

**CCRL** The Centre for Civic Religious Literacy  
**CLRC** Le centre de litt ratie religieuse civique

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## December 2021 Newsletter

### CCRL Updates

Dear friends of CCRL,

2021 has been an unpredictable year, and we are happy to end it strong! This includes changes in our team as [Dr. Sivane Hirsch](#) becomes our new Quebec Regional Director, and we welcome two Board members with extensive knowledge in non-profit management – [Dr. Kunle Akingbola](#) and [Dr. Kathryn Chan](#). Together, our team is very excited for three new projects that have just begun. To learn more about each project and our incredible project partners, we encourage you to review our [2021 Annual Report](#) for details.

As we embark on this work, headlines across Canada (including those noted below) show us that many religious and non-religious communities are making donations, fundraising, and volunteering for the BC floods, food banks, and helping women shelters because of climate change, increasing food prices, and an increase in domestic violence. There is clearly much to do.

This past year, we have been privileged to meet many social service providers working tirelessly on these issues through the pandemic. They also continue to adapt and address racism, religious discrimination, oppression, declining mental health, integration and inclusion, homelessness, drug use, and the legacies of colonialism nationally. We're thankful to have met them and are prepared to tackle these challenges with them through religious literacy in 2022.

If you would like to support, collaborate, or connect with us in this work, please reach out at any time. You are welcome.

Until then, we wish you a restful, joyful, and rejuvenating December and January holiday season!



Sincerely,

[Alice](#)

CCRL Executive Director & Co-Founder

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## The Pulse

### *How does belief (religious or not) inform life and society in Canada today?*

Here are some headlines that show how religious, spiritual, and non-religious perspectives remain part of our daily lives and society. They show the struggles, virtues, and influence of Canadians in local and global communities. Some are one-on-one interactions while others are systemic, good and bad.

*Follow our Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn accounts for headlines on a regular basis. Note, these headlines do not indicate endorsement but are shared for the purpose of awareness and understanding.*

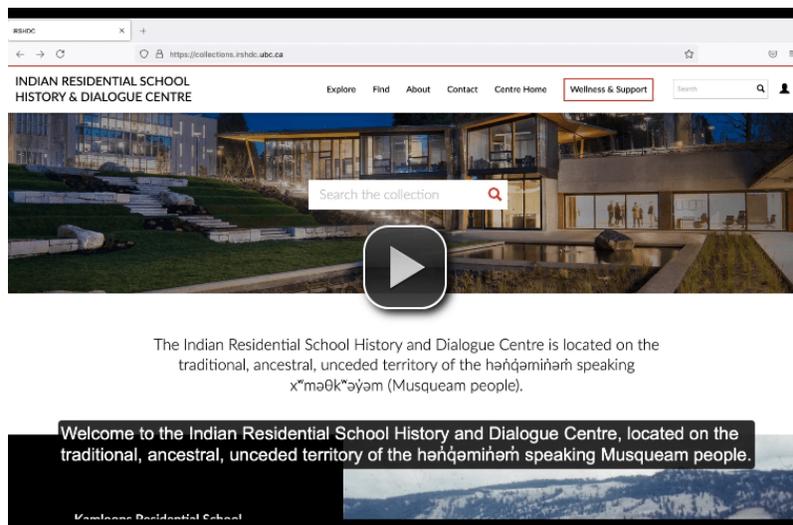


Image of, and from, the new web resource for survivors by the University of British Columbia.

(More info about the image above here: [‘It’s history being made.’ What! celebrates Tłı̨cḥo Highway Cabin Radio](#) (photo by Sarah Pruys)

### Canada:

- [Canada bans conversion therapy, a practice Trudeau calls ‘despicable and degrading’](#) *CNN*
- [Canadian Bishops, Assembly of First Nations, Métis National Council, and Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami Provide an Update on Delegation to Rome](#) *Assembly of First Nations*
- [Church of Canada may disappear by 2040, says new report](#) *Religion News Service*
- [Trudeau announces diplomatic boycott of Beijing Olympics](#) *CBC News*
- [Residential school timelines, unmarked graves part of new web resource for survivors](#) *CBC News*

## Territories:

- [Ice menorah lights up the darkness for northern Hanukkah](#) *Yukon News*
- [‘It’s history being made.’ Whatì celebrates Tłı̨chų Highway](#) *Cabin Radio*
- [Jury calls on prison system to meet cultural needs of Inuit inmates](#) *Nunatsiaq News*
- [Popular N.W.T. tourist attraction becomes on-the-land healing camp](#) *CBC North*

## British Columbia:

- [B.C.’s new COVID-19 restrictions on religious gatherings met with mixed reactions](#) *CTV News*
- [Kelowna’s Hindu community rallies to help flood victims](#) *CastaNet*
- [Non-profit allows staff to substitute stat holidays](#) *HR Reporter*
- [‘We are not here to get killed’: Wet’suwet’en solidarity actions met with armed police response](#) *The Narwhal*

## Alberta:

- [Calgary’s Muslim community comes together to support victims of domestic violence](#) *Global News*
- [Edmonton advocates ask public school board to give kids day off for holidays like Eid, Diwali, and Yom Kippur](#) *Edmonton Journal*
- [Medicine Hat Women’s Shelter Society has gone up 29 per cent](#) *Toronto Star*
- [Miywasin Friendship Centre extends helping hands, celebrates Indigenous community](#) *Prairie Post*

## Prairies:

- [Fort Saskatchewan residents send more than 700 Christmas cards to soldiers](#) *FortSaskOnline*
- [Manitoba ceremony marks 32nd anniversary of Montreal Massacre, day of action against gender-based violence](#) *CBC Manitoba*
- [Regina’s emergency shelter faces challenges in first three weeks of operation](#) *Regina Leader-Post*
- [Winnipeg rally calls on Canada to help protect Palestinian children](#) *CBC Manitoba*

## Ontario:

- [Let kids celebrate Christmas at school, Education Minister Stephen Lecce tells Toronto Catholic teachers](#) *Toronto Star*
- [Nav Bhatia’s journey to become the Raptors’ superfan after immigrating to Canada revealed in CBC documentary](#) *BramptonGuardian.com*
- [Racist graffiti left on Brampton Sikh school](#) *The Times of India*
- [‘This is part of reconciliation’: Algonquin elder Albert Dumont awarded high school diploma](#) *Ottawa Citizen*

## Quebec:

- [D'importantes archives religieuses bientôt regroupées à Longueuil](#) *Le Devoir*
- [Une enseignante voilée retirée de sa classe](#) *La Presse*
- [New Sikh temple in Hudson, Que., gives local community a gathering place close to home](#) *CBC Montreal*
- [Quebec author explores if religious identity and feminism can mutually exist](#) *CityNews Montreal*

## Atlantic Provinces:

- [Wolastoqey Nation files claim against New Brunswick corporations for resource extraction on their land](#) *APTN News*
- [Some P.E.I. charities seeing increased demand this holiday season](#) *CBC PEI*
- [The Best Little Newfoundland Christmas Pageant back to live performances for 2021](#) *Global News*
- [X-Ring effect: Unusual graduation rite linked to COVID-19 outbreak at N.S. university](#) *The Standard*

## International:

- [Apocalypse, booze and Christmas: An ancient ABC](#) *The Conversation*
- [Body of Sri Lankan lynching victim arrives from Pakistan](#) *Al Jazeera*
- [In Buddhism, women blaze a path but strive for gender equity](#) *Religion News Service*
- [Former settler digs up Muslim branch of family tree](#) *Israel Hayom*



## Religious Literacy Thought Corner

Every issue, this section will focus on one specific aspect of society or identity. Using religious literacy skills and framework, our team will briefly prompt how to identify and perceive the influence of religion, spirituality, and non-religious belief in our lives and world.

**In this issue, Dr. Christina Parker, one of our Subject Matter Expert discusses:**



Photo from Peter Durand –  
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/alphachimpstudio/16480559778>.

## Restorative Justice Education and Religious Literacy in Schools

Restorative justice is a term that is growing in popularity as people are coming to embrace the approach more and more. But, what is it? In this thought corner, I describe how and why a restorative approach to teaching religious literacy is a valuable approach that would better equip young people (and adults alike) for success in schools and beyond.

### *What is religious literacy?*

As a topic for study, religion provides a platform for civic dialogue. In schools, [many educators engage religious literacy in their social studies, history, and world religions curriculum](#). For students and the public beyond school spaces, [religious literacy is about developing skills and attitudes to prepare people with a deeper understanding of how religion, spirituality, and non-religion inform their lived experiences](#).

### *What is restorative justice?*

The basic principles of restorative justice are about acknowledging how people are impacted by harm and creating communities, and building relationships that prevent damage from occurring. Through this process, those affected are [involved in a process of discernment and reflection](#). People interested in a restorative process move forward in rebuilding relationships and community. In schools, among other settings, this means that [conflicts are managed proactively through ongoing attention to relational connection](#).

### *Why do we need Religious literacy and Restorative justice in schools?*

Because conflict and aggression based on religion exists in schools. This includes [religious bullying \(which happens to those who are religious and non-religious\) and is increasing in some contexts](#). Religious bullying also profoundly impacts marginalized young people, and furthers their exclusion. Such youth may further disengage from school or pursue acts of

bullying or violence themselves. [Of great concern are adolescent youth who are at a critical stage in their identity development, and therefore most susceptible to adopting religious extremism. When young people feel like they do not matter in school, they may turn to radicalism for connection and community.](#)

To address these concerns, educators can draw on restorative justice by creating spaces for dialogue and reflection about who has been harmed and what could be done to prevent harm. These critical conversations can counteract religion-based conflict and exclusion. In this way, restorative dialogue is one way to interrupt the promotion of hateful discourse, religiously motivated violence, and exclusion.



To learn more about religious literacy and restorative justice, please see the "[Religious Literacy and Restorative Justice with Youth: The Role of Community Service Professionals in Mediating Social Inclusion.](#)"

[Dr. Christina Parker](#), CCRL Subject Matter Expert in Peace Education

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## Cultural/Holy days (December 2021 & January 2022)

This list of dates is generally commemorated or observed by many individuals within a community. Some individuals from each community may not adhere to the cultural/holy days themselves. It is not a comprehensive list of cultural/holy days worldwide but a list of those commonly recognized across parts of Canada. Our team wishes you a rejuvenating time of contemplation and community support this December and January.



A photo from the Yukon News article "Ice menorah lights up the darkness for northern Hanukkah" above (Haley Ritchie/Yukon News)

## December 2021

- Dec 6 – [St. Nicholas Day](#) (various Western European and Romanian Christian groups); [Hanukkah](#) ends (various Jewish people)
- Dec 8 – [Bodhi Day](#) (various Buddhists), [St. Clement of Oris – Patron Day](#) (Macedonian Orthodox Christians), [Immaculate Conception of Mary](#) (Catholic Christians)
- Dec 12 – [Our Lady of Guadalupe Feast Day](#) (Mexican and other Catholic Christians)
- Dec 14 – [Gita Jayanti](#) (various Hindus)
- Dec 16 – [Posadas Navidenas](#) (Hispanic Catholic Christians from Latin America, some from the Philippines, and others. Ends Dec 24)
- Dec 19 – [St. Nicholas Day](#) (Eastern European Christian groups)
- Dec 21 – [Winter Solstice](#) (Indigenous Peoples), [Yule/Litha](#) (Wiccans)
- Dec 25 – [Christmas Day/Feast of the Nativity](#) (All Christian sects and denominations, with the exception of most Christian Orthodox groups); [Geeta Jayanthi](#) (Hindus)
- Dec 26 – [St. Stephen's Day](#) (Catholic Christians)
- Dec 27 – [Feast of the Holy Family](#) (Catholic Christians)
- Dec 28/29 – [Holy Innocents](#) (Various Christian groups)

## January 2022

- Jan 1 – [Mary, Mother of God](#) (Catholic Christians), [Feast Day of St Basil](#) (Orthodox Christians), [Gantan-sai](#) (Shinto), [Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus](#) (Orthodox Christians)
- Jan 5 – [Twelfth Night \(Various Christian groups\)](#)
- Jan 6 – [Epiphany/Dia de los Reyes](#) (Various Christian groups), [Nativity of Christ](#) (Armenian Orthodox Christians)
- Jan 7 – [Christmas Day](#) (Orthodox Christians)
- Jan 9 – [Guru Gobindh Singh birthday](#) (Sikhs), [Baptism of the Lord Jesus](#) (Various Christian groups)
- Jan 10 – [Bodhi Day](#) (various Buddhists, based on lunar calendar)
- Jan 14 – [Maghi Lohri/Makar Sankranti](#) (Sikhs and Hindus)
- Jan 16 – [World Religion Day](#) (initiated by Baha'i but celebrated by many other groups)
- Jan 18 – [New Year](#) (Mahayana Buddhists), [Thaipusam](#) (Predominantly Malaysian Hindus)
- Jan 19 – [Theophany](#) (Orthodox Christians)
- Jan 31 – [Guru Har Rai birthday](#) (Sikhs)