



A Message from University of Kentucky  
**PRESIDENT ELI CAPILOUTO**

Dear Campus Community,

The University of Kentucky is home to many faiths, cultures, identities and beliefs. We make space for all those who respect and embrace the inescapable diversity of humankind to strengthen a shared humanity. Our commitment to each other is not confined to people only like us. And while we make room for differences and dissent, we give disrespect no quarter.

Our beliefs are personal, as they should be, and each of us may seek uniquely to connect to the inaudible, still and quiet voice within us to find answers to life's questions especially in anxious and frightening times.

We are in a season of rejuvenation and growth. It is the blooms of trees and flowers that remind us of spring's perennial renewal and allows us to reconnect with that which stirs our consciousness. Religious communities around the world are also in a season of celebration. And, for likely the first time in a number of millennia, people around the globe will celebrate these moments apart from their churches, temples, synagogues and mosques.

In the uncertainty and anxiety generated by the coronavirus, we are forced to separate rather than congregate. It is hard to live without what we never imagined could be stripped from us. Still, we find ways to connect with our communities and fulfill our social responsibilities while we remain physically distant.

Faith traditions build fellowship and comradery, and that sense of community, I believe, has never been more important. In these traditions, we are reminded of the importance of benevolence, compassion and service to one another – lessons our world needs now more than ever. In a moment without parallel in our lives, our faith traditions powerfully remind us of times when those who came before us reached deep within themselves to find resiliency and grace – whether Jews marking Passover, Christians approaching Easter, Muslims observing Ramadan, Sikhs celebrating Vaisakhi, or others marking the arrival of a New Year in Spring with festivals. They nurture their souls in their own way.

How you believe and how you practice is certainly yours. And, in celebration of our unique backgrounds and perspectives, we can build a community where we find collective courage, strength and peace – we belong when we belong with one another.

Those who came before us at the University of Kentucky understood the importance of expressions of faith and belief. They codified in our rules and regulations the space to reflect and renew, to worship and express ourselves. I urge our faculty, staff and students to review the accommodations we have made for such expressions at these sites:

- <https://www.uky.edu/universitysenate/course-syllabi>
- <https://www.uky.edu/ombud/religious-observation-accommodations>

In our differences, I believe, we can find unity. In our expressions of faith, or in ways apart from such traditions, we build a lasting, durable and shared experience, what Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. called the “beloved community.” We do not have to agree with each other to grow with each other or to reach out to those who need us most. And, as the writer Norman Maclean reminds us, though we may not understand or practice what our neighbor believes, “we can still love them – we can love completely without complete understanding.”

We are the University *of, for* and *with* Kentucky, because all who turn to us are deemed infinitely worthy, treated fairly and granted equal opportunity to learn and heal regardless of who they are or where they are from.

Thank you for being a servant community.

Sincerely,

Eli Capilouto  
President