Hinduism and of religious liberty.

Support the University Chaplaincy
Supporting dynamic programs at Tufts University in religious, spiritual, ethical, and cultural life is easy and vital to our work. To donate, please click on the button below. Thank you for your generosity.

Give Today

ABOUT US

The University Chaplaincy is a dynamic hub supporting religious, spiritual, ethical, and cultural life for all members of the Tufts community. We provide pastoral care, support religious and philosophical communities, educate about spiritual and ethical issues in society and the world, and promote multifaith engagement.

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