



*Christ is Born!*

# Eastern Orthodox Christmas

Orthodox Christian

[kris:muhs](#)



Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Protestant Christians all celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ on December 25th, but the Eastern Orthodox use the Julian Calendar and the Western churches use the Gregorian Calendar. Because of the thirteen-day difference between the two calendars, the Eastern Orthodox Christmas falls on January 7 in the Gregorian (Western) calendar.

The precise date of the birth of Jesus Christ is unknown. Its occurrence in the early 1st century B.C. in Bethlehem is recorded in the Christian Scriptures (the Bible) in Matthew chapters 1-2 and Luke chapters 1-2. Christians believe the conception and birth of Jesus is how the Son of God became a human.

This collection of information sheets on major holidays and cultural events is a joint partnership of the School of Information staff, the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and the Office of the Provost. Facts have been vetted by U-M's Association of Religious Counselors (ARC), and other campus groups. Public feedback is welcome; please email [DEIHolidayFacts@umich.edu](mailto:DEIHolidayFacts@umich.edu).

## Date

- January 7 of each year.
- Christian Orthodox churches calculate the date according to the Julian calendar so the date usually occurs after the western observance.
- Check the [Calendar Index](#) for Religious Holidays during the current academic year for the exact date.

## Greetings

Christians have historically celebrated this day (and the weeks leading up to it, known as the "Christmas season") by greeting others with the words, "Merry Christmas." Some Orthodox Christians greet each other with "Christ is Born" and in reply "Glorify Him".

## Common Practices and Celebrations

- Attending Church services on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.
- Christmas is not about presents; it is a time to heal the soul. It is also a time of peace, joy, and unity.
- Many fast for 40 days before Christmas Day as a means of preparing to celebrate Jesus Christ's birth.

## Impact to U-M Community

- Christian Orthodox observers may request the day off.
- Link to [U-M Guidance Regarding Conflicts](#).

## U-M Campus Resources

- [Maize Pages - Orthodox](#), U-M
- [Association of Religious Counselors](#), U-M

## Information Sources

- [Time and Date](#), holidays
- [Blue Letter Bible](#), Matthew 1-2
- [Blue Letter Bible](#), Luke 1-2

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