



## St. Olaf Interfaith Calendar 2020-2021

The St. Olaf community includes people whose beliefs and practices reflect a variety of religions and worldviews, including Judaism, Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, non-religious spiritual practice, and more. As an institution affiliated with Lutheran tradition, St. Olaf college values the role religion and spirituality play in the lives of students, faculty, and staff. To support community members in practicing their traditions, the Lutheran Center, in collaboration with the Center's [Interfaith Fellows](#), is making a calendar available that indicates the significant holidays from various religions/worldviews as a reference for the St. Olaf community. **Observance of the holidays included in this calendar may involve time off from work or school.**

The calendar was developed through research into the different traditions themselves, consultations within and beyond the St. Olaf community, and review of calendars developed by other colleges and universities. Notes related to common practices for adherents of the particular tradition are included in the calendar.

Some holidays use the lunar calendar or particular cultural patterns that vary by region. This reality makes the location of the holidays somewhat fluid on the calendar. It also means that some holidays may begin at sunset the day before the date specified for the holiday.

The calendar presents the significant holidays of very diverse traditions. If this calendar does not include a significant date for your religious tradition or worldview, please let us know ([lutherancenter@stolaf.edu](mailto:lutherancenter@stolaf.edu)).

Date(s)	Holiday	Religion / Worldview	Description
September 18-20	<b>Rosh Hashanah</b>	<b>Judaism</b>	The Jewish New Year, Rosh HaShanah, is the first of the Ten Days of Awe (also known as the Ten Days of Repentance) which culminates on Yom Kippur. It is a solemn and celebratory day marking the beginning of the new year; a day for reflection on past deeds and commitment to do better; a day for the sounding of the "shofar" (ram's horn) and accepting God's sovereignty. Begins at sundown on 9/18/20 and ends at nightfall on 9/20/20.
September 22	<b>Mabon</b>	<b>Paganism</b>	Autumnal equinox and the second harvest festival, celebrating the equivalence of light and dark, the arrival of Autumn, and thanksgiving for the Earth's bounty. Begins at sundown on 9/22/20.
September 27-28	<b>Yom Kippur</b>	<b>Judaism</b>	The culmination of the Ten Days of Awe, Yom Kippur or Day of Atonement, is the most solemn of all days in the Jewish year. It is characterized by repentance, fasting, and forgiveness. Begins at sundown on 9/27/20 and ends at nightfall on 9/28/20.
October 2-9	<b>Sukkot</b>	<b>Judaism</b>	Also known as the Feast of Booths, Sukkot is an eight-day Jewish festival of booths (or tabernacles) and the fall harvest. The name refers to the booths (sukkot) used by the Israelites during desert wanderings and constructed in the fields during the harvest season. The Eighth Day (Shemini Atzeret) is considered both the end of Sukkot and a distinct festival. Begins at sundown on 10/2/20 and ends at nightfall on 10/9/20

October 9	<b>Shemini Atzeret</b>	<b>Judaism</b>	The Eighth Day of Sukkot (Feast of Booths). It is considered both the end of Sukkot and a distinct festival.
October 10-11	<b>Simchat Torah</b>	<b>Judaism</b>	Simchat Torah (Rejoicing of the Law) is a joyous festival in which the annual cycle of the reading of the Torah in the synagogue is completed and begun again. The celebration typically includes singing and dancing with Torah scrolls. Follows Shemini Atzeret and lasts until nightfall on 10/11/20.
October 17-26	<b>Navaratri</b>	<b>Hinduism</b>	A nine-night (nav-rat) celebration of nine auspicious forms of Shakti/Devi (feminine divine power/the Goddess).
October 20	<b>Installation of Granth Sahib Ji as Guru</b>	<b>Sikhism</b>	This day celebrates Gobind Singh Ji's passing on guruship to Scripture, henceforth known as the Guru Granth Sahib.
October 25	<b>Dusserah</b>	<b>Hinduism</b>	Celebrates the killing of the demon Mahishasur by the Goddess Durga as well as the defeat of Ravana by Rama.
October 28-29	<b>Mawlid an-Nabi</b>	<b>Islam</b>	The birthday of the Prophet Muhammed (PBUH). Begins at sundown on October 28. Muslim students and employees may be fasting.
October 31	<b>Samhain</b>	<b>Paganism</b>	The New Year and the final harvest festival, celebrating the last gifts of the Earth before winter and the return of the spirits of the dead.
November 1	<b>All Saints Day</b>	<b>Christianity</b>	Christian celebration of the lives of all the saints, especially those not having a special day.
November 14	<b>Diwali (Deepavali)</b>	<b>Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism</b>	<p>Hinduism - Perhaps the most popular of all Hindu festivals, also known as the Festival of Lights, it is dedicated to the goddess Kali in Bengal and to Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, in the rest of India. As with several other festivals, Diwali is associated with one of the stories about the destruction of evil by Vishnu in one of his many manifestations.</p> <p>Jainism - This "Festival of Lamps" celebrates the attainment of Moksa by Lord Mahavira. A burning lamp symbolizes the "light of knowledge," which dispels the darkness of delusion and ignorance.</p>
November 24	<b>Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji</b>	<b>Sikhism</b>	This day commemorates the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji (1621-1675), the ninth of the Ten Sikh Gurus. He is remembered not only for his defense of the Sikh faith, but also of Hinduism and of religious liberty.
November 29 - December 24	<b>Advent</b>	<b>Christianity</b>	Period of four weeks in which Christians prepare for Christmas and meditate on the end of all time. In Western churches, the first Sunday of Advent marks the beginning of the Christian liturgical year.
November 30	<b>Guru Nanak's Birthday</b>	<b>Sikhism</b>	Celebrates the anniversary of the birth of Guru Nanak, the first teacher.
December 8	<b>Bodhi Day</b>	<b>Buddhism</b>	In the northern tradition, this is the anniversary of the Buddha's Enlightenment, ca. 596 BCE. In the southern tradition, the Buddha's Enlightenment is celebrated during Wesak. The dates and names of Buddhist celebrations vary significantly among cultures and communities.

December 10-18	<b>Hanukkah</b>	<b>Judaism</b>	The Feast of Lights (Feast of Dedication) is celebrated for eight days to commemorate the re-dedication of the Temple following the Jews' victory over occupying forces in 165 BCE, which re-established their religious and political freedom for a time. Begins at sundown on 12/10/20 and ends at nightfall on 12/18/20.
December 20	<b>Yule</b>	<b>Paganism</b>	Winter Solstice, celebrating the longest night and the blessings of darkness as the return of light to the world and the new year. Begins at sundown on 12/20/20.
December 25	<b>Christmas</b>	<b>Christianity</b>	Celebrates the anniversary of the birth of Jesus.
December 26 - January 1	<b>Kwanzaa</b>	<b>African American</b>	Created in 1966 by Dr. Maluana Karenga, Kwanzaa honors African heritage in African American culture. The seven principles of Kwanzaa are represented by KiSwahili words: umoja (unity), kujichagulia (self-determination), ujima (collective work and responsibility), ujamaa (cooperative economics), nia (purpose), kuumba (creativity), and imani (faith). Kwanzaa is celebrated both within the United States and around the world.
January 6	<b>Epiphany</b>	<b>Christianity</b>	Signifying the end of the 12 days of Christmas, Epiphany celebrates the visit of the Three Kings to the infant Jesus as the occasion of the manifestation of Christ to the gentiles.
January 7	<b>Orthodox Christmas</b>	<b>Orthodox Christianity</b>	The Orthodox Church recognizes January 7th as the day that Jesus was born. Elsewhere in the world, Christmas is celebrated on December 25th.
January 19	<b>Birthday of Guru Gobind Sing Ji</b>	<b>Sikhism</b>	Guru Gobind Singh Ji (1666-1708), the 10th and final Sikh master, created the Khalsa, the "Brotherhood of the Pure," and declared the Scriptures, the Adi 'Granth, to be the Sikh's Guru from that time on.
February 1	<b>Imbolc</b>	<b>Paganism</b>	The first fertility festival, celebrating the approach of spring, the growth of light in the darkness, and the rebirth of life.
February 15	<b>Vasant Panchami (Sri Pancami)</b>	<b>Hinduism</b>	One of many festivals to honor the advent of spring, this day is celebrated particularly in North India, where it is associated with Saraswati, the goddess of learning; however, it also retains connection with the goddess Lakshmi.
February 15 (for some February 8)	<b>Nirvana Day</b>	<b>Buddhism</b>	In the northern tradition, it commemorates the parinirvana of the Buddha. In cultures of Southeast Asia, the Buddha's parinirvana is remembered during Wesak. The dates and names of Buddhist celebrations vary significantly among cultures and communities.
February 17	<b>Ash Wednesday (Lent begins)</b>	<b>Christianity</b>	A special day of repentance observed by Protestant and Roman Catholic Christians to mark the beginning of Lent, the 40-day period (excluding Sundays) of prayer, repentance, and self-denial preceding Easter. The name derives from the practice of marking of the faithful with ashes to signify penitence.
February 25-26	<b>Purim</b>	<b>Judaism</b>	Celebrates the rescue of the Jews of ancient Persia from a plot to destroy them as relayed in the Book of Esther, which is read at this time. Purim is a joyous holiday, celebrated by wearing costumes, giving gifts to friends, giving to the poor, and socializing. Preceded by the Fast of Esther, Purim is a day of feasting. Begins at sundown on 2/25/21 and ends at nightfall on 2/26/21.

March 10-11	<b>Laylat al-Isra'wa al-Mi'raj (Mi'raj al-Nabiy)</b>	<b>Islam</b>	Commemorates the ascension (al-Mi'raj) of the Prophet to heaven following his night journey (al Isra') from Mecca to Jerusalem and his ascent to heaven and return the same night. Begins at sundown on 3/10/2021.
March 11	<b>Maha Shivarati</b>	<b>Hinduism</b>	A feast dedicated to the Hindu deity Shiva. The night before the feast fasting is observed, texts are recited, songs are sung, and stories told in honor of this God whose cosmic dance creates, preserves, destroys, and recreates the world.
March 19	<b>Ostara</b>	<b>Paganism</b>	Vernal Equinox, celebrating the equivalence of light and dark, the arrival of Spring, fertility, renewal, and rebirth.
March 21	<b>Naw Ruz</b>	<b>Zoroastrianism</b>	The seventh greatest festival, "New Day" is the first day of the Zoroastrian/Persian. It falls on the spring equinox and symbolizes the renewal of the world after the winter. For Zoroastrians, Naw Ruz also celebrates the creation of fire that is symbolic of Asha, or righteousness. It is also the day on which Zarathustra received his revelation.
March 27-28	<b>Laylat al-Bara'ah</b>	<b>Islam</b>	Night of Repentance. Begins at sundown on March 27. On this night, God approaches the Earth to call humanity and to grant forgiveness of sins. Observed on the 14th day of the lunar month of Sha'ban.
March 27 - April 4	<b>Pesach/Passover</b>	<b>Judaism</b>	Commemorates the deliverance of the Israelites from slavery to freedom. Traditionally the Biblical command to remove all leavened foods (like bread) from the home is observed; bread is replaced with "matzah" for 8 days. The first evening of the festival is celebrated with a Seder, a ritual meal designed to educate all on the founding narrative of the Jewish people - God's liberation of the Israelite slaves. The first two and the last two days are holidays. Begins at sundown on 3/27/21 and ends at sundown on 4/4/21.
March 28 - 29	<b>Holi (dates may vary)</b>	<b>Hinduism</b>	A joyous spring Hindu festival that is dedicated to Krishna in some parts of India; in other parts of India, it is dedicated to Kama, the God of Pleasure. People throw colored water or colored powder in celebration. Begins at sundown on 3/28/21 and ends at nightfall on 3/29/21.
April 1	<b>Holy Thursday/ Maundy Thursday</b>	<b>Christianity</b>	Commemorates the institution of the Lord's Supper/the Eucharist by Jesus prior to his arrest and execution. "Maundy" is derived from the Latin text of John 13:34, in which Jesus gives a mandatum novum ("new commandment")
April 2	<b>Good Friday</b>	<b>Christianity</b>	Commemorates the Passion of Jesus Christ, i.e., his death by crucifixion.
April 4	<b>Easter</b>	<b>Christianity</b>	Celebrates the resurrection from death of Jesus Christ. It is the oldest and most important festival in the Christian year.
April 6	<b>Anniversary of the Founding of the Church</b>	<b>Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints</b>	Celebrates the anniversary of the Church's founding by Joseph Smith. Annual World General Conference of the Church held on Saturday and Sunday closest to this date each year.

April 8	<b>Yom HaShoah</b>	<b>Judaism</b>	Yom HaShoah is the Holocaust Day of Remembrance that memorializes the six million Jews, and millions of others, who died as victims of the Nazis during World War II.
April 12 - May 12	<b>Ramadan</b>	<b>Islam</b>	The Holy Month of Ramadan is the month of fasting during which Muslims who are physically able do not eat or drink from the first sign of dawn until sunset in honor of the first revelations to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The evening meal is celebrated in community.
April 13	<b>Vaisakhi</b>	<b>Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism</b>	Occurs on the first day of the solar year. It is primarily an agricultural festival, celebrating the harvest, and is especially important in North India. It is named after the month Vaisakh. For Sikhs, it is also the anniversary of the creation of the Khalsa (the "Brotherhood of the Pure") in 1699 by Guru Gobind Singh.
April 20, April 28, and May 1	<b>First, Ninth, and Twelfth Days of Ridván</b>	<b>Bahá'í</b>	Commemorates the 12 days that Baha'u'llah spent in the Garden of Ridvan in the last days of his exile in Baghdad, during which time he proclaimed himself as the one announced by Bab. Work is suspended on the first, ninth, and twelfth days.
April 21	<b>Ramanavami</b>	<b>Hinduism</b>	Celebrates the birthday of Rama, the seventh incarnation of the God Vishnu. The Ramayana, one of the Hindu epics that tells the story of Rama, is read during the previous eight days.
April 25	<b>Mahavir Jayanti</b>	<b>Jainism</b>	Celebrates the birthday of Lord Mahavira. Born with the name Vardhamana in ca. 599 BCE, he was later given the titles of honor, Mahavira ("Great Hero") and Jina ("Conqueror" or "Victor"), a title applied also to the other Tirthankaras.
April 27	<b>Hanuman Jayanti</b>	<b>Hinduism, Jainism</b>	Celebration of the birth of Rama's devotee, Hanuman.
April 30	<b>Holy Friday</b>	<b>Orthodox Christianity</b>	The day that commemorates the Passion of Jesus Christ, i.e., his death by crucifixion. It is the Orthodox equivalent of "Good Friday."
May 1	<b>Beltane</b>	<b>Paganism</b>	The final fertility festival, halfway between the spring and summer equinoxes, celebrating the Earth's fecundity and anticipating the power of the sun and the Earth in summer.
May 2	<b>Easter Sunday (Pascha)</b>	<b>Orthodox Christianity</b>	Celebrates the resurrection from the death of Jesus Christ. It is the oldest and most important festival in the Christian year. Protestant and Roman Catholic Christians often observe Easter on a different date than Orthodox Christians.
May 8-9	<b>Laylat al-Qadr</b>	<b>Islam</b>	The Night of Power or Destiny commemorates the first revelation of the Qur'an (the Islamic scriptures) to Prophet Muhammad in 610 CE. Muslim students and employees may spend the evening in prayer on this night.
May 12-15	<b>Eid al-Fitr</b>	<b>Islam</b>	Also known as the Festival of the Breaking of the Fast. One of the two main Islamic festivals (the other is Eid al-Adha), this day celebrates the end of Ramadan, the month of fasting. It comes on the first day of the next lunar month, Shawal. The holiday is typically celebrated by gathering to pray and eat.
May 16-18	<b>Shavuot</b>	<b>Judaism</b>	Shavuot, or Feast of Weeks, marks the conclusion of the seven weeks following Pesach (Passover). It is a celebration of the harvest of first fruits and commemorates the giving of the Torah and

			Commandments at Mount Sinai. Begins at sundown on 5/16/21 and ends at nightfall on 5/18/21.
May 23	<b>Declaration of the Báb</b>	<b>Bahá'í</b>	The anniversary of the Báb's announcement of His mission in 1844.
May 23	<b>Pentecost</b>	<b>Christianity</b>	The commemoration of the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples of Jesus following his ascension, Pentecost is considered the "birthday" of the Christian church (Acts 2:1-11).
May 26	<b>Wesak (Buddha Day)</b>	<b>Buddhism</b>	The commemoration of Buddha's birth, enlightenment, and parinirvana, celebrated on the day of the full moon of the sixth lunar month in Southeast Asian cultures; in Tibetan culture, Wesak commemorates only the enlightenment and parinirvana. The dates of this celebration vary significantly among Buddhist cultures and communities.