



North American Hindu Chaplains Association
2026 Annual Conference
“Sacredly Rooted: Dharmic Wisdom for Uncertain Times”

Conference Program Day 1

Friday April 3, 2026

*All times listed are in Eastern Daylight Time

10:15 AM* **Opening Prayer | Code of Ethics | Welcoming Remarks | Roadmap for the day**

10:45 AM **Antara: Living with Integrity in the In Between**

A Unitarian Universalist minister shaped by multiple religious traditions, including the Brahma Samaj and Hinduism, Reverend Abhi Janamanchi invites us to reflect on what it means to live with integrity in the spaces between traditions, cultures, and communities.

Drawing on ancient Vedic wisdom and lived experience across continents and callings, he will explore an enduring question: How do we remain rooted in our own tradition while also open, responsive, and adaptive in an interconnected world?

This session offers reflection, storytelling, and practical inspiration for anyone navigating the complexity of interfaith life, chaplaincy, leadership, and cross cultural ministry.

Speaker: Reverend Abhi Janamanchi, Senior Minister, Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Congregation

Moderator: Ms. Rumni Saha, NAHCA PR Co-Chair and Hindu & Unitarian Universalist Chaplain, Wellesley College, Multifaith Chaplain, Dana Farber Cancer Institute

12:00 PM **Break for lunch | Feedback request**

Join us for casual conversation over lunch

1:00 PM **CPE Student Reflections**

CPE students from Hindu and Sikh traditions will share reflections and writings inspired by verbatims. This session follows a “reverse-classroom” format offering ample opportunity for feedback and discussion. Please help us support these students who represent the future of dharmic spiritual care.

Speakers:

Ms. Kamal Brar, CPE student, Toronto School of Theology-University Health Network

Mr. Achyut Saroj, PhD CPE student, Emory University

Moderators:

Mr. Sanjay Mathur, NAHCA Membership Co-Chair and Hindu Affiliate of Spirituality & Religious Life at Rochester Institute of Technology and Hindu Chaplain at University of Rochester and Syracuse University
Dr. Shama Mehta, NAHCA Vice Chair and Board Certified Chaplain and Educator, Michigan Medicine

2:30 PM **Workshop – Chair Yoga for your Care Recipients**

Workshop leader: Ms. Priya Amaresh, NAHCA PR Co-Chair and Hindu Chaplain, Duke University

3:00 PM **An Exploration of Faith**

Suren, Bindu and Rucha discuss ideas they are exploring in their work and how these concepts are reconfiguring their philosophical outlook and enhancing their spiritual caregiving strategies.

Speakers:

Ms. Rucha Modi, Facilitator and Teaching Fellow, Harvard Divinity School
Mr. Suren Pandya, Inpatient Pediatric Palliative Care Chaplain at MemorialCare Miller Children's and Women's Hospital
Ms. Bindu Lanka, Chaplain, Children's Health

Moderators: Dr. Shama Mehta & Mr. Sanjay Mathur

4:30 PM **Chai and Coffee Break | Reminders, feedback request**

Opportunity for informal chat together online

6:00 PM **Dinner Presentation: The Science Behind Pranayama**

Speaker: Mr. Robert Sankara Moses, Co-founder, [Yoga Education College](#); Founder, [Namarupa](#)

Pranayama is the lengthening, expanding or directing of the universal life force intrinsic to the breath. Resonance breathing is a basic form of breath control that can be used to coordinate our body systems to improve our health and wellbeing. This talk considers the scientific and yogic inquiries, the physiological and spiritual mechanisms and benefits of this practice.

Moderator: Dr. Asha Shipman, NAHCA Chair and Director of Hindu Life, Yale University

Feedback Request | Reminders and Notes for Saturday's program | Closing prayer

Goodnight and Thanks



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Conference Program Day 2

Saturday April 4, 2026

*All times listed are in Eastern Time

10:15 AM* **Opening Prayer | Code of Ethics | Roadmap for the day**

10:45 AM **“Our Turn” How spiritual care students are understanding, imagining and embodying spiritual care**

Hindu Spiritual care students will share reflections and writings inspired by course assignments and their work in the field. This session follows a “reverse-classroom” format offering ample opportunity for feedback and discussion.

Speakers:

S.B. Keshava Swami, Resident Hindu Monastic Fellow, Harvard Divinity School

Dr. Lavanya Pandit, student, CIF Certificate in Hindu Spiritual Care

Mr. Carl Hildebrand, Master of Divinity Student, Vanderbilt Divinity School

Moderators:

Mr. Jer Bryant, NAHCA Secretary and Associate University Chaplain, University of Lynchburg

Ms. Bindu Gupta, NAHCA Treasurer and Membership Co-Chair

Ms. Priya Amaresh

12:00 PM **Break for lunch | Feedback request**

Join us for casual conversation over lunch

1:00 PM **Equivalency Credentials Towards BCC: The Certificate in Hindu Spiritual Care**

In January 2022 Chinmaya Vishwavidyapeeth (University) in Kerala offered the first instance of their Certificate in Hindu Spiritual Care designed to train Hindu spiritual care providers to work in various institutional settings supporting Hindus in India and the US. In 2023 Chinmaya International Foundation (CIF) became the umbrella organization. Accredited and recognized by the Association of Professional Chaplains (APC) for credits towards earning Board Certification, this is a landmark program in spiritual care. Program Director Smt. Vilasini Balakrishnan discusses the evolution of this remarkable training program and plans for the future.

Speaker: Smt. Vilasini Balakrishnan, MS, LMHC, Programme Director Chinmaya International Foundation Certificate in Hindu Spiritual Care

Moderators: Dr. Shama Mehta and Mr. Jer Bryant

2:30 PM **Chai and Coffee Break | Reminders, feedback request**

2:45 PM **Workshop – Affection Without Attachment: Wisdom for Caregivers from the Story of King Bharat and the Deer**

In this workshop, we will explore how Hindu teachings around non-attachment encourage us to become thoughtful caregivers. We'll examine a beloved (but often misunderstood) wisdom tale from the Bhagavata Purana to suggest lessons that can help us all to guard against the common pitfalls that too often plague spiritual caregivers with even the best of intentions.

Workshop leader: Dr. Vineet Chander, NAHCA Resource Development Chair and Assistant Dean, Hindu Life at Princeton University

3:30 PM **Disaster Spiritual Care with the American Red Cross**

The unique role of the Red Cross Disaster Spiritual Care (DSC) provider is to assist people in drawing upon their own spiritual resources – values and faith – in the midst of their pain, regardless of their faith or belief tradition. Learn about the training DSC responders receive and the emergency support they provide.

Speakers:

Ms. Bindu Gupta, Disaster Spiritual Care Coordinator

Ms. Jinny Bishop, Disaster Spiritual Care Coordinator

Moderator: Dr. Asha Shipman

4:30 PM **Gratitude | Feedback request | Closing Prayer**