



# Chaplaincy Services

## Holy Days, Celebrations and Observances of October 2019

### HOLY DAYS WITH FIXED DATE

**OCTOBER 4 FEAST OF ST. FRANCIS CATHOLIC CHRISTIAN** St Francis, who founded the Catholic Church's Franciscan order, lived in Italy during the late 12th and 13th centuries. He is remembered for his generosity to the poor and his willingness to minister to the lepers. He is remembered for his love for animals and nature. St Francis died at Portiuncula, Italy on October 4, 1226.

Pope Gregory IX pronounced St Francis a saint in 1228. The pope also laid the foundation stone for the Basilica of St Francis in Assisi, Italy. The church, also known as Basilica of San Francesco d'Assisi, is a UNESCO world heritage site.



**OCTOBER 8 DUSSEHRA HINDU** Dussehra celebrates the Hindu god Rama's victory over the demon king Ravana and the triumph of good over evil. The epic Ramayana tells the story of the Lord Rama who wins the lovely Sita for his wife, only to have her carried off by Ravana, the demon king of Lanka.

Ravana plays an important role in the Ramayana. Ravana had a sister known as Shoorpanakha. She fell in love with the brothers Rama and Lakshmana and wanted to marry one of them. Lakshmana refused to marry her and Rama could not as he was already married to Sita.

Shoorpanakha threatened to kill Sita, so that she could marry Rama. This angered Lakshmana who cut off Shoorpanakha's nose and ears. Ravana then kidnapped Sita to avenge his sister's injuries. Rama and Lakshmana later fought a battle to rescue Sita. The monkey god Hanuman and a huge army of monkeys helped them.

The Mahabharata is another series of Hindu stories that play a role in the Dussehra festival. The Pandavas were five brothers who fought evil forces with a set of distinctive weapons. They abandoned their weapons and went into exile for one year. They hid their weapons in a Shami tree and found them at the same place when they returned from exile. They then worshiped the tree before going to a battle, which they won. This epic is also commemorated during Dussehra.

Many people of the Hindu faith observe Dussehra through special prayer meetings and food offerings to the gods at home or in temples throughout India. They also hold outdoor fairs (melas) and large parades with effigies of Ravana (a mythical king of ancient Sri Lanka). The effigies are burnt on bonfires in the evening.



**OCTOBER 9 YOM KIPPUR JEWISH** Yom Kippur (The Day of Atonement). This is the day at the conclusion of which, according to tradition, God seals the Books of Life and Death for the coming year. The day is devoted to communal repentance for sins committed over the course of the previous year. Because of the nature of Yom Kippur and its associated rituals, it is the most solemn day in the Jewish calendar.

A ritual for the expiation of sins was in existence already during biblical times. However, it was only during the Second Temple Period that Yom Kippur assumed central importance as a day of mourning and abstention. By the Rabbinic Period, it had become the most important day in the Jewish liturgical calendar, an importance that the day has retained until the modern period.

Yom Kippur is the day on which Jews are instructed to divorce themselves as completely as humanly possible from the mundane world in which we all live, in order to devote themselves to the relationship with the Divine. Fasting is the most widespread manifestation of this devotion. Other examples include: refraining from washing, sexual relations, and the wearing of leather (a sign of luxury in earlier times). It is traditional to dress in white on this day, symbolizing personal purity. Because of this and the desire to avoid leather, many Jews wear sneakers, or white athletic shoes, on Yom Kippur.

The liturgy of Yom Kippur is completely centered in the synagogue. It is traditional to wear a tallit, or prayer shawl, at all times in the synagogue on Yom Kippur; this is the only time during the year when the tallit is worn in the evening. There are more and longer services on this day than any other in the Jewish calendar. Yom Kippur is ushered in while it is still light out with a powerful and ancient prayer called Kol Nidrei (All Vows), in which the congregation asks that all vows made under duress during the coming year may be considered null and void before God. In addition to the three daily services of Maariv (evening service), Shachrit (morning services), and Mincha (afternoon service), the Yom Kippur liturgy adds a special Musaf (additional) service. On Yom Kippur, Yizkor, the memorial service, is recited, as is the Avodah, a symbolic reenactment of the ancient priestly ritual for Yom Kippur. During the course of the holiday, a major component of the liturgy is the repeated communal confession of sins, the Viddui. The day closes with a unique and emotionally powerful service called Neilah, during which the liturgy imagines the gates of heaven closing at the end of the High Holiday period. Neilah, during which it is traditional to stand since the ark is opened, ends with a long blast of the shofar or ram's horn, understood by many as signifying God's redemptive act in answer to true repentance.

The overarching theme of Yom Kippur is repentance. During the holiday all thoughts are supposed to be centered on this theme. From Kol Nidrei to the repeated Viddui to Neilah, the day revolves around the theme of communal repentance for sins committed during the past year, in order that both the community and the individual be inscribed in the Book of Life for the coming year.



**OCTOBER 14 SUKKOT JEWISH** Sukkot (Feast of Booths or Tabernacles) is one of the three biblically based pilgrimage holidays known as the shalosh regalim. It is an agricultural festival that originally was considered a thanksgiving for the fruit harvest. Sukkot are hut-like structures that the Jews lived in during the 40 years of travel through the wilderness after the exodus from Egypt. As a temporary dwelling, the sukkah also represents the fact that all existence is fragile, and therefore Sukkot is a time to appreciate the shelter of our homes and our bodies.

Sukkot is celebrated by, first of all, building a sukkah. Jews are required to eat in the sukkah for eight days (seven days in Israel), and some even sleep in the sukkah for the duration of the holiday. The sukkah is decorated and the first day is considered a holy day in which most forms of work are forbidden. The rabbis dictated that arbat ha'minim (four species) should be held together and waved during the holiday. These are based on four plants mentioned in the Bible, and the rabbinic version includes the following: etrog (fruit of the citron tree), lulav (palm frond), hadas (leaves from the myrtle tree), and aravah (leaves from the willow tree). This waving ceremony was performed at the Temple in the ancient world.

The seventh day of Sukkot is called Hoshanah Rabah. On that day in the synagogue Jews circle the room seven times while the arbat ha'minim are held and special prayers are recited.

There are no traditional Sukkot foods, except for kreplach (stuffed dumplings). Sukkot meal inspiration can come from the harvest origin of the holiday, and meals can include fresh fruits and vegetables, or other harvest-related ingredients. Of course, challah, chicken soup, and kugels are traditional Jewish foods that can be served on Sukkot (or any time of the year).

To wish someone a Happy Sukkot, simply say "Chag Sameach!" (Happy Holiday).



**OCTOBER 18 FEAST OF ST. LUKE CATHOLIC CHRISTIAN** On October 18, Catholics and other Christians around the world will celebrate the feast of St. Luke, the physician and companion of St. Paul whose gospel preserved the most extensive biography of Jesus Christ.

St. Luke wrote a greater volume of the New Testament than any other single author, including the earliest history of the Church. Ancient traditions also acknowledge Luke as the founder of Christian iconography, making him a patron of artists as well as doctors and other medical caregivers.

Luke came from the large metropolitan city of Antioch, a part of modern-day Turkey. In Luke's lifetime, his native city emerged as an important center of early Christianity. During the future saint's early years, the city's port had already become a cultural center, renowned for arts and sciences. Historians do not know whether Luke came to Christianity from Judaism or paganism, although there are strong suggestions that Luke was a gentile convert.

Educated as a physician in the Greek-speaking city, Luke was among the most cultured and cosmopolitan members of the early Church. Scholars of archeology and ancient literature have ranked him among the top historians of his time period, besides noting the outstanding Greek prose style and technical accuracy of his accounts of Christ's life and the apostles' missionary journeys.

Other students of biblical history adduce from Luke's writings that he was the only evangelist to incorporate the personal testimony of the Blessed Virgin Mary, whose role in Christ's life emerges most clearly in his gospel. Tradition credits him with painting several icons of Christ's mother, and one of the sacred portraits ascribed to him – known by the title "Salvation of the Roman People"-- survives to this day in the Basilica of St. Mary Major.

Some traditions hold that Luke became a direct disciple of Jesus before his ascension, while others hold that he became a believer only afterward. After St. Paul's conversion, Luke accompanied him as his personal physician-- and, in effect, as a kind of biographer, since the journeys of Paul on which Luke accompanied him occupy a large portion of the Acts of the Apostles. Luke probably wrote this text, the final narrative portion of the New Testament, Luke was also among the only companions of Paul who did not abandon him during his final imprisonment and death in Rome. After the martyrdom of St. Paul in the year 67, St. Luke is said to have preached elsewhere throughout the Mediterranean, and possibly died as a martyr. However, even tradition is unclear on this point. Fittingly, the evangelist whose travels and erudition could have filled volumes, wrote just enough to proclaim the gospel and apostolic preaching to the world.

Patronage: artists, bachelors, bookbinders, brewers, butchers, doctors, glass makers, glass-workers, gold workers, goldsmiths, lace-makers, lace workers, notaries, painters, physicians, sculptors, stained glass workers, surgeons.

**OCTOBER 20 BIRTH OF THE Báb BAHÁ'Í** Thousands of Bahá'í followers around the world celebrate the birth of the Báb on 20th October.

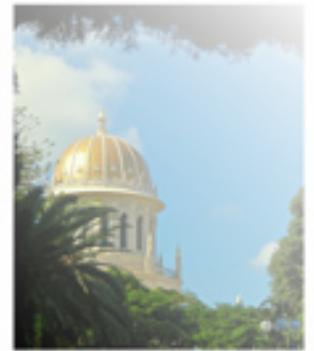
Báb, which literally translates as 'the gate', was a prophet and forerunner of the Bahá'í revelation. Likened to John the Baptist some two thousand years before, the Báb called on people to purify themselves for the coming of the messenger of God. This is asserted to be Bahá'u'lláh, who was initially a follower of Báb and through whom the Bahá'í faith was founded.

Although there are many stories of the Báb's childhood and his many good qualities, very little is known of his birth. He was born on 20th October 1819 in Shiraz, Persia (now Iran) as Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad. He was the son of a mercer of Shiraz, Siyyid Muhammad-Ridá, and his wife Fátimih-Bagum who were both descendants of the Prophet Muhammad. The Báb's father died when he was very young (when, exactly, is debated) and he was put into the care of his uncle, Hájí Mírazá 'Alí.

There is no established tradition in which his birth is celebrated except that this is one of the nine Holy Days on which work is to be suspended. The day is a simple and joyous event that will begin with prayers and devotional readings and develop into some kind of festive social gathering either at home or in a place of worship. The festival is celebrated, in the spirit of the Bahá'í, to be open to all.

2019 is the 200th anniversary of the Bab's birth.

*Image: [supportingthecoreactivities.com](http://supportingthecoreactivities.com)*



**OCTOBER 20 INSTALLATION OF THE GURU GRANTH SIKH** Among sacred texts around the world, the Adi Granth is unique in several ways: It contains wisdom from esteemed members of other religions, was compiled by multiple faith leaders and now is seen as the head of Sikhism itself—the faith’s central guru or teacher. Today, Sikhs honor the Installation of the Scriptures as Guru Granth. On this day in 1708, the ninth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh, announced that he would be the last in a line of living Sikh Gurus. Today, the sacred collection known as the Adi Granth was officially installed as the 10th and everlasting Guru, named Guru Granth Sahib.

Sikhs do not worship the Guru Granth Sahib, but they do reverently respect its wisdom as their spiritual guide. Many Sikh practices reflect this reverence: the Granth Sahib is opened in the Gurdwara (house of worship) every day, in the center of the Gurdwara and on a raised platform known as a throne; the book is always opened, read and closed ceremonially, with an awning placed above it; and whenever the Guru Granth Sahib is brought into a room, Sikhs stand up to honor its presence. Many Sikhs even choose to learn Gurmukhi, the language designed and used by the Sikh Gurus, so that they can fully comprehend the meaning of all writings in the sacred book.

The book is divided into poems, with messages such as: all people of the world are equal; women are equal to men; there is one God for all; one should speak and live truthfully; and all should live in God’s will/order. (Read more from the Times of India.)

As a fairly young religion, Sikhism is not as widely understood as more ancient faiths. Many Sikhs spend time raising awareness, particularly since some of their customs (ex: covering the head) can be misunderstood by the unaware. The 8th Annual Sikh International Film Festival recently raised awareness in New York, as tens of thousands gathered to get an inside peek at this lesser-known body of faith.

**OCTOBER 21 SHEMINI ATZERET JEWISH** Shemini Atzeret is the holiday that follows immediately after the seventh day of Sukkot. It is a time when prayers or celebrations for rain and a good harvest are made for the coming year in the Jewish calendar.

The name “Shmini Atzeret” refers to the eighth day, or the extra day, that brings the seven-day Sukkot period to its state of perfection. Rabbinic tradition teaches that Shemini Atzeret is the day when the world is judged for water, or rainfall, in the upcoming year. It is an important day for agricultural purposes.

Simchat Torah is generally celebrated on the same day as Shemini Atzeret in Israel and among Reform Jewish groups. These two occasions are also observed as two separate days among many Jewish communities outside of Israel.

**OCTOBER 22 SIMCHAT TORAH JEWISH** Simchat Torah (Rejoicing with the Torah) marks the end of the annual cycle of weekly Torah readings and the beginning of the new cycle. It is a joyous holiday that celebrates the Jewish love of Torah and study.

Simchat Torah is celebrated by taking all the Torah scrolls out of the ark in synagogue and spending the evening dancing, singing, and rejoicing. The scrolls are carried around the sanctuary in seven circles called hakafot. Though only seven circles are required, the dancing and celebrating usually goes on much longer. It is also customary to drink alcohol on the holiday as part of the celebratory experience. Many people also take the Torah scrolls out to the street and dance publicly as a way of showing their pride as Jews.

On the morning of the holiday, the last parashah (portion) of the book of Deuteronomy is read in synagogue, followed by the first parashah of the book of Genesis (the end and the beginning of the Torah, respectively). *Image:gateways.org*



There are not many traditional Simchat Torah foods, but one popular ingredient for Simchat Torah meals is cabbage, due its cylindrical shape, which is seen as representing the shape of the Torah scroll. Stuffed cabbage is a traditional Ashkenazi Simchat Torah dish. Another cylindrical shaped food that can be made is blintzes. Some people also like to make Torah shaped cookies for the holidays.

The greeting for Simchat Torah is simply "Chag Sameach!" (Happy Holiday).

**OCTOBER 27 CHRIST THE KING CATHOLIC CHRISTIAN** The Feast of Christ the King was established by Pope Pius XI in 1925 as an antidote to secularism, a way of life which leaves God out of man's thinking and living and organizes his life as if God did not exist. The feast is intended to proclaim in a striking and effective manner Christ's royalty over individuals, families, society, governments, and nations.

Today's Mass establishes the titles for Christ's royalty over all Christians: 1) Christ is God, the Creator of the universe and hence wields a supreme power over all things; "All things were created by Him"; 2) Christ is our Redeemer, He purchased us by His precious Blood, and made us His property and possession; 3) Christ is Head of the Church, "holding in all things the primacy"; 4) God bestowed upon Christ the nations of the world as His special possession and dominion.

Today's Mass also describes the qualities of Christ's kingdom. This kingdom is: 1) supreme, extending not only to all people but also to their princes and kings; 2) universal, extending to all nations and to all places; 3) eternal, for "The Lord shall sit a King forever"; 4) spiritual, Christ's "kingdom is not of this world".

According to the 1962 Missal of St. John XXIII the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite, this feast is celebrated on the last Sunday of October.

**OCTOBER 27 DIWALI SIKH/HINDU/JAIN** *Diwali is the five-day festival of lights, celebrated by millions of Hindus, Sikhs and Jains across the world. Diwali, which for some also coincides with harvest and new year celebrations, is a festival of new beginnings and the triumph of good over evil, and light over darkness.*

*The word Diwali comes from the Sanskrit word deepavali, meaning "rows of lighted lamps". Houses, shops and public places are decorated with small oil lamps called diyas. People also enjoy fireworks and sweets too, so it's really popular with children.*

*Each religion marks different historical events and stories. Hindus celebrate the return of deities Rama and Sita to Ayodhya after their 14-year exile. They also celebrate the day Mother Goddess Durga destroyed a demon called Mahisha. Sikhs particularly celebrate the release from prison of the sixth guru Hargobind Singh in 1619. But Sikhs celebrated the festival before this date. In fact, the foundation stone of the Golden Temple at Amritsar, the most holy place in the Sikh world, was laid on Diwali in 1577. The founder of Jainism is Lord Mahavira. During Diwali, Jains celebrate the moment he reached a state called Moksha (nirvana, or eternal bliss).*

*Many lights and oil lamps are lit on the streets and in houses*

*People visit their relatives and have feasts*

*Fireworks and festivities are an essential part of the occasion*

*Lakshmi, the Hindu goddess of wealth, is worshiped as the bringer of blessings for the new year*



*OCTOBER 31 REFORMATION DAY PROTESTANT CHRISTIAN* For many Protestants, particularly Lutherans, Reformation Day is one of the most important holidays, next to Christmas and Easter. Reformation Day is celebrated on the last Sunday in October and honors the beginning of the Reformation, commemorating Martin Luther's posting of ninety-five theses at the entrance to the Castle Church in the town of Wittenberg, Germany, in AD 1517.

Luther, an Augustinian monk, doctor of theology, and resident of Wittenberg, is considered by Protestants to have rediscovered the fundamental tenants of Christian faith, thereby setting the stage for a confrontation within the Church that would eventually lead to the Reformation.

*OCTOBER 31 ALL HALLOWS EVE CHRISTIAN* All Hallows' Eve falls on 31st October each year, and is the day before All Hallows' Day, also known as All Saints' Day in the Christian calendar. The Church traditionally held a vigil on All Hallows' Eve when worshipers would prepare themselves with prayers and fasting prior to the feast day itself.

The name derives from the Old English 'hallowed' meaning holy or sanctified and is now usually contracted to the more familiar word Hallowe'en.

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*Sources for this newsletter: timeanddate.com, myjewishlearning.com, toriavey.com, catholicnewsagency.com, bbc.co.uk, readthespirit.com, catholicculture.org, sharefaith.com. All images are from the subscriptions services Shutterstock unless otherwise identified.*



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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