

UNIVERSITY CHAPLAINCY

2024-2025 newsletter



Illumination Ceremony for the Class of 2028



Baccalaureate Ceremony for the Class of 2024

Dear Tufts community and friends,

Welcome to the University Chaplaincy! We are delighted to have you here and extend a warm invitation to explore the heart of our diverse spiritual, religious, and philosophical community at Tufts. Our team of chaplains, dedicated staff, and student leaders is passionate about fostering a space where everyone can connect, reflect, and grow. We invite you to not only discover but also contribute to our vibrant gatherings of prayer, practice, dialogue, and service.

At the University Chaplaincy, our mission is to provide meaningful spiritual care while building inclusive, lively communities rooted in the shared value of honoring every individual's dignity. We celebrate the uniqueness of each tradition and culture while encouraging interfaith commitments to justice and compassion in all its forms.

Whether you're visiting Goddard Chapel, the Interfaith Center, or the Granoff Family Hillel Center, you'll find welcoming faces ready to greet you with a cup of tea or a quiet space to reflect and rest. Our weekly gatherings offer something for everyone, from Buddhist meditation, Catholic Mass, and Protestant Worship to Shabbat services, Jumma prayer, Humanist meetings, and Hindu pujas. You'll also encounter opportunities for interfaith dialogue, concerts, storytelling, celebrations, and vigils, all designed to bring us closer together in community.

But most of all, we welcome you—your stories, your questions, your hopes, and your concerns. We are here to walk alongside you, to share in the joys and challenges of life on campus, and to support you as you grow in leadership and purpose both here and beyond.

On behalf of the entire University Chaplaincy team, we are so glad you're here.

Cordially,

Reverend Elyse Nelson Winger
University Chaplain

Tufts University Chaplaincy's Mission

The University Chaplaincy is a dynamic hub supporting religious, spiritual, ethical, and cultural life for all members of the Tufts community.

Our mission is to:

- Provide spiritual care
- Support religious and philosophical communities
- Educate about spiritual and ethical issues in society and the world
- Promote multifaith engagement

Providing Spiritual Care

Spiritual care is a type of counseling provided by professional chaplains and trained spiritual leaders. It involves nonjudgmental, compassionate listening that welcomes people to share their joys, concerns, and hopes in the context of their full humanity, and for many, their philosophy, religion, or spirituality. The University Chaplaincy team represents dynamic and diverse traditions: **Buddhist, Catholic, Hindu, Humanist, Jewish, Muslim, and Protestant**. Each chaplain is available to support all Tufts students and are:

- Confidential resources
- Open and affirming of all LGBTQIA identities
- Available to anyone in the Tufts community, regardless of religious or philosophical beliefs
- Never going to proselytize or seek to convert

You might seek out a conversation with a chaplain if you are exploring your spirituality or faith, have a question about your identity, or want to check in with someone during a difficult time.

The *Contact a Chaplain* form on our website is one easy way to connect, or you can email any chaplain directly.

“It means a lot that chaplains recognize me, follow up with me on events or problems I’ve mentioned to them, and just that they genuinely care about how I’m doing. I always walk away from talking to a chaplain feeling better.”

-Tufts student

Supporting Religious and Philosophical Communities

The University Chaplaincy currently collaborates with 13 student-run religious and philosophical student organizations (RPSOs). Each group meets regularly, often weekly, for programming, planning, celebrations, and events. The Interfaith Student Council is composed of representatives from each of the RPSOs and also plans gatherings each semester. You can find more about the groups and their student leadership on our website. Please visit our website to learn more, including our Tufts Policies and Resources related to student organizations.

Educating Students about Spiritual and Ethical Issues in the World

We draw upon the diverse voices, ancient wisdom, and fresh insights of our many traditions and practices to engage the urgent calls for justice, repair, and belonging in our campus and global communities. Through signature events, small groups, and special programming, Tufts community members have many opportunities to explore and embody the connections between spirituality, service, and justice.

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration is a collaborative creation of faculty, staff and



Humanist Community at Tufts on a hike in the Middlesex Fells Reservation in spring 2024



The Hindu Students Association and friends celebrate Holi in spring 2024

students from the University Chaplaincy, the Africana Center, Tisch College and beyond. Each year, the planning team selects a theme and a portion from King's writings to lift up and reclaim the living legacy of King's and other civil rights leaders' radical commitments to racial and economic justice, interfaith engagement, human rights, and peace. The 2024 theme "Single Garment of Destiny" comes from the 1963 "Letter from Birmingham Jail."

The Russell Lecture on Spiritual Life is the oldest lectureship at Tufts University. Each year, we welcome a speaker who, through their scholarship, storytelling, activism, or art, offers a spiritual perspective on the present historical moment. In 2024, we welcomed Scholar-in-Residence Dee-1 who gave his address, "My Joy Is My Weapon: Lyrics, Prayer, and Spiritual Repair." In 2025, Varun Soni, Tufts alum and Dean of Religious Life at the University of Southern California, will deliver the address.

Promoting Multifaith Engagement

Wonder, curiosity, reverence and respect animate multifaith engagement at the Tufts University Chaplaincy. We join together across traditions and our many intersecting identities to celebrate what it means to be human now and to work for the common good.

With the **First-Year Experience Program**, the University Chaplaincy, thanks to an Advancing Religious Pluralism grant from Interfaith America, is offering field trips throughout this academic year for first-year students. All of these trips will allow students to explore Boston's diverse religious and cultural history through free monthly site visits, dinners, and reflections alongside fellow first-years, student leaders, and chaplains. The new funding will also support a collaboration between the Tufts University Chaplaincy and the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Civic Life, and is intended to expand programming and equip students to engage across lines of religious differences to contribute to a sustainable and thriving democracy.

The **Interfaith Ambassadors** live their own questions of belief and identity and explore what interfaith engagement means to them. Through workshops and programs, Ambassadors invite the community into deeper understandings of civic engagement, justice, and peace in a pluralistic world.

Program highlights in 2024 include Pax et Lux: A Multifaith Holiday Celebration; The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Community Action; and Open Mic Nights in collaboration with Artist-in-Residence Dee-1.



Dee-1 speaks with student leader Wanci Nana, A25 on stage at Russell Lecture 2024



In Living Memory 2023: Baile Folklórico, the Latinx Center, the LGBT Center, Public Harmony, and sQ!, Voices for Peace and Light Choir, and the University Chaplaincy



“ The University Chaplaincy has offered me a space to grow in my faith identity by building relationships with peers and staff from other religious and cultural traditions. It has been my programmatic and social home on campus through the Interfaith Ambassadors. I’m grateful for the connections with peers, chaplains, and community members that I’ve gained through Ambassador workshops, trips, and speakers.”

-Peri Barest, A24

“ The University Chaplaincy is an amazing community that I never thought I’d be part of, but it has become one of my favorite groups. Everyone in the Chaplaincy is so curious and excited about learning each other’s customs and histories, fostering a diverse community. I always feel welcomed and love visiting the Chapel or IFC to chat in the office or grab a quick treat!”

-Shahadah Manzer, A26



“ The University Chaplaincy provides a students a way to discover themselves without fear. We are challenged to grow in my ways as college students and through support from the team of chaplains, staff, IFC, and IFA we are able to answer the tough questions with each other and come to love each other’s unique self.”

-Kyle Hammond, A25

SUPPORT THE TUFTS UNIVERSITY CHAPLAINCY

A vital portion of our programs are made possible by community donations. Here are some suggestions for how you can help make a difference in students’ lives:

- **\$25** provides a meal for a student at an interfaith event like Food & Faith
- **\$75** purchases a year’s worth of candles for services
- **\$150** contributes to the upkeep of our 140-year-old Hook & Hastings organ



Give Today!

To give to the University Chaplaincy, please visit <http://go.tufts.edu/giveChaplaincy>. To discuss a major gift, endowment, or bequest, please contact our Advancement liaison Tessa Buckley:

(617) 627-2991 | tessa.buckley@tufts.edu

Thank you for your generosity and support.