



PUJAS FOR MAR-APR

Holika Dahan	7pm	Mar 2
Holi colors	11am	Mar 4
Ramkrishna Jayanti	10:30 am	Mar 11
Ugadi/Gudipadwa *	9am	Mar 18
Ram Navmi	9am	Mar 25
Hanuman Jayanti	7pm	Mar 31
Sankashtahara Chaturthi	7pm	Apr 3
Akhand ramayan	10am	Apr 14
Akhand ramayan samapti*	10am	Apr 15
Vishu Puja	6pm	Apr 15
Ganesha Havan	8:30 am	Apr 22

* Third Sunday sponsored pujas

Find us at
www.augustahts.org

Published by **HINDU TEMPLE SOCIETY**

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We are now paperless

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Dear Members,

In the upcoming months, in addition to our regularly scheduled pujas and third Sunday pujas, we have two very important events. I strongly encourage everyone to take part in both, as both offer an opportunity for worship and seva.

On Saturday, March 24th at 9:00 am, we will have our first EC led Temple inventory and cleaning for the year. Please save the date and be on the lookout for a sign up sheet as we get closer to the date.

On Sunday, April 22nd, we will have our annual havan. Sponsorship for the havan starts at \$101.00. Please save the date and be on the lookout for details on the havan as we get closer to the date.

Our sincerest apologies if we have offended anyone in asking about your membership status. Our intention is not to offend anyone but instead help clarify and make our manner of operating the temple more transparent. This year our goal is to manage the day to day operations of the Temple in an efficient and consistent manner, while following those rules and objectives set forth in our Constitution.

Your membership dues are necessary for the smooth functioning of the Temple and allow you avail yourself of the various services offered only to Temple members. Participating in youth group, participating in balshala, and scheduling a private puja or temple rental, are just a few perks of being a Temple member. If you have any questions or concerns in this regard, please email at president@augustahts.org.

Thank you for your patience and continued support, as we move towards efficiency and transparency.

Mukti Patel,

President HTS

Thank you to Praful uncle and Vinod uncle for preparing the Holi Dahan. Thank you to Mukesh (Mukhi) uncle, Sureshbhai (Sunny) Patel, Alpesh Patel, Ajay Patel, Jitendra Patel, and Chirag Patel and their respective families for sponsoring the food and supplies for Holi. A very special thank you to all the volunteers that assisted in preparing, setting up, and cleaning up after the event.

Thank you to Youth Group for sponsoring, setting up, and cleaning up after Holi Panchami.

SHRI GANESH HAVAN APRIL 22ND 8:00 AM

Keeping in tradition with previous years, HTS is hosting the annual Havan in the month of April. This year the principal deity is Shri Ganesh. The Havan will start at **8:30 am** in the **morning** of the **April 22nd, 2018**. **Sponsorship starting at \$101.00** upwards.

Contact

Puja/Havan: Nimitha Shetty and Srinivasan Thiyagarajan,

Maha Prasad sponsor/Preparation: Gita Shah



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ANNUAL GRADUATION AWARDS AND PUJA MAY 20TH 10 AM

If you are interested in participating in the graduation puja, please contact Sheila Kamath at sheila731@yahoo.com for more details on the puja. The cost for the puja is \$50.00 and parents are kindly requested to help prepare mahaprasad. *You do not have to be an active member of HTS in order to participate in the graduation puja.*

Scholarships will be awarded for highest ACT/SAT score, Best Youth Group volunteer, and Best Essay. *At the request of the families that created these scholarships, you must be a member of HTS in order to qualify.* In addition, you must be a graduating high school student in order to qualify for the highest ACT/SAT score and Best Essay scholarships.

This year's essay topic is: Select two (2) characteristics of a hero/heroine from a Hindu epic and explain how these qualities influence our daily lives. The essay must be typed, double spaced, contain 350 words or less, and emailed to Sheila Kamath on or before **May 7th**.

CONDOLENCES

The HTS mourns the loss of following community members:

Dr. K. Ramesh Pai, Father of Sheila Kamath and Father-in-law Dr. Vinayak Kamath.

Mr. Kalwant R. Jindal, Husband of Kaushalya Bansal and Father of Sanjeev, Rajeev and Indu Jindal.

Mrs. Mridula Mittal, Mother of Neeru Gupta and Mother-in-Law of Mukesh Gupta

Mrs. Meenakshi Pichumani, Mother of Brinda Balan and Mother-in-Law of Shankar Balan

May god provide eternal peace to the departed soul and provide solace to the family members to bear the loss of the loved one.

YOUTH GROUP CORNER

Our youth group has been very involved in the community this year and we have many plans for this spring as well! Most recently, we volunteered at the local soup kitchen and we will continue to participate in these in the following months. Our first upcoming event for this spring will be the Annual Holi festival at Reddy Gardens on March 4th. There will be light snacks, refreshments, and colors all around! We also plan to take part in a planting project by planting trees and flowers at Reddy Gardens and around the temple. We have been giving presentations pertaining to poojas and are excited to continue to present more about Hinduism to Balashala kids and at 3rd Sunday poojas. This year, our major service project is associated with Rise Against Hunger and we plan to reach our goal of 10,000 food packets by the end of spring. In order to reach this goal, we hope to collect around \$3000 dollars in donations for a meal packaging event day in June. On April 21st, we are having our annual fundraiser performance, named Dhamaka, to raise money for a charity as well, so make sure to come and support us!

The efforts of the young generation were very much appreciated by the Golden Harvest food bank on HTS [facebook page](#). Thank you!! for putting the community on CSRA map.
HTS



More photos on [HTS facebook](#)

HTS COMMUNITY OUTREACH

We had a great turn out on Feb.4th Soup Kitchen service project. Nineteen volunteers showed up on a rainy day and brought sunshine in the hearts of many :). Adults cooked a typical southern meal and the youth group kids along with HTS adult volunteers helped to serve the prepared food, washed dishes and cleaned the dining area after the service was completed. The Golden Harvest team enjoyed watching us say the Hindu food prayer “Brahmarpanam” prior to serving the food to all. “Satisfaction” was the take-away for our volunteers present! Pictures are posted on [Hindu Temple Society](#) Facebook page.

The next one coming up is on Sunday, April 1st. We will certainly need MANY MORE helping hands as it is the start of the Masters week and I foresee many to be traveling out of town. So, if you are planning to be in town, WE NEED YOUR HELP! Please reach out to let me know your availability. We are in need of (i) kitchen help and (ii) dining servers. Kindly note that kitchen volunteers need to be 18 years of age or older while dining servers need to be at least 13 years old. Also, feel free to pass on the word to friends and families who maybe interested to help out at this service project undertaking by HTS. Interested in volunteers, please contact Meena Arun at nacha.bala@gmail.com or [919-757-1088](tel:919-757-1088).

Casteism in India Ramchandra Reddy

Lately there have been several articles in Indian news publications in the U.S. [as well as a book review of Sujatha Gidla's *Ants Among Elephants: An Untouchable Family and the Making of Modern India* in the December issue of *Khabar*] about the caste system in India, some misleading the readers. One writer was wrong in saying that casteism is not mentioned in Hindu scriptures. Another writer was correct in noting that it's laid down in the Gita and other Vedic scriptures. However, he stopped short of providing any excerpt and/or explanation of what the scriptures say about the caste system, thus leading readers to believe that the present caste system is traditionally approved by the Hindu religion.

I have not had the privilege to read all the Vedic scriptures that this gentleman listed, but let me quote what Krishna says in the Gita: "*Caturvarnyam maya srrstam gunakarma vibhagachha*," which literally means "The fourfold caste was created by me [referring to Krishna himself] by the different distribution of *guna* [attributes] and *karma* [deeds]." He repeats the divisions once again in chapter 18, in the slokas 42, 43, and 44. He describes the duties of the four *varnas* [classes] as the division by *svabhavajam*, one's behavior.

As time went by, these four classes expanded into numerous castes, also known as *varnas*, based on the trades they practiced. The Greek writer Megasthenes, who visited India during the Maurya period, recorded seven *varnas*: the Philosophers, Husbandries (farmers), Soldiers, Overseers, Councilors and Assessors, Shepherds and Neat herds [cowherds], and Artisans, which included carpenters, blacksmiths, and goldsmiths along with the people who did the lowest professions, known as untouchables (whom Mahatma Gandhi called Harijans, people of God).

In the medieval ages and during Muslim rule, there was not much emphasis on the caste system, but the British Raj encouraged the continuity of the caste system by favoring some groups with higher status and giving them titles and *jagirs* (land grants), and caste divisions proliferated literally into hundreds.

Reformers such as Dayanand Saraswati and, of course, Gandhi vehemently advocated against the system and discrimination based on caste. The Indian constitution made it illegal after independence, yet provided a reservation system for the lowest in availing of public education, jobs, etc. As India is transforming, one might expect caste to dissolve—unfortunately that is not the situation. The menace of caste is very much prevalent, especially when it comes to marriage, and more so in politics, similar to the race situation in the U.S.

Note: The letter was originally published in *Khabar Magazine* is reproduced here with permission from the publisher.

TEMPLE SCHEDULE

TEMPLE HOURS: 8-10 AM AND 6-8 PM

TEMPLE IS CLOSED ON EVERY THURSDAY AND LAST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH

Monday	7 pm	Shiva Pooja
Tuesday	6:45 pm	Hanuman Chalisa
Wednesday	6:45 pm	Krishna Archana
Thursday		Priest Day off
1st Friday	7 pm	Devi Puja
Friday's	6:15 pm	Krishna Chanting
1st Saturday	9 am	Karthikeya Puja
2nd Saturday	9 am	Venketashwara Puja
3rd Sunday	10 am	Monthly Puja
2nd & 4th Sunday	2 pm	Jain Puja