

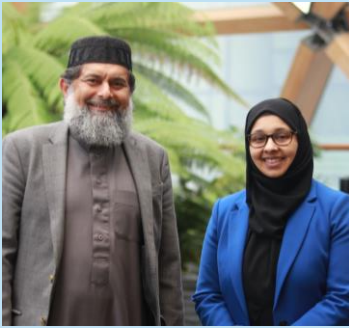
Canary Wharf  
Multifaith Chaplaincy



Scan to follow!

# In conversation with the Chaplaincy

VOLUME 7 • ISSUE 5 • DECEMBER 2024



## WELCOME

from this issue's editors:  
Saleha Bukhari Islam and  
Ibrahim Mogra

## INSIDE

Learning from shared  
experiences

Nigerian Christmas,  
British Diwali, Jewish  
festivals and much more

Inter Faith Week on the  
Wharf

The Chaplaincy team and  
guest writers share their  
reflections as they wind  
down for the end of 2024



Clifford Chance Diwali Celebrations

The Chaplaincy share highlights from celebrations that have taken place within companies on the Wharf. Our guest writers talk about the importance of shared experiences in creating an inclusive work culture.

**CHAT WITH A CHAPLAIN - 020 7 477 1073**

We are always available, face-to-face, by phone or online

We are excited to invite interest from our readers wishing to write for our Newsletter about their faith, work, and experiences of being in Canary Wharf. Please get in touch with us!

—  
**Additionally, we would love to meet you, hear your story, and connect with your team.**

[Email](#) us now to arrange a visit!



### *Editorial* **Festive Times!**

As we wrap up another year at the Canary Wharf Multifaith Chaplaincy, we reflect on the richness of our shared experiences, particularly during the recent Interfaith Week and the myriad festivals celebrated here. This edition features heartfelt narratives from our guest writers, who have beautifully chronicled their experiences.

Interfaith Week has always been a cornerstone event for us, fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation among the diverse faith communities that grace our vibrant business district. This year, our guest writers have shared stories that not only highlight the joy and camaraderie of these gatherings but also underscore the profound insights gained from such cross-cultural engagements. Their reflections offer a mirror to see how much more connects us than divides us.

As we approach the end of the year and the Christmas season, these stories of unity and mutual respect become even more poignant. Christmas, a time of profound significance for many, also offers moments of universal reflection and joy that resonate across different faiths and even with those of no faith. It is a season marked by giving, kindness, and a renewed hope for peace - values that echo the core tenets of many traditions and beliefs represented among us.

These festival reflections enrich our community's tapestry, reminding us that each celebration is an opportunity to learn from one another and to grow together. They prepare us to enter the New Year with a renewed commitment to inclusivity and fellowship. Let us carry forward the spirit of these reflections into our seasonal celebrations and beyond, cherishing each moment of fellowship and understanding. May this season bring you all peace, joy, and a deeper sense of community.

### *Diwali Celebrations* **Nina Goswami, Clifford Chance**

On 29 October, Clifford Chance celebrated Diwali at its Canary Wharf office with an evening filled with traditional performances, Indian bazaars, and delicious food. The firm's UK managing partner Michael Bates officially opened the festivities and reflected on what Diwali means to him.

"The great thing about Diwali is that it celebrates lots of things, but what stands out for me is love," he said. "Also, the fact that good triumphs over evil. And a focus on hope, and a focus on community."

He continued: "These are all things that are hugely optimistic and which shine through the Diwali celebration - particularly with a focus on helping others, and how together we can all look forward to the next year with light and hope."

This year's keynote speaker Consultant Psychiatrist and Priestess in the Hindu Tradition of Bhakti Yoga, Dr Chetna Kang, explained how Diwali brings focus on the importance of unity.

"Synergy is when we bring the very best of ourselves - our full selves - and work in such a way that actually we are not threatened by each other's differences," she said. "That we draw out those differences to encourage each other to work better, to serve better, to be kinder."

Diwali is a time of giving, and this year, Clifford Chance supported Akshaya Patra UK, a charity dedicated to fighting hunger and food poverty in India and the UK.

A spokesperson from the charity said: "What Akshaya Patra believes in is giving a child a reason to smile, a reason to believe, a reason to hope."

Clifford Chance is proud and thankful to the organisers from the firm's Hindu, Sikh, Jain and Buddhist Society. You can see highlights from the evening on [Clifford Chance's LinkedIn feed](#).





*Volunteer Retail Chaplain*  
**Vincent Omonigho**

Christmas in the predominantly Christian South of Nigeria is a major celebration, where it marks the birth of Jesus Christ. Preparations begin early in the year, reflecting the season's importance as a time for love, gift-giving, and family gatherings. Many travel to their villages to reconnect with loved ones. As December approaches, once-quiet streets transform into vibrant markets selling food, livestock, decorations, and firecrackers, which add colour and excitement. Homes, churches, and businesses glow with festive lights and trees. Celebrations feature carols, dancing, and feasts of jollof rice, chicken, turkey, and traditional dishes. Merry Christmas!

*Jewish Chaplain*  
**Rabbi Stanley Coten**

In the mid-1970s, a French presidential candidate campaigned on a promise of 'change without risk' - and narrowly won. But can change occur without risk? Many of us prefer the comfort of the familiar. Recently, Jews celebrated seven major festivals in one month, a period when daily work paused. I spent time with family and friends in the synagogue, saying prayers and reconnecting spiritually, unburdened by work stress. But life also requires attention to the mundane: to earning a living, paying bills, and maintaining our homes. After each festival, we hold a ceremony called Havdalah, meaning "to distinguish." It includes blessings over spices to revive us and prepare us to face routine life again. We conclude the festival by wishing one another "a good winter." So, I wish you all very good winter!



*Interfaith Week at Morgan Stanley*  
**Fatima Khanam, Regulatory Relations Director**

As Co-Chair of the EMEA Muslim Faith Forum at Morgan Stanley, I have had the pleasure of working with the Canary Wharf Multifaith Chaplaincy on various occasions over the last few years. We have invited members of the Chaplaincy to talk on a variety of topics ranging from the importance of Ramadan, the impact of climate change, topics related to race and diversity, and more recently introducing Interfaith Week.

During this week we celebrate all faiths in our workplace, an opportunity for people to learn about the different faith groups. 'We have explored these topics through the lens of faith.' writes Fatima Khanam, Regulatory Relations Director.


Working with the Chaplaincy has always been very seamless and collaborative. We typically set up an initial call to discuss the involvement we would like from them, and we set our expectations with them. We have always found this process very easy as the members are fully trained and most importantly understand the professional corporate culture.

Our Muslim Faith Forum operates within a diverse workplace and our intention is always to be as inclusive as we can with our message. The members of the Chaplaincy are very knowledgeable in their respective fields and have the experience of coming to firms like ours to talk about topics on a variety of subjects. They are always very well prepared and spend time organising their message. It is always a pleasure to work with the Chaplaincy and we look forward to continuing our work with them!

**Would you like to find out about volunteering with the retail team? If faith informs your perspective, you are a good listener, and you want to support your neighbours at work, contact Mark [here](#) to arrange a visit!**

—

**If you would like to receive our newsletters, or read past editions, please click [here](#).**



**Why not listen to our weekly podcast?**  
We have a new five-minute podcast every Monday morning – [bookmark](#) us for a regular listen.

**Fancy a coffee and a chat?**

All it takes is a quick call. A Chaplain will respond and try to meet with you the same day, or as soon as is mutually convenient. We can have a coffee and a chat, meet online, message or email. Whatever works for you. [Contact a chaplain.](#)