



Children's National<sup>®</sup>

# Chaplaincy Services

## Holy Days, Celebrations, and Observances of January 2019

### *Holy Day With No Fixed Date*

**Powamu** Among the Hopi the calendric cycle of ceremonies includes a series of extended festivals, each made up of kiva rites, prayers, and dances. The festivals differ upon the three mesas; certain interpretations of costume and ritual appear to have occurred independently in each village. Throughout a period of sixteen to twenty days of the second moon after the winter solstice, Powamu, the bean-planting ceremony, celebrates the return of the kachinas, who have been away from Hopiland since July. This festival also involves the exorcism of evil spirits from youth and man, and is appropriately placed in our month of February to denote the purification and renovation of the earth for future planting.

The Powamu ceremony is one of the most important and interesting festivals held on the Hopi mesa, and because it is the occasion of the advent of the supernaturals, many masked figures 'visit' the pueblo. Ordinarily, the commencement of a ceremony is proclaimed from the housetops, but for Powamu a messenger is sent from kiva to kiva to announce quietly and formally that the festival is soon to begin—a procedure required by a convention that no kachina names are spoken in public. During the next few days, prayer sticks are made for placing at various shrines, and the painting and renovation of masks begins. The masks are brought out of their storage jars, the old paint is scraped off, new colors are applied, designs are painted on, and the proper feather ornaments are assembled. In the evenings dance groups from the various kivas make the rounds and entertain audiences in each ceremonial chamber. Early in the festival, beans and corn are planted in basins of sand in all the kivas. The seeds are then forced to germinate by frequent watering and continuous heat. The fire beneath the hatchway is kept burning day and night, and a straw mat placed over the opening retains the heat, making the room a "veritable hot house."

One morning, just as the eastern sky reddens with the dawn, Ahül, the Sun Kachina comes up the trail, with his great circular mask radiating eagle feathers like the rays of the sun. He is accompanied by the kachina chief. In the capacity of leader of the returning kachinas, the former visits each kiva, bestowing prayers and blessings and presenting gifts of corn and bean sprouts to the kiva groups in retreat. *Photo: Ahul, the sun Kachina, from <https://publishing.cdlib.org/ucpressebooks>*



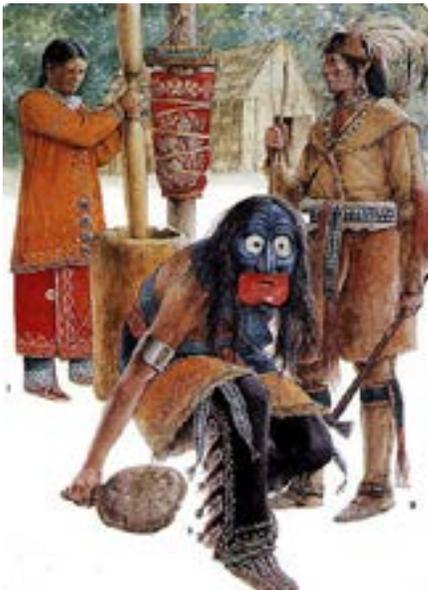
***Iroquois Midwinter Ceremony*** The tribes belonging to what is known as the Iroquois Confederacy or Six Nations-the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca, and Tuscarora-celebrate their Midwinter Ceremony in January or February, beginning on the fifth day after the first new moon in January and lasting for nine days. Also known as the New Year's Ceremony because it marks the beginning of a new ritual year, the celebration is announced by the masked messengers known as the Big Heads , who visit the longhouse-formerly a bark-covered structure in which the Iroquois lived, but now used primarily as a public activity space-and invite everyone to participate in the ceremonies that are about to begin.

Although the order in which the rituals take place varies according to the tribe and the location, the Midwinter Ceremony usually begins with the stirring of the ashes to show people's gratitude for all the blessings that have been bestowed on them during the preceding year. There is a public naming ceremony at which all the children born during the year receive their Indian names, and the performance of ceremonial dances, including the Great Feather Dance and the Bear Dance . Tobacco plays an important role in many Native American celebrations, and the Tobacco Invocation ritual performed during the Midwinter Ceremony is a way of communicating a message of thanksgiving and a plea for a successful growing season directly to the Creator.

Communal Dreamsharing is an important part of the Midwinter Ceremony. The Iroquois believe that dreams, rather than being merely fantasies or random images, represent a cure for diseases as well as mental disorders. By sharing their dreams in public and getting other tribe members' opinions about what these dreams represent, the Iroquois believe that they are better able to resolve whatever problems or conflicts gave rise to the dreams in the first place. The False Face Society also plays a role in dreamsharing by performing whatever curing rites are needed once the dreams have been interpreted.

One of the highlights of the Midwinter Ceremony, the white dog sacrifice , is no longer practiced. The Iroquois love their dogs, and to have one of their pets killed as a sacrifice was an indication of how seriously they took this thanksgiving ritual. The dog was strangled and decorated with beads, ribbons, and wampum. Its carcass was then burned, and people believed that the smoke would carry their gratitude and prayers to heaven. Nowadays a fancy white basket is considered an adequate substitute for a dog.

The Midwinter Ceremony concludes with a speaker who summarizes the events of the preceding nine days and makes a brief thanksgiving address. The new council members who have been chosen for the coming year are introduced at the longhouse and the rest of the tribe's members, now purified and released from the burden of their dreams, welcome a new year. The traditional Iroquois ceremonial year is divided into two parts: winter, which is controlled by men, and summer, which is under women's domain. Thus, men take charge of winter ceremonies. After the Midwinter Ceremony, the women are formally given charge of the ceremonies for the next half of the year.



*Photo: shirleytwofeathers.com*

## *Holy Days With Fixed Date*

**January 1 Gantan-sai Shinto** Gantan-sai is the annual New Year festival of the Shinto religion. Practitioners pray for inner renewal, prosperity, and health, as well as visiting shrines and visiting friends and family. Avoid scheduling important academic deadlines, events and activities on this date (work restricted holy day)



**January 1 Holy Name of Jesus Orthodox/Catholic Christian** The Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus is a Christian holiday observed anywhere from the first to the eighth of January, observing the naming of Jesus Christ on the eighth day of his life. It is a time to honor the revelation of Jesus' name by dream to Saint Joseph, and likewise the revelation of the same to Mary by the Archangel Gabriel at the Annunciation. Although officially eliminated from the liturgical calendar in CE 1970, it was later re-instituted by Pope John Paul II as an optional day of memorial celebrated on January 3rd.

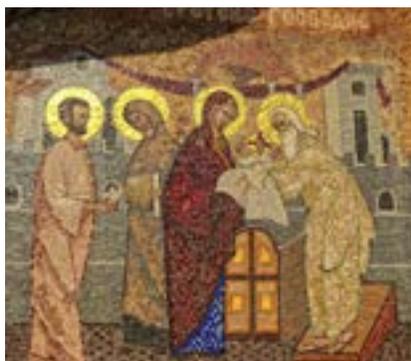
The Holy Name refers to the name of Christ, as revealed through divine intervention to Joseph and Mary. It is most often seen in emblem form as "I. H. S.", a Latin abbreviation of Christ's name. While the letters themselves are not considered intrinsically holy, they stand as a reminder of blessings received through Christ's love and mercy.

The Feast of the Holy Name originated toward the end of the 15th century, celebrated between New Year's Day and Epiphany. In its older incarnations, the Feast was a celebration of Christ's naming and circumcision (Luke 2:15-21), and thus a memorial of the first shedding of the Lord's blood. In its modern form, it is considered to be the central feast of all the mysteries of Jesus Christ.

The greatest promoters of the Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus were two Christian saints - St. Bernadino of Sienna and his disciple, St. John Capistrano. During the time of their ministry, they carried a monogrammed copy of the holy name beautifully painted on a tablet, with which they performed miracles and healed the sick. At the end of their sermons, they would ask the faithful to prostrate themselves before the emblem of Christ's name. They also began the practice of placing Jesus' monograms over gates and doorways.

This behavior was considered slightly heretical at first, resulting in St. Bernadino being called before a papal tribunal for his actions. Capistrano, however, defend his master's practice so skillfully and successfully that the Pope, Martin V, allowed worship of the holy name, and even assisted in a procession of the tablet. The tablet itself has survived, and is now housed at the basilica of Santa Maria in Aracoeli, Rome.

In spite of its removal from the liturgical calendar, the Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus continues to be an important celebration for Christians, especially those in the Western world. It is a time for reflection on the divine revelation of the name of Jesus Christ and the miraculous power for good it can inspire.



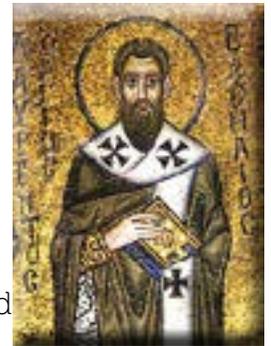
**January 1** *Mary, Mother of God* **Catholic Christian** Mary's divine motherhood broadens the Christmas spotlight. Mary has an important role to play in the Incarnation of the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. She consents to God's invitation conveyed by the angel (Luke 1:26-38). Elizabeth proclaims: "Most blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" (Luke 1:42-43). Mary's role as mother of God places her in a unique position in God's redemptive plan.

Without naming Mary, Paul asserts that "God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law" (Galatians 4:4). Paul's further statement that "God sent the spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying out 'Abba, Father!'" helps us realize that Mary is mother to all the brothers and sisters of Jesus.

Some theologians also insist that Mary's motherhood of Jesus is an important element in God's creative plan. God's "first" thought in creating was Jesus. Jesus, the incarnate Word, is the one who could give God perfect love and worship on behalf of all creation. As Jesus was "first" in God's mind, Mary was "second" insofar as she was chosen from all eternity to be his mother.

The precise title "Mother of God" goes back at least to the third or fourth century. In the Greek form *Theotokos*—God-bearer—it became the touchstone of the Church's teaching about the Incarnation.

**January 1** *Feast of St. Basil the Great* **Orthodox Christian** Basil the Great (ca. 330 - January 1, 379), was bishop of Caesarea, a leading churchman in the 4th century. The Church considers him a saint and one of the Three Holy Hierarchs, together with Saints Gregory the Theologian (Gregory Nazianzus) and John Chrysostom. Basil, Gregory the Theologian, and Basil's brother Saint Gregory of Nyssa are called the Cappadocian Fathers. The Roman Catholic Church also considers him a saint and calls him a Doctor of the Church.



Basil's memory is celebrated on January 1; he is also remembered on January 30 with the Three Holy Hierarchs. In Greek tradition, he is supposed to visit children and give presents every January 1. This festival is also marked by the baking of Saint Basil's bread (Gr. *Vasilópita*), a sweetbread with a coin hidden inside. *Photo: St. Basil, Icon from St. Sofia's Cathedral, Kiev.*

**January 5** *Twelfth Night* **Christian** In Christianity, Twelfth Night is a holiday on January 5 that marks the 12th and final night of the Christmas season. The Twelve Days of Christmas are the twelve days beginning on night of Christmas (December 25) and ending on Epiphany (January 6).

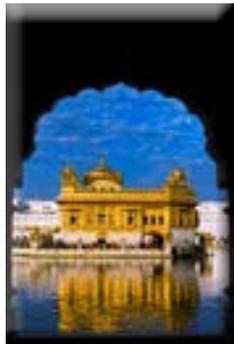
In the Middle Ages, this December period was one of continuous feasting and merrymaking, which climaxed on Twelfth Night, the traditional end of the Christmas season. During the twelve days of Christmas, traditional roles were often relaxed, masters waited on their servants, men were allowed to dress as women, and women as men. Often a Lord of Misrule was chosen to lead the Christmas revels. Some of these traditions were adapted from older, pagan customs

In Tudor England, the Twelfth Night marked the end of a winter festival that started on All Hallows Eve, which is now celebrated as Halloween. A King or Lord of Misrule would be appointed to run the Christmas festivities, and the Twelfth Night was the end of his period of rule. The common theme was that the normal order of things was reversed. This Lord of Misrule tradition can be traced back to pre-Christian European festivals such as the Celtic festival of Samhain and the Ancient Roman festival of Saturnalia. *Photo: transitionbath.org*



**January 5** *Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh* **Sikh** Guru Gobind Singh Jayanti (also spelled Govind Singh) is a Sikh festival that commemorates the birthday of Guru Gobind Singh Ji, the tenth Guru of the Sikhs. It is a religious celebration in which prayers for prosperity are offered.

Guru Gobind Singh Jayanti is a public holiday. It is a day off for the general population, and schools and most businesses are closed. In the United States it is a work restricted holy day.



Many Sikhs go to the temple during the celebration of the Guru's birthday. It is common for large processions to go through markets in India on Guru Gobind Singh Jayanti. People sing devotional songs during the procession and share sweets and a cold drink or a *sharbat* among the adults and children. There are also special prayer gatherings that are held at places of worship known as *Gurudwaras*.

Historical lectures are conducted and poems recited as part of praising the Guru on his birthday. Special dishes that are unique to this occasion are prepared and served during the festivities.

Guru Gobind Singh Ji was the son of Guru Tegh Bahadur, who gave his life to protect religious freedom. He succeeded his father when he became a Guru at nine years of age. Guru Gobind Singh Ji's teachings have a big impact on Sikhs. In his lifetime, he stood against the Mughal Rulers and fought against injustice. In 1699, Guru Gobind Singh Ji took five men from the lower caste of society and baptized them as His Five Beloveds, endowing them with great courage and a devotion to God. It was his dedication to God, his fearlessness and his desire to protect the people from being oppressed that led Guru Gobind Singh Ji to establish the Khalsa, a military force of saint-soldiers which he baptized.

Under Guru Gobind Singh Ji's guidance and inspiration, the Khalsa followed a strict moral code and spiritual discipline. It was through his courage that the people rose against the oppression of the Mughal ruler in India at the time. Aside from being a spiritual and a military leader Guru Gobind Singh Ji was also a gifted writer who penned a large body of literary work. Before his death in 1708, he declared the Guru Granth Sahib, which is Sikhism's Holy Scripture to be the permanent Sikh Guru.

**January 6** *Epiphany/Dia de los Reyes* The Epiphany is an ancient Christian feast day and is significant in a number of ways. In the East, where it originated, the Epiphany celebrates the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist in the River Jordan. It also celebrates Jesus' birth.

The Western Church began celebrating the Epiphany in the 4th century where it was, and still is, associated with the visit of the magi (wise men) to the infant Jesus when God revealed himself to the world through the incarnation of Jesus. According to Matthew 2:11 they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.



For many Protestant church traditions, the season of Epiphany extends from 6 January until Ash Wednesday, which begins the season of Lent leading to Easter.

Other traditions, including the Roman Catholic tradition, observe Epiphany as a single day, with the Sundays following Epiphany counted as Ordinary Time.

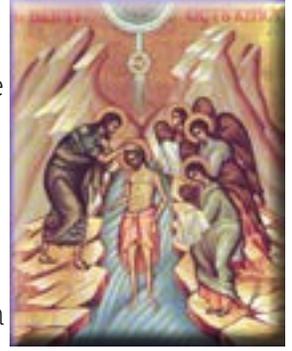
In the Spanish speaking world Epiphany is also known as *Dia de los Reyes* (Three Kings Day).

*Photo: a depiction of the Magi by a Kenyan artist*

**January 6 Theophany Orthodox Christian** Theophany is celebrated on January the 6th. The name is derived from the Greek *theophania*, translating as “appearance of God” and on this day we recall the Baptism of Our Lord, Jesus Christ in the river Jordan by John the Baptist and the appearance of the Holy Spirit descending upon him in the form of a dove.

The celebration of this Feast of our Lord begins on January 5, a day known as the Forefeast of Theophany. Depending on the day of the week, this could be an evening service with Vespers followed by the Liturgy of Saint Basil or a morning service with Matins and the Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom. Following the service on January 5, the service of the Blessing of the Waters is conducted. The Blessing of the Waters is typically conducted in the church; however in many places throughout the world services are conducted near open bodies of water. As a sign of blessing as Christ blessed the Jordan, holy water is poured into the body of water.

The holy water from the church is given to the faithful to consume and to use in blessing their homes. In the weeks following the Feast, clergy visit the homes of parishioners and conduct a service of blessing using the holy water that was blessed on the Feast of Theophany. *Photo: Icon of the Theophany from antiochianarch.org.au*



**January 6 Nativity of Christ Armenian Christian** On 6 January the Armenian Apostolic Church celebrates the great feast of Epiphany that combines the Nativity of Jesus Christ and His Baptism.

**January 7 Orthodox Christmas** Many Orthodox Christians in the United States celebrate Christmas Day on or near January 7 in the Gregorian calendar. This date works to be December 25 in the Julian calendar, which pre-dates the Gregorian calendar. It is a time to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ.

Many Orthodox Christians in countries such as the United States fast before Christmas Day. Many people identify the Nativity Fast as the period of preparing to celebrate Jesus Christ’s birth. It is believed that fasting helps people shift their focus from themselves to others, spending less time worrying about food and using more time in increased prayer and caring for the poor. In return, fasting before the Nativity enables one to fully enjoy, appreciate and celebrate the Nativity of Christ.

Many Orthodox Christians attend a special church liturgy on Christmas Day on January 7. Orthodox churches celebrate Christmas Day with various traditions. For example, many churches light a small fire of blessed palms and burn frankincense to commemorate the three wise men’s (also known as Magi) gifts to baby Jesus.

For many Orthodox Christians, Christmas Day is not about presents, eggnog or Christmas characters that have become popular through commercialization. Christmas Day is a time to heal the soul. It is also a time of peace and unity.

White cloth is used on dinner tables in some countries to symbolize purity and the cloth that baby Jesus was wrapped in. Straw may be placed on these tables to symbolize the simplicity of the place where Jesus was born. Candles may be lit to represent the light of Christ and the festive Christmas meal represents the end of fasting.



**January 8** *Feast of the Holy Family* **Catholic Christian** Feast of the Holy Family, Roman Catholic religious festival falling on the first Sunday after Christmas. Although major feast days dedicated to each member of the Holy Family—Jesus, Mary, and Joseph—also exist, the Feast of the Holy Family commemorates their life together, and the celebration focuses on religious family life. Because of the flight of the Holy Family into Egypt, a feast for the Holy Family has been observed by the Copts from early times. In Western Christianity, however, a cult of veneration for the Holy Family as a group, rather than as individuals, did not arise until the 17th century and was not officially recognized until the feast day was formally instituted in 1921 under Pope Benedict XV. Originally celebrated on the Sunday after Epiphany (January 6), the Feast of the Holy Family was moved to the Sunday after Christmas in 1969, bringing it within the Christmas season.

**January 12** *Lohri* **Hindu** The onset of the harvest season in Punjab is marked by the festival of Lohri. The festival is celebrated by both the Hindu and the Sikh communities, by lighting a holy bonfire that also signifies passing of the winter solstice. Lohri officially marks the end of the long nights of winter and welcomes the longer days of summer, as the Sun begins its journey to the Northern Hemisphere.

Lohri is an occasion to celebrate the end of the sowing season of rabi crop, that is now ready to be harvested. Lohri is also a celebration of the Sun God, Surya, who is offered gratitude for gracing devotees with his presence once again.

The festival of Lohri is characterized by the ancient tradition of lighting of a holy fire that signifies the Fire God, *Agni*. People gather around the bonfire, offer prayers and food to the fire God and also sing, dance and make merry. Devotees circle the fire with their hands joined together in supplication, asking for a prosperous year and also tossing sweet treats made from jaggery (*gur*) and sesame seeds (*til*).

Sweets made from jaggery and sesame seeds include rewari and gajak that are both put into the fire, as offerings to the Fire God. Other offerings made include peanuts or moongphali and popcorn. These foods are also distributed to people who attend the festivities as prasad. The Lohri feast is prepared by using ingredients from winter crops including mustard greens, sugarcane, radish, groundnuts, etc. The dishes that are traditionally prepared during Lohri include *makki ki roti* (flatbreads prepared from corn flour) and *sarso ka saag* (a spicy Indian preparation made from mustard greens).

The two dishes are served together, with whole jaggery or powdered jaggery and/or homemade butter made from cow's milk, as accompaniments. Another traditional dish of the harvest festival is the sesame rice or *til bhaat* that is rice made with sesame seeds and jaggery.



**January 13** *Maghi* **Sikh** For Sikhs, Maghi means primarily the festival at Muktsar, a district town of the Punjab, in commemoration of the heroic fight of the Chali Mukte, literally, the Forty Liberated Ones, who laid down their lives warding off an attack by an imperial army marching in pursuit of Guru Gobind Singh.

The action took place near a pool of water, Khidrane di Dhab, on 29 December 1705. The bodies were cremated the following day, the first of Magh (hence the name of the festival), which now falls usually on the 13th of January. Following the custom of the Sikhs to observe their anniversaries of happy and tragic events alike, Maghi is celebrated with end-to-end recital of the Guru Granth Sahib and religious *divans* (gatherings) in almost all *gurdwaras* (community gathering and religious places).

**January 18 - 25 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity** *Christian* The Church Unity Octave, a forerunner of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, was developed by Servant of God Father Paul Wattson, SA, at Graymoor in Garrison, New York, and was first observed at Graymoor from January 18-25, 1908. Today, the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity invites the whole Christian community throughout the world to pray in communion with the prayer of Jesus "that they all may be one" (John 17:21).

In 1966, the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches and the Vatican Secretariat (now Council) for Promoting Christian Unity began collaborating as a common international text for worldwide usage. Since 1968 these international texts, which are based on themes proposed by ecumenical groups around the world, have been developed, adapted and published for use in the United States by the *Graymoor Ecumenical & Interreligious Institute*.

**January 19 Timkat** *Ethiopian Christian* Timkat is an important festival of the 40-million-strong Orthodox Church of Ethiopia. By common consent, it is one of the world's most spectacular religious festivals. A three-day celebration literally brings large areas of the country to a halt in a season dedicated to elaborate rituals, to feasting and gift giving, pageantry and mysticism. In vast pilgrimages and processions, individual churches parade their tabots —symbols of the Ark of the Covenant.

Timkat comes 12 days after Christmas, which in the local calendar means that it falls on January 17 through 19. Tourist guidebooks vaguely relate it to Epiphany. Actually, the event commemorates the baptism of Christ in the Jordan (Timkat is the Amharic word for baptism). Baptismal symbolism dominates the rituals to the point that enthusiastic believers plunge into consecrated pools to renew their vows. The baptismal theme recalls some very early debates in the Christian church, controversies that were raging not long after apostolic times. Timkat is, in fact, a startling relic of ancient Christian beliefs. *Photo: Fasiladas' bath in Gondor, Ethiopia (from christiancentury.org).*



**January 20 World Religion Day** *Baha'i* Baha'i is a form of faith that emerged in 19th century Persia and follows three core principles: unity of God, religion and humankind. The Baha'is believe that there is a single God and the spirituality of all religions in the world stem from this single god. They also believe that all humans are born equal and have the same rights and duties irrespective.

Keeping in line with this philosophy, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States announced the institution of World Religion Day in 1949. The first such day was observed in 1950. The day calls for members of all religions in the world to recognize that all religions have common spiritual goals.

**January 20 Tu B'Shavat Jewish** Tu Bishvat or the "birthday" of all fruit trees, is a minor festival. The name is Hebrew for the 15th of the Hebrew month of Shevat. In ancient times, Tu Bishvat was merely a date on the calendar that helped Jewish farmers establish exactly when they should bring their fourth-year produce of fruit from recently planted trees to the Temple as first-fruit offerings.

In the 16th century, the Kabbalists (mystics) of Tzfat (the city of Safed) in the Land of Israel created a new ritual to celebrate Tu Bishvat called the Feast of Fruits. Modeled on the Passover seder, participants would read selections from the Hebrew Bible and Rabbinic literature, and would eat fruits and nuts traditionally associated with the land of Israel. The Kabbalists also gave a prominent place to almonds in the Tu Bishvat seder, since the almond trees were believed to be the first of all trees in Israel to blossom. Carob, also known as bokser or St. John's bread, became another popular fruit to eat on Tu Bishvat, since it could survive the long trip from Israel to Jewish communities in Europe. Participants in the kabbalistic seder would also drink four cups of wine: white wine (to symbolize winter), white with some red (a harbinger of the coming of spring); red with some white (early spring) and finally all red (spring and summer).

Complete with biblical and rabbinic readings, these kabbalists produced a Tu Bishvat Haggadah in 1753 called "Pri Etz Hadar" or "Fruit of the Goodly Tree."

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Sources for this newsletter: [allaboutsikhs.com](http://allaboutsikhs.com), [britannica.com](http://britannica.com), [timeanddate.com](http://timeanddate.com), [bbc.co.uk](http://bbc.co.uk), [antiochianarch.org.au](http://antiochianarch.org.au), [geoarch.org](http://geoarch.org), [publishing.cdlib.org](http://publishing.cdlib.org), [encyclopedia2.com](http://encyclopedia2.com), [libguides.vsd.edu](http://libguides.vsd.edu), [sharefaith.com](http://sharefaith.com), [franciscanmedia.org](http://franciscanmedia.org), [orthodoxwiki.org](http://orthodoxwiki.org), [religionfacts.com](http://religionfacts.com), [vdtv.com](http://vdtv.com), [geii.org](http://geii.org), [christiancentury.org](http://christiancentury.org), [myjewishlearning.com](http://myjewishlearning.com). All pictures are from the subscription service, Shutterstock, unless otherwise identified.

Do not dare not to dare.



C.S. Lewis, *The Horse and His Boy*

Chaplaincy Staff:

Rev. Kathleen Ennis-Durstine, room 4201, x.3321  
Margarita Roque, habla Espanol,, room 4115, x 2626  
Rev. Eliezer Oliveira, habla Espanol, room 4115, x 5050  
Rev. Matthew Schlageter, room 4115, x 6736  
Rev. Lavender Kelley, room 4115, x 4638

Catholic Mass is held Thursday at noon and Saturday at 4 p.m. in the Main Chapel, third floor Main, room 3201

Jumma Prayer is held Friday at 12:15 p.m. in the Main Chapel, third floor Main, room 3201