Calendar of Religious Observances
FALL 2012
SEPTEMBER
1 Ecclesiastical Year begins - Orthodox Christian
8 Nativity of Mary, The mother of God - Christian
14 Elevation of the Life Giving Cross (Holy Cross) - Christian
17-18 Rosh Hashanah – Jewish
19 Ganesha Chaturthi – Hindu
19 Fast of Gedaliah – Jewish
26 Yom Kippur – Jewish
28 Meskel - Ethiopian Orthodox Christian
29 Michael and All Angels - Christian

OCTOBER
1-7 Sukkot – Jewish
2 Feast of the Guardian Angels – Christian
4 St. Francis Day – Christian
7 Hoshanah Rabbah – Jewish
8 Shemini Atzeret – Jewish
9 Simchat Torah – Jewish
13 St. Edwards Day – Christian
16-23 Navratri – Hindu
24 Dussera – Hindu
25 Waqf al Arafa – Islam
26-29 Eid Ul Adha – Islam
28 Reformation Day – Protestant Christian
31 All Hallows Eve - Christian

NOVEMBER
1 All Saints’ Day - Christian
2 All Souls’ Day - Catholic Christian
13 Diwali – Hindu
15 Nativity Fast (through Dec. 25) – Orthodox Christian
15 Al Hijra – Islam
21 Yule - Christian
22 Thanksgiving - Interfaith (USA)
24 Ashura – Islam
25 Christ the King – Christian
30 Saint Andrew’s Day - Christian

DECEMBER
2 Advent (First Sunday) - Christian
6 St. Nicholas Day - Christian
8 Bodhi Day (Rohatsu) - Buddhist
8 Immaculate Conception of Mary – Catholic Christian
8 Nativity of Mary – Christian
9-16 Chanukkah – Jewish
11 Third Sunday of Advent - Christian
12 Our Lady of Guadalupe - Catholic Christian
16-25 Posadas Navidenas – Christian
21 Yule - Christian
25 Christmas - Christian
26 Kwanzaa (through January 1) – Pan African/Interfaith
28 Holy Innocents - Christian

Adapted from the Diversity Awareness Partnership Calendar.
For an extensive, annual calendar, please visit dapstl.org.
Glossary of Religious Terminology

Advent: Christian time of preparation for observing the birth and anticipating the coming again to earth of Jesus Christ.

All Hallows Eve: Christian celebration combining prayers and merriment involving children and families.

All Saints' Day: Christian day for honoring saints, known and unknown.

Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary: Christian celebration of Gabriel announcing to the Virgin Mary the coming birth of Jesus.

Asalha Puja Day: One of the sacred days in Buddhism. It marks the coming into existence of the Triple Gems, namely the Lord Buddha, His Teaching, and His Disciples.

Ascension of Christ: Christian recognition of the departure of Jesus from earth after the resurrection.

Ash Wednesday: Christian observance to begin the 40-day season of Lent.

Ashura: An Islamic optional one-day fast recognizing the creation, Noah's departure from the Ark, and the saving of Moses from Pharaoh.

Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary: Roman Catholic Christian observance commemorating the assumption of Mary, mother of Jesus, into heaven.

Blessing of the Animals: Christian observance of showing respect for the domestic animals that mean much to people.

Bodhi Day (Rohatsu): Buddhist celebration of the Enlightenment of Buddha.

Buddha Day (Visakha Puja): Holiest of Buddhist holy days, which celebrates Buddha's birth, enlightenment and death.

Candlemas: Presentation of Jesus in the Temple.

Christmas: Christian celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ.

Corpus Christi: Roman Catholic Christian celebration in recognition of the Eucharist.

Diwali (Deepevali): Hindu celebration marking the end of the Hindu year.

Dormition (falling asleep) of the Theotokos: Orthodox Christian observance of the death, burial, resurrection and transfer to heaven of the Virgin Mary.

Dussehra: Hindu festival celebrating the victory of Goddess Durga over the Demons.

Easter: Most holy of Christian sacred days which commemorates the resurrection of Jesus Christ from his death by crucifixion.

Eid al-Adha: Islamic Feast of Sacrifice. The most important feast of Islam.

Eid al Fitr (‘Id al-Fitr): A three-day Islamic fast marking the close of Ramadan and a festival of thanksgiving to Allah for enjoying the month of Ramadan.

Elevation of the Holy Cross: Celebrates when St. Helen found the Holy Cross.

Epiphany: Christian commemoration of the manifestations of the divine nature of Jesus Christ.

Feast and Commemoration of St. Luke: Celebrated with the Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom, conducted on the morning of the feast and preceded by a Matins (Orthros) service.

Feast of St. Basil: Orthodox Christian commemoration of St. Basil the Great, who wrote a Eucharist Liturgy which bears his name.

Feast of the Theophany: Orthodox Christian feast to recall the revelation of the Holy Trinity in the baptism of the Lord.

Founding of the Church: Mormon Christian commemoration of the appearance of the angel Moroni in 1830 to Joseph Smith and the founding of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

Ganesh Chaturthi: A Hindu festival honoring the god of prosperity, prudence and success.

Good Friday: Christian festival honoring the crucifixion of Jesus and related events.

Guru Purnima: Hindu celebration of the ancient Gurus.

Hanukkah: Jewish Festival of Lights commemorating the recapture and rededication of the Jerusalem Temple.
Holi: Hindu spring festival dedicated to the god of pleasure.

Holy Family: Celebrates the love between the family of Jesus.

Holy Innocents: Day of solemn memory of male children killed by King Herod in the attempt to destroy Jesus.

Immaculate Conception: Roman Catholic Christian day of celebrating the belief that Mary, mother of Jesus, was preserved from original sin all of her life.

Krishna Janmashtami: Hindu commemoration of the birth of Krishna.

Kwanzaa: An African American and Pan-African holiday celebrating family, community and culture.

Lailat al-Miraj: Islamic observance of Mohammed's night journey from Mecca to Jerusalem and his ascension to heaven.

Lailat al-Bara'ah: Islamic Night of Forgiveness.

Lailat el Qadr: Islamic Night of Destiny; first revelation of Qur'an to Prophet Mohammed.

Lammas: Christian first fruits celebration observed by placing bread baked from first harvest on the altar. From the Celtic Christian tradition.

Lazarus Saturday - Orthodox Christian celebration of the resurrection of Lazarus by Jesus, revealing that Jesus is "the resurrection and life" of all mankind.

Lent: A Christian time of reflection and preparation for Holy Week and Easter; usually forty days.

Lord's Evening Meal: Jehovah's Witness (Christian) primary annual celebration taking place in the evening.

Magha Puja Day: Buddhist celebration of the presentation of teachings by Lord Buddha to an assembly of holy men.

Maha Shivaratri: A Hindu festival in honor of Lord Shiva and his marriage to Goddess Parvati. Ceremonies involving prayers and hymns take place mostly at night. Special foods are not used.

Mawlid an-Nabi: Islamic commemoration of the birthday of Prophet Muhammad, founder of Islam.

Maundy Thursday (Holy Thursday): Christian observance during Holy Week of the first Lord's Supper.

Meat Fare (Judgment) Sunday: Orthodox Christian observance preparing the faithful for the celebration of the resurrection of Christ.

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Milvian Bridge Day: Christian day of solemn reflection on the relationship of the spiritual community and the powers of civil government.

Moon Cake Festival: Third major festival of the Chinese calendar is celebrated on the 15th day of the eighth month. This festival corresponds to harvest festivals observed by Western cultures (in Hong Kong, it is held in conjunction with the annual Lantern Festival).

Muharram: The first day of the first month of the Muslim year.

Nativity of Mary, the Mother of God: Christian celebration of the birth of the Virgin Mary.

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.

Nirvana Day: Buddhist - a regional observance of the death of Buddha.

Orthodox Sunday: Orthodox Christian first Sunday of Lent at which restoration of icons to the church is celebrated.
Palm/Passion Sunday: Christian celebration of the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, which begins Holy Week.
Parryushana: 8 day festival signifying human emergence into a new world of spiritual and moral refinement, and a celebration of the natural qualities of the soul.
Pascha: Orthodox Christian feast day of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
Pentecost: Christian observation of the day when the Holy Spirit came to the disciples in the forms of tongues of fire and rushing wind.
Pesach (Passover): Jewish 8-day celebration of the deliverance of the Jews from slavery in Egypt.
Pioneer Day: Mormon observation of arrival of first settlers at Great Salt Lake, USA.
 Purim: Jewish celebration of the deliverance of the Jewish minority in Persia from genocide.
Quds Day: Islamic time of proclaiming solidarity in support of oppressed Muslim people.
Raksha Bandhan: Hindu festival honoring the loving ties between brothers and sister in a family.
Ramadan: Islamic month devoted to the commemoration of Muhammad's reception of the divine revelation recorded in the Qur'an. The holiest period of the Islamic Year.
Ramanavami: Hindu celebration of the birth of Lord Rama.
Reformation Day: Protestant Christian anniversary of their tradition and its emphasis on the place of the Bible and religious freedom.
Rosh Hashanah: Jewish New Year.
Sacred Heart of Jesus: Roman Catholic Christian occasion to pay homage to Christ’s all encompassing love for humanity.
Saturday of Souls: A day set aside for commemoration of the dead within the liturgical year of the Eastern Orthodox and Greek-Catholic Churches. Saturday is a traditional day for prayer for the dead, because Christ lay dead in the Tomb on Saturday.
Shavuot: Jewish celebration of Moses descent from Mt. Sinai with the Ten Commandments.
Shemini Azteret: Jewish completion of the annual cycle of reading of the Torah.
Shrove Tuesday: Christian carnival day on the eve of Ash Wednesday which begins Lent, a time of fasting and devotions.
Simchat Torah: Jewish day to celebrate the reading of the Law.
 Sukkot: Jewish Feast of Tabernacles, which celebrates the harvest and the protection of the people of Israel as they wandered in the wilderness dwelling in tents.
Thanksgiving: Interfaith celebration of the created earth.
Tisha B’Av: Jewish day of fasting in remembrance of the destruction of the Temple in 586 b.c.e. and 70 c.e.
Transfiguration of the Lord: Christian commemoration of the experience on Mt. Tabor when Jesus' physical appearance became brilliant as his connection with traditional Jewish holy figures became evident to the disciples.
Triodion: Triodion is the Orthodox Christian time period leading up to Lent. The liturgy involves hymns, odes and scriptures.
Tu B’Shevat: Jewish celebration of the coming of spring.
Twelfth Night: Christian observance of the close of Christmastide.
Ulambana: Buddhist celebration of the ritual of saving the deceased from torments after death.
Vasant Panchami: Hindu festival of spring honoring the goddess of learning.
Waqf al Arafa: Islamic observance day during Hajj when pilgrims pray for forgiveness and mercy.
Watch Night: Christian occasion to thank God for bringing people safely through another year. Developed by the African American community in the USA at the time of Emancipation (1863).
Yom HaSho’ah: Jewish Holocaust Day established to remember the six million Jews killed by the Nazis in 1933-45.
Yom Kippur: Jewish Day of Atonement. The holiest day of the Jewish year.
Yule: Christian celebration of the light dawning in Jesus.