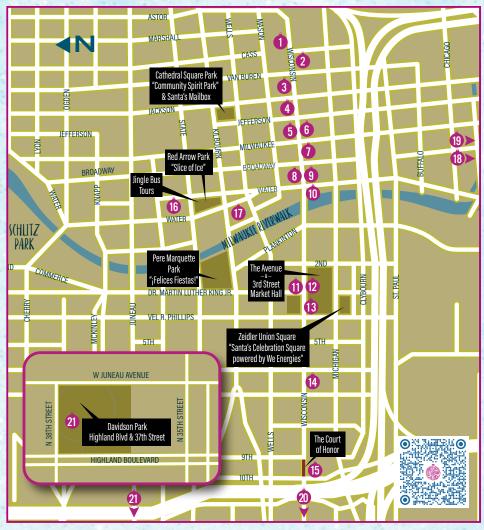


ABOUT THE ORNAMENT TRAIL

Coordinated by Milwaukee
Downtown, BID #21 and the
Downtown Placemaking Task
Force, The Ornament Trail adorns
Wisconsin Avenue, as well as select
locations on Water Street and nearby
neighborhoods, including the Historic
Third Ward and Near West Side.
New this year, the art installation
has expanded to 20 larger-than-life
ornaments, each hand-painted by a
locally or nationally renowned artist
with Milwaukee ties. The Ornament
Trail will enliven city sidewalks
November 20, 2025 – January 18, 2026.





For more information on The Ornament Trail, scan the QR code above or visit www.milwaukeedowntown.com/bid-events/ornament-trail.

NOT-TO-MISS EVENTS OF THE MILWAUKEE HOLIDAY LIGHTS FESTIVAL

Santa's Mailbox

SPONSORED BY EDUCATORS CREDIT UNION WITH SUPPORT FROM SERVING OLDER ADULTS AND NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS – PIONEER BRANCH 2

November 10 – December 14 Cathedral Square Park

414.220.4700 milwaukeeholidaylights.com

Place a child's letter to Santa in Santa's Mailbox. Be sure to include a return address because Santa and his extra special helpers will ensure each child receives a personalized reply. Holiday spirit delivers the letters. No postage required!

Jingle Bus Tours

Fri – Sun, December 5 – 28 5pm to 9pm (weather permitting) Red Arrow Park

414.220.4700 | milwaukeeholidaylights.com

Marvel at Downtown's spectacular sights aboard the convenient Jingle Bus. For \$8 per person, visitors can take in the festive panorama while a narrator shares stories about the jolliest attractions and landmarks. Advance ticket purchases are encouraged.

Santa's Christmas Cavalcade

Sat, December 6 | Departs at 5pm Fri, December 12 | Departs at 5pm Downtown Milwaukee

414.220.4700 milwaukeeholidaylights.com

See Santa and Mrs. Claus along their festive route riding atop a vintage fire truck. Sarah Fierek will also be on board singing jazzy holiday tunes. Route departs from the Milwaukee Public Market and travels throughout Downtown.

Cocoa with the Clauses

Sat, December 13 | 11am to 2pm Cathedral Square Park 414 220 4700 | milwaukeeholidaylin

414.220.4700 milwaukeeholidaylights.com

Santa and Mrs. Claus return for this annual cocoa klatch. The free outdoor event is a chance for kids to share their wish lists and for moms and dads to grab a keepsake photo. Elves and other holiday characters will also be there. Plus, complimentary cookies and hot cocoa will be provided, thanks to Educators

Credit Union

Slice of Ice

December through Early March 2026 (weather permitting) Red Arrow Park

414.289.8791 countyparks.com

Ice skate in the heart of Downtown at the "Slice of Ice" rink while surrounded by twinkling lights and dazzling décor. Skate rentals are \$11 for adults and \$9 for children. Ice skating is free



THE ORNAMENT TRAIL



1. Blossom

- by Daniel Fleming

ARTIST'S STATEMENT: "Humans have always found healing in nature. Whether that takes form as time-honored remedies passed down through generations, scientific breakthroughs, or even just the refreshing experience of being outside. Despite all our technological advancements, the power of nature continues to demand a role in our lives. While winter brings its own form of beauty, we sometimes lose that inspiration as the temperatures plummet and colors recede behind a white curtain of snow. Blossom seeks to reintroduce color, energy, and beauty into this dormant season by utilizing native flowers and foliage to honor the natural ecosystem from which we take solace throughout the year."

— sponsored by —





LOCATION: NORTHWESTERN MUTUAL, 720 E. WISCONSIN AVENUE

2. Current Pastimes

- by Dave Watkins

ARTIST'S STATEMENT: "This abstract design takes on an elegant and vintage Christmas design with rich reds, pinks, and contrasting deep burgundies and gold leaf accents. The overlapping colors and shadows provide a stark contrast to the otherwise grey winter days."

- sponsored by -



LOCATION: US BANK CENTER, 777 E. WISCONSIN AVENUE



- by Brad Anthony Bernard & Grace Gasser

ARTIST'S STATEMENT: "The inspiration for this ornament comes from a West African Adinkra symbol commonly seen in my previous murals. The symbol represents a life principle that I believe is important to embody this time of year, 'One must obtain a humble spirit to engage in generosity and acts of kindness."

LOCATION: 600 EAST CAFÉ, 600 E. WISCONSIN AVENUE

- sponsored by -





4. Untitled

by The Couto Brothers

ARTIST'S STATEMENT: "Milwaukee native Alex Couto traveled back home from Los Angeles to complete a one-of-a-kind holiday ornament for the city that raised him. Similar to The Couto Brothers' past work seen across town, the ornament features bright, bold colors, and patterns that energize the street with vibrancy and life."

LOCATION: THE MILWAUKEE CLUB, 706 N. JEFFERSON STREET

sponsored by -



- sponsored by -

- THE -

PFISTER HOTEL

ESTD MILWAUKEE 1893

5. Lotería Holiday

by Nicole Acosta (Former Artist-in-Residence at The Pfister Hotel)

ARTIST'S STATEMENT: "Lotería or 'Mexican Bingo' is a beloved Mexican family tradition during the holiday season. Typically played at family gatherings after an enormous meal and bellies are full. An abuela (grandmother), mother (mama), or aunt (tia) is the first to break out the deck calling on others to gather around the table to pick their 'lucky' board (tabla). Frijoles (beans) replace bingo daubers and a money pot passes from person to person, collecting twenty-five cents per card. One person calls the cards and must call them in Spanish, no excuses. Some call the cards fast, so you better keep up, and whoever matches the pattern first wins the pot. The end game is called llena tabla (full card), the stakes are higher and whoever fills the entire board is the victorious one! Lotería is a favorite Latinx pastime played by the young and old, beyond abuela's dining table. You can find this game being played amongst friends, birthday parties, or other social gatherings. Over time, the cards have become symbols of Mexican identity. This game has a long history dating back to 1887 and has a lot of cultural meaning. Today, you can find modern takes on the card decks reflecting society or personal interests. As The Pfister Hotel's first Mexican Artist-in-Residence, it's important for me to represent my heritage. I grew up in a very traditional Mexican home, and with that comes a cultural identity I wear proudly. For me, the holidays mean connecting with my family and continuing traditions like Lotería. When people view this ornament, I want them to either learn something new or see themselves represented."

LOCATION: THE PFISTER HOTEL, 424 E. WISCONSIN AVENUE





6. Merry & Bright in Flight

— by John Kowalczyk

ARTIST'S STATEMENT: "Inspired by holiday lights, this ornament design incorporates the illumination and color that they add to our winters. The ornament's bright colors and patterns suggest light strands and glowing orbs, while a few birds represent the lighthearted and fun times spent with friends and family during the holidays."

LOCATION: PNC, 411 E. WISCONSIN AVENUE





7. Winter's Rabbit

- by Drew York

ARTIST'S STATEMENT: "Capturing the spirited leap of a cottontail traversing in unfamiliar snow-covered terrain. The rabbit's enthusiasm shines as it confronts the formidable power of nature, demonstrating unwavering resilience in the face of adversity."

LOCATION: 333 E. WISCONSIN AVENUE





8. Flourish & Frolic

- by Emma Daisy Gertel

ARTIST'S STATEMENT: "An expression of warmth and joy, this design of larger-than-life colorful flowers and bits of holly express the conviviality and magic that engenders the holiday season. It wouldn't be winter in Wisconsin without some glittering snowflakes that remind us of the true beauty and wonders of nature."

LOCATION: TWO-FIFTY, 250 E. WISCONSIN AVENUE







9. The Four Graces

- by Nova Czarnecki

ARTIST'S STATEMENT: "This ornament features the three goddesses from ancient Greek mythology that bestowed the gifts of light, joy, and bloom upon our humanity, but adds the fourth goddess of 'time.' All these gifts are far more precious than jewels or gold. The ornament seeks to realign our definition of wealth and remind the viewer that life itself is a gift. In other words, beauty is all around!"

LOCATION: RAILWAY EXCHANGE BUILDING, 229 E. WISCONSIN AVENUE



— sponsored by —



10. Merry in Pink

— by Monique Machut

ARTIST'S STATEMENT: "Merry in Pink rounds up what I love most about the holiday season in Milwaukee. From the Nutcracker and Bucks to just the sparkling light displays throughout the city, winter downtown can be truly magical!"

LOCATION: CHASE TOWER, 111 E. WISCONSIN AVENUE





11. Paz, Amor y Amistad (Peace, Love and Friendship)

— by Mauricio Ramirez

ARTIST'S STATEMENT: "I have chosen to lean towards the traditional colors of red and green. These dominant colors throughout the ornament give off the spirit of the season, in addition to abstract evergreens throughout the piece. I have also taken inspiration from a traditional Mexican Zarape (blanket) as it symbolizes warmth and care. The result is a brilliant composition with all elements working towards peace, love, and friendship."

LOCATION: 310W, 310 W. WISCONSIN AVENUE





12. The Wonder Years

— by Adjua Nsoroma

ARTIST'S STATEMENT: "This ornament captures the joy and wonder of experiencing snow and the holiday season as if for the very first time. It celebrates that pure awe we feel in childhood—the laughter, the cold air, the magic of winter's light—and gently reminds us, as adults, of the beauty we often forget. Painted with care, it includes a bright red cardinal, a symbol of love, warmth, and spiritual presence. In many traditions, cardinals remind us that our angels are near—watching over us and our joyful children. Together, the snowfall and the cardinal reflect the tender connection between memory, spirit, and the simple happiness of being present in the season's glow. Through this piece, I hope to rekindle that sense of wonder and peace that Milwaukee's winter brings."

sponsored by -



LOCATION: THE AVENUE, 301 W. WISCONSIN AVENUE



13. Wrapping Paper

- by Byada Meredith

ARTIST'S STATEMENT: "My fondest memories of the holiday season almost always include moments of getting cozy at home or gathering at the family house to eat, drink, and make merry! Through my design, I want to highlight those quiet yet constant characters that help weave the tapestry of these memories. One of them is the friendly dwellings that bring us together and allow us to be ourselves. The other is the inconspicuous, yet all-important and almost instantly forgotten, wrapping paper. Where would the holidays, or celebrations in general, be without this humble but essential element? What Christmas scene would be complete without this simple or bold, traditional or sometimes modern, accessory to all that Santa, family, or friends bring into each other's lives? Let's take a moment to appreciate the mystery, wonder, and excitement that these patterned papers have brought to us all over time!"

LOCATION: HUB 640, 331 W. WISCONSIN AVENUE





14. Painting the Town

Dave Watkins

ARTIST'S STATEMENT: "Downtown for the holidays takes on such a special meaning. For this ornament, the colors of the Milwaukee Bucks shine through, with greens, creams, and blues. The ornament provides a contemporary spin on the holidays with fresh colors, while reflecting on the upward trajectory of the place that I feel so fortunate to call my home!"

LOCATION: THE CLARK BUILDING, 633 W. WISCONSIN AVENUE





15. The Court of Honor

— by Milwaukee Downtown, BID #21

Home to Milwaukee's most historic civic monuments, the Court of Honor on West Wisconsin Avenue, near the Milwaukee Public Library's Central Library, serves as the trailhead for the Wisconsin Avenue Ornament Trail. Featuring a dozen larger-than-life red and green ornaments, the median is dressed in its holiday best.

- THE COURT OF HONOR

- sponsored by -





16. The Joys of Winter

— by Rozalia Singh

ARTIST'S STATEMENT: "One of my favorite things to do downtown during the holidays is to drive around and look at the beautiful lights and decorations. I did not grow up celebrating the holidays, however, colorful lights and decorations are for everyone. I decided to focus on winter, and the simple joys of the season that bring fond memories."

LOCATION: REINHART BOERNER VAN DEUREN, 1000 N. WATER STREET

— sponsored by —





17. Life Has Always Gathered Here

- by Jeff Zimpel

(Former Artist-in-Residence at Saint Kate - The Arts Hotel)

ARTIST'S STATEMENT: "Using Increase Lapham's book 'Antiques of Wisconsin as Surveyed and Described' (1855), along with a letter from Solomon Juneau to the American Fur Company (1840), I was able to identify eight mammals that once lived upon the lands we now enjoy as downtown Milwaukee. These animals weren't only hunted in this place, but were also symbolized and treated with a high degree of sacred power in the form of ceremonial earthen mounds created by The Potawatomi, and the many Native Peoples who lived on this land before they were removed. According to Lapham's descriptions, over 55 mound sites existed, peppering Milwaukee County many along our three main rivers. My concept is about unearthing the other-than-human ancestors of this place, weaving together a lattice of abstracted symbols inspired by the Bear, Otter, Marten, Fox, Wildcat, Lynx, Wolf, and Deer that once thrived where this ornament will be displayed.

These interconnected animal markings will serve as an acknowledgment of the life this special place has the power to sustain, along with a monument to the species that have been wiped out to make room for our human-centric city."

LOCATION: SAINT KATE - THE ARTS HOTEL, 139 E. KILBOURN AVENUE



SAINT KATE®

THE ARTS HOTEL



18. Winter Reflections

- by Josephine Rice

ARTIST'S STATEMENT: "For me, the holidays are a time of reflection and connection to loved ones and to our past. It can be a sad time for many when thinking of what has been lost or how things used to be. There is a sweetness in the peaceful moments – the snow covering the summer's greenery and the chill in the air. I wanted to highlight the real greyness and blue sky, with exaggerated transformations for the year to come in a purply pink icicle sparkle."

LOCATION: SKYLIGHT MUSIC THEATRE, 158 N. BROADWAY

sponsored by —





19. Snow Season

- by CERA

ARTIST'S STATEMENT: "Spending the holidays in Milwaukee is such a treat, from the celebratory holiday lights to hot chocolate alongside the ice-skating rink. Sometimes, the lake effect is so strong that I've found the bright white and grey atmospheric tones to be almost tundra-like. With this nostalgic depiction, I hope other Milwaukeeans find the same joy that I do."

LOCATION: 322 N. BROADWAY





20. The Frost Bound Familiar

- by Thyla Arden

ARTIST'S STATEMENT: "Inspired by the timeless elegance of blue and white porcelain, *The Frost Bound Familiar* reflects the serene beauty of Wisconsin winters. A jackalope – the mythical creature of Midwestern folklore – dances through clusters of winterberries, its body adorned with painted Christmas roses that bloom against the frost. Gold kintsugi-inspired lines trace the surface, celebrating repair and transformation. Like pottery mended with gold, the piece honors cracks as part of its story – a reminder that winter invites us all to pause, mend, and emerge renewed."

LOCATION: MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY, 1198 W. WISCONSIN AVENUE





ARTIST'S STATEMENT: "My design for The Ornament Trail celebrates the city's unique character, holiday nostalgia, and my signature artistic style. Bold, lively colors infuse the piece with energy and joy, creating a design that feels both festive and deeply connected to Milwaukee's history and personality. The ornament features vintage holiday lights, a classic motorcycle, and lush greenery elements woven together into a vibrant botanical composition. By blending nature's richness with the gleam of vintage lights and the spirit of Milwaukee's industrial innovation, the ornament captures the city's beauty, creativity, and enduring holiday warmth."

LOCATION: DAVIDSON PARK, 3725 W. JUNEAU AVENUE











The Studio

139 E. Kilbourn Avenue

One complimentary cup of coffee with any breakfast order at The Studio.

Offer expires on January 18, 2026

Café at the Pfister 424 E. Wisconsin Avenue

One complimentary hot cocoa with the purchase of a specialty coffee.

Offer expires on January 18, 2026

3rd Street Market Hall

3RD MARKET HALL

275 W. Wisconsin Avenue

One free medium fountain drink with the purchase of another beverage from 3rd Street Market Hall main bar.

Offer expires on January 18, 2026

Baskin-Robbins

622 W. Wisconsin Avenue

One free scoop of ice cream with an ice cream purchase of equal or greater value. Limit one per customer.

Offer expires on January 18, 2026

600 EAST Café

600 E. Wisconsin Avenue

One complimentary small (12 oz.) hot cocoa with purchase of another beverage.

Offer expires on January 18, 2026

600 EAST Casé & Business Contor

BR









(ATHEDRAL SQUARE PARK)

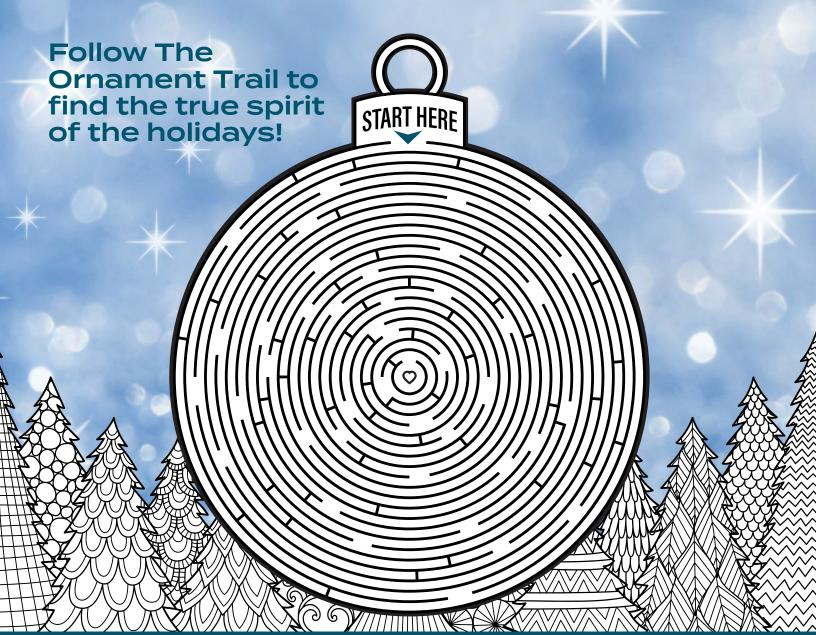
Visit with Santa and Mrs. Claus and snap a photo at this free outdoor event. Free hot cocoa, cookies and face painting available, too!





www.milwaukeeholidaylights.com





www.milwaukeeholidaylights.com

\$8 Jingle Bus Tours

Fri – Sun, Dec. 5 – 28, 5pm to 9pm (weather permitting) Tours Depart from Red Arrow Park 920 N. Water Street

Enjoy a lighthearted, 40-minute tour of Downtown's lights and sights. Book your tour at www.milwaukeeholidaylights.com.





Santa's Christmas Cavalcade Rolls Into Town

Sat, December 6 & Fri, December 12 Downtown Milwaukee

See Santa and Mrs. Claus as they travel around Downtown aboard a vintage fire truck. The route begins at 5pm at the Milwaukee Public Market.

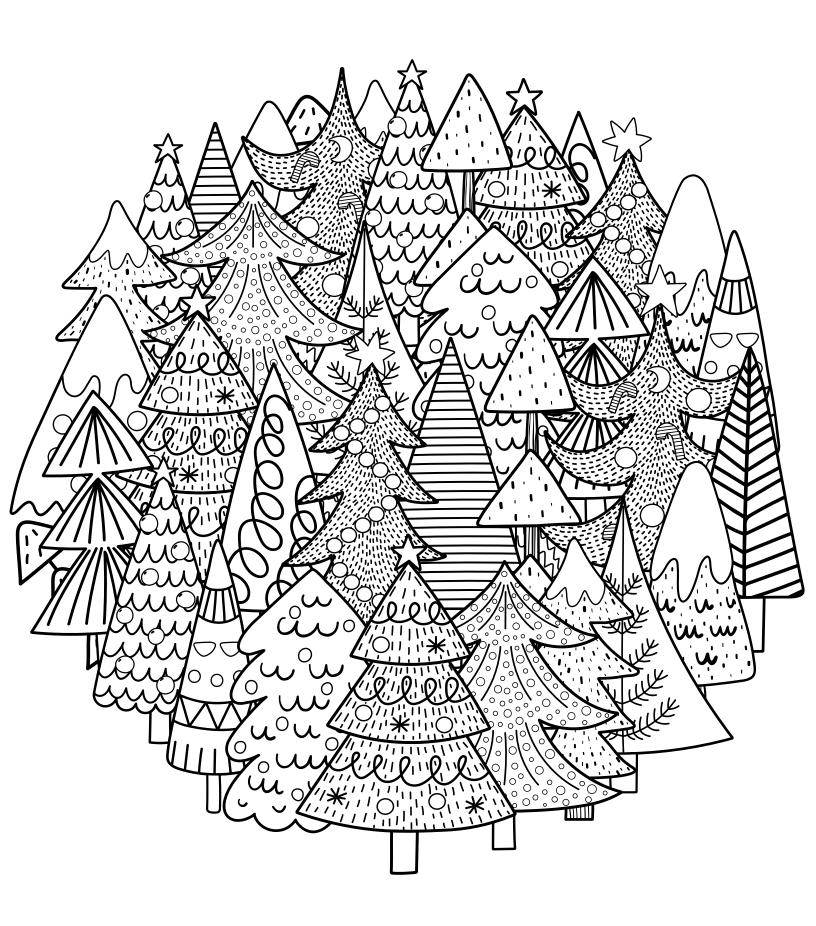
Slice of Ice

December – Early March 2026 (weather permitting)

Red Arrow Park - 920 N. Water Street

Ice skate in the heart of Downtown at the "Slice of Ice" rink while surrounded by twinkling lights and dazzling new décor. Get hours and skate rental info at www.countyparks.com.





Holiday Lights Word Search

[words are horizontal, vertical, diagonal, forwards, & backwards]

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- WORDS TO FIND -

- milwaukee
- holiday
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- festival
- ornament
- trail
- family
- bulb
- -cheer
- snowflake
- kindness
- cookie
- decoration
- downtown

- chilly
- season
- gingerbread
- jolly
- mittens
- scarf
- nutcracker
- tidings
- evergreen
- winter
- icicle merry
- newyear
- party

- star
- ribbon
- bright
- happy
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- toys bells
- sled
- greetings
- december - cards
 - warm
 - kiss

• love (10)

Word Unscramble

TERANONM LRTIA

SWONCIISN VNEEUA

DEIHRCELNA

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ETH TCKECRUANR

Cocoa with the Clauses Ornaments Santa's Mailbox Community Spirit Park

Тһе Митсгаскег

Mistletoe

Jack Frost

Sleigh Bells

sug əlgnil Christmas Cavalcade

ANSWER KEY

Brilliant Slice of Ice Holiday Lights Chandelier Wisconsin Avenue Ornament Trail







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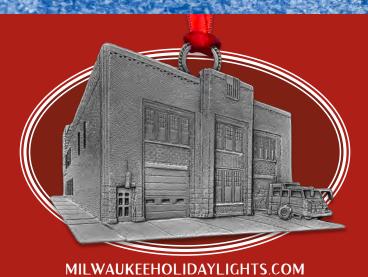
— 2025 EDITION — MILWAUKEE FIRE DEPARTMENT GIFT A PIECE OF MILWAUKEE HISTORY

DOWNTOWN LANDMARKS SHINE IN ORNAMENT SERIES

This holiday season, gift a piece of the city with the Milwaukee Holiday Lights Festival ornament collection. Perfect for friends, family and business associates, choose from over 20 downtown landmarks. Hand-carved and cast in pewter, each edition is a beautiful accent to any tree. Purchase yours today!

The 2025 Milwaukee Fire Department edition is available for \$19.95. A limited number of past editions are available for \$24.95.

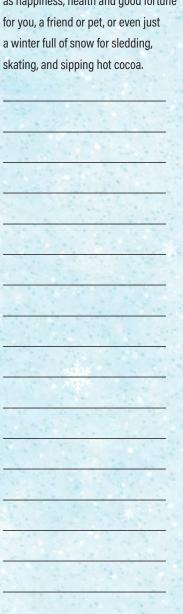
Ornaments may also be purchased at Milwaukee Downtown, 301 W. Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 106 (414.220.4700), Historic Milwaukee, 235 E. Michigan Street (414.277.7795), Kloiber Jewelers, 777 E. Wisconsin Avenue (414.276.2457), or Urban Milwaukee, 755 N. Milwaukee Street (414.395.0632). Call ahead for hours of operation and inventory.



A WISH LIST FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Make a list of everything you want for Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa or whatever season you're celebrating.

Remember, it doesn't have to be a thing. It can be something as simple as happiness, health and good fortune for you, a friend or pet, or even just a winter full of snow for sledding, skating, and sipping hot cocoa.







A special thanks to the presenting sponsor of the Milwaukee Holiday Lights Festival:



Visit their Downtown branch on Cathedral Square at 535 E. Wells Street. The Ornament Trail is produced by:



www.milwaukeeholidaylights.com

