



2012 Interfaith Calendar Holidays and Festivals



Living The Golden Rule.

NCCJ'S MISSION

The NCCJ of the Piedmont Triad, Inc. is a human relations organization that promotes understanding and respect among all cultures, races and religions through advocacy, education and dialogue.

NCCJ works with people from different backgrounds to create communities of justice where everyone will be treated with respect and understanding.



2012

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JANUARY *Poverty Awareness Month*

1	New Year's Day	F
	Feast of the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God	RC
5	Birth of Guru Gobind Singh	S
6	Epiphany	O, P, RC
13	Maghi	S
15	World Religion Day	Ba
16	Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday (Observed)	F
23	Chinese New Year	Bu
30-Feb.4	Clergy Appreciation Week	I

FEBRUARY *Black/African American History Month*

4	Mawlid al Nabi*	Mu
8	Parinirvana	Bu
12-18	Brotherhood/Sisterhood Week	I
14	St. Valentine's Day	RC, I
15	Nirvana Day	Bu
20	President's Day	F
22	Ash Wednesday (Lent Begins)	P, RC
26-Mar 1	Ayyam-i-Ha*	Ba
27	Clean Monday (Lent Begins)	O

Women's History Month
Mental Retardation Awareness Month
Irish American Heritage Month

MARCH *Deaf History Month*

2-20	Nineteen Day Fast Period	Ba
8	Purim*	J
	Holi	H
9	Hola Mohalla	S
17	St. Patrick's Day	RC
20	Spring Equinox	I
21	Naw-Ruz*	Ba

APRIL *Child Abuse Prevention Month*

1	Palm Sunday	O, RC
5	Maundy Thursday	P, RC
6	Good Friday	P
7-14	Pesach* (Passover)	J
8	Easter	P, RC
15	Pascha (Easter)	O
14	Vaisakhi	H, S
21-May 2	Ridvan *	Ba

Asian/Pacific Islander Month
Older Americans Month

MAY

1	Yom Ha-Sho'ah*	J
6	Buddha Day (Visakha Puja, Wesak)	B
17	Ascension Day	P, RC
13	Pentecost	P
24	Ascension Day	O
27-28	Shavuot *	J
28	Memorial Day (Observed)	F
29	Ascension of Baha'u'llah *	Ba

Non-working holidays for Abrahamic faiths:
 January 6—Epiphany [O]
 April 6 - Good Friday [P]
 April 6 (sundown) - 14 (sundown) - Pesach (Passover) [J]
 April 8 - Easter [P, RC]
 May 26 (sundown) - 28 (sundown) - Shavuot [J]
 August 18 (sundown) - 19 (sundown) - 'Id al-Fitr [Mu]
 September 16 (sundown) - 18 (sundown) - Rosh Hashanah [J]
 September 25 (sundown) - 26 (sundown) - Yom Kippur [J]
 September 30 (sundown) - October 6 (sundown) - Sukkot [J]
 October 8 (sundown) - 9 (sundown) - Simchat Torah [J]
 October 25 (sundown)—26 (sundown) - 'Id al-adha [Mu]
 December 25—Christmas [P, RC]

JUNE *Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Pride Month*

3	Trinity Sunday	P
	Pentecost	O
7	Corpus Christi	RC
10	All Saints Day	O
16	Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev	S
	Lailat al Miraj *	Mu
19	Juneteenth	I
20	Summer Solstice	I

JULY *Foreign Language Month*

4	Independence Day	F
	Lailat al Bara-ah*	Mu
9	Martyrdom of the B'ab *	Ba
20	Ramadan Begins* (US Date)	Mu
24	Pioneer Day	Mo
29	Tisha B'av *	J

AUGUST *Physically Challenged Awareness Month*

10	Krishna Janmashtami	H
14	Lailat al-Qadr*	Mu
15	Assumption of Blessed Virgin Mary	RC
	Dormition of the Theotokos	O
19	'Id al-Fitr*	Mu

SEPTEMBER *Hispanic/Latino Heritage Month* *Healthy Aging Month*

3	Labor Day	F
17-18	Rosh Hashanah *	J
22	Autumn Equinox	I
26	Yom Kippur*	J

Diversity Awareness Month
Disability Employment Awareness Month
Lesbian, Gay & Bi History Month

OCTOBER *Breast Cancer Awareness Month*

1-6	Sukkot*	J
8	Shemini Atzeret*	J
9	Simchat Torah *	J
16-23	Navaratri	H
20	Birth of the B'ab *	Ba
	Installation of Scriptures of Guru Granth Sahib	S
26	'Id al-Adha * (US Date)	Mu
31	Halloween/All Hallows Eve	I

NOVEMBER *American Indian/Native American Heritage Month*

1	All Saints Day	P, RC
2	All Souls Day	RC
11	Veterans Day	F
12	Birth of Baha'u'llah *	Ba
13	Diwali (Deepavali)	H, S
15	Al Hijra/Muharram * (New Year)	Mu
22	Thanksgiving	F
26	Day of the Covenant *	Ba

DECEMBER *Universal Human Rights Month*

2	Advent Begins	O, P, RC
8	Bodhi Day	Bu
	Immaculate Conception	RC
9-16	Hanukkah *	J
21	Winter Solstice	I
25	Christmas *	F, P, RC
26	St. Stephen's Day	O, P, RC

F indicates a federally observed holiday in the United States.

* indicates that observance begins at sundown the day before this date.

*****DISCLAIMER:** This publication may not include all major religious/cultural holidays. Due to variations in cultural and regional religious practices and the use of different calendars, some dates of holidays may vary from these listed above.

KEY TO RELIGIOUS GROUPS

Baha'i	Ba
Buddhist	Bu
Hindu	H
Interfaith	I
Jewish	J
Mormon	Mo
Muslim	Mu
Orthodox Christian	O
Protestant Christian	P
Roman Catholic	RC
Sikh	S

RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL OBSERVANCES

The NCCJ Calendar is a resource designed to encourage public awareness of the great mixture of religious and ethnic groups that live in our community. However, because of the large number of religious, ethnic and cultural groups who reside in the United States, this resource cannot provide an exhaustive list for all of our faith traditions.

Many people may find the calendar helpful as it identifies opportunities for discussion about different religious and faith practices. It also serves as a reminder of those religious observances that many may wish to attend, and therefore can aid in the planning and scheduling of events and meetings.

Some Civic holidays and other well known celebrations are not included.

ADVENT Period of four weeks in which Christians prepare for Christmas.

AL HIJRA (MUHARRAM) Remembrance of the migration of Mohammed and followers to Medina.

ALL HALLOWS EVE (HALLOWEEN) Also known as Samhain, the ancient Celtic festival is a celebration of the end of the harvest season. The ancient Gaels believed that on October 31st, the boundary between the living and the deceased dissolved. This day is also celebrated as the eve of All Saints Day.

ALL SAINTS DAY Celebration of lives of all the saints, especially those who do not have a special day.

ALL SOULS DAY Day of prayer, remembrance and intercession for the dead.

ASCENSION DAY Celebrates Jesus' ascent into heaven.

ASCENSION OF BAHÁ'U'LLAH A commemoration of the death of Baha'u'llah.

ASH WEDNESDAY Begins Christian Lent; name derives from symbolic use of ashes to signify penitence.

CORPUS CHRISTI This is a feast in honor of the institution of the Eucharist during the Last Supper.

AYYAM-I-HA This period adjusts the Baha'i year to the solar calendar. It leads to the 19 day fast; each day of Ayyam-i-Ha is marked by a different virtue like hospitality, gift giving or charity.

BIRTH OF BAHÁ'U'LLAH Commemorates the birth of the founder of the Baha'i faith in 1817.

BIRTH OF B'AB Anniversary of the birth of one of the twin prophet founders of the Baha'i faith.

BIRTH OF GURU GOBIND SINGH Anniversary of the birth of the tenth guru.

BODHI DAY Celebration of the enlightenment of Buddha, ca. 596 B.C.E.

BUDDHA DAY (VISAKHA PUJA) Celebration of the birth of Buddha in Japan.

DAY OF THE COVENANT Celebration of the covenant given in the last will and testament of Baha'u'llah.

DIWALI (DEEPAVALI) Festival of Lights; one of four seasonal celebrations in India.

DORMITION OF THE THEOTOKOS The Orthodox Christian commemoration of the death and burial of the Virgin Mary.

EPIPHANY End of the 12 days of Christmas; celebrates visit of the three kings to baby Jesus; especially important to Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholics.

FEAST OF THE SOLEMNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF GOD A celebration of the holiness of Mary as the chosen bearer of Jesus.

FOUR CHAPLAINS SUNDAY Commemoration of the four Chaplains of Jewish and Christian traditions who gave their life jackets to others as a ship sank in the Atlantic Ocean during World War II.

GOOD FRIDAY The Friday of Jesus' crucifixion.

HANUKKAH Festival of lights; eight-day commemoration of the rededication of the Second Temple in 165 B.C.E. The eight candle Menorah is lighted.

HOLA MOHALA A day to commemorate the valor and bravery of the Sikhs. This 3-day festival consists of mock battles, music and poetry reading.

HOLI Spring festival; a carnival occasion featuring bright colors, pilgrimages and bonfires.

'ID AL-ADHA Festival of sacrifice; commemorates the faith of Abraham and the near sacrifice of Isaac; also a memorial to the dead.

'ID AL-FITR Festival of the breaking of the fast of Ramadan.

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION Day of celebrating the belief that Mary, mother of Jesus, was preserved from original sin all of her life.

INSTALLATION OF THE GURU GRANTH SAHIB Commemorates the installation of the Sikh scriptures by Guru Gobind Singh; these scriptures were installed as the perpetual guru.

JUNETEENTH Also known as *Freedom Day* or *Emancipation Day*, it commemorates the announcement of the abolition of slavery.

KRISHNA JANMASHTAMI Birthday of Lord Krishna. It falls on the 8th day of the dark half of the month of Bhadrapada (August-September). A twenty-four hour fast is observed on this day, which is broken at midnight.

KWANZAA Seven day spiritual celebration of African-American values and traditions and their continued vitality. "Kwanzaa" is Swahili and means "first fruits of the harvest."

LAILAT AL MIRAJ Observance of Mohammed's night journey from Mecca to Jerusalem and his ascension to heaven.

LAILAT AL BARA'AH Night of Forgiveness. A night of prayer to Allah for forgiveness of the dead. Preparation for Ramadan through intense prayer.

LAILAT AL-QADR Night of Destiny. First revelation of Qur'an to Prophet Mohammed. Observed during the last ten days of Ramadan.

(Continued on next page)

LENT Period of preparation for Easter, usually 40 days before. **Clean Monday** signifies the beginning of the Lenten period.

MAGHI Commemorates the battle in which 40 Sikhs (the Immortal Ones) laid down their lives for the guru (Guru Gobind Singh).

MARTYRDOM OF THE B'AB Anniversary of the martyrdom of the B'ab, the forerunner of Baha'u'llah, in 1850.

MARTYRDOM OF GURU ARJAN DEV Anniversary of the martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev in 1606 C. E., the fifth guru who had built the Golden Temple of Amristar.

MAUNDY THURSDAY Also known as Holy Thursday, this day celebrates the institution of the Eucharist (or Holy Communion) at Jesus' Last Supper.

MAWLID AL-NABI Birthday of the Prophet Mohammed, ca. 570 C. E.

NAVARATRI Hindu Festival of the divine mother honoring Durga, wife of Shiva, and seeking her blessings. Also observed as a celebration recalling the days of Lord Krishna.

NAW-RUZ Baha'i and Iranian New Year.

NINETEEN DAY FAST A fast to be observed by adult Baha'is in good health from sunrise to sundown.

NIRVANA DAY Commemorates the death of Buddha.

PALM/PASSION SUNDAY Celebrates the arrival of Jesus into Jerusalem during Passover. Usually reenacted by the waving of palm branches and the singing of songs. This also commemorates the beginning of Holy Week.

PENTECOST Fifty days after Easter, this time celebrates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon early Christians following the ascension of Jesus.

PESACH (PASSOVER) Marks the deliverance of the Jews from slavery in Egypt; "Seder" ceremonies emphasize the concept of freedom.

PIONEER DAY Observance of the arrival of Brigham Young and the early settlers to Salt Lake City, Utah.

PURIM Feast of Lots; celebrates deliverance of Jews of ancient Persians

from a plot to destroy them.

RAMADAN The ninth month in the Islamic calendar; 30 days of strict fasting from sunup to sundown in honor of the first revelations to the Prophet Mohammed.

RIDVAN Commemorates the declaration of Baha'u'llah to his followers in 1863. Work is suspended for the 1st, 9th and 12th day.

ROSH HASHANAH New Year; beginning 10 days of penitence concluded on Yom Kippur.

SHAVUOT Festival of Weeks; celebrates harvest of first fruits and commemorates the giving of the Torah and Commandments at Mt' Sinai.

SHEMINI ATZERET Eighth and last day of Sukkot.

SIMCHAT TORAH Joyous festival in which the reading of the Torah is completed and its first book begun again. Symbolized by singing, dancing and marching around the synagogue with Torah scrolls.

ST. STEPHEN'S DAY A day of remembrance of St Stephen, the first Christian martyr.

SUKKOT Festival of Booths (or tabernacles) and the fall harvest.

TISHA B'AV A day of mourning and repentance in remembrance of the destruction of the First and Second Temples in Jerusalem.

VAISAKHI Anniversary of the creation of the Khalsa (the army of the Pure Ones) in 1699.

WESAK The commemoration of Buddha's birth, enlightenment and death, celebrated on the day of the full moon of the sixth month in the Theravada tradition.

WORLD RELIGION DAY In 1950, this day was founded by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States to address the need for religious unity.

YOM HA-SHO'AH Holocaust Remembrance Day. Memorializes the six million Jews who died in the Holocaust. Observance is not limited to Jews.

YOM KIPPUR Day of Atonement; day devoted to prayer, fasting and repentance.



ADDITIONAL NOTES

All dates of holidays and festivals were researched to the best of our abilities. Some dates may vary depending on region and group affiliation.

Baha'i, Jewish and Muslim holidays begin at sunset on the evening before date listed.

Buddhist, Hindu and Sikh holidays may be observed at different times than those indicated here. The observance date is dependent on both religious group affiliation and region. For example, Buddha's birthday is one of the most widely celebrated of Buddhist holidays. However, there is no one date accepted by all Buddhists. Therefore, the observance of Buddha's birthday will vary, as seen by the inclusion of Wesak, Bodhi Day and Buddha Day in this calendar.

Christians also follow a number of different calendars depending on their denomination and/or region. The NCCJ Calendar includes dates for the Western calendar which is mostly followed by the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches and the dates for the Orthodox New Calendar which is the same as the Western calendar for fixed holidays and

observances but uses the Julian calendar for moveable feasts. The Orthodox New Calendar is primarily used by the Greek and Cypriot Orthodox Churches.

We recognize that for many Christians, an integral part of the faith is the observance of days that commemorate the lives of saints. Many of these days have not been included as part of this calendar because they are vast in number and often differ by region, religious affiliation and personal belief.

Jewish dates in this calendar are generally in accordance with the Orthodox tradition. The length of some holidays and the extent to which they are observed may vary according to denominational affiliation.

Muslim holidays are subject to change because observance is dictated by the phases and sightings of the moon.

The Sikh calendar — their own Nanakshahi calendar— was adopted for use on March 14, 1999 and aligns with the Gregorian Calendar.

For more information on particular local or regional observances and traditions, please feel free to contact individual constituencies.