

## Holy Days and Cultural Observances 2024-2025 Academic Year

As a diverse community, Wittenberg strives to recognize spiritually and culturally significant days throughout the academic year that may be observed by our faculty, staff and students. Some holy days include fasting, attendance at religious services, and community events for adherents. Our community is mindful that such observances may lead students to miss class or faculty/staff to need time away from work. Please work with students who need to miss class as a result of their faith practices. We invite questions for clarity and learning, which can be directed to Pastor Tracy or Suzanne Smailes. Blessings as you celebrate in the coming year!

### Locations and Opportunities for Worship and Reflection:

**Weekday Chapel:** weekly calendar: Every Tues & Thurs at 12:00-12:20 pm (Weaver Chapel). Per University policy, classes and meetings should not be scheduled during chapel time.

**Evening Chapel:** Sundays from 4:30-5:30 pm in Weaver Chapel. A time of reflection, prayer and song.

**Interfaith Prayer and Meditation Room:** Located on the second floor of the library, this space is available for personal meditation, reflection, prayer and religious practices. A sink is available and the space is marked to identify the East wall for prayer and observance.

**Meditation Space:** The activity room in Weaver Chapel offers space for prayer, meditation and personal reflection. A more intimate space within Weaver Chapel for reflection and mediation.

## Religious and Secular Observances throughout 2024-2025 academic year

### Jewish - Holy Days: October 2024

The Jewish High Holy days encompass the ten days from the beginning of Rosh Hashanah (the Jewish New Year) and the end of Yom Kippur (Jewish Day of Atonement): observant students, faculty and staff might fast, attend synagogue, refrain from work/classes, request re-scheduling of exams.

Rosh Hashanah: Wed Oct 2<sup>nd</sup>-Fri Oct 4<sup>th</sup> (sundown to sundown)

Yom Kippur: Fri Oct 11<sup>th</sup>-Sat Oct 12<sup>th</sup> (sundown to sundown)

Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles or Feast of Booths) celebrates the gathering of the Fall harvest. The holiday has also come to commence Wed Oct 23

<sup>rd</sup> (sundown to sundown)

Simchat Torah celebrates when the yearly cycle of Torah reading is completed and the next cycle is begun.

Simchat Torah: Thurs Oct 24<sup>th</sup>-Fri Oct 25<sup>th</sup> (sundown to sundown)

### **Hindu - Festival of Lights - Diwali: Oct-Nove 2024**

Families light their homes and gather for feasts. The Springfield community often has an observance available to attend.

Diwali: Thurs Oct 31<sup>st</sup>-Fri Nov 1<sup>st</sup>

### **American Secular - Thanksgiving: November 2024**

A traditional harvest festival and time to give thanks for the year's blessings. Family and friends gather for a large meal of traditional foods and time together.

Thanksgiving: Thur Nov 28 (University closed 11/28-/11/29)

### **Jewish - Hanukkah (Festival of Lights): December 2024-Jan 2025**

Commemoration of rededication of the Second Temple of Jerusalem. Celebrated through the lighting of candles on the evening of each night for 8 nights.

Hanukkah: Wed Dec 25<sup>th</sup>-Thur Jan 2<sup>nd</sup> (sundown to sundown)

### **Christian - Advent & Christmas: December 2024**

A time of preparation and reflection (Advent) followed by the commemoration of the birth of Jesus. Christians believe Jesus is the Son of God, who came into the world to redeem and unite.

Advent: Sun Dec 1-Tues Dec 24

Christmas Eve: Tues Dec 24

Christmas Day: Wed Dec 25

(University is shut down 12/21-1/1)

### **Commonwealth Secular - Boxing Day: December 2024**

Traditionally a day when wealthy people gave boxes of food to those in poverty, today's traditions include time with family, meals and celebrations.

Boxing day:

lunar calendar, 15 days later. Traditionally, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day are reserved for family celebrations, including ceremonies honoring ancestors. Being with family is important. Traditionally Chinese people eat no animal products the 1st and 15th days during this time.

Lunar New Year: Wed Jan 29<sup>th</sup>

Lantern Festival: Wed Feb 15<sup>th</sup>

**Christian - Lent, Holy Week & Easter: March-April 2025**

Seder; students should call Temple Sholom well in advance for details. Weaver Chapel can assist in connecting students.

Passover: Sat April 12<sup>th</sup>-Sunday April 20<sup>th</sup> (sundown to sundown)

**Jewish - Yom HaShoah: April 2025**

Yom HaShoah, Day of Remembrance of the Holocaust

Yom HaShoah: Wed April 23