

The Holy Days of November 2017

Celebrations, Observances and Information
Religious, Spiritual, and Cultural Occasions



Children's National®

Chaplaincy Services

Holy Days With No Fixed Date

Wuwuchim Ceremony Hopi

The Hopi Indian ceremony known as Wuwuchim takes place in November and marks the beginning of a new ceremonial year in the Hopi calendar. The name is believed to have derived from the Hopi word *wuwutani*, which means "to grow up," and the initiation of young men into the sacred societies that oversee this and other Hopi ceremonies is an important part of the celebration. The tribal elders close off all roads leading to the pueblo, all fires are extinguished, and the women and children stay indoors. The initiation rituals take place in the underground chamber known as the KIVA, where the adolescent boys are gathered and where they participate in secret ceremonies that introduce them to Hopi religious customs and beliefs. Although visitors and even other tribe members are not allowed to witness these rites, they are overseen by a tribal chief who impersonates MASAU'U, the Hopi god of death and the ruler of the underworld. After they have undergone their initiation, the young men are treated as adults and allowed to dance as KACHINAS in other Hopi ceremonies throughout the year. Wuwuchim is therefore essential to the continuing cycle of Hopi ceremonial life.

The kindling of the new fire (see NEW FIRE CEREMONY) is the first ritual to take place during Wuwuchim. Other tribes observe this ritual around the time of the **WINTER SOLSTICE**, but the fact that it is part of Wuwuchim underscores the latter's importance as the start of the Hopi New Year. As the ceremony draws to a close, there are prayers, songs (see WUWUCHIM SONG), and dances designed to ensure the safety and success of the Hopi people in the coming year.

Closing of the Roads

It is during Wuwuchim that the Hopi invite their dead ancestors (see KACHINAS) to return to the pueblo. A path must be kept open for them, but this necessitates closing all roads leading to the pueblo so that other people cannot enter during this sacred time of year. Tribal elders do this by laying down four parallel lines of cornmeal across each road that leads into the village. These lines serve as a symbolic barrier to the outside world. (continued)

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*Catholic Mass: Thursday at 12:00 pm
(Main Chapel, room 3201, 3rd floor)
Saturday at 4:00 pm (Main Chapel, room 3201, 3rd floor)*

*Friday: Jummah Prayer at 12:30 pm
R-114/ floor 3.5 Main*

Kachinas

Kachinas (also katsinas or katchinas) are the spirits or supernatural beings who possess the power of gods and represent the Hopi ancestors. They first begin to emerge from the underworld at Wuwuchim and remain on earth for about half the year, departing in July after the **SUMMER SOLSTICE**. Young Hopi children are taught from the very start to respect the power of the kachinas by being given dolls that represent these spirits. As they grow older, they are often disciplined by male tribe members wearing kachina masks, and, when they reach adolescence, they are initiated into the grown-up world when the men who impersonate the kachinas take off their masks and reveal their true identities. This is what happens during Wuwuchim.

One of the most powerful kachinas is MASAU ' U , who is also known as the Blue Star Kachina. The Hopi believe that when the Blue Star Kachina finally removes his mask and reveals himself, this will herald the end of an era or cycle of Hopi life.

Kiva

The underground ceremonial chamber known as the kiva is a symbolic representation of the underworld from which the Hopi people emerged at the time of creation. It is the place where many of the Hopi's secret ceremonies are held and where ceremonial fires are lit and tended. The small hole in the floor of the kiva is known as a *sipapu*, and only spirits or KACHINAS can pass through it. The *sipapu* is also a symbolic umbilical cord that connects the "womb" of the earth to its inhabitants.

The kiva is a focal point for most Hopi ceremonies, Wuwuchim among them. The dancers use it to dress, rehearse, and rest after their public performances. It is also where the secret initiation rites are held for adolescent boys.

Masau'u

Masau'u (also Masaw, Masao, Masauwu) is the Hopi god of death, fire, darkness, and war. He rules the underworld and is said to wear raw animal hides for clothing and a frightening mask. As the god of fire, Masau'u is responsible for teaching the young Hopi men undergoing their initiation during Wuwuchim about fire. It is usually a chief who impersonates Masau'u during the ceremony.

New Fire Ceremony

The New Fire Ceremony takes place at dawn on the first day of Wuwuchim. Two Hopi priests use flint or the friction produced by rubbing two sticks together to kindle a fire, which they then feed with coal. Torches are ignited from this fire and carried throughout the pueblo, where they are used to light other fires. The fire itself is symbolic of the power of the sun, which is channeled through MASAU ' U to warm the earth and its inhabitants.

Wuwuchim Song

A number of songs are sung during Wuwuchim, but in the past there has been one particular song that, according to legend, heralds the coming of war or disaster. It tells the story of the Blue Star Kachina and how a new cycle of Hopi life will begin when the Blue Star Kachina takes off his mask.

Photo: Eddie Basha Collection



Sha'lak'o Ceremony Zuni The winter solstice signals the beginning of the year for the Zunis, who commemorate the occasion with a ceremonial dance, Sha'lak'o.

The Sha'lak'o dance bids farewell to the old and asks for blessings in the new year.

In Sha'lak'o, a Zuni boy, carrying a burning cedar torch and wearing a bag of seeds over his shoulder, represents the Fire God. He is painted black with circles of red, yellow, blue and white—the colors of the sun in Zuni iconography. The Fire God is followed by the Rain God of the North, who emerges behind a mask of black and white stripes. A long curved horn juts out of his right side, and he is dressed in white buckskin and adorned with jewelry. Others of the Council of Gods come, including the Shalako, the messengers of the gods. The Shalako wear masks symbolizing birds with clacking bills topping nine-foot-tall costumes of painted buckskin stretched over willow-wood frames. Crossing the Zuni River, the Shalako dance in intricate patterns, reflecting “the village and the people’s state of grace,” ;dancing ensues for four more days, and then new dancers are chosen for the next year, so as the cycle ends, it also begins.

The sacred ritual is generally only open to members of the tribe, and photography is strongly discouraged.

Painting by Raymond Naha



Navajo Night Chant Navaho Night Chant is composed of a whole series of practices—including dances, the construction of sand paintings, and the use of prayer sticks—that constitute a nine-day healing ceremony traditionally performed by the Navajo.

The Night Chant is a “way” insofar as it attempts not just to break into the natural course of an illness, but in fact sets the “patient” on the path or way toward reestablishing the natural harmony and balance that allow for health. For the Navajo, who migrated to the Southwest from the northern lands sometime between seven hundred and one thousand years ago, the Night Chant is one of many ceremonial chants meant to affect the world in some concrete manner. The Night Chant is a healing ceremony, a treatment for illness, especially paralysis, blindness, and deafness. The ceremony emphasizes humans’ ability to control their world and their responsibility to use that control in the service of balance, respect, and healing. If the Holy People—the ancestors or the spirits—inflict suffering, it is because people have broken the rules; the Night Chant attempts to put the rules back together, to restore the conditions conducive to order, balance, and health.

The ceremony begins at sunset when the chanter, the medicine man who conducts the ceremony and the only one with the knowledge of proper Night Chant practice, enters the home of the patient, the one who is to be cured. After a ritual call for participation (“Come on the trail of song”)—which emphasizes the role of not only the patient but all guests present to form a community of healing—the patient sits to the west of a fire. There follow elaborate chants, songs, and dances. The first four days are devoted to purification, after which the Holy People are called upon. On the sunrise of the ninth day, the patient is invited to look eastward and greet the dawn, representative of renewal. The chant is fundamentally narrative, although not necessarily continuous, and its specific details and enactments vary greatly among different medicine men and the particular needs of the patient. There is no central episode that must be retold in all cases for the ceremony to be effective; rather, specific episodes arise from local situations, and no single medicine man possesses the knowledge of every possible episode. But there is generally a basic storyline, which tells of a long-ago cultural hero of particular visionary power who gathers the details of how to properly conduct the ceremony from the Holy People.

The Night Chant is therefore in part a perpetual retelling of itself; it is neither entertainment nor abstract teaching, but the ritual reenactment of its own origin. In this origin is the way toward order, which is the way toward healing. Through this retelling the singer aims to bring about *hózhó*, or holiness, harmony, beauty.

The sand paintings reflect this goal of balance and harmony seeking. Created for the ceremony and immediately wiped away, the sand paintings elaborately echo some of the main patterns and images of the chant. As sacred artifacts, they are not intended to be recorded through film or painting. Because they are designed specifically to attract the attention of (and eventually embody) the Holy People, it would be a dangerous violation to allow them to exist after the proper time for spiritual contact had passed. *Photo: Navajo Prayer Sticks: Pinterest*



Holy Days With Fixed Date

November 1 All Saints Day Christian All Saints' Day is also known as All Hallows Tide, All-Hallowmas, or All Hallows' Day, and it's celebrated in many areas of the United States, especially where there are large Roman Catholic populations.

In New Orleans, for example, people gather in local cemeteries and decorate the graves with flowers. The descendants of French Canadian settlers around St Martinsville, Louisiana, observe this day in the traditional French manner by laying wreaths and bouquets and lighting candles on even the most obscure graves.

All Saints' Day, which is celebrated globally, is closely tied with All Souls' Day, which was first instituted at the monastery in Cluny, France in 993 CE and quickly spread among Christians. Some eastern churches in the United States celebrated All Saints' Day on the first Sunday after Pentecost.

All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day are also closely linked with Halloween, which is a shortened for the name "All Hallows' Eve".

In the United Methodist Church, All Saints' Day is observed on the first Sunday in November to remember deceased members of the local church congregation. A candle is lit as each person's name is called out, followed by a prayer offered for each soul.

Many Latin American communities in the United States hold celebrations around November 1 and 2, linking with All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day (November 2). These celebrations are part of the Day of the Dead, also known as *Día de los Muertos*.

According to some sources, the idea for All Saints' Day goes back to the fourth century when the Greek Christians kept a festival on the first Sunday after Pentecost (in late May or early June) in honor of all martyrs and saints. Other sources say that a commemoration of "All Martyrs" began to be celebrated as early as 270 CE, but no specific month or date is recorded.

Pope Gregory IV made All Saints' Day an authorized holiday in 837 CE. It is speculated that the chosen date for the event, November 1, may have been an attempt to supplant pagan festivals that occurred around the same time.



November 1 Samhain Wicca/Pagan As millions of children and adults participate in the fun of Halloween on the night of October 31st, few will be aware of its ancient Celtic roots in the Samhain (Samain) festival. In Celtic Ireland about 2,000 years ago, Samhain was the division of the year between the lighter half (summer) and the darker half (winter). At Samhain the division between this world and the otherworld was at its thinnest, allowing spirits to pass through.

The family's ancestors were honoured and invited home whilst harmful spirits were warded off. People wore costumes and masks to disguise themselves as harmful spirits and thus avoid harm. Bonfires and food played a large part in the festivities. The bones of slaughtered livestock were cast into a communal fire, household fires were extinguished and started again from the bonfire. Food was prepared for the living and the dead, food for the ancestors who were in no position to eat it, was ritually shared with the less well off.



Christianity incorporated the honouring of the dead into the Christian calendar with All Saints (All Hallows) on November 1st, followed by All Souls on November 2nd. The wearing of costumes and masks to ward off harmful spirits survived as Halloween customs. The Irish emigrated to America in great numbers during the 19th century especially around the time of famine in Ireland during the 1840's. The Irish carried their Halloween traditions to America, where today it is one of the major holidays of the year. Through time other traditions have blended into Halloween, for example the American harvest time tradition of carving pumpkins. (read more at <http://www.newgrange.com/samhain.htm>)

November 2 All Souls Day Christian All Souls' Day in the United States is a day of prayer for deceased souls. Many Christians visit cemeteries where their loved ones are buried. Some cemeteries offer candles to be placed on these graves. The candles are blessed and marked with the names of the deceased to be placed at the designated grave sites. The Catholic Church remembers deceased members of the congregation on this day.

Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) is celebrated in many parts of the United States, particularly where there are large Latin American communities. Day of the Dead events, which come in the form of festivals, parades and group celebrations, are held on November 1-2 to coincide with All Souls' Day and All Saints' Day. During these celebrations some people wear masks, carry signs, or put up elaborate decorations to honor the dead. Some community centers invite people to commemorate their deceased loved ones with *ofrendas* (offerings) through altars that include food, symbols, flowers, candles, photos and other mementos. Altars in memory of the dead are also made in people's homes.

All Souls' Day was first instituted at the monastery in Cluny in 993 CE and quickly spread throughout the Christian world. People held festivals for the dead long before Christianity. It was Saint Odilo, the abbot of Cluny in France, who in the 10th century, proposed that the day after All Saints' Day be set aside to honor the departed, particularly those whose souls were still in purgatory.

The skull, which symbolizes death and/or rebirth, is used for All Souls' Day. With regard to the Day of the Dead, elaborately decorated skulls, including those made of candy, are made for the day. The Marigold is a traditional flower that is associated with the dead. Some say that the flower represents the rays of the Sun, which is linked with life, so the deceased have not lost their place in the universe. The raven and the crow have both been linked with death, although some say that the crow tends to be confused with the raven, which they claim is the true symbol associated with death.

November 4 Birth of Guru Nanak Dev Sikh Nanak Dev, the first guru of the Sikhs, and founder of the Sikh religion, was born to Hindu parents in a town which in modern times is known as Nankana Sahib, of Pakistan.

He preached that God was omnipresent and did not adhere to any kind of ritualism or worship patterns. He led a life of purity and clarity and believed that the attainment of enlightenment would relieve one from the cycle of birth and death. He visited many places to preach and spread his knowledge, which includes Burma, Iraq, Tibet and Sri Lanka. Guru Nanak composed a set of poems known as "*Japji*" that is recited as the Morning Prayer. It forms the first chapter of Guru Granth Sahib, the holy book of the Sikhs. These thoughts and poems inspire many till date and are considered the epitome of good living.

November 12 Birth of Bahá'u'lláh Baha'i This year, people around the world are celebrating the 200th anniversary of the birth of Bahá'u'lláh, Founder of the Bahá'í Faith and the Divine Educator for this age. Although many have not yet heard the story of this Divine Messenger, the echoes of His rich spiritual and social teachings reverberate around the globe.

Bahá'u'lláh envisioned a future where all of humanity operates as one family. He taught that every human being has a unique purpose to help bring about a unified world, that justice enables each of us to fulfill this potential, and that the inequalities between women and men, black and white, rich and poor, East and West must dissolve. Bahá'u'lláh's mission of unity and justice was foretold by the Báb, an equally important Divine Messenger, Who prepared the way for Bahá'u'lláh. The bicentennial of His birth will be celebrated in 2019. The Báb's teachings encouraged the spiritualization of society, urged all to seek truth with independent hearts and view their fellow human beings as beautiful creations of God worthy of respect.

November 15 Nativity Fast Begins Orthodox Christian The Nativity Fast (November 15 through December 24)

The Nativity Fast is one of the four Canonical Fasting Seasons in the Church year. This is a joyous fast in anticipation of the Nativity of Christ. That is the reason it is less strict than other fasting periods. The fast is divided into two periods. The 1st period is November 15th through December 19th when the traditional fasting discipline (no meat, dairy, fish, wine, and oil) is observed. There is dispensation given for wine and oil on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Similarly, fish, wine, and oil are permitted on Saturdays and Sundays. The 2nd period is December 20th through 24th when the traditional fasting discipline (no meat, dairy, fish, wine, and oil) is observed. There is dispensation given for wine and oil only on Saturday and Sunday during this period.

Abstinence includes refraining from the food and drink mentioned above, as well as from smoking. The Eucharistic Fast means abstaining from at least the previous midnight for communing at a morning Liturgy.

The purpose of fasting is to focus on the things that are above, the Kingdom of God. It is a means of putting on virtue in reality, here and now. Through it we are freed from dependence on worldly things. We fast faithfully and in secret, not judging others, and not holding ourselves up as an example.

Fasting in itself is not a means of pleasing God. Fasting is not a punishment for our sins. Nor is fasting a means of suffering and pain to be undertaken as some kind of atonement. Christ already redeemed us on His Cross. Salvation is a gift from God that is not bought by our hunger or thirst.

We fast to be delivered from carnal passions so that God's gift of Salvation may bear fruit in us.

We fast and turn our eyes toward God in His Holy Church. Fasting and prayer go together.

Fasting is not irrelevant. Fasting is not obsolete, and it is not something for someone else. Fasting is from God, for us, right here and right now.

Most of all, we should not devour each other. We ask God to "set a watch and keep the door of our lips."

Do Not Fast, between December 25 and January 5 (even on Wednesdays and Fridays); if you are pregnant or nursing a newborn; during serious illness; without prayer; without alms-giving; according to your own will without guidance from your spiritual father.



Photo: section of the Icon of the Nativity from the Greek Orthodox Church of the Hamptons

November 24 Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur Sikh Born in Amritsar, Guru Tegh Bahadur was the ninth of the ten Gurus who founded Sikhism.

He's honored and remembered as the man who championed the rights for all religious freedom.

He taught liberation from attachment, fear and dependence. Strength should be gained through truth, worship, sacrifice and knowledge.

During the reign of Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb, Islam was imposed on the people. Hindu temples were demolished and turned into mosques, higher taxes were charged to non-Muslims and the Emperor persecuted those who would not conform to Islamic law.



Guru Tegh Bahadur spoke out amid this persecution. He refused to convert to Islam and in 1675, he was beheaded in Delhi. The site of his execution was later turned into an important *Gurdwara*.

He's also remembered for his poetry, much of which is included in the *Guru Granth Sahib*.

Photo: gtbpschool.edu

November 26 Feast Day of Christ the King Christian The Solemnity of Christ the King is a newer feast in the Catholic Church; it was established by Pope Pius XI in 1925. The pontiff was witness to a turbulent time in the world's history. Secularism was on the rise and dangerous dictatorships were emerging in Europe and beyond. Christ had long been referred to as King, but Pope Pius and the Christian faithful saw the respect and reverence for Christ's authority waning in the midst of the unrest during the first part of the 20th century. In response, the feast was set with the intent to reaffirm and refocus faith and respect in the kingship of Jesus.



November 28 Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Baha Baha'i On November 28, members of the Baha'i Faith throughout the world commemorate the passing of 'Abdu'l-Baha, the eldest son and successor of Baha'u'llah.

'Abdu'l-Baha died in His house in Haifa in 1921, aged 77. More than 10,000 mourners, representing every one of the diverse religions and ethnic communities in the Holy Land, attended His funeral.

He was laid to rest in a vault adjoining that in which He had laid the remains of the Bab on Mount Carmel in 1909.

Baha'is observe the Holy Day of the Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Baha at 1:00 a.m., about the time of His death. There are no prescribed ceremonies but gatherings usually involve prayers and devotional readings.

Photo: AZquotes.com



Let us have love and more love; a love that melts all opposition, a love that conquers all foes, a love that sweeps away all barriers, a love that aboundeth in charity, a large-heartedness, tolerance, forgiveness and noble striving, a love that triumphs over all obstacles.

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Not the maker of plans and promises, but rather the one who offers faithful service in small matters. This is the person who is most likely to achieve what is good and lasting.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe