

# Interfaith Insider

Welcome to the SAIT Interfaith Centre monthly newsletter. Subscribe at [interfaith@sait.ca](mailto:interfaith@sait.ca) to meet our team and stay up to date on all that's happening!



## St. Patrick's Day

The history and celebration of this day  
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## The Vernal Equinox

Some spiritual traditions are based on the utterances of a prophet. These can often be thought of as supernatural religions. The Abrahamic family of religions comprising Judaism, Christianity and Islam probably belong in this category.

The other great category of spiritual traditions is those based on the observation of nature. These are often referred to as "nature religions" or "natural spiritualities".

Indigenous traditions from around the world, as well as Wicca are arguably in this category. The cycles of nature almost invariably play a part in these traditions, and no natural cycle is more compelling than the lengthening (and shortening) of the days versus the nights.

This month, on March 21, take a moment to notice the vernal equinox, one of two days each year, (the other being the autumnal equinox) when the daytime and the nighttime are of equal length.

*Submitted by Rev. Tim Nethercott, United Church*



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## What's Happening at the Interfaith Centre in March

**March 5:** **International Women's Day and The Role of Women in Religion** - we delve into the sometimes controversial and sometimes honouring role of women in both religion and culture

**March 12:** **St. Patrick's Day: What's luck got to do with it?** - We will discuss concepts and practices of good and bad luck in various religions

**March 19:** **World Water Day and Holy Water** - We take a look at how water is viewed in religion and it's uses

**March 26:** **Jesus and the Easter Bunny** - Come join us for an informative and funny look at our traditions and beliefs around Easter

Please [click here](#) to join us for an online dialogue on MS Teams.



## St. Patrick's Day

It's the one day each year that everyone and anyone calls themselves Irish – if not by birthright, then in spirit. The luck of the Irish and all things green is celebrated on St. Patrick's Day on March 17 every year. Initially a day to honour patron saint St. Patrick of Ireland, over time has evolved into a fun and festive celebration of Irish culture.

Although the holiday originally started as a Christian feast day celebrating the life of St. Patrick and the spreading of Christianity to Ireland, today, it is a day of revelry and a celebration of all things Irish. St. Patrick's Day has been celebrated in Ireland for more than a millennium. It was a time to cut loose during the Catholic Lent season, and it quickly became synonymous with Irish food and drink.

Saint Patrick is credited with successfully spreading Christianity throughout Ireland—hence the Christian celebration of his life and name.

We wear a shamrock on St. Patrick's Day because, legend says, St. Patrick used its three leaves to explain the Holy Trinity in his teachings. (The Trinity is the Father, the Son, and the Spirit as three divine persons who are one divine being - God.)

For many, St. Patrick's Day is a break in the middle of Lent, when they can have one extravagant meal before returning to fasting.



*"Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."*

*-- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.*

Last month we celebrated Black History Month. There is no better time to reflect on these words than now; we face multiple crises as individuals, nations, or continents. As if the threats of economic shutdowns and climate change are not enough to deal with, we also face an existential threat of a ruthless virus that has redefined the world we love and live in.

Celebrating the month as an immigrant to Canada leaves me with this thought; In the light of the pandemic and other turmoil that have befallen the earth in recent times, how has the color of my skin absolved me of the consequences of these crises?

Created in 1926 in the United States and named Negro History Week, black history month was proposed in 1970 and President Gerald Ford officially recognized it in 1976. Other nations followed suit subsequently.

Black History Month in 2021 is a moment to look beyond the color of our skin or the accent in our conversation and really look at the strength of our character and values. The time is now to shed the toga of hate, racism, bullying, oppression, and discrimination and hold hands in solidarity against the threats we face as one entity: HUMANS.

*Submitted by Oluwabamise Onifade*

