

Trinity College
Office of Spiritual
and Religious Life

2023-2024 Holy Days and Seasons
A Calendar of Religious Holidays

This document is offered by the Office of Spiritual and Religious Life as a resource to the Trinity College community. A special thank you goes out to Harvard Divinity School's Office of the Chaplain and Religious and Spiritual Life, the Jewish Federation of Hartford, and other partners for their assistance in compiling this resource. Please bring any errors to our attention.

This calendar is not an exhaustive list either of religious traditions or of the holidays observed in those traditions. If we have not included a religious tradition or major religious holiday of significance to you, please notify our office so that it can be included in future editions of this calendar.

While we have made extensive efforts to verify the accuracy of the information included here, some inaccuracies may remain. Please bring to our attention any you notice. The dates of some holidays, particularly those that are calculated according to a lunar calendar and rely on sightings of the New Moon. (e.g., Islamic holidays), vary according to region; other observances and dates (e.g., Buddhist holidays) very greatly across cultures and strands of a tradition.

Contact:

The Reverend Marcus George Halley, D.Min.
Chaplain to the College and Dean of Spiritual and Religious Life
E-mail: marcus.halley@trincoll.edu
Phone: 860-297-2013

Key

IA - Indigenous American
Bi - Bahá'í
Bd - Buddhism
C - Christianity
O - Orthodox Christian
P - Protestant Christian
RC - Roman Catholic Christian
Hd - Hinduism

Ja - Jainism
J - Judaism
LDS - Latter-Day Saints
MS - Modern Spiritualism
Sk - Sikhism
U - Unitarian Universalism
W/P - Wicca/Paganism
Z - Zoroastrianism

Is - Islam

July 2023

Green Corn Ceremony (or Stomp Dance) (IA)
Hopi Snake Dance (IA)
Mescalero Apache Mountain Spirit Dances (IA)
Sun Dance (IA)
1 Eid al-Adha ('Id Al Adha) ends* (Is)
3 Dharma Day (Asalha Pujā) (Bd)
3 Ghambar Maidyoshem ends (Z)
9 Martyrdom of the Bab* (Bi)

18 First of Muharram (Ra's al-Sanat Al Hijrayah)* (Is)
24 Pioneer Day (LDS)
26 Tisha B'Av* (J)
27 Ashurah ('Ashurah)* (Is)
31 Lammas/Lughnasa* (W/P)

August 2023

Green Corn Ceremony (or Stomp Dance) (IA)
Hopi Snake Dance (IA)

Sun Dance (IA)

15 Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (RC)
15 Dormition of the Theotokos (O)
30 Raksha Bandhan (Hd)

September 2023

Iroquois Green Corn Ceremony (IA)
Jicarilla Apache Ghost Dance (IA)
6 Krishna Janmashtami (Hd)

Trinity College Office of Spiritual and Religious Life

8 Feast of the Nativity of the Theotokos (O)

11–19 Paryushana Festival (Ja)

12–16 Ghambar Paitishem (Z)

15–17 Rosh Hashanah* (J)

18 Ganesh Chaturthi (Hd)

20–29 Das Laxana Festival (Ja)

23 Mabon (W/P)

24 Yom Kippur* (J)

26 Mawlid an-Nabi* (Is)

29 Sukkot begins* (J)

October 2023

Cherokee Great New Moon Festival (IA)

6 Shemini Atzeret* (J)

6 Sukkot ends* (J)

7 Simchat Torah* (J)

12–16 Ghambar Ayathrem (Z)

15 Birth of the Bab* (Bí)

15–23 Navaratri (Hd)

16 Birth of Baha'u'llah* (Bí)

20 Installation of Granth Sahib Ji as Guru (Sk)

23 Dussehra (Vijaya Dashami) (Hd)

31 Reformation Day (P)

31 Samhain* (W/P)

November 2023

1 All Saints' Day (P, RC)

2 All Souls' Day (RC)

12 Diwali (Dipavali) (Hd)

12 Diwali (Mahavir Nirvana) (Ja)

24 Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji (Sk)

25 Day of the Covenant* (Bí)

26 Guru Nanak's Birthday (Sk)

27 Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Baha* (Bí)

December 2023

Shalako Kachina Ceremony (IA)

3 Advent begins (P, RC)

7–15 Hanukkah* (J)

8 Bodhi Day (Rohatsu) (Bd)

8 Feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary (RC)

12 Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe (RC)

21 Yule (W/P)

24–25 Native American Church

25 Christmas (P, RC)

25 Feast of the Nativity of Jesus Christ (O)

26 Death of the Prophet Zarathustra (Z)

31 Ghambar Maidyarem begins (Z)

January 2024

Iroquois Midwinter Ceremony (IA)

4 Ghambar Maidyarem ends (Z)

6 Epiphany (P, RC)

6 Theophany (O)

17 Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh Ji (Sk)

24 Sadeh (Z)

24 Tu B'Shevat* (J)

February 2024

Iroquois Midwinter Ceremony (IA)

1 Imbolc* (W/P)

8 Laylat al-Isra'wa al-Mi'raj* (Is)

13 Vasant Panchami (Hd)

14 Ash Wednesday (P, RC)

15 Nirvana Day (Bd)

25 Laylat al-Bara'ah* (Is)

29 Nineteen Day Fast begins* (Bí)

March 2024

Eagle Dances (IA)

8 Maha Shivaratri (Hd)

11 Ramadan begins* (Is)

11 Sri Ramakrishna Jayanti (Hd)

16–20 Ghambar Hamaspathmaedem (Z)

18 Great Lent begins (O)

19 Naw Ruz (Noruz)* (Bí)

19 Nineteen Day Fast ends* (Bí)

19 Ostara (W/P)

21 Naw Ruz (Noruz) (Z)

23 Purim* (J)

24 Palm Sunday (P, RC)

25 Holi (Hd)

26 Birthday of Prophet Zarathustra (Khordad Sal) (Z)

28 Holy Thursday (P, RC)

29 Good Friday (P, RC)

31 Easter Sunday (P, RC)

31 Hydesville Day (MS)

31 Native American Church Easter

April 2024

Eagle Dances (IA)

6 Anniversary of the Founding of the Church (LDS)

6 Laylat al-Qadr* (Is)

9–12 Eid al-Fitr ('Id al-Fitr)* (Is)

13 Vaisakhi (Baisakhi) (Hd)

13 Vaisakhi (Sk)

16 Ramanavami (Hd)

19–30 Ridvan* (Bí)

21 Mahavir Jayanti (Ja)

22–30 Passover (Pesach)* (J)

28 Palm Sunday (O)

30 Beltane* (W/P)

30 Ghambar Maidyozarem begins (Z)

May 2024

Hopi Kachina Dances (IA)

2 Holy Thursday (O)

3 Holy Friday (O)

4 Ghambar Maidyozarem ends (Z)

5 Easter Sunday (Pascha) (O)

5 Yom HaShoah* (J)

9 Ascension of Jesus (P, RC)

15 Wesak (Buddha Day) (Bd)

19 Pentecost (P, RC)

22 Declaration of the Bab* (Bí)

27 Ascension of Baha'u'llah* (Bí)

June 2024

Hopi Kachina Dances (IA)

11 Shavuot* (J)

13 Ascension of Jesus (O)

15–18 Eid al-Adha ('Id Al Adha)* (Is)

16 Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev Ji (Sk)

21 Litha (W/P)

23 Pentecost (O)

27 Martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph

Smith and His Brother Hyrum (LDS)

29 Ghambar Maidyoshem begins (Z)

**asterisks indicate that the holiday begins (or ends, as indicated) at sundown on the calendar date listed celebrations vary significantly among cultures and communities.*

Christmas Prayer Meeting (IA)

Prayer Meeting (IA)

GLOSSARY

Advent: Period of four weeks in which Christians prepare for Christmas and meditate on the end of all time. In Western churches, the first Sunday of Advent marks that beginning of the Christian liturgical year. (C)

All Saints' Day: Christian celebration of the lives of all the saints, especially those not having a special day; Orthodox churches observe the day in mid-summer. (C)

All Souls' Day: Catholic Christian observance in memory of all the faithful who are deceased. In some Latin cultures, this day is known as "The Day of the Dead." (RC)

Trinity College

Office of Spiritual and Religious Life

Anniversary of the Founding of the Church: Annual World General Conference of the Church held on Saturday and Sunday closest to this date each year. (LDS)

Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Bahá: Commemorates 'Abdu'l-Bahá's death. (Bí)

Ascension of Baha'u'llah: Marks the anniversary of the death of the founder of the Bahá'í faith. Work is suspended on this day. (Bí)

Ascension of Jesus: The celebration of Jesus' ascension into heaven and enthronement as universal sovereign. It comes 40 days after Easter. The date observed by Protestants and Roman Catholics is different from the date observed by Orthodox Christians. (C)

Ash Wednesday: A special day of repentance observed by Protestant and Roman Catholic Christians to mark the beginning of Lent, the 40-day period (excluding Sundays) of prayer, repentance, and self-denial preceding Easter. The name derives from the practice of marking the faithful with ashes to signify penitence. (P, RC)

'Ashurah: For Sunni Muslims, it is a voluntary fast day. Many important events are believed to have occurred on this day, such as Noah's leaving the Ark and the freedom and departure of the Children of Israel from Egypt. For Shi'i Muslims, it is a time of mourning commemorating the martyrdom of Husain (the grandson of the Prophet Muham- mad) on the 10th day of the lunar month of Muharram. (Is)

Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary: Commemorates the assumption of Mary, mother of Jesus, into heaven. (RC)

Beltane: The final fertility festival, celebrating the Earth's fecundity and anticipating the power of the sun and the Earth in summer. (W/P)

Birth of the Bab: The anniversary of the birth of the Bab, the herald of the new age for Bahá'ís. The Shrine of the

Bab in Haifa, Israel, is part of the World Center of the Bahá'í faith. (Bí)

Birth of Baha'u'llah: The anniversary of the birth of Baha'u'llah, the founder of the Bahá'í faith. Work is suspended on this day. (Bí)

Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh Ji: Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh Ji (1666–1708). The 10th and final Sikhmaster, he created the Khalsa, the "Brotherhood of the Pure," and declared the Scriptures, the Adi 'Granth, to be the Sikh's Guru from that time on. (Sk)

Birthday of Prophet Zarathustra: The anniversary of the birth of the founder of the Zoroastrian faith. (Z)

Bodhi Day (Rohatsu): In the northern tradition, this is the anniversary of the Buddha's Enlightenment, ca. 596 B.C.E. In the southern tradition, the Buddha's Enlightenment is celebrated during Wesak. The dates and names of Buddhist celebrations vary significantly among cultures and communities. (Bd)

Cherokee Great New Moon Festival: October marks the beginning of the new year. (IA)

Christmas (Feast of the Nativity): Celebrates the anniversary of the birth (nativity) of Jesus. Dec. 25 is the date of this observance for Roman Catholic, Protestant, and many Orthodox Christian churches. In some Orthodox churches, Christmas falls on January 7. (C)

Das Laxana Festival (the Paryushana Festival of Jain Digambar Sect): A 10-day festival that is considered to be a holy convocation. During these days, Jains impose some restraints on their daily activities by fasting, meditation, and prayer. The last day of Paryushana is the most solemn occasion of forgiveness and the examination of one's own thoughts and feelings. On this day, Jains ask for forgiveness from their relatives and friends for any offense they may have committed by deed, word, or thought. (Ja)

Day of the Covenant: Celebrates the anniversary of the appointment of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the son of Baha'u'llah, as the Center of the Covenant. (Bí)

Death of Prophet Zarathustra: The anniversary of the death of the founder of the Zoroastrian faith. (Z)

Declaration of the Bab: Commemorates the day in 1844 on which he announced his identity as the Bab ("Gate"), the herald of the new age. (Bí)

Dharma Day: Commemorates the Buddha's first teaching following his enlightenment. The date and name of this Buddhist celebration varies significantly among cultures and communities. (Bd)

Diwali (Dipavali): Perhaps the most popular of all Hindu festivals, also known as the Festival of Lights, it is dedicated to the Goddess Kali in Bengal and to Lakshmi, the Goddess of Wealth, in the rest of India. As with several other festivals, Diwali is associated with one of the stories about the destruction of evil by Vishnu in one of his many manifestations. In Jainism, where the festival is also known as Mahavira Nirvana, Diwali celebrates the attainment of Moksa by Lord Mahavira. A burning lamp symbolizes the "light of knowledge" that dispels the darkness of delusion and ignorance. (Hd/Ja)

Dormition of the Theotokos: Commemorates the death of Mary, the mother of Jesus. (O)

Dussehra (or Vijaya Dashami): The concluding day of a 10-day festival honoring various goddesses, especially Durga, and Lord Rama, a manifestation of the God Vishnu. The 10-day festival is known as Navaratri ("nine nights") and Durga Puja ("worship of Durga"). Its pervading theme is the victory of good over evil. Vijaya greetings are sent to friends and relatives. (Hd)

Eagle Dances: Pueblo peoples (Arizona) perform Eagle dances dramatizing the relationship of their communities with the Sky-World. (IA)

Easter (or Pascha): Celebrates the

Trinity College

Office of Spiritual and Religious Life

resurrection from death of Jesus Christ. It is the oldest and most important festival in the Christian year and initiates the 50-day period culminating in Pentecost. Protestant and Roman Catholic Christians observe Easter on a different date than Orthodox Christians. (C)

Eid al-Adha (Festival of Sacrifice): One of the two main Islamic festivals (with Eid al-Fitr), this festival falls on the 10th day of the lunar month of Zul-Hijja and is the concluding act of pilgrimage to Mecca. In commemoration of Abraham's faith, sheep, goats, and camels are offered to God, and the meat is distributed to the poor and needy. Eid al-Adha is observed whether or not one is on pilgrimage. (Is)

Eid al-Fitr (Festival of the Breaking of the Fast): One of the two main Islamic festivals (with Eid al-Adha), this day celebrates the end of Ramadan, the month of fasting. It comes on the first day of the next lunar month, Shawal. (Is)

Epiphany: Signifying the end of the 12 days of Christmas, Epiphany celebrates the visit of the Three Kings to the infant Jesus as the occasion of the manifestation of the Christ to the gentiles. In Orthodox churches, where it is known as Theophany, the day commemorates the baptism of Jesus and the manifestation of the Trinity. The day is especially important in Latino/a/x cultures and in Orthodox churches. The Armenian Orthodox Church celebrates the nativity and theophany together. (C)

Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe: Commemorates the day on which the Guadalupana (the Virgin of Guadalupe) appeared to San Juan Diego and her image appeared on his tilma (apron). The miraculous roses Juan Diego found and carried to the Bishop took the form of the image of Mary exactly as she had appeared to him at the hill of Tepeyac. (RC)

Feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary: A feast day that celebrates the belief that Mary, mother of Jesus, was born without sin. (RC)

Feast of the Nativity: See Christmas. (O)

Feast of the Nativity of the Theotokos: Celebrates the belief that Mary, mother of Jesus, was born without sin. (O)

First of Muharram (Ra's al-Sanat Al Hijriyah): The first day of the first month of the Islamic year. This day commemorates the Hijra ("migration") of Muhammad and his followers from Mecca to Medina in 622 C.E., where the first Islamic community was established. In 2023, the new year is 1445 A.H. (Anno Hegirae-in the year of the Hijra). (Is)

Ganesh Chaturthi: A celebration of Ganesh's birthday, one of the major Hindu deities. Ganesh, who has the head of an elephant, is the God of Success and is invoked at the beginning of all new undertakings. (Hd)

Ghambar Ayathrem: Celebrates the creation of plants, the sowing of the winter crop, and the return of herds from pasture. (Z)

Chamber Hamaspathmaedem: Celebrates the creation of human beings and honors the souls of the deceased. (Z)

Ghambar Mailyarem: Celebrates the creation of animals. Zoroastrians are encouraged to remember their practice of the equitable sharing of food during this observance. (Z)

Ghambar Mailyoshem: Celebrates the creation of water, the sowing of the summer crop, and the harvesting of grain. (Z)

Ghambar Mailyozarem: Celebrates the creation of the sky and harvesting of the winter crop. (Z)

Ghambar Paitishem: Celebrates the creation of the Earth and the harvesting of the summer crop. (Z)

Good Friday: Commemorates the Passion of Jesus Christ, i.e., his death by crucifixion. Observed as Holy Friday by Orthodox Christians on a different

date from the one observed by Protestants and Roman Catholics. (C)

Green Corn Ceremony (Stomp Dance): A time of renewal and purification that involves fasting and dances, and for some, participation in sweat lodge rituals. (IA)

Guru Nanak's Birthday: Observes the birth of the founder of the Sikh religion in 1469 C.E. The first of the Ten Gurus, Guru Nanak was born in 1469 C.E. An accomplished poet, 974 of his hymns are part of the Guru Granth Sahib. (Sk)

Hanukkah: The Feast of Lights (Feast of Dedication) is celebrated for eight days to commemorate the rededication of the Temple following the Jews' victory over occupying forces in 165 B.C.E., which reestablished for a time their religious and political freedom. (J)

Holi: A joyous spring Hindu festival that is dedicated to Krishna in some parts of India; in other parts of India, it is dedicated to Kama, the God of Pleasure. People throw colored water or colored powder in celebration. (Hd)

Holy Thursday (or Maundy Thursday): Commemorates the institution of the Lord's Supper/the Eucharist by Jesus prior to his arrest and execution. "Maundy" is derived from the Latin text of John 13:34, in which Jesus gives a mandatum novum ("new commandment"). The date observed by Protestants and Roman Catholics differs from the date observed by Orthodox Christians. (C)

Holy Friday: See Good Friday. (O)

Hopi Kachina Dances: These dances take place throughout late spring and early summer in which long lines of Kachina Dancers, representing various spirit-powers, perform in the open plazas of Hopi pueblos in Arizona. (IA)

Hopi Snake Dance: A sixteen-day purification ceremony which includes the gathering and blessing of snakes. (IA)

Hydesville Day: On this date in 1848, the discarnate soul of Charles B. Rosna

Trinity College

Office of Spiritual and Religious Life

communicated via the mediumship of the Fox sisters, heralding the advent of Modern Spiritualism. (MS)

Imbolc: The first fertility festival, celebrating the approach of spring and the growth of light in the darkness. (W/P)

Installation of Granth Sahib Ji as Guru: This day celebrates Gobind Singh Ji's passing on guruship to Scripture, henceforth known as the Guru Granth Sahib. (1708 C.E.) (Sk)

Iroquois Green Corn Ceremony: A time of renewal involving fasting, dances, offerings, and readings from the code of Handsome Lake. (IA)

Iroquois Midwinter Ceremony: A six-day curative rite in which false faces visit houses. Old fires are extinguished, and new fires are lit. (IA)

Jicarilla Apache Ghost Dance: New Mexico. (IA)

Krishna Janmashtami (Sri Krishna Jayanti or Janmashtami): Celebrates the birthday of Krishna. According to the Hindu epics, Krishna was the eighth incarnation of the God Vishnu, opposed to the demon Kansa, who was responsible for the increase of evil in the world. Worship of Krishna is characteristically expressed in dance and song. (Hd)

Lammas (Lughnasa): The first harvest festival, celebrating the sacrifices of the Earth, the sun for the harvest, and the diminishing strength of summer. (W/P)

Laylat al-Bara'ah (Night of Repentance): On this night, God approaches the Earth to call humanity and to grant forgiveness of sins. Observed on the 14th day of the lunar month of Sha'ban. (Is)

Laylat al-Isra'wa al-Mi'raj (Mi'raj al-Nabiy): Commemorates the ascension (al-Mi'raj) of the Prophet to heaven following his night journey (al-Isra') from Mecca to Jerusalem and his return the same night. (Is)

Laylat al-Qadr: The Night of Power or Destiny commemorates the first revelation of the Qur'an (the Islamic scriptures) to Prophet Muhammad in 610 C.E. (Is)

Lent: In Orthodox churches, the first day of Lent marks the beginning of the Great Fast, the final six weeks of a 10-week period leading up to Holy Week and Easter (Pascha). In the churches that follow the Gregorian calendar, Lent is a six-week observance (40 days excluding Sundays) beginning with Ash Wednesday and culminating in Holy Week. It is a time of repentance and sacrifice in preparation for Easter. (C)

Litha: Summer Solstice, celebrating the longest day and the blessings of light as well as the beginning of the sun god's death. (W/P)

Mabon: Autumnal Equinox and the second harvest festival, celebrating the equivalence of light and dark, the arrival of Autumn and thanksgiving for the Earth's bounty. (W/P)

Maha Shivaratri: A feast dedicated to the Hindu deity Shiva. The night before the feast, fasting is observed, texts are recited, songs sung, and stories told in honor of this God whose cosmic dance creates, preserves, destroys, and recreates the world. (Hd)

Mahavir Jayanti: Celebrates the birthday of Lord Mahavira. Born with the name Vardhamana in ca. 599 B.C.E., he was later given the titles of honor Mahavira ("Great Hero") and Jina ("Conqueror" or "Victor"), a title applied also to the other Tirthankaras. (Ja)

Mahavir Nirvana: See Diwali. (Ja)

Martyrdom of the Bab: Anniversary of the martyrdom of the Bab, the forerunner of Baha'u'llah, in 1850. Work is suspended on this day. (Bi)

Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev Ji (1563–1606): The fifth Guru, he built the Golden Temple of Amritsar to emphasize that the Sikh way was open to all, regardless of caste; the temple was constructed with doors facing all four directions. The first Sikh martyr, Arjan

is also remembered for his contributions to and compilation of the Sikh Scriptures. (Sk)

Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji: This day commemorates the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji (1621–1675), the ninth of the Ten Sikh Gurus. He is remembered not only for his defense of the Sikh faith, but also of Hinduism and of religious liberty. (Sk)

Martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph Smith and His Brother Hyrum: The Prophet Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum were assassinated in 1844 while incarcerated in Carthage, Ill. (LDS)

Mawlid an-Nabi: The birthday of the Prophet Muhammad. (Is)

Mescalero Apache Mountain Spirit Dances: New Mexico. Also called the Crown Dance. (IA)

Navaratri: A nine-night (nav-rat) celebration of nine auspicious forms of Shakti/Devi (feminine divine power/the Goddess). (Hd)

Naw Ruz: The seventh greatest festival, "New Day" is the first day of the Zoroastrian/Persian and Bahá'í New Year. It falls on the spring equinox and symbolizes the renewal of the world after the winter. For Zoroastrians, Naw Ruz also celebrates the creation of fire that is symbolic of Asha or righteousness. It is also the day on which Zarathustra received his revelation. (Bi/Z)

Nineteen Day Fast: A designated 19-day period of fasting each year immediately before the Bahá'í New Year. The fasting is seen as a period of spiritual preparation and regeneration for the new year ahead.

Nirvana Day: In the northern tradition, it commemorates the parinirvana of the Buddha. In cultures of Southeast Asia, the Buddha's parinirvana is remembered during Wesak. The dates and names of Buddhist celebrations vary significantly among cultures and communities. (Bd)

Ostara: Vernal Equinox, celebrating

Trinity College

Office of Spiritual and Religious Life

the equivalence of light and dark and the arrival of Spring. (W/P)

Palm Sunday: Celebrates the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, marking the beginning of Holy Week that culminates in Easter or Pascha. In some churches, Palm Sunday is combined with the anticipation of Christ's death and so is also known as "Passion Sunday." Orthodox Christians observe this Sunday on a date different from the date on which Protestant and Roman Catholics observe it. (C)

Paryushana Festival: Considered the holiest period of the year, these eight days are marked for Jains by fasting, meditation, prayer, and public readings of the life story of Lord Mahavira. Observed especially by the followers of the Shvetambara sect, Paryushana concludes on Samvatsari, the most solemn occasion of self-scrutiny and forgiveness. On this day, Jains ask for forgiveness from their relatives and friends for any offense they may have committed by deed, word, or thought. (Ja)

Pascha: See Easter. (O)

Passover (Pesach): Commemorates the deliverance of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. It is celebrated for eight days with special prayers and symbolic foods at home, starting with the Seder, a ritual meal that reenacts that ancient deliverance and emphasizes the freedom of the Jews under the guidance of God. The first two and the last two days are holidays. (J)

Pentecost (or Whitsunday): The commemoration of the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples of Jesus following his ascension, Pentecost is considered the "birthday" of the Christian church (Acts 2:1-11). It comes 50 days after Easter (Pascha, Orthodox Easter). Roman Catholic and Protestant Christians observe Pentecost on a different date from Orthodox Christians. (C)

Pioneer Day: Mormon observance of the arrival of Brigham Young at the site of Salt Lake City, Utah, in 1847. (LDS)

Purim (Feast of Lots): Celebrates the rescue of the Jews of ancient Persia from a plot to destroy them as related in the Book of Esther, which is read at this time. Purim is a joyous holiday, celebrated by wearing costumes, giving gifts to friends, giving to the poor and socializing. Preceded by the Fast of Esther, Purim is a day of feasting. (J)

Ramadan: The Holy Month of Ramadan is the month of fasting during which Muslims who are physically able do not eat or drink from the first sign of dawn until sunset in honor of the first revelations to the Prophet Muhammad. The evening meal is celebrated with family. (Is)

Raksha Bandhan (Thread for Protection): Also abbreviated to Rakhi, it is the Hindu festival that celebrates brotherhood and love. It is celebrated on the full moon in the month of Sravana in the lunar calendar. (Hd)

Ramanavami: Celebrates the birthday of Rama, the seventh incarnation of the God Vishnu. The Ramayana, one of the Hindu epics that tells the story of Rama, is read during the previous eight days. (Hd)

Reformation Day: Commemorates the beginning of the Protestant Reformation of Christianity with Martin Luther's challenge to the Roman church in the 16th century C.E. (P)

Ridvan (pronounced "Riz-wan"): Commemorates the 12 days that Baha'u'llah spent in the Garden of Ridvan in the last days of his exile in Baghdad, during which time he proclaimed himself as the one announced by the Bab. Work is suspended for the first, ninth and 12th days. (Bi)

Rosh Hashanah: The Jewish New Year and the anniversary of the creation of the world, Rosh Hashanah is the first of the Ten Days of Awe (also known as the Ten Days of Repentance) that conclude on Yom Kippur. It marks the beginning of the holiest time of the year for Jews. (J)

Sadeh: An Iranian mid-winter celebration observed by the kindling of fire. Meaning "one-hundred," Sadeh marks 50 days (100 days and nights) before Naw Ruz. (Z)

Samhain: The New Year and the final harvest festival, celebrating the last gifts of the Earth before winter and the return of the spirits of the dead. (W/P)

Shalako Kachina Ceremony: Held at Zuni pueblo (New Mexico). Celebrates the end of the old and the beginning of the New Year and blesses the houses of the Pueblo erected during the year. (IA)

Shavuot (Feast of Weeks): Shavuot marks the conclusion of the seven weeks following Passover. It is a celebration of the harvest of first fruits and commemorates the giving of the Torah and Commandments at Mount Sinai. (J)

Shemini Atzeret: See Sukkot. (J)

Simchat Torah (Rejoicing of the Law): Joyous festival in which the annual cycle of the reading of the Torah in the synagogue is completed and its first book begun again. The celebration typically includes singing, dancing, and marching with Torah scrolls. (J)

Sri Ramakrishna Jayanti: Celebrates the birthday of Sri Ramakrishna, teacher of Swami Vivekananda. (Hd)

Sukkot (Feast of Booths): An eight-day Jewish festival of booths (or tabernacles) and the fall harvest. The name refers to the booths (sukkot) used by Israelites during desert wanderings and constructed in the fields during the harvest season. It is a time of thanksgiving for God's presence in creation and among the Jewish people. The Eighth Day (Shemini Atzeret) is considered both the end of Sukkot and a distinct festival. (J)

Sun Dance: Plains Peoples (Arapaho, Cheyenne, Shoshone, Arikara, Crow, Sioux, and others) observe the Sun Dance, a three- to four-day ceremony of penitence and sacrifice. (IA)

Tisha B'Av: A day of communal mourning of the destruction of the First

Trinity College Office of Spiritual and Religious Life

and Second Temples. Tisha B'Av is the saddest day of the Jewish calendar and is recognized by fasting. (J)

Theophany: See Epiphany. (O)

Tu B'Shevat: A mid-winter celebration of the new year of the trees. Sometimes referred to as "Jewish Earth Day." (J)

Vaisakhi: Occurs on the first day of the solar year. It is primarily an agricultural festival, celebrating the harvest, and is especially important in North India. It is named after the month Vaisakh. For Sikhs, it is also the anniversary of the creation of the Khalsa (the "Brotherhood of the Pure") in 1699 by Guru Gobind Singh. (Hd/Sk)

Vasant Panchami (Sri Pancami):

One of many festivals to honor the advent of spring, this day is celebrated particularly in North India, where it is associated with Saraswati, the goddess of learning; however, it also retains connection with the goddess Lakshmi. (Hd)

Wesak: The commemoration of Buddha's birth, enlightenment and parinirvana, celebrated on the day of the full moon of the sixth lunar month in Southeast Asia; in Tibet, Wesak commemorates only the enlightenment and parinirvana. The dates of this celebration vary significantly among Buddhist cultures and communities. (Bd)

Yom HaShoah (Holocaust

Remembrance Day): Memorializes the six million Jews who died as victims of the Nazis during World War II and emphasizes respect for human dignity. Its observance is not limited to Jews. (J)

Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement):

The conclusion of the 10 Days of Awe, Yom Kippur is the holiest and most solemn of all days in the Jewish year. It is characterized by repentance, fasting, and forgiveness. (J)

Yule: Winter Solstice, celebrating the longest night and the blessings of darkness as well as the rebirth of the sun god. (W/P)