



# The Holy Days of August

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

**Office of InterFaith  
Pastoral and Spiritual Care**  
Senior Chaplain  
Rev. Kathleen Ennis-Durstine  
extension 3321/ room 4201

Staff Chaplain  
Janie Brooks  
extension 5050/ room 4115

Staff/Spanish Language Chaplain  
Margarita Roque  
extension 2626/ room 4115

Catholic Chaplain  
Fr. Olusola Adewole  
extension 2626/room 4115

**Catholic Mass: Thursday at 12:00 noon**  
(East Chapel, room 3033, third floor East  
Tower) and **Saturday at 4:00 pm** (Main  
Chapel, room 3201, 3rd Floor Main Hospi-  
tal)

**Prayer and Meditation Tuesday 12:45 pm**  
East Chapel, room 3033, third floor East  
Tower—please listen for the  
announcement\*\*

**Friday: Jumah Prayer R-114, floor 3.5**  
Main Hospital at 1:15

**Sunday Worship 4:00 pm Room 3201, Main  
Chapel third floor, Main Hospital - please  
listen for the announcement\*\***

**\*\*Because of staffing limitations leaders for  
these worship opportunities may not be  
available. We OVERHEAD announce them  
1/2 hour prior to the service.**

Note the Information Boards and Brochure  
Racks for other information

August is American Indian Heritage Month, Cataract Awareness Month, Children's Eye Health and Safety Month, National Catfish Month, National Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Awareness Month, National Immunization Awareness Month, National Minority Donor Awareness Month, National Spinal Muscular Atrophy Awareness Month, Neurosurgery Outreach Month, What Will Be Your Legacy Month. Assistance Dog Week is observed the 5—11, Exercise With Your Child Week (6—12), World Breastfeeding Week (6—10), Elvis Week (10—18), Little League Baseball World Series (17—26), National Safety at Home Week (27—31). Assistance Dog **day** is the 5th, Lighthouse Day (7), Sneak Some Zucchini Onto Your Neighbor's Porch Night (8), Smithsonian Day (10), International Youth Day (12), National Navajo Code Talkers' Day (14), Senior Citizens' Day (21), International Day Against Nuclear Tests (29), National Toasted Marshmallow Day (30).



## Holy Days With No Fixed Date

**The Crow Fair Crow Tribe (and others)** This is the largest Powwow in the U.S. It dates to 1904 as an agricultural and craft fair and has been an important event in maintaining a living Crow culture. It occurs in an area just south of Billings, Montana. Several dances and dancing competitions occur.

**Hopi Flute Ceremony Hopi** This occurs over nine days in August in the mesas of north-eastern Arizona. The ceremony encourages rainfall and the growth of the corn. Unlike most of the other Hopi ceremonies which take place in the kiva, this one takes place in the ancestral rooms of the Flute Clan. It begins with a procession led by the clan chief, followed by the Flute Boy and two Flute Girls. Others include men carrying cornstalks, a man wearing a sun emblem, a man carrying a "moisture tablet" and several small boys. White is the ceremonial color for clothing. There are prayers and rituals for good rain and good harvest. On the sixth day an important ritual occurs—the unwrapping of the *tiponi*. This is a wooden cup-shaped item with an ear of corn inside. The cup



is divided into 4 sections each decorated with symbols of corn and rain clouds. The corn symbolizes the seed early nomadic tribes carried with them. The *tiponi* plus the corn is called the "mother" - the Flute priest unwraps it, places a new ear of corn inside and re-wraps it. The old grains are planted.

**Eagle Dance Native People** This dance is performed by many different tribes and the details of the dance will vary from group to group. The eagle is a sacred and symbolic bird because of its ability to fly so high; it is believed it have the power to move between heaven and earth. The dance portrays the life cycle of the eagle from birth to death, The Eagle Dance may have originally been a part of a larger ceremony performed to bring rain when crops were planted. Since the eagle can approach closer to the Great Spirit than any other creature it is a symbol for wisdom, power, and strength.

The eagle's feathers are regarded as sacred and must be handled with great care and respect. In the past, Hopi would carry out special expeditions to find young eaglets, which would be captured, kept, fed and cared for until their feathers were needed. Then, they would be killed and their bodies placed in a special burial ground. Today, Native Americans must apply to the government for a special permit; when dead eagles are found, government agencies see to it that their feathers are given to the Native Americans who need them.

**Hopi Snake Dance Hopi** The Snake Dance is observed for 16 days in August, typically on alternate years. It is a rain dance. Hopi rely on the snakes to carry their prayers for rain to the underworld where the gods and spirits of the ancestors live. Members of the Snake and Antelope clans from all three mesas in Arizona participate. Much preparation is needed to make the prayer sticks, sand paintings, and building the altar. Snakes are gathered during the last four days. The final two mornings races are held across the plain and up the slope of the mesa to represent the coming of rain. On the day of the dance the snakes are placed in the snake-shrine; the priests will then carry the snakes around, finally dropping them on the ground. They are sprinkled with corn meal and then the priests gather them and take them to special shrines where they are released to carry the prayers for rain from the mouths of the priests to the rain gods.

### **Holy Days with Fixed Dates**

**August 1 Fast in Honor of Holy Mother of Jesus Orthodox Christian** This day begins a fourteen-day fasting period before the great Feast of the Dormition of the Virgin Mary. This time celebrates Mary as the Holy Mother.

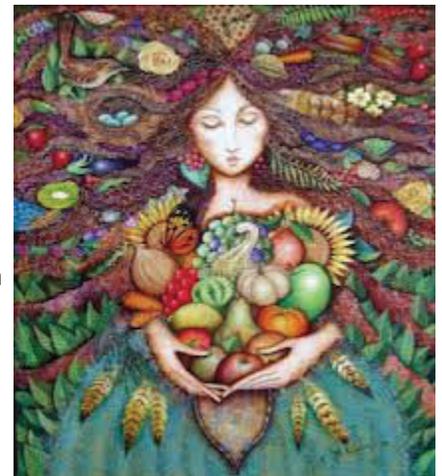
**August 1 Lammas Pagan** Lammas, also known Lughnasadh, is a celebration of the fruits of the first harvest of all grains, fruits, and vegetables. It is one of the cross-quarter sabbats and is the first of the three harvest celebrations of the Pagan calendar year. Throughout history, Pagan worshippers in Ireland, Britain, and Europe have celebrated their bountiful harvests on this day and offered prayers and sacrifices for the success of future crops. Since many fruits, vegetables, and grains today are available to us year-round, it is thought that this celebration is somewhat overlooked. Celebrated on August 1, the holiday still resonates with many around the world as it marks the end of summer and the welcoming of autumn.

Lughnasadh is another known name for the holiday. The name Lughnasadh originates from the Celtic god Lugh (also known as Lugus), whose name means "bright and shining one." Legend has it that the holiday was a recognition of the games and ceremonies that Lugh began in homage to his deceased mother, Tailtiu. These ceremonial games took place in Ireland, Britain, and other countries in Europe. Many Pagan worshippers around the world today still play games in celebration of the holiday.

Colors usually associated with this time of year are earthy oranges, browns, yellows, and golds. The colors are used to symbolize the harvest and the sense of renewal that comes with it. Often, worshippers use these colors in every aspect of their celebration.

A lot of the themes focus not only on the harvest but on underlying ideas such as renewal, giving thanks, making sacrifices. Mourning is also a theme that is highlighted, since Lugh's games were an origin of the holiday.

At this time of year, worshippers celebrate in various ways, whether in solitude or as part of a family or group. Harvesting one's own crops, participating in games, reciting chants in honor of the season, baking breads and berry pies for feasts or for sacrifice in rituals, and arts & crafts like making corn dollies and harvest knots are all ways in which Lammas is honored.



**August 2 Raksha Bandhan Hindu** Raksha Bandhan, also abbreviated to Rakhi, is the Hindu festival that celebrates brotherhood and love. It is celebrated on the full moon in the month of Sravana in the lunar calendar.

The word Raksha means protection, whilst Bandhan is the verb to tie. Traditionally, during the festival sisters tie a rakhi, a bracelet made of interwoven red and gold threads, around their brothers' wrists to celebrate their relationship.

Today the festival has developed with others joining in the festivities:

Priests tie rakhis around the wrists of congregation members.

Rakhis are often shared between close friends.

Women tie rakhis around the wrists of the prime minister.

Rakhis are tied around the wrists of soldiers.

It is believed that when a woman ties a rakhi around the hand of a man it becomes obligatory for him to honor his religious duty and protect her. Traditional stories state that rakhis are blessed with sacred verses and are encompassed by them.

Sometimes rakhis are consecrated in rice and grass before they are given, and they are traditionally tied by people familiar with the Vedas. Following these customs the rakhi is believed to remove sin from one hand and provide safety to the other. The protection offered by a rakhi is believed to remain for a year.

As the rakhi is tied, a prayer is offered asking for happiness and prosperity. Today rakhis are often decorated with multi-colored silk thread, and often adorned with stones and beads. Once the rakhi has been tied a mantra is chanted either in Sanskrit or Punjabi. At the end of the ceremony the sister places a sweet in her mouth. Following this her brother gives her a small monetary gift of appreciation. This festival has evolved over the years to encompass the importance of many people in Hindu society, yet foremost it continues to honor and uphold the relationship between a sister and brother.

**August 6 Transfiguration of the Lord Orthodox Christian** From the 6th to the 15th of August, for eight consecutive days, the Church celebrates the Transfiguration of our Lord Jesus Christ.

A little while before His voluntary Immaculate Passion and His death on the Cross, Christ isolated Himself for prayer on top of a hill (a mountain, as it is given geographically in Palestine), which is known by the name Tabor. With Him were present His three exceptionally loved and trustworthy Disciples, namely Peter, James and John.

This event constitutes a triple divine revelation, when the identity of Jesus is revealed to the Apostles. That is not only the strange change in His appearance and the inundation of light which emanated from His face, but the witnessing of the voice of the Father and the presence of the two most holy people from the "other side", that is, Moses and Elijah are confirming without a margin of doubt that Jesus is not just a simple person, or a wise teacher, a virtuous reformer of some new-wave of life-style, a charismatic miracle-worker, or even, a Prophet or a Saint, but He is the Son and the Word of the Living God!

See more at: <http://www.orthodoxchristian.info/pages/Metamorphosis.htm>





**August 10 Krishna Janmashtami Hindu** The Krishna Janmashtami festival marks the birth of Krishna, one of the most popular Gods in the Hindu pantheon. Krishna is perceived by most Hindus to be an avatar (incarnation) of Vishnu, who is regarded as the highest avatar. It is believed that all other deities are manifestations of him. Krishna is considered to be a warrior, hero, teacher and philosopher by Hindus.

Krishna's birthday is celebrated eight days after Raksha Bandhan in the month of Sravana and celebrations are spread over two days. The first day is called Krishan ashtami or Gokul ashtami. The second day is known as Kaal ashtami or more popularly Janam ashtami.

Celebrations

For the 48 hour period Hindus are likely to forego sleep and instead sing bhajans, which are traditional Hindu songs. It is believed that Krishna was born at midnight and it is at this time that the true festivities commence. Food is prepared from milk and curds said to have been favored by Krishna. Some Hindus choose to fast for the first day of Krishna Janmashtami, choosing only to eat after the midnight celebrations.

Dances and songs are used to venerate and remember this supreme God. Plays are also carried out re-enacting scenes from Krishna's early life. In Temples images of Krishna are bathed and placed in cradles, whilst the shankh (conch shell) is played and bells are rung. Holy mantras are also chanted to venerate Krishna. Given the significance of Krishna in the Hindu pantheon, Krishna Janmashtami is celebrated with great importance and consideration.

**August 14 Lailat al Qadr Islam** Lailat al Qadr, the Night of Power, marks the night in which the Qur'an was first revealed to the Prophet Muhammad by Allah.

Muslims regard this as the most important event in history, and the Qur'an says that this night is better than a thousand months (97:3), and that on this night the angels descend to earth.

This is a time that Muslims spend in study and prayer. Some will spend the whole night in prayer or in reciting the Qur'an.

Lailat al Qadr is a good time to ask for forgiveness.

Whoever establishes the prayers on the night of Qadr out of sincere faith and hoping to attain Allah's rewards (not to show off) then all his past sins will be forgiven.

Lailat al Qadr takes place during Ramadan. The date of 27 Ramadan for this day is a traditional date, as the Prophet Muhammad did not mention when the Night of Power would be, although it was suggested it was in the last 10 days of the month.

Because of this, many Muslims will treat the last 10 days of the month of Ramadan as a particularly good time for prayer and reading the Qur'an.

To listen to a discussion about forgiveness by Islamic, Jewish, and Buddhist scholars go to: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam/holydays/lailatalqadr.shtml>



**August 15 Assumption of the Virgin Mary Catholic Christian  
Dormition of the Theotokos Orthodox Christian**

The feast day of the Assumption of Mary, also known as Assumption Day, celebrates the day that the Virgin Mary ascended into Heaven following her death, according to popular Christian belief. It is the principal feast day of the Virgin Mother.

Assumption Day commemorates the belief that when Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ, died, her body was not subjected to the usual process of physical decay but was "assumed" into heaven and reunited there with her soul. This holiday, which has been celebrated since the fourth century CE, is a Christianization of an earlier harvest festival and, in many parts of Europe, is known as the Feast of Our Lady of the Harvest.



For centuries celebrations were held in the honor of the goddess Isis of the Sea, who was born on this day according to mythology. With the coming of Christianity church leaders decided that the easiest way to handle this pagan ritual was to simply change it into a Christian holiday, hence the introduction of Assumption Day came forth.

Like the Immaculate Conception, the Assumption was not always an official dogma of the Roman Catholic Church – not until Pope Pius XII ruled it so in 1950. It is, however, a pious belief held by some Orthodox Christians and some Anglicans. It is regarded as the principal feast day of the Virgin Mother.

The Dormition (Falling Asleep) of the Theotokos is one of the Great Feasts of the Orthodox Church, celebrated on August 15. This feast, which is also sometimes called the Assumption, commemorates the death, resurrection and glorification of Christ's mother. It proclaims that Mary has been "assumed"

by God into the heavenly kingdom of Christ in the fullness of her spiritual and bodily existence.

**August 19–21 Eid al Fitr Islam** The first Eid was celebrated in 624 CE by the Prophet Muhammad with his friends and relatives after the victory of the battle of Jang-e-Badar.

Muslims are not only celebrating the end of fasting, but thanking Allah for the help and strength that he gave them throughout the previous month of Ramadan to help them practice self-control.

The festival begins when the first sight of the new moon is seen in the sky. Muslims in most countries rely on news of an official sighting, rather than looking at the sky themselves.

The celebratory atmosphere is increased by everyone wearing best or new clothes, and decorating their homes. There are special services out of doors and in mosques, processions through the streets, and of course, a special celebratory meal - eaten during day-time, the first daytime meal Muslims will have had in a month. Eid is also a time of forgiveness, and making amends.



**August 29 Beheading of John the Baptist Christian** On this day, the Church marks the beheading of John the Baptist, who prepared the way for Jesus. As an adult, he lived as a hermit in the wilderness. After the Spirit inspired him, he went about preaching that the people should repent of their sins and be baptized in order to prepare for the Messiah. Herod imprisoned John because he had condemned Herod for committing adultery by living with his brother's wife, Herodias.



At the celebration for Herod on his birthday, the daughter of Herodias danced for him, and Herod was so impressed that he said he would offer her anything she liked. She consulted with Herodias who told her to ask for the head of John the Baptist on a platter. Herod did not want to kill John for fear or what his followers might do, but because of his promise to the girl he could not refuse, and

so John was beheaded.