

## Carol Festival brings Christmas cheer



The Debruijn family (from left, Burke, Raef, Richard, Sue, and Winston) performed a pair of tunes.

By JORDAN TWISS

Shellbrook Chronicle Reporter

The Shellbrook and Districts Arts Council delivered all the hallmark sounds of the season on Sunday, Dec. 7, when it rang in Christmas with its annual Carol Festival at the Shellbrook Theatre.

The Carol Festival is one of the longest-standing traditions in the community, routinely packing the festively decorated Shellbrook Theatre with an always-appreciative audience. This year carried on that tradition, as a capacity crowd filled up the seats and stood at the back of the theatre to enjoy the show, which began with a piano prelude by Terry Martin.

MCed by Karen Beauchesne (and her ever-changing, but always sparkly wardrobe) this year's Carol Festival program also boasted the same level of local talent the audience has come to expect, with more than a dozen official numbers and some last-minute additions to the program providing more than two hours of low-cost, holiday season entertainment and joy.

Almost as much of a tradition as the Carol Festival itself, Sunday evening's show opened with a performance from Kerri English's students, who played fiddle, guitar, and cello to "O Come All Ye Faithful" and "Deck the Halls."

Adding a new artistic element to the show, Studio 747 dancers Kyra Parsons and Hayley Van Hereweghe graced the

stage, with Parsons performing a ballet solo and Van Hereweghe performing a lyrical solo.

The dramatic arts were next to be represented, as Myron Wall presented a humorous rendition of "Twas the Night Before Christmas."

From here, the Carol Festival brought music from some familiar faces, including the Debruijn family (Richard, Sue, Winston, Raef, and Burke) with "Carol of the Bells" and "Silent Night/Night of Silence," The homegrown harmonies of the Helm Trio (Debbie Helm, Pam Boettcher, and Kim Zawislak) with "Little One" and "Sleep Little Baby," singer songwriter Cyndi Aarestad with a pair of recently penned originals, and the

Watsonaires (Saskatchewan's oldest all-female choral group) with "Five Favourite Holiday Songs," "Star Led Wonder Bound," and "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen."

All this led into the intermission and a community sing-along to "Hark the Herald Angels Sing" and "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer."

Following a brief intermission, Kerri English returned to the stage as conductor for the Prince Albert Strings Orchestra, which played "Christmas Stars," "The Yuletide Rag," and "Christmas Time is Here," then a surprise performance of "Blue Christmas" by Elvis himself earned cheers from the crowd.

*Continued on page 2*



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# Carol Festival brings Christmas cheer

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Up next, a group of performers (Kristen, Michelle, Juliana, Debi, Leah Naber, and Jessica Crowl) performed “Away in a Manger” and “Silent Night,” and Myron Wall returned to the stage to share a Christmas gift idea for seniors.

The show closed with Lydia and Madison Graham performing their take on “All I want for Christmas is You” and “The First Noel,” with accompaniment from Kerralynn Bloom, before Lydia and Kerralynn performed “Hey Moon” together.

Then, not quite ready to send the audience on its way just yet, Karen Beauchesne returned to the stage one last time to perform a couple numbers and lead into the traditional community sing-along of “We Wish You a Merry Christmas.”

Planning for the Carol Festival typically begins in September, with calls to past performers and then call backs closer to

the show date. This can be a challenge in itself, as it’s important to keep the show fresh and surprising year after year, meaning performers and songs can’t be repeated too often.

Once the Arts Council has its line-up reasonably solidified, including the accompaniment for performers, programs need to be printed and volunteers need to be gathered to work sound, lights, and the stage for the show, and to help decorate the theatre with its twin Christmas trees and other décor.

All this work pays dividends for the Arts Council, both in terms of the joy it brings, and in the funds it raises for the Arts Council to support the arts in the community. This includes annual donations to allow Shellbrook Elementary School to attend the E.A Rawlinson’s annual December production (Matilda) and donations to W.P. Sandin High School’s arts programs.



Kerri English’s students opened the Carol Festival with two familiar Christmas tunes.



Elvis made a surprise appearance to sing his classic, “Blue Christmas.”



The Helm Trio (from left, Pam Boettcher, Kim Zawislak, and Debbie Helm) showcased tight family harmonies.



Hayley Van Hereweghe brought dance to the Carol Festival with a lyrical solo.



Lydia and Madison Graham put their own twist on “All I Want for Christmas is You.”



Myron Wall offers a humorous rendition of “’Twas the Night Before Christmas.”

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# Christmas spirit comes alive in Spiritwood

By **BEVRA FEE**  
*Spiritwood Herald*  
Reporter

The return of an old classic event in Spiritwood provided a draw that saw the streets lined with families to await the Parade of Lights on Saturday, Dec. 6. Floats decorated with lights and illuminated Christmas decorations of every manner rolled up to the wolf monument to await the leadership of the RCMP vehicle, and then proceeded down Main Street twice to brighten up the town’s atmosphere.

Tractors, horse-drawn wagons and even the RM grader were ablaze with colour on the frigid evening, but the warmth generated by the enthusiastic crowd

spilled over into the Town Square where fire pits and hot chocolate rewarded the hardy revellers.

Santa and the Grinch attended the parade before settling in at the Town Square to hear requests from mesmerized children. Parents and grandparents were able to take pictures of their tots with the two traditional Christmas icons, and the hot chocolate provided an extra treat and more photo opportunities.

Visiting around the fires was jovial — although not prolonged due to the crisp weather — and Experience Spiritwood (Northern Lakes Economic Development Corp.) called the cheery event another successful activity.



Santa and the Grinch made many kids happy after the Parade of Lights.



Families gathered around fires at Town Square to warm up while waiting for Santa.



Bedrock Sand & Gravel and RQD Contracting teamed up with a Grinch-inspired truck.

## Vaadeland, Shantaia win big at SCMAs

By **JORDAN TWISS**  
*Shellbrook Chronicle*  
Reporter

It’s been a big year filled with many firsts for Jake Vaadeland and the Sturgeon River Boys (Jaxon Lalonde, Joel Rohs, and Jake Smithies).

The young group, with an old-time sound rooted in the Big River area

where Vaadeland grew up, made its first big splash on the national stage by winning its first Juno Award for Traditional Roots Album of the Year for their 2024 album *Retro Man... More and More* in March, and the band was also named a finalist in SiriusXM’s Top of the Country competition.

This served as the perfect springboard for Vaadeland and the Sturgeon River Boys to release their latest musical offering, *One More Dollar To Go*, which went on to earn the band its first Canadian Country Music Award for Alternative Country Album of the Year in September.

And Vaadeland and the Sturgeon River Boys kept their momentum going all the way into the Saskatchewan Country Music Association’s (SCMA) awards gala on Nov. 30, where they were nominated for nine awards.

touring to attend, the band made out well on the evening, adding six awards to its ever-expanding trophy case, including Male Artist of the Year for Vaadeland, Alternative Country Album of the Year, Interactive Artist of the Year, Record Producer of the Year, Fan’s Choice, and National/International Artist.

SCMA Awards night was also a big one for Spiritwood’s Shantaia, who took home the awards for Female Artist of the Year and Single of the Year (“What I Wouldn’t Do”).



Jake Vaadeland (middle left) and the Sturgeon River Boys (Joel Rohs, Jake Smithies, and Jaxon Lalonde) at the CCMAs.

Photo Credit: Facebook/Jake Vaadeland

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## Sask Party's change still hard to spot

The fall sitting of the Legislature came to a close last Friday, effectively marking the end of the first year of the Sask Party government's renewed four-year mandate from the people of Saskatchewan.

At the risk of flogging a dead horse, let's revisit what Premier Moe promised when his government was given its mandate.

"When you look at the results tonight, there are many people who voted for the Sask Party in the past but chose not to in this election. We have lost your support, whether it be due to our management of healthcare, or education, or the cost-of-living pressures we're all feeling," he said on election night.

"All of us in government, and it starts with myself, are going to take a bit of time and reflect on the message that was sent here this evening and what exactly it means. And we will strive to win back your support."

Reflection. Accountability. Change. These are lofty promises from governments, which, in general, tend to be resistant to change.

But, with Mr. Moe's promise in mind, let's take stock of how his government fared over the past year.

To be certain, there was some change from Mr. Moe himself, most notably in his tone when it came to dealing with the federal government.

At times, during the nine-year reign of former Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, it felt like Mr. Moe was both the premier of Saskatchewan and the leader of Mr. Trudeau's official opposition.

While Mr. Trudeau was in office, scarcely a week went by without Mr. Moe having an opinion on something his government did.

Sometimes, his opposition to Mr. Trudeau was justified, and sometimes it was clearly rooted in nothing more than partisan politics. Either way, it was always clear where he stood on federal policies that impacted Saskatchewan.



JORDAN  
TWISS

~  
News Editor

But then, voters in the United States re-elected Donald Trump, who began threatening Canada's economy and sovereignty, and Mr. Trudeau tendered his long overdue resignation.

At last, Mr. Moe and Ottawa had a common adversary to focus their joint efforts on. And by the time Mark Carney was selected as Mr. Trudeau's replacement and won his first election, Mr. Moe had gone from leader of the unofficial

opposition to hopeful optimist about the prospects of working with the federal government.

Perhaps this tonal shift was due exclusively to Mr. Carney's policy shifts, starting with the immediate elimination of the consumer carbon tax. Either way, it's meant we've heard far less from Mr. Moe in recent months, leaving Ontario Premier Doug Ford, Alberta Premier Danielle Smith, and, over the last few weeks, B.C. Premier David Eby, as the country's most vocal provincial leaders.

This, however, is where the changes from Mr. Moe's government began and ended.

This past spring, the Sask Party government continued to do pretty much nothing to address the concerns of the voters it lost due to its "management of healthcare, or education, or the cost-of-living pressures we're all feeling," tabling a bogus budget with a supposed \$12.2 million surplus that included nothing to account for Mr. Trump's tariffs.

What's more, as the Sask Party government boasted about increased funding for healthcare and education, its own documents showed it had budgeted less than it spent in the prior fiscal year.

As 2025 wore on, it was mostly status quo in Saskatchewan.

People continued to grapple with affordability challenges.

Schools continued to struggle to meet the increasingly complex needs of their growing student bodies.



Residents of northern communities were forced out of their homes and, in some cases, watched them burn to the ground during wildfire season, and were left without supports or guidance.

Hospitals across the province continued to lack frontline healthcare workers, resulting in more service disruptions (though, the government did introduce a new system to better notify people about closures).

Through all of this, the Sask Party government did everything in its power to resist reflecting on or taking accountability for its actions.

On the wildfire issue alone, the Sask Party government voted against a public inquiry into the Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency's response to the crisis, as well as an investigation into reports it spent twice what it should have for four new firefighting aircraft (at a cost of an extra \$100 million to taxpayers).

And in the waning days of the fall sitting of the Legislature, it also gave no indication it would support a bill to establish a new provincial wildfire strategy.

Also the same throughout the last year is the Sask Party government's inability to responsibly manage the province's finances.

Critics knew the government's projected \$12.2 million surplus was

the stuff of pure fantasy. As such, it wasn't all that surprising when the Sask Party government's mid-year report showed that its \$12.2 million surplus had transformed into a \$427 million deficit (the same thing happened in 2024-2025, with a \$273 million deficit ballooning to \$743 million).

And just last week, the Sask Party government was facing yet more questions about its financial mismanagement, after announcing an additional \$813 million in required spending for SaskPower.

Crown Investments Minister Jeremy Harrison couldn't be bothered to show up to a government committee meeting to justify the unexpected expenditure.

Eventually, he did provide an explanation to the media, saying the extra money would go to covering the expense of not collecting the industrial carbon tax from SaskPower customers, the cost of refurbishing and bringing coal-fired power plants back online, and expanding the province's power transmission system.

Premier Moe promised the people of Saskatchewan that his government was listening and reflecting to better serve them.

If this is what a year of listening brings, perhaps the Sask Party needs to have its ears checked.

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Publications Mail Registration #07621

Published Every Thursday Morning

P.O. Box 10, Shellbrook, Sask. S0J 2E0  
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Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.;

Advertising Deadline: Fridays at 4:00 p.m.

Websites: www.shellbrookchronicle.com

www.spiritwoodherald.com

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# Freeman wins national insurance broker award

By **JORDAN TWISS**  
*Shellbrook Chronicle Reporter*

Shell Lake’s Rose Freeman didn’t exactly plan on having a career in insurance. But 13 years after she entered the business, the small-town broker is making big waves in the industry and has no intention of going anywhere.

Before beginning in the insurance business, Freeman was working for a credit union in Alberta and in the midst of completing a mentorship program to become director of enterprises management. When getting the position meant relocating to Edmonton, Freeman paused, took stock, and asked herself what she would do and where she would go if she had all the money in the world.

The answer, she says, was obvious: she’d return to Shell Lake, where she grew up.

“I was told I’d never do anything career-wise if I moved out to rural Saskatchewan,” she recalled of her decision to turn down the job and return home. “And I didn’t have any job prospects at the time.”

Upon returning to Shell Lake, Freeman interviewed at an insurance brokerage in a neighbouring community and found she was interested in the work, even if she didn’t love having to drive every day. At a

suggestion from her father, she approached the owner of the insurance brokerage in Shell Lake, and learned that he was looking to retire.

That was in January of 2012. And a year later, Freeman had completed the four courses required to obtain her Canadian Accredited Insurance Broker designation and purchased the brokerage, renaming it Willow Insurance.

Then, at the start of 2017, Freeman expanded Willow Insurance to Deb-



**Shell Lake’s Rose Freeman is the Insurance Broker of the Year award winner for the prairies and maritime provinces.**

den.

“I got to the end of the first [course], and I had no clue how insurance works. It’s poorly explained,” Freeman said.

“So that’s been the basis for our business approach. We’re an education-based brokerage. It makes it easier to sit on this side of the desk when you remember sitting on the other side of the desk.”

Calling insurance an industry people “get into by accident but end up staying in for a long time,” Freeman says she loves the people side of the business, and the problem solving involved in finding the right insurance solution for each customer.

With the industry constantly evolving and becoming more complex, Freeman says quick 5 to 10 minute drop-ins are no longer enough to educate clients on their options. That’s why Willow Insurance has transitioned to an appointment-only model, carving out more time to find the best plan for each client.

In her experience, the best insurance policy isn’t the cheapest one, or one chosen from a handful of prepackaged options. Rather, it’s the policy that “fits your budget and helps you sleep at night.”

“You should empower people,” she said.

“An insurance claim is a traumat-

ic life event. It’s not just a financial setback, but a personal setback. You have to help people navigate on their worst day, and it can be very scary.”

This people-centred approach has been a successful business model for Willow Insurance. It’s also garnered Freeman attention and accolades from her peers in the industry at the national level.

In March, she was named one of the Elite Women in the insurance industry, and in October she made the list of Canada’s top 20 insurance brokers.

Capping off a year of accolades, Freeman traveled to Toronto in November for the 2025 Insurance Business Canada Awards gala, where she learned she’d been named Insurance Broker of the Year for the region that includes the prairies and the maritime provinces.

The award also earned her one of three nominations for the SPG Canada Award for Canadian Insurance Broker of the Year Award.

“It’s an incredible honour. Rural Saskatchewan is often written off that there is no potential out here,” Freeman said.

“But insurance is a great industry. I don’t know that I could have found this level of success in any other professional career and still lived in Shell Lake.”

## BRANDED CONTENT

### Safer workplaces support a stronger Saskatchewan

#### Putting WorkSafe Saskatchewan’s fatalities and serious injuries strategy to work

Saskatchewan is proving that a culture of safety works. Thanks to the shared commitment of workers, employers, safety associations, labour and government, workplaces in the province are safer than ever.

That shared dedication to workplace safety is showing real results. In 2024, the Saskatchewan Workers’ Compensation Board (WCB) recorded the province’s lowest ever Total injury rate of 3.91 per 100 workers and its lowest Time Loss injury rate at 1.72 per 100 workers. For the fifth year in a row, 90 per cent of Saskatchewan workplaces reported zero injuries and zero fatalities. These milestones demonstrate that safety is becoming a deeply ingrained value across many of our province’s industries.

**More work to do**

But while progress has been made, the work isn’t finished. In 2024, 27 Saskatchewan workers lost their lives to work-related incidents or illnesses. Every year, as many as 2,400 workers suffer serious injuries. Behind each of those numbers are workers, families, workplaces and communities forever changed.

“Even one injury is too many,” said Gord Dobrowolsky, WCB chair. “This new historic low in our Total injury rate represents the focus and hard work of so many people across the province. But we cannot be satisfied until every worker returns home safely.”

**The strategy for change**

To accelerate progress, WorkSafe Saskatchewan, the injury

prevention partnership between the WCB and the Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety, launched the 2023-2028 Fatalities and Serious Injuries Strategy.

It builds on the province’s first strategy introduced in 2019, which focuses on high-risk industries and the injuries that caused the greatest harm. That inaugural three-year plan focused on four critical hazards: asbestos exposure, work-related motor vehicle collisions, firefighter cancer exposure and falls from heights. It targeted the industries where injuries were most prevalent – health care, transportation, first responders, construction and manufacturing.

The latest strategy, introduced in 2023, sharpened its focus on three high-risk sectors: health care, transportation and construction. Together, these industries account for a majority of serious injuries that occur in Saskatchewan workplaces. The 2023-2028 strategy introduced two streams of work:

- Regulatory and enforcement: Strengthening rules and ensuring compliance.
- Prevention and learning: Providing training, education and resources to foster safety culture.

“Everybody has a responsibility when it comes to workplace safety,” said Phillip Germain, WCB’s CEO. “Coming home safely at the end of the day is a right of every worker in the province.”

**Early results**

Provincial injury rates continue to move downward, reaching historic lows in 2024. The 2023-2028 strategy has spurred collaboration between industry leaders, safety associations and government agencies to share knowledge and strengthen prevention efforts.

“The efforts of many are playing an important role in helping us prevent injuries and fatalities,” said WCB CEO Phillip Germain. “While safe workplaces are good for business, the

most important part of every job is for each worker to come home safely.”

**Why it matters**

Serious injuries account for approximately 11 to 15 per cent of all claims in Saskatchewan, but they represent more than 80 per cent of the compensation system’s costs. They also have lasting impacts on workers’ health and well-being, families’ and communities’ stability and employers’ productivity.

By targeting the industries and hazards where the risks are highest, the fatalities and serious injuries strategy tackles the root causes of harm. This not only saves lives but supports a stronger Saskatchewan.

**Looking ahead**

As the strategy continues, the call is clear: safety and prevention are everyone’s business. The WCB and WorkSafe Saskatchewan are urging workers, employers and industry partners to:

- Prioritize safety leadership on every job site.
- Support education and training that empowers workers to recognize and address safety hazards.
- Collaborate across industries to share best practices and address complex safety issues in the workplace.

“We are committed to supporting workers and employers to create safer workplaces in our province,” said Germain. “Continued collaboration is the key to building on these historic gains.”

**Learn more**

Copies of the 2023-2028 Fatalities and Serious Injuries Strategy and its latest updates are available at [worksafesask.ca/fatalities-and-serious-injuries](https://worksafesask.ca/fatalities-and-serious-injuries).



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# Parkside celebrates the meaning of Christmas

By **JORDAN TWISS**  
*Shellbrook Chronicle*  
Reporter

A last-minute indoor pivot due to bitterly cold weather couldn't dampen the Christmas spirit in Parkside on Saturday, Dec. 6, when the community was invited into the Parkside Heritage Centre to take A Journey Under the Stars and learn the reason for the season.

The dramatic retelling of the Nativity story, complete with live actors in costume, was introduced to the community in 2021 by the efforts of Natalie and Steven Jonasson, and typically sees guests guided around the village to take in scenes from the story.

But a week out from the event, with the fore-

cast calling for temperatures in the -30s, a decision had to be made: cancel or improvise.

"No wasn't really an option," said Lyndon Petten, who helped organize the evening alongside Natalie, Steven, and many others, and served as the event's MC. "We didn't feel right about cancelling the whole thing, because so much work and prep had gone into it."

With some brainstorming, plans were made to move the event to the Parkside Heritage Centre. And, despite the bitter cold, more than 200 people stopped in to take in the story.

All in all, Petten says the organizers did the best they could and it was a great night.

"It's so good to see the

vitality [of the community]," he said. "To shine a little light and bring people together under the common cause of Christmas and the birth of Christ, that's why we do it."

A Journey Under the Stars shone a light in more ways the one, by serving as an opportunity to give back to the community. A chilli dinner, held in conjunction with the retelling, saw 250 bowls served to hungry guests, helped to raise funds for Jasey Petten, who's going to Mexico for a stem cell transplant.

"It was amazing to see the community support come out."

Other attractions on the evening included live music from the Quist family and Jaden Schutte, both local tal-

ents from the Canwood Pentecostal Church, sleigh rides around the village, and, new to this year, a market for vendors to display and sell their wares.

Though some vendors cancelled at the last minute, Petten says it was a great addition to the event and will hopefully be bigger and bet-

ter next year.

"It's a great way for some people come out to make a little extra money over Christmas but to also bless other people," he said. "There were some great gifts downstairs."

For Petten, nights like A Journey Under the Stars are important because they bring the

community together. That's why organizers are already looking forward to next year.

"When we were cleaning up [on Sunday] we were already talking about plans for next year of how we can do it and make it better," he said. "We're just excited to serve the community."



Mary says a prayer after learning she's pregnant in a scene from the Nativity story.



Jasmine Allen was one of a handful of vendors at the Christmas Market, selling her homemade baked goods.



Joseph reflects on Mary's surprise pregnancy, while receiving an unexpected visit from an angel (and another guest).

## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

**SPIRITWOOD:** Wapiti Regional Library - Tuesday 10am - 5pm; Wednesday 10am - 5pm; Thursday 1pm to 5pm; Friday 10am - 5pm

**LEOVILLE:** Wapiti Regional Library - Wednesday 10am - 4pm; Thursday 10am - 4pm

**SHELL LAKE:** Wapiti Regional Library - Tuesday 11am - 4pm; Wednesday 12 pm - 5 pm

**BLAINE LAKE:** Wapiti Library - Wednesday 1pm - 6pm; Thursday 1pm - 6pm; Friday 1pm - 6pm; Saturday 10am - 3pm. Contact us for more info 306-497-3130, www.wapitilibrary.ca.

**BIG RIVER:** Wapiti Library - Tuesday 11:30am - 4:30pm; Wednesday 11:30am - 4:30pm; Thursday 11:30am - 4:30pm. Phone # 306-469-2152

**CANWOOD:** Canwood Branch of Wapiti Regional Library Hours: Tuesday 9:30am - 4pm; Wednesday 10:30am - 5pm; Phone: 306-468-2501

**DEBDEN:** Wapiti Library hours: Tuesday 10am - 4pm; Wednesday 12pm - 6pm. Librarian: Aline Hannon

**LEASK:** Wapiti Library & Legacy Gallery Hours - Tuesday 9am - 2pm; Wednesday 2pm - 8pm; Friday 9am - 12pm

**MARCELIN:** Wapiti Library - Saturday 10am - 2pm; Thursday 2pm - 8pm. For information on all your library needs, please contact 306-226-2110.

**SHELLBROOK:** Shellbrook Branch of the Wapiti Library located at 105 Railway Ave., West (Provincial building). Library Hours: Monday 2pm - 6pm; Tuesday 2pm - 8pm; Wednesday 2pm - 8pm; Thursday 12pm - 6pm; Friday 10 am - 5pm (Story Time 10:30am - 11:30am); Saturday 10am - 4pm.

**BIG RIVER:** Alcoholics Anonymous Meeting – Every Wednesday, 7:30 pm @ Train Station in Big River (Railway Avenue)

**SHELLBROOK:** Kinette Club of Shellbrook presents Small Business Christmas Party – Friday, December 12, Shellbrook Community Hall. 5pm Cocktails; 6:30pm Christmas Supper; 8pm Comedian Darryl "Junior" Koszman & friends with dance to follow. Tickets: \$50 ea. or \$350/table of 8. \$10 entry fee for dance entrance after 10pm. Limited tickets available. For tickets contact shellbrook\_kinettes@hotmail.com or Shellbrook Kinettes facebook page. All proceeds to Shellbrook Community Hall improvements.

**SPIRITWOOD:** Witchehan Wildlife Federation Horn Scoring – Sunday, December 14, 2pm @ Ag Barn in Spiritwood.

**SHELLBROOK:** You are invited to Skate Shellbrook's Christmas Ice Show – Friday, December 19, 6:30 to 7:30 pm @ Richardson Pioneer Rec Centre (125 Main St, Shellbrook). Silver Collection at door. Raffle prizes available.

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## Pyrolysis could provide farm waste solution

It is easy to sit in awe of the constant advancements being made by science and technology.

At times the steps are so large, dynamic, and paradigm shifting, it is almost scary — perhaps only because of the backlash of the few (vocal as they may be) who fear science.

But without science we'd be back in the Dark Ages, and we most definitely need to look boldly to the future, not regress.

So when I saw a recent producer.com article about the installation of

a pyrolysis system on a Regina area farm I was intrigued.

The idea is that the unit will turn crop waste into biochar.

Biochar — and I admit I had to read the article to know what it is — is a product which enhances soil and sequesters carbon.

Now pyrolysis in itself new.

Pyrolysis involves baking, not burning of waste materials — in this case, targeting field waste such as flax straw. The materials are broken down into a gas, a liquid, and a solid

char.

The process is intriguing because of its versatility. Sources include poultry litter, cattle manure, crop waste and municipal solid wastes. The latter is interesting, as ever-changing environmental regulations



CALVIN DANIELS

make it increasingly costly for municipal landfills to expand to deal with waste.

The char ends up back in the field as a soil additive.

Certainly, in the case of feedlot waste, using field material not easily re-incorporated in the soil — in particular flax straw, and municipal waste — is an effective way to essentially recycle worthwhile product is a hugely positive thing.

Of course there is the issue of logistics, which is something that is constantly a stumbling

block on the rural prairies. Whether it is the need to maintain more hospitals than the overall population warrants, maintaining all the miles of asphalt, or in this case gathering raw materials for pyrolysis, the vast size of the prairies adds to costs.

Regina may not seem so far away, but hauling waste from a Yorkton landfill or an Estevan-area flax field might not make financial sense.

It was an issue when a flax fibre plant was located south of Canora, and a marketing hurdle

of a pea chip plant once located at Kelvington.

Having products coming from or going to a plant on trucks adds to costs. And, while one answer might lie in establishing a number of smaller pyrolysis units, this model would be less efficient.

Still, the pyrolysis process is another tech advancement — one that deals with waste and offers a positive soil additive. It is another example of why we need science, because it creates better options for our collective future.

## Sask. NDP introduces wildfire strategy bill

By SASK NDP  
Submitted

The Saskatchewan NDP has introduced new legislation to ensure the provincial government finally develops a comprehensive, province-wide strategy to fight wildfires after a disastrous season that saw entire northern communities burn to the ground.

"This was a horrific summer for so many people in Northern Saskatchewan — I want them to know we've heard their calls for change," said Carla Beck, Leader of the Saskatchewan NDP. "We have a responsibility to make sure what happened this summer never happens again. The provincial government can never be caught flat-footed like this again."

Bill 609, The Saskatchewan Wildfire Strategy Act, would require the Ministry of Public Safety to create and regularly update a provincial wildfire management strategy, maintain ongoing consultation with experts and Indigenous and community partners, and provide clear, transparent public reporting.

"The people of the North are tired of being ignored by this 18-year-old government," said Athabasca MLA

Leroy Laliberte. "Every community deserves a safe, secure future in this great province."

Out of pure frustration, Trevor Sewap quit as the Fire Base Supervisor for Pelican Narrows as fire raced into Denare Beach. He welcomes legislation that would require better wildfire management training.

"The government wanted to run from the fire and they left behind only people with only their running shoes and no proper equipment to try to save the community," Sewap said. "No one listened to me or anyone else with experience. That can't happen again — I've been fighting fires since before many of the people calling the shots were born."

Parts of the Sask. Party's chaotic and ineffective wildfire response are currently under investigation by the Provincial Ombudsman and by two separate investigations from the Provincial Auditor. Community firefighters and residents of Denare Beach continue to call for a full public inquiry into the government's response.

The Sask. Party government refused federal military assistance at the peak of the wildfires and allegedly overspent \$100 million on waterbombers

that never saw action.

"Just weeks before fire season, Moe's minister looked me in the eye and promised the government was fully prepared," said Cumberland MLA and Northern Affairs Shadow Minister Jordan McPhail. "The word of a Sask. Party minister simply isn't enough anymore. We need a law on the books that forces real preparation."

Kari Lentowicz has an extensive background in disaster and emergency management. Her home burned in Denare Beach.

"We need to involve the local people and realize that their years of experience in their environment has significant value. Their lived experience and knowledge of the land needs to be integrated into preparedness planning and leveraged during response," Len-

towicz said.

"We don't want anyone else to lose their homes or two-thirds of their community because the government failed to consult the very people they were supposed to serve and protect. Many of us were there and were ignored — utilizing local knowledge, listening to those outside the Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency with years of wildfire experience, and acknowledging help outside the existing SPSA was necessary and would have prevented a disaster of this scale."

"There is also the need for accountability for everything that was lost."

The Saskatchewan NDP also continues to join countless voices from the North in advocating for a truly independent public inquiry into the wildfire disaster.

Shellbrook Chronicle  
& Spiritwood Herald

Office will be closed from

**December 23/25**

through

**January 1/26**

Regular office hours will  
resume January 2, 2026

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**is Fri., Dec. 19/25**

for December 25<sup>th</sup> edition.

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# Young superstars belong on Olympic team

In hockey-mad Canada, fans spend their time watching hockey, thinking about hockey, talking about hockey and mentally planning Canada's roster for the 2026 Olympic Games in Italy.

Only a couple of weeks remain before the Dec. 31 deadline for Hockey Canada to submit its roster and while a number of players' names are automatic, a couple of others are subject to quite the controversy.

Such as: Should Connor Bedard and Macklin Celebrini be part of Canada's team that tries to win another gold medal for the No. 1 hockey country in the world? A 3-0 victory over Sweden in the 2014 gold-medal game was the last time Canada's team was comprised of National Hockey League players.

A disagreement between the NHL Players' Association, the International Olympic Committee and the International Ice Hockey Federation kept NHL players out of the 2018 Winter Olympics and



BRUCE  
PENTON

~

the COVID-19 pandemic was responsible for their absence in 2022.

Now the NHL is back, offering Olympic Games fans the absolute cream of the world's hockey crop ... or is it? If Bedard, 20, and Celebrini, 19, are not on Canada's team, are fans truly being treated to best-on-best?

Arguments against including Bedard and Celebrini include the value of experience in international hockey. Okay, if experience is that vital, why not get over that hump in '26 so when the 2030 games come around, they'll have already conquered that intangible.

At last look, Celebrini

was second in the NHL scoring race, trailing only Nathan MacKinnon, while Bedard was fourth.

Both have led their respective teams to NHL relevance after years of hanging around the bottom of the standings.

Both are clearly among the top 14 forwards in the NHL; the only drawbacks are their age.

It's hard to argue that a lack of international experience should be a factor in keeping them off the team when in their immediate pre-NHL years, they've dominated Canadian U-17 and World Junior teams in international play.

If Canada gets solid goaltending, as Jordan Binnington provided in last winter's 4 Nations Cup, it has enough firepower up front and on defence to allow for the inclusion of Bedard and Celebrini and win gold.

Perhaps Anthony Cirelli and Mark Stone can offer better defensive play but they can't come close to generat-

ing offence like Bedard and Celebrini.

If Tampa Bay's Brayden Point is a projected member of the Olympic team due to his offensive prowess, how can Canada's hockey hierarchy justify the fact that at the end of November, Point had played in 21 of Tampa's 25 games but stood 222nd in the NHL scoring race with 11 points? Perhaps Tampa coach Jon Cooper, one of the Team Canada bosses, is exerting too much influence on Canada's roster.

Dump Point. Dump Cirelli. Add the two young superstars and fill the net in Italy.

Remember, the best defence is a good offence and if Bedard and Celebrini are currently filling NHL nets surrounded by a plethora of ordinary players, how good could they be surrounded by fellow superstars?

Comedy guy Torben Rolfsen of Vancouver: "Blue Jays' Vladimir Guerrero, Jr., won MLB's first entertainer of the year award, beating out Taylor Swift and

the San Diego Chicken."

In a Steve Rushin si.com story on ballpark food, Joey Votto, responding to a fan who heckled that 'I remember when you used to be good': "I remember when you used to be thin."

Scott Matia, on Bluesky: "Connor McDavid took less money and all he got in return was Trent Frederic and a kick square in the (unmentionables)."

Torben Rolfsen again: "Saskatchewan Roughriders players say they've got the greatest fans in pro sports. One of them said he got recognized in Walmart. Uh, dude, that's their job. They're called people greeters."

Rolfsen once more: "The NFL had another spitting incident last week. C'mon guys, stop it. Maybe we can have a punt, pass and spit competition."

Norman Chad, on 'Gambling Mad': "Drake Maye could be the latter day Tom Brady, without the supermodel wife, special diet and deflated footballs."

RJ Currie of sports-deke.com: "Three

things I'm thankful for on American Thanksgiving: 3. I am not a Tennessee Titans fan; 2. I am not a Toronto Maple Leafs fan; 1. I am not a turkey."

Steve Simmons of the Toronto Sun: "A former Olympic coach on deciding who your third goalie is: 'If you need your third goalie at the Olympics, you're already in trouble.'"

Headline at fark.com: "Once again the NY Giants defence snaps a loss from the jaws of victory. Meanwhile, fans wonder if they can get an interim head coach to replace the current interim head coach."

A golden oldie from Mets' manager Casey Stengel, during an early-1960s mound visit with pitcher Roger Craig, with Giants slugger Willie McCovey about to bat: "Where do you want to pitch him, upper deck or lower deck?"

Care to comment? Email brucepenton2003@yahoo.ca

## U18 Elks pick up second win

By JORDAN TWISS  
Shellbrook Chronicle Reporter

The U18 AA Parkland Elks had a full weekend lineup of hockey, hosing the Saskatoon Sabercats at the Richardson Pioneer Recreation on Saturday night, before traveling to North Battleford to face the North West Stars on Sunday afternoon.

Through two low-scoring affairs, the Elks fought their way to their second win of the season, but followed it up with a tough loss.

### Elks (2) vs Cats (1)

Though the Elks jumped out to an early lead against the Sabercats on Saturday night, thanks to a goal from Aiden Tait, assisted by Brady Hujber, this quick first goal wasn't a harbinger of a flood of scoring.

Instead, more than 20 minutes passed before the next goal came in the second period — this time from

the Sabercats' Gavin Clements, assisted by Caleb Buck.

With the game tied at 1-1, and goals seemingly hard to come by, it seemed like whoever scored next would end up being the winner. Then, the rest of the second period passed without either team scoring, and the third period also passed without a goal, sending the game into overtime.

In the shortened five-minute period, the Elks managed to eke out the win on a late goal from Davin Hart, assisted by Cohen Ball.

### Elks (2) vs Stars (3)

With less than 24 hours of rest, the Elks traveled to meet the North West Stars on Sunday afternoon and showed no fatigue as they jumped out to a 1-0 lead on a goal from Davin Hart, assisted by Lyndon Soonias, late in the first period.

The one goal lead would hold for the remainder of the period, then become a two goal lead midway through the second period when Hart struck again on an assist from Brady Hujber.

The Elks' fortunes quickly swung the other way, however, as back-to-back penalties resulted in back-to-back goals for the Stars

As the action moved to the third period, the Stars capitalized on another Elks penalty to go up 3-2, and controlled the pace of the period to hold on for the win.

The Elks now sit at 2-11-0-1 on the season.

This Friday evening, the team hosts the Martensville Marauders in Shellbrook, before travelling to Saskatoon to face off against the Saskatoon Crunch on Saturday.

## Shellbrook seniors receive FCC grant

By FARM  
CREDIT CANADA  
Submitted

Farm Credit Canada (FCC) is giving \$1.5 million through its FCC AgriSpirit Fund to 81 community projects across Canada to support rural capital projects.

Among the Saskatchewan recipients is Shellbrook Senior Citizens' Co-operative Club, which was awarded \$16,000 to remove rotten wood and shingles and put a new roof on the Shellbrook Senior Citizens' Centre.

"Every AgriSpirit Fund project reflects a community coming together to solve a need," said André Surprenant, senior vice-president of ag

production at FCC. "We are proud to play our part in supporting those efforts and contributing to these essential spaces, services and infrastructure that help rural communities thrive. These projects show what's possible when local vision and national support work hand in hand."

This year, the FCC AgriSpirit Fund awarded between \$10,000 and \$25,000 to various community improvement initiatives that enrich the lives of residents in cities, towns or Indigenous communities with fewer than 150,000 people.

Over the past 22 years, the FCC AgriSpirit Fund has supported 1,778 projects, an investment of \$24 million.

## In Memoriams

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OBITUARIES

Marie Helene Juliette Assman



ASSMAN, Marie Helene Juliette (née Poulin)  
April 6, 1934 – November 26, 2025  
Julie, as she was known to all who loved her, passed away peacefully on November 26, 2025, at the age of 91. She was predeceased by her beloved husband of 65 years, Herb Assman, on November 21, 2024.  
Born on April 6, 1934, in Leoville, Saskatchewan, Julie was one of ten children born to Arthur and Gabrielle Poulin. In her early twenties, she moved to Prince George, where she met the love of her

life, Herb. They married in 1960, and together they built a life centred around family. Julie embraced life with gratitude and joy; she was the steady heart of our family and supported Dad through many adventures and a successful business. She cherished her children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and her many siblings, nieces, and nephews and countless friends. With a spirit that saw the glass as always full, she taught us patience, kindness, strength, and most of all love.  
Julie is lovingly remembered by her children: daughters, Beverly Assman (Michael Noonan) and Judy Neiser (Richard George), and her son, John Assman (Maureen); her grandchildren Michael (Angie) Neiser, Steven Neiser, Jennifer Neiser; Kenedy (Melissa) Assman, Bowen Assman, and Benett Assman; and her great-grandchildren, Hudson, Weston, Gracen, and Shea. She is also sur-

vived by her sisters Muriel Leblanc and Jeannine Albach; brother-in-law, Ken Kania; and sister-in-law, Donna McBurney (Terry). Julie was predeceased by her son-in-law Cal Neiser; her grandson Sean Noonan; her brothers, Candide, Laurier, Lionel, and Philip; and sisters Carmel Seierstad (Frechette), Alice Bourassa, and Louise Kania; along with her parents.  
At this time, the family has chosen to honour our mother's memory privately. To those who knew her, we invite you to raise a toast in her honour and remember her warmth, gentle humour, kindness, and generous spirit.  
Mom, we miss you dearly. We smile knowing you, Dad, and those who went before you are together again in eternity.  
"To love and be loved is to feel the sun from both sides." David Viscott  
Condolences may be sent to the family by visiting [www.springfieldfuneralhome.com](http://www.springfieldfuneralhome.com).

Bertha Johnson



Bertha was the first-born child of Agnus and Olga Gillespie. She grew up South of Shellbrook. She attended the country school and completed her high school by boarding with a family in Shellbrook. Upon graduation, she took nurse's training at St Paul's Hospital in Saskatoon. After graduating, she worked at Rosthern Hospital for one year, and in 1953, she married Ken Johnson and settled on the farm in Canwood. Here they raised their three children, Karen, Glenys and Danny. In 1987, they moved to town, and Danny took over the responsibility for the farm.  
On the farm, she valued her garden, her flower beds, the appearance of the yard, and her home. Her children's education and church attendance were very important. She kept regular contact with family and friends over the years. She would regularly write many letters to send out with her Christmas cards. She was involved with the local church and the ladies' group. She was a volunteer on the Can-

wood housing board. She had a great interest in her community. She was a driver for many seniors and created close friendships in these connections. She was also involved in the senior activities.  
Following her husband's passing in 2005, Bertha continued to live independently and stayed involved in the community. In 2017, Bertha began to feel less able to live independently. This was when Bertha started to change; she was less determined and more accepting of help. She moved to an assisted living home in Shellbrook. A year and a half later, she was assessed to move into a nursing home, and fortunately, she was placed in Canwood.  
To begin with, many of her previous friends from church were also in the home. Her room was across the hall from Doris Schwer whom she had graduated from grade 12 with. One day, while sitting around a table were Ruth Nordstrom, Doris Schwer, Hildegard Butz, Kaye Haugen and Bertha. This could have been a Lutheran lady's aid gathering. As they one by one passed away, Bertha's life flame dimmed. She slowly progressed to being unable to walk, speak, and lost all independence. It was a blessing for her and her family that the flame was extinguished, and she passed into glory.  
A special thank you to the present and past staff at Whispering Pines Place. They cared

for Bertha with love, respect and compassion. They are a blessing to the community.  
She leaves to mourn her passing her children, **Karen** Johnson and Gary Robinson, **Glenys** Martin, and **Danny** (Tracey) Johnson; her grandchildren **Nicholas** (Joleen) Martin and Hennessy, Mila and Bohdi, **Nathaniel** (Deanna) Martin and Anika and Raya, **Johnathan** Martin and partner Kayla Tait. **Ethan** Johnson, **Alyssa** Johnson, **Karina** Johnson, and **Noah** Johnson.  
She was predeceased by her husband Ken Johnson; her parents, Angus Gillespie and Olga Jamieson; her siblings, Mary Gillespie, Arnold Gillespie, Danny Gillespie and Isabel (Con) Richards; her infant grandchildren, Joshua and Zachary Martin; and her son-in-law, Darrel Martin.  
The Funeral Service for Bertha was held at 1:00 PM on Saturday, December 6, 2025, at Zion Lutheran Church, Canwood, SK.  
In lieu of tributes, donations may be made to the Zion Lutheran Church (Box 358 Canwood, SK S0J 0K0).  
Family and friends wishing to send online condolences are welcome to visit [www.beaulacfuneralhome.com](http://www.beaulacfuneralhome.com). Arrangements have been entrusted to the care of Beau "Lac" Funeral Home and Crematorium, Tammy Smart, Funeral Director, Shellbrook, SK 306-747-2828.

Denise Bonneau Sirois



Denise Bonneau Sirois, born February 11, 1942, in Laventure, Saskatchewan, passed away peacefully on December 2, 2025, at the Debden Heritage Manor, where she had resided for the past year and a half. After a courageous battle with cancer, she left this world at the age of 83, surrounded by family and the community she loved.  
Denise was the daughter of Alec and Simone Doré, one of seven children. She married Albert Bonneau in October 1962, and together they welcomed their daughter on November 23, 1963. After Albert's passing in October 1977, Denise later married Leo Sirois in 1980. In her life, Denise

lived in many places, but with Leo, they made their homes in Prince Albert, La Ronge, and Morin Lake, Saskatchewan.  
She worked in many roles throughout her life, but her greatest pride came from her years as an entrepreneur. She founded and operated The Little Country Grill in Victoire and later The Lamplight Cuisine in Debden, establishments that became beloved community hubs thanks to her warmth, energy, and love of cooking. Denise and Leo balanced hard work with adventure, spending winters as snowbirds and traveling widely, either on their own or with family.  
Even after their traveling days ended, Denise remained active in her community. She taught cooking classes for many years at Big River First Nation and continued to share her generosity through volunteering. She dedicated countless hours to the Debden Chamber of Commerce, the Debden Ladies Club, and the Debden Heritage Manor. While running The Lamplight, she hosted several "Beans & Jeans"

fundraisers to support the construction of the Debden Heritage Manor. Denise retired at the remarkable age of 80.  
Denise will be remembered for her generous heart, always providing food and support whenever it was needed, whether for a funeral, a celebration, or a family in need. She leaves behind her daughter, her son-in-law, three grandsons, and two great-grandchildren, along with extended family and countless friends whose lives she touched.  
Funeral Service was held on Monday, December 8, 2025, at 2:00 p.m., at St. Jean Baptiste Church in Debden, SK.  
Memorial donations may be made to the Debden Heritage Manor (P.O. Box 608 Debden, SK S0J 0S0).  
Family and friends wishing to send online condolences are welcome to visit [www.beaulacfuneralhome.com](http://www.beaulacfuneralhome.com). Arrangements have been entrusted to the care of Beau "Lac" Funeral Home and Crematorium, Lynn Anderson, Funeral Director, Shellbrook, SK 306-747-2828.

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Very little.



**'It's the most wonderful  
*time of the year!*'**

**As we turn the page to another holiday season,  
we'd like to take a moment to thank you, our patrons,  
for your trust and support.**

**We hope this Christmas delivers all the good news you've been hoping for and more.**

# Shellbrook Chronicle & Spiritwood Herald



# Christmas Eve fun for families

The day and evening before Christmas is a time of much anticipation for young children, particularly those awaiting the arrival of Santa Claus. What children do not realize is their parents have been working hard behind the scenes for many weeks to help maximize the holiday magic, and Christmas Eve often is the final push to get everything done before the big day (and man in red) arrives.

Keeping children happy and entertained on Christmas Eve can free up time for adults to check off their to-do lists and savor some of the holiday spirit themselves. Here are some traditions to explore on Christmas Eve that are entertaining for kids and adults.

- Bake some cookies.

Santa is going to want a fresh batch of cookies to refuel for a long night of delivering presents. Therefore, having children prepare and bake some cookies can be a Christmas Eve tradition that keeps little ones occupied. When cooled, and after sampling one or two themselves, kids can feel pride placing a dish of cookies out for the jolly old elf.

- Decorate gingerbread houses. Christmas Eve is a great night to decorate gingerbread houses. Families who do not freshly bake the panels for the gingerbread houses can rely on pre-made kits available at various stores. It's a smart idea to have some extra icing available, especially if kids are anxious to "glue" on extra candy embellishments.

- Attend evening services. Most churches hold Christmas Eve services, with some offering a Midnight Mass for parishioners. Spending time at these services enables families to slow down and celebrate their faith.

- Do a Christmas pajama reveal. It's traditional in some families to buy matching PJs to wear to bed on Christmas Eve and then lounge around in them on Christmas morning. Whoever is in charge of wrapping gifts can set apart the Christmas PJs by wrapping them in a different patterned paper. Then everyone opens the pajamas at the same time for the big reveal.

- Leave out reindeer food. Kids can have a fun time putting together a batch of special reindeer food. After all, Santa isn't the only one doing the heavy lifting delivering gifts; his reindeer probably get hungry, too. Reindeer food can be made using a few different ingredients, namely oatmeal, shredded carrots and glitter. Children can decide where to toss this reindeer food, with some opting to make



a path along the front lawn leading toward the house.

- Watch a holiday classic. Choose a Christmas movie and gather the family around to watch it. Some options include "National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation," "Miracle on 34th Street," "Elf," or

"A Christmas Story." Set up a popcorn bar nearby where everyone can customize their popcorn with different add-ins, like chocolate candies, cheese or sea-

sonings.

Christmas Eve traditions can be fun for kids and families as they anticipate all the festivities to come on Christmas morning.

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**Merry Christmas**  
Mayor, Council and Staff  
Town of Shellbrook

Warmest holiday wishes from our families to yours.

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We hope you **DIG** the Happy Holidays, as much as we do.

*Thank you to everyone for your support this year.*

**Ho! Ho! Ho!**

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# Tips to make holiday dinners more affordable

“Eat, drink and be merry” is a familiar refrain come the holiday season. Hosting a holiday dinner is a great way to welcome family and friends and encourage them to em-

brace the festive nature of the season. However, the high cost of foods and other essentials may have certain holiday hosts rethinking their menus and their guest lists this year.

Stretching holiday entertaining dollars comes down to being savvy. With that in mind, hosts can consider these meal modification strategies this holiday season.

- Replace a high-cost protein with a more affordable alternative. Sometimes a holiday meal calls for pulling out all of the stops, and that may mean spending more on a special main dish. Rather than a luxury like beef tenderloin or prime rib roast, consider a less expensive dish, such as a pork tenderloin, roasted chicken or even seafood.

- Add extra side dishes. Incorporate an inexpensive item like rice, beans or an extra vegetable side dish into the meal so that plates can be filled with the less expensive foods and fewer high-cost items.

- Shop the sales. Plan meals around a supermarket circular. While you may have had one holiday dinner idea



in mind, once you see what the stores are putting on sale you can stock up on those items and build the dinner around them. If you find a good deal several weeks away from the holidays, buy the items and freeze them until they're needed.

- Buy generic or store brands. Chances are no one will notice if you use generic or store brand ingredients, which can be considerably cheaper than their brand-name counterparts. Many are even manufactured in the same facilities that produce the name brand stuff.

- Make an affordable drink. Alcohol costs can add up when you

try to cater to everyone's tastes and preferences. Make one or two bulk drinks, like a holiday punch or signature cocktail, so you can keep alcohol costs in check.

- Stretch the snacks. Instead of a charcuterie board filled with expensive cheeses and meats, opt for dips and raw vegetables or a low-cost cheese ball made with cream cheese and herbs with crackers. Keep snacks to a minimum; otherwise, guests may fill up and

then not have room for dinner.

Holiday hosts can embrace various strategies to save money on family meals this season.

## Did you know?

Christmas is an important date on the calendar for faithful Christians across the globe. Given the fanfare around Christmas, it would seem that all Christians celebrate the holiday. However, some Christians do not celebrate Christmas. Denominations such as Jehovah's Witnesses and certain branches of the Churches of Christ do not observe Christmas. Their reasoning may be a lack of explicit biblical instruction to celebrate the holiday. The Bible does not command or even mention the early church celebrating the birth of Jesus. Others have concerns about the pagan origins of some Christmas traditions, such as mistletoe, holly, the yule log, and even Christmas trees. So they simply opt out entirely.



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## In The Holiday SPIRIT



We'd like to thank all of you who have helped to make our spirits bright this year with your friendship and support.  
*Merry Christmas!*

**Kerb Side Convenience**  
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## Trimmed With A Wish

Here's hoping your holiday is a cut above the rest! I loved every minute of serving you this year, thanks!

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*Brad & Staff*



## Thanks Friends!

With Season's Greetings to you and your kin, We're really grateful for you droppin' in!

*Dave, Heather & Staff*

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## A brief history of Christmas trees

Towering evergreen trees adorned in lights and other trinkets are a focal point of the holiday season. Christmas trees are placed in prominent locations in homes, typically in front of a large picture window or in the corners of large entryways. These awe-inspiring trees beckon people to inspect all of the ornaments and often are the first thing people envision when thinking of holiday decor.

The tradition of the Christmas tree is believed to have begun

in Germany in the sixteenth century. However, the National Christmas Tree Association says there may be earlier references to Christmas trees in other parts of the world as well.

The first written record of a decorated Christmas tree comes from Riga, Latvia, in 1510. Men of a local merchant's guild decorated the tree with roses and then set fire to it. The rose was considered a symbol of the Virgin Mary.

In the sixteenth century in Alsace, France,

trees were sold in the marketplace and brought home and set up undecorated. Laws limited the size to "eight shoe lengths" or slightly more than four feet.

Early German Christmas trees were adorned with apples, a holdover from earlier traditions when evergreen boughs hung with apples were used as props in miracle plays. These plays took place in churches on December 24, which was Adam & Eve's Day in the early Christian calendar.

Evergreens have long



been symbolic of life during the cold months of winter, calling to mind the promise of spring to come. Various cultures, including early Christians, featured trees during winter solstice celebrations.

Some historians believe Martin Luther, a Protestant reformer who might have been inspired by stars in the night, was responsible for adding lighted candles to the Christmas tree.

At a party hosted by the Baroness Riedesel for British and German officers on Dec. 24, 1781, in Sorel, Quebec, the first official Christmas tree in North America was erected.

The Christmas tree was later introduced to the United States by German settlers in

the 1800s. Soon after those settlers' arrival, trees began to be sold commercially. President Franklin Pierce is credited with having the first Christmas tree at the White House.

Today, Christmas trees are still wildly popular around the world.

### WITH THANKS

Here's hoping this holiday delivers your fill of special surprises.



Merry Christmas to you and yours!



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On behalf of  
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### Merry Christmas!

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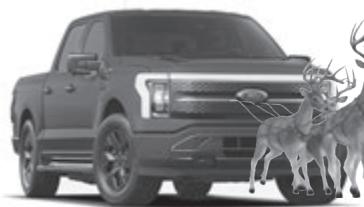
We'd like to give you our well wishes for a happy and healthy holiday season. We feel deeply honored to have your friendship and trust. **Thanks!**

Grant, Heather, Daryl, Tamara, Mark, Karen, Taylor, Wendy, Marlene, Brandy, Patty, Lorraine, Jeremy, Ale, Alyssa, Carla, Wendy W., Coral, Jacqueline, Marlane & Chris

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### Season's Greetings!



We take this opportunity to  
**Thank You**

for your friendship & support over the past years. We look forward to serving you in 2026 and wish you health, happiness and prosperity in the New Year.

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# Peace in our time

By **DAVE WHALLEY**  
Big River First  
United Church

Advent is a time of waiting, waiting for the incarnation of God. We meet the Creator in many different ways in our individual lives. We sense the presence of the Great Spirit when we least expect it. We, as a people, find it difficult to accept and realize that God is always present with us in our earthly lives.

This Christmas season, may the hope of a meaningful and fulfilled life be with all of us by faith in a Higher Power. May God bring the love that is promised in the Bible and may we let the Spirit work with us and through us as we travel this highway of life.

I pray that all of us will remember those who are less fortunate than ourselves or have suffered a loss this year and hold them up in prayer. Christmas can be a difficult time

for many people in our community. Homelessness is increasing. Let us find ways to keep in touch with those who live away from home.

This Christmas we need to pray for peace in our world, God's world. We need to hold the people of the Ukraine in our prayers for peace. They have been dealing with the horrors of war for almost 4 years now. Also, we need to pray for peace in the Middle East; for the potential peace agreement for Gaza and Israel, as there are many individuals, on both sides, losing their lives and freedom.

On behalf of all of us at Big River First United Church, we wish everyone a

very Blessed Christmas season, filled with the gifts that are given to us by God; especially the gifts of peace, hope, love and joy. All we have to do to receive these gifts is live by faith in God, worship our Creator, and treat our neighbours as we would want to be treated ourselves.

May the blessing of God be with you, now and forever, as we wait for Christmas and the New Year!



# All I want for Christmas

By **LORNE VALUCK**  
Parkside Pentecostal  
Church

Hope, peace, joy, and love. Four words that we hear at this time of the year, Christmas.

In Romans chapter 15, verse 13, Paul tells us, "I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in Him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit."

1st  
John  
chap-

ter 4, verses 8 and 16. tell us, "God is love." So really, we could receive Paul's words as, "I pray that God(Who is Love), the source of Hope, will fill you with joy and peace because you trust in Him."

I like that. I like that a lot.

But you may say, "That's just pie in the sky." Unattainable, unrealistic, fake news.

You're right in a sense, about it being out of reach, and hard to believe, but that's what Christmas is all about.

Jesus reconciles us to the God of love, who pro-

vides us with His love, joy, hope and peace.

That baby in the manger paid the price for our sins, our wrongdoings, and when we repent, He "lifts us up" to the standard a perfect sovereign God can accept. Becoming our Heavenly Father, He bestows wonderful gifts on us, His children. Hope, peace, joy, love, and more.

So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him? (Matthew 7:11)

Go ahead. Ask Him. God is delighted to hear what you want for Christmas.

Have a wonder-filled Christmas season.





*Tidings of Comfort & Joy*

At Christmastime, may the company of loved ones present and the fond memories of those who have passed surround you with happiness and fill your heart with peace.

*We wish you all the very best this holiday season.*

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and your family a  
Merry Christmas  
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*The holidays bring many gifts, but none  
are more precious than the gift of  
your support and friendship.  
Thank you for contributing  
to our success*

**Management &  
Board of Directors**  
**Honeywood (Dr. A.J. Porter)**  
**Heritage Nursery**  
Parkside



**Merry  
Christmas**



**RANDY HOBACK MP**  
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[MP.RANDY.HOBACK.CA](mailto:MP.RANDY.HOBACK.CA)  
306-953-8622



# Five meaningful ways to give back this holiday season

Many people have a sense that they want to do more for the people around them and for their community. But it can be difficult to know where to start. The truth is, supporting people locally and even globally can be simpler than many may expect. Here are a few ways one person really can make a difference:

## 1. Support your neighbours

Often, one of the greatest gifts you can give is your time. Seniors in your community appreciate small acts of kindness—shovelling driveways, raking leaves, carrying groceries or simply sharing coffee and conversation. These gestures

can combat loneliness and help your neighbours maintain independence during the winter months.

## 2. Find local volunteer opportunities

Community organizations often need extra hands in the winter. Some good opportunities to look for include staffing food drive collection points, organizing donated clothes and toys or helping coordinate charity fundraising events. Blood donations are particularly needed during winter when supplies run low. Volunteering makes these programs possible.

## 3. Become a humanitarian hero

A few clicks can change

a life halfway around the world—online charitable donations support families and children experiencing extreme poverty. Organizations like Children Believe use that support to address critical needs like healthcare, clean water, education and safe spaces to play. The impact that even small donations have can be surprising:

- \$25 can buy a year's worth of dental hygiene. For children in underserved communities, poor oral hygiene can lead to serious health complications. Access to toothbrushes, toothpaste and floss can go a long way to supporting their overall health.

- \$75 can buy critical mental health support. Nearly one billion people globally live with mental health conditions, yet care remains critically underfunded, especially in conflict zones. A small contribution can provide access to specialized care and medication for families who otherwise have nowhere to turn.

- \$100 can give a newborn a start in life. New mothers and babies need essential vitamins and medical checkups. Millions of women and newborns die from preventable causes each year—it doesn't take much to provide life-saving intervention.

## 4. Create lasting change by giving sustainably

If you're considering making donations, consider monthly contributions, as opposed to one-time donations. Recurring gifts allow organizations to plan long-term programs and create sustainable change. Even small monthly amounts add up to significant impact—and most organizations will provide regular updates on how your support is making a difference.

## 5. Inspire others to join you

The spirit of giving multiplies when shared. You could host a giving circle where friends or family contribute to a cause together, or organize a donation drive at work. Sharing your volunteering experiences on social media and giving openly can allow others to step up, too.

Don't discount the power of individual action, even in the face of large issues such as poverty. Even one person stepping up makes a difference, and that impact often ripples out to affect even greater change. You can learn more about ways to give at [childrenbelieve.ca](http://childrenbelieve.ca). [www.newscanada.com](http://www.newscanada.com)

## Did you know?

Come New Year's Eve, it's customary to count down the last 10 seconds until the clock strikes midnight and the new year officially begins. It seems like the 10-second countdown is as old as time itself, but the tradition actually is much more modern. According to Alexis McCrossen, a history professor at Southern Methodist University, prior to the twentieth century, New Year's Day was celebrated rather than New Year's Eve. And even up until the mid-twentieth century, countdowns were not associated with New Year's Eve or even festive occasions. However, the tides turned on countdowns with the Apollo moon launch in 1961. After that, countdowns for radio hits and other fun activities began. Although some TV announcers in the 1960s began counting down to the new year, it wasn't until 1979 that the crowd at Times Square in New York City began joining in. This was despite the first New Year's Eve ball drop being held more than 70 years earlier in 1907. Publisher Adolph Ochs organized the first New Year's Eve party in Times Square in 1904, while the first-ever ball drop took place three years later when the city banned fireworks for the celebration. Yet it was not until the final year of the 1970s for it to be fashionable for a crowd to gather and participate in shouting out the 10-second countdown, a practice that is now tradition.



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*With Tidings of Comfort & Joy*  
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Wishing you much harmony and joy at Christmas



**Reeve and Council**  
**R.M. of Leask #464**

Have a Very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year



**Town of Blaine Lake**  
**306.497.2531**  
Blaine Lake

**SANTA**

*Especially for you...*

We'd like to join jolly old Saint Nick in sending warm wishes to you and your loved ones this holiday season. We appreciate your goodwill and trust in us, and thank you for your business.

Merry Christmas!


From Management and Staff of  
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*Spread The Word!*



Here's hoping that your holiday brings,  
Peace and joy and all good things  
Plus a load of fun and laughter  
To create warm memories forever after!

**Village of Canwood Council & Staff**




**Rejoice!**

With joy in our hearts, we wish you all a truly miraculous holiday season.

**Staff and Management of**  
**Blaine Lake Ambulance Care**  
*Keith & Diana Woytiuk*

Wishing everyone Peace & Good Will at Christmas



**Mayor and Council**  
**Village of Leask**



## Thinking outside-the-box for kids' gifts

Children may look forward to the holiday season more than most people. The holiday season is an opportunity for kids to tear open wrapping paper and see the amazing gifts they've received this year.

Although toys and games are typical gifts for children, there are many other items that go beyond these staples to make for unique and

creative gifts that can spark imagination or boost physical activity. Shoppers can consider these outside-the-box gift ideas when shopping for youngsters this holiday season.

- 3D pen or printer: Kids can design and build amazing objects that encourage them to employ their creative side.

- Soap-making kit: These kits spur cre-

ative endeavours and ultimately produce useful finished results. Soap or perfume kits are great for hands-on sensory learning. Such gifts also teach some components of science and math by requiring users to follow the recipe.

- Robot-building kits: Take building kits one step further with items that can move. Robot kits combine play with engineering basics.

- Interactive books: Children can solve puzzles or make choices to move the story along. These types of books may even appeal to the most hesitant readers.

- Bug collection kits: Budding entomologists can observe insects close up, and then release them back into the wild.

- Greenhouse, terrarium or bonsai tree kit: Put together the materials needed for kids to grow something special. They can nurture the plant along the way.

- Dress up trunk: Fill



a box or a trunk with various dress-up costumes and accessories and let children's imaginations run wild. This will spur hours of imaginative play and crazy combinations of clothing.

- Geocaching app: Let kids find objects hidden all over their neighbourhoods in real-world outdoor treasure hunts. Geocaching utilizes GPS coordinates to find hidden containers, called geocaches, placed there by other players.

- Various craft supplies: Let kids create any and all of their fun ideas by compiling a kit full of various craft

supplies. From beads to wooden letters to paints to paper, there are plenty of items to be made.

- Hiking attire: Get kids out into nature by supplying the gear needed to take to the trails.

- Adopt a star or planet: Children can adopt and name a star or

planet and get a certificate honoring the event.

- Time capsule: Let children store favourite items tucked away for safe keeping, where they'll remain until unveiled in the future.

Parents and other holiday shoppers can think creatively when it comes time to choose gifts for children.

### Did you know?

The debate continues regarding the merits of artificial and real Christmas trees. Though there's no available data about which type they choose, Canadians may favor live Christmas trees, or they're at least skilled in growing them. In fact, Canada exported more than 2.4 million fresh Christmas trees in 2021, and 97.2 percent ended up in the United States, according to Statistics Canada. In 2021, according to Statistics Canada, there were 1,364 Christmas tree producers and 50,803 acres of trees in Canada.



*Greetings at Christmas  
With best wishes to  
you and yours  
this holiday season!*

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season filled with all the  
trimmings and hopes of  
a prosperous new year.*

*Thank you for your  
kind patronage. Your  
friendship really makes  
us feel like celebrating.*

*Margo, Russell  
and Staff*

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and  
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**Big River**



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Greetings*

May all the joys of a  
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Christmas be yours.  
Thank you for being  
such loyal customers.

*From Management  
& Staff of*

**Big River  
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Trailer**

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*Have a  
Merry Little  
Christmas*

*We're hoping your holiday is  
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Thanks for your continued  
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*Debden, SK  
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## Stress-free holiday hosting

The holiday season is one of the most joyful times of the year, but it can also be one of the busiest—especially if you're hosting friends and family. From food prep to decor, it's easy to get caught up in the details and overlook the simple steps that can make your gatherings both enjoyable and safe.

Here are some tips from Belairdirect to help you host with confidence this holiday season:

**1. Plan ahead.** Creating a detailed checklist covering everything from grocery shopping to cleaning will help you stay organized and reduce last-minute stress.

**2. Keep walkways clear.** Shovel and salt outdoor paths before guests arrive and keep entryways tidy to avoid accidents. Don't wait for

the last minute to stock up on de-icing products: these tend to sell out with the first snowfall.

**3. Mind the kitchen.** Stay present while cooking, use timers and keep flammable items away from stovetops. Keep a properly fitting lid handy to quickly put things out should they get out of control. Having baking soda or salt in easy reach can also help you put out any flames. If you have a fire blanket or extinguish-

er, make sure you know how to use them beforehand.

**4. Create cozy, safe spaces.** Candles and fireplaces add ambiance, but should never be left unattended. If using a fireplace, burn only well-seasoned dried wood. Hardwoods are preferred as they burn longer and cleaner. Consider using battery-powered candles for a safe alternative that still sets a festive mood.

**5. Think of your**



**guests.** Extra seating, plenty of coat space and even labeling food items for allergies can make everyone feel welcome

and comfortable.

Your home is more than just a place, it's where life's most meaningful moments happen.

By building safety into your holiday prep, you can focus on celebrating with peace of mind.

[www.newscanada.com](http://www.newscanada.com)

## Your guide to a greener holiday season

The holidays are filled with joy, memories and, too often, junk. For those of us finding ourselves heaving bags of trash to the curb once the festivities have ended and wondering if there's a better way, there is. Here are some simple strategies for a more eco-friendly holiday

season:

**Use reusable or repurposed décor.** Not only can buying new decorations for each event be wasteful, but it's stressful, too. Great décor is about quality over quantity. Think of items that you can use more than once a year, that blend with your existing aesthetic and

that are durable enough to last for years. Even items that are meant as single-use can surprise you with how well they hold up on repeat outings, or may even have parts you can salvage and reuse.

**Give green.** When you're being eco-conscious, buying gifts can be stressful. Most

items, especially toys, come with a great deal of extra packaging, and many items are made of plastic or other non-biodegradable materials. But there are other options:

- You can gift an experience, such as tickets to an event, rather than an item. It still shows you care, and your recipient won't need to worry about losing or breaking their gift.

- You can support a charity in your recipient's name. Some charities have environmentally friendly options built into their operations, like The Period Purse. It provides free education to reduce period stigma and donates sustainable and reusable menstrual products to communities in need.

**Shop local.** Supporting nearby businesses and organizations makes a real difference in your community. It's also a much greener way to shop: locally produced goods don't need to be shipped long distances, which cuts down on the carbon footprint of every item you buy. They also often don't need as much packaging to keep them fresh or to protect them during shipping.

Remember: small changes to reduce your environmental impact can add up over time. The key is to start with mindful choices—what you buy, how you celebrate and who you support. You can learn about giving more sustainably at [theperiodpurse.com](http://theperiodpurse.com).

[www.newscanada.com](http://www.newscanada.com)

**Thank you for your trust in us and we wish you all the best in 2026!**

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**SEASON'S GREETINGS**  
to all of the customers and friends who have made our year so special!

**We appreciate your support,** and we wish you a happy holiday.

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Prince Albert, Sask.

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for your business and Happy Holidays to you & yours.

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**Thank you for your patronage!**

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# Unique New Year's celebrations across the globe

It is time to turn the page on one year and usher in another. Each Dec. 31, people all over the world reminisce, celebrate, plan, and party in honor of the changing calendar.

Many are likely familiar with some of the common ways to ring in the new year, which include champagne toasts, fireworks and watching the ball drop in Times Square. Yet, there are many other ways to celebrate this occasion and welcome a new year with hope and good luck. Enjoy these ways to commemorate the start of 2025.

• Make some noise. Although fireworks are commonplace on New Year's Eve in various locales around the world, in Thailand it once was traditional to fire guns to frighten off demons. National Thailand reports that it is no longer legal to fire weapons during New Year's Eve festivities, but other noisemakers can simulate the ancient tradi-



tion. Thailand also has its own New Year celebration in April called Songkran, a three-day event. It's customary to splash water and shoot colorful water guns, which is another idea for ringing in the new year.

• Smash pomegranates for luck. Many have heard of smashing grapes to make wine, and the band Smashing Pumpkins has millions of devoted followers across the globe. The comic Gallagher used

to smash watermelons on stage. But in Turkey, smashing a pomegranate outside your front door is said to bring good luck. The fruit is seen as a symbol of prosperity, abundance and health.

• Make some good luck "Hoppin' John." Hoppin' John is a traditional New Year's Day dish from regions of the southern United States. The dish is made with black-eyed peas and pork bacon and is said to

bring good luck to those who consume it for the new year, according to the Old Farmers Almanac.

• Choose honey-dipped apples. People can take a page from the Jewish New Year tradition, which sees celebrants dipping apples in honey for a sweet new year. Rosh Hashanah takes place in late summer or early fall because it follows the Hebrew lunisolar calendar. However, anyone can apply similar customs to the New Year's celebrations taking place each Jan. 1.

• Put on some polka dots. In the Philippines, wearing polka-dotted clothing on New Year's Eve is a tradition said to bring good fortune in the new year, according to Philstar Life.

• Watch a sunrise. Chances are many revelers are staying up late on New Year's Eve and into

the next day, so they'll have ample opportunity to catch the sunrise. In Japan, watching the first sunrise of the new year is called "hatsuhinode," and is a practice thought to bring good fortune.

• Grab some cash. There's a perpetuating superstition that it's better to have some extra money in your wallet to enter the New Year full of financial prosperity. Also, it's best to wipe out any unpaid debts before Dec. 31 disappears; otherwise, the months ahead might not be financially sound.

New Year's traditions have persisted throughout the years and are borne of customs from all over the world.

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From Melinda & Staff

*Season's Greetings*

*We're serving up our best wishes for a joy-filled season!*

**Village Snack & Gas**  
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*Best Holiday Wishes from Angie, Leon & Staff*

**Season's Greetings**

Beau, Megan & Staff  
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Thanks for being such great friends and neighbours.  
Merry Christmas

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May your season be filled with all the good feelings and treasured traditions that make it so very special.

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HAPPY NEW YEAR

**MERRY CHRISTMAS**

from the Leoville Village Council, Mayor & Staff

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email: leoville@sasktel.net

*Season's Greetings from*  
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*Thank you for your patronage.*

*May the spirit of the season fill you with joy and contentment.*

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*This Christmas, create wonderful memories that you will cherish forever. May your heart be filled with warmth and your home with joy. Merry Christmas!*

Tracie & Staff at  
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www.glaslynagencies.ca



# Unique Christmas traditions around the world

Christmas celebrations span the globe. According to a 2025 report from the Center for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, there are roughly 2.6 billion Christians worldwide, a figure that undoubtedly contributes to the popularity of Christmas. Christianity continues to have the most adherents of any religion in the world, and the Christian population is expected to top three billion before 2050.

Christians bring unique cultural touches to their Christmas celebrations

each year. Celebrations vary widely, and here's a look at some notable Christmas traditions across the globe.

## Yule Goat

The Yule Goat is a Christmas tradition in Sweden. The goat is believed to be an invisible spirit that ensures that Yule preparations are done correctly. A popular theory connects the goat to the Norse god Thor, who rode a chariot pulled by two goats.

## Krampus

While many people celebrate the benevolence of Santa Claus, some celebrate a much grumpier alter-ego of sort. Krampus is a man-goat, half-demon monster who punishes misbehaving children at Christmastime, says Britannica. He is the evil companion of St. Nicholas, and is believed to have originated in Germany. His name comes from the German word "krampen," which means, "claw."

## Christmas chicken

Christmas Eve is a popular romantic occasion for couples and families in Japan. In addition to gift-giving and a romance, many people choose to feast on a meal of KFC fried chicken and strawberry shortcake for dessert.

## Roller-skating to Mass

In the city of Caracas, Venezuela, it's customary for Christmas Eve celebrants to roller skate to ear-

ly morning Mass. Known as "Misa de Aguinaldo," these special church services take place on the days leading up to Christmas, with the most festive held on December 24. On this day, the streets of Caracas are closed to automobiles, enabling revelers to cheerfully skate to church.

## Mumming

In Newfoundland, Canada, celebrants known as mummers dress in elaborate disguises featuring mismatched clothing and whimsical accessories. The mummers obscure their identities and visit neighbors' homes during the 12 days of Christmas, performing songs, skits or dances while others attempt to guess their identities.

## Las Posadas

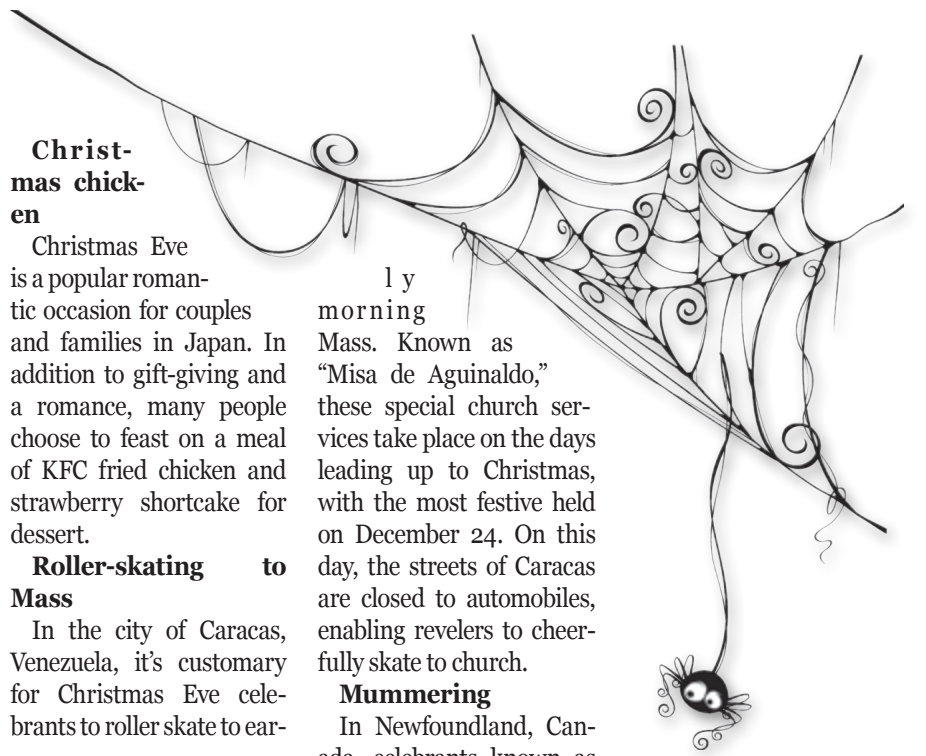
In some Hispanic regions, including Mexico, participants reenact Mary and Joseph's search for shelter in Bethlehem through vibrant processions. They travel from house to house, singing traditional songs and requesting shelter only to be turned away until they reach a final home or church that will symboli-

cally welcome them in.

## Spiderweb decorations

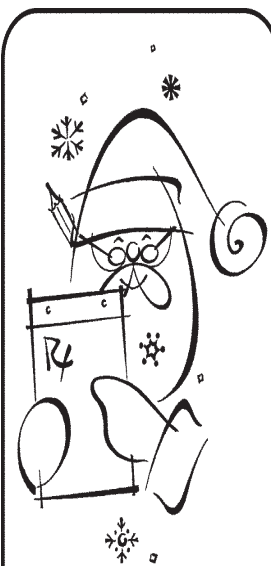
Individuals in Ukraine decorate their Christmas trees with artificial spider webs. This tradition is inspired by a tale of a poor widow and her children who didn't have money for tree ornaments. Upon waking up on Christmas morning, they found their tree covered in sparkling, glimmering spider webs that resembled tinsel. A spider had spun the beautiful display as thanks for finding shelter and warmth in the family's humble abode. Today's spider webs symbolize unexpected blessings and gratitude.

Plenty of unique touches set Christmastime celebrations apart across the globe.



*Merry Christmas*  
**& a Happy New Year!**  
**Christmas Break**  
 Dec. 22<sup>nd</sup> to Jan. 2<sup>nd</sup>  
**Classes resume**  
 January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2026

**Living Sky School**  
**Division No. 202**



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*from the staff*  
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 Thank you for your support

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## WITH BRIGHT WISHES AT THE HOLIDAYS

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Forrest King & Staff  
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 Spiritwood

*With Gratitude*

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 Thank you for the gift of your patronage.

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Lorne Friesen  
 306-883-8800 Spiritwood, Sask.



Getting children in on the fun of decorating for the holiday season makes this time of year that much more special. Children who make their own ornaments and other items can proudly display them all season long.

There are plenty of handmade holiday crafts to keep little fingers occupied. Here are some ideas to spark imagination and hours of creative fun.

#### Easy snow globes

A visit to the craft store will uncover various items that can be turned into snow globes. Look for a plastic cookie jar-like container with a lid that screws on tightly; otherwise, choose glass mason jars. Use a general ratio of one cup of water, three teaspoons of glycerine or an oil like baby oil or mineral oil, and a few teaspoons of glitter. Glue a plastic Christmas tree or snowman figurine to the underside of the lid of the jar with a rubberized adhesive or another glue that will hold up to wet conditions. When dry, replace the lid, invert the jar and watch the snow fall.

#### Salt dough ornaments

Salt dough is a mod-

eling dough made from two cups of all-purpose flour, one cup of salt, and about 3/4 cup of water. Mix the ingredients together and knead until the dough is smooth and easy to work with. Add more flour if it's too sticky; more water if it's too dry. Kids can use cookie cutters to cut shapes from the rolled-out dough, or sculpt

freehand. Remember to poke a hole through the top of the ornament to thread through string or ribbon later on. While the dough can be dried out by air in about a week, a faster method is to bake in an oven at 250 F for 1 1/2 to two hours, or until the dough is dry and hard. Kids can then paint the dried creations.

## Kid-crafted holiday decor ideas



piece of rolled-out paper. Then the general shape is cut out and decorated. Children can raise their arms, bend their legs, or vary their positions to give life to the gingerbread figures.

#### Winter wonderland

It can be fun to create a diorama or small winter landscape that can be set out with other decorations. Craft stores will likely sell small, plastic evergreen trees this time of year, or they may be available in the model train aisle of a local hobby shop. The trees can be given snowy boughs with a little acrylic paint. Include figures of bunnies, deer and whatever else kids can dream up. A thin strand of LED, battery-operated lights can add some illumination to the scene. Secure all items to a piece of cardboard or foam board for ease.

Children can make the most of their time crafting items for holiday decorating.

#### Paper gingerbread figures

Children may delight in making life-sized gingerbread girls and boys they can decorate and then hang up on the wall. A roll of brown postal

paper will work, as will other embellishments like markers, paints, crayons, or ribbon. Kids take turns being traced while lying down on a

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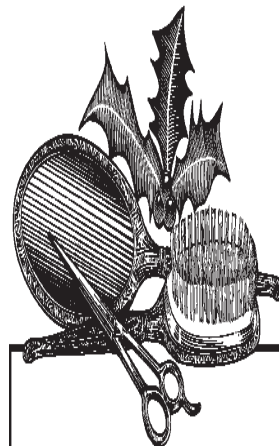
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# Kid-friendly holiday traditions

Tradition is a big part of the holiday season. Families lean into tradition each December, and perhaps no people participate in holiday customs with more enthusiasm than children. Whether it's decorating the family Christmas tree or baking cookies for Santa on Christmas Eve, children look forward to various holiday season traditions once the calendar turns from November to December.

Parents of young children can make this unique time of year even more special by engaging in various kid-friendly traditions that are sure to produce lots of fun and even more lasting memories.

• Advent calendars: The precise origins of Advent calendars are unknown, but historians believe the tradition was started by German Lutherans in the nineteenth century. More than a century later, roughly 50 million Advent calendars are sold across the globe each year, according to Marketplace.org. Advent is a nearly month-long period of preparation for the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ on December 25. Each day during Advent, children open a flap, window or door and find a small gift, poem, candy, or another item that adds to the excitement of the season.

• Matching pajamas: Though the tradition of wearing matching holi-

day pajamas may not have the same lengthy history as Advent calendars, it's nonetheless a very fun custom for families. Parents can decide how frequently their families dress up in matching pajamas at bedtime during the holiday season, but doing so on Christmas Eve is a popular way to make a fun day even more special. Another idea is to host weekly holi-

day movie nights during the season, which presents a perfect opportunity to don matching PJs.

• Holiday lights tour: Holiday lighting displays have come a long way in recent decades. Whereas it might once have been popular to string a few strands of lights around the exterior of a house, many holiday celebrants now beckon their inner Clark Griswold and turn their properties into areas with enough illumination to land a small plane. Holiday inflatables for the yard add to the awe of such displays. Kids tend to be especially fond of these types of displays, so parents can make a point to pick

a night each holiday season to go on a tour of their neighbourhoods and towns to see this year's offerings.

• Christmas dance party: Sweets are another staple of the holiday season, and what better way for kids to burn off some of that extra sugar than to dance it away to a holiday music playlist curated by Mom and Dad? Cue up some holiday classics but let kids dance to a few of their own favourites as well.

Holiday traditions help to make the season a special time of year. Families can embrace various kid-friendly traditions to ensure children have even more fun this December.



## Thank You for a Wonderful Season!

To our valued customers and friends, As the season comes to a close, we would like to express our heartfelt gratitude for your support, smiles, and the shared moments. Thank you to the surrounding Clients, including contractors, ranchers, farmers, and First Nations. It's been a pleasure serving you!

We closed for the season on December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025, and look forward to welcoming you back in the spring.

Until then, have a very *Merry Christmas*, and stay safe, warm, and know how much we appreciate you.

Thank you from the management and staff of Spirit Redi Mix.

You can contact us at [SRM@spiritredmix.ca](mailto:SRM@spiritredmix.ca) or leave a message at **306.883.2009**

620 – 5th Ave. Spiritwood, Sask.

