

## Christmas at UTS

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This week, members of the administration, faculty, and staff of UTS, Barrytown gathered in the Founders' dining room for a holiday meal together. However, it was not a meal, it was a banquet!!

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UTS Hospitality (Kate Korda, UTS' 10) simply surprised everyone with a delightfully prepared table: the table settings, the silverware (+ chopsticks), and stemware.

The meal: soup, bulgogi, kimchee, rice, chap chae, desserts. All lovingly prepared by Reiko Mickler. [She and I are already discussing making this the menu for next year's UTS Golf Tournament!]

The conversations were varied and engaging.



Seated next to Cabot Peterson (a UTS News reporter), he and I discussed his apartment move this coming weekend. He is staying in the area but moving to the west bank of the Hudson River.

Talking with Dr. Noda, opposite me, is always an opportunity to delve into philosophy. He has a new book coming out in 2016, so he was giving an overview of the contents. Intriguing.

Later Dr. Isaacs and Howie Callas came and sat down. Howie was groundskeeper back when I was at UTS 1978-80. He is still a groundskeeper, but only occasionally now at UTS. People connected to the earth tend to see things differently, so I always find it wise to listen carefully to their point of view.

Dr. Isaacs always has a few choice stories to tell. Ask him about the cheese that the funeral director brings to his home as a Christmas present, each year. Funeral cheese. Any takers?

We agreed that 2016 should be a year to promote reconciliation. Certainly in the USA, at the national, community and family level the need is obvious. UTS with its tagline "bridging religious and cultural divides" and its extensive alumni network may be in a position to be the catalyst to promote reconciliation. Dr. Isaacs encouraged the UTS alumni to take on that mission.

The conversation and laughter extended around the table. It was halted only a couple of times. First in prayer at the beginning of the meal, and second, when Dr. Spurgin went around the table letting people choose a fortune cookie. This was to honor our former UTS president, Dr. David S.C. Kim who is famous for his fortune cookie theater after each Chinese buffet meal.

Last week at the NYC extension center Dr. Kathy Winings assisted by Karen, Ute and Joy organized a holiday feast for those working down in Manhattan. There was a similar camaraderie and time for sharing. No table settings with bone china, but a rich experience nonetheless.

Dr. Hugh Spurgin, his wife Nora, the administration, the faculty, and the staff of UTS wish you a Merry Christmas and hope it is a stellar New Year for everyone.