



## **March 2020 Highlight**

### **The Vernal Equinox – March 19<sup>th</sup>**

- ★ On **Thursday, March 19<sup>th</sup>**, at 11:50 p.m. EDT, the Sun begins its journey north of the celestial equator, bringing spring to the northern hemisphere and autumn to the southern hemisphere. The first full day of spring will be Mar. 20<sup>th</sup>.
- ★ Because this is a leap year with an extra day in February, the Spring Equinox occurs one day earlier on the March calendar.
- ★ This event is called the “**vernal**” equinox in the northern hemisphere, when plants are beginning to “**green**”.
- ★ On this day, all places on Earth experience nearly equal amounts of daylight and darkness – about 12 hours of each. “**Equinox**” literally means “**equal night**”.
- ★ For all places on Earth at the equinox, the Sun rises due east and sets due west.



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Montage of Summer Solstice, Equinox and Winter Solstice sunrises from a small Greek town showing the seasonal motion of the Sun.



**Note: only on the Equinoxes does the Sun rise due East and set due West!**