

Shalem Newsletter



COMMUNITY CONNECTION

DECEMBER 2025

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Executive Director

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"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

Isaiah 9:6

Christmas invites us to rest in the enduring pillars of Advent—hope, peace, joy, and love—gifts that God offers to steady our hearts in every season. As we move through December's quiet moments and celebrations, these promises remind us that Christ's light meets us right where we are. Whether our days feel full or fragile, we trust that God is at work, bringing renewal, comfort, and a love that never fades.

Did you know?

Some families hide a pickle on the Christmas tree for kids. Originally a German tradition known as *Weihnachtsgurke*, this practice has also become popular in North America. In this festive custom, families hide a pickle (or a pickle-shaped ornament) on the tree, and the first child to find it on Christmas morning receives an extra gift or is said to have good luck for the coming year.





PRAYER AND PRAISE

WELCOME AND GOODBYE...

Last month, we said goodbye to Isobel MacKay, who passed away after a period of managing her illness. Her joyful smile and warm presence will be deeply missed by all who knew and loved her.

We are pleased to welcome Lois Ottewell and Agnes de Vries, who are moving into the Haven this month. May their transition to their new home be smooth, and may they feel supported and welcomed by our community.

PRAY FOR...

As we move through this holiday season—a time of hope, light, and God's comforting presence—let us keep in prayer those who are walking through difficult days.

To our friends in the hospital, we lift you in prayer and send our heartfelt encouragement. May God's healing hands be upon you, and you return home soon.

Please pray for:

Jason Smith
Anna Christensen
Frankie Steele
Lois Kaake
Betty Sampson
Karen Karperien
Sharon Holland
Herb Vleeming

PRAYER

Lord, bless us in this
holy season of
Christmas. Fill our
hearts with all that
Christ brings, and let
His light shine through
us to others. Keep us
in Your care, and guide
us with Your grace,
today and always.
Amen

MONTHLY VERSE(S)

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with
the angel, praising God and saying,
“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace
to those on whom his favor rests.”

Luke 2:13-14

LIVING WELL TOGETHER

Musings from the Executive Director

The Light of the World

December often arrives quietly — darker evenings, colder days, and the steady rhythm of a year drawing to a close. Yet even in this season of long nights, light has a way of finding us. Whether it's the soft glow of candles, a Christmas tree twinkling in the corner, or the kindness shared between people, light reminds us that hope is never far away.

When Jesus said, *"I am the light of the world,"* He was speaking to hearts that knew darkness — people longing for peace, for guidance, for love. His light still shines into our world today, reaching into every corner of our lives. Sometimes that light feels bright and joyful, and other times it comes gently — through the small, steady glow of faith that carries us through.

I remember one Christmas when our real tree dried out far too quickly. The needles kept falling off long before Christmas, and with one quick shake, the rest of them dropped to the floor — leaving behind a bare, skeletal tree with nothing but the lights still shining. We laughed at the sight of it, but it's stayed with me all these years. Even when everything else fell away, the light remained.

That simple memory reminds me of what Christ's coming means for us. His light isn't something that depends on our circumstances — not on how perfect things look, or how strong we feel, or how much we can hold together. His light keeps shining even when everything else seems to be falling apart. It stays steady, quiet, and sure — reminding us that God's love never burns out.

(cont'd on page 4)

**"I am the light
of the world.
Whoever
follows me will
never walk in
darkness but
will have the
light of life."**

JOHN 8:12





LIVING WELL TOGETHER

Musings from the Executive Director

The Gift of Remembering (continued)

This Christmas, we may not have everything we once did – the same energy, the same people, the same traditions – but the light of Christ still shines. We see it in the laughter of friends, the kindness of a caregiver, the warmth of a shared meal, the peace of a prayer whispered in the night. Each small light reflects His presence among us.

So, as we move through this season, may we take time to notice that light – not just in the decorations around us, but in the quiet assurance that Christ is here. His light shines within us and through us, bringing hope and warmth to a world that still needs it.

May His light continue to guide and comfort you through the days ahead.

Dorothy de Vuyst
Executive Director





Music by Romeo



Creative Endeavors



RESIDENT NOTICES

Successful Open House

Thank you to all the staff, volunteers, and residents who made our Open House a success. It was a wonderful time of fellowship, showcasing our community to the many visitors who came through our doors. Thank you to the talented musicians who helped create a beautiful atmosphere for the afternoon.

Christmas Happy Hour with Dorothy

Join Dorothy as she hosts a special Christmas Day Happy Hour, a joyful time of celebration, fellowship, and festive cheer. All are welcome—celebrate Christmas with togetherness and joy!

Staff Appreciation

If you wish to acknowledge our staff this Christmas, you're welcome to contribute a monetary gift or small item for our Staff Christmas Party. Monetary gifts will be shared among all staff, and items will be gifted at the celebration. Please drop off at the Business Office by December 10. Thank you for your kindness and generosity!

Shalem Services Survey Update

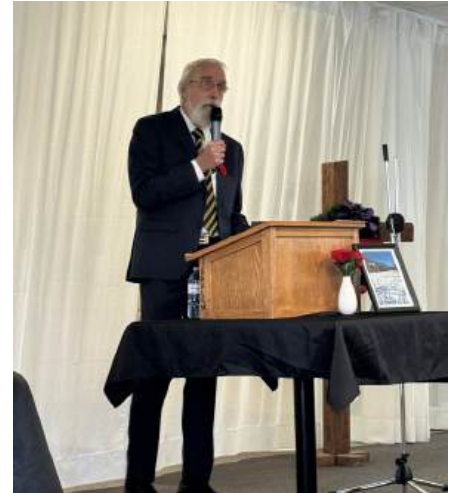
Thank you to everyone who completed our recent survey, your feedback is greatly appreciated. Key Highlights:

- Participation: 50% of residents responded.
- TV, Internet & Phone: 33 suites expressed interest; 21 already have contracts. We do not yet meet the minimum for a group option, but we'll revisit as interest grows.
- Home Phone: 29 residents are interested. We are exploring offering this service through Shalem at a reasonable rate.
- Housekeeping: 10 Court and Manor units expressed interest. See below for information on this service starting in 2026.

Housekeeping Services Available for All

Residents of the Court and the Manor can now access optional, affordable housekeeping services from Shalem for regular suite cleaning. Services include general cleaning, kitchen and bathroom cleaning, with all supplies provided (Laundry not included). Choose weekly, biweekly, or whatever works for you! Cost: \$25/hour with a minimum of 2 hours per visit. Please see the Business Office for a Housekeeping Services Enrollment Form.





The Importance of Checking Your Blood Pressure Regularly

Keeping an eye on your blood pressure is one of the simplest and most effective ways to protect your long-term health. High blood pressure often has no noticeable symptoms, yet it can increase the risk of heart disease, stroke, and other serious conditions. Regular monitoring helps you catch potential concerns early, manage existing conditions, and make informed decisions about your health and lifestyle.

We're grateful to have the knowledgeable staff from Richmond Square Pharmacy supporting our community. They are skilled in taking accurate readings, and always ready to answer any questions you may have about your numbers or medication. Make sure to sign up for a time on December 10th



HEALTH CLINIC INFORMATION & HOURS

Dr. Tolu Solola

Dr. Tolu is here on Fridays this month (Not Dec.26). Walk-ins are welcome, but please note you may need to wait if she has a scheduled appointment. **Appointments can be booked through the LPN's at the Health Clinic.**

**FRIDAYS
DECEMBER 5,12,19
9:30AM - 1:00PM**

Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)

There will be no LPN scheduled on December 24th or 25th.

Kim, Shelly, and Tigist are our LPN team, 7 days a week. For assistance, visit the Health Clinic or use the phone or email to the right. Please continue to use the ALERT system for immediate assistance, and **call 911 in a medical emergency.**

**MONDAY - SATURDAY
8:00AM-1:00PM
SUNDAY - 1:00-5:00PM
403.629.6762
nurse@shalem.ca**

Josephine Tite, *Manager of Care & Culture*

Josephine will not be in the office on December 25th for the Christmas holiday.

Offering psychosocial support for memory care, dementia, and life transitions. Residents and families are welcome to stop by the Health Clinic, call, email, or book online:
<https://calendly.com/josephine-shalem/30min>

**MONDAY, TUESDAY & THURSDAY
9:00AM-5:00PM
368-889-8020 Cell
403-240-2800 Ext.9
josephine@shalem.ca**



HEALTH

Taking Charge of Your Heart: Simple Ways to Manage Cholesterol

Provided by our health partner Longevity Care

Cholesterol plays a major role in heart health, even though you can't see or feel it. When "bad" cholesterol (LDL) builds up in your arteries, it increases the risk of heart disease and stroke. The good news is that small, consistent habits can help keep your cholesterol in a healthy range and support long-term wellbeing.

Simple Tips for Healthy Cholesterol:

- Fill your plate with colourful fruits and vegetables—these are especially high in heart-healthy fiber.
- Choose healthier fats such as olive oil, avocado, and nuts like almonds and walnuts.
- Cut back on processed foods, including sausages, bacon, and packaged snacks, often containing unhealthy fats.
- Stay active in ways that suit you: a daily walk, gentle stretching, or light gardening all help keep the heart strong.
- Know your numbers—regular check-ups with your doctor help you stay on track, even if you feel well.

Understanding Your Results:

- HDL (good cholesterol): Higher is better
- LDL (bad cholesterol): Lower is better
- Non-HDL (total minus HDL): Lower is better
- Triglycerides: Higher readings may need monitoring over time

Managing cholesterol isn't about drastic dieting or intense workouts—it's about steady, everyday choices that support your heart. Each healthy decision, whether choosing fruit over a pastry or taking a short walk, is an investment in your health and in more good days ahead.

Our Health Partners



Contact:

Info@longevitycare.ca
403-800-0858

Wellness Session: Sleep & Stress Management

Friday, December 5 | 10:30 AM | Atrium

With Richmond Square Pharmacy

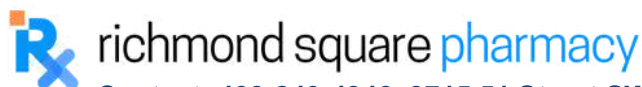
An informative and empowering session with Richmond Square Pharmacy as we explore tools to manage stress and have good sleep hygiene. Discover helpful strategies, ask questions, and gain valuable insights to support your well-being.

Blood Pressure Clinic

Wednesday, December 10 | 10:00 AM | Atrium

With Richmond Square Pharmacy

Don't miss your chance to check your blood pressure with the professionals! Regular check ins are an important part of overall wellness. Sign up for one of the available appointment times on the event board.



Contact: 403-249-4346, 3715 51 Street SW, Unit #142



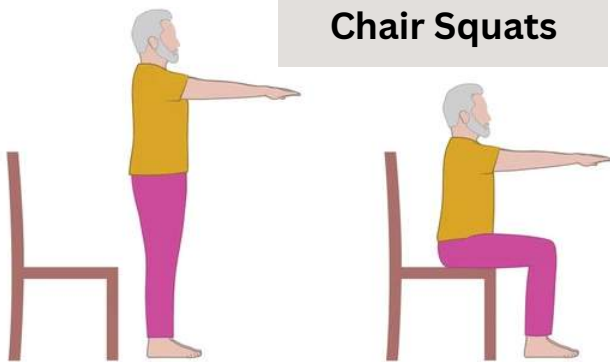
Safety First





Move of the Month

Chair Squats



The chair squat is a functional exercise that helps you do everyday activities — all in a controlled and easy manner.

Examples: getting up and down from a chair and getting in and out of a car.

- If you do not feel stable, place a chair in front of you for support.
- Stand with your back to the chair and your feet hip width apart.
- As you start to sit, put your buttocks back first, before you start bending your knees.
- Keep your chest and gaze up as you lower towards the chair.
- When you feel the chair beneath, push back up to standing.

Repeat 5X



Theresa de Walle

Fitness Instructor

Our recent information session with the Calgary Fire Department, a key point they emphasized was that falls are a common call they respond to and a leading cause of injury, particularly among older adults.

They highlighted that regular exercise can play a crucial role in preventing falls. Strengthening muscles, improving balance, and increasing flexibility all help reduce the risk of slips, trips, and falls.

Simple exercises such as leg lifts, heel-to-toe walking, chair squats, and gentle stretching can significantly improve stability and mobility. Even light activities, like daily walking or tai chi, help maintain coordination and boost confidence in movement.

Beyond physical benefits, regular exercise supports bone health, joint function, and overall well-being, promoting greater independence and lowering the likelihood of injury.

OUR COMMUNITY

DJ Denny's Disco Party!



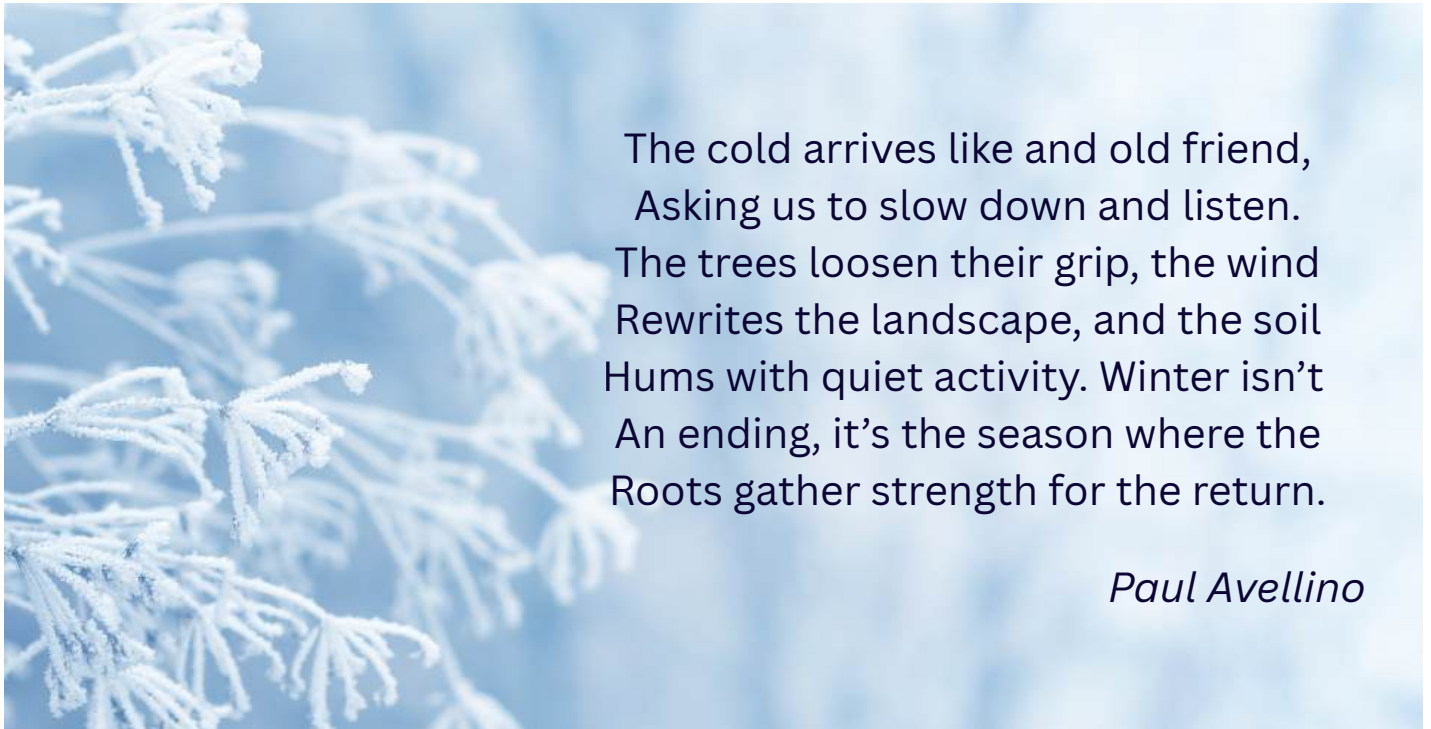
LIVING FULLY

Your Voice Matters: Resident and Family Council at Shalem

Thank you to the residents who attended our first Resident and Family Council meeting.

A quick update: we currently have two representatives from the Court, with one serving as minute-taker. We still need additional residents to join the Council—each building requires three representatives.

If you are interested, please contact Sjaak (Court 101C). Our next meeting will be held on January 15, 2026, and we hope to have full participation from all buildings so we can establish the official committee. Every building deserves a voice, so please consider getting involved.



The cold arrives like an old friend,
Asking us to slow down and listen.
The trees loosen their grip, the wind
Rewrites the landscape, and the soil
Hums with quiet activity. Winter isn't
An ending, it's the season where the
Roots gather strength for the return.

Paul Avellino



CELEBRATIONS AT SHALEM

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

| | |
|-------------|-----------------|
| December 1 | Herb Vleeming |
| December 2 | Doris Haynes |
| December 2 | Trudy Leyenaar |
| December 8 | Thomas Ferguson |
| December 13 | Molly Driediger |
| December 15 | Ebonie Allen |
| December 15 | John Vanderveen |
| December 16 | Irene Johansen |
| December 17 | Arie De Bruyn |
| December 23 | Joanie Grecko |
| December 24 | Irene Stronks |
| December 25 | Denny Post |
| December 26 | Bruno Kurz |
| December 28 | Gloria Zembiac |

MILESTONE BIRTHDAYS

This month we celebrate two milestones: John's 90th birthday and Denny, one of our youngest residents, turning 60 on Christmas Day! Wishing you both a new year of joy, good health, and God's enduring blessings.

Happy Birthday!

ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

This month, we celebrate three special anniversaries: John and Jennifer Canniff celebrate 59 years on December 10, Rudy and Mary Muller mark 53 years on December 12, and John and Sylvia Marshall reach 66 years on December 26. Wishing them all continued love and happiness!

BIRTHDAY PARTY

Tuesday

December 9

2:00PM

Dining Room

Entertainment:
Stampede City
Chorus







MEMORY LANE - SEARS WISH BOOK

Source: goodhousekeeping.com

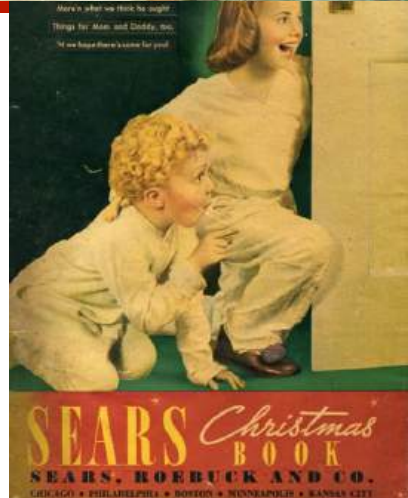
The Sears Christmas Book, first released in 1933, was merely a companion to the company's already-popular semi-annual catalog, commonly called the "Big Book." The mail-order company decided to expand its catalog offerings by publishing its first-ever Christmas Book as a way to bring the company's wide assortment of goods straight into homes during the holiday season.

It was only natural for Sears to expand its catalog business as the company's product assortment continued to multiply, especially since mail-order was a part of the brand's origin story. (The company's founder Richard Warren Sears started selling gold watches as a side business in 1886, and published his first mail-order catalog in 1888.)

The inaugural Sears Christmas Book, which highlighted "Miss Pigtails" dolls, five-pound chocolate boxes, and live singing canaries, was just 78 pages. By the time it was renamed the Sears Wish Book in 1968, it had ballooned to 608 pages, giving shoppers an expansive assortment of gifting options for all ages, interests, and budgets. In 1992, the Sears Wish Book hit an all-time high of 834 pages before dropping to 150 pages during its final years. Sears went out of business in October 2018 when Sears Holdings filed for bankruptcy.

Before online shopping was a possibility — or even a thought — Sears focused on making it easy for busy, budget-minded shoppers to buy everything on a loved one's Christmas list, no matter how far they lived from a physical store.

Ask someone who grew up in the years between 1933 and 2011, and you might find that their fondest memories of the catalog weren't really about toys at all. For many kids, it was a cherished moment shared with siblings, parents, and grandparents. There were many nights spent circling everything they wanted and showing everyone close to them their favourite wish book items.





CREATIVE CORNER

We would love for you to share. *Submit items to Pam in person or by email, communications@shalem.ca*

Coffee Cup of Life

Submitted by Sandy

Life moves fast. We chase goals, climb ladders, and push ourselves to achieve more...But sometimes, in the middle of all that noise, a simple cup of coffee can teach us everything we need to know.

A group of successful graduates once visited their beloved professor. They were proud, confident... but also stressed, overwhelmed, and exhausted. "Work is draining..." "I'm not sure I'm making the right decisions..." "Life feels so heavy lately..."

The professor listened quietly. Then, he went to the kitchen and returned with a large pot of coffee...and an assortment of cups—porcelain, glass, plastic, crystal... Some delicate. Some expensive. Some plain and simple. He invited them to help themselves. And naturally, everyone reached for the best-looking cups.

"Have you noticed something?
All of you chose the nicest cups...leaving the plain ones behind."
The room went quiet.

"Life is the coffee. Your job, your money, your status...those are just cups. They are tools to hold life— but they do not define its quality."

And suddenly, everything made sense. We spend so much of our lives focused on the cup—the car we drive, the house we live in, the titles we chase, the approval we crave. But the cup doesn't change the taste of the coffee. It doesn't add value to the life we already have.

Happiness doesn't come from what we hold. It comes from what we experience. From gratitude...presence...and the warmth of everyday moments that we often overlook.

"Don't let the cups distract you. Enjoy the coffee." said the professor

So the next time you feel stressed, or pressured to compare yourself to others...remember the lesson in the cup. Focus on what truly matters. Life isn't about having the best cup.
It's about savoring the drink.





UPCOMING EVENTS

THURSDAY - DEC. 4

Meet at Reception
10:00AM

FRIDAY - DEC.5

Shalem Atrium
10:30AM

MONDAY - DEC.8

Café
2:00PM

THURSDAY - DEC.11

Shalem Atrium
10:00AM

FRIDAY - DEC.12

Dining Room
9:30AM

Meet at Reception
6:00PM

SATURDAY - DEC.13

Shalem Atrium
10:00AM

BUS TRIP: North Hill Centre

Time to get your holiday shopping done! Find everything you need—and enjoy some time to socialize and treat yourself to your favourite meal at the food court.

Wellness Session: Stress & Sleep

An informative and empowering session with Richmond Square Pharmacy. Explore tools to manage stress and have good sleep hygiene. Discover helpful strategies, ask questions, and gain valuable insights to support your health.

Art with Geri (Level 1 & 2)

This creative class led by local artist Geri Karsten gives artists of all levels a chance to tap into their artistic side. Everyone welcome, sign-up to save a seat.

Personal Touch Shopping

Shop from the comfort of Shalem! Personal Touch Fashions comes right to you, so there's no need to go out. Update your festive wardrobe or find a thoughtful gift for a loved one—there's always something perfect to discover.

Fellowship with Bearspaw Students

What better way to spend a morning than with the smiling faces of the Bearspaw students? Enjoy some seasonal fun, refreshments, and warm fellowship.

BUS TRIP: Tour the Christmas Lights

Enjoy a fun night out touring Christmas lights in various parts of the city. The trip will include a mid-way stop for a warm drink and a bit of visiting. Perfect holiday outing.

Books n' Brew with Cheri

Join volunteer Cheri for words of wonder that spark the imagination and bring us together in a time of community as she shares some stories.



UPCOMING EVENTS

MONDAY - DEC.15

Dining Room
1:45PM

TUESDAY - DEC.16

Dining Room
1:45PM

THURSDAY - DEC.18

Dining Room
4:30PM - First Seating
7:00PM - Second Seating

TUESDAY - DEC.23

Shalem Atrium
10:30AM

WEDNESDAY - DEC.24

Café
10:30AM

THURSDAY - DEC.25

Café
3:00PM

TUESDAY - DEC.30

3rd Floor Manor Social Room
2:00PM

Cookie Decorating with St. Gregory

Get into the spirit by decorating holiday cookies with the students from St. Gregory School. Come share in the joy and warmth of the Christmas season!

Calgary Christian Ukulele Concert

Enjoy the cheerful sounds of ukulele music with students from Calgary Christian Elementary as they perform a mini seasonal concert for us.

Shalem Christmas Dinner

It's our favourite time of year as we celebrate the birth of Jesus. We warmly welcome all residents to join us for a FREE Christmas dinner. Guests are also welcome to attend for \$35.00. Come share in the joy of this special season! Bring your RSVP to the Dining Room by Saturday, December 13.

Documentary and Chat

Chris Hemsworth: A Road Trip to Remember

Australian actor Chris Hemsworth helps his father Craig, diagnosed with Alzheimer's, by taking him on a memory-filled road trip, exploring how social bonds and connection can protect brain health. Stay for a chat after the film.

Christmas Social - Sharing Traditions

Join Anne-Marie for coffee and a treat in the Café as we celebrate the season and reminisce about your holiday traditions.

Christmas Happy Hour with Dorothy

Enjoy a fun-filled Christmas treat with Dorothy on Christmas Day to celebrate the joy of the season together.

Sweets & Social: Nanaimo Bars

Spend time together making this decadent treat! Everyone is welcome, join in the baking and enjoy good company.