

WILLOWS BEND WORD

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Ebenezer Values: Dignity, Integrity, Service, Compassion, Innovation

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History of the Christmas Tree

By: History.com Editors

The history of Christmas trees has many roots, ranging from the use of evergreens in ancient Egypt and Rome to the German traditions of candlelit trees that made its way to America in the 1800s. Discover the history of the Christmas tree, from the earliest winter solstice celebrations to Queen Victoria's decorating habits and the annual lighting of the Rockefeller Center tree in New York City.

How did Christmas Trees Start? Long before the advent of Christianity, plants and trees that remained green all year had a special meaning for people in the winter. As people today decorate their homes during the festive season with pine, spruce, and fir trees, many ancient peoples hung evergreen boughs over their doors and windows. In many countries, it was believed that evergreens would keep away witches, ghosts, evil spirits, and illness.

In the Northern hemisphere, the shortest day and longest night of the year fall on December 21 or December 22, and it is called the winter solstice. Many ancient people believed that the sun was a god, and that winter came every year because the sun god had become sick and weak. They celebrated the solstice because it meant that at last, the sun god would begin to get well. Evergreen boughs reminded them of all the green plants that would grow again when the sun god was strong, and summer would return.

Germany is credited with starting the Christmas tree tradition—as we now know it—by the 16th century when sources record devout Christians bringing decorated trees into their homes. Some built Christmas pyramids of wood and decorated them with evergreens and candles if wood was scarce.

It is widely believed that Martin Luther, the 16th-century Protestant reformer, first added lighted candles to a tree. According to a common version of the story, walking home one winter evening, Luther was awed by the stars twinkling amidst evergreens. To recapture the scene for his family, he erected a tree in the main room and wired its branches with lighted candles.

The early 20th century saw Americans decorating their trees mainly with homemade ornaments, while many German Americans continued to use apples, nuts, and marzipan cookies. Stringed popcorn was added to the trees' decoration after being dyed bright colors and interlaced with berries and nuts. Electricity brought about Christmas lights, making it possible for Christmas trees to glow for days on end. With this, Christmas trees began to appear in town squares across the country, and having a Christmas tree in the home became an American tradition.



Sales and Marketing: A Year to Remember!

As we look to the new year, we celebrate the kindness, connection, and milestones that make Willows Bend so special. 2024 was filled with unforgettable moments! From the excitement of the Senior Summer Olympics to the joy of welcoming neighbors at our Valentine's Day Open House and celebrating our community's Second Anniversary, every gathering reflected the vibrancy and warmth of our incredible residents. Partnering with the Minnesota Twins and hearing Sonny and Sandy on the radio brought even more smiles and strengthened our sense of community.

A heartfelt thank-you to our amazing Resident Ambassadors, whose dedication and kindness shine brightly. They warmly welcome new residents, open their homes to potential neighbors, and lead wonderful volunteer efforts like Operation Bedtime Stories, Trunk or Treat, and our ongoing Toy Drive. Your generosity makes Willows Bend a place where everyone feels at home.

None of this would be possible without our wonderful partners, dedicated staff, and incredible residents. It's the small, daily acts of friendship and care that truly define our community and make life here so meaningful.

Looking ahead, we're excited for what 2025 will bring. From engaging events to expanded programs like Live 2B Healthy and continued partnerships with ODOM Therapy, Willows Bend is a place where growth and connection thrive.

Thank you for being part of the Willows Bend family and wishing you a joyful holiday season and a bright, exciting year ahead!

Jeramy Cain, Sales & Outreach Director

Activities Corner

December is here, and it's time to spread some holiday cheer! This month is packed with festive entertainment, including performances by the Fridley High School Jazz Band, St. Williams Carolers, 4 Too The Bar, Tara Brueske, Todd Anderson, and Mark Browning Milner, along with Christmas Karaoke with Rita & Larry. Outings will include bingo at Hi-Stakes Cafe and the Senior Center, shopping trips to Aldi, Target, and Bob's Produce, the Senior to Seniors Concert at Irondale, the Lions Club Holiday Dinner, and a special evening at the Chanhassen Dinner Theatre. Adding to the fun, the Girl Scouts will join us to decorate Christmas cookies. Other holiday highlights include the Tour of Homes, a Christmas Sweater Social, and a New Year's Eve Social to ring in 2025!

Kerri Antonen, Life Enrichment Director

Don't forget to like us on Facebook! <https://www.facebook.com/WillowsBendSeniorLiving>



Meet the ODOM Team: Alex Heinrich

A note from Alex: I live in Blaine with my husband, Grant, and dog, Jimmy. I became interested in physical therapy after volunteering to assist with teaching individuals with Parkinson's disease how to ballroom dance. Seeing individuals find joy in movement and celebrating small successes drives me as a therapist to keep going the extra mile for my patients. I love listening to music while exercising and am always open to suggestions for songs to play during sessions. When I am not working, you will find me going for a hike around parks in MN with my dog, antique shopping, or doing different renovation projects inside and outside my house.

Why work with Physical Therapy?

BALANCE

- Falls Prevention & Reduction
- Home Safety Assessments

GAIT

- Gait Training
- Assistive Device Assessment/Training

MOBILITY & STRENGTH

- General Deconditioning
- Bed Mobility/Bedrails
- Transfers

DISEASE MANAGEMENT

- Parkinson's Disease Management
- COPD Management
- CHF Management
- Stroke Rehab
- Vertigo & Dizziness

PAIN MANAGEMENT

- Fractures, Sprains, & Strains
- Headaches
- Arthritis
- Acute & Chronic Pain



Holiday Events

The Fridley area has a variety of exciting winter events lined up for the season! Here are some highlights:

- **Lantern Light Hikes:** Join evening lantern-lit hikes at Springbrook Nature Center on December 6, January 3, February 7, and March 7. Registration is \$5 per person, and children under 5 are free.
- **Skating, Sledding, and S'mores:** Celebrate the skating season at Commons Park on January 17, 2025, from 1–3 p.m., with free skates, sledding, s'mores, crafts, and music.
- **Winterfest:** A family-friendly event on January 25, 2025, at Springbrook Nature Center, offering activities like ice bowling, snowshoeing, s'mores, crafts, and Zumba.
- **Winter Lights Contest:** Fridley residents can participate in a community-wide lights display competition. Entries will be judged on December 9–10, with maps available on December 13th for custom light tours around town.

These events provide fun options for all ages, from outdoor adventures to festive indoor activities. For more details, visit the [City of Fridley website](#)

Resident Birthdays

- 12/4 Joann Heimenson
- 12/9 Jim Kinzie
- 12/11 Dick Jansen
- 12/17 Janet Griffith
- 12/20 Diane Cary
- 12/22 Carol Jansen

Staff Birthdays

- 12/9 Winnie Karn
- 12/25 Joseph Griffin



Holidays/Special Days

- 12/7 Pearl Harbor Remembrance
- 12/21 Winter Begins
- 12/24 Christmas Eve
- 12/25 Christmas /Hanukkah Begins
- 12/25 Kwanzaa Begins
- 12/31 New Year's Eve

Entertainment

MACPHAIL HOUR	Tuesday, December 3rd 3pm
DAVID JONES	Wednesday, December 4th 1:30pm
FRIDLEY HIGH SCHOOL JAZZ BAND	Friday, December 6th 1:30pm
4 TWO THE BAR	Monday, December 9th 7pm
TARA BRUESKE	Wednesday, December 11th 2pm
TODD ANDERSON	Friday, December 13th 2pm
MARK BROWNING MILNER	Monday, December 16th 2pm
MACPHAIL UNWRAPPING MUSIC	Wednesday, December 18th 2:30pm
CHRISTMAS KARAOKE WITH LARRY & RITA	Tuesday, December 24th 2pm

Outings

MONDAY, DECEMBER 2ND 11:30AM: HI-STAKES CAFE LUNCH & BINGO
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4TH 9:30 AM: ALDI'S
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5TH 9:30AM: BINGO SENIOR CENTER
MONDAY, DECEMBER 9TH 11:30AM: HI-STAKES CAFE LUNCH & BINGO
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10TH 12PM: LIONS CLUB HOLIDAY DINNER (SIGN UP CLOSED)
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12TH 11:45AM: SENIOR TO SENIORS CONCERT IRONDALE
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13TH 9:30AM: TARGET
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18TH 4:45PM: CHANHASSEN DINNER THEATER (SIGN UP CLOSED)
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19TH 9:30AM: BINGO SENIOR CENTER
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 20TH 9:30AM: BOB'S PRODUCE
MONDAY, DECEMBER 23RD 5:45PM: CHRISTMAS LIGHTS
MONDAY, DECEMBER 30TH 9:30AM: BOB'S PRODUCE

MINNESOTA VIKINGS
FOOTBALL
SCHEDULE

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION	TV
12/1	12:00p	Cardinals	Home	FOX
12/8	12:00p	Falcons	Home	FOX
12/16	7:00p	Bears	Home	ABC
12/22	3:05p	Seahawks	Away	FOX
12/29	12:00p	Packers	Home	FOX
TBD	TBD	Lions	TBD	TBD

*Jan 11-13: Wild Card Playoff Games Jan 18-19: Divisional Playoff Games
Jan 26: Conference Championship Games Feb 9: Super Bowl LIX/New Orleans

MINNESOTA WILD
HOCKEY
SCHEDULE

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
12/3	7:00pm	Vancouver	Home
12/6	9:00pm	Anaheim	Away
12/7	7:00pm	Los Angeles	Away
12/10	8:00pm	Utah	Away
12/12	7:0pm	Edmonton	Home
12/14	1:00pm	Philadelphia	Home
12/15	5:00pm	Vegas	Home
12/18	8:30pm	Florida	Home
12/20	7:00pm	Utah	Home
12/21	6:00pm	Winnipeg	Away
12/23	7:00pm	Chicago	Home
12/27	7:00pm	Dallas	Away
12/29	7:00pm	Ottawa	Home
12/31	7:00pm	Nashville	Home

December 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
10:00 Coffee & Chat (CL) 10:30 Resident Run-Live Worship Service (T/C) 12:00 Vikings vs. Cardinals (on FOX) 1:30 Independent Card Games (DR) 2:30 Willows Sunday Matinee: Babes in Toyland (Disney) (T/C)	10:00 Coffee & Chat (CL) 10:30 Resident Ambassador Meeting (DR) 11:30 Outing: Hi-Stakes Cafe Lunch & Bingo (WFE) 1:30 Bridge Club (DR) 3:00 Margarita Monday (CL) 4:30 Puzzle Club (LIB)	10:00 Making Christmas Sugar Cookie Bars (CR) 10:00 Coffee & Chat (CL) 11:00 Live 2B Healthy Exercise with Anita (- 1R) 1:30 500 Card Club (DR) 2:30 Sugar Cookie Bar Social (CR) 3:00 Life-long learning: MacPhail Hour (CR)	9:30 Outing: Aldi's for Groceries (WFE) 10:00 Coffee & Chat (CL) 1:30 Educational Speaker: David Jones- Prohibition (CR) 2:00 National Dice Game Day: Farkle, Etc. (DR) 3:00 Hot Chocolate Social (CR) 4:30 Puzzle Club (LIB)	9:30 Bingo: Senior Center (WFE) 10:00 Coffee & Chat (CL) 11:00 Live 2B Healthy Exercise with Anita (-1R) 1:30 Hand & Foot Card Club (DR) 3:00 Happy Hour (CL) 6:00 Independent Game Night- Cards, Bunco, Dominoes, etc. (DR)	10:00 Coffee & Chat (CL) 10:30 Baking Peppermint Chocolate Chip Cookies (CR) 1:30 Fridley High School Jazz Band (WL) 1:30 Dominoes (CL) 2:30 Cribbage Card Club (CL) 4:30 Puzzle Club (LIB)	10:00 Coffee & Chat (CL) 1:30 Independent Card Games (DR) 2:30 Willows Saturday Matinee: Last Christmas (MAX) (T/C) 4:00 Puzzle Club (LIB)	
10:00 Coffee & Chat (CL) 10:30 Resident Run-Live Worship Service (T/C) 12:00 Vikings vs. Falcons (FOX) 1:00 St. Williams Christmas Caroling (CR) 1:30 Independent Card Games (DR) 2:30 Willows Sunday Matinee: Christmas with the Kranks (Amazon) (T/C)	10:00 Coffee & Chat (CL) 11:30 Outing: Hi-Stakes Cafe Lunch & Bingo (WFE) 1:30 Bridge Club (DR) 3:00 Margarita Monday (CL) 4:30 Puzzle Club (LIB) 6:00 Girl Scout Troop 18675 (Decorating Christmas Cookies) (DM) 7:00 Holiday Show with 4 to the Bar (CR)	10:00 Coffee & Chat (CL) 10:30 Catholic Communion with St. Williams (T/C) 11:00 Live 2B Healthy Exercise with Anita (-1R) 12:30 Outing: Lions Club Holiday Dinner (WFE) 1:30 500 Card Club (DR) 2:00 Christmas Movie Matinee: The Nutcracker (Disney) (T/C)	10:00 Coffee & Chat (CL) 10:30 Rick Steves: European Christmas (T/C) 1:30 Farkle! Dice Game (DR) 2:00 Entertainment: Tara Brueske (CR) 3:00 Hot Chocolate Social (CR) 4:30 Puzzle Club (LIB)	10:00 Coffee & Chat (CL) 11:00 Live 2B Healthy Exercise with Anita (-1R) 11:45 Outing: Senior to Seniors Concert Irondale (WL) 1:00 Gingerbread House Making (DM) 1:30 Hand & Foot Card Club (DR) 3:00 Happy Hour (CL) 6:00 Independent Game Night- Cards, Bunco, Dominoes, etc. (DR)	9:30 Outing: Shopping Target (WFE) 10:00 Coffee & Chat (CL) 1:30 Dominoes (CL) 2:00 Entertainment: Todd Anderson (A Crooner Christmas) (CR) 2:30 Cribbage Card Club (CL) 4:30 Puzzle Club (LIB) 6:00 Tour of Homes (Apartments)	10:00 Coffee & Chat (CL) 1:30 Independent Card Games (DR) 2:30 Willows Saturday Matinee: Miracle on 34th Street (Disney) (T/C) 4:00 Puzzle Club (LIB)	
10:00 Coffee & Chat (CL) 10:30 Resident Run-Live Worship Service (T/C) 1:30 Independent Card Games (DR) 2:30 Willows Sunday Matinee: Love Actually (Amazon) (T/C)	9:30 Resident Ambassador Appreciation Breakfast (DR) 10:00 Coffee & Chat (CL) 1:30 Bridge Club (DR) 2:00 Entertainment: Mark Browning Milner (CR) 3:15 Margarita Monday (CL) 4:30 Puzzle Club (LIB) 7:00 Vikings vs. Bears (ABC)	10:00 Coffee & Chat (CL) 11:00 Live 2B Healthy Exercise with Anita (-1R) 1:30 500 Card Club (DR) 2:00 Resident Council (CR) 3:00 Ice Cream Bars after Resident Council (CR)	10:00 Coffee & Chat (CL) 12:00 Christmas Lunch (Residents Only) 1:30 Farkle! Dice Game (DR) 2:30 Life-long learning: MacPhail Unwrapping Music (CR) 3:30 Hot Chocolate Social (CR) 4:30 Puzzle Club (LIB) 4:45 Outing: Chanhassen Dinner Theater (White Christmas) (WFE)	9:30 Bingo: Senior Center (WFE) 10:00 Coffee & Chat (CL) 11:00 Live 2B Healthy Exercise with Anita (-1R) 1:30 Hand & Foot Card Club (DR) 3:00 Happy Hour (CL) 6:00 Independent Game Night- Cards, Bunco, Dominoes, etc. (DR)	9:30 Outing: Shopping Bob's Produce 10:00 Coffee & Chat (CL) 1:30 Dominoes (CL) 2:00 Christmas Sweater Social (CR) 2:30 Cribbage Card Club (CL) 4:30 Puzzle Club (LIB)	10:00 Coffee & Chat (CL) 1:30 Independent Card Games (DR) 2:30 Willows Saturday Matinee: Elf (MAX) (T/C) 4:00 Puzzle Club (LIB)	
10:00 Coffee & Chat (CL) 10:30 Resident Run-Live Worship Service (T/C) 1:30 Independent Card Games (DR) 2:30 Willows Sunday Matinee: Christmas Vacation (MAX) (T/C) 3:05 Vikings at Seahawks (FOX)	10:00 Christmas Movie Marathon Day: A Christmas Story (MAX) (T/C) 10:00 Coffee & Chat (CL) 1:00 Christmas Movie Marathon Day: White Christmas (Amazon) (T/C) 1:30 Bridge Club (DR) 3:00 Holiday Happy Hour with Santa (CL) 5:45 Outing: Christmas Lights Tour (WFE)	10:00 Coffee & Chat (CL) 10:30 Christmas Trivia (CR) 1:30 500 Card Club (DR) 2:00 Christmas Karaoke with Rita & Larry with Hot Chocolate & Cookies (DR)			10:00 Coffee & Chat (CL) 11:00 Live 2B Healthy Exercise with Anita (-1R) 1:30 Hand & Foot Card Club (DR) 3:00 Happy Hour (CL) 6:00 Independent Game Night- Cards, Bunco, Dominoes, etc. (DR)	10:00 Coffee & Chat (CL) 10:30 Documentary: Endurance (Hulu) (T/C) 1:30 Dominoes (CL) 2:30 Cribbage Card Club (CL) 4:30 Puzzle Club (LIB)	10:00 Coffee & Chat (CL) 1:30 Independent Card Games (DR) 2:30 Willows Saturday Matinee: Deadpool & Wolverine (Disney) (T/C) 4:00 Puzzle Club (LIB)
10:00 Coffee & Chat (CL) 10:30 Resident Run-Live Worship Service (T/C) 12:00 Vikings vs. Packers (FOX) 1:30 Independent Card Games (DR) 2:30 Willows Sunday Matinee: A Man Called Otto (Disney) (T/C)	9:30 Outing: Shopping Bob's Produce (WFE) 10:00 Coffee & Chat (CL) 1:30 Bridge Club (DR) 3:00 Margarita Monday (CL) 4:30 Puzzle Club (LIB)	10:00 Coffee & Chat (CL) 11:00 Live 2B Healthy Exercise with Anita (-1R) 1:30 500 Card Club (DR) 2:00 History Trivia (CR) 3:30 Documentary: Billy & Molly (Hulu) (T/C) 7:00 New Years Eve Social- Bring your own drinks and food (CR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -1R Exercise Gym CL Club Room 1st Floor CR Community Room 2nd Floor DM Dimensions DR Dining Room 1st Floor LIB Library 2nd Floor T/C Theater/Chapel 2nd Floor WFE Willows Front Entrance WL Willows Lobby 				

Environmental Services Updates

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

I'm sure many of you are getting in the festive mood; but as you decorate, please remember that "real" trees or wreaths are **NOT** permitted anywhere in the building. Santa still visits if you use an artificial tree...

WINTER IS COMING!

Just a reminder...and I feel it's going to be **verrry** snowy. If you park a car outside, it will be your responsibility to dig out and move your car so the plowing company can clear the parking lot. You may want to rent an indoor stall to avoid being plowed in. Don't wait for the snowstorm to come!

RESIDENT REMINDER SHEET

I have put a number of these comments/instructions together on for anyone who wants them. If you would like one, please see the front desk receptionist. They will print a copy and put it in your mailbox. I will update them periodically.

THERMOSTATS: Seasonal Changeover:

As a Willows Bend resident, you control the heat and cooling by using the thermostat on your wall; it will not automatically change from Cool to Heat. The system button controls "Heat/Cool/Off" and the Fan button controls "On vs Auto" are located under a flip-down cover at the bottom of most thermostats (some have them exposed). If you set the Fan to "ON", it will run ALL the time, in "AUTO" mode the fan comes on when needed. If you need assistance, call or stop by the front desk to make a Work Order. If maintenance is not on site, someone will investigate your concern as soon as possible.

STORAGE OF ITEMS

Please keep in mind that our building has sprinkler heads in all areas of the building/apartments, even in most closets. All items **MUST** be kept 18" away from those sprinklers or it is a violation of the fire code. You also do not want to bump those heads and set off a spray of water that cannot be shut off, except by the fire department; it would be a costly accident.

FIRE DRILL

This month's fire drill will be a silent drill on the overnight shift, and we will pull the alarm the following day. A reminder will be posted in several areas 3 days before the drill.

COMMUNITY ROOM DECK IS CLOSED

The community room deck is closed due to needed repairs. We cannot lock the door, but please keep guests from using the deck.

TRASH/RECYCLING:

ALL trash must be in a tied garbage bag and sent down the Trash Chute located on the wall. Please remember, the wheeled bins are **ONLY for clean RECYCLEABLE items listed on the containers: Plastic containers, paper, and glass bottles**. All recyclable food containers should be thoroughly rinsed before recycling them. Cardboard boxes should be flattened and stacked behind/beside the recycling container. If you have put your recyclable items in a plastic bag, it is no longer recyclable and must go down the Trash Chute. If the recycling bin is full, PLEASE alert the front desk to have it changed out.

Tom Miller, Environmental Services Director

