

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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<https://okeeferanch.ca/tours-events/calendar>

### ***O'Keefe Ranch Celebrates the Holidays with Victorian Christmas***

Nothing is more nostalgic than a stroll through the old village on a cold winter day, with a hot cocoa, the crackle of the fire, the sound of farm animals eating hay, and a genuine warmth and happiness from everyone around you. A great way to start the holiday season, the O'Keefe Ranch offers Victorian Christmas as a weekend to celebrate the holidays, family, and good cheer and merriment.

“Christmas at O'Keefe Ranch goes back a long ways. The O'Keefe family was Catholic and traditional religious observations of the season would have been very important to them. In 1886 when their new home was completed, they moved in just in time for Christmas. In 1892, the Vernon News reported that a Christmas Service was held in St. Anne's Church with Mrs. Daniel Rabbitt playing the new pump organ. Community members are invited to come tour these historic buildings—the Mansion turns 131 this December, and the pump organ has never left the Church.” – Carla-Jean Stokes, Curator.

Although the Ranch is closed for the regular season, it opens its doors for Victorian Christmas, a family friendly event, on Saturday December 9<sup>th</sup> and Sunday December 10<sup>th</sup> from 12:00 pm – 4:00 pm.

“There will be lots to see and do, and it takes people away from the bustle of holiday traffic and shopping. The O'Keefe Ranch offers an experience for people, and that's something you can't buy for Christmas.” - Kelly MacIntosh, Marketing and Events Coordinator.

“We are offering cider and cookies, roasted chestnuts over an open fire, and pony rides for the kids. This year there will also be a church service at 2:30 each day with Evangelist Bernhard Kleckers and music by Rob Dinwoodie and Dixon Zalit. We'll also have a photographer onsite to take family portraits with Santa, on our old-fashioned sleigh, or with miniature horse “Wally the Elf”. A number of our historical buildings will be open and decorated for the occasion. Our

resident blacksmith and potter will be working in their studios for everyone to enjoy. It really is a good old fashioned Christmas.”

The cost to attend is \$10 + GST per person or \$30 + GST for a family of 5. Seasons Pass holders are welcome at no charge and children under 5 are free.

In addition, the O'Keefe Ranch is offering a Christmas Tea and Tour in the Mansion on Friday, December 8<sup>th</sup>. There are two seatings to choose from, 11:30 am and 2:30 pm. Guests will enjoy tea served in fine china, dainty sandwiches, fresh scones, fudge and cookies, holiday piano stylings by Brandon Schmor, and a guided tour of the Mansion. The cost is \$20 + GST per person. Call ahead to reserve, space is limited.

The O'Keefe Ranch and is now closed for the regular season and re-opens in May 2018, with the exception of Victorian Christmas. The Ranch is located at 9380 Hwy 97N Vernon BC. For more information visit [www.okeeferanch.ca](http://www.okeeferanch.ca)

*The O'Keefe Ranch tells the story of early BC Ranching and endeavors to preserve the history and culture of the early ranching era for future generations.*

Photos: Curator Carla-Jean Stokes, resident donkey “Flapjack”, and Marketing and Events Coordinator Kelly MacIntosh, standing in the doorway to the log barn at the O'Keefe Ranch.

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