

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) e-Zine

At Enterprise Bank, people and relationships come first. We encourage and foster a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion, where everyone feels valued and respected. We are committed to a caring workplace that recognizes the importance of making a meaningful, positive difference in the lives of our team members, customers, and communities. Please [click here](#) for more information. To learn about Enterprise Bank's history and Core Values [click here](#).

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Personal views and opinions expressed here are those of individual volunteer contributors, and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of Enterprise Bank.

October—December 2022 Edition

Welcome to the final edition of our DEI e-Zine for 2022!

As we head into the fall and winter seasons, it's odd that I don't feel as badly about ending my favorite season: Summer! I guess we all need a time to "chill," and also, to embrace the seasonal activities and events that take place during this cooler time of year.



Photo by Sophy Theam

The following Saturday, our Working Parents Resource Group organized an outing where team members and their families met and had fun at Mack's Apples.

Hispanic Heritage Month was celebrated at the Bank on September 29th, where we enjoyed great food, learned about the various Hispanic cultures, and learned to dance Bachata! We're looking forward to attending our LGBTQ+ Spirit Day event, scheduled for October 20th, put together by our Pride C.O.R.P.S. and we can't wait to see the Quilts of Valor that were made by our Veterans Resource Group and volunteer team members! To top it off, there are a few other activities and events to celebrate our teams between now and the end of the year.

September brought us a renewed sense of purpose after the last two months of sunbathing, beaching, and doing other fun, outdoor activities. School is back in session, and for parents, that meant a mental mindset shift, too. There are now also cooler weather activities to look forward to. On September 17th, a few of our team members participated in a walk to benefit Autism Speaks in Manchester, New Hampshire. Thank you, volunteers!



Photo by Sophy Theam

From a cultural heritage perspective, there are many holidays that are celebrated during the final months of the year which will be highlighted in some of the articles in this e-zine.

Being Khmer, I am aware of at least one upcoming celebration/holiday. It is the most important festival in the Khmer religious calendar: "Bon Pchum Ben," Ancestors' Day ceremonies that are attended by Khmer people across the globe over 15 days. It is quite coincidental that this "holiday" is celebrated around the Halloween and Dia de los Muertos...or is it?



Freepik.com

There are varying opinions on when Pchum Ben originated. While some say that it dates back to the Angkor period (AD 802–1351), others say it started during the Mahayana period from the first century B.C. The similarity is that credit was given to those who practiced animism, which is the belief that “objects, places, and creatures all possess a spiritual essence.” Since Buddhism and animism both emphasized a respect for ancestors, Pchum Ben was continued even when Cambodia became a Buddhist nation, and it continues to exist to this day. So what is Pchum Ben and how is it celebrated?



The Legend of Pchum Ben Cambodia News English

According to legend and stories passed down through generations, on the first day of Pchum Ben, the gates of hell are opened and all the ghosts (ancestors) are released by the devil. In this culture, even ghosts are divided into classes: those who eat blood and pus, “burning” ghosts, hungry ghosts, and the “Pakrakreaktopak Chivi.” The first three types of ghosts can’t receive food offerings from their relatives until their sins

are reduced to the level of the last type of ghosts. During the first 14 days of the festival, relatives offer food to the monks (usually in their local pagodas, wats, or temples). The hope is to earn “merit” and reduce the sins of their ancestors’ ghosts.

As my sisters and I don’t practice Buddhism, or any religion religiously for that matter, our Mom gets really upset that we don’t go to the temple to offer food to our ancestors. She’s slowly come to accept the fact that we have “lost” that part of our culture. However, it is said that we can just offer lunch or dinner to our parents, grandparents, and great grandparents if they are around, and that doing so will show a sign of respect for our elders, which I think is totally doable.

Our Mom has expressed the hope that when she is deceased that we will offer her food so her soul can rest in peace. Since we never knew our grandparents, great grandparents, or the rest of our ancestors, it’s been a struggle to understand the significance of worshipping them this way. However, to respect our Mom’s wishes, we’ll have to reconsider and celebrate Pchum Ben in our homes to earn merit for her soul – when the time comes – so that she can continue to protect us in her afterlife and be reincarnated into one of our future descendants.



Feeding the ancestors' spirits - Khmer Times (khmertimeskh.com)

With that, I hope that you will learn something new in our final edition of the year. Our appreciation goes to our contributors: Luisa Bedoya, Eddie Enea, Kira Morehouse, and Megan Pardoe.

We hope that you get to celebrate your important cultural holidays, if you celebrate, and wish you a healthy, peaceful, and safe winter season!

Sophy Theam. Manager—Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

A Letter from our Team Member, Eddie Enea!

Hello everyone,

My name is Eddie and I was recently named the active Chair for Enterprise Bank's LGBTQ+ Pride C.O.R.P.S., founded in 2021 by Elliot Hoan. When Elliot created Pride C.O.R.P.S., he envisioned a group of individuals who would understand and sympathize with members and supporters of this protected class with passion and purpose. His strides laid the foundation for an organization that has grown to be a respected force within the bank's employee resource groups.

Enterprise Bank is known for its commitment to the support of people who walk various life paths. Support for the LGBTQ+ community is still imperative in every school, every community, every household, and every business. That need endures, much in the same way that Pride C.O.R.P.S. will endure, providing steadfast support and resources to LGBTQ+ community members and allies.

More than ever before, we can stand together as members and allies to say with unshakable resolve that we are a community not to be ignored, but to be heard, acknowledged, and respected as members, as allies, and as a community. We are your friends, your neighbors, your family members, your co-workers. We are you.

Respectfully,

Eddie Enea



The Importance of Indigenous People's Day

Written by: Megan Pardoe

Indigenous People's Day honors the past, present, and future of all Native people throughout the United States. The holiday recognizes the impact of colonialism on Native communities and brings to light the history of Native people. It also celebrates the cultures, contributions, and resilience of modern Native communities. Indigenous People's Day falls on the second Monday of October, which this year, was October 10th.

This holiday aims to replace Columbus Day by turning the focus to the Native people that had already been living in what would come to be known as the United States. Many have been taught about Christopher Columbus and his journey to the Americas, but this education mostly erases the violence of his actions and his attitudes toward Native people. Columbus did not discover the Americas, as he never stepped foot on North American land, and millions of indigenous people already lived there. Columbus brutalized, killed, and enslaved the Indigenous people of the Caribbean and led the way for future colonizers in America.



Picture from: www.ohchr.org



The Importance of Indigenous People's Day

(cont.)

New Hampshire is home to the people of the Pennacook tribe and the Abenaki tribe. These people have been living in the land of New Hampshire for over 3,000 years. They hunted for meat, planted crops, and raised families in a community environment. These tribes lived mostly peaceful lives scattered throughout New Hampshire. When the colonizers came from England, there were mostly peaceful communications. They traded with each other, taught each other about the landscape, and often held meetings in similar areas. But by the early 1700's more European settlers began to push these people out. Most them relocated to Canada. But we have a purpose to remember these people and teach future generations about them. This can be done by allowing Indigenous People's Day to replace Columbus Day and focusing on the Native people that were in America and how we can help Native communities today.



Protesters marched in an Indigenous Peoples Day rally in Boston on Oct. 10, 2020, as part of a demonstration to change Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples' Day.

Coming Out: The Victories and Dangers in the LGBTQ+ Community

Written By: Megan Pardoe

When one finds themselves questioning who they are, it is hard to come out from that pit of confusion. From gender identity, sexual orientation, relationship preferences, and beyond, many people struggle to put a label on themselves and to share this with others. When one does find the confidence to do so, this should be celebrated. That's why, on October 11th, many celebrate National Coming Out Day.



This day celebrates and commemorates the bravery of those who were able to come out to themselves and to others. National Coming Out Day was first celebrated in 1988 and was founded by Robert Eichberg and Jean O'Leary. It marked the wins of those coming out and the refusal to respond to anti-LGBT remarks with violence. October 11th was selected for National Coming Out Day as was the date in 1987 that the National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights was held.

Many people, like myself, have been able to come out successfully and with little backlash. I publicly came out as Bisexual earlier this year in June. Both my family and friends were very supportive of me. The same can be said for many sharing their coming out stories anonymously on the UCI resource website. One person remarks, "After my coming out experience, I became eternally grateful for the support and empathy that was given to me by both my friends and my family. Although I lost quite a few friends and acquaintances in the process, the rewards of self-confidence are worth it in the end."

However, for some, the process of coming out and becoming their true selves poses a danger. This is most visible in the trans community. In 2021 alone, 45 trans people were murdered in the United States. On November 20th, the Transgender Day of Remembrance is held to memorialize those who have been killed due to transphobia. This day was first honored in 1999 after the 1998 murder of Rita Hester, a transwoman of color, in Allston Massachusetts.

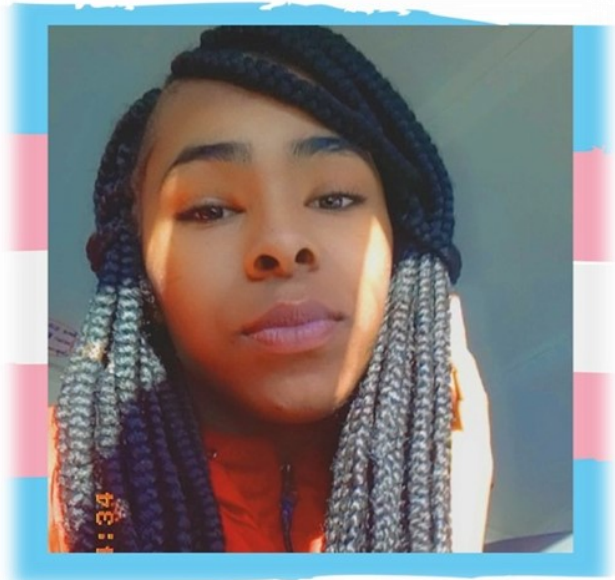


CAPNW.ORG: National Coming Out Day

Coming Out: The Victories and Dangers in the LGBTQ+ Community (cont.)

Sadly, since then, many other trans people have lost their lives the same way Rita did and more anti-trans legislation continues to be passed nationwide.

This past April, 17-year-old Ariyanna Mitchell was murdered when defending a friend at a party. Ariyanna stepped in to protect her friend from a fight. A gun was then pulled on her by an assailant who threw verbal offenses at her and questioned her gender identity. He then shot her multiple times, ending her life. Ariyanna was known as a happy girl who loved dance and styling hair. Tragically, her life was taken away from her for being a trans woman and protecting those she loved.



Ariyanna Mitchell

Source: Advocate.com

The act of coming out can be both a celebration of joy and an act of violence. Some can find family, friends, and a community that accepts them for who they are, while others may lose their lives for being their true selves. We must hold each other accountable to protect our friends in the LGBTQ+ community.

Sources:

Black trans teen fatally shot while 'heroically protecting a friend' at a party (pinknews.co.uk)
Here Are the Trans Americans Killed in 2022 So Far (advocate.com)
2021 is now the deadliest year on record for transgender people | PBS NewsHour
Coming Out Story 1 | UCI LGBT Resource Center | UCI
National Coming Out Day - Wikipedia

World AIDS Day: Prevention and Awareness for All

Written By: Megan Pardoe

AIDS and HIV are very difficult and stigmatized topics to discuss. Human Immunodeficiency Virus, or HIV, attacks the body's ability to fight infections; AIDS is the late stage of HIV – it occurs when HIV goes untreated. Currently, there is no cure for AIDS. As of 2020, over 36 million people worldwide have lost their lives due to HIV/AIDS. The World Health Organization reports that almost 40 million people today are living with HIV. Most people who have HIV can live full and happy lives by taking medication.



Red AIDS/HIV Ribbon hung on the White House, December 2021.

During the 1980s, there was a widespread pandemic of HIV and AIDS throughout the world. During this time, not much was known about the disease and a stigma developed around who got and transmitted HIV. This stigma was based around the LGBTQ+ community, mostly focusing on gay men. Luckily, research, time, and science have led to a breakdown of what HIV and AIDS are and how these diseases can be transmitted to anyone.

In 1988, the World Health Organization created World AIDS Day to bring awareness to the diseases and mourn those who lost their lives. It is held on December 1st and each year a different theme is selected to bring attention to new discoveries. The theme of 2021 was to end the inequalities in HIV/AIDS treatment. This was to shed light on the differences in HIV treatment globally and to campaign for the same level of care worldwide.

The recognition that this day brings to those living with HIV is amazing, and shedding light on different parts of the disease each year is valuable because living with HIV is a very hard thing to comprehend.

Joseph Wolfe, a 28-year-old living with his boyfriend of four years, shared his story with WebMD about what it is like living with HIV. He found out he was HIV-positive when we went to donate blood.



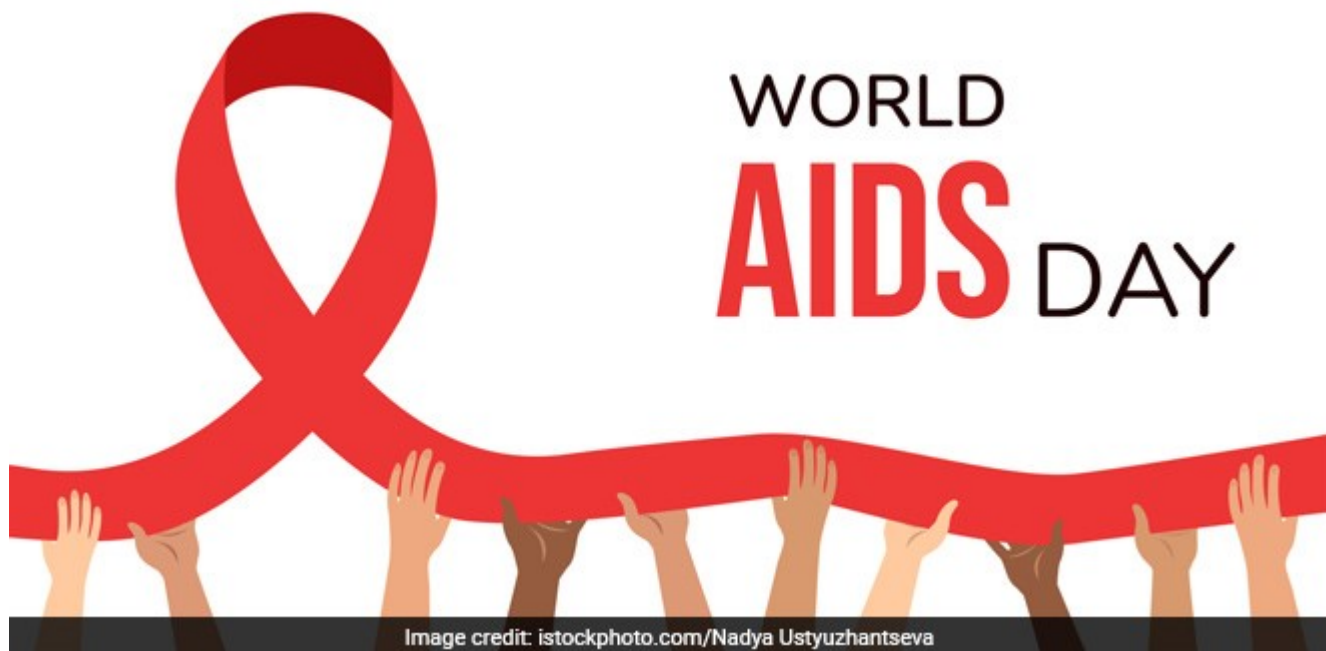
World AIDS Day: Prevention and Awareness for All

(cont.)

“I gave blood at work, and then the blood bank called and said there were complications with my donation. Then, they told me to contact the health department.” From there, Joseph learned he had contracted HIV. Fortunately, he is able to manage his HIV by being on medication. He takes five different types each morning, but says living with HIV is still hard. “Waking up, it was the first thing on your mind, and going to sleep it, was the last thing on your mind...Some days, I think I need to plan for my retirement. Other days, I think I don't need to worry; I won't live that long.” Joseph says this is an ongoing battle within him. He knows with the medication he'll be fine, but it's hard to remain happy when having such a serious disease.



Joseph is just one of the millions of people who live with HIV and can maintain a fulfilling life. World AIDS Day was created to bring awareness to the AIDS pandemic and to mourn those who have lost their lives. However, it's also meant to celebrate those like Joseph who can continue on with their lives while living with HIV. We have come a long way since the 1980s for HIV/AIDS treatment, but there is still more work that needs to be done to end this disease.



Sources:

World AIDS Day - Wikipedia
HIV Stories: 3 People Living with HIV (healthline.com)
What Are HIV and AIDS? | HIV.gov
<https://www.webmd.com/hiv-aids/features/man-hiv>

How is Diwali Celebrated?

Q & A with Kruti Shah

What's your name and role at the Bank?	My name is Kruti Shah and I am a Relationship Associate II at the Drum Hill branch.
What is your ethnic background?	Asian/Hindu
What part of the country were you born in/is your family from?	I am born and brought up in the state of Gujarat which is on the western coast of India.
What language(s) do you speak?	Gujarati, Hindi, English
When did you arrive to the U.S. and for what purpose?	I came to the USA in September 2011 when I got married to an Indian origin person who lives in the USA.
What is Diwali mostly attributed to in your country?	The main reason for the celebration of Diwali is the return of Lord Rama to Ayodhya after defeating Ravan. With so many people celebrating his return, the festival represents the same symbolic victory of light over darkness, knowledge over ignorance, and good over evil.
What date(s) is Diwali celebrated, typically?	The festival is usually some time between October and November, with the date changing each year. Usually, it comes on Amavasya day in the month of kartik.



[Diwali: What is it? - CBBC Newsround](#)

How is Diwali Celebrated?

(cont.)

Q & A with Kruti Shah

What are the highlights for you during these celebrations?

On Diwali day, we go to temple in the morning. We usually wear new clothes. We visit family and friends and get blessings from the elders. We light up diyas (candles) in the night. The most exciting thing is to watch fireworks. It's always fun to go shopping for a few weeks before Diwali.

What's your favorite food and/or dessert during this celebration?

My favorite foods to eat during Diwali are Mathiya and Chorafali. For dessert, I love Kaju Katri, Sutar feni, and Magas.

How do you celebrate the Diwali in the United States?

We keep our traditions alive and go to temple and we call family and friends for festivities.

What's your most memorable moment while celebrating Diwali?

My sister and I used to make Rangoli near the front of the door as it's the place to welcome the Hindu Goddess Lakshmi and the thought behind it is to bring good luck to the house. Rangoli is an Indian artform in which colorful and bright patterns are made on the floor.

Diwali Photos Source: [National Geographic Kids \(natgeokids.com\)](http://National Geographic Kids (natgeokids.com))



The Most Wonderful Time of the Year!

Written By: Megan Pardoe

The Friday after Thanksgiving marks the unofficial start of the Christmas season. People begin to put up their trees, string lights outside, and gather with loved ones to celebrate this holiday. One of the greatest things about Christmas is how many ways people celebrate this holiday.

The first record of Christmas being celebrated on December 25th was in Rome in 336 A.D. There were celebrations before this time, but they fell on different dates in December. The date of December 25th was chosen as it was the Winter Solstice on the Roman calendar and nine months after March 25th, which was a date linked to the life of Jesus Christ. Thus began the traditional celebration of Christmas honoring the birth of Jesus Christ which holds great significance to the Christian religion. Many celebrate through feasts, plays, nativity scenes, church services, and singing hymns.



The First Nativity Scene Was Created in 1223 | Smart News | Smithsonian Magazine

Nativity Scene

The Most Wonderful Time of the Year!

(cont.)

Over time, the link between Christianity and Christmas began to weaken and Christmas has come to be celebrated by many people. The holiday can somewhat be viewed as secular in modern times—the focus turned away from the birth of Jesus and instead turned to the act of giving gifts. This created the figure Santa Claus, who delivers gifts to good children across the globe. Santa has many different names, such as Father Christmas in the UK, Sinterklaas in Nordic countries, and Weihnachtsmann in Germany.



How to win the Christmas cracker pull every time - and what we all do wrong - Mirror Online

Christmas Crackers being opened by a family.

My family's background is mainly British. My dad was born in Wales and his parents were raised in Birmingham, England and Redditch, England. My own Christmas celebration is quite different than the American experience. Firstly, we mostly use Father Christmas in my home. This name is listed on the gifts brought by him and is how my family address the figure, while most Americans will use the name Santa or Santa Claus. After eating lunch, we always open Christmas crackers. These are cardboard-covered gifts that are pulled open by two people. Once opened, a colorful paper crown is found along with a toy and a joke. Christmas crackers are gaining more popularity in America, but not a lot of people know what these are.

The Most Wonderful Time of the Year!

(cont.)

Our Christmas dessert is always Christmas pudding. It is a dense fruitcake that is then set alight with Rum and served with custard. It is a more “harsh” dessert, and isn’t very sweet compared to traditional American desserts. Lastly, we always play Pass the Parcel as a family. This is a game where a present is wrapped in many layers of boxes, wrapping paper, duct tape, and even trash bags. Players pass the gift around to music and when the music stops the player with the gift begins to unwrap it. This usually takes a while and the person who gets to the gift first wins. I do not know of any other families that do this but mine!

Christmas is an amazing time of year, celebrated by many and in many different ways. One of the best things about this holiday is the different traditions that make Christmas special and the happiness they bring! I hope everyone has a great holiday season.



Christmas Pudding

Sources:

British Christmas Traditions Americans Have Never Heard of (insider.com)

Christmas - Wikipedia

Las Posadas

Written by: Luisa Bedoya

Las Posadas, celebrated yearly from December 16-24, is a religious festival traditionally held in Mexico and parts of Latin America and is an important part of the Christmas festivities. Over the nine nights of celebrations, parties are held at different people's homes. Before each gathering, all the guests form a procession to mark Mary and Joseph's search for an inn on the night of Jesus's birth. The march is usually led by an angel as a symbolic act of Mary and Joseph finding shelter in a stable when they were unable to find lodging in Bethlehem. The parties are joyous occasions, including prayers, food, music, fireworks, and piñatas!



Una Noche de las Posadas. The Santa Barbara Independent

Las Posadas celebrations were originally held in the church, but the custom spread. Later, it was celebrated in haciendas and then in family homes, gradually taking the form of the celebration as it is now practiced which dates back to the 19th century. Now, neighborhood committees often organize the posadas and a different family will offer to host the celebration each night. The other people in the neighborhood bring food, candy, and piñatas so that the costs of the party don't fall only on the host family.

Mass is held each day after the procession, and after the service, children break open piñatas filled with candy, toys, and occasionally, money. The piñatas are usually crafted in the form of a star, which is said to have guided the three wise men of Biblical tradition to the newborn Jesus.

Las Posadas (cont.)

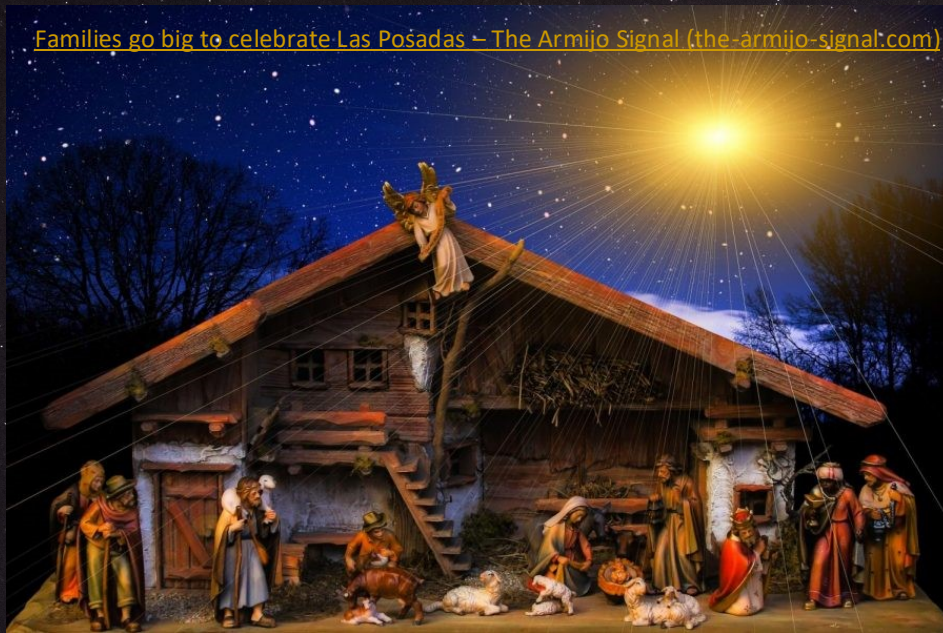
In Colombia, these 9 days of celebration are called La Novena. Celebrated in Colombia, Venezuela, and Ecuador, the novena is a tradition practiced by families who, for nine days, gather around a manger to recite a series of prayers specially written for the time, accompanied by some “joys” or special songs to praise Jesus' birth. These sessions all happen at each others homes, similar to Las Posadas celebrated in Mexico.

In between carols or *aguinaldos*, the prayer book is passed around for each guest to read aloud. When they finish praying, whether it is in a church, park, shopping center or, generally, at home, it is usually customary to sing Christmas carols and share dishes that are prepared especially for these dates. The dishes include the sweet “natilla” (kind of pudding) and salty “buñuelos” (fried cheese balls). The rest of the time is spent nattering and catching up, although as there are nine nights of novenas in a row, they usually wrap up early.



[Natilla Colombiana - Fácil y Rápida | Recetas Colombianas](#)

Natilla & Bunuelos



[Families go big to celebrate Las Posadas ~ The Armijo Signal \(the-armijo-signal.com\)](#)

Nativity Scene

Las Posadas - December 16-24. National Today. (2021, June 17). Retrieved September 15, 2022, from <https://nationaltoday.com/las-posadas/>

Las Posadas (cont.)

Christmas has always been my favorite time of year because of La Novena. Growing up in a Colombian household, La Novena is one of my family's tradition. Every year, my family and friends gather to pray, sing, eat, and laugh. Even if we haven't seen each other in months, it's almost like no time has passed.

When the pandemic hit, I realized how these traditions can be taken for granted. COVID novenas were quiet. I remember joining a zoom call with over 20 family and friends, attempting to celebrate La Novena. We each still took turns reading a prayer from the prayer book, but it was not the same.

This year will be my first year hosting La Novena in my own home. I'm already thinking of what snacks I will be offering! I know Christmas time is celebrated in many different ways, but I also know that Christmastime is a season for love and happiness in most traditions. I truly hope everyone reading this has a holiday season full of peace and joy.



The Bogotá Post: Christmas in Colombia

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"Learn about the Mexican Christmas Tradition of Posadas." *Learn Religions*, www.learnreligions.com/christmas-posadas-tradition-in-mexico-1588744.

"LAS POSADAS - DECEMBER 16-24." *National Today*, nationaltoday.com/las-posadas/.

"Nine Days until Christmas: These Are the Traditions of LATAM." *Al Día News*, aldianews.com/en/culture/heritage-and-history/only-9-days-christmas. Accessed 19 Sept. 2022.

Happy Kwanzaa to One and All

Written By: Kira Morehouse

Celebrated in the month of December, Kwanzaa is a holiday that was founded in 1966 by Maulana Karenga, an American of African descent, activist, author, and professor of Africana Studies. It was conceptualized as a new *holiday* to unite and empower the African American community impacted by the deadly Watts Rebellion that took place in California during the previous year in 1965.

Kwanzaa is modeled after the structure of traditional harvest festivals that are celebrated among indigenous people of Africa who existed before colonial influence. The name, Kwanzaa, is derived from the phrase “*matunda ya kwanza*,” which means “first fruits” in Swahili, a Bantu language widely spoken throughout East African countries.



AILISA/SHUTTERSTOCK

As a person of African descent who can trace my American origins more than six generations back to enslaved African ancestors, I can appreciate the ideals of this holiday as one way to further affirm, connect, and unify those of us whose cultural origins are part of the African diaspora. The founder of Kwanzaa, Karenga, also affirms that anyone is welcome to celebrate regardless of race, ethnicity, or other origin with respect for the meaning and intention of the holiday. All of this is a great opportunity.

Happy Kwanzaa to One and All (cont.)

Although my family did not celebrate Kwanzaa within our direct household when I was growing up, I have been a participant in church community activities as a member of the African Methodist Episcopal congregation as a teenager. This was when I first learned about the seven principals of Kwanzaa which are defined by its founder as follows:

Umoja (unity)
Kujichagulia (self-determination)
Ujima (collective work and responsibility)
Ujamaa (cooperative economics)
Nia (purpose)
Kuumba (creativity)
Imani (faith)

According to an article about Kwanzaa found on [History.com](https://www.history.com), Kwanzaa also has seven symbols—mazao (crops), mkeka (mat), kinara (candleholder), muhindi (corn), kikombe cha umoja (unity cup), zawadi (gifts – usually homemade and/or educational), and mishumaa saba (seven candles)—that are traditionally arranged on a table. Three of the seven candles are red, representing the struggle; three of the candles are green, representing the land and hope for the future; and one of the candles is black, representing people of African descent. Many types of Kwanzaa celebrations make use of these three colors—red, green, and black—for the décor and theme of clothing worn to further reflect the symbolic meaning.

Coincidentally, my middle name happens to be one of the seven principals, Imani. My parents chose it for me to reflect upon as part of our ethnic and cultural heritage, and that meaning has always been a reminder to me throughout my life. It makes me thankful each time Kwanzaa rolls around that they may have been influenced by hearing the word during these newer traditions being brought to light.



Happy Kwanzaa!

WINTER SOLSTICE, A RETURN TO SUNLIGHT

Written by: Kira Morehouse

Like many, I appreciate the existence of the sun. I mean, have you ever stopped to imagine what the world would be like without sunlight? Since ancient times, people all over the world—in various ways and traditions—have recognized the importance of the sun in relationship to our Earthly existence. Think of how we measure time in daylight hours, how we celebrate seasons throughout the year, and the different events that take place during the times when the sun is closest to us versus when it is farthest away. Our existence would be drastically different without this guiding element, a force of nature to help us pace ourselves, to bring life-giving warmth and light to all within its path. Our ancient ancestors as early as the Stone Age appreciated all of this, too, and centered some aspects of our existence around occurrences known as solstices, combining the Latin words sol for “sun” and sister for “to stand still.” This term, solstice, specifically refers to the times when the sun reaches its most northerly or southerly point in the celestial sky relevant to its pattern of movement along the same plane as our Earth’s equator.



[Winter Solstice around the world in 2022 | There is a Day for that!](#)

For those of us who reside in the Earth’s northern hemisphere, winter solstice occurs each year around the same time, on either December 20 or December 22. This is the time when daylight hours are the fewest in the entire year. It is also a time when many traditions choose to celebrate through the night and into the next immediate sunrise that marks the beginning of longer-lasting, light-filled days until the following December.

WINTER SOLSTICE, A RETURN TO SUNLIGHT

Celebrations have been happening in all parts of the world, on every continent that has been able to observe the sun's equinox in winter. Prior civilizations—such as the Roman, Norse, Chinese, Japanese, Iranian, Incan, Zuni, and Hopi—are just a handful of those who have traditions centered around winter solstice, which makes sense due to their geographic locations covering parts of what we now know as Europe, Asia, and North and South America in our modern world. All these places are scattered on either side of the Earth's equator. Some of the traditions may have influenced modern holidays in ways which we might not be fully aware.

For example, the Romans had several celebrations, including Saturnalia, an agricultural festival leading up to the winter solstice, and Juvenalia, a festival in honor of their children and some other birthdays of their many deities that came up during this time of year. Eventually, many of these celebrations started to blend into one another. Therefore, many scholars believe that the Christmas holiday date was chosen in December to bring awareness of what was then a new religion to the masses by leveraging this existing pattern of festivities which had already been taking place in December. However, this theory is inspired by an article found on [History.com](https://www.history.com) which emphasizes that this is all speculative.

Similarly, there is also the theme of Yuletide greetings that come up around the winter holiday season. Think of popular Christmas song lyrics that reference some of this. Did you know that Yule celebrations originate from ancient Scandinavians, preceding Christianity? These Norse ancestors recognized the return of the sun by bringing home large *Yule* logs to be lit on fire, likely for warmth, cooking food, and comfortable respite from the cold. Perhaps this is all evidence that some of their seasonally social behaviors have transcended cultural barriers and persevered through the passage of time.



[Yule Log Ritual for Winter Solstice Magick | Heron Michelle \(patheos.com\)](https://www.patheos.com)