A Very Virden Christmas Presents Santa's Workshop

veryvirdenchristmas.ca



Special Issue ~ Friday, November 13, 2026



A Very Virden Christmas Kicks Off November 19

By Lauren Halowaty
Empire-Advance

It is time to bundle up and celebrate one of the most wonderful times in town! Downtown Virden is getting ready to transform into a cozy winter wonderland on Thursday, November 19. The entire community is invited to come together for a cheerful evening full of festive traditions, fun activities for all ages, and plenty of holiday spirit at the annual Downtown Kick Off Party.

Festive Fun for the Whole Family

The evening is packed with exciting events spread across town. Families can drop by the Lions Hall at 230 Nelson Street to snap a holiday photo with Santa himself! While waiting for your picture, children can enjoy an arts and crafts station as well. Attendees are encouraged to bring non-perishable food item donations, which will be collected right at the Hall for the food cupboard. Over at the Historic CP Train Station, Arts Mosaic will also have arts and crafts for kids, and the big kids at heart.

Warm up with snacks

The street will be buzzing with excitement thanks to a Downtown Bonfire on 7th Avenue and Nelson Street (the only set of street lights). Gather round' to enjoy free s'mores and popcorn while playing a game of street hockey alongside the Oil Caps players. You will also find Cooper with Cooper's Cornhole from Valleyview Co-op joining in the fun! To keep the energy high, tune in to station 92.3 FM for a Downtown Dance Party featuring Norm of the North.

Chill with Mrs. Claus

Young readers can head to the Border Regional Library for a holiday Storytime with Mrs. Claus, featuring cozy readings at 6:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. To bring even more warmth to the night, everyone is invited to gather at The Flower Attic for the heartwarming Memory Tree Light Up.

Late Night Shopping Begins

Thursday night also marks the official start of Virden's late-night shopping season. To help you cross everything off your gift list, downtown stores will be open late until 8:00 pm. For more details on upcoming holiday festivities, visit www.veryvirdenchristmas.ca. Come out, shop local, and celebrate the season with family and friends!



PHOTO BY ANNE DAVISON

Valleyview Co-op Cooper was at last year's Kick-Off party in 2025. Cooper plans to be back this year to have fun with the kids at the bonfire and he is bringing his bean bag toss game!













HOLIDAY Spirit





Making spirits bright, Virden Light Village set to return

By Beth McConnell
Empire-Advance

The magic of the holiday season will return to Virden this December as the Christmas Light Village lights up the Lions Park Campground for four festive evenings.

Taking place December 2 to 5, from 6 pm to 9 pm, the Christmas Light Village invites residents and visitors alike to experience a display featuring illuminated creations designed by local businesses, organizations, and community groups.

Organizers are once again planning for up to 20 displays, transforming the campground into a winter wonderland filled with holiday lights and seasonal cheer. Admission will be by donation, allowing visitors to enjoy the displays while supporting worthwhile community causes.

The event made a strong impression during its inaugural year, with community members turning out in large numbers despite cold temperatures. Through generous donations, a total of $4,250 was raised for local initiatives. Funds supported football players and families involved with the Selects team program, the Association for Community Living-Virden, and the Wallace District Fire Department.

Interest in this year's village is already growing, with several participants confirmed, including the Lions Hall, Valleyview Co-op, Virden Footwear, Sports & Fashion, Strike Welding, Virden Recreation and Watersports, Wolverine Supplies, Four Seasons, and Sunrise Credit Union and many more.

Organizers are continuing to seek additional businesses, organizations, and groups interested in creating a display. Those wishing to participate can contact Norm Murray at 204-748-2060 to reserve a spot.

Adding some friendly competition to the festivities, participants will have the opportunity to compete for Best Display, with the winning entry receiving a $500 gift certificate sponsored by Keystone Travel. The winner will be selected before Christmas, giving entrants the chance to showcase their creativity while helping create a memorable holiday experience for visitors.

The Christmas Light Village aims to provide a fun, family-friendly holiday experience while showcasing community creativity and supporting local causes. Whether visitors come to admire the displays, make a donation, or simply enjoy a festive evening with family and friends, organizers are hopeful the event will once again become one of Virden's brightest holiday traditions.



FILE PHOTO
Wolverine Supplies was just one of the many beautiful displays in 2025.















HOLIDAY Spirit





CPKC Holiday Train 'rock and rolls' into town





SUBMITTED PHOTO

Musicians, Tyler Shaw and the band American Authors, will be performing on Sunday, December 6 on the Holiday Train.

By Lauren Halowaty
Empire-Advance

Get ready for a festive holiday treat! On the morning of Sunday, December 6, between 10:30am and 11:00am, Virden will be treated to a fantastic live performance by American Authors and Tyler Shaw on the vibrant CPKC Holiday Train. The train will park on the North side of the tracks on 5th Ave S between Lyons Street and Ashburton Street. While Virden is a daytime stop, you can catch the train all brilliantly lit up the night before as well in Brandon, Manitoba on Rosser Ave East & West of Rosser Ave Railway Crossing from 7:00pm to 7:30pm to see the spectacular display. All of these incredible performances are completely free to attend, but generous donations of non-perishable food items are warmly encouraged to support our local food banks.

Make a day of it, start with breakfast with Santa

By Anne Davison
Empire-Advance

With a matinee performance by Theatrick Players and a 6pm Santa Clause Parade later in the day, it's promising to be busy in Virden on Saturday, Nov. 28 and a good breakfast is an important beginning to the day.

Pancakes with Santa will be served up in Tundra Oil & Gas Place banquet hall by a team of young high school students.

Hosted by Virden Collegiate Institute Grad Class of 2027, for just $10 a plate for adults and $5 for children they're serving pancakes, sausages, coffee and juice.

There's an opportunity for pictures with Santa, take your own photo or pass your phone to a VCI student and they can take a family/group photo for you. A great opportunity to get a family photo for your Christmas greeting cards.

To entertain the young'uns while parents enjoy visiting over coffee, VCI students will be armed with face paint essentials.

A colouring station will also be available for the doodlers and the artists.

This is a fundraiser for Virden Collegiate's 2027 Graduation ceremony and there will be a 50/50 draw to help with that.

Early risers and brunch lovers can enjoy Pancakes with Santa beginning in the TOGP banquet hall at 8am until 11am.



St Mary's Anglican Church Christmas Supper



at St Mary's Anglican Parish Hall
633 9th Avenue S.

December 25, 2026
Doors open at 5pm

Reservations accepted till December 21st,
Please call Barb to reserve seat
204-748-1249
Transportation will be available upon request



Wishing you warmth, rest, and happiness this Holiday Season. Cheers to a bright and productive New Year ahead.

2026 Holiday Hours
December 24 | 8:00 - 12:00
December 28 | Closed
December 31 | 8:00 - 1:00

VIRDEN AG & PARTS
560 Commowealth Drive
T: (204) 748-4469 virdenag.ca



HOLIDAY Spirit





Winter Wishes and Holiday Kisses



By Lauren Halowaty
Empire-Advance

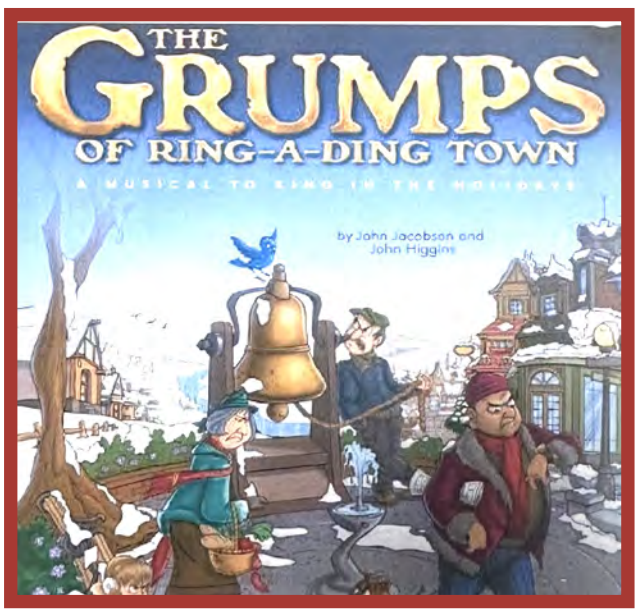
Celebrate the magic of the season as Goulter Elementary brings warmth and festive cheer to the stage! On December 10, students will present their heartwarming Christmas concert, "Winter Wishes and Holiday Kisses." Under the inspired direction of Mrs. Jill Radwanski, the school is ready to deliver an enchanting showcase filled with twinkling melodies and seasonal joy.

Showtimes at the Auditorium Theatre, Dec. 10:
Matinee: 1:30 p.m.
Evening: 7:00 p.m.

Join us for an unforgettable afternoon or evening full of festive charm, bright smiles, and heartfelt holiday cheer!

Mary Montgomery presents the Grumps

By Beth McConnell
Empire-Advance



Students at Mary Montgomery School are busy preparing for their annual Christmas concert, The Grumps of Ring a Ding Town, which will be presented twice on Dec. 3.

The approximately 45-minute musical tells the story of Ring a Ding Town, a once-cheerful village where the bells have mysteriously stopped ringing. As the joyful spirit of the town fades, the residents become grumpy and discouraged. When a major winter storm threatens the community, fear and panic begin to spread. It is then that one brave child steps forward with an important reminder: by relying on one another, the townspeople can overcome any challenge. As kindness, cooperation and friendship return to the village, the spirit of the season is restored, and Ring a Ding Town becomes a happy place once again.

The concert will begin with festive performances by kindergarten, Grade 1 and Grade 2 students before Grade 3 and 4 students take the stage to present the play. The production features six songs throughout the show, with each Grade 3 and Grade 4 class performing its own feature number.

Filled with humour, heartwarming moments and an uplifting message about community and caring for others, The Grumps of Ring a Ding Town promises to be an entertaining holiday celebration for students, families and staff. The musical highlights the importance of courage, teamwork and the true spirit of Christmas, reminding audiences that even during life's storms, people are strongest when they come together.

Wishing You & Yours a
Good Old-Fashioned
Merry Christmas!
From the unmistakable scent of fresh-baked cookies to the festive twinkle of the tree, we hope your Christmas season is filled with your favorite time-honored traditions and shared with loved ones.

Virden Recreation & Watersports
210 Frontage Rd,
Virden, MB
204.748.2060
www.virdenrec.com

Bundle Up
for a Cool Christmas

The forecast sure looks merry! We hope your holiday season is a flurry of good times. Thanks for making so many great memories with us in 2026. Christmas gifts for the whole family under one roof.
Happy Holidays!
VIRDEN SPORT & FASHION
Virden, MB ~ 204.748.2143
Open til 8:00 every Thursday night until Christmas starting Nov 19
2 Great Reasons to Shop Downtown Virden

Merry Christmas & Best Wishes
Thank you for your continued support and patronage throughout the past year. We wish you a wonderful holiday season and look forward to serving you in 2027.
WOLVERINE SUPPLIES
1 River Valley Road, North,
Virden, MB
204.748.2454
wolverinesupplies.com

We're All Spruced Up for Christmas!
Tabletop Christmas Trees,
Ornaments & Lights,
Gifts & Home Decor
Your Dollar Store With More
340 King St E, Virden
204-748-3409

Happy Holidays
to all of our friends and customers

Your visits have made our year so rewarding.
Thanks for choosing us and making us part of your celebrations all year!
T's Dining & Lounge
235 Nelson St W, Virden, MB
(204) 748-1141

KEYSTONE TRAVEL.ca
190 Nelson St W, Virden, MB ~ 204.748.3351

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HOLIDAY Spirit





Christmas at the Station has lots to offer kids, parents

By Anne Davison
Empire-Advance

Throughout the five Thursday evenings of late-night shopping, Arts Mosaic's Station will be open. Beginning with the special Christmas Kick-Off Party on Nov. 19, you will find an inspiring atmosphere with shopping opportunities, a photo booth and something special to feed kids' creative side. All this within Virden's heritage train station building that will be decorated with a cozy Holiday theme.

Mosaic Market will be filled with a beautiful array of gifts and Christmas items all locally created. Thinking of sending something Very Virden to family abroad? How about a hand made gift from the Station?

Volunteers with Arts Mosaic Board of Directors take the initiative with Very Virden Christmas in the Historic CP Rail Station. Jackie Tough says, "We are looking forward to a fun festive season at the Station!"

She, along with helpers, will be guiding young creators through a different craft each Thursday. Crafting for children will begin at 4:30pm, available on a come and go basis until 7:30pm. No charge for the crafting and free hot chocolate is served.

Some of the crafts planned include:

- fabric scraps 3D Christmas trees;
- paper patchwork collage tree ornaments;
- watercolour paper angels;
- 3D festive paper baubles;
- bead & pin 3D baubles;
- faux frosted cookie ornaments;
- tissue paper stain-glass;
- decorative wooden ornaments;
- and Christmas cards

Who doesn't love dress-up? Costume Closet makes available some glamourous outfits and accessories. Jackie says, "There will be a fun dress-up space with a snow globe for selfies."



FILE PHOTO

Dress-up and a photo op at Arts Mosaic on Light-up evening 2025.

Roots and Wings, celebrating the Aud Theatre, its history and revival

By Lauren Halowaty-
Empire-Advance

Built in 1911 and officially opening its doors on leap day, Thursday, February 29, 1912, the Auditorium Theatre stands as one of Manitoba's last remaining historic opera houses. Opening night was a landmark occasion for Virden's handsome new public hall, featuring a brief formal opening before the curtain rose on the Virden Dramatic Society's production of "The Misogynist," a four-act farcical comedy accompanied by the Virden Orchestra under the direction of Mrs. Cameron-Lidington. Advance tickets sold for as little as 50 cents in the gallery to $1.50 for boxes at Higginbotham's Drug Store, where patrons were encouraged to pick up a box of Neilson's Chocolates ("The Kind That's Different") to enjoy during the performance.

Renowned across Western Canada for its outstanding acoustics, classical architecture, grand proscenium arch, and hand-painted curtain, the "AUD" has served as the social and cultural cornerstone of Virden and the surrounding region for over a century.

Throughout its rich history, the venue has continually adapted. After hosting early local vaudeville acts, it operated as a cinema from the 1920s through the 1950s before returning to its roots as a live performance space. When threatened with decay and potential demolition in the early 1980s, dedicated community members formed the Virden Auditorium Restoration Committee Inc. Raising over $80,000, the committee successfully repaired critical roof and structural damage. Over the past four decades, the committee has continuously enhanced the facility, reupholstering original seating, expanding dressing rooms, renovating the lobby, and integrating modern soundboards and live-streaming technology.

Recently, the board undertook a major seating restoration project to address the building's century-old auditorium seats. Over time, the original cast-iron seat brackets had become brittle and irreplaceable. To better accommodate modern audiences and improve accessibility, the original 16-and 17-inch seat cushions were replaced with wider 18-, 19-, and 20-inch seating. While overall capacity shifted from 507 to 425 seats, the redesign significantly expanded accessible seating for individuals with mobility needs, ensuring the building preserves its historical integrity while offering enhanced comfort for all patrons.

The AUD continues to foster a vibrant regional performing arts community. It hosts long-standing traditions such as the Virden Music and Arts Festival, active since the 1930s, alongside cherished community programs including the Virden and District Youth Choir, Virden Theatre Productions, and local school initiatives. Over the decades, the stage has also welcomed renowned national and international artists, including the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, Natalie MacMaster, Leahy, Murray McLauchlan, and the Royal Winnipeg Ballet. Beyond its cultural impact, performances at the theatre generate vital economic spin-offs for Virden's local shops, restaurants, and hotels.

To celebrate the completion of the seating restoration and honour the region's artistic heritage, an upcoming Gala will take place at the theatre on Saturday, December 12. To see the show only, tickets are $30, for the show and dinner, tickets are $100. Show is at 3pm and followed by the dinner at 5pm. The event will feature a celebratory concert highlighting historic AUD moments, established local performers with deep roots at the venue, and emerging young talent ("wings"). During the dinner, the committee will present a special recognition to Rick Kristjanson for his steadfast service as an AUD board member since the early 1980s.

Starry Strings



FILE PHOTO

St. Paul's United Church.

By Lauren Halowaty-
Empire-Advance

Experience the magic of the holiday season with a heartwarming evening of festive music presented by the Suzuki Talent Education Strings Tour Group. This enchanting Christmas performance features a talented ensemble of roughly 10 to 15 passionate young string musicians aged 5 to 17. Audiences will be treated to a joyous blend of classical masterpieces by legendary composers Vivaldi, Handel, and Bach, alongside beloved holiday carols that bring cozy warmth to the winter season. From the uplifting "Joy to the World" and the majestic "We Three Kings" to a breathtaking, rendition of "Silent Night," this sparkling event promises to fill every heart with Yuletide cheer.

See the magic for yourself on Monday, December 7, 2026, at St. Paul's United Church under the direction of Mr. Robert Richardson. Doors open at 4:00 pm, with the performance beginning at 5:00 pm, and admission is available by silver collection.









When memories light the season

By Beth McConnell
Empire-Advance

The Virden & Area Memory Tree Association is once again inviting residents to honour the memory of loved ones through its annual Christmas Memory Tree campaign, culminating with the Memory Tree Light Up ceremony on Thursday, November 19 at 7pm.

For a donation of $5, community members can have the name of a loved one featured on a memorial board displayed beside the tree. Donations can be made at one of eight collection boxes located throughout Virden, including Sunrise Credit Union, Garb & Guise, Super Thrifty, Flower Attic & Gifts, Virden Sport & Fashion, Princess Lodge, the Virden Border Regional Library, and the Dollar Store.

The light-up ceremony, which will take place outside Flower Attic, will feature performances by students from the high school choir. Westland Insurance has donated hot chocolate and cookies for those attending.

According to organizer Gina Bradbury, all proceeds from the Memory Tree campaign support the Virden Cemetery Improvement Association. While the association has not yet determined which project the fundraiser will support next year, donations have helped fund several meaningful improvements in the past. Most recently, proceeds contributed to the installation of four new benches at the cemetery.



Now a valued community tradition, the Memory Tree offers residents an opportunity to remember loved ones during the holiday season while helping enhance a local space that holds special meaning for many families.

St. Mary's makes plans for Christmas Day dinner

By Anne Davison
Empire-Advance

St. Mary's Anglican Church is serving Christmas dinner on December 25. It's become a tradition for the church community and it's open to anyone.

Sitting down together to enjoy food is a universal tradition that transcends culture. At this time of year, St. Mary's faith family opens their arms to the community at large, bringing people together.

Church secretary Linda Lane said it fills a gap for people on this important day. People may find themselves alone on that day for a variety of reasons. And winter weather can play havoc with travel plans.



FILE PHOTO
Christmas Dinner was served at St. Mary's Anglican Church in 2023.

"We do this to support the community, for anyone who is alone, they are welcome to come to our dinner," she said, adding, "the weather can be a challenge and families may not be able to get together so this is one way to have fellowship."

Doors open at 5pm and the feast is set out at 5:30. There's no charge for this meal where ham, turkey, salad, potatoes, corn, buns, stuffing and lots of dessert is on offer.

"As it is Christmas Day, we are short on a working crew so we are appealing to anyone in the community who would like to help - just give me a call," says Lane.

If transportation is an issue Lane says, "We will also provide transportation if required."

Virden's Best Christmas Pageant Ever

Submitted
By Krista Pederson

The title is a mouthful, and quite the lofty claim: "Virden's Best Christmas Pageant Ever." But you won't want to miss this production. What happens when a hungry, rough-around-the-edges family comes to church for the snacks and ends up with all the lead roles in the Nativity play? And how do the others react, the Sunday school teachers, the minister, and the children who are used to playing Mary, Joseph, the Wise Men and the Angel of the Lord? They are the ones who know how to sit quietly, are well fed and are kind to one another.

For this Theatrick Players production, the cast is busy learning lines and stage directions. Jill Radwanski, who has many Christmas plays under her belt, is helping the cast have fun while getting into character and costume. Beth Collier, producer of every Theatrick Players production to date, has all the details in hand.



SUBMITTED PHOTO
The full cast gathers for theatre games led by Jill.

Under the musical direction of Krista Pederson, local musicians Jacqueline Moony, Leona Joseph and Elisabeth Archambault will join Pederson in providing Christmas music to accompany the play.

As always, Theatrick Players productions are fundraisers for community groups.

Proceeds from the November 28 and 29 performances will go to Arts Mosaic in support of children's programming. If you have a chance, stop by the station to see the monthly art exhibits and browse the market, which is filled with great gifts.

Arts Mosaic also has a creative space. It is always open to artists of all ages and is bustling with children during the summer. This show promises to be fun for all ages.

Tickets: On sale November 12 at the Collier Building, 463 7th Ave. S. Tickets are $5 each.

Performances: St. Paul's United Church, 286 Nelson St. W., on Saturday, November 28, and Sunday, November 29. Both shows begin at 2pm.

Door prizes and raffle draws will be available, so arrive early to enter for a chance to win.

Saturday, November 28, begins with a pancake breakfast with Santa, hosted by the VCI grads, and ends with the Santa Claus parade. Plan a full day in Virden and make "Virden's Best Christmas Pageant Ever" at 2pm part of it.











A Very Virden Christmas

veryvirdenchristmas.ca

Decorating Contest

DOOR DECORATING CONTEST

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CONTEST

- **SUBMIT ENTRIES** by December 7
- **JUDGING WILL TAKE PLACE** December 8 to 10
- **WINNERS NOTIFIED** December 11

JUDGED CATEGORY

1ST ★ 2ND ★ 3RD RESIDENTIAL AND BUSINESS

- **SUBMIT ENTRIES** by December 7
- **JUDGING WILL TAKE PLACE** December 8 to 10
- **WINNERS NOTIFIED** December 11

OVER $1050 IN PRIZES TO BE WON!

Visit the website for full details and to submit your entries.

November 14

A SPLASH OF CHRISTMAS CRAFT & TRADE SHOW
@ Tundra Oil and Gas Place
★ **10am to 4pm**

November 19

DOWNTOWN PARTY, SMORES, POPCORN, GAMES, CRAFTS & PICTURES WITH SANTA, LATE NIGHT SHOPPING BEGINS, MEMORY TREE LIGHT UP, ARTS MOSAIC KIDS CRAFTS & SO MUCH MORE!

November 28

PANCAKES WITH SANTA
Presented by VCI Grad Class of 2027 ★ **8am to 11am**

VIRDEN SANTA PARADE ★ 6pm

November 28 & 29

VIRDEN'S BEST CHRISTMAS PAGEANT EVER
Presented by Theatrick Players Christmas ★ **2pm**

December 2-5

CHRISTMAS LIGHT VILLAGE
★ **6pm to 9pm**

December 5

WING DING BINGO
Presented by Wallace District Fire Department Station No. 1
★ **12pm to 4pm**

December 6

CAROLS AND CANDLELIGHT
Presented by St Pauls United Church ★ **7pm**

December 7

COWBOY CHRISTMAS TOUR
George Canyon & Aaron Pritchett ★ **8pm**

For more Christmas fun and holiday cheer, Visit the Event Calendar here: With events for all ages, there are so many activities, Join in the fun and share in these merry festivities!

Visit us online!

A Very Virden Christmas is proudly sponsored by

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