

Willow Bend

DECEMBER 2020

Neighbors



*Rice Family
Values Their Plano Village*

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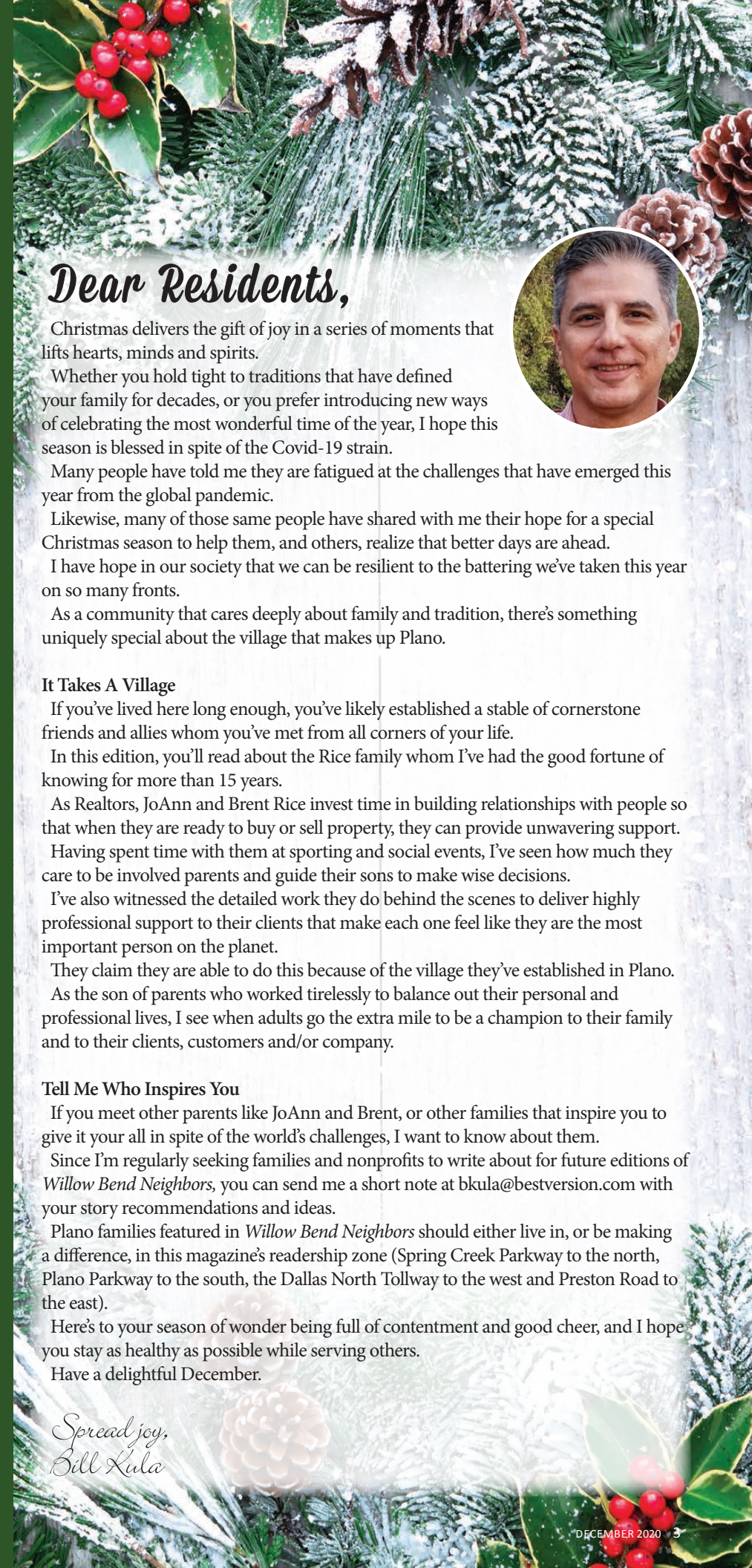
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Dear Residents,



Christmas delivers the gift of joy in a series of moments that lifts hearts, minds and spirits.

Whether you hold tight to traditions that have defined your family for decades, or you prefer introducing new ways of celebrating the most wonderful time of the year, I hope this season is blessed in spite of the Covid-19 strain.

Many people have told me they are fatigued at the challenges that have emerged this year from the global pandemic.

Likewise, many of those same people have shared with me their hope for a special Christmas season to help them, and others, realize that better days are ahead.

I have hope in our society that we can be resilient to the battering we've taken this year on so many fronts.

As a community that cares deeply about family and tradition, there's something uniquely special about the village that makes up Plano.

It Takes A Village

If you've lived here long enough, you've likely established a stable of cornerstone friends and allies whom you've met from all corners of your life.

In this edition, you'll read about the Rice family whom I've had the good fortune of knowing for more than 15 years.

As Realtors, JoAnn and Brent Rice invest time in building relationships with people so that when they are ready to buy or sell property, they can provide unwavering support.

Having spent time with them at sporting and social events, I've seen how much they care to be involved parents and guide their sons to make wise decisions.

I've also witnessed the detailed work they do behind the scenes to deliver highly professional support to their clients that make each one feel like they are the most important person on the planet.

They claim they are able to do this because of the village they've established in Plano.

As the son of parents who worked tirelessly to balance out their personal and professional lives, I see when adults go the extra mile to be a champion to their family and to their clients, customers and/or company.

Tell Me Who Inspires You

If you meet other parents like JoAnn and Brent, or other families that inspire you to give it your all in spite of the world's challenges, I want to know about them.

Since I'm regularly seeking families and nonprofits to write about for future editions of Willow Bend Neighbors, you can send me a short note at bkula@bestversion.com with your story recommendations and ideas.

Plano families featured in Willow Bend Neighbors should either live in, or be making a difference, in this magazine's readership zone (Spring Creek Parkway to the north, Plano Parkway to the south, the Dallas North Tollway to the west and Preston Road to the east).

Here's to your season of wonder being full of contentment and good cheer, and I hope you stay as healthy as possible while serving others.

Have a delightful December.

Spread joy,
Bill Kula

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Rice Family Values Their Plano Village

By Bill Kula | Photos by Chloe Saltarelli

The resident feature is proudly sponsored by Edward Jones



A conscious decision nearly 20 years ago to be self-employed has helped JoAnn and Brent Rice be successful real estate professionals, and equally important, allowed them to be intimately involved in the lives of their two sons through school and sports.

The nearly 20-year residents of Plano grew up 8,800 miles apart in Saigon, Vietnam, and Lubbock, Texas, and they both say there is no place they would rather live than Plano.

The saying, "It Takes a Village" rings loud and clear for JoAnn and Brent.

"We are most thankful for the genuine friendships that we have made while living in Plano," says Brent, 53. "Plano is our village. Plano is home."

Before they moved to their first home in Plano, the couple's courtship breathed life after JoAnn, the same age as Brent, and friends took some low level golf instructions and played mini-golf at the Golden Bear Golf Center in Carrollton where Brent was working part time.

After Cupid's arrow played love songs, it wasn't too long before Brent proposed to JoAnn on the 18th tee box at Pebble Beach Golf Club in Carmel, California, followed by their wedding at Gleneagles Country Club in Plano.

COOKING UP GOODNESS AT THE RICE GROUP

Having grown up in Lubbock, Brent earned a real estate sales license in 1988 and a Finance/Real Estate degree from Texas Tech University. After graduation, he began his career in the banking industry in Houston with First Interstate Bank.

Since being transferred to Dallas with the bank in 1991, Brent has served in a variety of roles within the corporate real estate and banking industry. In his early career, he worked at Goldman Sachs Commercial Mortgage Capital and several residential lending firms. Today, he works as a commercial and residential real estate broker.



Outside of work, Brent has also served in a variety of roles within Big Brothers Big Sisters of America to coordinate fundraising events. In addition, he served on his homeowner association board and currently volunteers as treasurer of the Hebron High School Baseball Booster Club.

When Mark Cuban purchased the Dallas Mavericks in January 2000, Brent was hired to become the official game clock operator. As a result, he was privileged to be a part of the 2011 NBA Championship season and earned a Championship ring.

JoAnn and her family moved to Irving in the mid-70s from Vietnam, and she earned an Associate Degree in Design from Wade College in Dallas, and later, her real estate sales license.

Together, Brent and JoAnn have been known in the Plano area for many years as The Rice Group, Inc. They recently joined the esteemed brokerage of Compass Real Estate.

Their motto in the real estate business is "When Character Matters."

"One of our primary tenets and key verses that describes our attitude and approach to business and life is Philippians 2:3-5," says JoAnn and Brent. It reads, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or empty pride, but in humility consider others more important than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."

BASEBALL LOVING SONS

When they are not working, the couple loves spending time with their sons Garrison, 19, and Garner, 15.

Garrison graduated from Hebron High School earlier this year.

As a three-year member of the varsity baseball team, Garrison grew up in the Plano area playing a variety of sports and earned a college baseball scholarship. He excels in media content, editing and production, and is an aspiring model represented by The Campbell Agency.

Garner is a two-sport athlete at Hebron High School. He plays basketball and baseball and will graduate in 2023.

The family is the proud owner of two dogs, CoCo, a Pomsky, and Ranger, a Maltese.

The entire Rice family are avid sports fans and support the Dallas-area professional sports teams.

FAITHFUL SERVANTS

The family have been members of Prestonwood Baptist Church for over two decades. At Prestonwood, JoAnn and Brent have been in various positions of leadership including Bible fellowship and Prestonwood's sports ministry, Prestonwood Sports Organization (PSO).

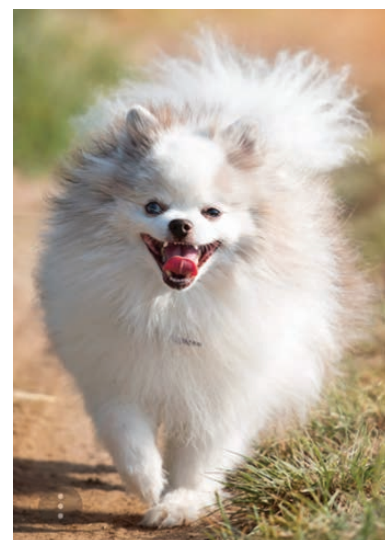
Throughout their children's developmental years, JoAnn volunteered in Vacation Bible School, and Brent coached more than a dozen sports teams at PSO including basketball and baseball.

In selecting Plano as their home, the Rice's chose to raise their two boys in Plano due to the proximity to their church, safety, excellent infrastructure and the number of activities available for youth sports as well as the quality of the local school systems.

When moving to their current home in the Kings Ridge neighborhood, they love their multicultural community, walking trails, rolling hills, large ponds that serve as main attractions, and the proximity to entertainment, shopping and restaurants that give them a quiet, yet connected place to live.

LONG LASTING RELATIONSHIPS

JoAnn and Brent believe that one of the keys to their success comes from being genuine and having pure motives, and helping others get to where they want to go.



They admire the leadership of former business legend, Zig Ziglar, who once said, "You can have everything in life you want if you will help enough other people get what they want."

With Ziglar as inspiration, they look for opportunities to serve others within the areas of our expertise, especially given the fact that they consider themselves a very real family who deals with the same types of issues faced by many families in our area.

"With a history of establishing and maintaining long lasting relationships, our friends and clients know that we value loyalty and our commitment to keep "private matters private," says Brent.

"This philosophy encourages transparency and a bond that extends well beyond a transaction, and into a lifelong genuine friendship," they say. "We believe in and rely on God's will for our personal lives and continuously pray for His guidance in our business."

PUTTING THE "REAL" IN REAL ESTATE

JoAnn and Brent often like to say they put the "Real" in Real Estate.

"Many families these days, like ours, are under attack," says JoAnn.

"We have clients and friends who have experienced separation and divorce while others are holding on to each other tighter than ever as they continue to face challenges that our parents did not experience," she says.

"Most of our generation have either dealt with or are currently facing challenges that were not part of our own upbringing," adds Brent.

"For example, while social media can be a place to gain encouragement and motivation, the darker side can perpetuate envy, jealousy and ultimately depression," he says.

Their shared strength, combined with the relationships made through their church, team sports, school and neighborhood have become their support group from which they draw encouragement and hope, they say.

"We all realize that we need each other."



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Making Financial Adjustments in An Unusual Holiday Season



By Chris Garcia

As we continue to manage life under the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic, you might find that you need to re-think some of your holiday plans. Family gatherings, office parties, gift giving, and other aspects of the season may require a different approach to effectively manage the continuing health risks.

Balancing holiday obligations can be challenging even in a normal year, but it may become even more stressful in 2020 given the adjustments required as we try to maintain our health and a semblance of normalcy in our lives.

Planning in advance can help you make solid personal and financial decisions in the months ahead. Here are some aspects to consider:

Financial adjustments

Depending on your circumstances, you might face some financial challenges at a time of year when spending tends to rise. You should determine whether you need to dial back your spending plans on gifts, parties and other facets of the holiday season to account for that. If so, be sure to set proper expectations with family members, friends or others so they are aware that you might approach things differently this year.



Gatherings of family and friends

If you are going to reduce the size of your gathering this year, it could reduce the budget required for food and beverages. Even your decorating expenses might be lower if you think that not many people will be walking through your door during the season.

Office parties

With so many people working remotely and extra efforts being made to limit personal contact, office holiday parties are likely to be limited. If you

thank you gift for each employee. This could be in the form of a specific item, a gift card or a cash bonus.

Gift giving

If you face financial pressure due to today's economic uncertainty, be upfront about that with family members or friends who typically may expect something from you. This may not be the year to shower people with expensive presents, but instead put more emphasis on the meaning and thought behind any gifts you provide. Even gifts that require little or no financial outlay can be very special.



Charitable support

This also may be a prime time to step up your charitable giving, particularly if you've cut back holiday spending in other areas. This has been a difficult year for many charitable organizations. A number have faced increased demands for their services while also seeing donations drop due to the weakened economy. Your generosity could be a truly beneficial gift for organizations you like to support.



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Chris Garcia, (CFP®, CRPC®, AWMA®, APMA®), is a Private Wealth Advisor and Chief Executive Officer of Azimont Group, a private wealth advisory practice of Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC. in Plano, TX. He specializes in fee-based financial planning and asset management strategies and has been in practice for 16 years. To contact him, please visit <https://www.ameripriseadvisors.com/chris.garcia/profile> or call 469-865-1055, 1308 Village Creek Drive, Suite 2000, Plano, TX 75093.

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are an employer or the person responsible for a celebratory event, you may decide to scrap the party idea. An alternative is to put some of that money toward a



Christmas Cranberry Orange Bread

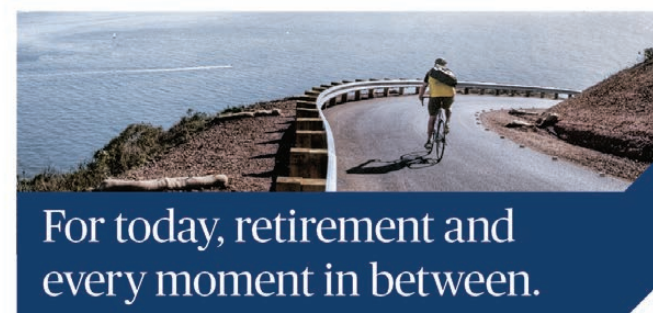
By Christina Novak

A December tradition in our family, this rich, buttery dessert bread has just the right balance of sweetness and tartness, and the red cranberries make it festive for the holiday. Cut into little slices so your guests can get a bite of something hearty and wholesome to balance out the sweet sugar cookies!

One recipe makes 1 large loaf. Double recipe makes 3 loaves.

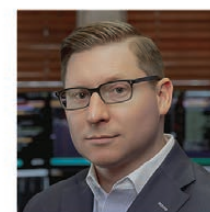
- 2 cups whole wheat pastry flour
- 1½ tsp. baking powder
- ½ tsp. baking soda
- 1 tsp. sea salt
- ½ cup raw honey
- ½ cup butter (or 3 TBSP oil)
- 1 egg
- ¾ cup orange juice
- 1 TBSP grated orange zest
- ¾ cup chopped walnuts (optional)
- 2 cups fresh or frozen cranberries, coarsely chopped (don't pre-thaw)

Mix the dry ingredients together in a large bowl. Cut in the butter until mixture resembles coarse cornmeal. In a separate bowl, beat the egg and add the honey and orange rind until well mixed. Pour the wet ingredients into dry all at once and mix just until moistened. Fold in the nuts and berries. Pour into a greased 9" loaf pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour. Knife inserted in center should come out clean. Let cool in the pan before removing from pan. Let sit overnight before slicing and so flavors set. Store in the refrigerator.



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St. Andrew United Methodist Church Multi-Night Outdoor Christmas Event “Journey of Lights” to Benefit Mental Health Services

By Elizabeth Lenart



St. Andrew United Methodist Church invites the community to safely celebrate the season at “Journey of Lights,” a new outdoor, immersive Christmas experience, December 11 - 19, from 6 to 9 p.m. on their campus located at 5801 W. Plano Parkway.

The holiday spectacular benefits the church’s new mental health initiative, a program that will be available not only to church members but also to the community.

Mental Health Initiative

“With a generous gift from an anonymous St. Andrew member family, St. Andrew leadership is excited to begin this new mental health initiative – a need we have been discussing for a long time that has only grown during the pandemic,” said Jenny Gomez, MS, LPCS, RPTS, at St. Andrew UMC. “We are most grateful for their generosity and excited to announce our new ‘Journey of Lights’ event, which gives community members a chance to also support this mental health initiative – an effort which will reduce the stigma associated with mental health, open the lines of communication with families and individuals and connect them to important resources.”

At “Journey of Lights,” attendees will enjoy multiple immersive outdoor Christmas environments throughout the 21-acre campus, filled with photo opportunities.

The various environments will include:

- a Christmas Village, featuring a magnificent oak tree filled with lights; a 3D snowfall lane; music with projection of Christmas carolers; holiday décor throughout the village with candy canes, reindeers, and snowmen; a larger-than-life advent calendar utilizing actual windows; costumed characters along the path; and visits by Santa and Mrs. Claus (Dec. 16 and 19),
- Light in the Darkness, a highly curated, immersive 30-minute light show experience throughout the trees and creek area, timed and synchronized with music of all St. Andrew Choirs and Imperial Brass, including visual projection, live Christmas vocalists, live handbells, readings, and actors sharing the Christmas story as guests walk through and savor the awe of the season, and
- culminate with a moving experience at Nativity at the Pond, with hanging lights, lanterns on the path, luminaries in the water, peaceful Christmas music such as Silent Night, and a live nativity on the island in the pond featuring Mary, Joseph, and the baby Jesus.

Reflection Of The Season

Seating is available throughout all experiences for viewing and reflection of the season. Paperless tickets sold in designated time segments are \$5 each. Attendees may show their tickets through an App on their phones upon arrival at this timed event. Ages 2 and under are free.

Christmas at St. Andrew will also include its traditional, ticketed “A St. Andrew Christmas” musical celebration on two different dates in a drive-in format:

On December 20, at 6 p.m., St. Andrew is partnering with the VOCES8 Foundation to present Handel’s Messiah, performed by VOCES8 and the Academy of Ancient Music at Trinity College in Cambridge, England, through video on an LED wall. Sound will be available through car speakers via a designated radio station.

On December 21, at 6 p.m., the Imperial Brass big band will perform Christmas favorites live in a family friendly concert. The Ladies Liberty Show Troupe, featuring St. Andrew’s Sarah Brammer and Natalie Loftin Bell, will sing live. Throughout the concert, an LED wall will display pictures of Christmas card favorites that St. Andrew members may submit for this purpose in the days/weeks prior to the concert.

Only vehicles are permitted for both drive-in concerts (no standing or chairs for safety) at \$20 per car.

A Musical Christmas

“Don’t miss this unique, COVID-19-year edition of our long-standing St. Andrew Christmas concert, one of the highlights of the season for the Dallas-Fort Worth region,” said Taylor Davis, director of music and worship arts. “We know that these types of events would not be possible without St. Andrew’s incredible musical partners including the VOCES8 Foundation, helping us to keep the tradition of a Christmas Messiah performance alive during this season of the pandemic; Imperial Brass and the Ladies Liberty Show Troupe, and last but not least, all our talented and flexible choirs bringing joy to others with their gift of song in some of the most creative ways.”

Additionally, St. Andrew will hold its Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship Services outdoors, online, and in the sanctuary.

Visit www.standrewumc.org/Christmas for more details of all St. Andrew Christmas events and to purchase tickets for any of the ticketed events.

“This is a time like no other we have ever experienced,” said Rev. Robert Hasley, senior pastor, St. Andrew United Methodist Church. “Within our own church we have seen families and individuals struggling with and hurting with increasing anxiety, depression, hopelessness, and fear just as many others are in the community. Our new mental health initiative is going to be a life-changing and life-saving program for so many.

“We are beyond thrilled to finally be launching this effort and are most grateful to the generous family who kick-started this effort. Not only will this Christmas season at St. Andrew contribute to this critical effort, it will bring comfort of tidings and joy to everyone who celebrates with us. I am grateful to our hard-working and creative team who has put together all these amazing, affordable, and safe Christmas experiences at St. Andrew and invite you to join us. Many blessings to you and your family during this holiday season!” said Hasley.

All COVID-19 protocols will continue to be in place for each of these live, in-person events.

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Willow Bend Real Estate

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AVG. DAYS ON MARKET

4572

AVG. SQFT OF HOME

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OF HOMES HAD POOLS

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AVG. PRICE PER SQFT

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AVG. SOLD PRICE

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AVG. LIST TO SALES PRICE

SOURCE MLS: 9/25/2020 - 10/26/2020

COMPASS

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December

DECEMBER 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

Tuesday Trivia

@LegacyHall
Bring your friends and put your knowledge to the ultimate test with live trivia on the 3rd floor of Legacy Hall. Grab dinner and drinks from one of their 20+ eateries. Questions will be general trivia. You may work in teams of up to 6 people, and winners will receive Hall Passes which are gift cards to ANY eatery or bar at Legacy Hall. Each team must bring one smart phone or tablet to submit answers to each question. All guests are asked to wear safety face masks.
Time: 7 p.m.
Cost: Free
www.legacyfoodhall.com/events

DECEMBER 4

Plano West Senior High School Varsity Football

@Plano West Senior High School
Cheer on the Plano West Senior High School Wolves as they compete for Friday Night glory in their last district game of the year against Plano Senior High School under the bright lights of John Clark Stadium. Safe distancing will be in place and safety masks are required for all fans.
Time: 7 p.m. kickoff.
Cost: \$4-\$10
www.planowestfootball.org

DECEMBER 5

Dickens Fest Tree Lighting

@DowntownPlano
Due to COVID precautions, Dickens in Downtown will not be hosted in person this year. However, the City of Plano will feature Dickens-related videos every day on Facebook during the first week in December, ending with a tree lighting at 7 p.m. on Saturday, December 5 from McCall Plaza in downtown Plano.
Time: 7 p.m.
Cost: Free
www.visitdowntownplano.com

DECEMBER 5, 12, 19, 26

Red Tent Willow Bend Farmers Market

@Shops At Willow Bend
Visit with more than 30 local vendors every Saturday in the western parking lot of the shopping mall near Chapel Hill and West Plano Parkway to choose from a variety of quality products from farmers, craftsmen, makers and bakers.
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www.shopwillowbend.com

DECEMBER 11-19

Journey of Lights

@St.Andrew United Methodist Church
St. Andrew United Methodist Church invites the community to safely celebrate the season at "Journey of Lights," a new outdoor, immersive Christmas experience, December 11 to 19, from 6 to 9 p.m. on their campus located at 5801 W. Plano Parkway. The holiday spectacular benefits the church's new mental health initiative, a

program that will be available not only to church members but also to the community. The event includes a Christmas Village, a 30-minute light show; and Nativity at the Pond experience.
Time: Nightly
Cost: \$5
www.standrewumc.org/Christmas

DECEMBER 12

American Red Cross Blood Drive

@ShopsAtWillowBend
Schedules get busy, set aside a day now where you can devote your time and passion to give back and help save lives. The American Red Cross Donor Coach Bus will be at The Shops at Willow Bend in Parking Lot E (Food Court Parking Lot). Walk-ins are welcome or call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) for availability. All donors are required to wear safety face coverings. Another blood drive will take place on December 14 at 1 p.m. at the Plano Event Center.
Time: 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
Cost: Free
www.shopwillowbend.com

DECEMBER 20

A Service of Comfort and Hope

@St.AndrewUnitedMethodistChurch
St. Andrew United Methodist Church invites the community to "A Service of Comfort and Hope," designed for those experiencing grief and loss, on Sunday, Dec. 20, at 4 p.m., in the sanctuary, 5801 W. Plano Parkway. The service will also be livestreamed online, and there is no cost to attend in person or stream online. Featuring guest speaker Paula D'Arcy, an award-winning author, retreat leader and former psychotherapist, harpist Barbara Biggers, music by the St. Andrew Chancel Choir Ensemble, and hymns, the service will be led by St. Andrew pastors Rev. Jennifer Powell, Rev. Robert Hasley, and Associate Director of Music Phillip Haworth. Registration is required to attend the in-person service.
Time: 4 p.m.
Cost: Free
www.standrewumc.org/news/ComfortAndHope

DECEMBER 20

Home For The Holidays - Virtual

@PlanoSymphonyOrchestra
Enjoy the traditional holiday musical celebration with the Plano Symphony Orchestra, led by maestro Hector Guzman, online as part of a subscription to the symphony's 2020-21 season. Home For The Holidays this year features guest singer Fela Domínguez and the Vocal Majority. The Plano Symphony Orchestra will perform holiday favorites that you can enjoy from the comfort and safety of your home on your favorite Internet-connected device or smart TV.
Time: 4:30 and 7:30 p.m.
Cost: Call 972-473-7262 for online subscription options.
www.planosymphony.org

DECEMBER 20-21

A St. Andrew Christmas

@St.AndrewUnitedMethodistChurch
On December 20, at 6 p.m., St. Andrew is

partnering with the VOCE58 Foundation to present Handel's Messiah, performed by VOCE58 and the Academy of Ancient Music at Trinity College in Cambridge, England, through video on an LED wall. Sound will be available through car speakers via a designated radio station. On December 21, at 6 p.m., the Imperial Brass big band will perform Christmas favorites live in a family friendly concert. The Ladies Liberty Show Troupe, featuring St. Andrew's Sarah Brammer and Natalie Loftin Bell, will sing live. Throughout the concert, an LED wall will display pictures of Christmas card favorites that St. Andrew members may submit for this purpose in the days/weeks prior to the concert.
Time: 6 p.m.
Cost: Only vehicles are permitted for both drive-in concerts (no standing or chairs for safety) at \$20 per car.
www.standrewumc.org/Christmas

THROUGH DECEMBER 30

Deerfield Holiday Lights Display

@DeerfieldHOA
Drive through this famous Plano neighborhood in December for a spectacular holiday lights display. Deerfield is located between Preston Road and Coit Road. Enter from Legacy Drive, heading north on Colonnade or Archgate (noting one-way and restricted-turn signs along Old Pond Drive and Hallmark).
Time: 7-11 p.m.
Cost: Free
www.deerfieldplano.org

THROUGH JANUARY 3

I Love Christmas Movies

@GaylordTexanResort
Walk through your favorite Christmas movies in an all-new, never-before-seen 17,000 square foot sensory pop-up exhibit. Guests can interact and capture moments with the characters, sets and moments you know and love. At the exhibit, guests can enjoy 13 fully immersive scenes that make you feel as if you've stepped into the actual story, complete with replicas of film props, audio clips and more. Scenes will include Buddy the Elf from Santa's North Pole workshop, the Griswold's house adorned with thousand of Christmas lights, and scenes from the Polar Express, A Christmas Story and The Year Without A Santa Claus.
Time: Varies by day and subject to change
Cost: From \$21 per adult, From \$15 per child (ages 4-11)
www.christmasatgaylordtexas.marriott.com

THROUGH JANUARY 4

Christmas In The Square - Frisco

@CityOfFrisco
See more than 175,000 lights, 11.5 miles of wiring and 8 miles of extension cords to create this a one-of-a-kind computerized light show nightly. Visitors may drive through the streets and listen on their car radios, or stroll along the sidewalks of Frisco Square to enjoy the dazzling display.
Time: 7-11 p.m.
Cost: Free
www.friscosquare.com

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