The November Allyship Newsletter is full of religion and traditions. In this newsletter we’ll be discussing some special holidays from Sikhism and Christianity. Thanksgiving is also this month and we’ll be reading some articles to educate us about the holiday.

Don’t forget to catch up on last month’s Newsletter! Also, next month is Christmas, Kwanza, and Hanukah. If you have someone in mind to be featured scroll to the last page of the newsletter and read about our featured section!

IN THIS NEWSLETTER

- Thanksgiving Articles
- Diwali Articles
- Sikhism Good Reads
- Christianity Movie Recommendations
- Feature of The Month
- Links and More!

Disclaimer: This newsletter and the external references and sources do not represent the opinions or views of Georgia Southern University and are rather intended as learning material to hear from a variety of underrepresented opinions and perspectives. We do not endorse the authors or sources; rather, we hope that readers will critically consume media and use it for reflection and learning in pursuit of inclusion, openness, and cultural enrichment. Some sources may contain mature language or triggering topics, so please read with caution.
"7 Ways to Be An Ally to Native Peoples This Thanksgiving"
Written By Deilah Friedler

One way to be a true ally is to take action and stand up for what's right. Thanksgiving is such a controversial holiday because the history of thanksgiving has been imprecise. In this article, Friedler goes into detail about how we as American people can respect and honor Indigenous people during this holiday. America has been built through colonization, and the lands we inhabit were taken unjustly. One of the most controversial issues with Thanksgiving celebrations are that they reconstruct historical events that have large impacts on Indigenous peoples existences in this country. Learning and honoring the truth about our historical celebrations, especially Thanksgiving, can help us understand the ongoing battles Indigenous peoples are still fighting today. Refer to the article above on some ways to be an ally to Indigenous People this month!

"The Power of Thanksgiving"
Written By Craig Von Buseck

Original traditions of Thanksgiving are all about the giving of thanks, which started with the pilgrims and is continuing throughout the United States. In this article, we'll be exploring the power of Thanksgiving and the positivity attached to it. Buseck talks about how the giving of thanks has been a tradition since biblical days. Christians celebrate Thanksgiving with a different connotation behind the holiday. Buseck points out that Thanksgiving can mean a lot of things depending on your morals behind celebrating the holiday.
What is Diwali, the festival of lights, and how will it be celebrated amid coronavirus?

Written By N’dea Yancey-Bragg

Diwali is celebrated by Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, and some Buddhist. The holiday is celebrated on November 4th each year. However, with the recent changes to the world, the Festival of Lights will have to be celebrated this year with precaution. Diwalis are usually celebrated amongst family members and in large gatherings. Due to coronavirus, the Festival of Lights will be celebrated in smaller gatherings and amongst close immediate family members for safety precautions. Diwali is a five-day celebration in which candles, fireworks, and clay lamps are lit up to signify light over darkness and good over evil. Diwali is similar to New Year, where the greeting "Happy Diwali" is equivalent to saying "Happy New Year."

However, different religions celebrate Diwali for various reasons. To learn more about Diwali refer to the article above!

The little lamps are called Deepavali, which is where the word Diwali comes from.
**THIS MONTH**

**Gur-Gaddi Guru Granth Sahib - November 6th**

**Bandi-Chhor Divas (Divali) - November 14th**

**Guru Nanak Dev Ji's Birthday - November 19th**

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**"Walking With Nanak"**  
By Haroon Khalid

After reading one of his poems, Haroon Khalid had a huge interest in Guru Nanak. In this book we'll be taking a walk with Khalid as he journeys through Pakistan, as he tries to learn more about Guru Nanak and his transition from a poet to a Guru. This is not just a story about Khalid, we'll also be receiving an in-depth background about Guru Nanak and his life endeavors.

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**"Premka: White Bird in a Golden Cage: My Life with Yogi Bhajan"**  
By Pamela Dyson

This book gives us deep insight on the starting point of the Western Sikh movement. This story is unfolding the relationship between a student and a teacher. This book is full of love, dedication, betrayal, loss, and healing, as well as becoming one with yourself. Premka informs us on the systematic mind-controlling behaviors of the Yogi, which has led many women astray. Refer to this book to read more about the relationship between Pamela and Yogi bhajan!

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**"1984: The Anti-Sikh Riots and After"**  
By Sanjay Suri

In this historical non-fiction, we'll be exploring the experiences of Sanjay Suri. He was a young crime reporter in India during 1984. He lived out the tragedies that followed behind the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, who was assassinated by her bodyguards on October 31, 1984. The violence that followed Sikhs for the next couple of days was highly ignored by the police. To read more about these tragic events refer to the book!
CHRISTIANITY

"THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST"
In this movie, "The Passion of the Christ" the crucifixion of Jesus is brought to motion picture and explained in detail. Jesus's crucifixion is told to be the most brutal one in history! Although, there are inaccurate details in the movie, like the depiction of Jews. Overall, the movie does its job at explaining the final hours of Jesus. This is definitely a great movie to watch to learn more about the history of Christianity.

"GOD'S NOT DEAD"
In the film, "God's Not Dead" we're taking a look at Christian students' life as his faith is tested by one of his Professors. His Professor, an atheist, passes around a document on the first day of classes which states that "God is Dead". Professor Jeffrey Radisson says that if his students sign the document, they automatically pass the class. Harper, (Christian student), could not bear the thought of denying the power of God. Therefore he refuses sign the document, which is when a huge debate uproars between him and his Professor. This film is recommended to understand the faith of Christians!

"HEAVEN IS FOR REAL"
Christians believe that once you pass away on Earth, your spirit has a home that is goes to called Heaven. In the film, "Heaven is for Real" we'll be looking at the experience of a young boy whose spirit left his body in a tragic hospital incident and went away to its spiritual home, Heaven. His spirit eventually came back into his body and the things he saw in heaven shocked an entire community. Look at this film to know more about this place called Heaven.

THIS MONTH

All Saints Day - November 1st

All Souls Day - November 1st

Advent - Nov. 24th - Dec. 24th
HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN RELIGION AND TRADITION? ARE THEY INTERCHANGEABLE?

Sometimes saying the word “religion” over and over gets old, and you need an alternative. I use “tradition” interchangeably with the word “religion” when I’m teaching about a religion, like Buddhism, with a long history. In cases like that of Buddhism, “tradition” is a better choice than “faith,” because to call something a faith is to imply that it is a system of beliefs, and religions are much more than that. Religions involve practices – rituals – and sometimes the practices are more important to the religion than participants’ states of mind. At the same time, the word “tradition” implies a history of significant length, so I would not use “tradition” for referring to New Religious Movements (NRM) like Scientology and Falun Gong.

FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF YOUR RELIGIOUS STUDIES, HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE ALLYSHIP?

From the perspective of Religious Studies, I would describe allyship as willingness to engage with and learn from people who practice religions different from whatever is dominant in that society. In South Georgia, the dominant religion is Protestant Christianity, so for people in Bulloch County and at Georgia Southern, allyship is showing active respect for those who do not identify as Protestant. This could mean correcting someone when they imply that Islam is inherently violent. Or, it might mean arguing in defense of a non-religious person who, strictly by virtue of their being non-religious, is seen as somehow less ethical or less capable of being a “good” person or role model.
RELIGION, TRADITION, AND ALLYSHIP FROM AN EXPERT (CNT'D)

WHAT IS THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING AN ALLY TO DIFFERENT RELIGIOUS GROUPS?

On a world scale, look at current events in Myanmar, Xinjiang, Tibet, and India. Allies can be powerful voices in preventing the persecution of religious minorities. Here in South Georgia, being an ally to people from different religious groups is especially important because of the overwhelming cultural and political dominance that Protestant Christianity exercises in this part of the country. Every year at Christmas, there is a nativity scene on Statesboro’s courthouse lawn. At other times throughout the year, there will be crosses to represent people who have died in war or from COVID-19. Have you ever seen a large public display of a non-Christian religion in Statesboro? Imagine living here but never seeing your religion represented in public. Acting as an ally can help non-Protestants in our area feel less alienated and more welcomed.

IF YOU COULD GIVE THREE TIPS TO STUDENTS LOOKING TO INCREASE THEIR PARTICIPATION AS A BETTER ALLY FOR PEOPLE OF DIFFERENT FAITH, WHAT WOULD THEY BE?

1. Demonstrate genuine respect for other religions. Perhaps you’re in class with someone who practices Wicca. Ask them a question about it. Perhaps your roommate goes to a Hindu temple for certain holidays. If they invite you to go with them, go and check it out.

2. Speak up when you hear members of the religious majority assert their superiority to those who are not part of their group. We know that racism, sexism, ableism, etc., are not OK, but we often give people a free pass for discriminating against others on the basis of religion. Just a few days ago, I heard a Protestant minister say – about someone he does not know – that, because he’s an atheist, the man could not possibly be a good father. That's not OK. When you hear something like that, speak up.

3. Did you know that Georgia Southern has a Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies? Take a course! Religious Studies can introduce you to new ways of thinking about life’s most important questions, and it can expand your appreciation for the practices and worldviews of others.
Nominate someone for us to feature in our next newsletter!

Nomination Information and Link:
https://georgiasouthern.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_879LzXdR1O4s3gF

Feedback Form:
https://georgiasouthern.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eQo4q73jRLRdi3H

Social Media: (click the icons)