

WOODBURY UNIVERSITY

DECEMBER 2023

# NEWSLETTER

YOUR DREAM. OUR MISSION.



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

DIVERSITY  
EQUITY &  
INCLUSION

# DECEMBER HOLIDAYS

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Persons with Disabilities

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(Chanukah)

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Rights Day

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## CONGRATULATIONS AND HAPPY HOLIDAYS

As we approach the end of the semester, it's time to bid farewell to books, exams, and early morning alarms. Winter break is upon us, and we wanted to take a moment to extend my warmest wishes to each and every one of you. This has been a semester of hard work, growth, and countless achievements. We are incredibly proud of the dedication and enthusiasm you've shown in your studies and extracurricular activities. As we embark on this well-deserved break, take the time to relax, rejuvenate, and spend quality moments with family and friends. Whether you're planning to travel to new destinations, catch up on your favorite books, or simply enjoy the winter wonderland from the comfort of your home, we encourage you to make the most of this time for self-care and reflection. Take a step back, appreciate your accomplishments, and recharge your energy for the exciting challenges that lie ahead in the coming year. Remember to embrace the spirit of the season, spread kindness, and find joy in the little moments. Whether it's the warmth of a crackling fire, the laughter of loved ones, or the beauty of snowflakes falling gently outside your window, may your winter break be filled with happiness and peace. Thank you for your hard work and dedication throughout the semester. We look forward to welcoming you back in January for a new chapter of learning and growth. Wishing you a joyful holiday season and a Happy New Year!





## NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS MONTH

National Human Rights Month provides an opportunity to raise awareness about human rights issues globally and within a specific country. It allows governments, non-governmental organizations, and individuals to educate the public about the principles of human rights and the importance of upholding them. By designating a specific month, there is an increased emphasis on advocating for social justice and equality. It encourages individuals and organizations to actively engage in promoting the rights of marginalized and vulnerable populations, fostering inclusivity and combating discrimination. Many human rights issues transcend national borders. National Human Rights Month can be an opportunity for countries to collaborate on a global scale, sharing best practices, experiences, and resources to address common challenges and promote a more cohesive approach to human rights. Designating a month for human rights empowers civil society organizations, activists, and individuals to engage in meaningful discussions, campaigns, and events. This can lead to the mobilization of communities and the creation of a collective voice advocating for human rights.

Human Rights Month can also be a time to celebrate achievements and progress in the field of human rights. Recognizing positive developments encourages continued efforts and inspires individuals and organizations to work towards further advancements.





# WORLD AIDS DAY

A woman in a striped shirt is lighting red candles arranged in a heart shape on the ground. In the background, a banner reads "WORLD AIDS DAY" and "Building Compassionate and Caring Churches and Communities with People Living with HIV &amp; AIDS". There are also red ribbon symbols.







## DECEMBER 3 **INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

The International Day of Persons with Disabilities, observed on December 3rd each year, has its roots in the United Nations' commitment to promoting the rights and well-being of individuals with disabilities. Established in 1992, the day aims to increase awareness of the challenges faced by people with disabilities and to mobilize support for their dignity, rights, and inclusion in all aspects of society. The day originated in response to the need for a global platform to address the discrimination, stigmatization, and barriers that persons with disabilities often encounter.

Over the years, it has evolved into a crucial mechanism for advocating inclusive policies, equal opportunities, and accessibility. Celebrated internationally, the day serves as a catalyst for discussions on disability rights, bringing attention to the achievements and contributions of individuals with disabilities while also highlighting the persistent challenges they face. It fosters a collective commitment to creating a more inclusive world that recognizes and values the diversity of abilities. Through events, campaigns, and awareness initiatives, the International Day of Persons with Disabilities encourages societies to break down physical and attitudinal barriers, promoting a more equitable and accessible global community.





# DECEMBER 3 - 24

## ADVENT

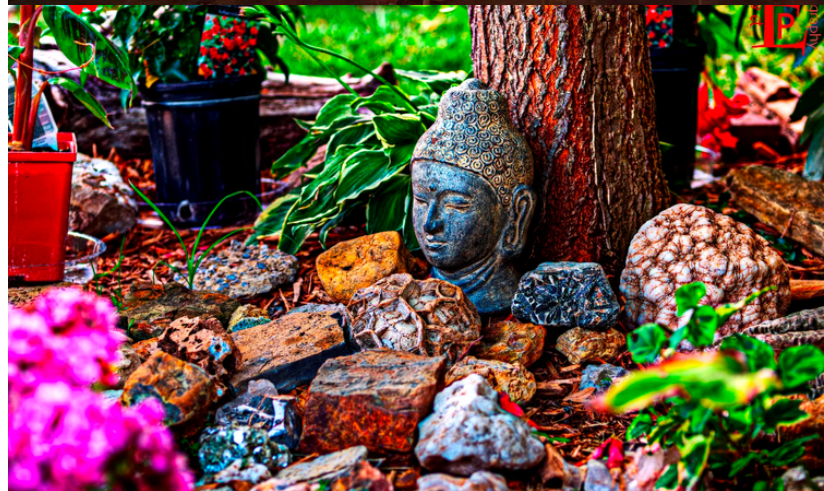
The history of Advent dates back to the early Christian period, tracing its roots to the 4th and 5th centuries. The word "Advent" is derived from the Latin word "adventus," meaning "coming" or "arrival." Originally, Advent served as a season of preparation and penance leading up to the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ on Christmas Day. The duration of Advent has varied throughout history, with different Christian traditions observing it for different lengths of time. The symbolic aspects of Advent, including the Advent wreath with its candles, were developed in the Middle Ages, likely in Germany. The wreath, featuring four candles representing the four weeks of Advent, became a central element of the season's observance. Over time, Advent has evolved into a time of reflection, anticipation, and hope, not only focusing on the Nativity but also emphasizing the broader theme of the anticipation of the second coming of Christ. Today, Advent is celebrated by various Christian denominations worldwide, often involving special liturgical practices, prayers, and the lighting of candles to mark the passage of each week leading up to Christmas.



# DECEMBER 8

## BODHI DAY

Bodhi Day, celebrated on December 8th, commemorates the enlightenment of Siddhartha Gautama, who later became known as Buddha. The term "Bodhi" is derived from the Pali language, meaning awakening or enlightenment. According to Buddhist tradition, Siddhartha, after years of rigorous spiritual practice, attained enlightenment under the Bodhi tree in Bodh Gaya, India, around 2,500 years ago. The historical event is a central theme in Buddhism, symbolizing the moment when Siddhartha transcended suffering and ignorance to attain perfect wisdom and understanding. Bodhi Day is observed by Buddhists worldwide through meditation, prayer, and acts of kindness. It serves as a reminder of the path to spiritual awakening and the potential for enlightenment inherent in all sentient beings.





# DECEMBER 10

## INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

International Human Rights Day, observed annually on December 10th, commemorates the day in 1948 when the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This landmark document, drafted in the aftermath of World War II, enshrined the fundamental principles and rights to which all human beings are entitled, regardless of nationality, ethnicity, religion, or any other status. The declaration was a response to the atrocities of the war and aimed to establish a universal standard for the protection of human dignity. International Human Rights Day holds immense historical significance as it marks a collective commitment to the idea that all individuals possess inherent rights that must be safeguarded. Since its inception, the day has served as a global platform to raise awareness about human rights issues, advocate for the rights of marginalized populations, and mobilize efforts to address systemic injustices. It reinforces the importance of upholding human rights as a foundation for building just, inclusive, and peaceful societies worldwide.







# DECEMBER 21

## WINTER SOLSTICE/YULE

Winter Solstice, also known as Yule, has deep historical and cultural roots, marking the longest night and the shortest day of the year in the Northern Hemisphere. The celebration predates many modern religions and is intertwined with various ancient traditions. In Norse mythology, Yule was a festival honoring the god Odin, while in Roman times, it was associated with Saturnalia, a festival dedicated to the god Saturn. The Celtic people celebrated the winter solstice as a time of renewal and rebirth, symbolized by the return of the sun. With the spread of Christianity, some Yule traditions were incorporated into Christmas festivities, such as the Yule log and the adornment of evergreen trees. Today, Winter Solstice is observed by various cultures and spiritual practices, often emphasizing themes of reflection, renewal, and the triumph of light over darkness. It remains a time for communities to come together, celebrate the changing seasons, and acknowledge the cosmic rhythms that have fascinated humanity throughout history.





# JANUARY 6

## ARMENIAN CHRISTMAS

Armenian Christmas, also known as Armenian Apostolic Christmas or Holy Nativity, is celebrated on January 6th, differing from the December 25th date observed in many Western Christian traditions. The unique date stems from the ancient Armenian Apostolic Church's adherence to the Julian calendar for liturgical events. The Armenian Christmas commemorates the birth of Jesus Christ and is marked by a rich tapestry of religious rituals and cultural customs. In Armenia, the celebration extends beyond the church with traditional festivities that include family gatherings, feasting on special holiday dishes, and the practice of exchanging gifts. Notably, Armenians participate in the ceremonial lighting of bonfires on the night before Christmas, symbolizing the enlightenment brought by Christ. The combination of religious reverence and cultural traditions makes Armenian Christmas a distinctive and vibrant observance within the global Christian calendar.

