

Barrytown College of UTS Newsletter

NO. 2

Greetings, brothers and sisters, from Barrytown College!



God's Day with UTS Doctors of Ministry & Barrytown College

In this issue, we would like to share more about the spiritual practices our students lead and invest in. While many of the students are engaged in their own individual spiritual practices, such as personal reflections, daily readings, prayer walks, etc., there are also activities open to all the students, to join together in practicing our faith.

Yoga - Krista Smith

Our first interview was with Krista Smith, on the topic of Yoga, which she leads every Friday morning at 8am. Krista also recently led a Prayer Circle on February 27th for our professors, many of whom are currently going through difficult physical and emotional battles, while still investing so much in the school. We pray for their good health and spiritual strength.



Weekly yoga has been one of the ways in which the students themselves gather strength, both physically and spiritually. Krista says she was “inspired by Chaplain Kone to share yoga as a spiritual practice, as I already do it regularly alone. It’s an opportunity for mindfulness of your spirit through physical activity, with an emphasis on intentional breathing. This makes it a very unique spiritual practice, because it integrates spiritual, mental, and physical health.”

There are many beneficial effects of yoga, according to Krista. “I find it calming and centering mentally. It’s also rejuvenating physically. It makes me feel relaxed but energized.”

For anyone who is interested in starting yoga as a regular practice, Krista had this to offer: “I think yoga is a great opportunity for anyone interested in expanding the incorporation of mental, spiritual, and physical health. I would encourage anyone of any skill level to come participate.”

Morning Hoon Dok Hae - Yasutaka Ozawa

Another regular spiritual practice is morning Hoon Dok Hae, led by student Yasutaka Ozawa, and held in the Interfaith Chapel. The students who participate make a habit of waking up at 7am to greet Heavenly Parents and True Parents, pray, and read God’s word. Afterwards, the students take time to reflect on that morning’s reading, and discuss passages that may have stood out to them. We interviewed Yasutaka to elaborate on what Hoon Dok Hae means to him.



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"In our faith, it is important for us to practice Hoon Dok Hae," Yasu asserts. "For me, starting off the day reading something from True Parents' words is special. When it's morning, I'm preparing for the day, so it's the perfect time to do Hoon Dok Hae. And if something strikes me during the reading, then I want to go out and practice it to see if it's true for me, during the rest of the day. I strongly think it's important that we practice what we read."

Meditation - Chaplain Drissa Kone

We also interviewed our Chaplain, Drissa Kone, about the Meditation sessions he supervises weekly. The students gather to meditate in the Interfaith Chapel on Tuesday and Thursday evenings, after dinner, for about fifteen minutes. One student leads each session, while Kone is present to mentor and support. "In every spiritual practice we're doing, I encourage the students to take leadership," Kone emphasizes. "It's important for them to lead, because that's another part of the learning experience at Barrytown College. It encourages the students to take responsibility. This college is not a place where you come to learn theoretically alone. Here, you do things with your knowledge."

"In simple terms, meditation means getting in touch with yourself," Kone explains. "Human beings are body, mind, and spirit. Most of the time, we tend to be more concerned with what's happening in our mind and body, and less in touch with the spirit. The mind is where we have all our thoughts, which are separate from ourselves. The spirit is pure. It's where we connect with the divine. This is where you can find peace."



Meditation during Martial Arts class

The student response to meditation has been positive, although it may be a new experience for many of them. "The students here come from a Unificationist background, and meditation is not part of the culture. However, I do know a few students who are practicing daily meditation." When students share their experiences, Kone expressed that it is "beautiful to hear about what they really gained from it. I personally think it is really helping students, especially those who are doing it consistently."

Kone also stated his belief that meditation should be a universal practice, and encourages Unificationists to meditate. "I believe meditation helps us really experience God's love," he says. "I think this is what the Divine Principle refers to as the First Blessing. When we say 'mind and body unity,' I don't think it's a very good translation. A more proper term is 'spirit and mind unity,' and then the body can follow. If we cut off the spirit from the process of unifying ourselves, there will be no unity possible. We need to be in touch with our heart and our spirit to be able to experience the love of God. Then we can share it with others, and we can experience real love in our relationships with people." He mentions that this is a very important way in which people can prepare for the Second Blessing; by receiving God's love, we are truly able to give love to others and invest unconditionally in our families.

Despite the difficulties of school work, relationships, and life in general, students at Barrytown are able to find spiritual strength and mental clarity through these valuable spiritual practices.

Thank you for reading!

God bless and best wishes to all.

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