

INTERFAITH INSIDER

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Embracing the Magic of the Autumn Wicca/Neo Pagan Tradition

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It's the month of comfy sweaters, warm drinks and pretty colors! Hello September - it's the time when day and night stand in delicate equilibrium, a celestial ballet known as the Autumnal Equinox. The word "equinox" comes from Latin *aequus*, meaning "equal," and *nox*, "night." On the equinox, day and night are roughly equal in length. The vernal equinox and the autumnal equinox are the two equinoxes that occur annually. The start of spring is signaled by the vernal equinox, also referred to as the spring equinox, which typically takes place on March 20 or 21. The Northern Hemisphere will experience the autumnal equinox and the start of autumn on Saturday, September 23, 2023, at 2:50 A.M. EDT. In this article, we embark on a journey through the enchanting world of Wiccan and Neo-Pagan traditions, where the Autumnal Equinox, also known as Mabon, symbolizes a sacred and deeply meaningful time.

According to many Wiccan and Pagan traditions, it is a time to give thanks for what they have, whether it be abundant crops or other blessings. It's a season of wealth, thanksgiving, and generosity toward the less fortunate. Neo-pagans and Wiccans may observe this festival with rituals, feasts, and other events that help them feel closer to nature and the changing of the seasons. It's a moment to recognize the cycle of life, death, and rebirth and to celebrate the fertility of the Earth. Mabon is often connected with the following themes and activities: harvest feasts, apple harvest, gratitude rituals and many more.

It's crucial to remember that different Wiccan and Neo-Pagan traditions, as well as individual practitioners, can have different specific customs and beliefs related to Mabon. In the end, Mabon is a time for reflection, gratitude, and a respect for the cycle of the seasons.

Important Dates and Events

- Sept. 1 - Religious year begins - Orthodox Christian**
- Sept. 6 - Krishna Janmashtami - Hindu (Birth of Lord Krishna)**
- Sept. 8 - Nativity of Virgin Mary - Christian**
- Sept. 12 - Ethiopian New Year - Rastafarian**
- Sept. 14 - Exaltation of the Holy Cross - Christian**
- Sept. 15-17 - Rosh Hashanah - Judaism**
- Sept. 19 - Ganesh Chaturthi - Hindu (Birth of Ganesha)**
- Sept. 21- International Day of Peace**
- Sept. 23- Fall Equinox - Wicca/Neo Pagan**
- Sept. 24 - Yom Kippur - Judaism**
- Sept. 26 - The Prophet's Birthday - Islam**
- Sept. 29 - Mid-Autumn Festival (Moon Cake) - Chinese Lunar Calendar**
- Sept. 29 - Oct. 6 - Judaism Sukkot Begins**
- Sept. 30 - National Day for Truth and Reconciliation**



Interfaith Spotlight

Blessing Polinar Student Leader



Al-Mawlid Al-Nabawiu Al-Sharif (المولد النبوي الشريف) The Birth of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him)



Milud is my father's name, a term meaning the day of Prophet Muhammad's (pbuh) birth. Mawlid is a day which all Muslims celebrate through different traditions across various countries. As a Libyan, I remember as a young child, waiting for my father to buy Khmesa, a five-point candelabra that we would light after breaking our fast with traditional foods. Entire streets and neighborhoods would celebrate with one another from sunset into the middle of the night, surrounded by the sounds of laughter and prayer all around.

The birth of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), in the Islamic faith, marks the arrival of the final Prophet of the Abrahamic religions, those upholding the monotheistic teachings of the prophets prior, including Adam, Moses, Jesus, and Noah (University of Michigan, 2021). The birth of the Islamic Prophet Muhammad is observed and celebrated by the roughly 1.8 billion Muslims worldwide during the month of Rabi' Al-Awal (the third month of the Islamic calendar) since the second year of Hijrah. Muslims commemorate Mawlid in diverse ways, including fasting, reading the Quran, learning about the Prophet, and donating to the needy.

The birth of the Prophet Muhammad signified a significant turning point in the history of the world as we know it. However, the birth of Islam was not marked until 40 years following the birth of the Prophet (pbuh) in the year 610 C.E. At the age of forty, Muhammad (pbuh) was visited by the angel Gabriel/Jibril in the cave of Hira near Mecca. There, Muhammad received the first revelations of the Quran and the title of Prophet.

My name is Blessing Grace Polinar. I'm a second-year student at SAIT taking Health Information Management. I was born and raised in the Philippines but came to Canada with my family directly from Saudi Arabia where I worked in Health Information Management for seven years. I am a reformed Christian and a work in progress.

My daily activities are most often inspired by and revolve around my husband and our daughter Alpha, but I break in this routine as an interfaith leader will be good for me. Being a part of Interfaith will offer a healthy disruption from chores, errands, and other work as I will be humbling myself, getting out there and connecting with new people.

As a student leader for Interfaith Centre at SAIT, I look forward to learning to bridge gaps between religious groups at a more personal level. After all, the school environment offers many young people their first (and possibly only) opportunity to interact meaningfully with people from various socioeconomic, racial, and religious backgrounds and gain a better understanding of their beliefs and worldviews. Graduates can then enter the real world outside of SAIT, prepared to interact productively with others and the ability to cross divides.

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