

## **CHRISTMAS NIGHT IN ASHLAND**

Christmas Night in Ashland, celebrated annually on the first Friday evening of December in downtown Ashland, will be held this year on December 7. The holiday family event is put on by local organizations, businesses and individuals, coordinated by the Community Council of Ashland. The 2018 celebration will include pictures with Santa Claus, a storybook giveaway for children, Christmas music, children's workshop and scavenger hunt, hay rides, food sales, free popcorn, face painting, a craft fair, a model train display, an historical photo display, the making of Christmas ornaments and cards for veterans, a reading of The Elf On The Shelf, a gift bag raffle to benefit the local food pantry, and the lighting of the town Christmas tree..

Most events will take place between approximately 5 and 7:30 p.m. on Main Street and Highland Street, in 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. Also at the Library, the Pond and Peak Reading Council, a non-profit group to promote literacy, will give away books. Each child can choose a book that he or she likes. Next door, the American Legion Hall at 37 Main Street is the site of several events. Local musician Paul Hubert will perform from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. and again from 7:00 to 7:30 p.m. In the interlude, children can listen to the reading of THE ELF ON THE SHELF starting at 6:30 p.m. The Christmas Elf is also the focus of the children's scavenger hunt. They may pick up a scavenger hunt form at the Legion Hall and use it to find the Christmas Elf pictures posted along Main and Highland Streets. They will then bring the completed form to the Legion Hall by 6:30 p.m. to listen to the book reading, get the signature of our resident elf, and earn their prizes. The Parks & Recreation Department will also hold crafts workshops for the children. Ashland children can enter a drawing for a free week at the Department's Summer Camp. The Dupuis-Cross Post of the Legion will provide the opportunity to remember our veterans during the holidays, by making ornaments and filling out Christmas cards for the veterans of the NH Veterans Home. The Post will also sell cookies, hot chocolate and coffee.

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 home-made cookies, for sale at \$3 per can. (Buyers 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, December 6 and Friday, December 7. One raffle ticket will

be given for each qualifying food item that is donated to the Pantry. (Government issued food does not qualify.) 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 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 in the upper level of St. Mark's Church parish hall, next to the Community Center on Highland Street. The supper, including chowder, crackers and beverages costs \$4. The lower level of the hall will house a Christmas Craft Fair from 4 to 7:30 p.m. (Vendors interested in renting tables for \$10 each can call Anne Lamson at 507-4188.) Also in the hall, Elaine Hughes Realty Group will provide information on entering their "Deck The House" contest for Christmas decorations.

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 would be appreciated, but are not required, for the rides, which will be given from 5 to 8 p.m. Anthony Hoerter's Lionel train display will be open to the public at the Cheney House at 82 Highland Street.

The Ashland Community Church will serve hamburgers, hot dogs, chips and drinks outside the church at 57 Main Street if the weather allows, inside the church dining hall if it does not. Donations for the meal can be made to Operation Santa Claus. The dining hall will also house other activities. The Church will have cookie decorating and face painting for the children. The Ashland Area Recreation Association will give away Christmas stockings to the children. The Ashland Historical Society will mount a display of historic photos of the Railroad in Ashland, a prelude to the 2019 celebration of the Ashland Railroad Station's 150th Anniversary. The local Rebekahs will sell cider and donuts. The 150th Anniversary Committee and the Fourth of July Committee will sell commemorative items from their celebrations. The 150th Committee has commemorative books and ceramic plates as well as limited quantities of Christmas ornaments, mugs and license plates. The Fourth of July Committee has T-shirts and wrist bands from 2018 and buttons from several years, all at reduced prices.

The celebration will end at 8 p.m. in Memorial Park, The prize winners of Santa's Gift Bay 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.