Tufts UNIVERSITY CHAPLAINCY

E-NEWS 2.3.21

Remember that You are Dust:
A Note from our Protestant Chaplain

In Western Christianity, Ash Wednesday is one of the most dramatic liturgical events of the church year. Worshippers step forward during the service to receive ashes and hear the words, “Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return.” It marks the beginning of Lent, a season of self-examination, fasting, and good works leading up to Easter, when Jesus Christ is acknowledged as the savior. In my Episcopal tradition, a prayer describes the ashes as “a sign of our mortality and penitence.” There is a new invitation to reflect this year as Ash Wednesday approaches on February 17.

This year many people, including members of our Christian communities at Tufts, will need to forego this powerful ancient sign. We are not physically offering the imposition of ashes out of regard for everyone’s health and safety. Instead, I am drawn to consider what other signs and symbols we may use instead. For those who identify with other philosophical or religious traditions, this also can be a useful theme to reflect on. We can all ask: what is it in my tradition, experience, or in nature, that reminds me that I am dust and to dust I shall return? What is it that keeps me humble, grounded, and connected to this idea?

Our Catholic Chaplain suggested to me recently that the masks we don daily are a ripe reminder. Masks are meant to protect us and others; yet they also stand as an ever-present symbol of our fragile existence on this earth. The pandemic reminds us of the fragility of our bodies. It has also thrown into clear relief the grave inequities in this country that cause some bodies to be made more vulnerable to disease and death than others, especially if they are Black, Latinx, Indigenous, disabled, or chronically ill.

Remembering that we will die someday is not enough. All of our traditions call us to make good use of the time we have on this earth to turn from wrong and to do right—seeking justice, overcoming oppression, and working together to create a more loving and compassionate world. This week, I wonder what practice, symbol, or reminder may help you in fulfilling that sacred commitment.

I wish you a meaningful beginning to the semester, and to Black History and Black Legacy Month.

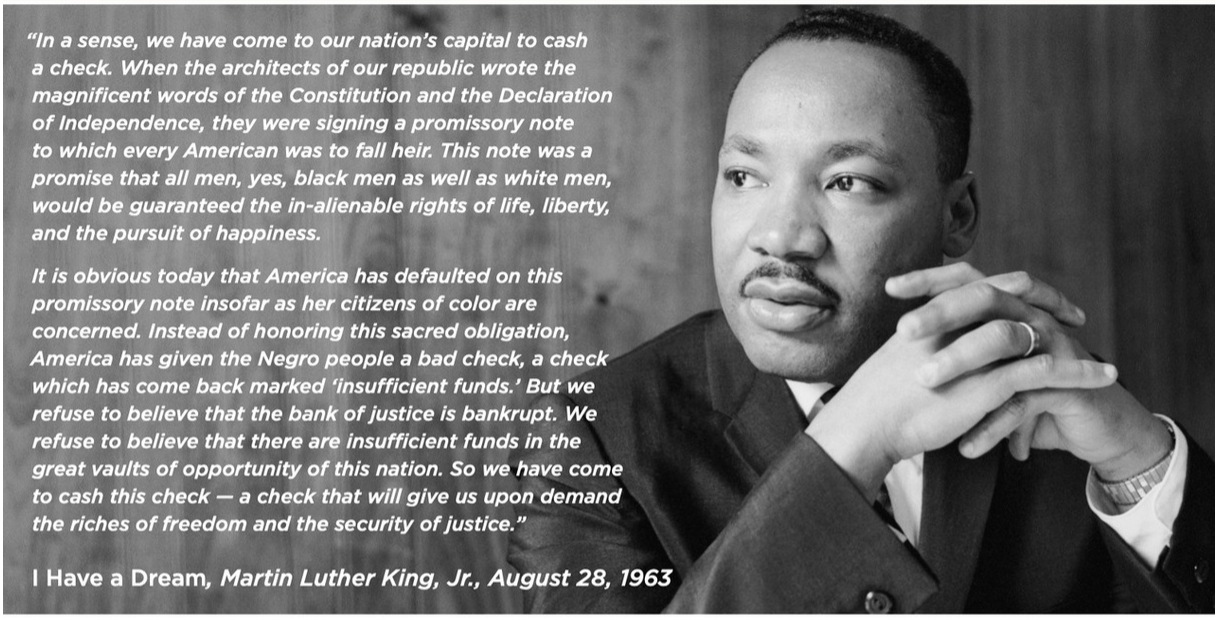
All best,

Rev. Dan Bell
Protestant Chaplain

Tufts University Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Symposium

CASHING OUR PROMISSORY NOTE

Race, Justice, and Reparation



"In a sense, we have come to our nation's capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the in-alienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked 'insufficient funds.' But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. So we have come to cash this check — a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice."

I Have a Dream, *Martin Luther King, Jr., August 28, 1963*

Wednesday, February 3, 2021, 5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. ET

Find registration information for the Symposium and pre-Symposium lunch at **go.tufts.edu/mlk2021**

Please join us **Wednesday, January 27** for a virtual pre-Symposium lunch to discuss our theme

Dr. Jelani Cobb

5:00 p.m. Welcome and Opening Remarks
Tufts Students • Katrina Moore, Director of Africana Center • Dr. Anthony Monaco, Tufts University President • Dr. Kerri K. Greenidge, Interim Director, Center for the Study of Race and Democracy • Dr. H. Adlai Murdoch, Director of Africana Studies

5:15 p.m. Address by Dr. Jelani Cobb
Ira A. Lipman Professor of Journalism at Columbia University, staff writer at the New Yorker Magazine, and prominently featured in the documentary *13th*

5:45 p.m. Q&A Session
Moderated by Dr. Kerri K. Greenidge

6:15 p.m. Concluding Remarks
Reverend Elyse Nelson Winger, University Chaplain

6:20 p.m. Closing Song
Harrison Clark, A22, S-Factor A Cappella Group

This event is part of the Africana Studies Distinguished Lecture Series at Tufts University. This event is sponsored by the Office of the President, the Office of the Provost, the Chief Diversity Officers, the Africana Center at Tufts University, Africana Studies, the Center for the Study of Race and Democracy: Department of Studies in Race, Colonialism and Diaspora, the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tisch College of Civic Life, and the University Chaplaincy.

Tufts

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Symposium
Wednesday, February 3, 5:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. ET; Registration required

Author, historian, and journalist Jelani Cobb, will give the keynote address at this year's symposium. The 2021 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Symposium will focus on the theme of "Cashing Our Promissory Note: Race, Justice, and Reparation," based on the powerful excerpt from the Rev. Dr. King's speech at the March on Washington in 1963. Cobb is the Ira A. Lipman Professor of Journalism at Columbia University as well as staff writer for The New Yorker, where he writes about race, politics, and injustice. He is well-known for his prominently featured role in Ana Duvernay's Oscar-nominated documentary "13th" about the mass incarceration of Black Americans. You can find more information and register for the event anytime by following this link.

Post-Symposium Lunch: What does 'Cashing our Promissory Note' mean to you now?
Wednesday, February 10, 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. ET; Registration required

Please join a virtual lunch on Wednesday, February 10 to continue the conversation about the theme of this year's Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Symposium "Cashing Our Promissory Note: Race, Justice, and Reparation." This event is hosted by the Africana Center, the Division for Student Diversity and Inclusion, Tisch College for Civic Engagement, and the University Chaplaincy. The lunch will include an opening reflection on Dr. Jelani Cobb's keynote address and facilitated discussion groups. Please register by 12:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 9 to receive a GrubHub coupon (please note: only Tufts students, faculty, and staff are eligible to receive the coupon). You will receive Zoom information and your lunch coupon on Tuesday, February 9. Please email University Chaplaincy program manager Nora Bond with any questions.

Register for MLK Events

Religious and Philosophical Life Programs

You can find more information about our many weekly gatherings and student group meetings on our website. You can also find the Zoom links for all events and gatherings there. In this section, we feature a weekly gathering hosted by one of our chaplaincies or religious and philosophical student groups here this semester, and highlight events and offerings from our chaplaincies. You can always reach out to the chaplain listed for more information, or find details on our website. If you have an idea for how University Chaplaincy programming can better serve you, please contact program manager Nora Bond.

Community Of Faith Exploration and Engagement (COFFEE) is Tufts' interfaith student coalition. Every other week, COFFEE holds group discussions on topics ranging from family traditions to sexuality to ghosts. Students share and compare how their unique religious points of view shapes their relationship to the topic. We open with check-ins and students usually bring a warm drink or light a candle to begin what often feels like a conversation among friends. COFFEE meetings are often small, relaxed, in-depth conversations, and are an opportunity to explore what we have in common with those who come from different faiths. COFFEE is having our general interest meeting on Monday, February 8 at 8 p.m. ET. You can find the Facebook event here. Students of all backgrounds, beliefs, and faiths (or lack thereof!) are welcome to share their unique points of view as we learn from each other and form interfaith community.

See more weekly gatherings

Ecumenical Ash Wednesday Services: Liturgy of the Word
Wednesday, February 17, 5:00 p.m. ET

Join Protestant Chaplain Dan Bell and Catholic Chaplain Lynn Cooper in virtual services for Ash Wednesday, as we gather to remember, once again, our finite lives and God's infinite love. Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent, a time when we honor the ancient call to be rooted in our truest selves through prayer, reflection, and acts of self-discipline. It is a call to journey through the wilderness as we move towards the Cross and the Empty Tomb. This year, we will not be imposing ashes, but turning our hearts and imaginations towards God and one another, preparing ourselves for Lent, the holy season of renewal and repentance. Music provided by Tom Dawkins, Music Director. Please contact Catholic Chaplain Lynn Cooper or Protestant Chaplain Dan Bell with any questions.

Something Greater than Ourselves Program, hosted the Humanist Chaplaincy

Throughout Spring Semester 2021

How do you find and describe your sense of meaning in life? Is it a commitment to justice, an awe before nature, or a unique experience of God? This new series will share readings, videos, reflection tools, and discussion groups around talking about "something greater than oneself" (abbreviated "sgto"). Those interested can sign up anytime through the semester and have access to all the program's resources in a shared Box drive. Join the new e-list organized by Humanist Chaplain Walker Bristol to hear weekly announcements, resources, and opportunities for connection around finding something greater than oneself. Join the sgto e-list via the Tufts e-list service here. Feel free to e-mail Walker Bristol with any questions.

Exploring the Spirituals: PSA Lenten Book Club
Details forthcoming; see updates on meeting time on our website

You are warmly invited to join members of the Protestant Students Association, Protestant Chaplain Dan Bell and University Chaplaincy Music Director Tom Dawkins for this year's Lenten book club. We will be exploring the rich tradition of African American spirituals and how they provide a powerful lens through which to view the Bible and our lives today. You can learn more about African American spirituals here. If you would like to receive more information as it becomes available, please contact Protestant Chaplain Dan Bell.

JLF Sex, Love, and Romance Class with Hillel
Spring 2021 Semester

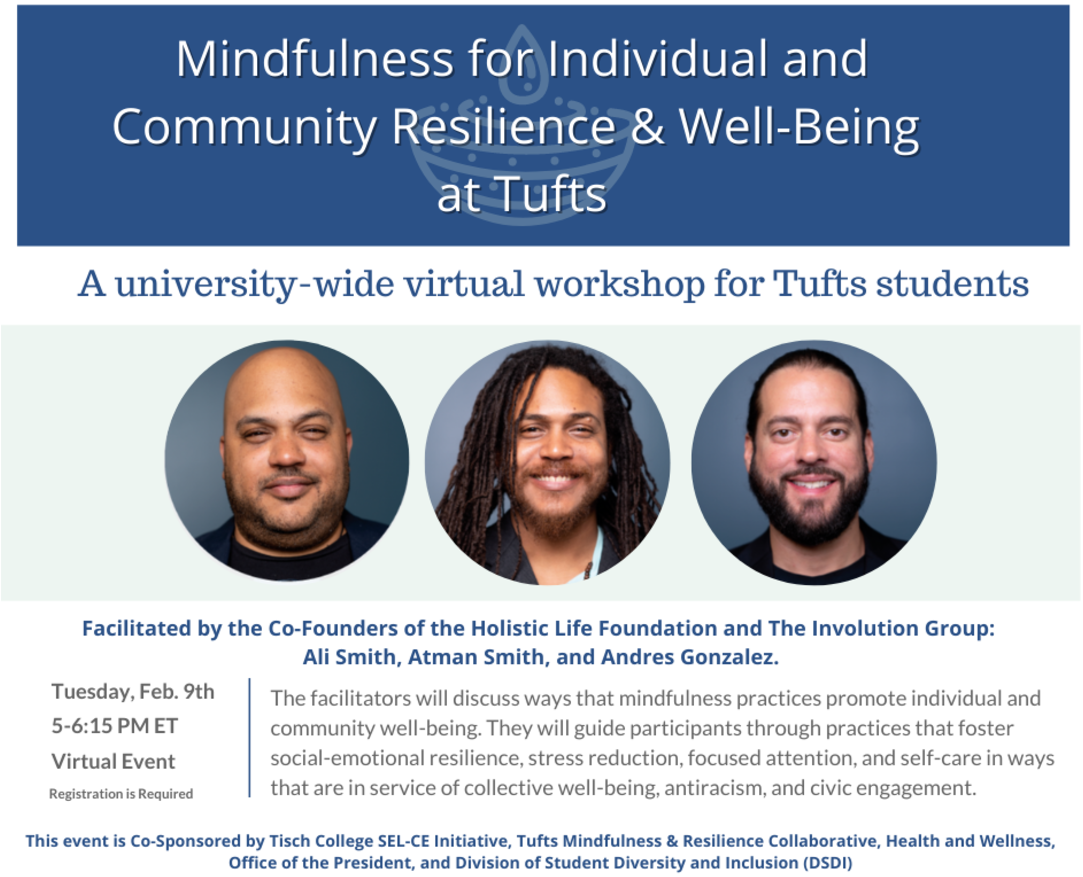
This is a 10-week experiential, conversational seminar for students looking to deepen their understanding of Judaism on their own terms. We're interested in asking big questions. Like, Does "the one" exist? What is intimacy? Where do queer people show up in Jewish tradition? What do healthy relationships look like? We make no claims about the "right" way to practice or not to practice Judaism. Our job is to help you explore the tradition in a safe space, and find your own place, on your terms, Jewishly. Learn more and apply here.

"Friendship is intimate and ordinary. It can also be revolutionary."
-Dana Robert

Participate in Spring Semester Be-Friend Program
Sign ups are now open

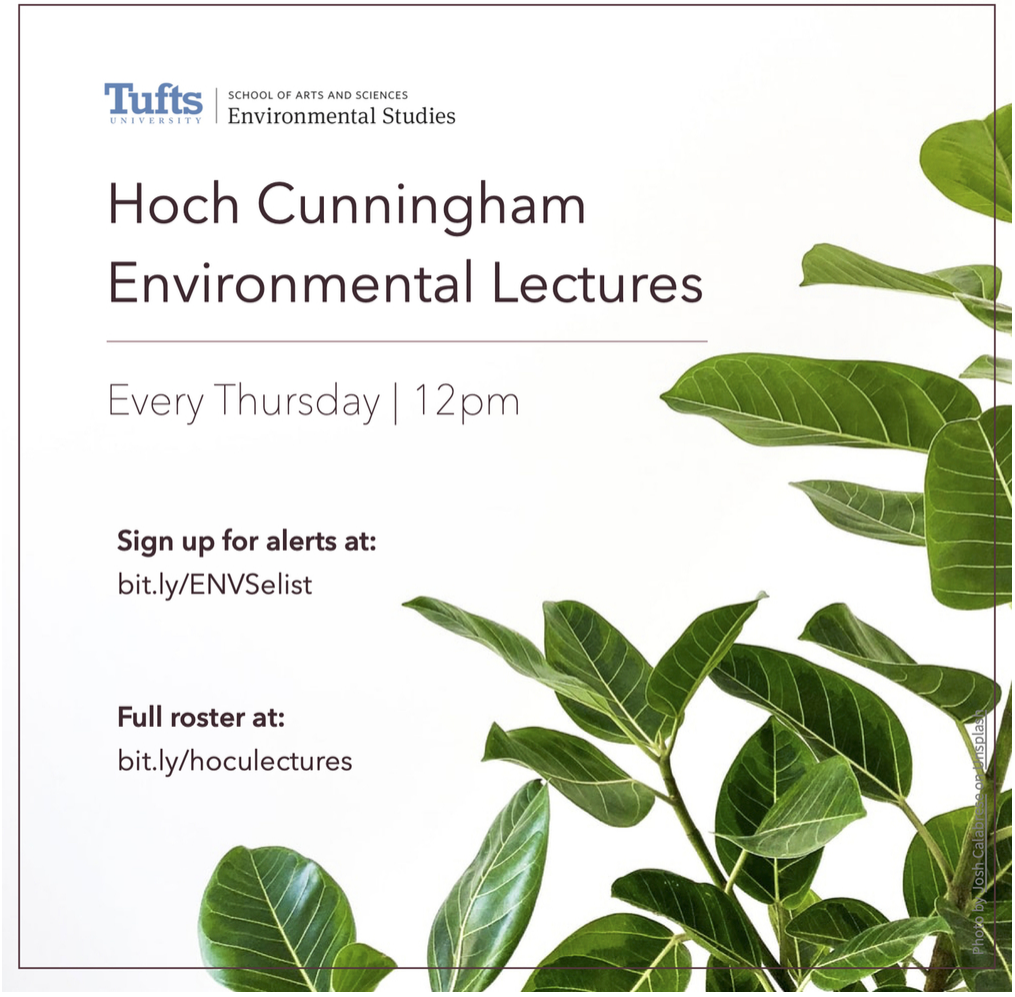
We are thrilled to, once again, be rolling out Be-Friend, our interfaith friendship program. This 9-week project is designed for participants to go deep and talk about the things that matter like our values, our sense of purpose, and our questions about life. You will learn the skill of active listening while experimenting with shared spiritual practices from different religious and philosophical traditions. Participants will be paired in dyads and will commit to spending an hour together each week as well as an extra half hour in private reflection. Several of our chaplains have contributed to the program offering a diverse array of spiritual practices, including nature walks, meditation exercises, listening to music, deep reading—of poetry, art, the world, our lives and one another. All Tufts students, staff, and faculty, are welcome to apply (please note: students will be paired with fellow students, and faculty and staff will be paired together). Contact Catholic Chaplain Lynn Cooper if you have any questions, or want to sign up. There is no application deadline.

Partner Programs



Mindfulness for Individual and Community Resilience & Well-Being at Tufts
Tuesday, February 9, 5:00 p.m. - 6:15 p.m. ET

This University-wide virtual workshop is open to the entire Tufts community. During this session, facilitators will discuss ways that mindfulness practices promote individual and community well-being. They will guide participants through practices that foster social-emotional resilience, stress reduction, focused attention, and self-care in ways that are in service of collective well-being, antiracism, and civic engagement. The session will be facilitated by the co-founders of the Holistic Life Foundation and The Innovation Group, Ali Smith, Atman Smith, and Andres Gonzalez. This workshop is co-sponsored by the Tisch College SEL-CE Initiative, Tufts Mindfulness & Resilience Collaborative, Tufts Health and Wellness, the Office of the President, and the Division of Student Diversity and Inclusion (DSDI). Registration is required. To register please follow this link.



Hoch Cunningham Environmental Lectures
Every Thursday throughout the spring semester, 12 p.m. - 1 p.m. ET

The Hoch Cunningham Environmental Lecture Series this spring will feature artists, policy makers, scientists, scholars, activists and more. This series is hosted by the Environmental Studies Program at Tufts. Speakers will be joining from local communities and around the world. This series is open to the general public, and topics this semester include, "The Global Environmental Justice Atlas: a Tool for Research and Activism" and "What Do We Mean When We Say 'Justice'?: Environmental and Climate Decision-making at a Crossroads." Please sign up to receive information about the lectures here.

Here Together: For Students in Covid Isolation or Quarantine
Fridays. February 12 through April 30 3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. ET

Drop by Friday afternoons for an informal discussion about ways to manage during Covid isolation and quarantine with Counseling and Mental Health Services. Come share connection and conversation about taking care of your mental health during this time. Learn fun and creative ways to expand your well-being toolkit. RSVP or inquiries, please contact Staff Clinician Jennifer Granquist.

Resources, Scholarships, and Opportunities

Anti-Racism as a Spiritual Practice Series: Season Two
New episodes weekly on Wednesdays

Religion News Service (RNS) announces the launch of the second season of Anti-Racism as a Spiritual Practice with Simran Jeet Singh. The first season, titled Becoming Less Racist: Lighting the Path to Anti-Racism, launched in June 2020 given the protests against police brutality and racial discrimination in the U.S. All episodes from season one can be found here. Speakers in season two will be probing the intersection of faith, justice, and politics, and trying to both ask and answer the hard questions. All full-length interviews will be made available on RNS's website and YouTube page.

Grace Year Fellowship Opportunity
Applications due March 31

Grace Year Fellowship is looking for college graduates interested in a ten month, fully funded fellowship program. Fellows spend a year living in intentional community. Participants spend 32 hours per week serving the community through local non-profits that focus on immigration, food justice, environmental issues, affordable housing etc. They participate in weekly seminars reflecting on their experiences, engaging in spiritual practices, exploring their vocation, learning about justice issues and leadership. Grace Year encourages people of diverse faith backgrounds to apply, as well as women, people of color, LGBTQ people and undocumented students. They are currently accepting applications for next year's cohort. You can find more information on the website. Applications are due March 31, 2021 and you can apply online.

Surat: Sikh Professional Conference
Registration now open

Registration for Surat 2021 is now open. Hosted by the Surat Initiative, this is an opportunity to network and engage with inspiring youth and young professionals from across the world. The theme of this year's conference is Planting the Seed: Building Sangat and Solidarity Across Distance. Participants willl reflect on the lessons learned over the past year, including how to build and support social movements like Black lives matter, the *kisaan* movement in India, and political movements in the United States. Using these lessons, and centering principles of *Chardi Kala*, *Seva*, and *Sangat*, participants will discuss concrete steps for movement-building around global issues in a post-pandemic world. The conference will take place virtually with a Welcome Night on February 12 from 8:00 p.m. –10:00 p.m. ET, and guest speakers, interactive workshops, and networking opportunities on February 13 from 12:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. ET. Throughout the years, Surat has welcomed attendees from over forty states, and over ten countries. Our alumni routinely network for career and academic advice. Be sure to follow us on Facebook and Instagram for updates. Feel free to email Surat Initiative with any questions, and you can register here.

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.

Nirvana Day (for some, February 8)
Monday, 2.15.2021

Tradition: Buddhism
In the northern tradition, it commemorates the parinirvana of the Buddha. In cultures of Southeast Asia, the buddha's parinirvana is remembered during Wesak. The dates and names of Buddhist celebrations vary significantly among cultures and communities.

Vasant Panchami (Sri Pancami)
Tuesday, 2.16.2021
Tradition: Hinduism
One of many festivals to honor the advent of spring, this day is celebrated particularly in North India, where it is associated with Saraswati, the goddess of learning; however, it also retains connection with the goddess Lakshmi.

Ash Wednesday
Wednesday, 2.17.2021
Tradition: Christianity-Protestant, Christianity-Roman Catholic
A special day of repentance observed by Protestant and Roman Catholic Christians to mark the beginning of Lent, the 40-day period (excluding Sundays) of prayer, repentance, and self-denial preceding Easter. The name derives from the practice of marking of the faithful with ashes to signify penitence.

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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