

CHRISTMAS NIGHT IN ASHLAND DECEMBER 1, 2017

Christmas Night in Ashland, celebrated on the first Friday evening of December in downtown Ashland, will be held this year on Friday, December 1. The Community Council of Ashland coordinates the efforts of local organizations, businesses and individuals to put on the holiday family event. The 2017 celebration will include children's workshops and scavenger hunt, pictures with Santa Claus, a storybook giveaway, a concert of Christmas music, food sales, hay rides, an historical photo display, face painting, a crafts fair, the making of Christmas cards and ornaments for veterans, the lighting of the Town Christmas tree, and a gift bag raffle to benefit the local food pantry.

Most events will take place between approximately 5 and 7 p.m. on Main Street and Highland Street, with the venues all within a short walking distance. The Friends of the Ashland Town Library will sponsor Pictures with Santa in the Library at 41 Main Street at the main intersection in the village. The Friends will take one picture of each family for free. Additional pictures are \$1 each. Families may also take their own pictures with Santa. Also at the Library, the Pond and Peak Reading Council, a non-profit group that promotes literacy, will give away storybooks. Each child can choose a book that he or she likes. Next door, in the American Legion Hall at 37 Main Street, the Dupuis-Cross Legion Post will provide an opportunity to remember our veterans during the holidays, by filling out Christmas cards and making ornaments for the residents of the N.H. Veterans Home. The Post will also be selling cookies, coffee and hot chocolate. The Legion Hall is also the site of the Parks & Recreation Department's arts and crafts workshops for children and the end point of the children's scavenger hunt. They may pick up a scavenger hunt form at either the Legion Hall or the Ashland Community Church dining hall and use it to find the twelve Christmas Elf pictures posted along Main Street. The last elf can be seen in the Legion Hall, where to complete the hunt, the children will listen to the reading of THE ELF ON THE SHELF at 6:30 p.m. and have our resident elf sign their form.

The Ashland Area Recreation Association will serve free popcorn in Memorial Park at the corner of Main Street and Riverside Drive. Across the road, at the corner of Riverside Drive and Highland Street, the Meredith Village Savings Bank will hold a free Christmas ornament workshop for children in its Ashland branch office. Next to the bank, at 12 Highland Street is the Ashland Community Center with its popular Cookie Walk, featuring cans of cookies, mostly home-made, for sale at \$3 per can. Buyers get to choose their own cookies. The Community Center is also the site of Santa's Gift Bag Raffle to benefit the Ashland Food Pantry. Non-perishable food items can be brought to the Center from noon to 6 p.m. on Thursday, November 30 and from noon to 7 p.m. on Friday, December 1. One raffle ticket will be given for each qualifying food item that is donated to the Food Pantry. The raffle prizes are bags of gifts, donated by local businesses and organizations, for both adults and children (12 and under). The public may attend the drawing of the winning tickets beginning at 7:15 p.m. in the Community Center. The winners will be announced later at the Tree Lighting in Memorial Park.

A Corn Chowder Supper to benefit the Food Pantry will be served at St. Mark's Church parish hall, next to the Community Center on Highland Street. The supper, including chowder, crackers and beverages, costs just \$3. Horse drawn Hay Rides, sponsored by the

Community Center, will load up in the Town Hall parking lot, at 20 Highland Street, next to St. Mark's Church. Donations will be appreciated, but are not required, for the rides, which will be given from 5 to 8 p.m. In the Ashland School's Tirone Gymnasium, almost opposite the Town Hall, the Middle School will hold a crafts fair from 4 to 8 p.m. with local crafters selling gifts, quilts, earrings, bird houses, etc. (Crafters interested in participating can find the fair registration form on the school website aesk8.org.) Hot dogs, snacks, and baked goods will also be on sale. There will also be a 50/50 raffle.

The Ashland Community Church dining hall at 57 Main Street will host several events. The Ashland Rebekahs will sell cider and doughnuts. The Ashland Historical Society will display historic photos of Ashland houses. The Ashland Area Recreation Association will hand out stockings to the children and forms for the scavenger hunt. The Ashland Community Church will paint faces and help children decorate cookies. The Church will also sell hamburgers, chips and drinks to benefit the Ashland Food Pantry. The 150th Anniversary Committee will sell commemorative items to mark the 150th Anniversary of the 1868 incorporation of the Town of Ashland that will be celebrated in July of 2018.

From 7 to 7:45 p.m., musicians from the Ashland Community Church will present a concert of Christmas music in the Community Church sanctuary.

The celebration will end at 8 p.m. in Memorial Park. The prize winners of the Gift Bag Raffle will be announced. With the help of Santa, the Town Christmas Tree, decked out for the holidays, will be lit to officially start the Christmas season. So, come to downtown Ashland to begin your Christmas celebration. (For more information, contact David Ruell at 968-7716 or davidruell@gmail.com.)