



# MOMENTS



## MATTER

### Spring Religious Traditions

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This spring, people from various faith traditions will celebrate certain aspects of their faith.

Not only does spring indicate the renewal of life with the advent of warmer weather, buds on the trees, and blooming flowers, but for people of faith, spring contains several reminders of the important expressions of their faith such as the concepts of new chances, new life, the hope of life eternal, and connecting with something higher than ourselves.



As a Christian, Easter is one of the most meaningful and important days of the year for me. Likewise, people from other religious backgrounds celebrate holidays during this time that are also just as meaningful to them. In this article, let's look at some of the religious festivals that occur during the spring season and how keeping these ancient traditions can offer us strength during our time of grief.

#### Christian traditions

Spring Christian traditions are among the most symbolic and powerful of the entire year. While Christmas gets the most attention, these four Christian holidays hold ancient roots.

#### Ash Wednesday • March 5th

Ash Wednesday is the first day of the Lenten season. Many Christian traditions commemorate this day with a time of fasting, repentance, and prayer. During Ash Wednesday services, ashes —sometimes coming from the ashes of the previous year's palm branches — are placed on an individual's forehead in the shape of the cross. The practice holds ancient roots, dating to at least AD 590 when Gregory the Great moved the service from Sunday to Wednesday.

Seeing that the service day was changed suggests that the ritual was much older than 590. The placement of ashes reminds Christian believers of their own mortality (Gen. 3:19).

#### Lent • March 5th - April 17th

No, Lent is not what you find in your dryer. Rather, Lent (meaning "lengthening of days") is a 40-day period of fasting and prayer, observed by many branches of Christianity, prior to Good Friday and Easter. During this time, participants reflect on the sacrifice of Jesus by giving up something they enjoy to spend more quality time with God and family. These fasts can include food, but they may also involve technological fasts (or as much as one can escape technology), hobbies, or other things that take up a person's time. Like Ash Wednesday, Lent is a very old practice, finding roots in the second century (AD 100 - 200) and was formalized in AD 325.

## Good Friday • April 18th

Good Friday is an odd name for this Christian celebration because it celebrates the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth, the founder of Christianity. It's called "good" since it correlates with the Christian view of salvation related to the sacrificial death of Jesus. Historians typically agree that the crucifixion of Jesus likely happened on Friday, April 3, 33 AD. However, the date moves on our calendar according to the placement of Easter Sunday.

## Easter • April 20th

Easter is the holiest day of the Christian calendar. On this Sunday, the Christian faithful from across the globe celebrate the resurrection of Jesus in their own unique way. Though the original date for Easter was likely on Sunday, April 5, 33 AD, the holiday is typically celebrated anywhere from March 22nd to April 25th. Since the time of the Nicaean Council of 325, Christian leaders determined that the day should be celebrated on the first Sunday after the first full moon following the spring equinox. On this day, the Christian faithful celebrate the hope of eternal life and, in some cases, the renewal of faith.

## Jewish traditions

Jewish believers also have two important holidays on their spring calendars: Purim and Passover. Some Christian branches may also celebrate these holidays.

## Purim • March 14th

Purim (meaning "lots" in Hebrew) is a minor Jewish festival that typically occurs in the spring. The holiday refers to Haman's casting of lots in the biblical book of Esther, leading to the salvation of the Persian Jews from a planned massacre in the fourth century BC. The festival is typically celebrated

on the 14th day of the Hebrew month Adar (February – March). Purim is typically characterized by vibrant and joyful celebrations, the wearing of costumes, eating of hamantaschen (triangular pastries), exchanging of gifts, and helping the poor.

## Passover • April 12th – 20th

Passover is one of the most important Jewish festivals of the year. Passover (otherwise known as Pesach or Pessah) is comparable to the American Thanksgiving. Passover celebrates the rescue of the Hebrew people from Egyptian enslavement by divine intervention. In the biblical narrative, the Jewish faithful placed a sign over the door frames of their homes to publicly demonstrate their trust in God. When judgment came, they were passed over because of their faith (hence the name "Passover"). In modern Judaism, the holiday is celebrated with a ceremonial dinner called the Seder and is often combined with the seven-day Festival of Unleavened Bread. Passover is an extremely ancient practice. Jewish faithful have been keeping Passover since 1446 BC, making it among the oldest ongoing practices to date. Passover signifies the importance of faith amid the most trying moments of life. For the Jewish faithful, it also symbolizes the nearness and love of God.

## Muslim celebration of Ramadan

As with Jewish calendars, Muslims follow a lunar calendar (following the cycles of the moon) rather than a solar calendar (following the cycles of the sun). Lunar calendars tend to have fewer days in the year than do their solar counterparts. Because of the difference in the calendars, the Muslim celebration of Ramadan floats with each passing year, as do Easter and Passover. Ramadan

begins on the first day of the month and concludes on Eid al-Fitr. Ramadan is celebrated in the ninth month of the lunar calendar, when Muslims believe that Muhammad first received the Qu'ran. During this month, Muslims fast from dawn to sunset and have a large meal during the evening. Muslims commit themselves to prayer five times a day, focus on studying the Qu'ran, and seek to provide for the less fortunate. Ramadan is another ancient practice originating around AD 622 in Medina (present-day Saudi Arabia).

Ramadan concludes on Eid al-Fitr (literally, "festival of breaking the fast"). Eid al-Fitr occurs on the first day of the 10th month in the Islamic calendar. The day is spent with something comparable to a Thanksgiving meal, gift giving, giving alms to the poor, and time spent in prayer. For the Muslim faithful, Ramadan is meaningful as it signifies the importance of sacrifice, devotion, community, faith, and charity.

## The Importance of traditions in bereavement

As with each of these religious traditions, people celebrate renewal and the importance of their faith and family. As you are undergoing your time of bereavement, you might find it helpful to lean into your faith (however that might look) and rekindle some of the traditions you formerly celebrated (no matter how it might look). If you have never kept these traditions, you may find value in trying them out for the first time. There is something meaningful with celebrations that have spanned millennia. Traditions, such as the ones listed in this article, help us to connect with something bigger than ourselves. It reminds us that we're not alone. And that can be very comforting, especially if and when your grief journey feels so lonesome.

# CROSSWORD

Clues from our Religious Traditions article!

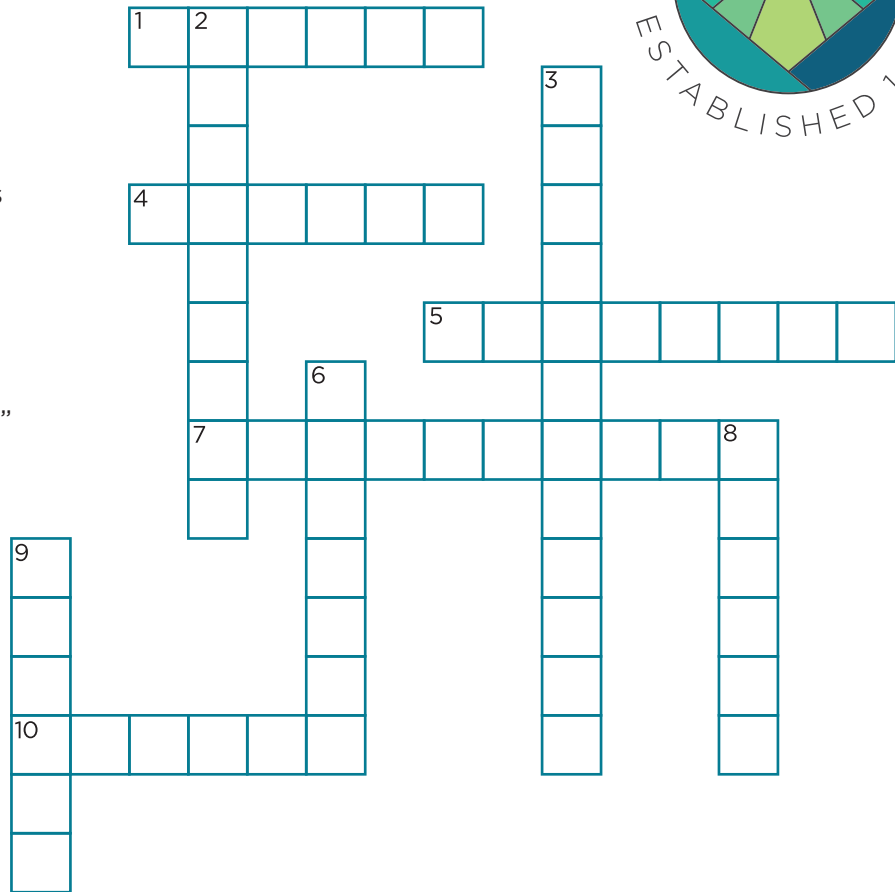


## ACROSS

1. One whose religion is Judaism
4. The holiest day of the Christian calendar
5. Otherwise known as Pesach
7. "Help us connect [and] reminds us we're not alone."
10. Ash Wednesday is the first day of what season

## DOWN

2. "Festival of the breaking of fast"
3. Jesus of Nazareth founded
6. Observed in the ninth month of the lunar calendar
8. Lent took root in this century
9. Adhere to Islam



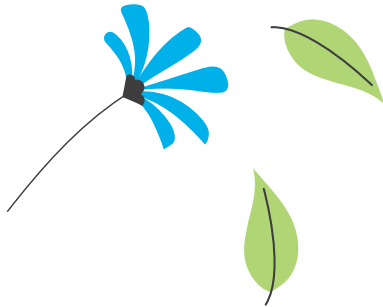
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## SUDOKU

The rules for sudoku are simple: A 9×9 square must be filled in with numbers from 1 to 9 with no repeated numbers in each line, horizontally or vertically. To challenge you more, there are 3×3 squares marked out in the grid, and each of these squares can't have any repeat numbers, either.

# Springing forward

TRACEY ANDERSON, MA, MAR  
Bereavement Coordinator



## It's that time of year to spring our clocks forward.

We get to enjoy outside activities for another hour. What does it mean to spring forward in your grief? How do you spring forward when it feels like you're stuck, and it's cold, dark, and lonely? When is the right time to spring forward? There are so many questions that those who grieve face daily.

Everyone's grief journey is different and everyone's springing forward will look different. Springing forward does not mean leaving everything in the past behind. It means to move into a new chapter in your life. It can feel scary, but it also can be very rewarding and a chance to feel alive again. Springtime represents happiness, new growth, and new life.

### Obstacles to springing forward

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#### Fear of loving again

It's scary to think about opening yourself up to the possibility of love again. There's a fear of "what if this person dies?" — I don't want to go through this pain again. I don't want to be hurt again. There's always a risk of opening your heart to others. But when you take that risk, you get to enjoy the benefits of companionship, having someone to share your day with, having someone to talk to and confide in again. Every relationship does not have to be a romantic one. There is nothing wrong with making new friends, establishing new traditions, hobbies, etc. It is ok to start to build a new life.

#### Fear of being disloyal

The relationship that you had with your loved one will never die. It will always be a part of you; it has made you who you are. You're not being disloyal if you move forward. Your loved one would want you to continue to live and to be happy again. Any relationship that you may have in the future will be different. It's ok to have new routines, traditions, etc., with someone new. This will be a new chapter in your life. It will never take away from your past and the love you shared with your loved one.

#### Guilt of being happy again

You don't need to feel guilty for being happy. It's ok to smile, laugh, and find joy again. There will always be difficult days, reminders, anniversaries, days when you will be sad. It does not have to be that way every day. It's ok to find joy, enjoy life again, and get back to living. It will never be easy, but it will be rewarding.

### Ideas for springing forward

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#### Start going out with friends

It can start with a lunch with friends or maybe just getting out for an hour or two. Be open to new friendships or re-establish old ones. Finding friends who have experienced the same things in life can be very helpful. You can support each other and help each other through your grief journeys.

#### Join a group at church or in the community

You can go to a local senior center, get involved in your local church or join a group in your community. Many communities have exercise,

hiking, gardening, etc. Find out what's in your community and what interests you. This can help you to have something to anticipate and enjoy. Many find joy in walking, hiking or gardening. Many find happiness sharing common interests with others.

**Volunteer**

There are many ways to volunteer in your area. There 's Meals on Wheels, soup kitchens, homeless shelters, hospice, or many other areas in your community that are always looking for volunteers. You can feel good when you reach out to help others. You can share

your journey and your story with others who may be beginning their own grief journey.

No matter what you decide to do, the hardest thing is to take that first step. It's scary to think about springing forward. Springing forward doesn't mean that you're forsaking the life that you had previously. You can embrace the past and carry it with you, forward. Look for opportunities to get out and meet others. You can never have too many friends. Enjoy the simple things, look for ways to invest in others, and don't be afraid to be happy again. Take time to enjoy that extra hour of sunshine.



**WORD SEARCH**

Enjoy our spring forward puzzle. Good luck!

March  
 Sunday  
 Spring  
 Forward  
 Energy  
 Daylight  
 Adjustment  
 W. Wilson  
 Routines  
 Growth  
 Sunshine  
 Hour

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# Grief support groups

## NORTH CAROLINA

### STOKES COUNTY

#### March 3rd @ 6pm

Slate Funeral Home  
132 E Dalton Rd, King, NC 27021  
Melissa McCollum: (336) 679-2466

### SURRY COUNTY

#### March 13th @ 11:30am

Central Cafe  
304 N Main St, Dobson, NC 27017  
Jessica Simandle: (336) 583-8589

#### March 13th @ 11am

Mountain Valley Elkin office  
968 N Bridge St, Elkin, NC 28621  
Tracey Anderson: (336) 526-2650

#### March 27th @ 6pm

Mountain Valley Elkin office  
968 N Bridge St, Elkin, NC 28621  
Tracey Anderson: (336) 526-2650

### YADKIN COUNTY

#### March 6th @ 11am

SECU Hospice Care Center  
243 N Lee Ave, Yadkinville, NC 27055  
Melissa McCollum: (336) 679-2466

#### March 11th @ 5pm

Oak Grove Baptist Church  
8087 Windsor Rd, Hamptonville, NC 27020  
Melissa McCollum: (336) 679-2466

#### March 20th @ 5pm

SECU Hospice Care Center  
243 N Lee Ave, Yadkinville, NC 27055  
Melissa McCollum: (336) 679-2466

### WILKES COUNTY

#### March 17th @ 6pm

Reins-Sturdivant Funeral Home  
270 Armory Rd, North Wilkesboro, NC 28659  
Tracey Anderson: (336) 526-2650  
Melissa McCollum: (336) 679-2466

## VIRGINIA

### HENRY COUNTY

#### March 5th @ 2pm

King's Grant Retirement  
350 Kings Way Rd, Martinsville, VA 24112  
Shannon Roberson: (888) 789-2922

#### March 11th @ 10am

The Community Fellowship  
2674 Virginia Ave, Collinsville, VA 24078  
Shannon Roberson: (888) 789-2922

### PATRICK COUNTY

#### March 20th @ 2pm

Stuart Church of Living Water  
101 E Blue Ridge St, Stuart, VA 24171  
Shannon Roberson: (888) 789-2922

### GRAYSON COUNTY

#### March 17th @ 2pm

Mt Olivet Community Church  
6926 Carrollton Pike, Galax, VA 24333  
Jessica Simandle: (888) 789-2922

## No RSVP needed

Please attend the group nearest you.  
Meeting dates and times are subject to change

For more information, please call  
the group's grief support coordinator

Mountain Valley  
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our special partner,  
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United Fund of  
Stokes County

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Wilkes County

Yadkin County  
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BENEFITING  
MOUNTAIN VALLEY  
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Activity page  
**solutions**

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MON - SAT • 10 - 5  
705 W PINE ST, STE 300  
(336) 789-1230

**SPARTA**  
TUES - SAT • 10 - 5  
38 E CHEEK ST  
(336) 372-4545



# Helpful books on grief and loss

There are more than 150 titles at the Alleghany, Stokes, Surry, and Yadkin locations of the Northwestern Regional Library • [mtnvalleyhospice.org/grief-library](http://mtnvalleyhospice.org/grief-library)



SCAN  
for the Moments Matter  
newsletter survey!



+ March 2025 grief support group schedule

Spring Religious Traditions  
Springing forward

INSIDE:

to Moments Matter, our bereavement newsletter

WELCOME



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# Activity page solutions



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