

# Holiday Guide

2025



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## Family-friendly things to do during holiday vacations, and beyond

With the holidays come school vacations and sometimes work vacations, and Massachusetts has lots to do in the winter months. Here are some cool (literally) things you could do over the holidays and beyond. Some require a longer drive (sometimes kids fall asleep on the way home), and some require snow but some do not. Regardless, you're sure to find a few cool ways to enjoy your winter vacation!

### Ice Skating

**Oval Ice Skating Rink at Worcester Common**, the 12,000 square foot ice skating rink in the heart of downtown Worcester is larger than the rink at New York City's Rockefeller Center. Check the website for special skating events (some on school vacations) [www.worcesterma.gov/worcester-common-oval/ice-skating](http://www.worcesterma.gov/worcester-common-oval/ice-skating)

**Boston Common Frog Pond** is iconic for a winter skate.

### Skiing, snow tubing, snowboarding

**Nashoba Valley Ski Area** in Westford is great for families, and they have tubing lanes too.

**Wachusett Mountain** in Princeton

**Ski Ward** in Shrewsbury is well-designed and perfect for beginners looking to learn and experts seeking a challenge

**Weston Ski Track** offers cross-country skiing or snowshoeing

### Winter Hiking & Walks

**Ashland State Park**, Ashland

**Hopkinton State Park**, Hopkinton

**Broad Meadow Brook Conservation Center**, Worcester

**Wachusett Mountain Reservation**, Princeton

**Leominster State Forest**, Leominster

**Mount Greylock State Reservation**, Lanesborough

**Great Brook Farm** in Carl-

isle has groomed trails for cross-country skiing plus educational tours.

**Salem Witch Trials Memorial** in Salem. You're sure to miss the crowds if you visit during the winter months.

### Indoor Winter Escapes

**Tower Hill Botanic Garden** in Boylston has greenhouses that are warm and full of plants

**Apex Entertainment** in Marlborough has an arcade, bowling, bumper cars, go karting, laser tag, pool, ropes, and sports simulators.

**Roller Kingdom** in Hudson, the ultimate roller-skating destination.

**LEGO Discovery Center** Boston in Somerville is Boston's ultimate kid's indoor playground.

**Sky Zone Indoor Trampoline Park** in Providence is perfect for burning energy on a cold day.

### FAMILY-FRIENDLY

*continued on page 5*

## Practical tips for the holidays: Deadlines, budgeting, scam protection and more

As joyful as the holiday season can be, it can also bring a long list of things to do, busy stores, full airports, and plenty of pressure. A little planning can go a long way toward keeping spirits bright. Here are practical tips to help make shopping, celebrations, and travel go more smoothly this year.

### Shipping and mailing

- Shipping deadlines vary, but this is a good guideline. In general, the closer to the holiday you ship a package, the longer it will take.

- Use tracking numbers, request secure delivery instructions, and order online gifts early to avoid backorders and porch theft.

- Ground shipping: usually needs to go out 1-2 weeks before the holiday

- Priority / 2-Day: typically the week before

- Overnight services: often 2-3 days before (but faster means more expensive)

- International shipping: send 3-4 weeks early when possible

- Order early online to avoid sold-out items and backorders

- Use package tracking and delivery instructions (porch pirates often increase around the holidays)

### Holiday budgeting made easier

- Set a total seasonal budget and divide it into categories such as gifts, food, and travel.

- Track spending with a notes app or spreadsheet to avoid surprises.

- Try a family gift exchange or adopt the four-gift guideline for kids: want, need, wear, read.

- Homemade gifts—cookies, ornaments, framed photos—can be thoughtful and affordable.

- DIY or low-cost gift ideas: baked goods, framed photos, ornaments, playlists, acts of service coupons.

- Shop sales smartly: compare prices, avoid impulse buys, stick to your list.

- Consumable gifts are great for the person who has everything (or really does not want another thing)

### Online safety and scam prevention

- Beware of fake shipping texts/emails—check tracking only through official carrier sites.

- Use secure websites (look for "https" in the URL).

- Avoid deals that seem too good to be true from unknown sellers. (Remember the old adage:

### TIPS

*continued on page 5*

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# Ways to help your community during the holidays

The holidays can be a time of joy for many, but they can be a time of struggle for some making the holidays the perfect time to give back or pay it forward. Here are some ways to help your community during the holidays.

**1. Food pantries.** Food pantries welcome donations year-round but there is an increased need at the holidays, especially this year. Reach out to a local food pantry to learn their needs, they often have a wish list on their website. Top needs are usually canned goods, grocery gift cards, baby formula, and hygiene products.

**2. Winter clothing.** Many food pantries, churches, and businesses hold coat drives and collect other winterwear to help ensure everyone stays warm dur-

ing the coldest months.

**3. Nursing homes/senior living.** Older adults in nursing homes or living alone often cherish connection during the holidays. Contact your local senior center to see how you can help. Often communities have greeting card projects, deliver meals, or simply spend time in conversation. A one-on-one visit or a caroling group (of children or adults) can bring holiday cheer.

**4. Toy/book drives.** Toy and book drives remain a beloved tradition, helping ensure every child wakes up to something special. Contact local churches, youth centers, or a school Outreach Coordinator to see what needs your community might have.

**5. Shelters.** Contact a soup kitchen or shelter to see if they

have a need. Often, they are overwhelmed with volunteers at the holidays; if that's the case, consider signing up to help in January instead.

**6. Animal shelters.** Animal shelters often see an influx of pets during winter months and appreciate donations of food, blankets, and supplies. Volunteers can help with dog walking or cat socialization, and can also foster a pet. Fostering a pet can help a community member in crisis who has a short-term need for pet care.

**7. Be neighborly.** You might not have to go far to find someone in need. Someone in your immediate neighborhood might need help shoveling or running errands at this time of year. Ask your friends and neighbors, ask the senior center, or post on your town's Facebook

page, you're sure to find someone in need (and likely get some additional volunteers to help you). You might learn of someone who doesn't want company at the holidays but would appreciate having a meal or baked goods dropped off.

**8. Small businesses.** A great way to support your community year-round is to shop at local businesses. Gift cards to local establishments is a great way to support your community (and local economy).

*Wishing you a Joyous Holiday Season and a Happy and Safe New Year!*

- From the staff of LocalTownPages, The Free Press and Xpress Papers

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# Holiday Happenings

## December

• Bellingham Annual Holiday House Decorating Contest Throughout December: Get ready to light up the town! Residents are encouraged to participate in the annual Holiday House Decorating Contest. Judging will take place in December, with winners announced later in the month. Full details will be available on the Bellingham Lions Club Facebook page.

### Monday, December 1

Cookies and Carols at 4 p.m., United Presbyterian Church, 51 Cottage St., Whitinsville. Kick off the Advent season with the singing of Advent and Christmas Carols led by a guest organ player (William Cudmore, who has played for the Woo Sox) and pianist (Eileen Straub, the church's Minister of Music). There will be activities for the kids and singing of seasonal songs. For more information, call 508-234-8220.

### Thursday, December 4

• Dean College's Holiday Lighting Ceremony: Every year, Dean College welcomes the Franklin community to witness the annual holiday lighting on its lawn on Awpie Way. This year's event includes holiday entertainment and performances by Dean students. Holiday lightings will include a Christmas Tree, A Menorah, and a Kwanzaa Kinara.

### Friday, December 5

• Olde Sturbridge Village, Sturbridge, 2-8 p.m. Christmas by Candlelight, tickets required. Experience the history of Christmas festivities, relish old traditions and create new ones. Also Saturday Dec. 6, Sunday, Dec. 7; 12-14; 19-23; and 27-30 [www.osv.org/event/christmas-by-candlelight](http://www.osv.org/event/christmas-by-candlelight)

• Vaillancourt Folk Art's Blaxton Hall Theatre, Sutton "A Christmas Carol" with Gerald Charles Dickens – Nov. 28 2-4 p.m. and 6-8 p.m. Nov. 30 1-3 p.m. and 5-7 p.m. This performance by Charles Dickens' great-great-grandson gives life to the beloved holiday ghost story. performance of The Christmas Carol. The two-hour performance includes intermission. This one-man tour- de-force includes Dickens portraying 26 different characters using different gestures, vocal changes and mannerisms. Due to length, the show is not recommended for children under the age of 8 years old. [Valfa.com/calendar](http://Valfa.com/calendar)

• Holiday Tree Lighting, 6 p.m. at the Auburn Fire Station Headquarters, 47 Auburn Street. Special appearance by Santa Claus. Cookies (sponsored by Central one), the Dance Dazzlers, AHS Marching Band & Chorus/SWIS Honor Choir/AHS Chamber Singers/ Boy & Girl Scouts/ hot cocoa, coffee and cookies baked by Bay Path Culinary Arts students

• Exsultet! A Celebration of Voices - 7:30 p.m. at the Christ Lutheran Church, 113 Union St., Natick. Tickets are \$20 for

general admission, \$15 for students and seniors, and free for children aged 12 and under. Visit [www.exsultet.us](http://www.exsultet.us) for more information.

• Festival of Lights at the Worcester Common. The municipality's annual Festival of Lights event will take place on Friday, Dec. 5, 2025 from 4:30 - 9 p.m. on the Worcester Common Oval and adjacent streets. This free, family-friendly event will host a number of lighting features, ice skating, food vendors, community organizations, and performances. A highlight for Festival of Lights visitors is the lighting of the tree, which will take place at 6 p.m.

### Saturday, December 6

• 4th Annual Oxford Holiday Extravaganza with 70 vendors, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. The Student Council will also host its Breakfast with Santa from 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. in the cafeteria. Cost is \$5 per person, including breakfast and a photo with Santa and Mrs. Claus. Also, a raffle table set up with vendor-donated items, \$1 per ticket or 15 for \$10. Cash only for raffle and breakfast. The Holiday Lights Parade starts at the North Oxford Fire Station at 5 p.m. and concludes with the tree lighting at the Joslin Park Bandstand. Hot cocoa and treats for all.

• Waters Farm Preservation, Sutton. Breakfast with Santa, 9:30 a.m., sponsored by Sen. Ryan Fattman and Stephanie Fattman. Breakfast, photos, crafts. Free, but reservations are required. <https://bit.ly/breakfastwithsantatickets>

• Sutton Chain of Lights from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., in various locations, Sutton. Celebrate Christmas in historic Sutton with businesses, churches and organizations in town for the annual Christmas and holiday season celebration. Hop on a free trolley for rides to more than three dozen locations to do shopping, enjoy delicious food, kids' activities and animals. The Sutton High School Band plays traditional carols and Christmas tunes at 5 p.m. on the Town Common and Santa Claus comes by to light the Town Christmas tree. Live performance by Sam James of the Kelly Clarkson Show and The Voice at Vaillancourt Folk Art from 11 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

• Christmas Fair at First Congregational Church of Dudley, 135 Center Road 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Santa Claus, live entertainment, vendors, LBS gift shop, cookie corner, basket raffles, quilt raffle. Live auction starts at 1:30 p.m.

• Uxbridge First Holiday Night Parade and Celebration . The parade starts at 4:30 p.m. It begins at Rivulet Street and ends at the Town Common on Route 16. Local businesses, community groups, three high school marching bands, fire dancing, ice sculpture and the arrival of Santa & Mrs. Claus.

• St. Blaise Parish Island of Misfit Toys Fair, at St. Blaise Church, 1158 S. Main St.,

Bellingham, will take place on December 6, from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. The fair feature a Country Store, with baubles and other unique crafts created by the Holy Crafters, St. Blaise parishioners, who, like Santa's elves, work throughout the year to create items to sell at the annual event. This holiday bazaar will also feature a craft table with handmade Christmas decor, tree ornaments, and water bottle holders, to name a few. There will be games for adults and kids, great food from the Cafe which will be open 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., and homemade sweet treats from the Country Bake Shop. There will be several raffles going on throughout the day.

• Annual Jolly Holly Fair! This longtime tradition of more than 70 years is sure to help you find the right gift for anyone on your list! We have many local artisans and vendors, needlework, Silent Auction, crafts, food, and much more! We also have Pictures with Santa, and face painting! We hope to see you there! 9am-2pm Millis Church of Christ, 142 Exchange St. Millis.

• Hopedale Winter Stroll & Shop Hop: 12-7 p.m. The 14th Annual Hopedale Winter Stroll and Shop Hop takes place at many stops along Hopedale Street and Dutcher Street including many historic buildings such as the Draper Gym, Hopedale Community House, Bancroft Memorial Library, Hopedale Unitarian Church, Union Evangelical Church and the Little Red Shop Museum. Grab a drink from the mobile Irish pub and a meal from one of our food trucks or Hopedale restaurants and then shop multiple vendor locations that will showcase work from local vintage vendors, hand makers, artisans, food vendors and mobile shops. Many businesses across Hopedale will take part in the Stroll and Shop Hop with special offers for customers. Hop on the shuttle bus and visit them! All of this ending in the long standing and popular town tradition of the tree lighting and Santa visit at the Hopedale Community House. Check out our website for more information and to see pictures of previous years! <https://friendsofhistorichopedale.com/winter-stroll>

• St. John's Church Christmas Fair: 9 am to 2 pm at 237 Pleasant Street, Franklin. Do your holiday shopping in one stop: Buy gift cards from popular restaurants and stores; silent auction and raffle items. Check out gift baskets with themes like sports; spa, health and wellness, and pet items. Give the gift of food, wine, coffees, or teas. Appreciate unique, hand-made crafts? You'll love the beautiful fresh wreaths and greens, as well as cozy scarves, mittens, and hats. Choose delicious treats like cookies, fudge and other baked goods at the Cookie Walk. Snacks and drinks can be purchased during the fair. For more information: Facebook at St John's Episcopal Church, [www.stjohnsfranklinma.org](http://www.stjohnsfranklinma.org) or call 508-528-2387

• United Parish Holiday Bazaar: 1- 3 p.m. 1 Church Street, Upton

• Hopkinton Holiday Stroll: 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.: It will be a great way to get all of your shopping done and have a fantastic time doing it. Go from store to store by foot or cover much more mileage by using your own vehicle. Take a ride on a horse drawn carriage around the Common, watch the ice sculpture creation and stay for the annual Tree lighting on the Hopkinton Town Common that evening.

• Holiday & Vendor Craft Fair at Bellingham High. BHS Operation Graduation 2026, which plans an all-night safe party for BHS graduates, will hold a Holiday & Vendor Craft Fair at Bellingham High School on December 6th, from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m., 60 Blackstone St., Bellingham.

For more information on BHS Operation Graduation, email [bhsmaopgrad@gmail.com](mailto:bhsmaopgrad@gmail.com).

• Luminary Night, Norwood Town Common, 4-6 p.m. The Norwood Circle of Hope Foundation invites you to help light up the Circle of Hope by purchasing a luminary to be lit on the Town Common. Continuing a Norwood tradition that began 23 years ago, the luminaries are considered a symbol of Life, Hope, the Season, and Remembrance of others. Luminaries can be purchased for \$5 each by sending your payment to COH, PO BOX 421, Norwood, MA 02062, or by stopping by Murph's Place Restaurant at 58 Broadway, Norwood. You may include a brief message of life, hope, the season or remembrance to be written on the luminary. You will also find an order form on the Circle of Hope website, [NORWOODCOH.ORG](http://NORWOODCOH.ORG).

• Annual Christmas Fair - 9 am to 2 pm. The fair has a wide variety of fresh balsam wreaths, cemetery baskets, gift and bake tables and raffles. Free admission! Come and enjoy! St. Gabriel's Church, 151 Mendon Street, Upton

### Sunday, December 7

• The annual Holliston Lions' Breakfast with Santa will be held on Sunday, December 7, 2025, from 8 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at the Placentino-Miller School Cafetorium, 235 Woodland St., Holliston. This event, which has been held for over 25 years, will include breakfast, photos with Santa (\$5, or \$4 with a donation for the food pantry), and entertainment on stage provided by local dance academies and troops, and the Holliston High School Performing Arts band and chorus. Donations for the Holliston Pantry Shelf and Toys for Tots will be accepted, and any proceeds will benefit Holliston Music and Arts Parents Association, the Food Pantry, and other local charitable needs. Children under 2 eat free, and breakfast is \$8 for those ages 2-11 and \$12 for those 12 and older. The event is supported by local businesses, including Garelick Farms, Holliston Superette, and

Fiske's.

• Exsultet! A Celebration of Voices. 2 p.m. at the First Congregational Church, 725 Washington St., Holliston. Tickets are \$20 for general admission, \$15 for students and seniors, and free for children aged 12 and under. Visit [www.exsultet.us](http://www.exsultet.us) for more information.

• During Grafton Celebrates the Holidays, the Unitarian Universalist Society of Grafton and Upton will hold a Holiday Faire at 3 Grafton Common. Join us between 11:30 AM and 3:30 PM for food, artisan gifts, vintage holiday decorations, seasonal music, and crafts for children. At 2 PM, enjoy a performance by the the Hand Bell Choir and a reading of "'Twas the Night before Christmas."

• The Charles River Chorale, under the direction of Ashley Nelson-Oneschuk, will present "Lift and Illuminate Our Voices at the Medway High School Auditorium at 2 p.m. The ambitious program will feature two major works by American composers. "Illuminate," a 5-movement choral work accompanied by a seven-member string orchestra, and "Sing Together" commissioned by the Chorale to celebrate our 40th anniversary, which will be performed for the first time. For more information, visit: <https://our.show/crcwinterconcert>.

• Annual Christmas Bazaar, St. Joseph's Parish Center, 68 Central Street, Auburn, from 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. Come enjoy an old-fashioned Christmas Bazaar and check out the collectibles, attic treasures, jewelry, plants, knit goods, holiday décor, toys, candy, baked items and so much more! Take a chance on one of our many raffles. There is something for everyone! Free Admission. Plenty of parking available. Handicap accessible.

• Grafton Celebrates the Holidays. Start the day with a Pancake Breakfast at North Grafton Elementary School 46 Waterville Street with crafts, a book fair, and holiday photos from 8 - 11 a.m. Then visit designated Frosty Stops around town, 12-4 p.m. A trolley service will be available to help with transportation between key locations. Craft & Vendor Fair, 10 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. at Grafton High School, 24 Providence Rd., Grafton. Over 75 vendors featuring baked goods, home décor, jewelry, woodworking, activities and more. Enter to win a special giveaway.

• Tea at the Museum: The Grafton Historical Society will host a holiday tea from 2-4 p.m. at 71 Main St., Grafton.

• Community Strum: Apple Tree Arts will host a community strum-along or sing-along to holiday songs starting at 2 p.m.

Events on the Common: 3:30-4:30 p.m. Boy Scout Troop 2019 will

**TIPS***continued from page 2*

If it seems too good to be true, it probably is, and don't risk it).

- Enable package delivery instructions or lockboxes when possible.

**Hosting without stress**

- Plan menus ahead to avoid ingredient shortages and high last-minute prices.

- Invite guests to contribute a dish or dessert to ease your workload (most people are eager to help in some way)

- Prep and freeze ahead items like soups, casseroles, cookie dough.

- Stock the basics (toilet paper, paper towels, hot cocoa, tea).

- Have activities for all ages like puzzles, board games, craft table, kids' corner.

- And don't forget the music which will help set the mood and will also make any awkward silences less...silent.

**Gift-giving & wrapping**

- Keep a running gift list to avoid duplicates and overspending.

- Be sure to store the gifts in a place you'll remember (or keep a list in your notes app).

- Buy extra small gifts like gift cards, candles, chocolates for surprise needs. Be sure to add a tag so you're ready to go (make sure you indicate to yourself what's inside).

- Use recycled or reusable wrapping: kraft paper, bags, tea towels, newspaper with twine. If the kraft paper or backside of other paper is blank, have children (or adults) personalize it with holiday scenes.

- Perhaps most important: Always label as you wrap so you don't forget what's inside!

**Pets & Plants**

- Keep chocolate, poinsettias, and certain decorations away from pets.

- Secure trees and breakable ornaments if you have curious animals or toddlers.

- Have a safe space for pets during gatherings.

**Travel tips**

- Book early and travel mid-week to avoid the peak rush (Tuesdays often offer the best rates).

- Arrive at the airport earlier than normal as lines will be longer and weather delays are more common, and other issues may arise.

- Pack essentials in carry-ons (medications, chargers, a change of clothes, snacks) in case of lost luggage or delays.

- Check road conditions and weather forecasts before driving; keep a winter emergency kit in the car (blanket, shovel, scraper, flashlight, water, backup phone charger).

- Consider digital luggage trackers for luggage, backpacks, strollers, etc.

- Download entertainment ahead of time for kids (and adults!) in case of limited Wi-Fi.

**Holiday self-care**

- Schedule downtime the way you schedule events.

- Share responsibilities for cooking, planning, and shopping.

- Embrace "good enough" instead of perfection.

- Stay hydrated, rest well, and get outside when possible.

- Do what you need to do to enjoy this time of year!

**FAMILY-FRIENDLY***continued from page 2*

**Colonial Theatre** in Pittsfield is a historic theater with a variety of shows.

**Festivals & Seasonal Events**

**Claflin Hill's Holiday Pops Show** in Milford, Dec.

13 only. [www.claflinhill.org/symphony-series](http://www.claflinhill.org/symphony-series)

**Southwick's Zoo's Winter Wonderland** in Mendon. Four million holiday lights, larger-than-life displays, enchanting polar bear displays, and much more. Through Dec. 28. <https://southwickszoo.com/winter-wonderland/>

**La Salette Christmas Fes-**

**tival of Lights** in Attleboro, more than one million lights through Jan. 4, 2026. [lasalette-attleboroshrine.org/](http://lasalette-attleboroshrine.org/)

**Drumlin Farm** in Lincoln offers maple sugaring programs in Feb. and March but be sure to register today.

**Lowell Winterfest** is a fun carnival-style winter festival with tubing, wagon rides, and

seasonal treats. Save the date: Feb. 2026 <https://www.facebook.com/LowellWinterFest/>

**Staycation Family Time**

**Outside:** Build a snow fort, have a snow day scavenger hunt, go sledding

**Inside:** Board games, books, build a blanket fort, hide and seek, themed eye-spies, deco-

rate windows with special markers.

**Don't forget your local public library** could have both indoor and outdoor games you could borrow.

Finally, remember to be kind and patient with yourself and others, which add to the holiday fun.

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## HAPPENINGS

*continued from page 4*

give away homemade holiday treats. 3:45-3:55 p.m. Beatz Dance Studio performs a holiday dance routine 3:55-4:10 p.m. Join the Grafton Girl Scouts in singing winter and holiday tunes. 4:10- 4:15 p.m. Join Rabbi Rachel as she shares a few words about Hanukkah. The event culminates on Grafton Common with Santa's arrival at 4:15 p.m., followed by the official tree-lighting ceremony.

For more information, visit [GraftonRec.com](http://GraftonRec.com)

- The 25th Annual Millbury Chain of Lights, a town-wide event to celebrate the holidays with local food, shopping and entertainment! From 10:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., various locations around town.. Enjoy nearly 40 stops in town for live music, holiday shopping, holiday figures like Buddy the Elf and the Grinch, raffles and food. Old-fashioned trolleys provide free transportation throughout the day. The event is sponsored by local businesses and concludes with a tree lighting and appearance by Santa Claus at the Millbury bandstand. [www.facebook.com/millburychainoflights/](http://www.facebook.com/millburychainoflights/)

- The Unitarian Church at 3 Grafton Common is having a traditional Church Faire and Musical Program from 11:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. Enjoy lunch with holiday music and shop local artisans for unique gifts not available anywhere else, fresh holiday greens, vintage Christmas decorations and jewelry extravaganza. Take a photo of your family in our Winter Wonderland photo booth. Free kids' crafts. Stay and enjoy a free performance by our church Hand Bell Choir at 2 p.m.

- Webster Dudley Business Alliance Holiday Stroll on Main Street, Webster from 3-6 p.m. Local shops stay open late with treats, raffles, and festive displays. Great for holiday shopping and meeting Santa before the tree lighting. Webster Holiday Parade and Tree Lighting. Parade steps off from Town Hall at 5 p.m., followed by the tree lighting at 6 p.m. Scout troops, floats, and Santa along with live music, hot cocoa and caroling.

- Auburn High School to City Hall, Auburn. Lighted Santa Parade & Tree Lighting. Live music begins at 4 p.m. at City Hall, parade begins at 4:30 p.m. After parade ends, at City Hall there will be a tree lighting, a visit from Santa, and live music. [bit.ly/AuburnSantaParadeTreeLighting2024](http://bit.ly/AuburnSantaParadeTreeLighting2024)

### Saturday, December 13

- Wreaths Across America at Highland Cemetery, Norwood, 12 noon. This is Norwood's eighth season in participating in Wreaths Across America where wreaths will be placed on local service men and women's graves at Highland and Old Parish Cemeteries. This expression is in coordination with wreath-laying ceremonies with Arlington National Cemetery and more

than 1,600 locations across 50 states in the United States. Volunteers and visitors are encouraged to arrive between 11:30 and 11:45 a.m., as the minute of silence across Norwood America and islands begins at 12 noon.

- Franklin's 2nd Annual "A-Wreath-of-Franklin." 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. Get ready to experience the magic of the holidays with Franklin's newest seasonal tradition—A Wreath of Franklin! Presented by the Franklin Cultural Council, the Franklin Cultural District Committee, Franklin Downtown Partnership and the Department of Arts, Culture, and the Creative Economy, and our incredible community partners. Celebrate local talent, small businesses, and the joyful spirit of the season. Shop small and local from a beautifully curated selection of handcrafted goods from local artists, makers, and small businesses.

Enjoy a Community Wreath Display created by artists, families, schools, and organizations showcasing the theme of "Franklin Welcomes the World," to reflect the upcoming international soccer games to be held at nearby Gillette Stadium next summer. Visit <https://franklinartsculture.my.canva.site/wreath25-program-site>

- BBA Presents Bellingham's Holiday Celebration: 4:30 p.m. parade steps off from Bellingham Middle School, ends in tree-lighting at 300th Park, in front of Municipal Building, followed by a celebration at Spartan Fitness. Follow updates on "Bellingham Holiday Celebration" on Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61563431491862>

- Auburn Recreation and Culture Holiday Arts & Craft Fair at Auburn High School, 99 Auburn Street, Auburn. With 192 vendors, artisans, awareness groups and food trucks. 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. 508-832-7736.

- Manchaug Stroll. The historic Village of Manchaug will transform into a traditional winter wonderland for the 2025 Manchaug Stroll from 4-8 p.m. Hosted by Vaillancourt Folk Art and District V House in partnership with the Sutton Fire Department, this free outdoor event celebrates the evolution of Christmas in a historic 1800s mill village. Perfect for families and friends, the Stroll offers a festive way to embrace the holiday spirit while enjoying history, music, and holiday treats.

Event Highlights: Live Music by Heartland Radio — Soak in the joyful sounds of Christmas as Heartland Radio performs live at Vaillancourt. Expect a lively mix of Christmas classics at District V!

Traditional Food and Drinks: Savor authentic baked goods by Fraulein's Bakery, Chimney Cakes (a fragrant, spiral-shaped Bulgarian pastry), and Christmas sausages for dinner at Vaillancourt along with a cash Christmas bar offering gourmet hot chocolate, glühwein imported from Nürnberg, Germany, and a selection of festive beers and wines. Meanwhile, District V will host

## HAPPENINGS

*continued on page 7*

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**HAPPENINGS**

*continued from page 6*

the 20 Hudson Street Beverage Trailer and Kith and Kin Food Truck ensuring holiday spirit flows through the night.

Special Appearances by St. Nicholas and Krampus, Holiday Shopping and Historic Strolling, Historic Experiences- Douglas Winter Stroll, Douglas from 3-6 p.m. Do some holiday shopping, listen to carolers, explore the Museum and take part in special events, and treats at the Library (special guest appearances, too!), visit the Orchard, get your trees and wreaths, grab an app or meal...best of all, take in the holiday lights on Main Street up to the Common. For more information, email [allyssamanyak@gmail.com](mailto:allyssamanyak@gmail.com).

• Santapalooza 13: Concert for A Claus: This event to support the Marines' Toys for Tots foundation will take place at the Highfields Golf & Country Club, 42 Magill Drive, Grafton.

**Sunday, December 14**

• HOLIDAY POPS with THE BVCCI The Blackstone Valley Community Chorus and Orchestra will present HERE WE COME A'CAROLING, A Holiday Pops Concert, on Sunday, December 14, 2025 at 4:00pm. The concert will take place at Valley Chapel at 14 Hunter Road in Uxbridge. Admission is free, though donations are accepted and appreciated!

**Friday, December 19**

An 18th-Century Yuletide Celebration by Candlelight with acclaimed Boston area chamber ensemble, Musicians of the Old Post Road. 7:30 – 9 p.m. Enjoy a concert steeped in the seasonal spirit and soundscape of the Baroque and early Classical eras illuminated by hundreds of candles. This festive program transports audiences across time and continent, from the frost-laced hills of Ireland and the pastoral chapels of Germany to the colonial meetinghouses of New England.

Performed on period instruments and with historically informed interpretations in Blaxton Hall, Vaillancourt Folk Art. Tickets are \$60 or \$150.

**Saturday, December 20**

• Auburn Fire Rescue Department's traditional Santa Claus Tour by fire truck to visit kids and adults throughout town. Route begins at the Drury Square Fire Station. Please be patient as route completion depends upon traffic, weather and emergencies. Santa Tour: from 11 a.m. – 7 p.m. The Auburn Fire Rescue Department is expected to continue its traditional Santa tour by fire truck on Saturday, December 20, 2025. The route begins at the Drury Square Fire Station around 11 a.m. Note that times are approximate and depend on traffic, weather, and emergencies.

• Celebrate the Winter Solstice with Christmas in New England, hosted by the

Grass Roots Coffeehouse and the Rockdale Congregational Church. The concert will take place in sanctuary of the Rockdale Congregational Church at 42 Fowler Road in Northbridge. Prior to the show, come have a bowl of soup or chili, and at intermission have dessert. Proceeds go to the Church. Also we'll have our Cookie Walk at intermission. Buy a box for \$15 (or if you are a return customer with your box from last year \$10) and fill it up with cookies baked by the congregation. Admission to the show is \$20 at the door only. Doors will be open at 6:30. Seating for the 7:30 show is at a first come/first serve basis.

**Sunday, December 21**

• The Diverse Holliston Choir will present a Winter Solstice Concert on Saturday, December 21st at Holliston Town Hall. The program will include: "Crowded Table," "I Wish You Peace," "Brighter Days," "Candlelight Canon," "Here Comes the Sun," "Seasons of Love," "Stand by Me," "Dona Nobis Pacem," and "This Little Light of Mine." If interested in joining the choir, email [sarastalnak@gmail.com](mailto:sarastalnak@gmail.com).

**Thursday, December 25**

• Parishioners and volunteers from the Blackstone Valley United Methodist Church would like to cordially invite everyone to our Free Community Christmas Dinner, including the usual holiday meal favorites, roast turkey, potatoes, vegetables, squash, stuffing, cranberry sauce and dessert. The

dinner is free of charge. The meal will be served from 12 – 2 p.m. in the Faith Hall, 61 Linwood Avenue, Whitinsville. Parking is available behind the church, accessible from Church Street. For more information, call the church office, 508-234-2275.

• Christmas Dinner at St. Mary Parish, 77 Mendon Street, Uxbridge. Free for neighbors, friends and anyone who might otherwise be alone on Christmas Day,

enjoy music, caroling and a holiday feast from 5- 7 p.m.

**Wednesday, December 31**

• The Friends of Natick Trails is planning the fifth Cochituate Rail Trail on New Year's Eve event on Wednesday, Dec. 31 from 4:30-7:30 p.m.

Activities will include entertainment, fire pits, a photo booth, festive lighting, food and beverages, and other attractions.

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