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2025 – 2026 Religious and Spiritual Holiday Calendar

Below is a list of many religious holidays observed by the SIUE community. Please note that this is not a comprehensive list and individual practices may vary.

**Fall 2025**

**Friday, August 15:** Feast of Assumption (Catholicism) – a feast day commemorating the belief that the Virgin Mary was taken into Heaven at the end of her life, celebrations include attending mass, processions, festivals, blessing of the harvest, and special prayers and observances

**Friday, August 15 – Saturday, August 16:** Krishna Janmashtami (Hinduism) – a festival marking the birth of Krishna, celebrations include fasting, singing, night vigils, and shared prayer

**Thursday,** **August 21:** Paryushana Parva/Samvatsari (Jainism) – a time focused on spiritual renewal and lasting between eight and ten days depending on the individual’s beliefs which ends in a day of atonement and a forgiveness festival, celebrations include intense study, fasting, prayer, and reflection

**Tuesday, August 26:** Ganesh Chaturthi (Hinduism) – ten-day festival celebrating the birth of Ganesh, celebrations include the raising of idols of Ganesh, prayers, and festive processions

**Wednesday, August 27:** Samvatsari (Jainism) – a festival focused on forgiveness, celebrations include prayer, community gatherings, and self-reflection

**Thursday, September 4 – Friday, September 5:** Mawlid Al-Nabi (Islam) – a holiday commemorating the birth of the Prophet Muhammad, celebrations include feasts, decorations, prayers, gatherings, and parades

**Monday, September 22 – Tuesday, September 30:** Navaratri (Hinduism) – a nine-night autumn festival dedicated to celebrating the triumph of good over evil, celebrations include prayer, fasting, colorful attire, dance, and music

**Monday, September 22 – Wednesday, September 24:** Rash Hashanah (Judaism) – a two-day festival commemorating the creation of the world and marking the start of the High Holy Days, celebrations include self-reflection, intention settings, sounding of the shofar, special meals, and attending services

**Wednesday, October 1 – Thursday, October 2:** Yom Kippur (Judaism) – a day for reflection and the holiest day of the Jewish year, celebrations include a twenty-five-hour fast, prayer, reflection, community gathering, and making amends

**Wednesday, October 1:** Dussehra/Vijaydashami (Hinduism) – marking the end of Navaratri and celebrating the triumph of good over evil, celebrations include rituals, community gathering, sharing of meals, and cultural events

**Monday, October 6 – Monday, October 13:** Sukkot (Judaism) – a week-long holiday commemorating the forty-year period when the Israelites wandered in the desert after the Exodus from Egypt, celebrations include eating traditional meals, gathering with friends and family, prayers, and music

**Monday, October 13 – Wednesday, October 15:**Shemini Atzeret (Judaism) – a holiday celebrating the spiritual aspects of Sukkot, celebrations include candle lighting, prayers, singing and dancing, and festive meals

**Tuesday, October 14 – Wednesday, October 15:** Simchat Torah (Judaism) – a holiday celebrating the completion of the annual cycle of reading the Torah and the beginning of a new cycle, celebrations include processions, singing and dancing, and reading the Torah – double check date

**Saturday, October 18 – Wednesday, October 22:** Diwali (Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism) – a five-day festival marking new beginnings and the triumph of light over darkness with the main day of the festival falling on October 20th, celebrations include ceremonies, prayers, lighting of candles, decoration of homes, feasting, exchanging gifts, and setting off fireworks

**Monday, October 20:** Parkash Utsav/Installation of the Guru Granth Sahib (Sikhism) – a holiday celebrating the installation of the Sikh holy book, celebrations include processions, prayers, community meals, and reflection

**Wednesday, October 22 – Thursday, October 23:** Twin Holy Days (Bahá’i Faith) – holy days commemorating the births of the Bab and Baha’u’llah, celebrations include prayers, devotional readings, music, and community gatherings

**Friday, October 31:** Reformation Day (Christianity, Protestant) – a holy day marking the beginning of the Protestant Reformation, celebrations include church services, activities, celebrations and meals with friends and family, and discussions of faith and scriptures

**Saturday, November 1:** All Saints Day (Catholicism) – a holiday honoring all saints who have attained Heaven, celebrations include attending mass, remembering and reflecting on the lives and teachings of saints, visiting cemeteries, prayer, and community meals

**Sunday, November 2:** All Souls Day (Catholicism) - a day of remembrance and prayer for all souls who have died, celebrations include attending special mass, visiting the graves of loved ones, prayers for the dead, altars, shared meals, and lighting candles

**Wednesday, November 5:** GuruNanak Jayanti (Sikhism) – a festival celebrating the birthday of the founder of Sikhism, Guru Nanak Dev Ji, celebrations include processions, prayers, and community meals

**Monday, November 24:** Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji (Sikhism) – a day of commemorating the sacrifice of the ninth Sikh Guru who was executed for defending religious freedom, celebrations include processions, reflection, community gatherings, special prayer services, and traditional music and dance performances

**Monday, November 24 – Tuesday, November 25:** Day of the Covenant (Bahá’i Faith) – a holy day commemorating the appointment of Abdu’l-Bahá as the Center of Bahá’ulláh’s Covenant, celebrations include community gatherings for devotional programs, remembrance of Abdu’l-Bahá and Bahá’ulláh, and reflection on faith and the covenant

**Sunday, November 30:** Advent Sunday (Christianity) – a day marking the beginning of the Advent season, celebrations include the lighting of a candle on the Advent wreath, attending special mass or church service, charitable giving, acts of service, and beginning decorating for Christmas

**Monday, December 8:** Jodo-e/Bodhi Day (Buddhism) – a day commemorating Siddhartha Gautama’s enlightenment, celebrations include chanting, offerings, and Dharma talks

**Monday, December 8:** Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Catholicism) – a holy day celebrating the belief that Mary was preserved from original sin from the moment of her conception, celebrations include attending mass, learning about Mary, and celebrating mothers/women

**Friday, December 12:** Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe (Catholicism) – a feast day commemorating the Virgin Mary’s apparitions to Saint Juan Diego in Mexico, celebrations include pilgrimages shrines dedicated to Our Lady of Guadalupe, special masses, colorful processions, prayers, and traditional music and dances

**Sunday, December 14 – Monday, December 22:** Hanukkah/Chanukah (Judaism) – an eight-day festival of lights commemorating the rededication of the Second Temple in Jerusalem, celebrations include lighting a menorah, playing dreidel, enjoying oil-based foods, exchanging gifts, and community gatherings

**Spring 2026**

***Tuesday, January 6:*** *Epiphany (Catholicism) – a day marking the end of the Christmas holiday season, celebrations include taking down Christmas decorations, giving gifts, and singing songs*

**Wednesday, January 7:** Orthodox Christmas Day (orthodox Christianity) – a holiday commemorating the birth of Jesus, celebrations include feasting, attending church services, nativity fast (fasting from specific foods), exchanging of gifts, caroling, and gathering of friends and family

**Tuesday, January 20:** Guru Gobind Singh Jayanti (Sikhism) – a day celebrating the birthday of the tenth Sikh Guru, celebrations include prayers, processions, chants, special songs, community meals, storytelling, decorations, and acts of charity

**Wednesday, January 14:** Makar Sankranti (Hinduism) – marking the transition of the sun into Capricorn and noted as the Hindu New Year, celebrations include flying kites, enjoying traditional sweets, praying, and participating in feasts with family and friends

**Wednesday, January 14 – Saturday, January 17:** Pongal (Hinduism) – a four-day harvest festival expressing gratitude for the year’s harvest and the sun’s energy, celebrations include community events, family gatherings, and rituals

**Thursday, January 15 – Friday, January 16:** Lailat Al-Miraj/Isra and Miraj (Islam) – a holiday commemorating the Prophet Muhammad’s night journey and ascension into heaven, celebrations include special prayers, storytelling, acts of charity, fasting, and remembrance

**Sunday, February 15:** Ne-han-e/Nirvana Day/Parinirvana Day (Buddhism) – a festival commemorating Buddha’s passing, celebrations include ceremonies, meditation, reflection, memorials, and offerings

**Sunday, February 15 – Monday, February 16:** Maha Shivaratri (Hinduism) – a festival honoring Lord Shiva, celebrations include participation in an all-night vigil, prayers, devotional music, chanting, meditation, and fasting

**Tuesday, February 17:** Lunar New Year (Buddhism, Daoism, Confucianism) – a festival celebrating letting go of the past and welcoming the future, celebrations include family reunions, decorations, special meals, lion and dragon dances, cultural parades, exchanging of gifts, and a lantern festival

**Tuesday, February 17 – Thursday, March 19:** Ramadan (Islam) – a holy month of spiritual reflection, celebrations include prayer, reciting the Quran, fasting from dawn until dusk, self-reflection, and gathering with friends and family

**Wednesday, February 18:** Ash Wednesday (Catholicism) – a day of repentance and reflection that marks the beginning of lent, celebrations include attending mass, the imposition of ashes on the forehead in a cross shape, prayer, confession, and fasting

**Monday, February 23:** Clean Monday/Ash Monday (Orthodox Christianity) – a day marking the transition from feasting to fasting, celebrations include fasting until noon, engaging in outdoor activities, enjoying special foods, and spring cleaning

**Sunday, March 1 – Friday, March 20:** Nineteen Day Fast (Baha’i Faith) – a period of spiritual rejuvenation and preparation for the Bahá’i New Year, celebrations include fasting from food and drink from dawn to dusk, meditation, contemplation, and prayer

**Tuesday, March 3:** Purim (Judaism) – a holiday commemorating the Book of Esther’s story, celebrations include reading the Megillah, exchanging gifts of food and drink, giving charity, a celebratory meal, parades, carnivals, and dressing up in costumes

**Tuesday, March 3:** Magha Puja Day (Buddhism) – a festival commemorating a spontaneous gathering of enlightened monks coming to pay homage to the Buddha, celebrations include special prayers, candlelight processions, meditation, changing, and acts of charity and service

**Wednesday, March 4:** Holi (Hinduism) – festival celebrating the arrival of spring and the joy of new beginnings, celebrations include colorful festivals, rituals, community celebration, and shared meals

**Wednesday, March 4 – Friday, March 6:** Hola Mohalla (Sikhism) – a three-day festival showcasing the martial spirit and bravery of the Sikhs, celebrations include mock battles, processions, religious lectures, prayers, communal meals, and music

**Thursday, March 19 – Friday, March 20:** Eid Al-Fitr (islam) – a holiday marking the end of Ramadan, celebrations include special prayers, gathering with friends and families, exchanging gifts, feasts on traditional dishes, and charitable giving

**Thursday, March 19 – Friday, March 27:** Navaratri (Hinduism) – a nine-night festival celebrating the divine feminine and the triumph of good over evil, celebrations include fasting from certain foods and drinks, decorations, traditional dances, prayers, rituals, and gathering of friends and families

**Friday, March 20:** Naw-ruz/Nowruz (Bahá’i Faith) – a festival marking the Persian New Year and the beginning of spring, celebrations include festivals, eating traditional foods, and rituals

**Thursday, March 26:** Rama Navami (Hinduism) – a festival celebrating the birth of Lord Rama, celebrations include fasting, temple visits, recitations from the Ramayana, community gathering, charitable events, and cultural programs

**Sunday, March 29:** Palm Sunday (Catholicism) – commemorating Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem and marking the beginning of Holy Week, celebrations include attending mass, prayer, and blessing and distributing palm branches

**Tuesday, March 31:** Mahavir Jayanti (Jainism) – a festival celebrating the birth of Lord Mahavira, celebrations include prayers, processions, acts of charity, meditation, and fasting

**Wednesday, April 1 – Thursday, April 9:** Pesach/Passover (Judaism) – a week-long festival commemorating the Exodus from slavery in ancient Egypt, celebrations include ceremonial meals with symbolic foods, fasting from certain foods, special services, and work prohibition

**Thursday, April 2:** Maundy Thursday/Holy Thursday (Christianity) – a holiday commemorates the Last Supper of Jesus Christ with his disciples, celebrations include special church services and reflection on Jesus’s commandment to love one another

**Friday, April 3:** Good Friday (Catholicism, Christianity) – commemorating the crucifixion and death of Jesus, celebrations include reflection attending mass, and fasting

**Sunday, April 5:** Orthodox Palm Sunday (orthodox Christianity) – a holiday commemorating Jesus’s triumphal entry into Jerusalem before his crucifixion, celebrations include special services, blessing and distribution of palm branches, scripture readings, and fasting from some foods

**Sunday, April 5:** Easter (Catholicism, Christianity) – commemorating the resurrection of Jesus from the dead and marking the end of lent, celebrations include attending mass/church, decorating Easter eggs, exchanging Easter baskets, hiding/finding Easter eggs, and gathering with friends and family

**Thursday, April 9:** Orthodox Maundy Thursday/Holy Thursday (Orthodox Christianity) – a holiday commemorates the Last Supper of Jesus Christ with his disciples, celebrations include special church services and reflection on Jesus’s commandment to love one another

**Friday, April 10:** Orthodox Good Friday (Orthodox Christianity) - commemorating the crucifixion and death of Jesus, celebrations include reflection attending mass, and fasting

**Sunday, April 12:** Pascha/Orthodox Easter (orthodox Christianity) - commemorating the resurrection of Jesus from the dead and marking the end of lent, celebrations include attending mass/church, decorating Easter eggs, exchanging Easter baskets, hiding/finding Easter eggs, and gathering with friends and family

**Monday, April 20 – Saturday, May 2:** Ridvan (Bahá’i Faith) – a twelve-day festival commemorating Baha’u’llah’s declaration of his mission in the Ridvan garden near Baghdad, celebrations include prayers, reading from Baha’I writings, sharing meals, and acts of service

**Friday, May 1:** Visakha/Wesak Day (Buddhism) – festival commemorating the birth, enlightenment, and death of Buddha, celebrations include food and gift offerings, mediation, reflection, and services

**Summer 2026**

**Thursday, May 14:** Ascension Day (Catholicism, Christianity) – feast day commemorating the elevation of Jesus into Heaven after his resurrection, celebrations include processions, crowing of the Pope, special customs, attending mass, scripture readings, and preparation for Pentecost

**Thursday, May 21:** Go-tan-e (Buddhism) – holiday commemorating the birth of Shinran Shonin, celebrations include services and rituals

**Thursday, May 21 – Saturday, May 23:** Shavuot (Judaism) – a holiday celebrating the giving of the Torah to the Jewish people, celebrations include, special services, decorations, abstaining from work/school, lighting candles, acts of charity, candle lighting, overnight studying, and festive meals

**Saturday, May 23 – Sunday, May 24:** Declaration of the Báb (Bahá’i Faith) – a holy day commemorating the day the Bab declared his mission as a messenger of God, celebrations include prayers, storytelling, reflection, and gathering of friends and family

**Sunday, May 24:** Pentecost (Christianity) – a holiday celebrating the birthday of the Church, celebrations include special church services, prayers, and processions

**Tuesday, May 26 – Wednesday, May 27:** Eid Al-Adha (Islam) – a holiday commemorating Prophet Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice his son in obedience to God, celebrations include prayer, rituals, charity, feasting, exchanging gifts, and gathering with friends and family

**Thursday, May 28 – Friday, May 29:** Ascension of Baha’u’llah (Bahá’i Faith) – a holy day commemorating the death of Baha’u’llah, celebrations include prayer, reflection, suspension of work/school, spiritual gathering, and pilgrimage

**Thursday, June 25 – Friday, June 26:** Ashura (Islam) – the tenth day of Muharram, celebrations include fasting, gratitude, reflection, mourning, and sermons

**Sunday, July 2:** Tzom Tammuz (Judaism) – a day marking the beginning of the three-week period of mourning and commemorating several historical tragedies, celebrations include repentance, self-reflection, fasting from dusk to dawn, and avoiding certain customs

**Sunday, July 9:** Martyrdom of the Bab (Bahá’i Faith) – commemorating the execution of the Bab, celebrations include prayers, reading of Bahá’i scriptures, and a day of rest

**Sunday, August 2 – Monday, August 3:** Tisha B’Av (Judaism) – the end of Tzom Tammuz commemorating historical tragedies, celebrations include prayer, reflection, and fasting

**Saturday, August 8:** Raksha Bandhan/Rakhi (Hinduism) – festival celebrating sibling relationships, celebrations include exchanging gifts between brothers and sisters and offering protection and blessings