



World Council of Churches

150 route de Ferney, PO Box 2100
CH-1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland
Phone: +41 22 791 6111 Fax: +41 22 791 0361
Email: infowcc@wcc-coe.org www.oikoumene.org

General Secretariat

Direct phone: +41 22 791 6285
Direct e-mail: dcb@wcc-coe.org

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Dear friends and co-pilgrims of peace from the Hindu communities,

As you celebrate the auspicious festival of Diwali the World Council of Churches extends to you greetings of joy and peace!

As a festival of lights Diwali appeals to the primary spiritual yearning of many human communities to move from ignorance to wisdom and from hopelessness to hope. Light, as a shared sacred symbol within different religious traditions, binds religious communities in our quest to overcome the darkness of despair and despondency exacerbated in today's world by divisive human conflicts, the devastating effects of climate change and discrimination of the most vulnerable. Therefore, this festive season is truly a time to nurture the best values of our religious traditions. May we light the lamp of *hospitality* towards the other, the lamp of *healing* of mother earth and the lamp of *hope* for a just world during this time of Diwali and work together towards dispelling the bane of poverty, prejudice and the pillaging of creation.

As I was contemplating on my message for Diwali I was struck by the following words from the *Chandogya Upanishad*:

“The light that shines above the heavens and above this world, the light that shines in the highest world, beyond which there are no others—that is the light that shines in the hearts of humans” (*Chandogya Upanishad* 3:13:7).

Diwali is truly a time both to let the light of our hearts shine and recognise the light in the hearts of the other. This is possible by overcoming fear and fostering friendships. The World Council of Churches cherishes the relationship that we enjoy with our Hindu brothers and sisters across the world and are committed to developing it further in a spirit of openness and honesty. It is our confidence that together we can work towards making justice and peace a concrete possibility in our world today in cooperation with people of other faiths. Therefore this time of Diwali is also a time for the renewal of friendship in a spirit of respect and trust. Let us with a renewed vision walk the talk of peace and justice together for the greater good.

As you celebrate this festive season let me end by wishing you, your families and your wider communities greater peace and prosperity. May you have a joyful Diwali!

With best wishes

Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit
General Secretary