



Tufts

UNIVERSITY CHAPLAINCY

E-NEWS 12.13.23



An Advent wreath, diya, hanukkah, and Our Lady of Guadalupe candles prepared for Pax et Lux 2023

Winter greetings from your University Chaplaincy Team

This December, our University Chaplaincy team offers our annual Winter Greetings to the Tufts community. We look forward to resuming our work and life together in January 2024!

From Elyse Nelson Winger, University Chaplain

Each year, Pax et Lux: A Multifaith Winter Celebration is a marvel of student creativity and commitment. Beginning in September, Interfaith Ambassadors begin to dream about this gathering of peace and light and the stories and communities they want to invite and celebrate. This year, children's and adults' voices filled Goddard Chapel and students and faculty danced to the joyous sound of drums or strings; students and chaplains reflected on the peace and light they experience during special holidays, lighting the hanukkah, Diwali diyas, and Our Lady of Guadalupe candles; a cappella voices resounded during a Muslim Nasheed Medley and a *Dona Nobis Pacem* round; and a candlelight procession to Cabot Hall of Flags ended with good food and community at a dinner co-hosted by the First Gen

Collective. It was all a gorgeous glimpse – yet only a glimpse! – of the myriad expressions of beauty, energy, and joy that emanate from our community. And it helped me recall that so many of the religious and cultural traditions of light and peace that have been passed through the generations originated in times of historical darkness and violence. And the people and communities who looked to the light, who told stories and prayed for freedom and hope in the midst of despair and injustice, are with us *still*. They are calling us to look for and become light for one another—light that shines, exposes, and ultimately overcomes anything that violates anyone’s inherent dignity as a human being. May this season embolden us to do the work of peace-making and justice-seeking in ways that always center the sacred and moral worth of every single person in our Tufts community and beyond, for we were, I believe, created for communion. We were created to be a blessing.

As a winter greeting, I offer a portion of Jan Richardson’s poem, *Blessing in a Time of Violence*:

*...there is none
that can stop it...
none that can keep it
from springing forth
from the mouths of us
who hope,
from the hands of us
who act,
from the hearts of us
who love,
from the feet of us
who will not cease
our stubborn, aching
marching, marching

until this blessing
has spoken
its final word,
until this blessing
has breathed
its benediction
in every place,
in every tongue:

Peace.
Peace.
Peace.*

From Najiba Akbar, Muslim Chaplain

As we enter into the season of winter, I invite you to take time for self-reflection as well as reflection on the natural world around us. Reflecting on ourselves as well as on what is happening around us gives us a chance to re-evaluate our priorities and how they fit with the needs of the moment. I offer you this verse from the Quran, that encourages humanity to constantly reflect on the world around us: "Surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of the night and day are signs for people of understanding" (3:190). My wish for each of you is that you find opportunities to connect with yourself and others and find space to ponder questions of meaning and purpose. Let the rhythm of the season guide you towards opportunities for renewal, rest, warmth, and connection.

From Preeta Banerjee, Hindu Chaplain

As we move into this time of being more intentionally in rest and reflection, I share this quote from one of

my favorite poets and Nobel Prize winner Rabindranath Tagore: "When the heart is hard and parched up, come upon me with a shower of mercy. When grace is lost from life, come with a burst of song. When tumultuous work raises its din on all sides shutting me out from beyond, come to me, my lord of silence, with thy peace and rest. When my beggarly heart sits crouched, shut up in a corner, break open the door, my king, and come with the ceremony of a king. When desire blinds the mind with delusion and dust, O thou holy one, thou wakeful, come with thy light and thy thunder." Best wishes to you and yours for the holiday season.

From Daniel Bell, Protestant Chaplain

In my tradition, one of the sacred texts appointed for Christmas speaks of Jesus' birth in this way: "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness doesn't extinguish the light" (John 1:5, CEB). Amid the great suffering in our world today, which threatens to snuff out the flame within us, I pray that you find brightness of soul that keeps you shining with the undying light of holy love and newborn life.

From Nora Bond, Associate Director for Programs

The chill stark of winter is when I am most reminded that non-existence is the norm for me as an earthly creature. Simply, it's much more likely that I don't exist – right here! right now! – than that I do. Bare trees and biting cold remind me of that. Witnessing death, violence, and oppression make my response of that fact urgent – asking, but you are here, what could you make of this? For winter is, in fact, filled with possibility, and you, me, we, are too.

From Naftali Brawer, Jewish Chaplain

As the fall semester draws to a close and you get ready to journey home or wherever else your circumstances take you during the winter break, I want to share a passage from the Hebrew Bible that offers comfort and security during transitional moments in life: He will order his angels to guard you wherever you go. (Psalm 91:11) May the winter break rejuvenate you, body, mind and spirit!

From Lynn Cooper, Catholic Chaplain and Associate Director, University Chaplaincy

On Wednesday night, the second night of reading period, the Interfaith Student Council hosted a Decompression Session at Goddard Chapel. It was a restorative evening of mellow music, ice cream, an enormous friendly dog, friendship bracelets, bedazzled snowflakes, letter-writing, Lego-building, and an extended lounge on meditation cushions. What a gift to be with our beloved students as they took deep breaths and truly sank into playful time together. In the coming weeks, I wish you the spirit of this wise and warm gathering. May you be blessed with tasty food, creativity, rest, joy, and rich conversation with friends old and new.

From Anthony Cruz Pantojas, Humanist Chaplain

Winter break is here! Our bodies and psyche transition into processes of adaptation, and maybe even moments of discomfort during this cold and dark season. May these times aid in the intimate exploring, cultivating, listening, and having the compassion to let yourself *be*.

From Frances Lee, Harvard Divinity School Chaplaincy Intern

"Bend and you will be whole. Curl and you will be straight. Keep empty and you will be filled." These lines are from verse 22 in the Chinese classical text Tao Te Ching. My wish for you is to cease your striving during this season of quiet and rest. Even though it may seem counterintuitive, I invite you to allow yourself to simply be and notice what arises. Have a superbly spacious winter break!

From Ji Hyang Padma, Buddhist Chaplain

May you enjoy every blessing of this season of light—and this excerpt from a traditional Theravadan blessing:

By the power of every moment of your goodness,

may your heart's wishes be soon fulfilled

as completely shining as the bright full moon,

as magically as by a wish-fulfilling gem.

By the power of every moment of your goodness,

may all dangers be averted and all disease be gone.

May no obstacle come across your way.

Enjoy the break, Jumbos!

**Scroll to the bottom of this issue to see the photo of the
month for December!**

Upcoming Signature Programs

MLK

WIN A
CASH
PRIZE!

STUDENT VOICES AWARD

What does it mean to you to be
“caught up in an inescapable network
of mutuality, tied in a single garment
of destiny”?

OPENS
24 OCTOBER



CLOSES
18 JANUARY

Accepting creative submission for the annual Rev. Dr.
Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration on Wednesday,
January 31. Find more at
go.tufts.edu/studentvoicesmlk



Jonathan M. Tisch
College of Civic Life



University
Chaplaincy



AFRICANA
CENTER



Office of the Vice Provost for
Institutional Inclusive Excellence

MLK Student Voices Award

Submissions now open through January 18, 2024

The annual Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration offers the Tufts community a time to participate in the ongoing university commitment to racial justice by honoring what we learn from the past, listening deeply to current voices of change, imagining together for Tufts, and celebrating a future of Beloved Community. Each year, we invite student voices - through essays, poems, spoken word, songs, art, or performances - to be a part of our community celebration.

Interested undergraduates and graduate students are invited to submit creative responses for this year's Student Voices Award as part of the annual Celebration coordinated by the Africana Center, Tisch College of Civic Life, and the University Chaplaincy. For the 2024 Celebration, we ask submitters to respond to an excerpt from the "Letter from Birmingham Jail," authored by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1963:

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. Never again can we afford to live with the narrow, provincial "outside agitator" idea."

For the 2024 Award, we are asking submitters to respond to the questions: What does it mean to you to be “caught up in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny”? What does that mean to you in this time of your life? Where does it show up for you at Tufts? What value does it have for our life together?

Individual and group submissions are welcome. Submissions could uplift a place, relationship, program, or gathering on our campuses that models mutuality and a recognition of the "single garment of destiny." Submissions are due on Thursday, January 18 at 11:59 p.m. ET.

There will be a cash prize for each winner, and one of the winners will be invited to present at the Celebration on Wednesday, January 31, 2024. [Find more information on the University Chaplaincy website.](#)

Find out more about the Student Voices Award

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 website](#). If you have any questions, or would like to connect about convening a new gathering, please [reach out to the University Chaplaincy](#).

Please note weekly gatherings and events are not scheduled when classes are not in session.



Read by The River: Book Drive

Donate this week, Hillel and Tisch Library

Hillel is collecting children's book donations for Read by the River, a children's literacy carnival! We work to promote literacy in elementary school students by organizing an annual reading-themed carnival that welcomes hundreds of children and their families from our local community. If you have old

Partner Programs



Cherish Chinatown Restaurant Challenge

Ends Friday, December 15, Boston's Chinatown

From November 15 through December 15, join Tufts University students, staff, and faculty in supporting small businesses in Boston's Chinatown by participating in the third [annual Cherish Chinatown Restaurant Challenge](#)! To enter the challenge, visit a locally owned Chinatown restaurant or bakery. After you make a purchase, enter into the [challenge raffle](#). Each week, four raffle winners will be drawn to win \$25 gift cards to Chinatown restaurants. At the end of the challenge, two grand prize winners will be selected: one will receive a \$250 gift card to Shojo, and another will receive \$250 to use at a Chinatown restaurant of choice for a Tufts club, class, or office gathering. To enter the raffle, complete [this short form](#) each time you make a purchase. Check out the [Tufts Now article on the challenge here](#)! Questions about the challenge? Email [Community Relations](#) with any questions



Discounted MBTA Passes

Order by Monday, January 8, 2024

The Green Line Extension (GLX) project provides expanded ridership service to Somerville, Cambridge, and Medford by extending the existing MBTA Green Line service northwest of Lechmere Station. Consider saving money and the environment by signing up for a discounted MBTA pass. Discount passes are available to all Tufts students. Medford/Somerville students receive an 11% discount. [Learn more and enroll here.](#)

December 2023 Photo of the Month



This month we offer a huge shoutout to the four planners of Pax et Lux! These students worked together this entire fall semester to plan the evening of story-telling, song and dance, and authentic connection. Thank you again to all our performers and guests!

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](#).

Advent

Sun., Dec. 3 - Sun., Dec 24., 2023

Tradition: Christianity-Protestant, Christianity-Roman Catholic

Period of four weeks in which Christians prepare for Christmas and meditate on the end of all time. In Western churches, the first Sunday of Advent marks the beginning of the Christian liturgical year.

Hanukkah

Thu., Dec. 7 - Fri., Dec. 13., 2023

Tradition: Judaism

The Feast of Lights (Feast of Dedication) is celebrated for eight days to commemorate the rededication of the Temple following the Jews' victory over occupying forces in 165 BCE, which re-established for a time their religious and political freedom.

Yule

Thu., Dec. 21., 2023

Tradition: Wicca/Paganism

Winter Solstice, celebrating the longest night and the blessings of darkness as well as the rebirth of the sun god. Begins at sundown.

Christmas

Mon., Dec. 25, 2023

Tradition: Christianity-Protestant, Christianity-Roman Catholic

Celebrates the anniversary of the birth of Jesus.

Feast of the Nativity of Jesus Christ

Mon., Dec. 25, 2023

Tradition: Christianity-Orthodox

Celebrates the anniversary of the birth (nativity) of Jesus. December 25 is the date of this observance for Roman Catholic, Protestant, and many Orthodox Christian churches.

Death of Prophet Zarathustra

Tue., Dec. 26, 2023

Tradition: Zoroastrianism

The anniversary of the death of the founder of the Zoroastrian faith.

Ghambar Maidyarem

Sun., Dec. 31, 2023 – Thu., Jan. 4, 2024

Tradition: Zoroastrianism

Celebrates the creation of animals. Zoroastrians are encouraged to remember their practice of the equitable sharing of food during this observance.

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.

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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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