



Religious Observance Calendar

2025-2026 School Year

July 2025

- July 6 -- Ashura, begins Sundown, July 5 (Islamic)
- July 12 -- Apostles' Feast (Christian - Oriental Orthodox)

August 2025

- August 1-14 -- Dormition Fast (Christian - Orthodox)
- August 3 -- Tisha B'av, begins Sundown, August 2 (Jewish)
- August 6 -- Transfiguration (Christian - Catholic/Orthodox)
- August 7-21 -- Saint Mary's Fast (Christian - Oriental Orthodox)
- August 15 -- Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary/Dormition of the Theotokos (Christian - Catholic/Orthodox)
- August 19 -- Transfiguration (Christian - Oriental Orthodox)
- August 22 -- Saint Mary's Feast (Christian - Oriental Orthodox)

September 2025

- September 5 -- Eid e Milad, begins Sundown, September 4 (Islamic)
- September 6 -- Ullambana Day (Buddhist)
- September 8 -- Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mother/Theotokos (Christian - Catholic/Orthodox)
- September 11 -- Nayrouz (Christian - Oriental Orthodox)
- September 14 -- Exaltation of the Cross (Christian - Catholic/Orthodox)
- September 22-October 1 -- Navratri/Dussehra (Hindu)
- September 23-24 -- Rosh Hashanah, begins Sundown, September 22 (Jewish)

October 2025

- October 2 -- Yom Kippur, begins Sundown, October 1 (Jewish)
- October 6 -- Mid-Autumn Festival (Asian)
- October 7-13 -- Sukkot, begins Sundown, October 6 (Jewish)
- October 14-15 -- Shemini Atzeret & Simchat Torah, begins Sundown, October 13 (Jewish)
- October 20 -- Diwali (Hindu)
- October 31 -- Reformation Day (Christian - Lutheran)

November 2025

- November 1 -- All Saints' Day (Christian - Catholic/Protestant)
- November 15-December 24 -- Nativity Fast/Advent (Christian - Orthodox)

November 21 -- Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary/Entrance into the Temple of the Theotokos (Christian - Catholic/Orthodox)

November 25-January 6 -- Nativity Fast/Advent (Christian - Oriental Orthodox)

November 30-December 24 -- Advent (Christian - Catholic/Protestant)

December 2025

December 8 -- Bodhi Day (Buddhist)

December 8 -- Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Christian - Catholic)

December 15-22 -- Chanukkah, begins Sundown, December 14 (Jewish)

December 25 -- Christmas/Nativity of Christ (Christian - Catholic/Orthodox/Protestant)

January 2026

January 1 -- Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God (Christian - Catholic)

January 6 -- Epiphany (Christian - Catholic/Orthodox/Protestant)

January 7 -- Feast of the Nativity/Christmas, Julian Calendar (Christian - Oriental Orthodox)

January 14 -- Circumcision of our Lord (Christian - Oriental Orthodox)

January 16 -- Isra and Miraj, begins Sundown, January 15 (Islamic)

January 19 -- Theophany/Epiphany (Christian - Oriental Orthodox)

January 21 -- Wedding of Cana (Christian - Oriental Orthodox)

February 2026

February 2 -- Presentation of Christ (Christian - Catholic/Orthodox)

February 2 -- Feast of Nineveh (Christian - Oriental Orthodox)

February 15 -- Lord's Entrance into the Temple (Christian - Oriental Orthodox)

February 15 -- Maha Shivaratri (Hindu)

February 16 -- Great Lent Begins (Christian - Oriental Orthodox)

February 17 -- Lunar Calendar New Year (Asian)

February 17 -- Shrove Tuesday (Christian - Catholic/Protestant)

February 18-March 19 -- Ramadan, begins Sundown, February 17 (Islamic)

February 18 -- Ash Wednesday/Lent Begins (Christian - Catholic/Protestant)

February 23 -- Great Lent Begins (Christian - Orthodox)

March 2026

March 3 -- Purim, begins Sundown, March 2 (Jewish)

March 4 -- Holi (Hindu)

March 16 -- Laylat Al-Qadr, begins Sundown, March 15 (Islamic)

March 20 -- Eid al-Fitr, begins Sundown, March 19 (Islamic)

March 20 -- Nowruz, Persian New Year

March 25 -- Annunciation of the Lord (Christian - Catholic/Orthodox/Protestant)

March 26 -- Ram Navami (Hindu)

March 29 -- Palm Sunday (Christian - Catholic/Protestant)

April 2026

April 2-9 -- Pesach (Passover), begins Sundown, April 1 (Jewish)

April 2 -- Maundy/Holy Thursday (Christian - Catholic/Protestant)
April 3 -- Good Friday (Christian - Catholic/Protestant)
April 5 -- Easter/Pascha (Christian - Catholic/Protestant)
April 5 -- Palm Sunday (Christian - Oriental Orthodox/Orthodox)
April 7 -- Annunciation of the Lord (Christian - Oriental Orthodox)
April 9 -- Covenant/Great and Holy Thursday (Christian - Oriental Orthodox/Orthodox)
April 10 -- Good Friday (Christian - Oriental Orthodox/Orthodox)
April 11 -- Lazarus Saturday/Apocalypse (Christian - Oriental Orthodox)
April 12 -- Feast of the Resurrection/Easter/Pascha (Christian - Oriental Orthodox/Orthodox)
April 14 -- Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day), begins Sundown, April 13 (Jewish)
April 19 -- Thomas Sunday (Christian - Oriental Orthodox)
April 21 -- Yom HaZikaron, begins Sundown, April 20 (Jewish)
April 22 -- Yom HaAtzmaut (Israel Independence Day), begins Sundown, April 21 (Jewish)

May 2026

May 5 -- Lag B'Omer, begins Sundown, May 4 (Jewish)
May 14 -- Ascension of the Lord (Christian - Catholic/Protestant)
May 21 -- Ascension of the Lord (Christian - Oriental Orthodox/Orthodox)
May 22-23 -- Shavuot, begins Sundown, May 21 (Jewish)
May 24 -- Buddha's Birthday (Buddhist)
May 24 -- Pentecost Sunday (Christian - Catholic/Protestant)
May 27 -- Eid al-Adha, begins Sundown, May 26 (Islamic)
May 31 -- Pentecost Sunday (Christian - Oriental Orthodox/Orthodox)

June 2026

June 1 -- Holy Family's Entrance into Egypt (Christian - Oriental Orthodox)
June 26 -- Ashura, begins Sundown, June 25 (Islamic)

July 2026

July 12 -- Apostles' Feast (Christian - Oriental Orthodox)
July 23 -- Tisha B'av, begins Sundown, July 22 (Jewish)

August 2026

August 1-14 -- Dormition Fast (Christian - Orthodox)
August 6 -- Transfiguration (Christian - Catholic/Orthodox)
August 7-21 -- Saint Mary's Fast (Christian - Oriental Orthodox)
August 15 -- Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary/Dormition of the Theotokos (Christian - Catholic/Orthodox)
August 19 -- Transfiguration (Christian - Oriental Orthodox)
August 22 -- Saint Mary's Feast (Christian - Oriental Orthodox)
August 27 -- Ullambana Day (Buddhist)

This calendar is presented by the University Chaplains Association. Please note, some dates may shift throughout the year based on the lunar cycles. Should you have any questions, please contact us at uca.odu@gmail.com or visit ucaatodu.org.



Religious Observance Calendar

Descriptions

Asian

Lunar New Year -- One of the most important festivals celebrated in Asian cultures. In the West, Lunar New Year is often referred to as Chinese New Year. During this 15-day festival, family and friends travel across the nation to reunite over great food such as dumplings. People decorate houses with red lanterns, Spring couplets, and paper-cut outs. Young people love setting off firecrackers and receiving cash in paper (or electronic nowadays) red envelopes.

Mid-Autumn Festival -- The Mid-Autumn Festival, also known as the Moon Festival or Mooncake Festival, is a harvest festival celebrated in Chinese culture. On this day, the Chinese believe that the moon is at its brightest and fullest size, coinciding with harvest time in the middle of autumn. During the festival, lanterns of all size and shapes – which symbolize beacons that light people's path to prosperity and good fortune – are carried and displayed. Mooncakes, a rich pastry typically filled with sweet-bean, egg yolk, meat or lotus-seed paste, are traditionally eaten during this festival. The Mid-Autumn Festival is based on the legend of Chang'e, the Moon goddess in Chinese mythology.

Buddhist

Bodhi Day -- The day that the historical Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama (Shakyamuni), experienced enlightenment.

Buddha's Birthday -- The birthday of the Buddha. Also called Vesak Day.

Ullambana Day -- The day of offering filial piety to parents.

Christian (Catholic/Oriental Orthodox/Orthodox/Protestant)

Advent/Nativity Fast -- Advent is a season observed in most Christian denominations as a time of expectant waiting and preparation for both the celebration of the Nativity of Christ at Christmas and the return of Christ at the Second Coming. Advent is the beginning of the liturgical year in Western Christianity.

All Saints' Day -- Christian festival celebrated in honor of all the Saints, both known and unknown.

Annunciation of the Lord -- The Solemnity of the Annunciation is celebrated nine months before the Nativity of the Lord, Christmas. The Annunciation recalls the day when the Archangel Gabriel

appeared to Mary and revealed God's will that she become the Mother of the Son of God, and she accepted.

Apostles' Feast -- The Apostles' Feast follows the Apostles' Fast. This commemorates the fast observed by the disciples after the Ascension of Christ. The fast starts on the Monday that follows Pentecost and ends on the Apostles' Feast, which commemorates the apostles Peter and Paul.

Ascension of the Lord -- Commemorates the bodily Ascension of Jesus Christ into Heaven.

Ash Wednesday -- This day marks the beginning of Lent. Ashes are worn as a reminder that we are creatures and that our lives were given to us. Also, they remind us that our lasting home is in eternity with God not here.

Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary/Dormition of the Theotokos/Saint Mary's Feast -- The Immaculate Mother of God, the ever Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory.

Christmas/Feast of the Nativity -- The celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ.

Circumcision of our Lord -- The Feast of the Circumcision of Christ is a Christian celebration of the circumcision of Jesus in accordance with Jewish tradition, eight days after his birth, the occasion on which the child was formally given his name.

Dormition Fast -- The Dormition Fast is a period of fasting observed by Orthodox Christians in the two weeks leading up to the Feast of the Dormition, which commemorates the death and glorification of the Theotokos (Virgin Mary). During this time, Orthodox Christians abstain from meat, dairy, fish, wine, and oil, with exceptions for fish on the Feast of the Transfiguration (August 6th) and the day of the Dormition.

Easter Sunday/Pascha/Feast of the Resurrection -- The celebration of Jesus being raised from the dead.

Epiphany -- Celebrates the revelation of God incarnate as Jesus Christ. Commemorates principally (but not solely) the visit of the Magi to the Christ Child, and thus Jesus' physical manifestation.

Exaltation of the Cross -- This feast commemorates the cross used in the crucifixion of Jesus, as the sign of salvation.

Feast of Nineveh -- The Feast of Nineveh is a three-day observance commemorating the repentance of the people of Nineveh after being called to repentance by the prophet Jonah. It is a time of prayer and fasting, typically observed by abstaining from food and drink from midnight to noon, or by avoiding meat and animal products for the entire period.

Good Friday -- The day Jesus was crucified and died.

Holy Family's Entrance into Egypt -- The Holy Family, consisting of the infant Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, fled to Egypt to escape King Herod's persecution. This event, known as the Flight into Egypt, is recounted in the Gospel of Matthew and is a significant event in Christian tradition. They entered Egypt via the Sinai desert, likely through Rafah and then Pelusium (Farama), before traveling south

Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Theotokos) -- The conception of the Virgin Mary, free from original sin by virtue of the merits of her son Jesus.

Lazarus Saturday/Apocalypse -- Lazarus Saturday is a significant feast day in the Orthodox Christian Church that commemorates Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead. This event, described in the Gospel of John (John 11:1-45), is particularly important because it was the last miracle performed by Jesus before his own death and resurrection.

Lent/Great Lent -- Lent is a six week period of prayer and fasting in anticipation of Easter.

Maundy/Holy Thursday/Covenant Thursday/Great and Holy Thursday -- The institution of the Lord's Supper.

Nayrouz -- This day is the Oriental Orthodox New Year!

Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mother/Theotokos -- The birth of Mary, mother of Jesus. The Church honors Mary's birth as a pivotal moment in salvation history, as it signifies the beginning of her unique role in God's plan.

Palm Sunday -- Christian feast that falls on the Sunday before Easter. The feast commemorates Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, an event mentioned in each of the four canonical Gospels.

Pentecost Sunday -- Commemorates the coming of the Holy Spirit in the form of flames to the Apostles, thus allowing the apostles to speak in other languages through 'tongues of fire,' and they started preaching the word of Jesus. Many Christians recognise this day as the birth of the Church.

Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary/Entrance into the Temple of the Theotokos -- This feast commemorates the moment when Mary, at age three, was presented by her parents, Joachim and Anne, in the Temple in Jerusalem as part of a vow made by her parents when they were childless.

Presentation of Christ/Lord's Entrance into the Temple -- It commemorates the presentation of the infant Jesus at the Temple in Jerusalem by Mary and Joseph, as described in the Gospel of Luke. This event fulfills the requirements of Jewish law, including the purification of Mary and the redemption of the firstborn son.

Reformation Day -- Anniversary of the day Martin Luther is said to have posted his Ninety-five Theses on the door of the church in Wittenberg, Germany (October 31, 1517). It was later identified by Protestants as the beginning of the Reformation.

Saint Mary's Fast -- This is a two-week fast that helps one to prepare for the Feast of the Assumption.

Shrove Tuesday -- The last day before the beginning of Lent. This day is marked through the eating of pancakes or other items you might be fasting from during Lent. The holiday is celebrated in many different cultures through names such as Mardi Gras and Carnival. As a popular feast day, the holiday is celebrated religiously by Christians but also culturally by many others worldwide.

Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God (Theotokos) -- A feast day of the Blessed Virgin Mary under the aspect of her motherhood of Jesus Christ, whom Christians see as the Lord, Son of God.

Theophany -- This observance commemorates Christ's baptism by John the Baptist in the River Jordan, beginning of Christ's ministry on earth and revealing the Holy Trinity of God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit to mankind.

Thomas Sunday -- This Sunday marks Christ's post-Resurrection appearances—first to His disciples without Thomas, then again eight days later when Thomas famously declared, "My Lord and my God."

Transfiguration -- This event in the Gospels is where Jesus' appearance was dramatically changed, revealing his divine glory to three of his disciples. It signifies a shift from his earthly, human form to a radiant, heavenly one. The transfiguration is a pivotal moment, and the setting on the mountain is presented as the point where human nature meets God: the meeting place of the temporal and the eternal, with Jesus as the connecting point, acting as the bridge between heaven and earth.

Wedding of Cana -- The Wedding at Cana is a biblical event recorded in the Gospel of John where Jesus performs his first miracle: turning water into wine. It took place at a wedding feast in Cana of Galilee, where Jesus, his mother Mary, and his disciples were in attendance. The miracle is significant as it marks the beginning of Jesus' public ministry and is considered the first of his "signs" in John's Gospel, revealing his glory and leading to his disciples' belief.

Hindu

Diwali -- Festival of Lights. This holiday is typically celebrated by families sharing various traditional rituals in their homes.

Holi -- Festival of Spring or Festival of Colors. This day is typically celebrated by families in India, Nepal, and other parts of Asia by partaking in various regional traditions.

Maha Shivaratri -- Hindu festival celebrated annually in honor of the god Shiva. The name also refers to the night when Shiva performs the heavenly dance called Tandava.

Navratri/Dussehra -- This is one of the most revered Hindu festivals and is observed in the honor of Mother Goddess Durga.

Ram Navami -- This celebration commemorates the birth of Lord Rama to the king of Ayodhya, King Dasharatha.

Islamic

Ashura -- Shi'a Muslims commemorate the martyrdom of Husayn ibn Ali, Muhammad's grandson. According to Sunni Muslims, Muhammad fasted and asked others to do so on this day as well.

Eid al-Adha -- Festival of Sacrifice. Commemorates the willingness of Abraham to sacrifice his son Ishmael. God provided a sheep to sacrifice in Ishmael's place

Eid al-Fitr -- Marks the end of Ramadan, the month of fasting, and the holiest month in Islamic tradition. It literally means "breaking the fast." Eid al Fitr is Allah's (God's) reward for believers who have fasted during the holy month of Ramadan. This is also believers thanking Allah (God) for giving them the chance and the strength to carry out His commands during the blessed month of Ramadan.

Eid e Milad -- Recognizes the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad. The holiday honors Muhammad's life and teachings.

Isra and Miraj -- Celebrates the night when the Prophet (PBUH) ascended to the Heavens. "Exalted is He who took His Servant by night from al-Masjid al-Haram to al-Masjid al- Aqsa, whose surroundings We have blessed, to show him of Our signs. Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Seeing" (Quran; Surah Isra: 1).

Laylat Al-Qadr -- This is a night of prayer, generally considered to occur on the 27th night of the month of Ramadan - a month of fasting, prayer, charity, reflection, and community. This night is considered to be the most auspicious to seek forgiveness from God and develop God consciousness.

Ramadan -- The most sacred month of the year in Islamic culture. Muslims observe the month of Ramadan, to mark that Allah, or God, gave the first chapters of the Quran to the Prophet Muhammad in 610. During Ramadan, Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset, abstain from pleasures and pray to become closer to God.

Jewish

Chanukkah -- In the second century BCE, the Holy Land was ruled by the Seleucids (Syrian-Greeks), who tried to force the people of Israel to accept Greek culture and beliefs instead of their own. Against all odds, a small band of faithful Jews led by Judah the Maccabee, defeated one of the mightiest armies on earth, drove the Greeks from the land, reclaimed the Holy Temple in Jerusalem and rededicated it to the service of G-d. When they sought to light the Temple's Menorah (the seven-branched candelabrum), they found only a single cruse of olive oil that had escaped contamination by the Greeks. Miraculously, they lit the menorah and the one-day supply of oil lasted for eight days, until new oil could be prepared under conditions of ritual purity. To commemorate and publicize these

miracles, the sages instituted the festival of Chanukah. Jews light an eight branched candelabra and eat special foods to commemorate the miracles.

Lag B'Omer -- Lag B'Omer is celebrated on the 33rd day of the Counting of the Omer, the period between Passover and Shavuot. It commemorates the cessation of a plague that afflicted Rabbi Akiva's students in the Talmudic era and honors the death anniversary of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, a revered mystic and author of the Zohar. The day is marked by celebrations such as bonfires, picnics, and pilgrimages to his tomb in Meron, Israel.

Pesach (Passover) -- The eight-day festival of Passover is celebrated in the early spring, from the 15th through the 22nd of the Hebrew month of Nissan. It commemorates the emancipation of the Israelites from slavery in ancient Egypt. It is observed by avoiding leaven and highlighted by the Seder meals that include four cups of wine, eating matza and bitter herbs, and retelling the story of the Exodus. The first and last two days are like Sabbaths and no work is permitted.

Purim -- It commemorates the salvation of the Jewish people in ancient Persia from Haman's plot "to destroy, kill and annihilate all the Jews, young and old, infants and women, in a single day," as recorded in the Megillah (book of Esther).

Rosh Hashanah -- It is the birthday of the universe, the day G-d created Adam and Eve, and it's celebrated as the end of the Jewish year. The holiday is two days and involves blowing a ram's horn, having festive meals, and being in synagogue. Both days are considered like a Sabbath and no work is permitted.

Shavuot -- The holiday of Shavuot is a two-day holiday. The word Shavuot (or Shavuot) means "weeks." It celebrates the completion of the seven-week "Omer" counting period between Passover and Shavuot. The Torah was given by G-d to the Jewish people on Mount Sinai on Shavuot more than 3,300 years ago. Every year on the holiday of Shavuot we renew our acceptance of G-d's gift, and G-d "re-gives" the Torah. The two days of this holiday are like a Sabbath and no work may be done on these days.

Shemini Atzeret -- Marks the final day of Sukkot.

Simchat Torah -- Joyous holiday that marks the completion of the yearly cycle of reading the Hebrew Bible (Torah) and the beginning of the next cycle.

Sukkot -- Sukkot is a weeklong Jewish holiday. Sukkot celebrates the gathering of the harvest and commemorates the miraculous protection G-d provided for the children of Israel when they left Egypt. We celebrate Sukkot by dwelling in a foliage-covered booth (known as a sukkah) and by taking the "Four Kinds" (arba minim), four special species of vegetation. The first two and last two days are observed like Sabbaths and no work is permitted.

Tisha B'av -- The 9th day of the Hebrew month of Av, is the saddest day on the Jewish calendar, on which we fast, deprive ourselves and pray. It is the culmination of the Three Weeks, a period of time during which we mark the destruction of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem.

Yom Ha'Atzmaut (Israel Independence Day) -- Israel's Independence Day is celebrated on the fifth day of the month of Iyar, which is the Hebrew date of the formal establishment of the State of Israel, when members of the "provisional government" read and signed a Declaration of Independence in Tel Aviv. The original date corresponded to May 14, 1948. It is a day of celebration.

Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day) -- Yom HaShoah is a day set aside for Jews to remember the Holocaust. The name comes from the Hebrew word 'shoah', which means 'whirlwind'. Yom Hashoah was established in Israel in 1959 by law. It falls on the 27th of the Jewish month of Nissan, a date chosen because it is the anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising.

Yom HaZikaron -- Yom HaZikaron is Israel's Memorial Day, honoring soldiers who died in service and victims of terrorism. It is observed with national ceremonies, sirens, and moments of silence. It is a solemn holiday which falls the day before Yom Ha'Atzmaut, Israel's Independence Day.

Yom Kippur -- Yom Kippur is the holiest day of the year, when we are closest to G-d and to the essence of our souls. Yom Kippur means "Day of Atonement." It is the 10th day of the Jewish year and is a full day (sunset to sunset) fast and is typically spent in synagogue. It is like a Sabbath and no work may be done on this day.