



Chaplaincy Services

Holy Days, Celebrations and Observances of June 2019

HOLY DAYS WITH NO FIXED DATE

SUN DANCE The origin of the Sun Dance is unclear; most tribal traditions attribute its conventions to a time deep in the past. By the end of the 19th century it had spread with local variations to include most of the tribes from the Saulteaux in Saskatchewan, Can., south to the Kiowa in Texas, U.S., and was common among the settled agriculturists and the nomadic hunting and gathering societies of the region.

One example of the globally common religious practice of requesting power or insight from the supernatural is the Sun Dance. In many instances sun dancing itself was a private experience involving just one or a few individuals who had pledged to undertake the grueling ritual. The development of participation by the whole community, direction by tribal and religious leaders, and elaboration of ceremonies augmenting the votaries' prayers and offerings indicate the ways this ritual reflected a tribe's secular and religious aspirations.

The most elaborate versions of the Sun Dance took place within or near a large encampment or village and required up to a year's preparation by those pledging to dance. Typically the pledges' spiritual mentors and extended families were heavily involved in the preparations, as they were obligated to provide most of the necessary supplies for the ritual. Such supplies generally included payments or gifts to mentors and ritual leaders, often in the form of elaborately decorated clothing, horses, food, and other goods.

As the community gathered, specific individuals—usually members of a particular religious society—erected a dance structure with a central pole that symbolized a connection to the divine, as embodied by the sun. Preliminary dances by a variety of community members often preceded the rigors of the Sun Dance itself, encouraging supplicants and ritually preparing the dance grounds; one such preliminary was the Buffalo Bull Dance, which preceded the Sun Dance during the complex Okipa ritual of the Mandan people.

Those who had pledged to endure the Sun Dance generally did so in fulfillment of a vow or as a way of seeking spiritual power or insight. Supplicants began dancing at an appointed hour and continued intermittently for several days and nights; during this time they neither ate nor drank. In some tribes supplicants also endured ritual self-mortification beyond fasting and exertion; in others such practices were thought to be self-aggrandizing. When practiced, self-mortification was generally accomplished through piercing: mentors or ritual leaders inserted two or more slim skewers or piercing needles through a small fold of the supplicant's skin on the upper chest or upper back; the mentor then used long leather thongs to tie a heavy object such as a buffalo skull to the skewers. A dancer would drag the object along the ground until he succumbed to exhaustion or his skin tore free. Among some tribes the thongs were tied to the center pole, and the supplicant either hung from or pulled on them until free. Piercing was endured by only the most committed individuals, and, as with the rest of the ritual, it was done to ensure tribal well-being as well as to fulfill the supplicant's individual vow.

In 1883, acting on the advice of Bureau of Indian Affairs personnel, the U.S. secretary of the interior criminalized the Sun Dance and a variety of other indigenous religious practices; under federal law the secretary was entitled to make such decisions without consulting Congress or the affected parties. The prohibition was renewed in 1904 and reversed in 1934 by a new administration. During the period of prohibition, attenuated forms of the ritual continued among a number of tribes, usually as part of public Fourth of July celebrations. Despite government efforts, the original forms of the Sun Dance were never completely repressed, and in the early 21st century sun dancing remains a significant religious ritual among many Plains peoples.

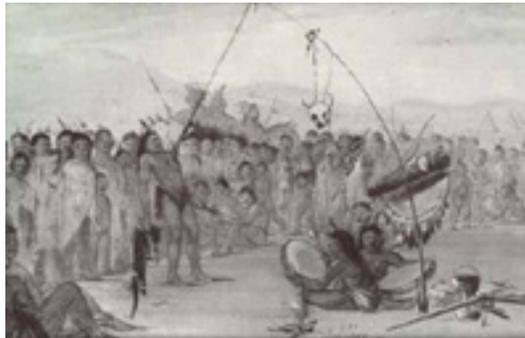


Photo: kawvalley,K12.ks.us

Wianki Polish Traditional (Typically on or around the summer solstice) Wianek (plural form: wianki) means a wreath in the Polish language. According to the old-Slavic tradition, wreaths were an important symbol connected to numerous rites and festivals – it was a representation of blooming youth, vitality and virginity. Only young girls and the unmarried women (particularly those who haven't bore a child yet) were allowed to wear them. They were woven out of local flowers, herbs and plants, often those of magical (e.g. protective) meaning.

Wreaths are extremely important during the Slavic celebrations of the summer solstice, a feast of pre-Christian origins that in Poland holds many names, for example Noc Kupały, Kupalnocka, Sobótki (after a word for Slavic ritual bonfires), Wianki (annual festival held for example in Kraków, called literally 'Wreaths') or the Christianized version: Noc Świętojańska (St. John's Night), Świętojanki, etc.

During that special day, girls were weaving wreaths and dancing around bonfires in rites meaning to evoke fertility, beauty, health and strength. Some herbs could be also attached to a belt around the waist. Later that night, whole processions were approaching a nearby river [or lake, if no river was available] in order to launch the wreaths down the stream. That part of the custom is still alive today. The wreaths, often attached to a board or two crossed planks with a small candle at the center, were used in divinations, predicting love and even marriage. Some girls would launch two wreaths at once to observe how they float – if they were staying close together on the water, mutual love was indicated.

In many cases, the boys would jump into the water to pick up a wreath. The most desired sign for a girl was when the wreath was brought back to her by the very boy she cherished in her heart. Some boys would jump even into the strongest streams and deepest waters just to capture a certain wreath, only to give it back to the girl that created it. They were able to confess their love and show the courage that way.



It was once believed that the night is a time of people to fall in love with each other, and to openly express their feelings. It was also the one special night in the old-Slavic calendar when the people were able to choose their sexual partners freely and spend that one night together without being judged. Some couples would even get married later in the same year. There is a Wianki celebration in Washington, DC, on the Mall.

June 1 Laylat al-Qadr Islam Laylat al Qadr is also known as the Night of Power or the Night of Destiny. It commemorates when Koran (Qur'an) was revealed to the prophet Muhammad (also known as Mohammad). Muslims in the United States celebrate the event, also spelled as Laylat al-Qadr or Shab-e-Qadr, on one of the last 10 days of the Islamic month of Ramadan.

Laylat al Qadr commemorates the night in 610 CE when Allah revealed the Koran (Islamic holy book) to the prophet Muhammad. The angel Gabriel first spoke to the prophet during that time, which marked the beginning of Muhammed's mission. These revelations continued throughout the remainder of his life, according to Islamic belief.

Muslims pray in the night to God for mercy, forgiveness, and salvation. This practice is also called Ehyaa.

This "Night of Power" is considered the most appropriate time of the entire year to pray for salvation and blessings. It is believed that a Muslim's past sins are forgiven if the person prays throughout this night. Many people assemble at mosques during the Isha' prayer, with many prayers being made until midnight.

June 5 Eid al-Fitr Islam Eid-al-Fitr is the first day of the Islamic month of Shawwal. It marks the end of Ramadan, which is a month of fasting and prayer. Many Muslims attend communal prayers, listen to a khutba (sermon) and give zakat al-fitr (charity in the form of food) during Eid al-Fitr.

These prayers are held outside or in large venues, such as sports arenas, in some places. Many Muslims may travel far to participate in these activities. Some communities organize different festivities, such as communal meals or events for children, on this day.

If a Muslim has not given zakat al-fitr during Ramadan, he or she can give this on Eid-al-Fitr. Zakat al-fitr is a form of charity consisting of a quantity of food, such as barley, dates, raisins or wheat flour, or its monetary equivalent given to the poor. Many Muslims may also prepare festive meals to share, wear new clothes, visit relatives and give presents or candy to children. Cards can also be sent, often featuring the words "Eid Mubarak" (blessed Eid).



June 9 Pentecost Christian Pentecost, also called Whitsunday, (Pentecost from Greek pentecostē, "50th day"), major festival in the Christian church, celebrated on the Sunday that falls on the 50th day of Easter. It commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles and other disciples following the Crucifixion, Resurrection, and Ascension of Jesus Christ (Acts of the Apostles, chapter 2), and it marks the beginning of the Christian church's mission to the world.

The Jewish feast of Pentecost (Shavuot) was primarily a thanksgiving for the first fruits of the wheat harvest, but it was later associated with a remembrance of the Law given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai. The church's transformation of the Jewish feast to a Christian festival was thus related to the belief that the gift of the Holy Spirit to the followers of Jesus was the first fruits of a new dispensation that fulfilled and succeeded the old dispensation of the Law.

When the festival was first celebrated in the Christian church is not known, but it was mentioned in a work from the Eastern church, the Epistola Apostolorum, in the 2nd century. In the 3rd century it was mentioned by Origen, theologian and head of the catechetical school in Alexandria, and by Tertullian, Christian priest and writer of Carthage.

In the early church, Christians often referred to the entire 50-day period beginning with Easter as Pentecost. Baptism was administered both at the beginning (Easter) and end (the day of Pentecost) of the Paschal season. Eventually, Pentecost became a more popular time for baptism than Easter in northern Europe, and in England the feast was commonly called White Sunday (Whitsunday) for the special white garments worn by the newly baptized. In The First Prayer Book of Edward VI (1549), the feast was officially called Whitsunday, and this name has continued in Anglican churches. In Catholic and other Western churches, priests often wear red vestments during Pentecost to symbolize the "tongues of fire" that descended on the disciples from the Holy Spirit; members of the congregation also wear red in some traditions, and the altar is commonly dressed in a red frontal cloth.

June 8 - 10 Shavuot Jewish Shavuot, the feast of weeks, is celebrated seven weeks after the second Passover seder. Although Shavuot began as an ancient grain harvest festival, the holiday has been identified since biblical times with the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai.

To commemorate the giving of the Torah at Sinai there is a tradition of staying up all night studying Jewish texts in what is called a tikkun. On Shavuot the Book of Ruth is read. Traditionally dairy foods are eaten on Shavuot. In order to mark the agricultural history of Shavuot, some decorate their house and synagogues with a floral theme.

June 16 Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev Sikh Every religion has its own festivals and honors its own saints. Sikhism is no different. One such day which is very important to the Sikhs is the day when Guru Arjan Dev became a martyr. He was the first martyr, and every year on June 16, the Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev is commemorated. This day has been marked to honor him and has been commemorated since 1606.

During the reign of Nur-ud-din Salim Jahangir in the early 17th century, Jahangir was obsessed about turning his country, India, into a Muslim state. During the Guruship of the fifth Guru, Guru Arjan Dev, thousands of people began to follow Sikhism. Both Hindus and Muslims gathered in Gowindwal, the center for Sikhism in the 16th century. Jehangir, along with many other Muslims and Hindus, did not like the growing popularity of Sikhism. Muslim and Hindu fundamentalists went to Jehangir and persuaded him to make moves against the Guru.

There were several baseless allegations lodged against Guru Arjan Dev. One such allegation was that Guru Arjan Dev helped the rebellious Khusrau, Jehangir's son. There was a tiff between father and son as Akbar the Great preferred to have Khusrau as his successor than Jehangir. Akbar felt that his son was unfit to rule the kingdom as he had taken to alcohol and opium. However the war of succession which followed was won by Jehangir, and Khusrau managed to get only Punjab. This, coupled with Jehangir's jealousy, made sure that Guru Arjan Dev was arrested.

It is said that Guru Arjan Dev was tortured when he was arrested. They made him sit on a hot iron plate, immersed him in boiling hot water, poured hot sand on him, and did not give him food or water. But Guru Arjan Dev is said to have bore the torture calmly and never once cried out loud or even sighed.

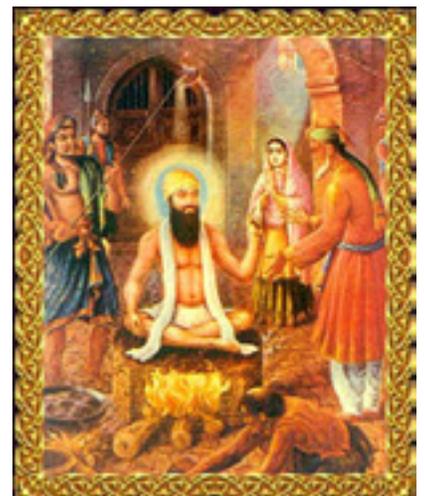


Photo: sdministry.org

On the fifth day of torture, the Guru asked if he could bathe in the Ravi River which flowed along the city of Lahore. The authorities felt that as the Guru's body was full of blisters, bathing in the cold water would add to the pain and so they let him bathe. Soldiers accompanied him to the river and as the Guru entered the water, he *became one with the water, and his body was nowhere to be found. Thus the Guru attained Martyrdom.*

Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev Traditions, Customs and Activities

Traditionally, prayers are made to Guru Arjan Dev, and his message of peace is meditated on by followers. The observance typically includes "kirtan" (recitation of hymns from the Sri Guru Granth Sahib, the Holy Scripture) and "katha" (Sikhism-based lectures).

June 16 Trinity Sunday Christian On Trinity Sunday many Christians in the United States remember and honor the belief of an eternal God, consisting of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Many churches have special prayers on Trinity Sunday. The Athanasian Creed, named after St Athanasius, Archbishop of Alexandria, is recited in some churches on Trinity Sunday because of its strong affirmation of the Triune nature of God.

Churches and choirs across the United States have planned special activities and events centered on Trinity Sunday. These include: Choral vespers concerts. Special church services focusing on the Holy Trinity and featuring music by the trumpet and the pipe organ. Special awards given at Trinity Sunday church services. Meals and social events after church services. Evensong services.

The ordinal Sundays following Trinity Sunday are focused on Christian growth and discipleship after a long period of emphasis on the life and ministry of Jesus. In the Eastern Orthodox and Eastern Catholic churches, the Sunday of Pentecost itself is called Trinity Sunday.

In some churches, the liturgical color is white on Trinity Sunday. Images of the Trinity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit depict that there are three elements of one God. The Trinity is sometimes symbolized by a



triangular shape formed by three overlapping oval rings or loops, each featuring the one of the following images: the crown (father) within the top loop; the lamb (son) within the second loop (clockwise); and the dove (spirit) within the third loop (clockwise). Other shapes depicting the Trinity include Borromean rings and the triquetra.

The Borromean rings feature three overlapping round circles forming a triangular shape, and in the center, inside all the circles is the word "unitas". The Borromean rings are named after the crest of the Borromeo family in 15th-century Tuscany. The triquetra symbol uses shapes similar to one of the oldest Christian symbols. In the triquetra, the three equal arches of the circle express the equality of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The union of the arches represents the unity of the Godhead. Their continuous form symbolizes eternity. Their interwoven appearance

denotes the indivisibility of the Trinity. In the center of the triquetra is an equilateral triangle, one of the most ancient Trinity symbols, and each pair of arches formed an ellipse, the symbol of God's glory.

June 19 Juneteenth Traditional African American On June 19, 1865, two months after the surrender of Confederate General Robert E. Lee at Appomattox Court House in Virginia, Union General Gordon Granger and approximately 1,800 federal troops arrived in Galveston, Texas, to take control of the state and enforce the Emancipation Proclamation.

Granger read General Orders No. 3, which declared in part: "The people of Texas are informed that, in accordance with a proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free." Juneteenth (short for "June Nineteenth") is a holiday commemorating this day, which marked the effective end of slavery in the United States.

More than two years before Granger's announcement, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation (on January 1, 1863), which made known that all enslaved people in Confederate states in rebellion against the Union "shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free."

In reality, the Emancipation Proclamation didn't instantly free any slaves because it only applied to places under Confederate control and not to slave-holding border states or rebel areas already under Union control. However, as Northern troops advanced into the Confederate South, many slaves fled behind Union lines.

In Texas, slavery was relatively unaffected because the state experienced no large-scale fighting or significant presence of Union troops. Many slave owners from outside the Lone Star State viewed it as a safe haven and moved there with their slaves.

After the war came to a close in the spring of 1865, General Granger's arrival in Galveston that June signaled freedom for Texas's 250,000 slaves. Although emancipation didn't happen overnight for everyone—in some cases, slave owners withheld the information until after harvest season—celebrations broke out among newly freed blacks, and Juneteenth was born. (That December, slavery in America was formally abolished with the adoption of the 13th Amendment.)

In the ensuing decades, Juneteenth commemorations featured music, barbecues, prayer services and other activities, and as blacks migrated from Texas to other parts of the country the Juneteenth tradition spread. In 1979, Texas became the first state to make Juneteenth an official holiday, and today most states hold Juneteenth observances.

[D.C.'s Juneteenth Observance is on June 15 at 2500 Martin Luther King Jr Ave SE.](#)

June 20 Corpus Christi Christian (Catholic) Feast of Corpus Christi, also called Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, festival of the Roman Catholic Church in honor of the real presence of the body (corpus) of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. A movable observance, it is observed on the Thursday (or, in some countries, the Sunday) after Trinity Sunday and is a holy day of obligation in many countries.

The Feast of Corpus Christi originated in 1246 when Robert de Torote, bishop of Liège, ordered the festival celebrated in his diocese. He was persuaded to initiate the feast by St. Juliana, prioress of Mont Cornillon near Liège (1222–58), who had experienced a vision. It did not spread until 1261, when Jacques Pantaléon, formerly archdeacon of Liège, became pope as Urban IV. In 1264 he ordered the whole church to observe the feast. Urban's order was confirmed by Pope Clement V at the Council of Vienne in 1311–12. By the mid-14th century the festival was generally accepted, and in the 15th century it became, in effect, one of the principal feasts of the church.

The procession became the feast's most prominent feature and was a pageant in which sovereigns and princes took part, as well as magistrates and members of guilds. In the 15th century the procession was customarily followed by the performance by guild members of miracle plays and mystery plays. After the doctrine of transubstantiation was rejected during the Reformation, the festival was suppressed in Protestant churches.

Photo: Wikipedia.com



June 21 Solstice/Litha Wicca/Pagan Litha is a specific celebration that is important to pagans and other celebrants for a variety of reasons. Most people enjoy Litha, which typically is called the Summer Solstice, by celebrating the longest day of the year, which falls on June 21. During this time, the sun is out for the most prolonged period, allowing people to enjoy as much time with daylight as possible. However, the Pagans have a variety of rituals and symbolism attached to Litha that goes beyond a beautiful, long day in the sun.

One of the reasons that modern Pagans celebrate Litha is that it represents the potency of life as brought forth by the sun. This is the longest day of the year, and the sun brings about life through plants and warmth that facilitates the comfort of creatures worldwide. One of the most common rituals that are seen on Litha occurs when the sun is at its zenith in the midday sky, the time when the sun is most potent and visible on the day it is out for the longest time. People celebrating Litha will take part in a variety of different rituals including meditation and daytime gatherings at noon to celebrate the power of the sun.

Litha is not only seen as a time to celebrate the power of the sun; it is also a time to celebrate the balance between light and dark, and the importance of nature's cycles in general. Some Pagans will take part in massive bonfire celebrations once the sun goes down. Not only does the symbolize the power of life through the sun, but it also serves to keep the light in the darkness at a time when the days will inevitably begin to become shorter. Thus, the bonfires are a reminder of the need to keep warm and light abundant in the darkest nights that will come in winter.

The celebrations of Litha take place across the globe, with some of the most popular ones occurring in New York City, Stonehenge, Russia, and across South America. The chances are that there will be some form of solstice celebration near most major cities on June 21st!



June 23 All Saints Orthodox Christian The first Sunday after the Feast of Holy Pentecost is observed by the Orthodox Church as the Sunday of All Saints. This day has been designated as a commemoration of all of the Saints, all the Righteous, the Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, Confessors, Shepherds, Teachers, and Holy Monastics, both men and women alike, known and unknown, who have been added to the choirs of the Saints and shall be added, from the time of Adam until the end of the world, who have been perfected in piety and have glorified God by their holy lives.

June 28 Feast of the Sacred Heart Catholic Christian The Friday that follows the Second Sunday in Time After Pentecost is the Feast of the Sacred Heart which brings to mind all the attributes of His Divine Heart mentioned above. Many Catholics prepare for this Feast by beginning a Novena to the Sacred Heart on the Feast of Corpus Christi, which is the Thursday of the week before. On the Feast of the Sacred Heart itself, we can gain a plenary indulgence by making an Act of Reparation to the Sacred Heart.

From the earliest days of the Church, "Christ's open side and the mystery of blood and water were meditated upon, and the Church was beheld issuing from the side of Jesus, as Eve came forth from the side of Adam. It is in the eleventh and twelfth centuries that we find the first unmistakable indications of devotion to the Sacred Heart. Through the wound in the side, the wound in the Heart was gradually reached, and the wound in the Heart symbolized the wound of love. (Catholic Encyclopedia)

Sources for this newsletter: britannica.com, timeanddate.com. myjewishlearning.com, aglobalworld.com, history.com, worldreligionnews.com. geoarch.org. All pictures are from the subscription service, Shutterstock, unless otherwise noted.

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

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