

The occasion of divine shelter: Govardhan Puja

*saptāham evācyuta-hasta-paṅkaje, bhṛṅgāyamānaṁ phala-mūla-kandaraiḥ
saṁsevyamānaṁ harim ātma-vṛndakair, govardhanādrim śirasā namāmi*

Girirāja Govardhana rested like a bee upon the lotus hand of Acyuta for seven days. He expertly serves Śrī Hari and Śrī Hari's dear associates by providing them with fruits, roots, and caves. I bow my head and offer praṇāma unto that Govardhana.



Govardhan Puja holds a profound significance, symbolizing Krishna's protective shelter in our lives. It serves as a beautiful reminder that when the storms of life surround us, Krishna himself stands as our guardian. The glorious tale of Govardhan reveals Krishna's divine wisdom and merciful nature. When the vrajvasis experienced the wrath of Indra by continuous heavy rains, Krishna effortlessly lifted the Govardhan on his little finger for 7 days. In a spirit of deep devotion, ISKCON Pittsburgh embraced this holy festival with immense enthusiasm. Devotees joined hands to meticulously adorn Govardhan with an array of food offerings, including rice, fruits, vegetables, and dry fruits. Their collective efforts resulted in a captivating miniature replica of Sri Sri Giriraj ji, captivating the hearts of all who witnessed it.

Following the Govardhan Parikrama, devotees had the opportunity to participate in Deep Dan, a soulful offering of lamps to Sri Sri Radha Damodar, accompanied by spirited kirtan and arti. The evening concluded with a delectable prasadam feast. Each devotee received the boundless blessings of Sri Sri Radha Krishna on this auspicious occasion.

VAISHNAVA CALENDAR (December)

Dec 8	Utpanna Ekadasi (fast from grains & beans)
Dec 9	Break fast 07:31 - 10:38 (Daylight saving not considered)
Dec 22	Moksada Ekadasi (fast from grains & beans), Advent of Srimad Bhagavad-gita
Dec 23	Break fast 07:40 - 10:46 (Daylight saving not considered)
Dec 26	Katyayani vrata ends
Dec 27	Narayana Masa
Dec 30	Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura Disappearance (Fasting till noon)

Tulasi Vivha

Tulasi is auspicious in all respects. Simply by seeing, touching, remembering, praying to, bowing before, hearing about or sowing this tree, there is always auspiciousness. Anyone who comes in touch with the Tulasi tree in the above-mentioned ways lives eternally in the Vaikuntha world.

On 26th November, devotees came together to celebrate the auspicious festival of Tulsi Vivah at Krishna prabhuji and Madahavi mataji's place. The Tulasi Vivah celebration mesmerized everyone's heart. The devotees adorned Tulasi devi with saree, beautiful jewelry and flower garlands. They bathed shaligram and deity of lord Vishnu and dressed the deity with dhoti, garland and other decorations. The sacred proceedings included Kanya Sampradanam, Mala Dharanam, Sindhur Danam, Mangal Sutra Dharanam, Vastra Bandhanam, Saptapadi Grahanam, amongst other rituals. Tulasi Devi's wedding signifies the beginning of the opportune phase. It is said in our scriptures that whoever, with devotion, welcomes Tulasi Devi, collects her leaves, or installs her along with lord Vishnu achieves liberation, the abode of the Lord and enjoys along with Shri Hari.



36 Week Systematic Srimad Bhagavad Gita Study

In continuation to the Science of Self-Realization (7 Session Srimad Bhagavad Gita course), ISKCON Pittsburgh launched a 36-Week Systematic Srimad Bhagavad Gita Study course. The advanced and in-depth sessions of the course aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of each chapter of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita, offering key insights on practical implementation in our fast-paced modern lives. Classes are scheduled online every Monday evening 8.30 pm - 9.30 pm EST, ensuring participants gain a fresh perspective at the beginning of each week.

The first session attracted more than 25 participants from varied age groups. Everyone recited one shloka each from 1st chapter, followed by in-depth understanding of each shloka.

People took home 3 major learnings from first half of the Chapter 1:

- 1) Don't be indecisive like Dhristrastra. Make decisions timely and wisely.
- 2) Arrogance is the major cause of self-destruction as understood from Duryodhan's behavior.
- 3) Make your home a dharmakshetra by chanting Krishna's holy name.

HG Shyamsundar Prabhuji, the speaker, addressed participants' questions with utmost clarity. For those interested in joining these enlightening sessions, please contact 412-888-9577 or fill out the registration form at <https://forms.gle/5LD6VubC9uS4DSG88>. These sessions serve as a platform to inspire individuals to derive meaningful insights from the teachings of Srimad Bhagavad Gita.

DAMODAR MONTH 2023 CELEBRATIONS

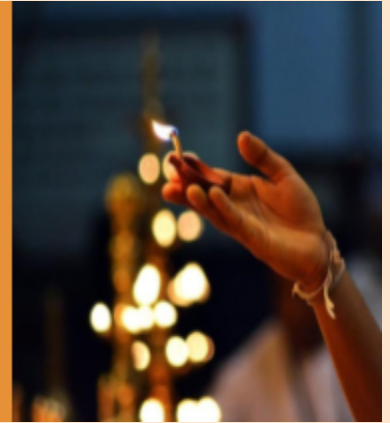
Lighting our path to spiritual world: Kartik DeepDan

In the auspicious month of Kartik, ISKCON Pittsburgh Devotees came together to organize Deep Dan each day.

This collective offering of lamps not only purified the hearts of the devotees but also empowered everyone to embrace the spiritual essence of this purifying month. Deep Dan is a divine opportunity to connect with Krishna.

Devotees took the initiative to organize Deep Dan in the sanctity of their own homes.

A resounding haribol to all the dedicated organizers for their commitment and efforts in facilitating these sacred gatherings!



In the Skanda Purana it is stated that as Satya-yuga is the best of yugas, as the Vedas are the best of scriptures, as Ganga is the best of rivers, so Kartik is the best of months, the most dear to Lord Sri Krishna. A person who offers a ghee lamp to Lord Krishna during Kartik burns away a collection of sins as big as Mt. Meru or Mt. Mandara, will not take birth again in this world and attains to the eternal spiritual realm where there is no suffering. Even if there are no mantras, no piety, and no purity, everything becomes perfect by such an offering.

WEEKLY EVENTS

Saturday Program

This month's Saturday program was a spiritual journey filled with divine insights as we joyously celebrated the Damodar Month!

~In the Bhagavatam class for parents, we delved into profound teachings, reaching as far as Canto 8, Chapter 8. The discussions centered around the transformative power of surrendering and remembering God, fostering unwavering faith in the cosmic divine energy, and recognizing the eternal spiritual truths that inspire and uplift devotees.

~The Drama class completed with the recording of Sudama Balaram drama along with practice of two others. The kids enthusiastically participate and engage in learning through fun with these dramas.

~The L1, L2 & Youth Sanskul classes had insightful lessons the whole month of Damodar.

As we approach the end of the semester, the culmination of these classes promises to be a reflection of the collective journey of knowledge and devotion undertaken over the past months. May these divine learnings continue to inspire and guide us in our spiritual pursuits.

SYSTEMATIC GITA STUDY

Understand the depth of Gita in 36 weeks

Speaker: HG Shyamsundar Das

- Each class will cover half a chapter of the Bhagavad Gita
- Learn the themes and key concepts
- Get practical understanding to foster personal growth

8.30pm to 9.30pm
Every Monday
Online on zoom

Contact: Sanskriti at 412-888-9577

Friday Bhakti Vrksa

The Friday program encompasses a rich variety of elements to provide a holistic spiritual experience which includes soulful kirtans, bhagavad gita lessons and japa meditations. There is a dedicated segment for children that includes sloka learning, Vedic stories, occasional drama performances. Collective spiritual activities are done followed by delicious dinner prasadam. Join us on Fridays for an immersive spiritual journey that encompasses wisdom, devotion, and joy!

Contact Vanamali Gopal Das (4127253442) & Gokulpriya Devi Dasi (4124011308) for more details!

Time - 7pm - 9pm

Address - 345 Lorlita In
Pittsburgh PA 15241

Thursday Kirtans

In the midst of life's hectic pace, solace awaits at the ISKCON Pittsburgh Kirtan Center. Here, amid the hustle and bustle, one can immerse themselves in the tranquil vibrations of ancient chants, creating a haven for spiritual rejuvenation. Join these sessions to experience the magic!

Special thanksgiving Thursday kirtan followed by a scrumptious ekadashi feast was organized on 23 november 2023 which attracted more than 50 people!

Youtube: @pittsburghkirtancenter9380

Instagram: @steelcitykirtans

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/145947672174296/>

**Become part of
ISKCON Pittsburgh family:**

http://weblink.donorperfect.com/ISKCONPittsburgh_member

The Perfect Birthday Gift: Krishna's blessings

Special days like birthdays and anniversaries have a powerful divine energy. When collective prayers of devotees are offered, the impact is magnified. ISKCON Pittsburgh has fervently started celebrating weekly birthdays as part of Saturday programs. Birthday puja and celebration is done for members of all ages to evoke Krishna and Radharani's blessings!

Enchant your and your loved ones birthdays and other special days by becoming members:

http://weblink.donorperfect.com/ISKCONPittsburgh_member

ISKCON Pittsburgh will perform birthday puja on your behalf and send Krishna's prasadam to you and your family! Invoke Lord Krishna to bless you with his love and care on special occasions.

Engage in devotional services that attract all auspiciousness on your birthday or anniversary.

ISKCON Pittsburgh prays for these wonderful devotees who had their birthday in the month of November!

Ramakrishna Prabhu
Keshav Panangipalli
Kishan & Keshav Nakrani
Suresh Prabhu



Sizzle & Spice
Vegan & Vegetarian Restaurant

Opening Soon for Pittsburgh Community

*Serving Delicious Vegetarian Food
Salads, Grains, Curry, Idli & Dosa,
Smoothies and much more!*

Starting Student Lunchbox program soon!

3513 Butler Street, Pittsburgh, PA, 15201

CONSTRUCTION IN FULL SWING!



Harinam Lunch box Program for University of Pittsburgh and Carnegie University Students:

Food delivered to "Schenley Drive Extension" opposite to Cathedral, Below is the Google form-

Please forward it your friends and children

<https://forms.gle/prG8Nd3RqaE29ZcC8>

THANK YOU!

A big haribol to all our devotees and members for a month full of devotional service. This month has been a testament to the power of collective devotional service, and we extend our heartfelt gratitude to each participant for their dedicated efforts. Together, we have maximized the sanctity of the Damodar Month by organizing the auspicious Deep Dan every day. ISKCON Pittsburgh expresses warm thanks to both organizers and participants for their invaluable contributions in making this initiative a success. The Govardhan Puja drew a large and joyous crowd of devotees. We are grateful to all the members who contributed in adorning Sri Sri Giriraj ji with food offerings.

As we conclude this month of devotion, ISKCON Pittsburgh offers prayers to Sri Sri Radha Damodar for the well-being and happiness of all. May the blessings of the divine continue to shower upon our community, fostering growth, unity, and spiritual prosperity.

We believe it is essential to keep you, our valued supporters, informed about all our finances. Here we share ISKCON Pittsburgh financial statement for the month of November.

Income				Expenditure			
Total		Income \$464.00		Total		Expenditure -\$4,339.96	
Number	Date	Item	Income amount	Number	Date	Item	Expenditure Amount
1	11/30/23	Donation Box	\$464.00	1	11/17/23	Electricity Bill	-\$37.04
2				2	11/22/23	Electricity Bill	-\$38.49
3				3	11/6/23	Cake	-\$90.00
4				4	11/15/23	Mortgage @locust Rd	-\$1,500.00
5				5	11/15/23	Mortgage @downtown	-\$2,414.00
6				6	11/29/23	Water bill	-\$10.43
7				7	11/30/23	October Church expens	-\$250.00
8							
		Total	\$464.00			Total	-\$4,339.96

How can I donate?

Please donate generously to support and grow the activities for our community. You can make a contribution via Zelle - email id - iskconpgh108@gmail.com

Contact Info: Sanskriti V Walia at 412-888-9577