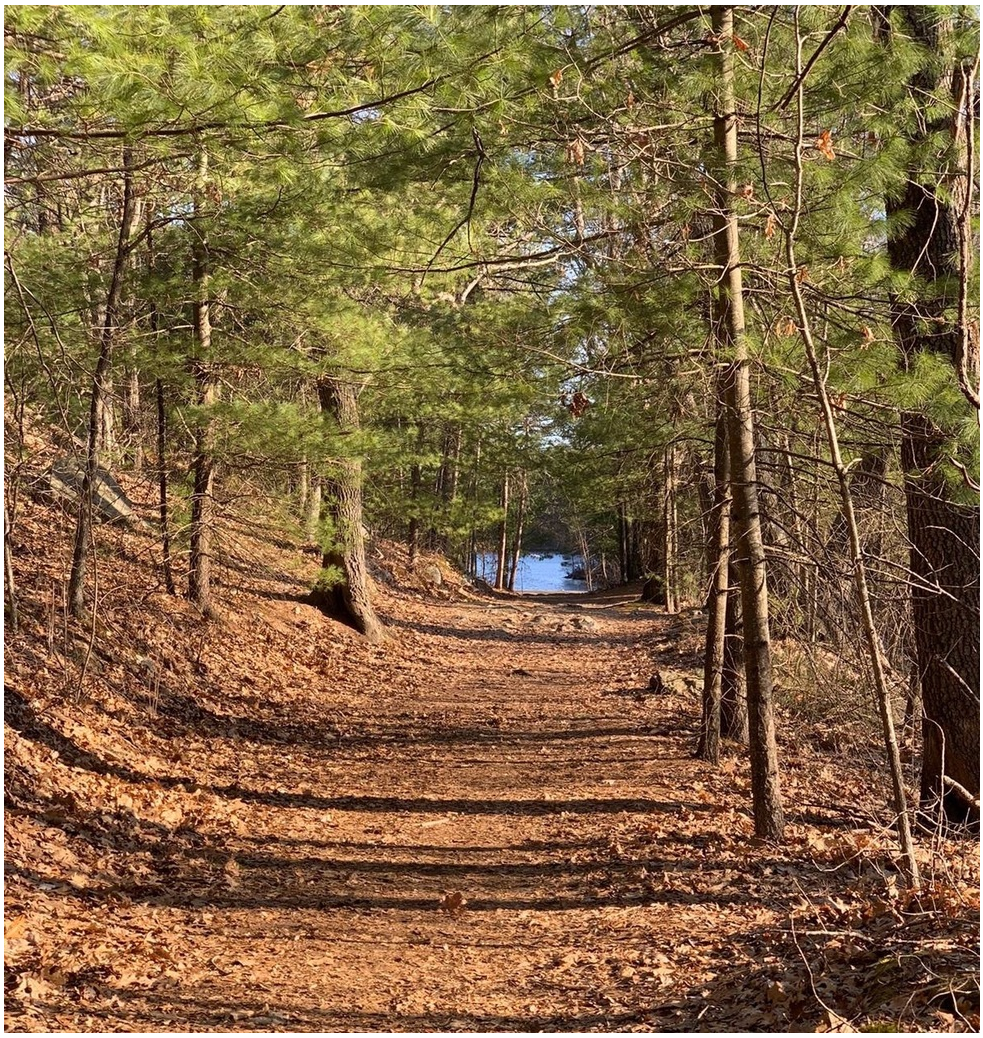
Tufts UNIVERSITY CHAPLAINCY

E-NEWS 5.6.20



A scene from the Middlesex Fells Reservations,
photo by Muslim Chaplain Abdul-Malik Merchant

A note from the Muslim Chaplain

As-Salamu ‘Alaykm wa RahmatuAllahi wa Barakatuhu —
May the peace, mercy, and blessings of God be upon you!

Muslims around the world are about one third into the sacred month of Ramadan. I wish everyone, observing the month or not, *Ramadan Mubarak* (Blessed Ramadan). Ironically, this time is already meant for physical distancing, with the aspiration of drawing closer to God and knowing ourselves better. For the last 1400+ years, we physically and spiritually fast from dawn to dusk, distancing ourselves from food, drink, and intimacy. This year’s unique reality means communal *itfars* (dinner gatherings to break the fast) and nightly prayers together are not possible. Ramadan this year has challenged the Muslim community to embrace these circumstances in new logistical, emotional, and spiritual ways. Personally, it has challenged me to contemplate what “closeness to God” means and

how it is practically attained.

I've noticed, at times, living quarantined can feel like emotional asphyxiation and, perhaps consequently, I have also felt spiritually dull; therefore, getting out of the house and into nature has been extremely emotionally rejuvenating. The Middlesex Fells Reservation and Lynn Woods Reservation have served as my very own retreat centers, masterfully allowing for a peaceful recalibration of my heart and mind. I don't even know exactly why this is—whether it's being in the fresh air, hearing the birds and trees, or being subsumed by something incomparably grander than me—but it is real. Somehow, even twenty minutes in nature inevitably makes me feel healthier and better connected with God.

Imam Ali—son-in-law of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)—famously said, "Whoever knows themselves knows God, and whoever knows God knows themselves." No matter if we are Muslims seeking spiritual awakening and emotional healing or not, I invite us to use this time as an opportunity to become more familiar with ourselves. What are our emotional and intellectual strengths and where are our growth opportunities? Now, because honest introspection is never without difficulty, I am fully aware this invitation is essentially an invitation to be courageous. Nevertheless, despite how we perceive our own capacity for courageousness, I pray we all grow emotionally and spiritually in every possible way. I pray we surface from this current, temporary reality, existentially healthier and more whole. I pray we all have a *Ramadan Mubarak*. Amen!

Imam Abdul-Malik Merchant
Tufts University Muslim Chaplain

Sustaining Practices with the University Chaplaincy

The University Chaplaincy team is offering short videos to the community, featuring a range of ideas for grounding and centering. These videos include practices and invitations to reflect, hosted by a chaplain or University Chaplaincy staff member. Our team hopes the videos will offer sustenance in this time, and speak to people from a range of religious and philosophical worldviews.

Last week, Catholic Chaplain Lynn Cooper shared how letter writing is a practice that keeps her connected to the people she cares about. This week, Humanist Chaplain Walker Bristol will share their practice of intentional presence with nature. Next week, in our final installment, University Chaplain *ad interim* Jenny Peace will share her practice of making small clay pinch pots. To see more offerings as they are posted, follow the University Chaplaincy's Facebook page. To find the full collection visit our website.

Check-In with a Chaplain

Our chaplains are here for you, no matter where you are in the world or how you are doing in this time. Click on a chaplain's name below to schedule a time for conversation, meditation, prayer, or to check in about anything else on your heart or mind. You can go to the contact page on our website to find bios and additional information.

Jennifer Howe Peace, University Chaplain *ad interim*

Rev. Dan Bell, Protestant Chaplain

Rabbi Naftali Brawer, Jewish Chaplain

Walker Bristol, Humanist Chaplain

Lynn Cooper, Catholic Chaplain

Abdul-Malik Merchant, Muslim Chaplain

Venerable Priya Sraman, Buddhist Chaplain

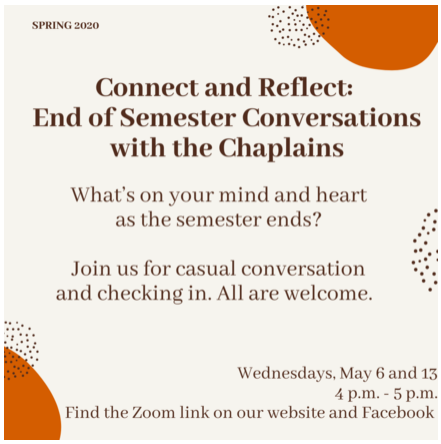
Appreciating Our Seniors

Please respond by May 13

Are you a graduating senior? The University Chaplaincy wants to celebrate your presence in our religious and philosophical communities during your time at Tufts. Please share your name and preferred address (the best place for you to receive mail through the end of May) with Shelby Carpenter at Shelby.Carpenter@tufts.edu by Wednesday, May 13. We look forward to sharing our appreciation with you soon.

Email Shelby

Religious and Philosophical Life Programs



Connect and Reflect: End of Semester Conversations with the Chaplains
Wednesdays, May 6 and May 13, 4 p.m. – 5 p.m. ET

The University Chaplaincy warmly invites you to join us for casual conversation, reflection, and checking in with one another. How are you doing right now? What's on your mind and heart as the semester ends? Just bring yourself, and feel free to drop in at either of the sessions for as long as you would like. We will end with a poem or inspiring quote in the hope of offering you some encouragement. All are welcome, regardless of philosophical or religious background. Hosted by Protestant Chaplain Dan Bell and Program Manager Nora Bond, plus we will have an additional guest chaplain in each session. Nora's canine companion, Samson, may make an appearance as well. Please email Nora at Nora.Bond@tufts.edu if you have any questions or concerns. Join both events via Zoom by clicking here.

Tufts Buddhist Sangha's
Virtual Buddha Day Celebration
Friday May 8, 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. ET

Join us as we celebrate Buddha Day virtually to commemorate the birth, enlightenment, and passing away of the Buddha. The program will include meditation, chanting, and Dharma reflections by students, alumni, and Buddhist monastics. For more information, please contact Buddhist Chaplain Venerable Priya Sraman at Priya.Sraman@tufts.edu.

Join Friday event via Zoom by clicking here.

Check-In and Reflection with Tufts Buddhist Sangha
Friday, May 15, 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. ET

Join Buddhist Chaplain Venerable Priya Sraman for meditation, Dharma discussion, and spiritual reflection. All are welcome. For more information, please contact Buddhist Chaplain Priya Sraman at Priya.Sraman@tufts.edu.

Join Friday event via Zoom by clicking here.

End of the Year Virtual Gathering
Tuesday, May 12, 8:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. ET

Rituals orient us. We need rituals and in this moment when we are scattered. Our hearts are hungry for connection and recognition of what has come to pass. Join us as we mark the end of this year. Hosted by Catholic Chaplain Lynn Cooper, we will give thanks, support one another and send forth those who are graduating. All are welcome. Join event via Zoom by clicking here.

Catholic Chaplaincy on Instagram (@tufts_catholic_chaplaincy)

Check out the Catholic Chaplaincy's Instagram account. This account will be a place to collect and reflect on videos and photos from Catholic Chaplain Lynn Cooper and the broader Catholic Community of Tufts. Follow the link to view the latest on the Instagram account.

Partner Programs

Mindfulness and Yoga Opportunities

Christina Pastan, D91, DG94, director of Mind-Body Wellness at the Tufts School of Dental Medicine, will lead virtual drop-in meditation on Thursdays at 12:30 p.m. ET through May 28. She will lead virtual yoga Tuesdays at 4:30 p.m. ET through April 28. Write to her at Christina.Pastan@tufts.edu to be added to the e-list for information. Please also visit the webpage Tufts Health Promotion and Prevention for more information about its mindfulness sessions and its Student-Athlete Mindfulness Program.

CMHS Virtual Support Group for Graduate Students
Fridays, April 17 through May 8, 2:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. ET

Counseling and Mental Health Services is hosting groups for Tufts graduate students currently living on campus or in the greater Boston area. You can join a small group of other students in four weekly meetings via Zoom. This confidential group aims to help you build connection, get support, and share strategies for self-care and coping in the current challenging times. Facilitated by CMHS Staff Clinicians, Sophie Ricks and Marilyn Downs. For more information or to sign up, please contact Sophie at Sophie.Ricks@tufts.edu or Marilyn at Marilyn.Downs@tufts.edu.

Resources, Scholarships, and Opportunies

Tufts Admissions Hiring Apply by May 15

Tufts Admissions is currently hiring Admissions Fellows for the 2020-2021 academic year. These are paid positions running September through May, and the commitment averages about 10 hours per week. They are hiring both General Admissions Fellows (seniors only) and Engineering Outreach Fellows (senior and junior engineers only). All fellows work together on the same team for the majority of projects.

This position is ideal for students considering the admissions field, or for students interested in how the admissions process works. Previous experience in the Admissions office is a plus but not required. If you have any questions, please email Aidan O'Shea at aidan.oshea@tufts.edu. Applications are due by May 15 and virtual interviews will be conducted in the weeks following. Please visit the job posting on Handshake for more details.

Volunteer Virtually and Locally with Tisch College

Tisch College is supporting the Tufts community response to the COVID19 crisis by training and deploying volunteers virtually and locally. Using the Tufts Civic Impact platform, Tufts students, alumni, parents, and other Tufts affiliates can find and train for volunteer opportunities. You can learn more about how to join here and via this video tutorial. Virtual opportunities include assisting with contact tracing and supporting those who might be homebound, lonely, or recovering. Local opportunities in the Medford/Somerville/Boston area include collecting and donating supplies (in a safe and socially distant manner) to organizations in need. If you have any questions, please email communityrelations@tufts.edu.

COVID-19 Documentation Project

While health and safety is everyone's first priority, the Tufts Digital Collections and Archives (DC&A) have been working to develop a community documentation project. Creating documentation of this historic moment not only provides firsthand accounts of life during a pandemic but can also serve as an emotional outlet for the people living through it. To that end, DC&A invites you to keep a journal or create other documentation of what is happening in your life now: at school, with your family and friends, in the news. They are especially interested in stories about the shift to remote learning, displacement from student housing, impact on student or off-campus jobs and other changes to your daily life.

If you're interested in contributing to the Tufts COVID-19 Pandemic Collection at Digital Collections and Archives, please fill out this webform. Additional details and guidelines for submission are also available on the DC&A website. Any questions can be submitted to archives@tufts.edu.

Upcoming Religious Holidays and Festivals

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.

Ramadan

Ongoing through Saturday, May 23, 2020
Tradition: Islam
The Holy Month of Ramadan is the month of fasting during which Muslims who are physically able do not eat or drink from the first sign of dawn until sunset in honor of the first revelations to the Prophet Muhammad. The evening meal is celebrated with family.

Wesak
Thursday, May 7, 2020
Tradition: Buddhism
The commemoration of Buddha's birth, enlightenment, and parinirvana, celebrated on the day of the full moon of the sixth lunar month in Southeast Asian cultures; in Tibetan culture, Wesak commemorates only the the enlightenment and parinirvana. The dates of this celebration vary significantly among Buddhist cultures and communities.

About the University Chaplaincy Enews

The University Chaplaincy Enews is published weekly by the Tufts University Chaplaincy to promote programs and opportunities related to spirituality, ethics, culture, and social justice. To propose announcements for inclusion please contact the University Chaplaincy at chaplaincy@tufts.edu.

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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