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Goddard Chapel in the snow

A Winter Greeting from the University Chaplain

Dear Tufts community and friends,

Greetings to you during this multifaith season of light when Advent wreaths, Hanukkah menorahs, Yule logs, Christmas trees, and Kwanzaa kinaras all shine. In their distinctive religious and/or cultural ways, they illuminate shared values of love and belonging. They proclaim hope that new life and liberation are at hand. And they usher in stories about the resilience and creativity of humanity to repair our hurting world.

These vessels of light join others that glow and inspire at different times of the year: Diwali diyas, Ramadan lanterns, Buddhist sky lantern and light festivals. These, too, illuminate love, proclaim hope, and usher in stories both ancient and new.

I am grateful for this and all seasons of light that call on us to care for the earth and to love our neighbors.
As candles are lit, songs sung, prayers offered, gifts exchanged, and memories shared this season, may fervor for a better world abide among us. May we trust that we have light within us to shine and share. May we together seek both justice and joy!

Wherever you are on this blessed earth in this season, I hope that you will also claim moments for reflection and connection. I offer these simple words, adapted by Ray Makeever from a traditional Celtic text, as you make your way into a new calendar year.

Deep peace of the running waves,
Deep peace of the flowing air,
Deep peace of the shining stars to you,
Deep peace of the quiet earth.

Peace (and perseverance!) be with you all.

Rev. Elyse Nelson Winger
University Chaplain

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Greetings from the whole University Chaplaincy Team

The entire University Chaplaincy team offers, in their own words, their greetings and wishes for your winter season.

From Preeta Banerjee, Hindu Advisor: *I hope these months are a time of replenishment and renewal. In the words of my guru Anandamayi Ma: "Reality is beyond speech and thought. Only that which can be expressed in words is being said. But what cannot be put into language is indeed That which IS."*

From Rev. Dan Bell, Protestant Chaplain: *May the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you and scatter the darkness from before your path; and may the New Year bring blessings of Peace and Light to your life, no matter what the future holds.*

From Nora Bond, Program Manager: *In this reflective season, I wish you the gift of wonder. On the evening of December 21, Saturn and Jupiter will appear to be very close in the sky – a celestial event called "The Great Conjunction" that has not occurred at night in nearly 800 years. Though they are technically still hundreds of millions of miles apart, to us, they will appear to be nearly touching. I hope you claim moments to notice the other marvels around you, including your fellow humans, your home planet, and your simple aliveness in this moment.*

From Rabbi Naftali Brawer, Jewish Chaplain: *Wishing all a joyful, peaceful and luminous holiday break. May the new year bring fresh blessings and opportunities to heal our broken world.*

From Walker Bristol, Humanist Chaplain: *The Winter Solstice, the darkest day of the year on December 21st, offers us a moment to look inward and celebrate darkness, while forward looking towards the seasons of light. May your Solstice be filled with reflection and rejuvenation, with hope and health, and with an appreciation for all things in our lives that darkness makes possible: focus, peace, and rest.*

From Shelby Carpenter, Program Coordinator: *Winter break is here! I hope you all find a moment of rest, a space for restoration, and a community to be with this winter break, as it is well-deserved and much needed this year.*

From Lynn Cooper, Catholic Chaplain: *This Advent and Christmas, may the joy of Jesus' coming be a beacon of light — inside and out. And may you be blessed with hope and renewal in this new year. Peace.*

From Thomas B. Dawkins, Music Director and Organist*: May the music, creativity, and words that come from your heart go to the hearts of all that hear, see, or read them.* (Adapted from an inscription that Beethoven wrote in the manuscript of his Missa Solemnis)

From Azmera Hammouri-Davis, Africana Spirituality Chaplain:

Habari Ghani,
With the holiday season before us, I want to wish everyone a warm, restful and restorative winter break. May this time with loved ones be filled with reflection and introspection, and in the great African American tradition of Kwanzaa, Umoja - Unity. Peace and blessings to all.

From Imam Abdul-Malik Merchant, Muslim Chaplain: *In the Quran God says, "God is the Light of the heavens and earth. His Light is like this: there is a niche, and in it a lamp, the lamp inside a glass, a glass like a glittering star, fueled from a blessed olive tree from neither east nor west, whose oil almost gives light even when no fire touches it - light upon light - God guides whoever He will to his Light; God draws such comparisons for people; God has full knowledge of everything," (23:35). May God's light bless you and your loved ones as we enter into a new year. May your next year be full of openings of goodness, ease, and well-being!*

From The Venerable Priya Sraman, Buddhist Chaplain: *Wishing everyone a time of peace, resilience, strength and hope as we enter a new time in the new year. May we all be able to protect ourselves and care for each other.*

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Celebrating 115 Years at Tufts: Giving Tuesday 2020 with the University Chaplaincy

Thank you for Giving: Giving Tuesday 2020

The University Chaplaincy sincerely thanks all of the students, faculty, staff, alumni, families, and friends who supported our multifaith community on Giving Tuesday 2020. For our second campaign, we received over $4,100 in donations from more than 50 gifts. These generous gifts are a sign of the deep and meaningful impact of our spiritual life programs and communities. We are heartened and grateful for all those who could help us celebrate 115 years of the University Chaplaincy's mission in supporting student life at Tufts during this year's Giving Tuesday.

If you did not have a chance to give and you would like to include the University Chaplaincy and Tufts spiritual life in your year-end charitable giving, please contact any of our staff or follow this link to give on our website.

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The academic quad on the Medford campus, in the snow

Offerings and Updates

A Guided Self-Meditation from our Buddhist Chaplain
If you are seeking a centering practice this month, Tufts Buddhist Chaplain, The Venerable Priya Sraman, offers a short guide "Offering Ourselves the Gift of Mindful Attention," which you can access by following that link. The simple practice invites you to pause, appreciate, and wish wellness to the people and beings you care about. It is a lovely addition to a reflective winter day any time this month.

An Original Piece by Music Director and Organist Thomas B. Dawkins
Please enjoy Winter Meditation (Cold Night), an original piece by Tufts University Chaplaincy Music Director and Organist, Thomas B. Dawkins. It is accompanied by images of the Tufts Medford/Somerville campus in the snow. We offer this, along with our warmest wishes to the entire Tufts community, as the year 2020 closes.

Virtual Christmas Party, Co-Hosted by the Catholic Chaplaincy and Protestant Chaplaincy
Friday, December 18, 6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m ET

While we cannot be together in person this year, we will still gather (virtually) to celebrate this rich and meaningful season. We will break bread, give thanks, be merry, and share stories with one another. All are welcome. Please think of one or two traditions in your family or in your hometown that truly bring you joy. We know that many of these traditions might not be happening in full swing this year, but nevertheless, we hope you bring them with you. There is no obligation to share the tradition, we just want to offer this evening as a chance to pause, take stock of those meaningful and lifegiving elements of the season, and to learn from one another. We will be sending out GrubHub gift cards so each of you can order dinner to be delivered (fill out this Google form to receive a gift card). If you are not in the United States please let us know; we would still love to figure out a way to send you dinner that night. For any questions, please email Catholic Chaplain Lynn Cooper or Protestant Chaplain Dan Bell. You

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The University Chaplaincy will be closed from Thursday, December 24 - Sunday, January 3, in accordance with the University's winter closure. We wish you rest and safety in this season.

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