

# UNIVERSITY CHAPLAINCY

## 2025-2026 newsletter



**Rev. Elyse Nelson Winger,**  
University Chaplain

### Dear Tufts community and friends,

Welcome to the University Chaplaincy! We are delighted to have you here and extend a warm invitation to explore our diverse spiritual, religious, and philosophical communities at Tufts. Our team of chaplains, dedicated staff, and student leaders is passionate about fostering spaces where everyone can connect, reflect, and grow. We invite you to discover and contribute to our vibrant communities for worship, prayer, and meditation as well as gatherings for learning, exploration, and service.

Whether you're visiting Goddard Chapel, the Interfaith Center, the Granoff Family Hillel Center on the Medford/Somerville campus, or stopping by our office at Posner Hall on the Boston campus, 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: Buddhist meditation, Catholic Mass, Protestant Worship, Shabbat Services, Jumma prayer, Humanist meetings, Hindu pujas, and much more. You'll also encounter opportunities for interfaith dialogue, concerts,

storytelling, celebrations, and vigils—all designed to bring us closer together in community. On our Boston and Grafton campuses, we offer a range of opportunities to connect through lunch and learns on various topics, such as resilience, self-compassion, and meaning-making, as well as working and serving in diverse religious communities. We are also available to meet with individuals and small groups for spiritual care and conversation.

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



**The Fall Illumination Ceremony  
welcomes all new students to Tufts**

### 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, Humanist, Jewish, Muslim, and Protestant**. Each chaplain is available to support all Tufts students, faculty, and staff, 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 collaborates with many student-led religious and philosophical groups in

our Tufts undergraduate and graduate communities. Each group meets regularly, often weekly, for programming, planning, celebrations, and events. You can find more information about each of the groups on our website, and if you are interested in starting a new group, just email chaplaincy@tufts.edu.

### Undergraduate Groups:

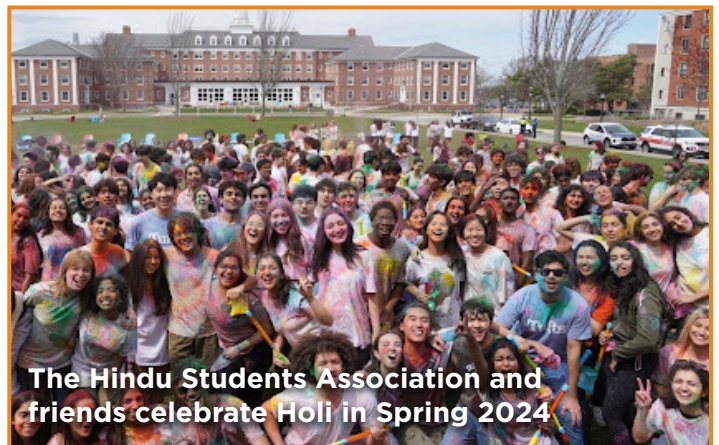
- Asian Baptist Fellowship
- COFFEE (Community OF Faith Exploration and Engagement)
- C. Stacey Woods Programming Board (non-denominational Christian)
- Catholic Community at Tufts (CCT)
- Chabad at Tufts University (Jewish)
- Hillel at Tufts (Jewish)
- Humanist Community at Tufts (HCAT)
- Muslim Students Association at Tufts (MSA)
- Daily Flame (non-denominational Christian)
- Protestant Students Association (PSA)
- Tufts Hindu Students Association (HSA)
- Tufts Buddhist Mindfulness Sangha
- Tufts Orthodox Christian Fellowship

### Graduate Groups:

- Christian Medical and Dental Association (CMDA), Health Sciences Campus (Boston)
- Christian Veterinary Fellowship, Cummings School (Grafton)
- Fletcher Christian Fellowship (Medford)
- Hindu Graduate Students Association
- Dental Muslim Students Association
- Medical School Muslim Students Association
- Graduate Buddhist Mindfulness Sangha



Each spring we celebrate seniors from across our communities at Senior Awards Night



The Hindu Students Association and friends celebrate Holi in Spring 2024



## 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 an annual collaborative creation of faculty, staff, and students from the University Chaplaincy, the Africana Center, Tisch College of Civic Life, and beyond. We celebrate student voices and the living legacy of King's work for beloved community.

Our **Field Trip Series** launched in 2024 thanks to generous funding from Interfaith America. Graduate and undergraduate students joined chaplains and Interfaith Ambassadors for trips to the Islamic Society of Boston, Westborough Gurdwara, St. Cecelia's Catholic Parish, Sri Lakshmi Temple, Chinatown, and the Museum of African American History. Each event includes a shared meal for conversation and community building. Follow us on Instagram to learn about upcoming trips! Our Fall series will include the SMFA, the Museum of Science, and the Vietnamese Temple of Brockton.

## Promoting Multifaith Engagement

Wonder, curiosity, reverence, and respect animate multifaith engagement at the Tufts University Chaplaincy. We join across and through our traditions and many identities to connect and work for the common good.

The **Undergraduate and Graduate Interfaith Student Councils** bring together representatives from

student organizations for meals, dialogue, and community building which fosters friendship and appreciative knowledge of one another's traditions and practices.

The **Be-Friend Interfaith Friendship Program** is a semester-long interfaith friendship project designed for participants to talk deeply about the things that matter: values, sense of purpose, and questions about life. Faculty, staff, and students are welcome to participate. Be-Frienders learn the skill of active listening while experimenting with shared spiritual practices from different religious and philosophical traditions. Please contact chaplaincy@tufts.edu to learn more. Be-Friend will run again in Spring 2026—follow us on Instagram to learn when to sign up!

*"My friend and I always have these tender, intense conversations that are full of gravity but also rooted in vulnerability and friendship. And the radical act of sharing yourself with someone is a foundation for Be-Friend...I would leave our conversations and think, 'We just had the best talk today.'"*

**-Be-Friend Participant**

The **Interfaith Ambassador Team** is an undergraduate learning and programming cohort who create workshops, events, and collaborations that invite the whole Tufts community into deeper understandings of civic engagement, justice, and peace in a pluralistic world. Annual programming includes Pax et Lux: A Multifaith Holiday Celebration and the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Community Action.

*"Being an Ambassador has taught me the power of storytelling. In addition to gaining new friends, I've learned about so many new ideas and have grown in empathy through sharing and receiving stories from my community."*

**-Tyler Kwong, A27**



Students at the Islamic Society of Boston for the Spring 2025 field trips



The 2024 Pax et Lux featured Voices for Peace and Light, the interfaith choir here at Tufts



“ Although I came from a non-religious background, I never once felt excluded from the interfaith community at Tufts. Rather, it became a place to freely explore my own spirituality without judgement as well as a source of meaningful connections for me, having met many of my closest friends and mentors through the Chaplaincy. The community fostered by the Chaplaincy—rooted in love, acceptance, and mutual respect—is one that extends far beyond the chapel and into the broader Tufts community.”

—Lily Clarke, A27

“ 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 Interfaith Center to chat in the office or grab a quick treat!”

—Shahadah Manzer, A26



“ The Chaplaincy holds a special place in my heart. It's where I feel comfortable sharing what truly matters to me, whether that's my beliefs or my personal journey. Being able to connect with others on that deep level, and feel understood, makes it an incredible source of positive energy for me on campus.”

—Niam Lakhani, A27

## 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 University Chaplain Elyse Nelson Winger:

(617) 627-3427 | [Elyse.Nelson\\_Winger@tufts.edu](mailto:Elyse.Nelson_Winger@tufts.edu)

Thank you for your generosity and support.