



Diwali and What It Means to the Hindu Temple of St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador

Every year, as the leaves fall and the days grow shorter, the Hindu Temple of St. John's begins to sparkle with light, colour, and excitement. For our small but vibrant community, **Diwali — the Festival of Lights — is more than a celebration.** It is a reminder of hope, togetherness, and the power of light to overcome darkness. It is also a time when our temple feels truly alive — with music, food, and laughter filling every corner.

The Spirit of Diwali

The word *Diwali* comes from the Sanskrit *Deepavali*, meaning “a row of lights.” Across India and around the world, it marks the triumph of light over darkness, good over evil, and knowledge over ignorance. Many celebrate the return of Lord Rama to Ayodhya after his victory over Ravana, while others worship Goddess Lakshmi for prosperity and well-being.

However, here in St. John's, Diwali carries an even deeper meaning. For many families far from their hometowns in India and other parts of the world, it is a chance to reconnect — to feel close to their roots, to celebrate culture and faith, and to pass on traditions to the next generation.

A Celebration that Brings Our Community Together

At the Hindu Temple of St. John's, Diwali preparations begin weeks in advance. Volunteers and families come together to decorate the temple with strings of lights and colorful rangoli patterns. The smell of incense fills the air, mixing with the comforting aroma of home-cooked sweets like *laddus*, *barfi*, and *Gulab jamun* — all lovingly prepared and shared among friends.

On the night of Diwali, the temple glows with hundreds of small *diyas* (oil lamps), each one representing a prayer, a memory, or a hope for the future. Families gather in the prayer hall for *puja*, singing *bhajans* together and offering devotion to Goddess Lakshmi. Children often perform plays or sing traditional songs, and watching them brings smiles to everyone's faces. After the prayers, everyone shares a warm *prasad* meal, sitting side by side — elders, children, students, and newcomers. It is a simple but powerful reminder that Diwali is as much about people as it is about rituals.

What Diwali Means to Our Community



For our temple community, Diwali is a time to reflect on what truly matters — kindness, unity, and gratitude. Many of us who live here in Newfoundland are far from our extended families, but during Diwali, the temple becomes our home. It is where we laugh, pray, and celebrate together. It is where our children learn about their culture, and where elders share stories that keep our traditions alive.

Lighting a *diya* at the temple feels special — especially here, surrounded by the Atlantic winds and Newfoundland snow. It is a small but mighty act of faith. It reminds us that light and hope can thrive anywhere, even in the farthest corners of the world.

A Festival that Welcomes Everyone

One of the most beautiful things about Diwali in St. John's is how it brings people together from all walks of life. Every year, the temple opens its doors to visitors from across the city — friends, neighbors, students, and families of different faiths who come to celebrate with us. Through shared meals, music, and storytelling, Diwali becomes not only a Hindu celebration but a universal message of peace, compassion, and joy.

Light Beyond the Lamps

Diwali at the Hindu Temple of St. John's reminds us that light does not just come from lamps or candles — it comes from people. It shines in the way we help one another, the way we welcome newcomers, and the way we share our traditions with pride.

As we light our *diyas* this year, we celebrate not only Lord Rama's return to Ayodhya or the blessings of Goddess Lakshmi, but also the light within each of us — the light that connects our community and brightens our city.

Diwali reminds us that no matter where we are, the spirit of faith, gratitude, and love will always find a way to shine.