

Religious Observances Fall Semester 2021 (August-December)

August

August 1 Lammas – Christian

Christian first fruits celebration observed by placing bread baked from the first harvest on the altar. From the Celtic Christian tradition. Note: The Southern Hemisphere observes this holiday on February 1st.

August 1 Fast in Honor of the Holy Mother of Jesus – Orthodox Christian

Begins the Orthodox Christian 14 day fasting period in preparation for the celebration of the Great Feast of the Dormition of the Virgin Mary.

August 6 Transfiguration Sunday – Christian

Christian commemoration of the experience on Mt. Tabor when Jesus' physical appearance became brilliant as his connection with traditional Jewish holy figures became evident to the disciples.

August 9-August 10 Hijra (New Year) – Islam

This is the first day of the month of Muharram which marks the time in 622 C.E. when Prophet Muhammad moved from Mecca to Medina.

August 15 Obon – Shinto

Japanese Buddhist festival to honor deceased ancestors. Involves lighting of bonfires, traditional meals, paper lanterns, and folk dances.

August 15 Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary – Christian

The Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary commemorates the death of Mary and her bodily assumption into Heaven. *Also known as the Dormition of the Mother God.

August 18 Ashura – Islam

The Day of Ashura commemorates, for Shi'a Muslims, a day of mourning for the martyrdom of Husayn ibn Ali, the grandson of the prophet Muhammad.

August 21 Raksha Bandhan – Hindu

Hindu festival honoring the loving ties between brothers and sisters in a family.

August 30 Krishna Janmashtami – Hindu

Hindu commemoration of the birth of Krishna – the 8th incarnation of the God Vishnu who took the form of Krishna to destroy the evil king Kansa.

September

September 6– September 8 Rosh Hashanah – Jewish

Rosh Hashanah marks the beginning of the Jewish New Year.

September 8 Nativity of Mary – Christian

This holiday, celebrated in the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches, celebrates the birth date of Mary, mother of Jesus.

September 9 Ganesh Chaturthi – Hindu

A Hindu festival honoring the God Ganesha who blesses with prosperity, prudence, and success.

September 11– September 19 Paryushan Parv – Jain

8-day festival signifying human emergence into a new world of spiritual and moral refinement. Recitations from Jain, sacred writing, and family exchange of cards & letters. Day 8 is the most important and focuses on forgiveness.

September 14 Holy Cross Day – Christian

A Christian day of recognition for the cross on which Jesus was crucified as a central symbol of the Christian religion.

September 15 - September 16 Yom Kippur – Jewish

Jewish day of atonement. This holiest day of the Jewish year is observed with strict fasting and ceremonial repentance.

September 19 – Anant Chaturdashi – Hindu

Marks the end of 11 days festival to celebrate God Ganesha.

September 20 – September 27 Sukkot – Jewish

Jewish Feast of Tabernacles celebrates the harvest and the protection of the people of Israel as they wandered in the wilderness dwelling in tents. Temporary dwelling places have leaves for a roof so the sky can be seen.

September 22 Equinox (Mabon) – Wiccan/Pagan

Mabon, falling in September in the Northern Hemisphere, is a celebration of the second harvest during the autumn equinox. When day and night are equal, it marks a balance between light and dark.

September 27 Meskel – Ethiopian Orthodox Christian

Ethiopian and Eritrean Orthodox Christian commemoration of the discovery of the True Cross by Queen Eleni (St. Helene) in the 4th-century a.d.

September 27 - September 28 Shemini Atzeret – Jewish

Jewish completion of the annual cycle of the reading of the Torah.

September 28 - September 29 Simchat Torah -Jewish

Jewish day to celebrate the reading of the Law. Synagogue service involves readings, processions, and the blessing of the children.

October

October 4 - Saint Francis Day – Christian

Christian recognition of service to people and appreciation of the natural world, as practiced by St. Francis and the Franciscan Monastic Order which he founded.

October 7 – October 14 Navaratri – Hindu

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.

October 12 Freethought Day – Free thinkers, Atheists, Agnostics and Humanists Celebration of free thinking and the importance of reason and evidence in decision making

October 15 Dasara – Hindu

Hindu celebration of victory and valor. Lord Rama is remembered as winning a victory over evil kind Ravana.

October 18 Mawlid an-Nabi – Islam

Islamic commemoration of the birthday of the prophet Muhammad, founder of Islam, in about 570 c.e. The prophet's teachings are read and religious meetings are held.

October 19 Birth of the Bab – Baha'i

Baha'i honoring the founder of the Babi religion, the forerunner to Baha'u'llah and the Baha'i faith.

October 31 Reformation Day – Protestant Christian

Anniversary of tradition and its emphasis on the place of the Bible and religious freedom. Public observation is the Sunday before October 31.

October 31 All Hallow's Eve – Christian

Christian celebration of mystery combining prayers and merriment involving children and families. It is a prelude to All Saint's Day.

November

November 1 – First Day of Native American Heritage Month. This month celebrates the people who inhabited the lands of what is now the United States thousands of years before settler colonizers arrived.

November 1 Samhain – Wiccan/Pagan

Samhain marks the beginning of the Pagan year; a time to search for wisdom and guidance.

Note: The Southern Hemisphere observes this holiday from April 30th through May 1st.

*November 1 All Saints Day – Christian and Eastern Orthodox

The Catholic and Protestant churches celebrate all believers, known and unknown, alive and dead. Note: The Eastern Church observes this holiday on a different date.

*November 2 Diwali – Hindu – Jain – Sikh

The Festival of Lights commemorates the triumph of the Good over the Evil and Light over Darkness. *Note: Different branches of this religion celebrate on different days.

November 2 All Soul's Day, "El Dia de los muertos" (Day of the Dead) (The day of the dead).

Christian day of prayers, remembrance, and intercession for the dead. Prayers of the faithful are seen as helping to cleanse the souls for the beatific vision of God in heaven.

November 7 Birth of Baha'u'llah – Baha'i

Baha'i celebration of the birth of their founder and teacher. Baha'u'llah is the Messenger of God. His teachings create the foundation of the Baha'i practice, which is the unity of people of all races and backgrounds.

November 19 Guru Nanak Dev Sahib's Birthday – Sikh

Day honoring the birth of the first Sikh teacher who lived from 1469-1539 c.e. There are sacred readings, prayers, hymns, and meals taken together.

November 24 Guru Tegh Bahadur Martyrdom – Sikh

Time of remembering the execution of Teg Bahadur by the Moghul Emperor in India.

November 25 Thanksgiving – Interfaith USA

Interfaith Celebration of the created earth. Celebrated in the USA.

November 25 Day of the Covenant – Baha'i

Baha'i celebration of the covenant given in the last will and testament of Baha'u'llah.

November 26 – Native American Heritage Day. This day celebrates the care for the land and its resources, and the care humans should have for one another.

November 28 –December 24 Advent – Christian

Time of preparation for observing the birth of Jesus Christ. Advent is observed with the lighting of candles, display of wreaths, and special ceremonies. Advent anticipates the coming again to earth of Jesus Christ.

November 27 Ascension of Abdu'l-Baha – Baha'i

Baha'i celebration of the rising of the spirit of Abdu'l-Baha to the heavenly dwelling.

November 28 - December 6 Hanukkah – Jewish

Hanukkah is an eight-day celebration during which Jews commemorate the victory of the Maccabees over the armies of Syria in 165 B.C.E. and the subsequent liberation and "rededication" of the Temple in Jerusalem.

November 30 Saint Andrew's Day – Christian

Christian observance of the coming of Christianity to the area now known as Scotland. The martyrdom of St. Andrew is remembered as the season of advent is about to begin. Note: The Eastern Hemisphere observes this holiday on December 13th.

December

December 6 Saint Nicholas Day – Christian

Celebration of the birth of Saint Nicholas, patron saint of children, and role model for gift giving. Many churches named for this saint, who is also the Dutch version of Santa Claus.

December 8 Rohatsu (Bodhi Day) – Buddhist

Rohatsu is the celebration of the enlightenment of the Buddha. A candle is lit every evening for thirty days, symbolic of enlightenment.

December 8 Immaculate Conception of Mary – Catholic Christian

The Immaculate Conception of Mary is the conception of the Virgin Mary without, according to the Roman Catholic Church, any stain of original sin.

December 12 Feast Day of Our Lady of Guadalupe – Catholic Christian

Catholic Christian honoring of the legendary appearance of the Virgin Mary near Mexico City in 1531 c.e.

December 16 – December 25 Posada Navidenas – Christian

The Hispanic Christian feast of The Lodgings commemorating the journey of Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem in preparation for the birth of Jesus.

December 21 Winter Solstice – Wiccan/Pagan

Yule is the time of greatest darkness and the longest night of the year. This time is celebrated as the “return of the Sun God” when He is reborn of the Goddess.

December 23 Humanlight Humanist: celebration of reason and human achievement; any time between the winter solstice and Christmas day, usually December 23. Celebrated among families and those in a freethought community.

December 24 Christmas Eve – Christian

Christian celebration of the arrival of Mary and Joseph in Bethlehem for the birth of Jesus. It is observed with worship, candle lighting, manger scenes, and festive meals.

December 25 Christmas – Christian

Christians celebrate Christmas Day as the anniversary of the birth of Jesus Christ.

December 26 - January 1 Kwanzaa – African American

A celebration of family, community, and culture.

December 28 Holy Innocents – Christian

Christian day of solemn memory of male children killed by King Herod in the attempt to destroy Jesus.