

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Power of Oneness

BY JER

I always loved it when the Zen master Thich Nhat Hanh would talk about Buddha and Jesus. His passion for interfaith dialogue would be on display.

Personally, I find inspiration in many paths to Oneness, and I am greatly inspired by both Buddhism and Hinduism. My own spirituality involves Buddhist practices, Hindu chants, and one-on-one meetings with a Hindu priest. It's true. I don't resemble previous chaplains at University of Lynchburg, so let me explain why I accepted the offer to be the university's first interfaith chaplain.

I believe in interfaith dialogue and interfaith service. Like Thich Nhat Hanh, I want to have conversations with faculty, staff, and students about their spiritual paths, and I want to work with people of various faith and secular traditions to better our campus and the communities that surround it. I believe in the power of Oneness, and I believe that when we work together to achieve both spiritual wellness and service to others, we are taking steps to repair the divisiveness that has plagued humanity for immeasurable time.

I also accepted the offer to become interfaith chaplain because our campus respects diversity, and this includes diversity of thought and of being. I have spent most of my life on this campus. I have been an undergraduate student, a graduate student, a professor, a director, and a chaplain. University of Lynchburg will always be in my heart, and because I love this university so dearly, I want to take care of its members. We are a family. We all deserve a seat at the table of spirituality. Perhaps my presence at the table will make others feel comfortable to pull up a chair.

If the incredible Thich Nhat Hanh, like so many other spiritual leaders, made room in his life for the beauty of working with members of other faith traditions, so can I. So can you, dear reader. While we may not always agree, we can

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For more information about the Spiritual Life Center, including info on student spiritual life student groups, go to our webpage - link in the email signature. You can also visit our Linkt.ree (link is in email).

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certainly respect one another and work together for the sake of our students, faculty, and staff.

One of the most beautiful moments I have experienced is when the Buddhist Community supported the Jewish Community last April during the Yom HaShoah service. Our city's beloved rabbi, Rabbi John Nimon, had unexpectedly left this realm. (May his memory be a blessing.) Buddhist students offered to help our students from the Jewish Community in forming and leading a service of remembrance for those who were taken from from this world during The Holocaust. This display of interfaith work has moved me in ways I find hard to express. The experience was ineffable.



I am also grateful for Spiritual Life's interfaith council, an opportunity for student leaders of different faith and secular traditions to come together, share, and learn from each other; it is such a magnificent gathering. So often these student leaders become friends and celebrate one another's spirituality.

This is who we are as Hornets. We value and respect one another, and this is why I find my chaplaincy work to be one of the greatest gifts I have been given. My ability to serve Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Muslim, Pagan, and secular students strengthens my own spiritual practice; it also makes me a better human. I accept all who come to me, and I am accepted for who I am as a spiritual being. This is a university of belonging. Even if we see the divine differently, may we all be respectful students on the road of life. May we remember the power of Oneness. May we keep unconditional love and respect at the forefront of our practices.

Sympathies, Concerns, and Congrats

Our sympathies are extended to:

- **Lisa Womack** (Business Office) on the death of her aunt, Frances "Toddy" Murray.

Dates to Remember

Sundays at 4:30 p.m.
Weekly ROMAN CATHOLIC MASS
in Snidow Chapel

October 4 at Sundown
Yom Kippur begins

OCTOBER is

- LGBT History Month
- National Disability Employment Awareness Month
- National Domestic Abuse Awareness Month

The Chaplain's Corner is a newsletter published by the Spiritual Life Center (SLC) at the University of Lynchburg. We share campus concerns and updates, spiritual life events and activities, and words for the journey. If you have a joy or concern you'd like to share, reply to this message, email the SLC office - spirituallife@lynchburg.edu, or call 434.544.8348. We only share with your permission. Current and previous issues are on the SLC page of the University website - go to Link in signature (www.lynchburg.edu/spiritual-life) and click on "Newsletter."