“The universe is not a static phenomenon, it is changing and evolving, still in the process of becoming. We are witnessing—and indeed participating in—a creative act that is taking place throughout time. We know from the experience of many artists, poets, and musicians that creativity is an uncertain reaching out, a growth, rather than a foreplanned or preconceived activity. The evolution of the universe which we observe going on about us and throughout the history of the universe is just this kind of activity. Little by little the process is advanced and the work of art begins to take shape... Many insights have made possible a new interpretation of this awesome, beautiful, but still unfinished universe.”

~ Louise B. Young, *The Unfinished Universe*

“What we have is a new story of the Universe we can see and imagine, set within an ultimate mystery, a myth like all the preceding ones of whatever culture or religion. Except that this one is woven by all of humankind from far wider strands of experience and imagination...and shepherded by a common scientific method. It is our ultimate personal history, tracing our individual existence beyond our families, beyond our species, beyond life, beyond the earliest galaxies, and finally beyond even the primordial fireball to the time when there was no time, the place where there was no space, and there was only mystery.”

~ Eric Carlson, in *Cosmic Beginnings and Human Ends*
**Significant resources:**
Eric Chaisson: *Epic of Evolution*
Loyal Rue: *Everybody's Story*
Thomas Berry: *Dream of the Earth*
Joel R. Primack and Nancy Ellen Abrams:  
*The View from the Center of the Universe*
Brian Thomas Swimme and Mary Evelyn Tucker: *Journey of the Universe*
On the Web: TheGreatStory.org (Connie Barlow and Michael Dowd)

**Image information:**
Cover – NASA, ESA, M.J.Jee and H. Ford et al. from hubblesite.org
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Weekday icons drawn by Maureen Monnet
Calendar graphic design by Julia Jandrisits (juliajandrisits.com)

*This calendar is dedicated to Thomas Berry (1914-2009).*

**About the author:**
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Orders and correspondence contact pcadair@sover.net or visit earthstorycalendar.com

**About the names of the days of the week:**
Except for Saturday, all of our usual weekday names derive from Germanic and Norse gods. Sunday and Monday are from Norse gods of Sun and Moon. Tuesday is named after the Saxon Tiw, god of love and war. Odin, king of the gods in ancient Scandinavia, is the Saxon Woden, whose day is our Wednesday. The god of thunder and lightning, Thor, is the namesake of Thursday. Freya, a Norse goddess of love and death, is the origin of Friday. Saturday is from the Roman Saturn.

There are exactly seven named days, and not four or ten, because each of these gods represents one of the seven heavenly spheres visible to the naked eye. The correspondences are: Sunday-Sun, Monday-Moon, Tuesday (Tiw)-Mars, Wednesday (Woden)-Mercury, Thursday (Thor)-Jupiter, Friday (Freya)-Venus, and Saturday-Saturn.

Because Norse gods and planetary cycles no longer have meaningful reference for us, we are indifferent to their named days. This condition can be amended. The weekday names used in this calendar derive from the traditional names, and are daily reminders of the natural elements that compose our lived experience.
Arousal of Mystery

At the Source of all is Mystery.

Every evolved form, from an atom of carbon to a leaf of grass, from a ruby-throated hummingbird to a pirouetting galaxy, is a presentation of mystery.

The heart of Mystery opens to existence.
The Great Radiance: Flaring Forth of the Universe

From an infinitesimal point of unimaginably extreme heat, pressure, and yearning, our cosmos unfurls in a radiance of elementary particles and light.

Initially minuscule, then sparking with inflation, and finally in a rushing expansion, our universe commences unveiling its splendors. Out of the radiance in a tumult of creation, the marvels of matter and energy, time and space, gravity and quintessence (the ecstatic energy of expanding space) flare forth. The early universe is a cosmic egg aborning, suffused with creative possibility. As a tiny pencil nib may sketch a multitude of images, so our minute seedling universe draws forth a spectacular bloom of atoms and stars, planets and perception, oceans and animals, mountains and music. Fourteen billion years hence, through the human, the universe will come to know and love the wonder and beauty of itself.

FEBRUARY 2013

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Above image © Tamara Knodel
THE BONDS OF RELATIONSHIP: FORM ARISSES

Communities of matter evoke novelty.
In the unfurling and cooling early universe, elementary particles commence lasting associations. Quarks bond and in the merging become neutrons and protons. Protons and electrons bond and in uniting become vast clouds of ancestor atoms of hydrogen, fertile progenitors of all other atoms (save helium and lithium) in the universe. Every melding of matter births unanticipated forms and characteristics. Hydrogen and its elemental offspring combine to become components of diverse molecules. Families of molecules join to comprise living cells. Organizations of cells give rise to complex organisms.

The universe shapes and discovers itself through multivalent relationships.

### MARCH 2013

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*Above image: NASA, ESA and J. Hester*
Beginning thirteen billion years ago, ushered by transparent fields of beneficence, immense clouds of hydrogen collect and condense along seams of the fabric of the universe, forming the hundreds of billions of galaxies that paint the heavens.

The fields of beneficence comprise the songlines of the universe. Misnamed ‘dark matter,’ the fields are a uniting energy interconnecting in mycelium-like networks. Galaxies emerge along the filamentary pathways, each galaxy swaddled in a timeless field of beneficence. Without the sustaining supportive energy of these fields, the components of galaxies would disperse, and planets and life forms emanating from the activity of galaxies could not develop. Invisible (although rendered visible in the simulation above), the fields are known solely through their gravitational effects, and are ten times larger than the galaxies they permeate and cocoon.

Embraced by unconditional fields of beneficence, the drama of creation and destruction plays out amidst stars and planets and life.
The Milky Way: a nourishment of stars

Among billions of galaxies displayed along the songlines of the universe, only those galaxies revealing a pinwheel or whirlpool or spiral shape are nests for the continual gestation of stars. The majestic outstretched arms of pirouetting galaxies are presentations of invisible propagation waves. The waves sweep across the galactic plane, nudging clouds of hydrogen into active association, resulting in the cascading magnificence of a star. As the wave undulates, a glittering ribbon of stars is left in its wake.

Our Milky Way, with its three hundred billion stars, is a spiral galaxy. Our sun is the progeny of a swirling dance of creation.
**SUPERNNOVA EVENT: BIRTH OF THE PLANETARY SYSTEM**

A supernova is the seed burst of a perishing star. Light emitted during this outpouring can outshine an entire galaxy.

The dispersed offerings of a supernova are the chemical elements of iron, magnesium, carbon, oxygen and all the other elements that constitute the raw materials of our solar system. These precious substances are produced only in the alchemical furnace of a star.

Four and a half billion years ago our sun’s gravity captured these jewels, and with them made a necklace of planets.

Earth and all things on it, including humans, are fashioned from the creative brilliance of stars.

### JUNE 2013

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*Summer Solstice*
Earth’s Dark Night: Cauldron of Evolution

Within the habitable region of our solar system Earth endures a fierce dark night. For five hundred million years after its formation, Earth is a ferment of seething volcanism, churning oceans and roiling magma. Unlike Mercury, Venus and Mars, planets that settle into stony paralysis, or the gassy giants Jupiter and Saturn, or the icy twins Uranus and Neptune, Earth holds fast onto its kaleidoscopic dynamism.

Earth’s dark night is a tumultuous and pregnant brew, a cauldron of evolution, from whose stirring issues forth life, ecosystems and wondering humans.
Earth Awakens: emergence of life

Earth’s transformational physical and energetic dance of atmosphere, water and mineral rock becomes the template for the first tiny forms of life. Earth breathes into being single-celled bacteria.

Bacteria are Earth’s most essential, most widespread and most versatile form of life. Four billion years ago bacteria initiate metabolism, the chemical tapestry of life that is woven into the cells of all later life forms, including plants and animals. Playing primary roles in all of Earth’s ecosystems, bacteria shepherd Earth’s carbon, nitrogen and oxygen cycles. Bacteria are environmental chameleons, adapting to myriad habitats. They reside in the atmosphere, in deep ocean vents, and in rocks beneath Earth’s surface more than three miles deep. Our very bodies are composed of ten times more bacterial cells than human cells.

Bacteria permeate the planet, composing the living tissue of Earth.

AUGUST 2013

Above image © Guido Vrola
Earth Embraces the Sun: Effervescent Life

Earth forms an intimate relationship with the Sun.

Three billion years ago, Earth awakens to the magnanimity of the sun. Ocean dwelling cyanobacteria shape the chlorophyll molecule, the vital green pigment enabling a harvest of the sun’s energy. Infused with solar energy, cyanobacteria originate water-based photosynthesis, the transforming invention allowing life to produce its own food in abundance. Oxygen, the dangerous waste product of photosynthesis, is transmuted into an energy-producing resource, becoming an essential support for multicellular life in the sea. Cyanobacteria venture onto land one thousand million years ago, followed by fungi and plants four hundred million years later. These pioneers establish the foundations for ecosystems. A cornucopia of insects and other animals pour into niches, and flowering plants emerge with their marvel of dazzling colors, exquisite scents, and delicious fruits.

In resonance with the Sun, united and nourished, Earth’s life flourishes.

SEPTEMBER 2013

Autumnal Equinox

Above image © Abdulla Sivad
Mammals Proliferate: Heightening of Care

As Earth’s life develops, the quality of caring unfolds.

When most fish or amphibians lay their eggs and the eggs are fertilized, the female overlooks them briefly, and then swims away. The fate of the eggs is no longer of interest to her. Among reptiles there is increased regard for the young. Reptiles will nest their eggs and conscientiously guard the newborn. However, the extent of concern is severely limited. Should an alligator hatchling stray a distance from its mother and then return, it is regarded as prey and eaten. With the development of mammals and their proliferation sixty-five million years ago, there is a widening and deepening of care. Mammalian young are formed inside the mother’s body. After birth, the bond of caring may continue for years and even decades.

Whales, elephants, walruses, chimpanzees, wolves, among many others, display a deep affection toward their offspring.

Through the mammals, Earth’s life embodies the field of beneficence, experiencing the tenderness of love.
Earth Reawakens: Human Emergence

Two and a half million years ago a profusion of flowering plants cover the globe and huge migrations roam the continents. From a world of beauty and bounty the creative human emerges.

At the root of human creativity is a genetic suggestion prolonging into adulthood the stage of exploratory curiosity, called 'play,' found primarily in the very young of most animals. A relative freedom from fixed instinct allows an open engagement with the world and a 'play' of imagination. Cultural traditions form when language and symbols are imagined as means to share and store learned experiences. Agriculture arises as humans imagine a relationship with the sun providing sustenance. Conflict and compassion, confusion and clarity are heightened propensities of the human journey, even as we explore the world through our scientific endeavors and unveil a wondrous fourteen billion year heritage.

Arising from the human capacities of fascination and creativity, our universe becomes transparent to itself.
**A Universal Humanity**

*We are self-aware embodiments of the universe.*

Our universe flares forth out of the Great Radiance, brimming with innovation and sensitivity. Enshrouled in fields of beneficence, the creative ferment of the early universe is recapitulated in the furnaces of stars as they forge the chemical elements. In a further intertwining of matter and energy, Earth’s fiery dynamism bodies forth life in its myriad forms, including humans. Through the transformative impact humans are having on Earth’s atmosphere, oceans, rivers, land and life, we discover ourselves as a planetary power, embedded in Earth’s ecology and participating in Earth’s ongoing evolution. We are recognizing the significance of our place in the Great Journey: we are a species capable of comprehending the miracle of our existence within an unfolding universe, and of revering the majesty of life.

Imbued with such awareness and love, we flare forth as luminous minds and hearts of the cosmos.

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*Above image © Anna Bäküläni*
Each of our lives is a journey.
And each of our lives is a facet of the creative unfolding of the universe.
We are participants in a Great Journey.

The traverses of the Great Journey illumined in this calendar are:
January – Arousal of Mystery
February – The Great Radiance: Flaring Forth of the Universe
March – The Bonds of Relationship: Form Arises
April – Fields of Beneficence: Galaxies Emerge
May – The Milky Way: A Nourishment of Stars
June – Supernova Event: Birth of the Planetary System
July – Earth’s Dark Night: Cauldron of Evolution
August – Earth Awakens: Emergence of Life
September – Earth Embraces the Sun: Effervescent Life
October – Mammals Proliferate: Heightening of Care
November – Earth Reawakens: Human Emergence
December – A Universal Humanity

“Our cosmological journey is the sprawling interdisciplinary narrative of evolutionary events that brought our universe from its ultimate origin to its present state of astonishing diversity and organization. In the course of these epic events matter was distilled out of radiant energy, segregated into galaxies, collapsed into stars, fused into atoms, swirled into planets, spliced into molecules, captured into cells, mutated into species, compromised into ecosystems, provoked into thought, and cajoled into cultures....This epic of evolution is the biggest of all pictures, the narrative context for all our thinking about who we are, where we have come from, and how we should live.”

~ Loyal Rue, Everybody’s Story

“We have a new story of the Universe. Our own presence to the Universe depends on our human identity with the entire cosmic process. In its human expression, the Universe and the entire range of earthly and heavenly phenomena celebrate themselves and the ultimate mystery of their existence in a special exaltation....Science has given us a new revelatory experience.”

~ Thomas Berry, Dream of the Earth

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