29th Annual Christmas on the River, Chester, Illinois

December 1, 2 & 3, 2017

Santa’s Village (corner of Opdyke & State St.) and the Chester Square Gazebo Park will be the place to be at 6 pm Friday evening. Christmas on the river will officially kick off with the Grand Illumination. Mayor Tom Page will light the Gazebo Park lights and the Santa’s Village lights simultaneously, signaling the beginning of the holiday season.

The Chester High School Marching Band, under the direction of Mr. Steve Colonel, will entertain us with Christmas music to put everyone in the Christmas mood. Pastor Timothy Sims will give a blessing and remind us of the true spirit of the season. We invite you to bring your lawn chair and your blanket and join in as we all come together and enjoy the official start to Christmas in Chester.

After the lights are on and the speeches are made, appreciate a Live Nativity at Santa’s Village courtesy of First Baptist Church. Carriage rides (12 passenger) will be available (6-9 pm) and will cost $5 for adult, $3 for children (under 4 free), $14 for Family (2 adults, 2 children). While waiting for your ride enjoy Aunt Nettie’s kettle corn, hot coco and Jodie’s Farmhouse chili, hot dogs and more.

As a tradition the driveway of Chester's historic Evergreen Cemetery will be line with Signs of Remembrance. The signs offer families and friends the opportunity to remember their deceased loved ones and are given in their remembrance. The signs are $10 each for a renewal and $20 each for a new one. You should contact Norma Baughman at 618-615-7892 for information on arranging yours.

You won’t have a reason to be hungry Friday evening. St. Mary’s PTO will host a Fried Chicken Dinner at the K.C. Hall (209 Church Street from 4:30 pm-7:30 pm). $10.00 a plate and includes two sides and dessert. Carry outs available.

The ever popular Craft and Vendor Sale is back for your shopping pleasure. The American Legion (500 Opdyke Street) and the Randolph County Courthouse (1 Taylor Street), will have more than 100 vendors on Friday evening (5-9 pm), Saturday (9 am-5 pm) and Sunday (10 am-3 pm). Make your shopping list and start wrapping the gifts you find! There a few vendors spaces available at the Legion (call 618-826-1430). They are $20 each for the weekend.

“I Remember: Christmastime in Chester” will be held Friday (10 am-5 pm) and Saturday (8 am- 1 pm) at the Chester Public Library (733 State Street).

Plenty of open houses this year to get you in the shopping mood. New business “Stylin’ on State” at 617 State Street will be open to celebrate its grand opening throughout the weekend (Friday 10 am-8 pm; Saturday 10 am-5 pm; Sunday Noon-3 pm); another new business Muddy River Coffey Company at 106 W. Stacey Street open house (Friday and Saturday 8 am-8 pm and Sunday 8 am-11 am); along with other open houses at The Studio Boutique at 1218 Swanwick Street (Friday 11 am-6 pm, Saturday & Sunday 10 am-2 pm); Vintage Market at 1208 Swanwick Street (Saturday 10 am-3 pm); Memorial Hospital Gift Shop at 1900 State Street (Friday 11 am-2 pm).

Also on Friday the St. Mary’s Catholic School will sponsor a Christmas Trivia Night and Ugly Sweater Contest in the school gym at 835 Swanwick Street (7 pm, doors open at 6 pm). $20 per person (adults only). Reserve your table at the school office at 618-826-3120, or contact Dainelle at 618-559-0555 or dpowell43011Wgmail.com. Bring your own food and drinks.

The Women of the Moose are having a vendor fair and food sale at the Chester Moose Lodge at 113 E. Stacey Street on Saturday (9 am-3 pm).

Again this year the Peace Lutheran Church of Chester at 125 Opdyke Street will have an Open House Saturday, December 2nd. The church will be open (9 am-4 pm) and will be decorated for Christmas. The altar area will feature a selection of Christmas trees. One of the trees will be a “Thankful Tree” and guests are invited to write a message expressing what they are thankful for and add it to the tree. Instead of their usual display of nativities the Ladies of Peace will have a Christmas Village display that they will add to over the next five years. Stop on by and watch their village grow. Another soup tasting event will be provided again this year. It will be held in the church basement. A selection of soups will be offered for the “tasting” as well as sandwiches, cookies and a drink. A free will offering will be accepted. The church basement will be home to the “Christmas Shop” which will offer a wide variety of gently used Christmas decorations, gifts, seasonal clothing and collectibles.

The St. John PTL will host its 45th Annual Christmas Bazaar Saturday, December 2nd (9 am-4 pm).This event will be held at the St. John’s Parish Hall, 302 W. Holmes Street. Hot lunch will be served starting at 10:30 am. The menu will consist of a traditional luncheon of soups and sandwiches. Adults $7.00, children are $5.00 and under 5 are free. The bazaar will be featuring their specialties: coffee cakes, cookies, ornaments, gifts cards for 200 + locations, craft, vendors, Santa’s Attic, and more.

And of course we are pleased to announce this time honored event. Santa Claus will make his way down the Mighty Mississippi River by barge on Saturday, December 2nd (10 am) at the riverfront where he will be greeted by a huge crowd of children and their families. The Chester High School Marching Yellow Jackets will be on hand performing songs of the season. Everyone is invited to the Boat Club on the riverfront following Santa’s arrival for a visit and refreshments (10 am-Noon).

The Stone Cottage Christmas Open House will be held Saturday, December 2nd (10 am-2 pm). Cottage is located at the corner of Taylor Street and Chestnut Street. Renovation on the cottage began the summer of 2010 with the objective to create a small museum and a memorial walkway at this historic Old Stone Cottage ca 1850. Many changes have occurred and will be decorated in Christmas splendor for all to enjoy.

Next to the Courthouse enjoy the Randolph County Museum & Archives open house (1 Taylor Street) on Saturday (10 am-3 pm) and Sunday (Noon-3 pm). Raising of the Official Bicentennial Flag will be held on Sunday at 1:15 pm and the Randolph County Commissioners will present a Presentation of Proclamation Honoring Illinois State Bicentennial will be at 1:30 pm. The first 50 visitors signing in on Sunday will receive an official Bicentennial lapel pin free. More pins will be available for sale at $5 each.

The Friends of the Library will sponsor a Book Signing and Pharaoh as “Santa Paws”. This event will take place on Saturday, December 2nd (10:30 am-12:30 pm) at the Chester Public Library at 733 State Street.

The Friends of the Cohen Home will again this year host a Quilt Tour at the Cohen Memorial Home at 523 Harrison Street on Saturday, December 2nd (10 am-5 pm). Visitors should stop by the home to view the quilts on display. There is no admission fee but a ‘Free Will Offering” will be collected. All monies collected will be donated to the Chester Area Christian Food Pantry.

The Holiday Home Tour which is sponsored by St. Mary's School and is set for Saturday, December 2nd (2:30-6:30 pm). Tickets are $10 each and will be available for sale November 15th. You may purchase the tickets through St. Mary’s School, by contacting Allison Blechle at 618.615.1548 or at one of the homes the day of the tour.

Homes on the tour include: Tony West & Nicole Jany at 934 William Street; James & Jennifer Knott at 4704 Kane Hill Road; Everett & Judy Wunderlich at 601 E. Buena Vista Street; Steve & Sue Colonel at 1251 Cole Place Road.

The 2nd Annual “Jingle Bell Fun Run” will be held Saturday (6 pm) before the parade! The 1 mile Fun Run will start in front of Chester City Hall. This year we have included a ¼ mile Santa Shuffle for our older/younger folks!! Costumes are highly encouraged! Dress up as Santa, an elf, or just get decked out in all your favorite jingle bells! Let your imagination run wild!

- Packet pickup and same day registration at Chester City Hall (5:15-5:45 pm in front of city hall)
- Registration fee is $15 per participant before November 17th for Fun Run and $10 for Santa Shuffle
- Entries received after November 17th will be $18 for Fun Run and $13 for Santa Shuffle
- Registration and fee must be received by November 17th to guarantee shirt & size
- Proceeds support Chester's Christmas on the River

Registration forms can be found at Chester City Hall, online at [www.chesterill.com](http://www.chesterill.com), or contact Brandy Maes by phone/text at 618-615-7020 or email at holleybrandy@gmail.com

Then bundle up, bring your family, invite your friends and see the magical lights of Christmas! The community is invited to experience the wonderful lights of the season during the Holiday Lighted Parade, Saturday, December 2nd. This parade is sure to bring out that sparkle in your eye. The parade will step off at 7 pm from Chester High School. It will continue through town, ending at Santa’s Village (Opdyke Street and State Street). Make sure to keep a watchful eye out for Santa and Mrs. Claus as part of the grand finale of the parade!

We would like to invite anyone who has an entry in any other Holiday Parade to join us. Bring it to our parade. We would love to celebrate our community event with you! Registration forms can be found at www.chesterill.com or you may contact Brandy Maes by phone/text at 618-615-7020 or email at holleybrandy@gmail.com or phone the Recreation Office to register, 618-826-1430.

On Sunday several events continue throughout the day but as the weekend activities start to wind down the Manor at Craig Farms at 3030 State Street will be offering a sweet ending to the festivities. Stop by the Manor on Sunday, December 3rd (1-3 pm), and enjoy Gingerbread House making! This is a FREE event for children up to age 12. Projects must be started by 2:30 pm. They will be decorated for the season and awaiting your arrival!

Visit [www.chesterill.com](http://www.chesterill.com) or on Facebook at Christmas on the River @christmasinrivercity for more events going on in Chester and latest up-to-date information.