

# LIVING THE GOLDEN RULE



**Building bridges of understanding  
and respect between people of all beliefs.**

## **NCCJ's 2020 INTERFAITH CALENDAR Holidays and Festivals**



## JANUARY

1	New Year's Day	F
	Feast of the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God	RC
6	Epiphany	P, RC
7	Feast of the Nativity (Orthodox Christmas)	O
13	Birth of Guru Gobind Singh	S
15	Maghi	S
19	Feast of the Epiphany	O
20	Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday (Observed)	F

## FEBRUARY Black/African American History Month

1	Imbolc (Northern Hemisphere)	W
5	Chinese New Year	Bu
10	Tu Bishvat	J
14	St. Valentine's Day	RC, I
15	Nirvana Day / Parinirvana Day	Bu, S
17	President's Day	F
25	Shrove Tuesday	P, RC
26-29	Intercalary/Ayyam-i-ha *	Ba
26	Ash Wednesday	P, RC

## MARCH Women's History Month

1-19	Nineteen Day Fast Period	Ba
2	Clean Monday (Lent Begins)	O
9	Holika Dahan	H
10	Holi	H
10-12	Holar Mohalla	S
17	St. Patrick's Day	RC
19	Ostara / Spring Equinox (Northern Hemisphere)	W
20	Naw Rúz*	Ba
22	Lailat al Miraj	Mu

## APRIL

5	Palm Sunday	P, RC, O
8	Buddha Day (Visakha Puja, Vesak)	Bu
	Lailat al Bara-ah	Mu
9	Maundy Thursday	P, RC
9-16	Pesach*/Passover	J
10	Good Friday	F, P, RC
12	Easter	F, P, RC
13	Baisakhi/ Vaisakhi	S
17	Good Friday	O
19	Pascha/Easter	O
21	Easter	F, P, RC
	Lailat al Bara-ah*	Mu
	Yom HaShoah	J
21-May 2	Ridván*	B
24-May 24	Ramadan	Mu
29	Yom Ha'Atzmaut	J

## MAY Asian/Pacific Islander Month

1	Beltane (Northern Hemisphere)	W
19	Lailat al-Qadr	Mu
21	Ascension Day	P, RC
23	Declaration of the Báb*	Ba
	Eid al-Fir	Mu
25	Memorial Day (Observed)	F
28	Ascension Day	O
28	Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh *	Ba
29-30	Shavuot*	J
31	Pentecost	P, RC

## JUNE LGBTQ+ Pride Month

7	Trinity Sunday	P, RC
11	Corpus Christi	RC
14	All Saints Day	O
16	Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev	S
19	Juneteenth	I
21	Litha / Summer Solstice (Northern Hemisphere)	W

## JULY

4	Independence Day	F
5	Ashlha Puja	Bu
9	Martyrdom of the B'ab *	Ba

24	Pioneer Day	Mo
30	Tisha B'av	J
31	Eid al-Adha (US Date)	Mu

## AUGUST Physically Challenged Awareness Month

1	Lughnassadh	W
11	Krishna Janmashtami	H
15	Assumption of Blessed Virgin Mary	RC
	Dormition of the Theotokos	O
20	Al Hijra/Muharram	Mu

## SEPTEMBER Hispanic/Latino Heritage Month

7	Labor Day	F
19-20	Rosh Hashanah	J
22	Mabon / Autumn Equinox (Northern Hemisphere)	W
28	Yom Kippur*	J
29	Ahura*	Mu

## OCTOBER Diversity Awareness Month + LGBTQ+ History Month

3-4	Sukkot	J
10	Shemini Atzeret*	J
11	Simchat Torah*	J
17	Navaratri	H
18	Birth of the B'ab	Ba
19	Birth of Bahá'u'llah	Ba
20	Installation of Scriptures of Guru Granth Sahib	S
22	Simchat Torah *	J
18	Mawlid al Nabi	Mu
31	Halloween/All Hallows Eve	I

## NOVEMBER American Indian/Native American Heritage Month

1	All Saints Day	P, RC
	Samhain	W
2	All Souls Day	RC
11	Veterans Day	F
14	Diwali	H, S
15	Nativity Fast Begins	O
25	Day of the Covenant *	Ba
26	Thanksgiving	F
27	Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Bahá	Ba

## DECEMBER Universal Human Rights Month

1-24	Advent	P, RC
8	Bodhi Day	Bu
	Immaculate Conception of Mary	RC
11-18	Hanukkah	J
21	Yule / Winter Solstice (Northern Hemisphere)	W
25	Christmas*	F, O, P, RC
26-Jan.1	Kwanzaa	I

### Non-working holidays and major holidays for Abrahamic Faiths:

January 6 — Epiphany [P, RC]  
 January 7 — Christmas [O]  
 January 19 — Epiphany [O]  
 April 10 — Good Friday [P, RC, O]  
 April 12 — Easter [P, RC]  
 April 9 (sundown) - April 16 (sundown) — Pesach (Passover) [J]  
 May 28 (sundown) - 30 (sundown) — Shavuot [J]  
 May 23 (sundown) - 24 (sundown) — Eid al-Fitr [Mu]  
 July 30(sundown) - 31 (sundown) — Eid al-Adha [Mu]  
 September 18 (sundown) - 20 (sundown) — Rosh Hashanah [J]  
 September 27 (sundown) - 28 (sundown) — Yom Kippur [J]  
 October 2 (sundown) - 4 (sundown) — Sukkot [J]  
 October 10 (sundown) - 12 (sundown) — Shemini Atzeret [J]  
 October 11 (sundown) - 13 (sundown) — Simchat Torah [J]  
 December 25 — Christmas [P, RC]

F indicates a federally observed holiday in the United States  
 \* indicates that observance begins at sundown the day before this date  
**DISCLAIMER:** This publication does not include all major religious/cultural holidays. Due to variations in regional and cultural practices and the use of different calendars, some dates of holidays may vary from these listed above.

## KEY TO RELIGIOUS GROUPS

Bahá'í	Ba
Buddhist	Bu
Hindu	H
Interfaith	I
Jewish	J
Mormon	Mo
Muslim	Mu
Orthodox Christian	O
Protestant Christian	P
Roman Catholic	RC
Sikh	S
Wiccan / Pagan	W

### RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL OBSERVANCES

This calendar is a resource designed to encourage public awareness of the diverse religious and ethnic groups in our community. However, because of the great number of religious, ethnic, and cultural groups who reside in the United States, we recognize that this resource cannot provide an exhaustive list for all of our faith traditions.

Many people may find the calendar helpful as it identifies opportunities for discussion about different religious and faith practices. It also serves as a reminder of those religious observances that many may wish to attend, and therefore can aid in the planning and scheduling of events and meetings. **Some civic holidays and other well-known celebrations are not included.**

**ADVENT** Period of four weeks in which Christians prepare for Christmas.

**AL HIJRA (MUHARRAM)** Remembrance of the migration of Muhammad (Peace be upon Him) and followers to Medina.

**ALL HALLOWS EVE (HALLOWEEN)** Also known as Samhain, the ancient Celtic festival is a celebration of the end of the harvest season. The ancient Gaels believed that on October 31st, the boundary between the living and the deceased dissolved. This day is also celebrated as the eve of All Saints Day.

**ALL SAINTS DAY** Celebration of lives of all the saints, especially those who do not have a special day.

**ALL SOULS DAY** Day of prayer, remembrance and intercession for the dead.

**ASCENSION DAY** Celebrates Jesus' ascent into heaven.

**ASCENSION of Abdu'l-Bahá** marking the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in 1921.

**ASCENSION OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH** A commemoration of the death of Bahá'u'lláh.

**ASH WEDNESDAY** Begins Christian Lent; name derives from symbolic use of ashes to signify penitence.

**ASHURA** A one day fast to commemorate God freeing The Children of Israel and Moses from Pharaoh.

**CORPUS CHRISTI** This is a feast in honor of the institution of the Eucharist during the Last Supper.

**AYYÁM-I-HÁ** This period adjusts the Bahá'í year to the solar calendar. It leads to the 19 day fast; each day of Ayyám-i-Há is marked by a different virtue like hospitality, gift giving or charity.

**BELTANE** Festival to celebrate the beginning of summer.

**BIRTH OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH** Commemorates the birth of the founder of the Bahá'í faith in 1817.

**BIRTH OF B'ÁB** Anniversary of the birth of one of the twin prophet founders of the Bahá'í faith.

**BIRTH OF GURU GOBIND SINGH** Anniversary of the birth of the tenth guru.

**BODHI DAY** Celebration of the enlightenment of Buddha, c. 596 B.C.E.

**BUDDHA DAY (VISAKHA PUJA)** Celebration of the birth of Buddha.

**CHRISTMAS** Celebration of the birth of Christ.

**DAY OF THE COVENANT** Celebration of the covenant given in the last will and testament of Bahá'u'lláh.

**DIWALI (DEEPAVALI)** Festival of Lights; one of four seasonal celebrations in India.

**DORMITION OF THE THEOTOKOS** The Orthodox Christian commemoration of the death and burial of the Virgin Mary.

**EASTER** Celebration of the resurrection of Christ.

**EPIPHANY** End of the 12 days of Christmas; celebrates visit of the three kings to baby Jesus; especially important to Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholics.

**FEAST OF THE SOLEMNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF GOD** A celebration of the holiness of Mary as the chosen bearer of Jesus.

**FOUR CHAPLAINS SUNDAY** Commemoration of the four Chaplains of Jewish and Christian traditions who gave their life jackets to others as a ship sank in the Atlantic Ocean during World War II.

**GOOD FRIDAY** The Friday of Jesus' crucifixion.

**HANUKKAH** Festival of lights; eight-day commemoration of the rededication of the Second Temple in 165 B.C.E. The eight candle Menorah is lighted.

**HOLA MOHALLA** A day to commemorate the valor and bravery of the Sikhs. This 3-day festival consists of mock battles, music and poetry reading.

**HOLI** Spring festival; a carnival occasion featuring bright colors, pilgrimages and bonfires.

**HOLIKA DAHAN** Celebrates the killing of Holika (the devil) by Vishnu.

**EID AL-ADHA** Festival of sacrifice; commemorates the faith of Abraham and the near sacrifice of Ishmael; as well as the Muslim Pilgrims making Hajj.

**EID AL-FITR** Festival of the breaking of the fast of Ramadan.

**IMBOLC** Festival celebrating the beginning of spring.

**IMMACULATE CONCEPTION** Day of celebrating the belief that Mary, mother of Jesus, was preserved from original sin all of her life.

**INSTALLATION OF THE GURU GRANTH SAHIB** Commemorates the installation of the Sikh scriptures by Guru Gobind Singh; these scriptures were installed as the perpetual guru.

**JUNETEENTH** Also known as *Freedom Day* or *Emancipation Day*, it commemorates the announcement of the abolition of slavery.

**KRISHNA JANMASHTAMI** Birthday of Lord Krishna. It falls on the 8th day of the dark half of the month of Bhadrapada (August-September). A 24-hour fast is observed on this day and is broken at midnight.

**KWANZAA** Seven day spiritual celebration of African-American values and traditions and their continued vitality. "Kwanzaa" is Swahili and means "first fruits of the harvest."

**LAILAT AL MIRAJ** Observance of Muhammad's (Peace be upon Him) night journey from Mecca to Jerusalem and his ascension to heaven

**LAILAT AL BARA'AH** Night of Forgiveness. A night of prayer to Allah for forgiveness of the dead. Preparation for Ramadan through intense prayer.

**LAILAT AL-QADR** Night of Destiny. First revelation of Qur'an to Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon Him). Observed during the last ten days of Ramadan.

**LITHA** Midsummer festival marking the summer solstice.

**LENT** Period of preparation for Easter, usually 40 days before. **Clean Monday** signifies the beginning of the Lenten period.

**LUGHNASADH** Festival celebrating the beginning of the harvest season.

**MABON** Harvest festival marking the autumnal equinox.

**MAGHI** Commemorates the battle in which 40 Sikhs (the Immortal Ones) laid down their lives for the guru (Guru Gobind Singh).

**MARTYRDOM OF THE B'ÁB** Anniversary of the martyrdom of the B'ab, the forerunner of Bahá'u'lláh, in 1850.

**MARTYRDOM OF GURU ARJAN DEV** Anniversary of the martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev in 1606 C. E., the fifth guru who had built the Golden Temple of Amritsar.

**MAUNDY THURSDAY** Also known as Holy Thursday, this day celebrates the institution of the Eucharist (or Holy Communion) at Jesus' Last Supper.

**MAWLID AL-NABI** Birthday of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon Him), c. 570 C. E.

**NAVARATRI** Hindu Festival of the divine mother honoring Durga, wife of Shiva, and seeking her blessings. Also observed as a celebration recalling the days of Lord Krishna.

**NAW-RUZ** Bahá'í and Iranian New Year.

**NINETEEN DAY FAST** A fast observed by adult Bahá'ís in good health from sunrise to sundown.

**NIRVANA DAY** Commemorates the death of Buddha.

**OSTARA** Festival marking the spring equinox.

**PALM/PASSION SUNDAY** Celebrates the arrival of Jesus into Jerusalem during Passover. This also commemorates the beginning of Holy Week.

**PENTECOST** Fifty days after Easter, this time celebrates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon early Christians following the ascension of Jesus.

**PESACH (PASSOVER)** Marks the deliverance of the Jews from slavery in Egypt; Seder ceremonies retell the story and celebrate freedom.

**PIONEER DAY** Observance of the arrival of Brigham Young and early Mormon settlers in Salt Lake City, Utah.

**PURIM** Feast of Lots; celebrates the deliverance of Jews in ancient Persia from a plot to destroy them.

**RAMADAN** The ninth month in the Islamic calendar; 30 days of strict fasting from sunup to sundown in honor of the first revelations to the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon Him).

**RIDVAN** Commemorates the declaration of Bahá'u'lláh to his followers in 1863. Work is suspended for the 1st, 9th and 12th day.

## ADDITIONAL NOTES

- Dates of holidays and festivals were researched to the best of our abilities. These dates may vary depending on region and affiliation.
- Bahá'í, Jewish, and Muslim holidays begin at sunset on the evening before date listed.
- Buddhist, Hindu, and Sikh holidays may be observed at different times than those indicated here. The observance date depends on both religious group affiliation and region. For example, Buddha's birthday is one of the most widely celebrated of Buddhist holidays. However, no one date is accepted by all Buddhists. Thus, the observance of Buddha's birthday varies, as seen by the inclusion of Wesak, Bodhi Day, and Buddha Day in this calendar.
- Christians follow a number of different calendars depending on their denomination and/or region. This calendar includes dates for the Gregorian (Western) calendar, which is mostly followed by the Roman Catholic Church and Protestant denominations, as well as dates for the Orthodox New Calendar, which is the same as the Gregorian calendar for fixed holidays and observances but uses the Julian calendar for moveable feasts. The Orthodox New Calendar is primarily used by the Greek and Cypriot Orthodox Churches.

**ROSH HASHANAH** New Year; begins 10 days of penitence ending on Yom Kippur.

**SAMHAIN** Festival celebrating the end of the harvest season and the beginning of winter.

**SHAVUOT** Festival of Weeks; celebrates harvest of first fruits and commemorates the giving of the Torah and Commandments at Mt' Sinai.

**SHEMINI ATZERET** Eighth and last day of Sukkot.

**SIMCHAT TORAH** Joyous festival in which the reading of the Torah is completed and its first book begun again. Symbolized by singing, dancing and marching around the synagogue with Torah scrolls.

**ST. STEPHEN'S DAY** Day of remembrance for St. Stephen, the first Christian martyr.

**SUKKOT** Festival of Booths (or tabernacles) and the fall harvest.

**TISHA B'AV** A day of mourning and repentance in remembrance of the destruction of the First and Second Temples in Jerusalem.

**VAISAKHI** Anniversary of the creation of the Khalsa (the army of the Pure Ones) in 1699.

**WESAK** Commemoration of Buddha's birth, enlightenment, and death, celebrated on the day of the full moon of the sixth month in the Theravada tradition.

**WORLD RELIGION DAY** Day founded in 1950 by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States to address the need for religious unity.

**YOM HA-SHO'AH** Holocaust Remembrance Day. Memorializes the six million Jews who died in the Holocaust. Observance is not limited to Jews.

**YOM KIPPUR** Day of Atonement; a day of prayer, fasting and repentance.

- We recognize that for many Christians, the observance of days that commemorate the lives of saints is an integral part of their faith. Many of these days have not been included as part of this calendar because they are vast in number and observance differs greatly by region, denomination, and personal belief.
- Jewish dates in this calendar are generally in accordance with the Orthodox tradition. The length of some holidays and the extent to which they are observed vary according to denominational affiliation.
- Muslim holidays are subject to change because observance follows the lunar calendar, aligned with the phases and sightings of the moon.
- The Sikh calendar — their own Nanakshahi calendar — was adopted on March 14, 1999 and aligns with the Gregorian (Western) Calendar.
- [For more information on particular local or regional observances and traditions, please feel free to contact individual constituencies.](#)