

Holy Days With No Fixed Date

Hopi Powamu Festival The Powamu Festival is the mid-winter ceremony and also called the Bean Planting Festival. It is observed in late January or early February. The celebration lasts 8 days and is mainly celebrated by the Hopi Indians in Arizona.

The Hopis call their ancestral spirits, Katchinas. They believe that for 6 months of the year, these spirits leave their mountain homes and visit the tribe. When they do this, they bring along with them good health to the Hopi and rain for their crops. The Powamu Festival celebrates the spirits return, just like the Niman Katchina ceremony in July celebrates their departure.

The preparations for the ceremony include repainting of the masks that will be worn by those Hopi who impersonate the Katchinas. On the third day, young men bring baskets of wet sand that they leave near the entrance to the kiva, the ceremonial meeting room. A hot fire also burns in every kiva of every Hopi village the entire 8 days of the Powamu Festival. Blankets are also stretched across the opening so that the atmosphere inside is similar to a hothouse.

Each man who enters the kiva during this period carries a basket (or bowl) of sand into it. He also plants a handful of beans, which sprout really fast due to all the heat and humidity inside the kiva.

The Hopi believe that bean sprouts represent fertility. Because the Hopi rely strongly on the Katchinas to bring rain (and other good weather conditions) essential to the growth of their crops, bean sprouts also symbolize the approaching spring too.

The Powamu comes to its conclusion with a dance that takes place in the nine kivas that dot the northeastern Arizona mesa. The bodies of the dancers are painted red and white and they wear squash blossoms in their hair. These are really yucca fibers twisted into the shape of a squash blossom. They also wear white kilts and sashes, plus leggings with a fringe of shells tied down the side.

The dance takes place inside the hot kiva and is done in two lines. When the dance is over, the dancers then leave for the next village's kiva, and another group arrives. So, by the time the night is over, each group will have danced at all of the nine kivas.

Then, the Katchinas arrive the next morning. They bring dolls and rattles for the girls; and, bow and arrows for the boys. Both of the boys and girls get the green bean sprouts that have been growing in the hot kivas. Clowns run around making jokes, tripping each other and performing pantomimes for everyone's pleasure and fun. The conclusion of the Powamu ends with a feast in which bean sprouts are the main ingredient. *Photo: shirleytwofeathers.com*



From this time until their departure in July, the Katchinas appear regularly in masked ceremonies performed in the Hopi villages. The men who impersonate the Katchinas wear masks which vary from year to year. A few of the masks will, however, remain the same. Before the dance, the masks are repainted and refurbished. They are made to fit closely over the head, hiding it totally. There is also a ruff of feathers, fur or spruce at the neck. The face on the mask usually resembles a bird, a beast, a monster or a man or a combination of all of these. Those who wear the Katchina masks usually also carry an object associated with the being they are suppose to represent (i.e. bow and arrow, a yucca whip or feathers.)

Iroquois Midwinter Festival



The Iroquois Mid-Winter Ceremony, for continuation of all life-sustaining things is a series of rituals, observed by the six tribes of the Iroquois Confederacy, which celebrates new beginnings and serves as a spiritual new year. The ceremony does not have an official date on the calendar, but rather is determined when the first new moon arrives while both the Ursa Major and Ursa Minor constellations are visible, which occurs in either February or January. (Photo: shirleytwofeathers.com)

The major events of the Midwinter Ceremony consist of the Tobacco Invocation, the Dream Sharing Ritual, the False Face Society, the Peach Stone Game, the Bear Dance, the White Dog Sacrifice, the Great Feather Dance, The Big Heads and the Stirring of the Ashes, and a closing ceremony. These events take place over the course of ten days with no specific order, but generally begin with The Big Heads and the Stirring of the Ashes and ends with a closing ceremony.

Big Heads and the Stirring of the Ashes: Generally, the first of the activities is the Big Heads and the Stirring of the Ashes. A group of anonymous messengers called the Big Heads visit the tribe's longhouse. They wear ceremonial outfits made of buffalo skins and braided corn husk masks which symbolize the hunt and the harvest.

They also carry a corn mashing mallet used in the Stirring of the Ashes. In the Stirring of the Ashes, the Big Heads go from house to house stirring the ashes in fire pits of each household while they ask that the New Year brings renewal and fertility to the land. This is gesture of gratitude to "The Creator" as ashes serve as a symbol of the earth and the cycle of life.

Tobacco Invocation: The next ritual to usually take place after the Stirring of the Ashes is the Tobacco Invocation. It consists of sprinkling tobacco in the embers remaining from the Stirring of the Ashes or outright smoking as an offering. The smoke that rises from the burning tobacco symbolically rises to the heavens to sign of giving thanks and to give messages to the Creator and other spirits.

Dream Sharing Ritual: The Dream Sharing Ritual serves as a ritual of healing. It serves as a way to get rid of troubling thoughts and a way to make wishes come true as the Iroquois believe that dreams represent ways to resolve real life problems. Tribe members would describe their dreams in front of others so they may give their interpretation of the events that take place in the dreams.

The person who has the best interpretation has to then aid the tribe member in seeing that the issue gets resolved. For dreams that represent physical or mental ailments, they dreamer is sent to the False Face Society which is a group of medicine men.

False Face Society: The False Face Society is a group of Iroquois medicine men who wear masks made out of wood. These people can consist of either men or women, but only the men wear the traditional masks. They are said to have the ability to scare off the evil spirits that cause illness. Those who are deemed of needing healing during the Dream Sharing Ritual are sent to these medicine men during their gathering. Healing rituals consist generally of blowing or rubbing hot ashes from a fire on those in need of curing.

Bear Dance

The Bear Dance is another healing ritual that coincides with the False Face Society gathering. It is conducted by both men and women by lumbering and waddling like bear counter clockwise around a person that was ill. This can be done either privately or publicly. The Iroquois believed that this dance can heal the problems of person that were placed upon them from the previous year.

Peach Stone Game: The next event is the Peach Stone Game. This game symbolizes the Iroquois creation story where the Creator and his evil brother played a game in competition during the creation of the Earth, the renewal of the Earth like the Stirring of the Ashes, and the battle for survival of crops. The game consists of six peach pits which are colored black (through burning for example) on one side. They are placed in a bowl and shaken while two teams take turns placing bets in the form of beans on how many black sides will face up. The teams are given an equal number of beans, and the first team to lose all of their beans loses the match. The results of this game are also used to predict the success of the coming year's harvest.

White Dog Sacrifice: One of the following events is the White Dog Sacrifice. Originally, this ritual consisted of killing a white dog, a symbol of purity, by strangulation as to leave no marks. The dog was then adorned in red paint, feathers, beads, wampum, and ribbons. It was placed on fire along with tobacco so that smoke may carry their, sacrifice, and prayers to the Creator. Today, however, the act of killing a white dog is replaced by a white basket due to the animal cruelty in the original proceedings of the ritual.

Great Feather Dance: The final event before the closing ceremonies is the Great Feather Dance. The dance is held on eight night of the nine-day festival, and serves as way to welcome the new spiritual year as well as thanking the Creator. Dancers wear traditional tribal clothing and turtle shell rattles, and dance to two singers that sit facing each other. They give thanks to all the Creator has bestowed upon them during the previous year by dancing in rhythm and shaking the rattles.

The event finally concludes with a closing ceremony where a speaker presenting an overview of the events and address of thanksgiving. New tribal council members who will lead the people until the next event are chosen and presented to the crowd. By the end of this ceremony, all members of the tribe are purified and a new year is welcomed.

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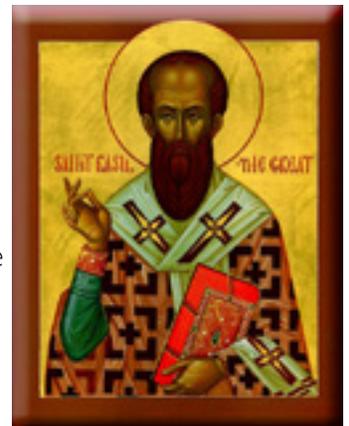
January 1 *Mary, Mother of God Catholic Christian* On January 1, eight days into the season of Christmas, the Church celebrates someone who played a major role in making Christmas possible: Mary, the Mother of God. The Feast of the Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God, gives us another perspective on the miracle of Jesus' life.

When Mary is called the Mother of God, it is to honor her for her fiat — her “let it be done” — that allowed Jesus to come into the world, and we are testifying to the amazing mystery of the Incarnation, that Mary's child really was God, from the first moment of his existence and throughout his human life.

The Incarnation means that God isn't “out there” somewhere else. God is active in human history, and that continues right up to today.

January 1 *Feast of St. Basil Orthodox Christian* Basil was on his way to becoming a famous teacher when he decided to begin a religious life of gospel poverty. After studying various modes of religious life, he founded what was probably the first monastery in Asia Minor. He is to monks of the East what Saint Benedict is to the West, and Basil's principles influence Eastern monasticism today.

He was ordained a priest, assisted the archbishop of Caesarea—now southeastern Turkey—and ultimately became archbishop himself, in spite of opposition from some of the bishops under him, probably because they foresaw coming reforms. *Photo: oca.org*



Basil was tireless in pastoral care. He preached twice a day to huge crowds, built a hospital that was called a wonder of the world—as a youth he had organized famine relief and worked in a soup kitchen himself—and fought the prostitution business.

Basil was best known as an orator. Though not recognized greatly in his lifetime, his writings rightly place him among the great teachers of the Church. Seventy-two years after his death, the Council of Chalcedon described him as “the great Basil, minister of grace who has expounded the truth to the whole earth.”

January 1 Oshogatsu Shinto About a month before the New Year, at the beginning of December, people traditionally put up a Kadomatsu - “entrance pine” - at their home. A combination of standing bamboo and pine branches, the Kadomatsu acts as a point of welcome for the Kami whose goodwill and blessings are being invoked.

Other New Year preparations include Susuharai, a ceremonial house cleaning followed by the preparation of traditional cold dishes called osechi-ryori and motchitsuki, rice cake. The purpose of the dishes being cold was to relieve housewives of the task of cooking for the opening three days of the New Year.

People sometimes visit their local shrines just after midnight, while others wait until daytime. At home, a family will clap their hands in front of the Kamidana, the shelf on which the miniature shrine is placed and make offerings to the Kami. Some people go out to watch the first sunrise of the year, hatsu-hi-node, while other simply go to a shrine the first two or three days of the year, hatsu-mode. People exchange visits, nenga ,among friends and relatives and send cards to each other, nengajo.

Children receive money, otoshidama, for the New Year and people involve themselves in the whole range of activities special to the New Year.

January 2 Guru Gobind Singh’s Birthday Guru Govind Singh Jayanti is a public holiday. It is a day off for the general population, and schools and most businesses are closed. 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.

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.



January 3 Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus 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 AD 1970, it was later re-instituted by Pope John Paul II as an optional day of memorial celebrated on January 3rd.

The Holy Name Itself: 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.



January 5 Twelfth Night Christian Twelfth Night is a holiday that is celebrated worldwide on the night of January 5, literally the twelfth night after December 25.

From December 25 to January 5 are the Twelve Days of Christmas when gifts are given and other holiday traditions take place. Twelfth Night signifies the end of the Christmas holiday that had begun on Christmas Day.

The morning after Twelfth Night is January 6, the Epiphany holiday, also called the adoration of the Magi. This holiday commemorates the arrival of the Magi from the east who brought with them gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh and presented them to Jesus in Bethlehem. Because Epiphany is an important holiday for many, Twelfth Night, the eve of Epiphany, is observed with just as much importance as Christmas Eve or New Year's Eve.

Leading up to Twelfth Night is the Twelve Days of Christmas that begins on December 25. This holiday includes many different kinds of traditions that are held around the world. There are feasts, song singing, and other merriment that finally comes to a climax on Twelfth Night. Traditionally, it was on this night that the Christmas tree and decorations were taken down and a kings' cake was made for Epiphany the following morning.



The kings' cake is perhaps the most well-known icon of the Twelfth Night celebration. Its exact origin can't be traced, though many different European countries have had a variation of this holiday food for many generations. The kings' cake has changed a lot over the years, though the tradition is still held just as much as Christmas itself. Similar to a fruitcake, a kings' cake was typically some form of cake with candied fruit or bread shaped into a ring. Hidden somewhere in the cake was a trinket of some kind. Older versions usually held a bean or a pea. Modern versions have a tiny plastic baby that in some cultures signifies the baby Jesus. Whoever ate the piece that had the bean or the baby was chosen as the king of the party. The "king" was then granted different privileges for the night, with the promise of supplying the next year's kings' cake.

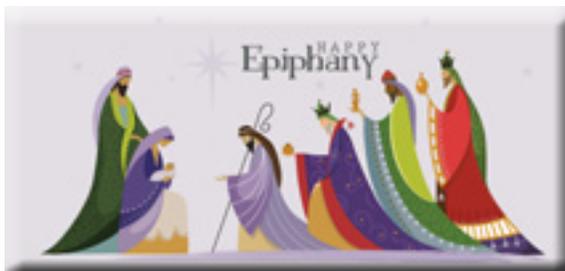
Other traditions for Twelfth Night include lighting a candle for each day, giving gifts and lighting the Yule Log each night. And food and drink accompany nearly every celebratory activity throughout the evening.

In America, the celebration of Twelfth Night originated with the colonists who brought their traditions with them from England. Of course, they adapted them to the new country, adding variations throughout each generation. On Christmas Eve, a homemade wreath was made from greenery and fresh fruits, and hung on the front door. Fresh fruits were often difficult to get and were considered fine foods. For this reason, they often were used as decorations prior to consumption. It was then during the Twelfth Night festivities that the wreath as well as the other decorations were taken down to avoid bad luck in the New Year, and all edible decorations were consumed.

January 6 Epiphany Christian Epiphany is commonly known as Three Kings' Day or the Feast of the Epiphany. It means "manifestation" or "showing forth". It is also called Theophany ("manifestation of God"), especially by Eastern Christians. Epiphany refers not only to the day itself but to the church season that follows it – a season that has a varied length because it ends when Lent begins, and this depends on the date of Easter.

It commemorates the first two occasions on which Jesus' divinity, according to Christian belief, was manifested: when the three kings (also known as wise men or Magi) visited infant Jesus in Bethlehem, and when John the Baptist baptized him in the River Jordan. The Roman Catholic and Protestant churches emphasize the visit of the Magi when they celebrate the Epiphany. The Eastern Orthodox churches focus on Jesus' baptism.

Epiphany is one of the oldest Christian feasts. It was celebrated since the end of the second century, before the Christmas holiday was established. Like other Christian seasons, the church appropriated Epiphany from an old pagan festival. As early as 1996 BCE, the Egyptians celebrated the winter solstice (which then occurred on January 6) with a tribute to Aeon, the Virgin.



January 7 Orthodox Christmas

January 14 Maghi Sikh The Maghi festival is a religious, cultural and seasonal festival which marks the start of the agricultural year and increasing daylight time. It is also the time when Sikhs observe the sacrifice done by forty Sikhs who once fought on the side of Guru Gobind Singh Ji. The festival starts with a Guru Granth Sahib recital. The biggest Maghi festival occurs in Muktsar city. The city name is the literal translation of "pool of liberation" in Punjabi. Large fairs are organized. Pilgrims take holy dip in the Sarovar's sacred waters and visit a number of shrines. Pilgrims march in large numbers to Gurdwara Tibbi Sahib from the principal shrine to conclude the three-day long celebration.

January 18 - 25 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Christian At least once a year, Christians are reminded of Jesus' prayer for his disciples that "they may be one so that the world may believe" (see John 17:21). Hearts are touched and Christians come together to pray for their unity. Congregations and parishes all over the world exchange preachers or arrange special ecumenical celebrations and prayer services. The event that touches off this special experience is the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

Traditionally the week of prayer is celebrated between 18-25 January, between the feasts of St Peter and St Paul. In the southern hemisphere, where January is a vacation time, churches often find other days to celebrate it, for example around Pentecost, which is also a symbolic date for unity.

The theme for the week of prayer in 2020, "They showed us unusual kindness..." is inspired by Acts 28:2. The resources for the week have been prepared by members of different churches in Malta.

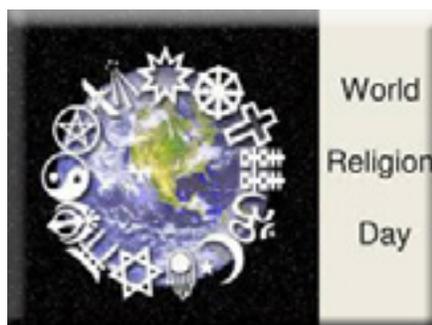
January 19 World Religion Day Baha'i The third Sunday in January is annually celebrated as World Religion Day. It was established by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States in 1950 as a way to encourage interfaith understanding.

Many organizations celebrate the day by holding interfaith events where faith leaders get together to give talks and lectures. People are encouraged to talk to and listen to people from faiths different than their own and to understand the basic tenets of other religions.

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 Timkat Ethiopian Christian Timkat is an Orthodox Christian celebration of the Ethiopian Epiphany. It marks the baptism of Jesus Christ in the Jordan River.

Pilgrims come from far and wide to take part in the festival and witness the re-enactment of the baptism. All over the country large crowds assemble as the religious festivities commence, with spectacular processions, song, dance and prayer.

The festival lasts for three days and is at its most colorful in the capital, Addis Ababa, where everyone gets involved in the celebrations. The festival takes place in Ethiopia every year on January 19th (or January 20th on leap years), starting with Ketera (preparations) the day before, and it lasts for three days.

In Addis Ababa, the festival is particularly spectacular. The streets are adorned with green, red and yellow to represent the Ethiopian flag and priests walk through the streets holding colorful and richly decorated umbrellas.

The religious ceremony commences on the first day when models of the Ark of the Covenant, called Tabots, are carried to the river in a procession led by the most senior priest of each church, who carry the arks on top of their heads. At dawn the water is blessed and sprinkled on the participants, some of whom jump in the water to renew their baptismal vows.

The Tabot symbolizes the Ark of the Covenant and the tablets describing the Ten Commandments, which God gave to Moses on Mount Sinai to serve as the core principles of the moral behavior for humanity.

The original Ark of the Covenant is said to be under permanent guard in Northern Ethiopia, protected by priests who have sworn never to leave the sacred grounds.

The second day of Timkat marks the main celebrations, with Orthodox Ethiopians from every segment of society merrily march through the streets in a riot of color, singing, dancing and feasting. All but one of the Tabots are returned to their respective churches.

On the third day of Timkat, known as the feast of St. Michael the Archangel, the Tabot of St. Michael's Church is returned, accompanied by a procession of priests and believers.



Photo: thetravelmagazine.net

January Tu B'Shvat Jewish Tu B'Shevat is the 15th day of the Jewish months of Shevat. This festival is also known as the "New Year for Trees". Many Jewish communities in the United States observe the festival by eating fruit on this day. The Torah praises seven "fruits", in particular grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives and dates. Many Jewish people also try to eat a new fruit, which can be any seasonal fruit. Some Jewish communities plant trees on Tu B'Shevat.

Tu B'Shevat is not a public holiday in the United States. However, some Jewish organizations may be closed or offer a limited service to allow for festivities to occur on this day.

Tu B'Shevat is first referred to in the late Second Temple period (515 BCE to 20 CE) when it was the cut-off date for levying the tithe on the produce of fruit trees.

January 29 Vasant Panchami Hindu Vasant Panchami is a famous festival that marks the end of the winter season and ushers in the springtime. Sarasvati is the Hindu goddess of the Vasant Panchami festival. Young girls wear bright yellow dresses and participate in the festivities. The color yellow holds a special meaning for this celebration as it signifies the brilliance of nature and the vibrancy of life. The whole place bursts with yellow during the festival.

People dress in yellow and they offer yellow flowers to others and to the gods and goddesses. They also prepare and feast on a special pastry called kesar halwa or kesar halva, which is made from flour, sugar, nuts, and cardamom powder. This dish also includes saffron strands, which gives it a vibrant yellow color and mild fragrance. During the Vasant Panchami festival, India's crop fields are filled with the color yellow, as the yellow mustard flowers bloom at this time of the year. Pens, notebooks, and pencils are placed near the goddess Devi's feet to be blessed before they are used by students.

The celebration of the Vasant Panchami is centered on the Hindu goddess Sarasvati. Sarasvati is the goddess of wisdom. She embodies the different facets of learning such as the sciences, arts, crafts and skills. She is said to be calm and collected. She is often pictured seated on a lotus or a peacock, wearing a white dress.

Resources for this newsletter: shirleytwofeathers.com, grottonetwork.com, franciscanmedia.org, tsubakishrine.org, sharefaith.com, timeanddate.com, worldreligionnews.com, oikoumene.org, thetravelmagazine.net. All photos are from the subscription service Shutterstock unless otherwise identified.

I hope that in this year to come, you make mistakes. Because if you are making mistakes, then you are making new things, trying new things, learning, living, pushing yourself, changing yourself, changing your world. You're doing things you've never done before, and more importantly, you're doing something.

Neil Gaiman



Chaplaincy Staff:

Rev. Kathleen Ennis-Durstine, room 4201, x.3321

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.

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