

2023 Diversity Messages

December 1st World AIDS Day



December 1, 2023, marks 35 years of the AIDS epidemic and pays tribute to the many lives lost to HIV/AIDS. The AIDS epidemic devastated many individuals, families, and communities.

This year's theme focuses on the message:

- **Remembering** the lives lost and the relentless effort to defeat the disease and continuing to provide support to those with HIV.
- **Commit** to the collective responsibility to improve health equity, end the disparities of access to prevention and treatment, promote education and awareness. The battle will take a whole society response to win.

For more information on World AIDS Day 35 please visit the link below:

[World AIDS Day 35 - Remember & Commit](#)

December 3rd International Day of People with Disabilities



International Day of People with Disabilities (IDPWd) is observed worldwide each year on December 3rd. The United Nations released the 2023 theme: *"United in action to rescue and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for, with and by persons with disabilities."*

The main program of the observance of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities is at the UN Headquarters in New York & will include:

- the Opening, panel discussions and cultural events
- Member States, civil society organizations and the private sector
- Raising awareness and promoting the rights and perspectives of persons with disabilities around the world

To learn more, visit:

[United Nations -- Social Inclusion](#)

December 6th Saint Nicholas Day - Christian

St. Nicholas derived from Nicholas of Myra and was a bishop in 4th century Greece. He was known for selling off his own items and then giving the money to the poor. He would commonly leave coins in people's shoes and dedicated his entire life to serving people who were sick and suffering.

As time passed St. Nicholas Day began in different ways:

- In Italy, this day was celebrated with feasts, gift-giving, and festivals.
- In Germany and the Netherlands, children would leave their shoes or special St. Nicholas boots in front of the fireplace.
- The history of St. Nicholas and his good deeds was part of the inspiration of the modern-day Santa Claus and Father Christmas.
- Other traditions include, leaving small gifts in a stocking above the fireplace.

To read more on the history of Saint Nicholas, visit:

[National Today - St. Nicholas Day](#)

2023 Diversity Messages

December 7th

National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day

The day Japan attacked the United States at Pearl Harbor, is commemorated with the National Pearl Harbor Day of Remembrance each year on December 7th. On that day in 1941, more than 2,400 people died in Japan's attack on the Hawaiian base of America's Pacific Fleet. Hundreds of aircraft were destroyed or damaged, as were most of the ships in the harbor, and thousands of service men and women were killed or injured. It was an unprecedented surprise attack that precipitated the United States entry into World War II.

Why Should We Honor this Day?

- The worst attack on American soil, to date
- Marked the beginning of the U.S. into WWII
- Honors the U.S. Military response & the lives lost in the attack

Ways to Observe

- Visit a memorial in Hawaii or your local area
- Adopt a military family in your community, small acts of kindness go a long way
- Participate in an on-line event

Click the link below for more information:

[Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day](#)

December 8th

Bodhi Day - Buddhist

Bodhi Day is observed to mark the moment that took place 2,500 years ago when Siddhartha Gautama achieved enlightenment and became the Buddha or 'awakened one'.

How the Day is Observed

Buddhists commemorate this day by:

- Meditating
- Studying the 'dharma' ('universal truth or law')
- Chanting sutras (Buddhist texts)
- Performing kind acts towards other beings
- Cooking a meal of tea and cakes
- Bodhi tree plantings are held throughout the month
- Incense and multi-colored lights are displayed during the following month in the capital city of Tokyo and in towns and villages across the country.

Visit the link below to learn more:

[National Today - Bodhi Day](#)

2023 Diversity Messages

December 10th

Statewide Human Rights Day

Human Rights Day on December 10 remembers the day the General Assembly of the U.N. adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. It is one of the most translated documents in the world and is available in over 500 languages. It has inspired countries and people alike to start treating every person with the right to life, liberty, property, and the pursuit of happiness.

The Declaration of Human Rights isn't legally binding, but each member of the United Nations strives to establish the standard of living for each respective nation.

Read Governor Lee's Proclamation:

[Human Rights Day Proclamation](#)

December 7th – 15th

(Sundown to Sundown) Hanukkah - Jewish

What is Hanukkah?

Hanukkah (means dedication), also known as the Festival of Lights, is an eight-day Jewish holiday commemorating the rededication of the Holy Temple (the Second Temple) in Jerusalem at the time of the Maccabean Revolt of the 2nd century BCE. Hanukkah is observed for eight nights and days, starting on the 25th day of Kislev according to the Hebrew calendar, which may occur at any time from late November to late December in the Gregorian calendar.

How is Hanukkah Observed?

Hanukkah is observed by lighting the menorah (each night light one additional candle to the number from the previous night), playing dreidel, and eating special foods unique to Hanukkah. Some people also sing Hanukkah songs or exchange gifts after lighting the menorah, which is also called a hanukkiah. Many people host and attend Hanukkah parties.

To learn more about interesting facts about Hanukkah visit:

[Farmer's Almanac - Hanukkah](#)

December 25th

Christmas - Christian



Christmas (*the Mass of Christ or Christ's Mass*) is celebrated by Christians every year on December 25. This day celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ. In the bible, the birth of Jesus was known by many Jewish people who heard of the prophecies of the coming of the Messiah through the Virgin Mary.

The Christmas Season is typically around Thanksgiving through December 25. During this time many people celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ in various ways, such as:

- Decorating a pine tree (fake or real)
- Decorating the house with lights, holly, garner, wreaths, etc.
- Singing Christmas Songs
- Reading the 4 gospels' (Matthew, Mark, Luke, & John) account of the birth of Jesus
- Children writing letters to Santa and visiting Santa at a local mall
- Christmas parties and family gatherings
- Watching Christmas movies

To learn more about the history of Christmas visit:

[Britannica - Christmas Holiday](#)

2023 Diversity Messages

December 26, 2023 – January 1, 2024

Kwanzaa – African Cultural Holiday

Kwanzaa is a time of learning, family, and celebration.

During the week of Kwanzaa, families and communities come together to share a feast, to honor the ancestors, affirm the bonds between them, and to celebrate African and African American culture. Each day they light a candle to highlight the principle of that day and to breathe meaning into the principles with various activities, such as reciting the sayings or writings of great black thinkers and writers, reciting original poetry, African drumming, and sharing a meal of African inspired foods.

The origin of the name of Kwanzaa

Kwanzaa gets its name from the Swahili phrase, “matunda ya kwanza” and is rooted in first fruit celebrations which are found in cultures throughout Africa both in ancient and modern times.

To learn more, visit:

[National Museum of African American History & Culture](#)

The 7 Principles of Kwanzaa

- Umoja – Unity
- Kujichagulia – Self-Determination
- Ujima – Collective Work & Responsibility
- Ujamaa – Cooperative Economics
- Nia – Purpose
- Kuumba – Creativity
- Imani – Faith

