

Reformers propose astronomical observation-based Easter date



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YOUR UNIVERSE

Various church denominations have suggested reforms for the Easter date.

In 1997, the World Council of Churches suggested direct astronomical observation to replace an equation-based method of calculating Easter. This would have solved the Easter date difference between churches that observe the Gregorian calendar and those that observe the Julian calendar.

The reform was supposed to go into effect in 2001, but it still hasn't happened 16 years later.

Another suggestion happened in the United Kingdom, where the *Easter Act 1928* was established to allow the Easter date to be fixed as the first Sunday after the second Saturday in April. However, this law was not implemented, although it is active on the *U.K. Statute Law Database*.

Technically, the observation method would be the correct one, but many can see the advantage of the calendar set one such as Christmas, New Year, etc.

Scripture does not give any comment about date setting, so Christians should not be divided on this. Many believe Christ was not born on Dec. 25 yet this day is universally accepted as the day to celebrate and plan accordingly.

Therefore, I vote and recommend the set calendar method. April 3, 33 A.D. is the universally accepted day of Good Friday, so April 5 would be resurrection Sunday commonly know as Easter.

Sky watch for the next month:

- Jupiter at Opposition — On Friday, April 7 Jupiter will shine at a magnitude of -2.46 with its four usual moons around.

- Midnight Moon and Saturn rise — On Sunday, April 16 look south east after midnight and watch them rise close together into the dawn.

- Lyrids Meteor Shower — also known as April shooting stars produced by dust particles left behind by comet C/1861 G1 Thatcher discovered in 1861 will peak before dawn Sunday morning April 23. Look east into the constellation of Lyra near Vega and you should be able to catch 10-20 meteors per hour on

average with rare surges of up to 100 with no moonlight.

- Morning Venus at its brightest — On Sunday, April 30 before sunrise, Venus will blaze at a magnitude of -4.52 which will seem almost blinding in a scope.

Public Events for the next month:

Monthly Stargazing at the Trek Center. Check out our stargazing event courtesy of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada (Calgary) starting at 7:30 p.m., Friday, April 14. Brief indoor presentation on "Easter and the Stars" followed special presentation by Vulcan Tourism then observing through our resident 11-inch Celestron telescope. All welcome, no charge and refreshments provided. Come early as

space fills up by show time. Experts will be on hand the second Friday monthly to explain the heavens, teach scoping skills and help you develop your knowledge of our sky. For further information, contact the Trek Center at 403-485-2994 or the websiste at: www.vulcantourism.com.

Happy Easter and hope for warmer days.

Neel Roberts is a member of the Calgary chapter of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada — the nation's leading astronomy club founded in 1849 with more than 5,000 members and 29 centres across Canada. Neel welcomes your questions and comments at 403-560-6574 or email Neel_Roberts@ptccanada.com. The members meet the second Friday monthly at the Trek Center at 7:30 p.m. and you find out about membership at <http://calgary.rasc.ca/vulcan2017.htm>.



Photos by Neel Roberts

Sally McMullen of Canada Post peeks through the 11-inch Celestron Scope. Representatives from the Ottawa headquarters made the trip to Vulcan and celebrated the occasion by scoping the sky.



The Spock Stamp released in 2016 was projected on the Trek Center wall and received much praise by attendees.