

UNIVERSITY CHAPLAINCY

2023-2024 newsletter



Illumination Ceremony for the Class of 2024



Baccalaureate Ceremony for the Class of 2023

Dear Tufts community and friends,

Welcome to the University Chaplaincy! We are a multifaith team of chaplains, professional staff, and student leaders who are passionate about engaging Tufts' vibrant religious, spiritual, and philosophical diversity, and we invite you to explore and contribute to our many communities of practice, prayer, dialogue, and service.

At the University Chaplaincy, we are committed to offering spiritual care; co-creating inclusive and lively communities rooted in the shared value of the dignity of all people; celebrating the distinctiveness of our many traditions and cultures; and fostering interfaith commitments to justice in all its forms. At Goddard Chapel, the Interfaith Center, and the Granoff Family Hillel Center, you will find chaplains and staff ready to welcome you for a cup of tea and a place to rest awhile. You will find weekly gatherings ranging from Buddhist meditation to Catholic Mass and Protestant Worship, from Shabbat services and Jummah prayer to Humanist gatherings and Hindu pujas. You will encounter interfaith dialogues and dinners, concerts and story-telling events, multifaith celebrations and vigils, learning series and text studies.

Most importantly, we welcome your life experiences, wonderings, hopes, and concerns. We are here to share in the many gifts of life together across our campuses, to accompany you, and to equip your leadership in this place and for our world.

On behalf of the entire University Chaplaincy team,

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: **Africana Spirituality, 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.



Protestant Chaplain Dan Bell and Muslim Chaplain Najiba Akbar at the Interfaith Iftar during Ramadan this year



Students celebrate Holi together on the Medford campus in spring 2023

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 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. In 2023, our theme was "*We Don't Have Much Time: Raising Consciousness and Building the Future Now.*"

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 2023, we welcomed Dr. Ofelia Zepeda (Tohono O'odham) who gave her address, *Our Language Is Our Strength*, about her work with Indigenous language revitalization and the poetic power to shape spiritual worlds and futures with expression.



Dr. Zepeda speaks to a student at the Russell Lecture in March 2023

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.

The CAFE (Conversation, Action, Faith, and Education) Pre-Orientation Program welcomes incoming first-year undergraduate students of any religious, spiritual and ethical identity to participate in a transformative week of community building and storytelling for interfaith leadership and civic engagement. CAFE provides a foundation for a successful transition into college life and offers lasting opportunities for meaningful connections at Tufts.

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 2023 include: *Pax et Lux: A Multifaith Holiday Celebration*; *The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Community Action*; and *Unpacking White Christian Nationalism: An Event Series with Dr. Anthea Butler*.



WuZee performs a Round Fan Dance at Pax et Lux 2022

“I first approached the chaplaincy to learn of religious customs outside of my Christian faith. I immersed in the chaplaincy, finding I could live out my faith through serving people with different faiths than my own. As an Interfaith Ambassador, I’m given the opportunity to practice what it means to love my God and my neighbors on campus.”

-Joseph Lim, A23



“The University Chaplaincy has played a vital role in my religious, social, and educational experience at Tufts. I was introduced through my participation in the Hindu Students Association (HSA) at Tufts and have learned an incredible amount within HSA and from representing the community in Interfaith Student Council. I especially value the team of chaplains that we have here at Tufts for their support and commitment to the student groups.”

-Taarika Bala, E24

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** contributes to the upkeep of our 140-year-old Hook & Hastings organ
- **\$150** helps send CAFE students to a Boston-area sit visit during Pre-Orientation



Music Director Suzie Cartreine hosts Meet the Organ in spring 2023

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 Lorraine Sparrow:

(617) 627-2052 | Lorraine.Sparrow@tufts.edu

Thank you for your generosity and support.