Generosity, Kindness, Treating Others as we wish to be treated.

This time of the year there are so many holy days celebration in all religious traditions. We would be remiss at this Universal Worship Service to not mention these.

**Nature Based Traditions** honor the Winter Solstice the time in the year "when the earth is most inclined away from the sun. It is the most southern or northern point depending on the hemisphere. The Yule honors “the winter-born king, symbolized by the rebirth of the sun.”

**Dhanu Sankranti** Is marked in the Hindu calendar when the sun crosses over to different zodiac signs a total of twelve times arriving in Sagittarius.

**Rohatsu (Bodhi Day)** — This **Buddhist** holiday celebrates the historical Buddha’s decision and vow to sit under the Bodhi tree until he reached spiritual enlightenment.

**Zarathosht Diso (Death of Prophet Zarathustra)** — **Zoroastrian** Unlike many of the other holidays in the month, Zoroastrians **honor the death of their prophet**, Zarathustra, who founded Zoroastrianism, one of the world’s oldest monotheistic religions.

**Hanukkah** — **Judaism** The eight-day Jewish festival of lights, in remembrance the Maccabean revolt in Egypt. Eight candles are lit with a menorah to honor the holiday.

**Advent Fast begins** — **Orthodox Christian** Though Advent began this last weekend, the fasting starts midway through the month with only two weeks until Christmas. The holiday is celebrated by believers lighting Advent **candles, hanging wreaths** and attending church ceremonies.

**Dec. 25: Christmas** Christmas is a primarily Christian holiday that celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ.

**Mawlid el-Nabi** — Is an Islamic holiday that honors the birth of the Prophet Muhammad, who founded Islam.
Dec. 31: Watch Night — observed by some by giving thanks God for the safety they received during the year and to pray for the coming year.

**Historic Significant & Symbology**

If we look at the sacred symbology of the Season we can get in touch with the deeper meaning of things we associate with this season.

The **evergreen** tree so reminiscent of traditional Christmas trees represent both Life ever living and life everlasting. The evergreen reminds us coming of the spring to come.

The custom of giving and receiving **presents at Christmas**, is to remind us of the **presents** given to Jesus by the Wise Men: Frankincense, Gold and Myrrh. Gold: is associated with Kings and Christians believe that Jesus is the King of Kings.

During Christmas, it we are also reminded of the gift that Jesus Christ gave over 2000 years ago by His birth and death.

A reminder that gifts are not always material but that perhaps even more valuable are the gifts of Charity in various forms: kindness, extending ourselves to be helpful, have the strength in the face of adversity and suffering, and forgiving.

So now I’m going to put our memory to a test. And no cheating. No looking at your cellphones for the answers.

According to the *The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes*, the song, "**The Twelve Days of Christmas**" is an English Christmas carol. From mid-1500’s until early 1800’s, there was religious strife and division. Some scholars maintain that the carol is can has two levels meanings. The surface meaning about gift giving and a deeper hidden religious meaning. **On the Twelve Days of Christmas**

On the first day of Christmas, my true love gave to me,

**A partridge in a pear tree**…

The partridge is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who comes to us on the first day of Christmas. He is fittingly represented as a partridge, a bird which will feign injury in order to draw predators to itself and away from its young.
The pear tree is the Cross itself. When King David wished to free his people from the scourge of the Philistines, the Lord told him that the moment would come “when thou shalt hear the sound of one going in the tops of the pear trees, then shalt thou join battle: for then will the Lord go out before thy face to strike the army of the Philistines.” (II Kings 5:24)

On the second day of Christmas, my true love gave to me,  
**Two turtle doves**…  
The two turtle doves represent the Old and New Testaments which look to each other with admiration and complement one another.

On the third day of Christmas, my true love gave to me,  
**Three French hens**…  
The three French hens symbolize the three theological virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity.

On the fourth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me,  
**Four calling birds**…  
The four calling birds are the four Evangelists – Matthew, Mark, Luke and John – because they spread everywhere the good news of the Gospel. “Their sound hath gone forth into all the earth: and their words unto the ends of the world.” (Psalms 18:5)

On the fifth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me,  
**Five golden ring**…  
The first five books of the Bible given to Moses.

On the sixth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me,  
**Six geese a laying**…Six geese a laying are the six days of creation. The eggs of the geese hold the promise of life to come and represent the six days of creation.

On the seventh day of Christmas, my true love gave to me,  
**Seven swans a swimming**…  

These sacraments are considered guardians, custodians, and dispensers of these living waters. (IV Kings 5:10) “Go, and wash seven times in the Jordan, and thy flesh shall recover health, and thou shalt be clean.”
On the eighth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me,

**Eight maids a milking…**

Eight maids a milking symbolize the eight beatitudes.

The Eight Beatitudes & Their Meanings – Just to name 2 of the Beatitudes

#1 Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (Be satisfied with what you have. Share the good things we have with others.)

#5 Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.
(Forgive those who are unkind to us and seek for ways to show kindness to others.)

On the ninth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me,

**Nine ladies dancing…**

The "nine ladies dancing" were nine fruits (Galations 5:22-23). fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

On the tenth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me,

**Ten lords a leaping…**

Ten lords a leaping are the Ten Commandments. If we keep these Commandments, we can leap from the bonds of this earth even to the heights of Heaven.

On the eleventh day of Christmas, my true love gave to me,

**Eleven pipers piping…**

Eleven pipers piping are the first eleven faithful Apostles. Like players in an orchestra, we must do our part in the great symphony of God’s plan for us. We play each the song that we are given and it becomes a part of a greater harmony, taking care not to strike a false note.

On the twelfth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me,

**Twelve drummers drumming…**

The "twelve drummers drumming" were the twelve articles of faith of the Apostles of Jesus.

**Article 1: Belief in God**

**Article 8: Belief is God as Spirit.**

**Article 10: Belief that God forgives our sins and transgressions.**

**Article 12: Belief that life everlasting.**
On the Twelve Days of Christmas – What time of year does this song represent? Days between Christmas and the appearance of the Magi-The Three Holy Men.
The three gifts had a spiritual meaning: gold as a symbol of kingship on earth, frankincense (an incense) as a symbol of deity, and myrrh (an embalming oil) as a symbol of death. ... Sometimes this is described more generally as gold symbolizing virtue, frankincense symbolizing prayer, and myrrh symbolizing suffering.

Charity does not only mean giving to those who are less fortunate than ourselves, it is also the kind ear of a friend, willing to give time to listen, it is a smile to a stranger, a hug to both friend, neighbor and stranger in need of comfort and reassurance. Inviting a single person into your family festivities for the holidays. Offering a grocery or mail run for an elderly person in the neighborhood, or how about shoveling their snow. Or simply think charitable thoughts of others. May we be mindful this season and the year throughout become the light of loving charity!

References
Zartosht no-diso, or Zarthost no deeso, is an important day of remembrance in the Zoroastrian religion, a commemoration of the death anniversary of the prophet Zoroaster. Zoroastrianism was founded by the Prophet Zoroaster (or Zarathustra) in ancient Iran approximately 3500 years ago. The precise date of the founding of Zoroastrianism is uncertain. Zoroastrianism is one of the world’s oldest known monolithic religions and, contrary to some misperceptions, fire only represents purity and the brightness of God in its belief system. Documents indicate that Zoroastrians initially did not have fire temples and they normally prayed at homes or on top of the hills. Zartosht no-diso, or Zarthost no deeso, is an important day of remembrance in the Zoroastrian religion. It is a commemoration of the death anniversary of the prophet Zoroaster. It is observed on the 11th day (Khorshed) of the 10th month (Dae). In the seasonal calendar, Zarathost No-Diso falls on December 26. It is an occasion of remembrance with lectures and discussions held on the life and works of the prophet. Special prayers are recited, and attendance at the fire temple is very high. A much higher Many Americans, especially Christians grew up observing specific holidays each year during the fall and winter. These were Labor Day on the first Monday in September, Columbus Day October 12, Thanksgiving on the fourth Thursday in November, Christmas on December 25, and New Year on January 1. Halloween was celebrated on October 31 but was not considered as a holiday. Now that this nation is so diverse, the special occasions of other cultures are being listed and there are quite a few. There are also Catholic observances that many mainstream Christians now take part in. 26 is Zarathosht Diso (Death of Prophet Zarathustra) which is where Zoroastrianism came from. Dec.